



PAPER – OPEN ACCESS

## “What is the function of a call?” : A Classroom Discourse Analysis in Pre-School at Kota Langsa

Author : Siska Eka Syafitri et al.  
DOI : 10.32734/lwsa.v3i4.1146  
Electronic ISSN : 2654-7066  
Print ISSN : 2654-7058

*Volume 3 Issue 4 – 2020 TALENTA Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)*



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).  
Published under licence by TALENTA Publisher, Universitas Sumatera Utara



## “What is the function of a call?” : A Classroom Discourse Analysis in Pre-School at Kota Langsa

Siska Eka Syafitri<sup>a</sup>, T. Silvana Sinar<sup>b</sup>, Mulyadi<sup>c</sup>, Masdiana Lubis<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Students of Linguistic Doctoral Program in Universitas Sumatera Utara, <sup>b</sup>Corresponding Author, Professor of Linguistic, and the Head of English Department in Universitas Sumatera Utara, <sup>c</sup>The Secretary of Linguistic Doctoral Program in Universitas Sumatera Utara, <sup>d</sup>The Lecturer in Universitas Sumatera Utara

siskaekasyafitri@students.usu.ac.id, tengkusilvana@usu.ac.id  
mulyadi.usu@gmail.com, masdianalbs26@gmail.com

### Abstract

Children in pre-school are in the golden age who need to practice their language to each participant in this area. Usually, the language used both by the children even the teachers is unformal. It is because the children are in the stage of learning how to interact with others, therefore, the language sometimes is used ungrammatically. Then the data is compiled from the field observation in pre-school at *Kota Langsa* to find out the linguistic phenomenon in the kinds of school. By using the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) analysis by Halliday, it is found that there is some minor clause used in the conversation among the children and the students. The minor clause in the theory is called “vocative” which is usually known as “calls”. There are twenty-eight (28) “calls” used in the instructional process at the pre-school. Some “calls” is form as a word but the other is form as a kind of vocalizations. The “calls”, however, have a different usage depending on the speakers and the addressee. It is different when the calls are used as the students talk to their friends when the calls are used by the teachers to the students, and vice versa. This kind of minor clause is interesting to be explored since there are only limited researches observed about this issue. Though, it can enrich the study of language especially for the function of a call (vocative).

*Keywords: Pre-School; SFL; Minor Clause; Vocative (Call)*

### 1. Introduction

Children in four-five-year-old is in the stage of having many interactions to the environment including their parents at home and teachers in the unformal school. It is proved that the children have so many answers for the question given by others in their conversation [1]. That is why they have so many choices of elements to speak and then interact. What is usually saying by the children is a single element. The element, however, becomes interesting to discuss since they have the interpersonal ability to exchange their information to the participant in the speaking. The children are learning when they are talking to others and acquire something from the adults insisting on the social routines [2]. They can practice something from the conversation with adult even create new utterances when communicate with others as a development of their idea.

In classroom communication especially in the pre-school, the children are in the step of practicing their ability to communicate with others rather than having a score of academic studies. In the language perspective, the children are allowed to create their own narrative to telling others [3]. It is very seldom that the teacher gives the children a topic then structure to be followed in encouraging the children to speak or interact in pre-school. What the teachers do in pre-school usually is give their students a chance to speak and perform to others. It is one of the essential points in teaching the children in pre-school. By seeing using this reason, we can see that the program of “show and tell” in pre-school is one of the important sessions in the class. The object of what is spoken is less important than developing the children’s ability to speak [4].

The children in speaking with others in the classroom usually using vocatives to calls the others when speaking. The calls which the children used sometimes are general and specific. Not only the kinds of formal calls but also the students sometimes used the unformal one to catch the attention of the addressee. In the research of the calls in pre-school at Kota Langsa, the writer found that there are so many calls (vocatives) are used by the participant in the class especially the children. The calls are used when the children talk to their friend or teachers and vice versa. This kind of minor clause is very interesting to be studied since the researches about vocative as a minor clause in pre-school are still limited. The minor clauses analysis in the conversation in the class has dominated much research than the minor clause though the minor clause also as a representation of the speaker’s interpersonal meanings.

## 2. Literature Review

The classroom is one of the media used by the teachers to conduct a heavily even happy situation to interact with the participants in the class. Especially in the early school stage, pre-school, the teachers usually have their strategy to build communication with their students. In systemic functional linguistic (SFL) the teachers and the students are making meaning when communicate with each other. Both participants in the class are exchanging information to others then it is called as interpersonal meanings in SFL.

Table 1. Three lines of meaning (Adopted from Halliday & Matthiessen: 2014)

Metafunction	Clause	System
Textual	as message	theme
Interpersonal	as exchange	mood
Experiential	as representation	transitivity

Interpersonally, the teachers and students in the class are sharing information over the clauses. The clauses which are delivered in a statement, question, command, and offer are called major clauses [5]. Then the other in the form of vocative, greeting, exclamations, and alarms are minor clauses. The major and minor clause different is about free and bound clauses. There are a limited number of minor clause research than the major one. Though the minor clause also take a part in the communication in the class. What is important to be analyzed in the interpersonal communication in the pre-school is about the minor clause “vocative” or “call”.

A vocative is a personal name usually used to address someone [5]. In communication, the vocative is used differently depending on the purpose of the speaker. Sometimes the vocative is used as a generality or a specificity in addressing someone [6]. Besides to address someone in speaking vocative also has a function of drawing the attention as an interjection [7]. Seeing the function of vocatives as a minor clause the observation about it becomes very interesting and important. Moreover the vocative itself is produced in a pre-school class. The direct and indirect vocative which is used in the class of course has its function.

## 3. Research Methods

The researcher uses the ethnographic method in observing the session in the class. With the ethnographic observation, the researcher becomes the part of the participant in the class [8]. It is done to have a natural situation in the class that had been observed by the researcher. In this kind of method, the researcher uses a camera and recorder to has documentation of class language and context.

## 4. Result and Discussion

The data is compiled from 7000 utterances both by the teachers and the students at pre-school Kota Langsa namely PAUD Buah Hati and RA Al Marhamah. From the data, the writer then divides the vocatives into four categorizations based on the speaker of the vocatives. The data that has been analyzed show that there are some functions of the vocative used. Below is the explanation:

### 4.1. Vocative used by the children to their friends

There are a number of vocatives used by the children when they are talking with their friends in the pre-school class. The vocatives is varying. Some of them are pronoun *kita* (we) and many of them are vocalization.

<sup>1</sup>*Oya kita hitam sama kita, karena kau bilang kita merah dia suka merah.* [Uh... We are same... because of you saying ‘we are red’ it makes him likes red, too]

<sup>2</sup>*Woi... Nadira mau naik di ayunan kita...* [*Woi*... Nadira want to swinging with us...]

<sup>3</sup>*Eh... ada putih...* [*Eh*... the color is white...]

<sup>4</sup>*Oii Afa kau pernah ngomong kan pocong?* [*Oii*, Afa, have you ever saying ‘pocong’?]

The data number<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> is the conversations among the children in pre-school. In data number<sup>1</sup> the child uses the vocative “we” to calls himself and his friends. The child uses this kind of vocative to create an intimate position to his friend as a first plural person. Intimate language becomes the choice when there is no social distance as a representation of correct verbal behavior [2]. Different from the data number<sup>2,3,4</sup> it shows the unique kinds of vocative. This kind of vocative is not a form of pronoun or name. *Woi*, *Eh*, and *Oii* is a kind of vocalizations bear by the children in speaking to their friends to catch the attention of their friends. Vocalizations are contribute to meaning-making made at all strata of language-in-context [9].

#### 4.2. Vocative used by the children to the teachers

When talking to the teachers, children use different vocatives. The children can differ the minor clause directly when they are talking to their teacher different from talking with their friends.

<sup>5</sup>*Buk, gadak yang mau kasi buk.. [Buk, there is no one want to share buk...]*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibuk... ibuk... ini buukk... [Ibuk... ibuk... here it is buukk...]*

<sup>7</sup>*Umi, tadi di bilang Jihan gambar Ikis jelek.. [Umi, Jihan said my picture is bad..]*

The children of pre-school have different calls to their teacher different from calls for their friends. When the children calling the teacher they never used vocalizations. It is because the children consider the different positions or the power of the teacher in the class. The higher power person may use intimate language to lower power [2] while in this condition the children have lower power than the teacher. Because of this situation, the children use politeness strategy by using formal calls to the teacher by saying *Buk, Ibuk, Mi, or Ummi*. *Buk or Ibuk is Indonesian then Mi or Ummi is Arabic*.

#### 4.3. Vocative used by the teacher to the children

Teacher as a controller of activity in the class of course have their own power when speaking to their students. The students in the pre-school who are called children rather than students have special vocatives given by the teacher depending on the purpose of speaking.

<sup>8</sup>*Jangan dekat kali sini ya, yang lain ke belakang... halo... halo...halo... [Don't be too close, alright! The other please move behind... hello... hello... hello...]*

<sup>9</sup>*Sabar ya teman teman yaa.. [Be patient, friends...]*

<sup>10</sup>*Farhan, ayo baca 'ayat kursi'... [Farhan, please read 'ayat kursi'...]*

<sup>11</sup>*Sayang, sayang temannya ya nak, ya... [Honey, please care to your friend, okay...]*

The female teacher is usually uses more intimate language to exchange information different from the male teacher [10]. It is what happened in pre-school classes when the teachers dominantly are female. The data<sup>9,11</sup> shows that the teacher want to make an intimate relationship to catch the children's attention by saying 'friends' and 'honey'. Then, to command the children, the teacher uses 'Hello' and 'Name' to have a fast response by the children toward the teachers' instruction.

#### 4.4. Vocative used by all the participants

Besides all those kinds of vocatives which is explained before, there are also some vocatives used both by the teacher and the children.

<sup>12</sup>*Kita buat kereta api, pegang bahu kawannya! [We walk like a the train, hold your friend shoulder!]*

<sup>13</sup>*Bahaya, bahaya abang.. abang.. Berbahaya naak! [Dangerous bang! Abang... It is dangerous honey!]*

<sup>14</sup>*Dia Cuma nengok.. [He just want to see...]*

Calls (vocatives) have every possible tone in the language, which are differences in meaning [5]. In the last category, it is found that some calls is used by all participants in the class both children and students. In the data<sup>12</sup> pronoun is used, it is a general kind of call (vocative) use by the speaker. The data<sup>13</sup> show the kinship calls "Abang" which is represented to brother in another case sometimes is used "kakak"[sister] or "adek" [little sister/brother]. The last data<sup>14</sup> shows the pronoun which is used as a call. Interpersonal metafunction show which meaning is an exchange between the speakers [11].

By analyzing all the data compiled from the observation it is found that there are 28 kinds of calls used in the pre-school classrooms by the children and the teachers. The following figure will show the kinds of calls (vocatives) in each category.

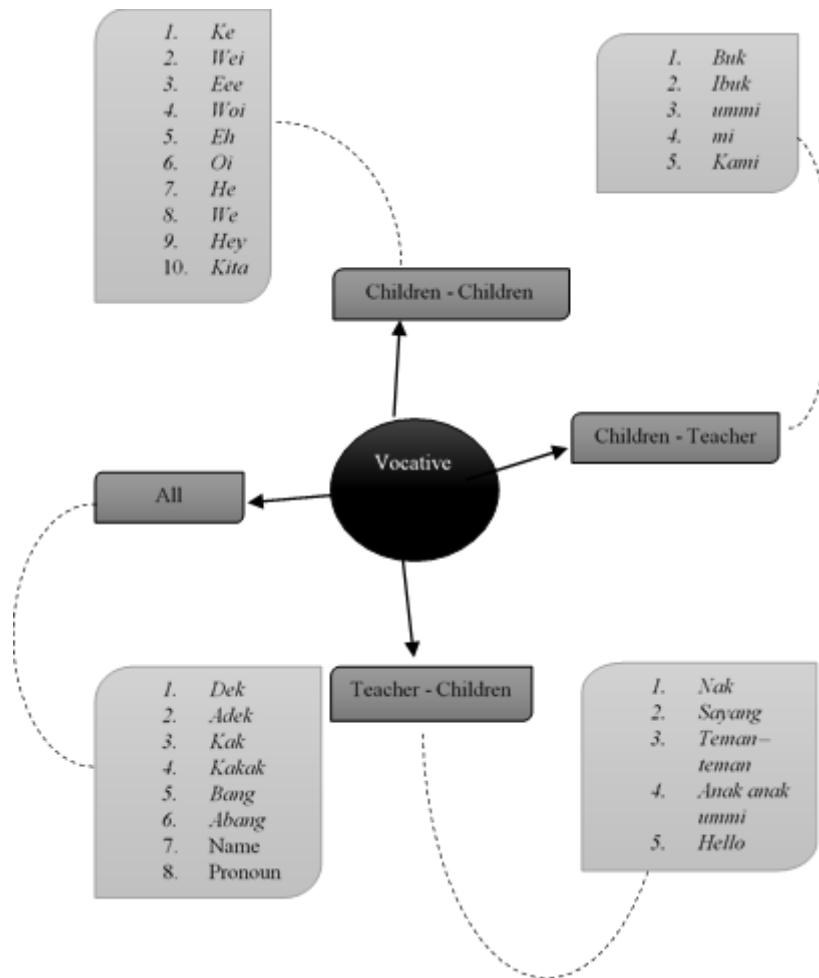


Fig. 1. Kinds of Vocatives in Pre-School at Kota Langsa

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

In exchanging information to others, the clauses do not just need the major clauses but also minor clauses. Even the minor clause sometimes should depend on the major clauses, however, the minor clause also take the important role in the conversation. In the conversational interaction of the children in pre-school, it is proved that the ability of the participant, in this case, is pointed to the children as the students of the informal school are creative to create the call. It shows that the talk of the children in pre-school makes the vocatives become varies. The calls (vocatives) have so many functions depend on the usage in the context of speaking to the addressee. It can refer to the next researcher who wants to explore more about the minor clause specifically "calls."

## References

- [1] Salomo-Dorothe, Elena Lieven, and Michael Tomasello. (2013) "Children's ability to answer different type of questions." *Journal of child language* **40** (2): 469–491.
- [2] Rydblom, Oskar. (2018) "You still say hello! A corpus study of the greeting words hi, hey and hello in spoken American English." *Master Thesis, Linnaeus University*.
- [3] Gebhard, Meg (2010) "Children's ability to answer different type of questions." *TESOL Quarterly* **44** (4): 797–803.
- [4] Kleeck, Anne Van. (2014) "Distinguishing Between Casual Talk and Academic Talk Beginning in the Preschool Years: An Important Consideration for Speech-Language Pathologists." *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* **23**: 724–741.
- [5] Halliday-M.A. K, and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. (2014) "Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar." *Routledge: Abingdon*.
- [6] Noor-Mehwish, Moazzam Ali1, Fakharh Muhabat, and Bahram Kazemian. (2016) "Systemic Functional Linguistics Mood Analysis of the Last Address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)." *International Journal of Language and Linguistics* **4** (1): 1-9.
- [7] Hill, Virginia. (2007) "Vocatives and the pragmatics–syntax interface." *Elsevier Lingua* **117** (2007): 2077–2105.
- [8] Spradley, James. (1979) "The Ethnographic Interview." Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- [9] Halliday, M.A.K. and Jonathan J. Webster (2009) "Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics." *Continuum: 11 York Road*.
- [10] Jule, Allyson. (2004) "Gender, Participation and Silence in the Language Classroom." *Palgrave Macmillan: 175 Fifth Avenue*.
- [11] Araghi, Seyed Mahdi and Kamal Shayegh. (2011) "Interpersonal Metafunction of Gender Talk in ELT Classrooms" *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies* **1**(2) : 25-32