International Journal of
Linguistics
(IJL)

Mood Analysis of COVID-19 Messages: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach to Understanding Public Health Communication

Muhammad Babangida Muhammad

International Journal of Linguistics
ISSN 2710-4788 (online)
Vol.5, Issue 3. No.1. pp 1 - 20, 2024

www.iprjb.org

Mood Analysis of COVID-19 Messages: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach to Understanding Public Health Communication

[1*]Muhammad Babangida Muhammad
Department of News and Current Affairs,
Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation, Yola

Article History

Received 11th August 2024

Received in Revised Form 14th September 2024

Accepted 21st October 2024

How to cite in APA format:

Muhammad, M. (2024). Mood Analysis of COVID-19 Messages: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach to Understanding Public Health Communication. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *5*(3), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijl.3009

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly through mood analysis, can enhance understanding of public health communication related to COVID-19. The aim is to explore the use of mood types in health messages to convey risk, provide instructions, and manage public vulnerability during the pandemic.

Methodology: Utilizing a qualitative and quantitative approach, this study analyzed 100 COVID-19 health messages sourced from government websites, social media, and public health announcements. The messages were categorized according to their mood type imperative (commands) and declarative (statements) to assess their functional roles in conveying public health information. Data were tabulated to illustrate the frequency of each mood type and their implications for public health communication.

Findings: The analysis revealed that 70% of the messages were in the imperative mood, highlighting the urgency of issuing clear directives to the public. In contrast, 30% of the messages were in the declarative mood, providing essential information and reassurance. This distribution indicates a strategic use of language in public health messaging to promote compliance while fostering public trust.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of SFL mood analysis in public health communication by illustrating how mood types influence public perception and behavior during a crisis. The findings offer practical insights for health authorities to enhance communication strategies, ensuring that messages are both directive and informative. Additionally, this research informs policymakers about effective messaging practices to improve health outcomes during future public health crises.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Messages, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Mood Analysis, Public Health Communication, Interpersonal Metafunction*

JEL Codes of Classification: *I18, Z18, C88*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a vital role in public health communication, especially during global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The way health authorities communicate risks and provide guidelines directly influences public behavior and compliance with health measures. One effective framework for analyzing language in such contexts is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which views language as a social semiotic system where meaning is shaped by the interaction between speakers and listeners (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Within SFL, mood analysis explores how clauses function to express interpersonal relationships, convey attitudes, and guide actions.

Mood types such as declarative (statements), imperative (commands), and interrogative (questions)—play a significant role in determining how messages are received and understood by the public. In the context of public health communication, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding the mood of health messages is crucial for ensuring that the information is both clear and effective.

COVID-19 presented unprecedented challenges to global health, and communication became a critical tool in mitigating the spread of the virus. Public health authorities worldwide issued messages to guide people on preventive measures, raise awareness of symptoms, and encourage vaccination. This study focuses on analyzing the mood of these messages to understand how language constructs relationships between health authorities and the public, particularly in managing risk and vulnerability.

By applying mood analysis within the SFL framework, this study aims to uncover patterns in how COVID-19 health messages function to instruct, inform, and persuade. Specifically, the study examines the predominance of imperative and declarative moods in these messages, highlighting their role in promoting adherence to public health measures. Through this analysis, the study will provide insights into how language is used to shape public perception and behavior during a public health crisis, offering valuable guidance for improving health communication strategies in the future.

Problem Statement

Effective communication is essential in managing public health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where timely and clear dissemination of information can significantly impact public behavior and health outcomes. Despite the abundance of COVID-19 health messages, there remains a critical gap in understanding how the linguistic structures of these messages, particularly their mood types, influence public perception and compliance with health directives.

While previous studies have focused on general health communication and COVID-19 messaging in specific contexts (such as news headlines and social media posts), there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on how Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) specifically mood analysis can be used to understand the interpersonal dynamics of COVID-19 public health messages. The mood of these messages, whether imperative (commands) or declarative (statements), plays a pivotal role in shaping public attitudes towards health risks and their responses to preventive measures.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by analyzing how mood types in COVID-19 health communication contribute to shaping public understanding of risk and vulnerability. By

applying SFL mood analysis to COVID-19 messages, this research aims to provide critical insights for health professionals, communication specialists, and policymakers on how to craft more effective public health messages that improve compliance and mitigate risks during health crises.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a linguistic theory developed by Halliday (1994), which views language as a social semiotic system where meaning is created through interactions between speakers and listeners. SFL posits that language serves three metafunctions: ideational (representing experiences), interpersonal (establishing relationships), and textual (organizing information). The interpersonal metafunction is particularly relevant to this study, as it focuses on how language constructs social relationships through the use of mood, modality, and evaluation.

Central to this research is the concept of mood analysis**, which is a core component of SFL's interpersonal metafunction. Mood refers to the grammatical structure that indicates the role of the speaker and the expected response from the listener. Mood types such as declarative (used to make statements), imperative (used to issue commands or instructions), and interrogative (used to ask questions)—are integral to how communication functions in different contexts.

In the case of public health communication, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, mood plays a crucial role in determining how messages are delivered and how they influence public behavior.

This study applies Halliday's mood analysis framework to investigate the language used in COVID-19 health messages, specifically focusing on how mood types are employed to convey urgency, provide instructions, and establish authority.

By analyzing the mood of these health messages, the study aims to uncover patterns in how public health authorities use language to manage risk and vulnerability during the pandemic.

In this context, mood types serve to reflect the power dynamics between health authorities and the public. For example, imperative mood often reflects a position of authority, where directives are given to the public to mitigate the spread of the virus, while declarative mood is used to provide factual information and reinforce credibility. Through this lens, the study will explore how these mood choices shape public understanding and response to COVID-19 health measures.

In summary, by using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) mood analysis, this theoretical framework provides a foundation for analyzing how language in COVID-19 public health messages functions to construct interpersonal relationships and influence public behavior. This approach will contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic strategies used in public health communication, offering insights for improving the effectiveness of health messaging in future crises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in health communication has gained traction as a tool for analyzing how language shapes relationships between healthcare providers, policymakers, and the public. SFL mood analysis, which focuses on understanding how mood types (declarative, imperative, interrogative) construct interpersonal meanings, has been widely used to study various health contexts. In particular, mood analysis helps reveal

how language choices influence behavior, attitudes, and relationships between speakers (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Existing research has employed SFL to analyze health communication in fields such as cancer care, health promotion, and patient-provider interactions. For example, Martin (1992) and Eggins (2004) explored the role of language in healthcare, showing how linguistic structures impact the effectiveness of medical discourse. Studies by Gunnarsson (2009) and Iedema (2007) have further demonstrated the significance of mood analysis in shaping patient-provider relationships and building trust in medical settings. These studies underscore the importance of understanding language's interpersonal function in improving communication outcomes.

In the context of health risk communication, SFL mood analysis has been used to examine how language is employed to inform, direct, and persuade the public. Fairclough (2003) and Lupton (1992) investigated how mood choices in health campaigns influence public perceptions of risk, while Wodak (2001) and Sarangi (2009) highlighted the role of mood in constructing health identities and social roles within health discourses. These findings indicate that the use of mood types, especially declarative and imperative, can affect how audiences interpret and respond to health messages.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, effective communication became a crucial tool for managing the public's understanding of risk and compliance with health directives. Several studies have analyzed the language of COVID-19 communication through the lens of SFL mood analysis. Zhang and Li (2020) examined COVID-19 news headlines, finding that declarative mood dominated the headlines to inform and alert the public, while imperative mood was used to direct public actions through health advisories. Similarly, Al-Masri and Al-Shboul (2021) analyzed social media posts and observed a shift from declarative to imperative moods as the pandemic evolved, reflecting a move from informative to directive communication. Despite these contributions, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific use of mood analysis in public health messages that address COVID-19 risk and vulnerability.

While studies have focused on broader COVID-19 communication strategies, little attention has been paid to how mood types are utilized in messages designed to mitigate risk and encourage behavior change. Khoja et al. (2020) and Khajeh et al. (2021) have highlighted the importance of mood in shaping crisis communication, but their work does not fully explore the implications of mood for managing public perception of risk and vulnerability during a pandemic.

This study aims to fill that gap by applying SFL mood analysis to 100 COVID-19 health messages, examining how mood types such as imperative and declarative function to instruct, inform, and guide public behavior. By analyzing these mood choices, the study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how COVID-19 public health communication leverages language to manage risk and foster compliance with health directives.

In conclusion, the literature demonstrates the value of SFL mood analysis in health communication, particularly in crisis contexts like the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there remains a need for deeper exploration of how mood types are used to address specific issues of risk and vulnerability in public health messages. This study will build on the existing research by focusing on the mood analysis of COVID-19 health messages, offering insights into how language shapes public response during a global health crisis.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze COVID-19 public health messages using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically focusing on mood analysis. The aim is to explore how language, particularly through mood types, is used to communicate health risks, provide instructions, and manage public vulnerability during the pandemic.

A total of 100 COVID-19 health messages were collected from various sources, including government websites, social media platforms, and public health announcements. These messages were selected based on their relevance to COVID-19 risk and vulnerability, focusing on preventive measures, vaccination information, and general health guidelines. The data set includes messages targeting a broad audience, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how public health authorities communicated with the public during different phases of the pandemic.

The analysis is grounded in Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), with a specific focus on mood analysis. Mood refers to the grammatical choices that indicate the nature of the interaction between the speaker (or message sender) and the listener (or message receiver). The two primary mood types examined in this study are: Imperative Mood (typically used for giving commands, instructions), or directives and Declarative Mood (used for making statements or providing factual information).

These mood types are central to understanding how public health messages function to direct behavior, inform the public, and build trust during the pandemic. Each message was categorized based on its mood type to examine the distribution and functional role of imperatives and declaratives in conveying public health directives.

Each message was first analyzed to identify its mood type whether declarative, imperative, or otherwise. This was done by examining the grammatical structure of the clauses in each message, focusing on the presence of subject-verb-object arrangements for declaratives and the absence of subjects in imperatives. After classifying the mood type, the function of each mood type in the context of the message was analyzed. For instance, imperative clauses were examined to determine how they communicated actions to be taken by the public (e.g., "Wash hands frequently"), while declarative clauses were analyzed for their role in conveying factual information (e.g., "COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective").

Once the mood types were categorized, the results were tabulated to observe the frequency of each mood type. This allowed for the quantification of how often imperative versus declarative moods were used in the COVID-19 messages. The findings were visualized in tables to highlight the predominance of specific mood types in different message categories (e.g., prevention, vaccination, symptom awareness).

Beyond the identification of mood types, the study also involved interpreting the broader context of these messages, considering how language choices reflect the urgency and seriousness of the pandemic. This interpretation aimed to understand the strategic use of language in constructing interpersonal relationships between public health authorities and the public.

Data Analysis

The COVID-19 health messages will be analyzed based on the mood analysis of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The classification of the messages (clauses) has been done according

to their semantic unity because SFL regards context and meaning very essential. The data analysis in tabulated form is presented as follows:

Prevention Messages

Date 1: Wash Hands Frequently with Soap and Water for 20 Seconds

Wash	Hands	Frequently	With soap and water	For 20 seconds
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: frequency	Adjunct: Manner	Adjunct: circumstantial

Date 2: Use Hand Sanitizers when Soap and Water aren't available

Use	Hand sanitizers	When soap and water aren't available
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 3: Wear Masks in Public to Reduce Transmission

Wear	Masks	In public	To reduce transmission
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: circumstantial	Adjunct: purpose

Data 4: Maintain 6 Feet Distance from Others

Maintain	6 feet	From others
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: circumstantial

Data 5: Avoid Touching Face, Especially Mouth, Nose and Eyes

Avoid	Touching face	Especially mouth, nose, and water
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: circumstantial

Data 6: Clean and Disinfect Frequently Touched Surfaces

Clean and disinfect	Frequently	Touched surfaces
Finite MOOD: imperative	Adjunct: frequency	Adjunct: condition

Data 7: Avoid Sharing Personal Items

Avoid	Sharing personal items
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 8: Stay Home if Feeling Unwell

Stay	Home	If feeling unwell
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 9: Cover Mouth and Nose with Tissue When Coughing/Sneezing

Cover	Mouth and nose	With tissue	When coughing/sneezing
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner	Adjunct: condition

Data 10: Avoid Crowded Areas and Gatherings

Avoid	Crowded areas and gatherings
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Vaccination Messages

Data 11: Get Vaccinated To Protect Yourself and Others

Get	Vaccinated	To protect yourself and others
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 12: COVID-19 Vaccines are safe and Effective

COVID-19 vaccines	Are	Safe and effective
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 13: Vaccination Reduces Severe Illness and Hospitalization

Vaccination	Reduces	Severe illness and hospitalization
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 14: Boosters Available for Continued Protection

Boosters	Available	For continued protection
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 15: Schedule Vaccination Appointments Today

Schedule	Vaccination appointments	Today
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: time

Data 16: Vaccines Approved for Emergency Use Worldwide

Vaccines	Approved	For emergency use	Worldwide
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement	Adjunct: location

Data 17: Protect Vulnerable Populations through Vaccination

Protect	Vulnerable populations	Through vaccination
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 18: Herd Immunity Achieved through Mass Vaccination

Hard immunity	Achieved	Through vaccination
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Adjunct: manner

Data 19: Vaccination Saves Lives

Vaccination	Saves	Lives
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 20: Consult Healthcare Professionals for Vaccination Guidance

Consult	Healthcare professionals	For vaccination guidance
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Symptom Awareness Messages

Data 21: Know COVID-19 Symptoms: Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath

Know	COVID-19 symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 22: Watch for Fatigue, Headache and Sore Throat

Watch	For fatigue, headache, and sore throat
Finite MOOD: imperative	Adjunct: purpose

Data 23: Loss of Taste/Smell May Indicate Infection

Loss of taste/smell	May	Indicate	Infection
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite: modal	Predicator RESIDUE	Adjunct: location

Data 24: Muscle/Body Aches and Diarrhea are Possible Symptoms

Muscle/body aches and diarrhea	Are	Possible symptoms
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 25: Severe Symptoms Require Immediate Medical Attention

Severe symptoms	require	Immediate medical attention
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 26: Difficulty Breathing, Chest Pain, or Confusion are Red Flags

Difficult breathing, chest pain, or confusion	Are	Red flags
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 27: Monitor Temperature Daily

Monitor	Temperature	Daily
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: frequency

Data 28: Report Symptoms to Healthcare Providers Promptly

Report	Symptoms	To healthcare providers	Promptly
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect object	Adjunct: manner

Data 29: Isolate if experiencing Symptoms

Isolate	If experiencing symptoms
Finite MOOD: imperative	Adjunct: condition

Data 30: Get Tested if Exposed or Showing Symptoms

Get	Tested	If exposed or showing symptoms
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Mental Health Message

Data 31: Prioritize Self-Care during Isolation

Prioritize	Self-care	During isolation
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: time

Data 32: Stay Connected with Loved Ones Virtually

Stay	Connected	With loved ones	virtually
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: associative	Adjunct: manner

Data 33: Manage Stress through Meditation and Exercise

Manage	Stress	Through meditation and exercise
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 34: Seek Professional Help for Anxiety/Depression

Seek	Professional help	For anxiety/depression
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 35: Maintain Routine for Mental Well-Being

Maintain	Routine	For mental well-being
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: time

Data 36: Share Feelings with Trusted Friends/Family

Share	Feelings	With friends/family
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 37: Practice Gratitude Daily

Practice	Gratitude	Daily
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: frequency

Data 38: Take Breaks from News and Social Media

Take	Breaks	From news and social media
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 39: Engage in Hobbies for Relaxation

Engage	In hobbies	For relaxation
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 40: You are not alone

You	Are	Not alone
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 41: Support is available

Support	Is	Available
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Community Messages

Data 42: Support Vulnerable Neighbors and Friends

Support	Vulnerable neighbors and friends
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 43: Donate to Local COVID-19 Relief Efforts

Donate	To local COVID-19 relief efforts
Finite MOOD: imperative	Adjunct: indirect object

Data 44: Volunteer for Community Initiatives

Volunteer	For community initiatives
Finite MOOD: imperative	Adjunct: purpose

Data 45: Respect Public Health Guidelines

Respect	Public health guidelines
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 46: Report Concerns to Local Authorities

Report	Concerns	To local authorities
Subject MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect object

Data 47: Participate in Contact Tracing

Participate	In contact tracing
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 48: Follow Local Health Advisories

Follow	Local health advisories
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 49: Protect Community by Wearing Masks

Protect	Community	By wearing masks
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 50: Share Accurate Information

Share	Accurate information
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 51: Collaborate to Combat COVID-19

Collaborate	To combat COVID-19
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Social Media Messages

Data 52: Share COVID-19 Updates from Credible Sources

Share	COVID-19 updates	From credible sources
Imperative MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: manner

Data 53: Use Hashtags #COVID19 #StaySafe

Use	Hashtags #COVID19 #StaySafe
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 54: Post Prevention Reminders

Post	Prevention reminders
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 55: Share Vaccination Experiences

Share	Vaccination experiences
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 56: Encourage others to get vaccinated

Encourage	Others	To get vaccinated
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: infinitive

Data 57: Offer support to those affected

Offer	Support	To those affected
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect object

Data 58: COVID-19 is real

COVID-19	Is	Real
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 59: We Should Debunk Misinformation

We	Should	Debunk	Misinformation
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite: modal	Predicator RESIDUE	Complement

Data 60: You share Personal COVID-19 Stories

You	Share	Personal COVID-19 stories
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 61: Utilize Instagram Reels/TikTok for Awareness

Utilize	Instagram Reels/TikTok	For awareness
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 62: Tag Local Health Organizations

Tag	Local health organisations
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

SMS/Text Messages

Data 63: Stay home if feeling unwell

Stay	Home	If feeling unwell
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 64: Get vaccinated today

Get	Vaccinated	Today
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: time

Data 65: We should wear masks in public

We	Should	Wear	Masks	In public
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite: modal	Predicator RESIDUE	Complement	Adjunct: locative

Data 66: Maintain 6ft Distance

Maintain	6ft distance
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 67: Report Symptoms to Healthcare Provider

Report	Symptoms	To healthcare provider
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect object

Data 68: Wash Hands Frequently

Wash	Hands	Frequently
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: frequency

Data 69: Avoid crowded areas

Avoid	Crowded areas
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 70: Cover mouth/nose when coughing

Cover	Mouth/nose	When coughing
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 71: "Schedule Vaccination Appointment"

Schedule	Vaccination appointment
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 72: Stay informed

Stay	Informed
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 73: Stay Safe

Stay	Safe
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Radio/TV Messages

Data 74: You need to stay safe

You	Need to	Stay	Safe
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Predicator RESIDUE	Complement

Data 75: COVID-19 updates, every hour

COVID-19 updates	Every hour
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 76: Vaccination centers near you

Vaccination centers	Near you
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 77: Prevention tips, daily

Prevention tips	Daily
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 78: Symptoms to watch for

Symptoms	To watch for
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 79: Mental Health support available

Mental health support	Available
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 80: Safeguard Community Resources

Safeguard	Community resources
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 81: Consult Local Health Advisories

Consult	Local health advisories
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 82: Interviews with Health Experts

Interviews	With health experts
Subject MOOD: declarative	Complement

Data 83: Stay tuned for COVID-19 news

Stay tuned	For COVID-19 news
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 84: This is Handwashing Technique

This	Is	Handwashing technique
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 85: Get Vaccinated", Public Service Announcements

Get vaccinated	Public service announcements
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 86: We are in this together

We	Are	In this together
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Adjunct: manner

Data 87: Provide Information for Pregnant Women

Provide	Information	For pregnant women
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 88: Let's stop the spread

Let's stop	The spread
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 89: Express Gratitude to Frontline Workers

Express	Gratitude	To healthcare workers
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect object

Data 90: Direct Viewers to Reliable Information Sources

Direct	Viewers	To reliable information sources
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: indirect

Newspapers Messages

Data 91: Nigeria recorded its first COVID-19 Case

Nigeria	Recorded	Its first COVID-19 case
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Complement

Data 92: Stay home if you have Symptoms

Stay	Home	If you have symptoms
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 93: Maintain Social Distancing to prevent spread

Maintain	Social distancing	To prevent spread
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: purpose

Data 94: Use Hand Sanitizers When Soap and Water and Water Not Available

Use	Hand sanitizers	When soap and water not available
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement	Adjunct: condition

Data 95: Follow Government Guidelines and Directives

Follow	Government guidelines and directives
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data 96: You Cough/Sneeze into Your Elbow

You	Coup/sneeze	Into your elbow
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite	Adjunct: manner

Data 97: COVID-19 is not yet over

COVID-19	Is	Not yet over
Subject MOOD: declarative	finite	Complement

Data 98: The Pandemic has affected Thousands

The disease	Has	Affected	Thousands
Subject MOOD: declarative	Finite: Modal	Predicator RESIDUE	Complement

Data 99: People should celebrate responsibly

People	Should	Celebrate	Responsibly
Subject MOOD: Declarative	Finite: Modal	Predicator RESIDUE	Adjunct: Manner

Data 100: Call this hotline

Call	This hotline
Finite MOOD: imperative	Complement

Data Summary

Here, the data will be summarized according to the functions of the clauses in the below table.

Sentences	Frequency	Percentage
Declarative	30	30%
Imperative	70	70%
Interrogative	0	0%
Exclamative	0	0%

Discussion

The analysis of 100 COVID-19 health messages demonstrates a clear preference for the imperative mood, constituting 70% of the messages, while declarative mood accounted for the remaining 30%. This outcome aligns with the goal of public health authorities to issue unambiguous, action-oriented directives during a global crisis. The frequent use of imperative mood underlines the urgency in instructing the public on necessary health behaviors, such as "Wear masks in public" and "Wash hands frequently." These commands were instrumental in encouraging public compliance with measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

Imperative mood, which facilitates direct and unambiguous communication, is critical during public health emergencies. It ensures that essential actions are clearly communicated, leaving minimal room for misinterpretation. This dominance of imperatives reflects the public health sector's need to command attention and dictate behaviors critical to public safety.

In contrast, the declarative mood, observed in 30% of the messages, played a pivotal role in disseminating essential information and fostering public trust. Phrases like "COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective" provided reassurance and addressed public concerns. This mood type aimed to inform and persuade the public rather than direct them, offering the necessary factual foundation to justify the prescribed health behaviors.

These findings are consistent with previous studies by Al-Masri and Al-Shboul (2021), who observed a shift in COVID-19 social media posts from declarative to imperative mood as the pandemic progressed. This shift, as highlighted by Zhang and Li (2020), emphasizes how the pandemic's evolving nature required a balance between informing the public and commanding immediate actions.

Conclusion

This study has employed Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) mood analysis to examine the use of language in COVID-19 public health messages, focusing specifically on how different mood types function to convey risk and vulnerability. The analysis of 100 health messages

revealed a clear predominance of the imperative mood, which accounted for 70% of the messages. This finding underscores the urgent need for direct, actionable communication from health authorities during the pandemic, reflecting a strategic use of language to command compliance with health directives.

Conversely, the presence of the declarative mood in the remaining 30% of messages served to provide crucial information and reassurance, helping to build public trust and understanding of the situation. The balance between imperative and declarative moods highlights the dual role of public health communication: to direct behavior and to inform the public.

The study's findings contribute valuable insights into how language shapes public health messaging, particularly during crises, and demonstrate the effectiveness of mood analysis as a tool for understanding the interpersonal dynamics of health communication. By revealing how health messages are constructed and how they influence public perception and behavior, this research offers a framework for improving future public health communication strategies.

Implications

This study supports the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly its application to mood analysis in public health communication. The predominance of imperative mood in health messages reinforces the interpersonal metafunction of language, demonstrating its role in shaping behavior through authority and control. By comparing this to previous research, such as that of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), this study expands the understanding of how mood types can influence public response in health crises, highlighting the dual roles of instruction and reassurance.

For public health practitioners, this study highlights the importance of using clear, direct commands (imperatives) to ensure compliance during health emergencies. The success of these commands in directing public behavior suggests that future health campaigns should prioritize simplicity and directness in their messaging, particularly when rapid public action is required. Declarative statements, on the other hand, should continue to serve as a tool for educating the public and building trust, especially when misinformation is prevalent.

This study offers valuable insights for policymakers on the linguistic strategies that should be embedded in public health campaigns. Policies related to public health communication should ensure that messaging is designed to meet the dual objectives of directing public behavior and fostering public trust. Evidence-based guidelines on the use of imperative and declarative moods can improve the clarity and effectiveness of future health directives, particularly during crises. This study also underscores the need for communication policies to be adaptable, allowing for shifts between informing and directing the public depending on the crisis stage.

REFERENCES

Al-Masri, M., & Al-Shboul, Y. (2021). Mood analysis of COVID-19 social media posts: A systemic functional linguistics approach. Journal of Language and Linguistics, 20(3), 638–653.

Christie, F. (2002). Classroom discourse analysis. Continuum.

Christie, F., & Martin, J. R. (2007). Genre and institutions: Social processes in the workplace and school. Continuum.

Eggins, S. (2004). An introduction to systemic functional linguistics. Continuum.

Eggins, S. (2005). Systemic functional linguistics and discourse analysis. In R. Wodak & P. Chilton (Eds.), A new agenda in (critical) discourse analysis (pp. 21–40). John Benjamins.

Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and social change. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (2003). Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research. Routledge.

Gunnarsson, B. (2005). Professional discourse in the workplace. Peter Lang.

Gunnarsson, B. (2009). Professional discourse. Continuum.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). Language as social semiotic. Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). An introduction to functional grammar. Arnold.

Iedema, R. (2003). Multimodality, resemiotization, and the subject. Semiotica, 144(1/4), 1–40.

Iedema, R. (2007). Communicating health. Palgrave Macmillan.

Khajeh, E., et al. (2021). Mood analysis of COVID-19 social media posts. Journal of Health Communication.

Khoja, S. A., et al. (2020). Linguistic analysis of COVID-19 news headlines. Journal of Language and Communication.

Lee, S., et al. (2020). Discourse analysis of COVID-19 public health announcements. Journal of Public Health.

Liu, X., et al. (2020). Mood and modality in COVID-19 health communication. Journal of Medical Communication.

Lupton, D. (1992). Discourse analysis and health promotion. Health Education Research, 7(2), 233–244.

Lupton, D. (2003). Medicine as culture. Sage.

Martin, J. R. (1992). English text: System and structure. John Benjamins.

Myers, G. (2003). Discourse studies of health communication. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 23, 105–124.

Myers, G. (2005). Applied linguistics and health communication. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 25, 105–124.

Nordquist, R. (2019, February 11). Declarative and imperative sentences. ThoughtCo.

Rahman, M. M., et al. (2020). Linguistic features of COVID-19 pandemic communication. Journal of Communication in Healthcare.

Sarangi, S. (2005). The language of healthcare. Palgrave Macmillan.

Sarangi, S. (2009). Discourse and communication in healthcare. Peter Lang.

Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about – A summary of its history, important concepts, and its developments. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), Methods of critical discourse analysis (pp. 1–13). Sage.

Wodak, R. (2005). Discourse and identity. In R. Wodak & P. Chilton (Eds.), A new agenda in (critical) discourse analysis (pp. 1–20). John Benjamins.

Zhang, Y., & Li, X. (2020). Mood analysis of COVID-19 news headlines: A systemic functional linguistics perspective. Discourse, Context & Media, 35, 100431.