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The Representations of Informative Function in Handling Food Service at Restaurant

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**"CAPACITY EMPOWERMENT BASED
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The Representations of Informative Function in Handling Food Service at Restaurant

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Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Informative Function, Language Functions, Tourism.

Abstract: Tourism is the worldwide fast-growing industry which directly affects various fields of life. Tourism study does not stand by itself, but is supported by other social sciences, specifically language education. This paper, based on a research in language functions, aimed to identify the use of informative functions in handling food service at the restaurant. Categorized as a study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this paper described language variations to provide preliminary analysis of needs in tourism and hospitality context. The research methods were qualitative, using observation and recording technique. The data were in the form of transcribed utterances between guests and waiters at the restaurant. The result of the analysis showed that informative functions were represented through micro functions, namely 'asking', 'explaining', 'stating', and 'confirming'.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the benefits of tourism is to expand employment and improve living standards of local people. The rapid development of the hospitality industry can directly affect language needs (Lin, Wu, and Huang, 2013). As tourism growth in line with hospitality industries, the ability to speak foreign languages, especially English, is increasingly becoming a necessity and the main requirement for achieving the desired profession. To practitioners involved in the industry, especially those who have direct contact with guests, such as front office staff and waiters at restaurants, English is very important as a media for revealing product knowledge and services. Therefore, those who work in the tourism sector must improve communication skills, as well as fluency in language (Zahedpisheh, et al. 2017). The sparks of language research in tourism have attracted attention due to high mobility of international tourists in the non-English speaking countries. English, which is the most widely used language as a medium of interaction, has a major role in delivering quality of services. Employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry are fully aware of the importance of good English competence to carry out their roles.

Given the importance of language support in the development of tourism, this article highlights the use of language functions used in restaurant service.

Although language learning currently tends to be communicative, linguistic knowledge is still needed to improve understanding of the target language (Lestari, 2013). Discussing the function of language is equal to discussing language use because the language will not be meaningful if it is not used or functioned (Luardini, 2009). Language function refers to the use of language by speaking, writing, reading, and listening to achieve communication goals (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 17). The word 'function' can be seen as the equivalent of the word 'use' so that the function of language cannot be separated from the situational and cultural context behind the language.

'Functions' from a pragmatic point of view tend to focus more on the purpose of the speaker than the effect on the listener (Cook, 1994). Function involves two things: the purpose of the language in general – referred to as a macro function, and the action carried out by speech specifically – referred to as a micro function (Cook, 1994). For example, 'explaining' is included in the micro function, while 'informative' is categorized as a macro function. The function of language is basically the goal achieved by language, for example stating, asking, responding, greeting, saying farewell words, and so on (Brown, 2007: 245).

Leech (1974: 47-50) divides the communicative functions of language into five, such as: 1) Informational functions to convey information; 2)

Expressive functions to express the feelings and attitudes of speakers; 3) Directive functions are used to influence the behavior and attitudes of others; 4) Aesthetic functions, the use of language for the sake of the work itself without hidden intentions, for example in poetry; 5) Phatic function, oriented to means of communication with the aim of keeping the lines of communication open and to maintain good relations in society. Four of the five language functions proposed by Leech (1974) are very suitable to be used as an analytical knife to identify the representation of language functions in the field of food service, namely informational, directive, expressive, and phatic functions, while an aesthetic function (which tends to be poetic) may not be suitable to be applied in the language variation in restaurants which are mostly informative.

Meanwhile, Halliday (1973: 22-26) divided language functions into seven categories described as follows (1973: 22-26): An instrumental function is the function of language to manipulate the environment, and to create certain situations or events; 2) Regulatory functions, namely the function of language in controlling circumstances or events; 3) Representational functions, namely the function of language to make statements, convey facts and knowledge, explain or bring back reality as people see it; 4) Interactional function, which is a language function that refers to its function as an interacting tool; 5) Personal function, which is a language function that implies the meaning that language is a tool to identify oneself; 6) Heuristic function, which is used to obtain knowledge; and 7) Imaginative functions, which can be used to imagine or create ideas. The most appropriate with the objective of this research is the fourth function, namely interactional functions that mainly aim to interact. This function requires a speaker to understand cultural values including politeness that applies in certain language.

Previously, Bühler (1965) argued that language could fulfill three functions: i.e. representational functions, conative functions, and expressive functions. 1) Representational functions are carried out by signs of language, e.g. text, utterances, sentences, etc.; 2) The conative function will be fulfilled when the text asks the reader or listener to do something, mentally, emotionally or physically, and influences their behavior, and 3) Expressive function will be achieved when the text is able to express the inner state of the writer or speaker. Whereas Jacobson (1960) divided language functions into six, namely: 1) Emotive function, used in human feelings as a tool to express themselves; 2) Conative function, used to motivate others to behave or do something; 3) Referential function, used to discuss a problem with a particular topic; 4) Poetic function, used to convey a specific message or message; 5) Phatic function, used to greet each other simply to make contact with others; and 6) Metalingual functions, used to discuss language problems with certain language.

The four theories of language function were then reformulated in Lestari (2017) which was adjusted to the use of language in the restaurant, called the food service, which was described as follows: 1) Informative function is used to exchange information represented in the function 'explain', 'state' , and 'ask'; 2) The directive 'ordering' function is refined to 'invite' or 'ask'; 3) The interactive function is identical with the effort to create as well as to maintain harmonious and communicative interactions between participants, which is represented in the function of 'greeting', and "chit-chatting'. 4) Indicative functions are used as markers in a conversation, which are realized in the function of 'thanking' and 'apologizing'; 5) Persuasive functions are used when offering and providing alternatives to guests with the aim of selling restaurant products; and 6) Permissive functions to create comfort and smoothness in a speech event. The use of non-standard English that remains acceptable, the use of intonation, and the use of passive forms is the representation of permissive functions.

The taxonomy in table 1 shows that the extended study of language functions is getting more interesting to discuss, especially if it is associated with studies outside the language, such as tourism and hospitality. In food service, the language function mostly used is the informative function, that is, when the waiter provides information to guests about the menu or facilities available. Therefore, the problem raised in this study is: how is the function of informative language represented in the expressions of language used in restaurants? The findings in this study can be used as a needs analysis and contribute to the preparation of ESP learning materials, especially in the field of tourism and hospitality.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out at Mamasan Restaurant, located on Jalan Kerobokan No 135, Kuta-Badung. Qualitative data were in the forms of recorded conversations between waitresses and guests, and also the results of interviews of 25 waiters and waitresses. The data were secondary as taken

from a dissertation on language functions (Lestari, 2017). In qualitative research, the researcher can be the main instrument (Creswell, 2010). The instruments used were a recorder, observation sheet, and a semi-structured interview sheet, in addition to the researcher herself. The findings were then presented informally using narrative descriptions. The analysis method used is the taxonomy of language functions.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Language Functions (1)

Bühler (1965)	Jacobson (1960)	Lestari (2017)
Representational Conative Expressive	Referential Conative Phatic Emotive Poetic Metalingual	Informative Directive Interactive Indicative - - - Persuasive Permissive

Table 2: Taxonomy of Language Functions (2)

Leech (1974)	Halliday (1973)
Informational Directive Phatic Expressive Aesthetic	Representational Instrumental Interactional Personal Imaginative Regulatory Heuristic

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The verbal transcription indicated that informative function tends to be used by waiters when explaining menu to guests at the restaurant. This informative function is represented in a number of micro functions, including 'explaining', 'asking', and 'confirming'. The following is a more detailed description of the informative function and its representations.

3.1 'Explaining' Function

Waitress: Good evening, ma'am, sir. Have you been here before?
Guest: No, it's our first time.
Waitress: So, we will explain the Mamasan concept, please. Our concept here is family dining, like a family self. So, we put the food in the middle, you can share between you like the starter or the main course. But for the entrée, start from the Grilled Scallops until the Chicken Betel Leaf is come one pieces, and the rest you can share in the middle.

And this is good come with the side dishes like the Naan or some rice. And ... are you OK with the spicy or you have any allergy, please?

Conversation above, is the 1st experiment. Mamasan Restaurant is unique in that it serves a large portion of food so that it can be enjoyed together. To first-time visitors, the waitress is obliged to explain this concept. As shown in the 1st data, waitress used the interrogative "Have you been here before?" to find out whether or not the guest has ever visited the restaurant. The purpose of this question was to determine if the waitress needed to explain the concept of the restaurant, because the unique concept must be explained to each guest who first came to the restaurant. This is to avoid mistakes in ordering food that might lead to problems or complaints from guests.

The waitress's question was responded by the guest, indicating that they were first-time guests. Knowing this, she immediately decided to give an explanation about the restaurant concept, by starting with a statement "Our concept here is family dining". The waitress then explained at length what is meant by the concept of family dining, i.e. dishes were served in large portions so that they could be shared in group. The waitress also informed that there were several menus which were served in small portions. When the guest asked a second time, the waitress immediately explained and described the name of the food in question complete with the accompanying dish. Thus, in a speech, the waitress used the function 'explaining' together with 'describing'.

Unlike the previous interrogative, the following questions "Do you have any food allergy?" And "Do you have any problem with spicy?" gave clues on what foods might be recommended to guests or, on the contrary, should be avoided. This certainly aimed to prevent the emergence of complaints or unwanted problems. Thus, the function 'asking' is often a trigger for statements, explanations, as well as determining the next response. For example, it is necessary to explain the concept of a restaurant, as shown in the previous conversation. This conclusion is reinforced by the following data:

Guest: What's different for entrée and starter?
Waitress: So entrée are mostly smaller like individual portion, and starter are bigger...like salad. You can check all in the menu.
Guest: Great. And what is Pork Belly?
Waitress: Pork Belly is a type of cube pork belly, it comes with the tamarind sauce and the other side is dipping sauce, the Naan pan sauce. It's a bigger portion.

Conversation above, is the 2nd experiment. In data above, guests asked about Pork Belly, one of the top

dishes in the restaurant. This question was then answered by the waitress with a description of the dish. This, again, confirmed the previous conclusion that in the function of 'asking' related also the function 'explaining' or 'describing'.

Waitress: Do you have any food allergy?
Guest: Actually, I'm allergic to shell fish.
Waitress: I see. Do you have any problem with spicy? Guest : Not too spicy, maybe.
Waitress: Alright. Because mostly our food here is spicy, so I'm gonna tell you if you order for something that is really spicy. Please have a look first, let me know if you are ready to order.

Conversation above, is the 3rd experiment. Different from the previous one, the interrogative sentence used by waitress in the data (3) serves to find out whether guests have allergies to certain types of food, so they can avoid food poisoning or other unwanted problems. Every waiter / waitress at Mamasan Restaurant had gone through training on the menu and the ingredients contained in it. Therefore, they must always ask about food allergy to each guest so they can help when explaining and providing food recommendations. In addition to asking about food allergies, the waiter / waitress also has to make sure that guests do not have a problem with spicy taste because the dishes in the restaurant tend to be spicy, especially for Europeans.

When recommending food and drinks to guests, of course the waiter must provide an explanation of these products. For example, a brief description of the taste of food (flavor), how to make it (method of cooking), or ingredients (ingredients) contained in it. In addition to explaining the menu, the waiter also needs to ask whether guests have allergies to a type of food and whether guests like the spicy taste or not. The 'explaining' and 'asking' functions are the micro functions of the informative.

3.2   'Confirming'

When a guest orders food in a restaurant, of course he needs some information related to the food he will order. Questions that arise in the food ordering process aim to ensure the information needed so that guests avoid dissatisfaction with the food and drinks ordered. The following data contained the 'confirming' function, which was closely related to other informative functions, namely 'asking', and 'explaining' function.

Waitress: What kind of starter would you like, madam?
Guest: I'll have this Snapper umplings, this one... and then for the salad I can take the Salmon Salad,... is it nice?

Waitress: Yes, but this is spicy. Are you ok for spicy?
Guest: It's ok, no problem. ... and for the main, I can take this Masaman Curry Chicken, and the side crispy thing I take the Chinese Style Pork Belly, and then for the side I take one Jasmine Rice and one stir fried Asian Grill. That's it.
Waitress : I'll inform you, madam. Are you ok with the fat? Because the Pork Belly here is come with the fat.

Conversation above, is the 4th experiment. In data above, the waitress used the function 'asking' and 'explaining' in response to the 'ordering' function used by guests. After deciding which food, he wanted to order, the guest again confirmed that the food would taste delicious by saying "Is it nice?". The waitress knew that the food was one of the foods with a spicy taste then tried to inform the guest and ensured that the guest would not have a problem with it. The interrogative form "Are you OK for spicy" in this case was crucial to avoid guest complaints if the food did not match their taste.

The same thing was done by the waitress when guests ordered Pork Belly which contained high fat. The waitress again ensured that guests would not have problems with fatty foods by asking "Are you OK with the fat?" which is then followed by a brief description of the food ordered.

Waiter: What would you like to drink, madam?
Female Guest: I think I'll have Two Islands, please.
Waiter: Two Islands, by the glass?
Female Guest: Yes.
Male Guest: Do you want it by the glass? Just one glass?
Female Guest: Yes. One glass... Two Islands, please.
Male Guest: Can I have Ginger Ale, please?
Waiter: Ginger Ale with ice, sir?
Male Guest: Uhm.. Yes... Oh .. No!... No ice, please.
Waiter: Let me repeat your order, one glass of Two Islands and one Ginger Ale without ice.
Male Guest: Yes. Thank you.
Waiter: Thank you.

Conversation above, is the 5th experiment. Data above, also showed the use of informative functions represented in the function of 'asking' and 'confirming' when ordering drinks. Hearing guests order Two Islands drinks, the waiter immediately asked if guests wanted to order one glass or one bottle of the drink. Not only waiters, but also the male guest ensured if the female guest intended to order only one drink. When male guest ordered drinks, the waiter asked if the guest wanted ice in the drink. All waiter's questions when taking food and beverage orders were

aimed to ensure orders as desired by guests in order to avoid complaints. The guest orders were then repeated for this purpose using the phrase "Let me repeat your order ...".

Female Guest: How about the snapper, is it fillet? No bones?

Waiter: Yes.

Female Guest: OK, I'll have the Snapper. One fillet Snapper, please.

Male Guest: Uhm.. Could we order the Grilled Vegetable Salad, please? How long will it take?

Waiter: More or less may be five minutes.

Male Guest: OK thank you.

Conversation above, is the 6th experiment. In data above, the function 'asking' in the phrase "Is it fillet? No bones?" was used by female guest before ordering food. This aimed to ensure that the fish menu ordered according to the tastes of guests. After confirming this, the guest immediately decided the choice of food. While male guest used the function 'asking' in the phrase "Could we order ...?". The guest asked how long it would take to prepare the food ordered in the sentence "How long will it take?"

Based on the description above it can be said that the function 'explaining' is often a response to the function 'asking'. The use of the 'asking' function is not only intended to request information, but can also be to 'offer' something or 'persuade' the listener to try or do something, or also to 'confirm' information previously obtained. The function 'asking' can also be used to give choices to the listener as shown in the following data.

Waitress: We have Indonesian food in our buffet. If you need anything else, we will prepare for you.

Guest: Yes, can I have some eggs, please?

Waitress: Yes, of course. Please looking our buffet. Maybe you want to take another food, and I'll prepare for your eggs. What would you like to have for your eggs, sir?

Guest: Omelette, please.

Waitress: One omelette... Mix, Cheese, or Mushroom omelette? What would you like to have?

Guest: Uhm... Mix Omelette.

Waitress: Mix Omelette, served with some bacon or sausages?

Guest: uhm... bacon, please.

Conversation above, is the 7th experiment. Data above, occurred at breakfast, when the guest wanted an egg dish that was not available at the buffet table so it had to be prepared specifically on request. The waitress must obtain detailed information about the type of dish desired, so she asked some questions that are actually an option. In general, there are two types of breakfast provided for hotel guests, namely

Continental Breakfast (consisting of cereals, bread, juice, tea / coffee) and American Breakfast (consisting of hot dishes namely egg dishes, toast, juice and tea / coffee). Egg dishes can be served with a variety of choices, such as sunny side up, turn over, omelette, scrambled, poached, soft boiled and hard boiled. When guests order omelette, the waitress had to ask again what filler material was desired because the restaurant provides various choices such as mix, cheese, and Mushroom. Mix Omelette was still divided into bacon and sausages. Thus, the function of 'asking' can also be used to inform the choices available to guests so that they can more freely determine choices when ordering food.

The following data strengthened the function of 'asking' which was used to give consideration about menus in restaurants.

From the data, occurred at breakfast, when the guest wanted an egg dish that was not available at the buffet table so it had to be prepared specifically on request. The waitress must obtain detailed information about the type of dish desired, so she asked some questions that are actually an option. In general, there are two types of breakfast provided for hotel guests, namely Continental Breakfast (consisting of cereals, bread, juice, tea / coffee) and American Breakfast (consisting of hot dishes namely egg dishes, toast, juice and tea / coffee). Egg dishes can be served with a variety of choices, such as sunny side up, turn over, omelette, scrambled, poached, soft boiled and hard boiled. When guests order omelette, the waitress had to ask again what filler material was desired because the restaurant provides various choices such as mix, cheese, and Mushroom. Mix Omelette was still divided into bacon and sausages. Thus, the function of 'asking' can also be used to inform the choices available to guests so that they can more freely determine choices when ordering food.

The following data strengthened the function of 'asking' which was used to give consideration about menus in restaurants.

Waitress: Excuse me, would you like to order now, sir?

Guest: Yes, please. maybe I'll try the steak... Tell me, is the beef imported?

Waitress: yes, sir. Our steak is imported from Australia.

Guest: Well, I guess I want to try the Rib eye steak. How big is it?

Waitress: It's about 200 grams, sir. But I need to inform you that the rib eye steak is greasy and fatty because it contains a lot of fat.

Guest: Oh really? Well. how about the sirloin steak?

Waitress: The sirloin is cut from the back part which is less tender, sir.

Guest: So, which one do you recommend?

Waitress: Well, I suggest you try our tenderloin steak. It's the most tender part of the beef, and not too fatty.

Guest: alright, maybe I'll have that, please.

Waitress: Of course, sir. How would you like it done, rare, medium, or well done?

Guest: Medium well, please.

Waitress: And what would you like to come with it? baked potatoes or french fries?

Guest: Baked potatoes, please.

Conversation above, is the 8th experiment. Data above, was a conversation about ordering steak, when the guest asked a few questions that the waitress immediately responded to. Here, it was clearly seen the use of informative functions that were full of information from waitresses to guests. The implicit information included steak meat imported from Australia so of course the quality of meat was better than local meat. Waitress also gave a brief explanation about the parts of beef with the aim of helping guests in choosing the type of steak they want.

The questions posed by the waitress could also function as a 'bait' to sell products with more leverage. For example, in a sentence when a waitress offers vegetables, "And what would you like to come with it? baked potatoes or French fries? ", the guest who initially did not intend to order finally agreed and chose baked potatoes as a complement to the dish. Based on the description above, it can be said that the 'confirming' function is closely attached to the function of 'explaining' and 'asking' as an informative function. The 'confirming' function is also used when ordering food as shown in the data below.

Waitress: What kind of starter would you like, madam?

Guest: I'll have this Snapper Dumplings, this one... and then for the salad I can take the Salmon Salad, is it nice?

Waitress: Yes, but this is spicy. Are you OK for spicy?

Guest: It's ok, no problem. ... and for the main, I can take this Masaman Curry Chicken, and the side crispy thing I take the Chinese Style Pork Belly, and then for the side I take one Jasmine Rice and one stir fried Asian Grill. That's it.

Waitress: I'll just inform you, madam. Are you ok with the fat? Because the Pork Belly here is come with the fat.

Guest: It's ok. I want to try it.

Waitress: May I repeat for your order? For the starter it's a Snapper Dumplings, and a Salmon Salad, for the main course it's a Masaman Curry and the Chinese Style Pork Belly, and a Jasmine Rice.

Guest: Ok. Is that enough for two people?

Waitress: Yes, it's enough for two people.

Guest: Alright.

Conversation above, is the 9th experiment. In data above, the function of 'confirming' was more widely used by waitresses to ask whether or not guests have problems with spicy and fatty foods. The 'confirming' function was also used by the guest who once again ask whether the portion of food ordered is enough for two people. Later, the waitress repeated all food orders by saying "May I repeat your order?" This question-like sentence form actually aimed to ensure and check that there were no orders left behind or wrong. Based on the data analysis above, it could be said that the 'confirming' function was used to confirm the message so that errors do not occur. This function also aimed to prevent potential problems or complaints.

Data below presented how the waitress explained the menu and persuaded the guests to place more orders at the same time.

Waitress: Excuse me, Ma'am. Are you ready to order?

Guest: I don't know ... I cannot decide, so do you have recommendation?

Waitress: Certainly, Ma'am.... The normally for the entrée and the starter you can keep two different things from the starter, I recommend you for the Scallops and then Pork Belly so you can share together with your friends, and for the main course you can keep two different things from the main course, I recommend you for the Pork Vindaloo, and then the Crispy Whole Fish, that's very popular food in our restaurant and very tasty, Madam.

Guest: The Crispy Whole Fish, does it come in big portion?

Waitress: Ehm.... that's... ehm.... that's only five hundred grams of the Snapper, deep fried of a Snapper with chilly jam sauce, and the taste is a bit spicy, sweet and spicy.

Guest: Oh, the fish itself is already spicy?

Waitress: Yes, Madam.

Guest: And is it big? No, it's not too big?

Waitress: No, not too big.

Guest: We can share?

Waitress: Because it comes with the bones, so I think the meat is not too much.

Conversation above, is the 10th experiment. The waitress in data above, at first used the informative function in explaining portions of Pork Belly and the scallops. Later, she tried to make the guest order something more, such as the pork vindaloo and crispy whole fish, using the persuasive function. The aim was to offer or persuade the guest. This showed that informative function was closely related to persuasive function when dealing with order taking at the restaurant.

4 CONCLUSION

The informative function in this study, similar to the informational function (Leech, 1974), has the function to exchange information. The function of this language is represented in the function of 'explaining', 'stating', and 'asking'. The function 'stating' aims to convey the intention or desire of the speaker which is generally represented in declarative form, as in the sentence "I think I'll have Two Islands, please". However, the function of 'stating' can also be represented in the form of interrogations, for example "Can I have Ginger Ale, please?" The interrogative form "Can I ...", might also be used to express the wishes of the speaker.

The 1st experiment shows that the waitress's question was responded by the guest, indicating that they were first-time guests. Knowing this, she immediately decided to give an explanation about the restaurant concept, by starting with a statement "Our concept here is family dining". Meanwhile, the 2nd experiment shows that guests asked about Pork Belly, one of the top dishes in the restaurant. This question was then answered by the waitress with a description of the dish. This, again, confirmed the previous conclusion that in the function of 'asking' related also the function 'explaining' or 'describing'.

The 4th to the 10th experiment show that Waitress also gave a brief explanation about the parts of beef with the aim of helping guests in choosing the type of steak they want. It can be said that the 'confirming' function is closely attached to the function of 'explaining' and 'asking' as an informative function.

The function 'asking' can be used to inform choices available so that guests can more freely decide when ordering food. For example, "What would you like for the vegetables? We have salad and steamed vegetables." This kind of question can lead to further products selling. The function of 'confirming' also aims to avoid errors or the emergence of problems later, such as errors in recording food orders. Therefore, restaurant staff must always repeat or reconfirm every message received from guests.

Based on the data discussed above, it can be seen that the interaction takes place in two directions, namely the guest uses the 'asking' function while the waitress uses the 'explaining' and 'confirming' functions, both of which fall into the category of informative functions. Thus, it is clear that the informative function is represented in the function of 'asking,' explaining ', and 'confirming' at restaurant service.

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