INTERPERSONAL ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP’S EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE

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Abstract
The victory of Donald Trump in 2016 US Presidential Election marks the rise of Post-truth era at which objective truth is less important than the emotional truth. This paper analyses interpersonal metafunction of his emotional languages in his campaign speeches. The data are obtained from his speech transcripts. The emotion involves fear, warmth, and humour. They are detected using theory of prototype scenario developed by Wierzbicka (1992) and is analyzed using the perspective of Halliday and Matthiessen’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (2004). The analysis focuses on Mood, Modality, and Appraisal Technique. The finding shows the use of all Mood system to convince his audiences, the dominant use of modal item will as median value of obligation, and various use of repetition technique.

Keywords: Interpersonal Metafunction, Emotional Language, Systemic Functional Linguistics

1. Introduction
The study is encouraged by the victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 US presidential election beating up his rival, Hillary Clinton, against all odds. His victory in the electoral college is claimed by many researchers as the rise of post-truth era, an era where emotional appeal aroused in fabricated truth is more influential than the objective truth itself (Gross, 2017; Rose, 2017; Speed & Mannion, 2017). With the help of the social media in spreading out the emotional truth, he successfully turned down most election pollsters predicting his lost to be his glory.

Schrock, Dowd-Arrow, Erichsen, Gentile, and Dignam (2017) argue that his use of emotional discourse is meant to attract the working-class community. By analysing his 44 transcribed campaign speeches, they find patterns indicating the working-class as the victim of policy maker, his rival as part of the establishment as the villain who produces the policy,
and he himself as a hero who saves the victim from the villain by running the candidacy. The feeling of fear and anger is transferred to his audiences and at the same time he comes as the representation of hope.

Seeing its success, this divisive campaign strategy seems to be replicated by other politicians across the world. By examining 4 different political settings, the 2016 Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, the 2016 Brexit Referendum, the 2017 Geert Wilders’ campaign in Netherlands, and the 2017 Marine Le Pen’s campaign in France, Levinger (2017) points out the emotion of love, fear, and anger is exploited. Each of them represents its own theme in shaping the perception of the audience; love for homeland, fear of foreigner, and anger of corrupt political elites.

Putting political debate aside, Donald Trump’s rhetorical strategy is proved to employ emotion rather than logical reasoning. Both Liu (2016) and Widyawardani (2016) examined Trump’s rhetorical strategies and found something in common although their object of study was different. The object of Widyawardani’s investigation was his announcement speech while Liu’s was his tweets. The finding suggests that his dominant rhetorical proofs were pathos (emotional appeal) instead of ethos (establishing the authority of speaker) and logos (logical argument). According to Liu, he used three different types of emotion; fear appeal, warm appeal, and humour appeal.

The previous three studies have something in common in highlighting the use of emotion by Donald Trump. However, most of them stop at the point of listing out linguistic items indicating emotion such as trouble, losing, bad shape. There is still unanswered question on how those emotion is communicated to his audiences. This paper is trying to answer it through the view of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Interpersonal metafunction is one of language metafunctions within SFL which enables linguists assess the interaction between speaker and hearer or speaker and his audiences. Thus, the research question is “in terms of interpersonal metafunction, how does the speaker communicate his emotion to his audience in his campaign speeches?”.

Interpersonal metafunction represents the use of language to establish and to maintain the relationship between addresser and addressee. It may also be used to express one’s experience. Recent studies reported that it may be used to influence the behaviour of the addressee (Feng & Liu, 2010; Koussouhoun & Dossoumou, 2015; Nur, 2015; Ye, 2010) although it mostly refers to the rhetorical use of language by politicians. To investigate the interpersonal metafunction produced by the speaker, Mood and modality should be analyzed (Feng & Liu, 2010; Koussouhoun & Dossoumou, 2015; Nur, 2015; Ye, 2010). Along with them, Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, and Yallop (2000, p. 120) adds another approach to investigate how the speaker position the audience. By exploring the interpersonal metafunction, the speaker’s attitude and strategies in speaking out his idea can be revealed.

Before all, there is preceding step before analysis, which is how to detect the emotion. Wierzbicka (1992, p. 539) suggests that emotion can be detected using prototype scenario in terms of thought, want, and feeling. The prototype is formed using the semantic primitives. The emotion of fear is about something bad happening. Different with the feeling of anger or sadness which has the same concept, the bad thing is predicted or probably happens in the future. This misfortune is accompanied by the feeling of one’s weaknesses. Thus, the basic concept of fear covers three criteria, 1) something bad will/can happen (to me), 2) I don’t want this, and 3) I can’t prevent it (Wierzbicka, 1990, p. 363). The prototype scenario of fear emotion can be described as follow,
Fear
X feels something (when X thinks of Y)
sometimes a person thinks something like this:
I don't know what will happen
something very bad can happen
I don't want this
because of this, I would want to do something
I don't know if I can do anything
because of this, this person feels something bad
X feels like this

Liu defines warm appeal to be a call for the sympathy of the audience to agree with speaker’s message. This will be contradictory since warm emotion is basically expressing something good whereas sympathy, according to Wierzbicka (1999, p. 284), means that a person wants to do something good to other person because he has something bad happen to him. Warmth is an emotion which involve people interpersonally. It is basically the feeling of good thing towards someone else. In this context, the interpersonal warmth emotion involves the speaker and the audience for the setting is during the campaign speech. The concept of warmth is a genuinely flowing from the heart of the speaker to express good feeling towards person or people who are not close the speaker. Expressing love is part of this type. Therefore, the prototype scenario of warmth can be seen below.

Warm
[people think:]
It is good
If a person says/does something
because this person feels something good towards another person

The concept of humour emotion is related to the feeling of amusement. Different from the emotional state of amusement, it is created from the amusement of incongruity where one might enjoy the violation on the way things are supposed to be (Morreall, 1983). It is also influenced by causal, spatial, and temporal factor. For example, a kid may perceive humour differently than the way adult may do. The following prototyp2 will give the detail scenario of humour setting.

Humour
X feels amused
Sometimes a person thinks like this:
Something violates my picture of the way it is supposed to be
I enjoy the violation
Because of that, I feel amused
X feels like this

2. Research Method
This study is a qualitative research which attempts to describe how the speaker influences his audiences using emotional language. The data are in the form of excerpts derived from three selected transcribed campaign speeches.


This paper applies two stages of analysis. First, the emotional languages are detected using prototype scenario developed by Wierzbicka (1992). From the three transcripts, there are 158 excerpts containing emotional language. Second, they are then analysed using interpersonal metafunction under Halliday and Matthiessen’s SFL theory (2004). There are three focuses of analysis here, Mood, Modality, and Appraisal Technique.

3. Findings and Discussion

The question to answer in this paper is how the speaker communicates emotional languages to his audience. This interaction may contain his choice of communication strategies including language preferences or style and his attitude towards the expressions. To reveal that, Mood, modality, and appraisal technique are investigated throughout the collected data. Mood analysis shows his language preference either indicative or imperative and their functional use in the speech. Modality evaluates his attitude towards them. And Appraisal technique will expose his style in using them.

3.1 The Speaker’s Mood

Mood as system network of interpersonal style may not just explain the speaker’s statement but also reveal its purpose in the text. Ye (2010) has found that Obama uses declarative sentences to change his audiences’ attitude and to arouse their passion. On the other hand, Nelson Mandela uses imperative sentences not just to command his audiences but to elicit hope and to arouse them to dream (Nur, 2015). Thus, this study does the same thing by investigating the Mood utilized by Donald Trump in expressing his emotion.

The Mood analysis indicates that the speaker frequently utters declarative sentences followed by imperative and interrogative sentences. This finding is in line with many investigations of Mood analysis of political figures in his speech (Feng & Liu, 2010; Nur, 2015; Ye, 2010). Most of them says that the frequent use of declarative is meant to give information from speaker to audience. Although the speaker, Donald Trump in this context, has something in common with aforementioned figures in terms of the use of declarative sentences as info-giver, he has a broader variation in its purpose as follows.

a. First, it serves as explanation and description of what is happening to world.

b. Second, it aims to encourage his audience to hope.

c. At last, his objective is to convince his audience to agree with his opinion by confirming what he speaks is true.

The first function of declarative sentences in Trump’s speeches is to explain and to describe state of affairs in the material world. The sentence (1) is uttered to explain how his opponent does not fit to be elected anymore because she has failed in her duty. As a result of her failure, he explains that the community affected by her failure is law-abiding African-
Americans as in (2). It can be implied that this frequent use of declarative sentences is meant to describe the fear he has and transfer it to his audience.

(1). *Hillary Clinton has failed in every single country where she has ever gotten involved, and at a very high price for the world.* (excerpt no. 93)

(2). *The main victims of these violent demonstrations are law-abiding African-Americans who live in these communities and only want to raise their children in peace.* (excerpt no. 104)

The second function is to encourage his audience to hope. The speaker’s most popular slogan in his campaign is Make America Great Again abbreviated as MAGA. This study finds that he gets used to uttering it in the closing speech of his campaign. However, he expresses it not in the form of imperative like in the slogan but in declarative one as in (3). It aims to arouse the audiences’ courage to dream, the dream to be Great Nation again. In saying so, he uses pronoun *we* instead of *I* with the message that to make America great again cannot be achieved by him alone as the presidential candidate. Nur (2015) argues that pronoun *we* can be used to create more intimate relation between the addresser and the addressee. The pronoun also reveals the warm emotion evoked by the speaker because it also means he has the same feeling with them. The choice of marked theme, Friends and fellow citizens, strengthens the proof. Thus, it can be claimed that when the declarative sentence expresses the speaker’s warm emotion, it functions to encourage the audience to hope for a better condition.

(3). *Friends and fellow citizens, We Will Make America Great Again.* (excerpt no. 146)

The last function of declarative sentence is to convince his audience. Trump’s speech like any other political speeches is designed to influence the audience’s perception to agree with him. One of his style in convincing them is by employing conditional sentence as logico-semantic relation as in (4). The main clause in the sentence is *you will keep getting the same, exactly the same, results.* What is referred by the results here are none other than poverty, joblessness, or unemployment. The dependent clause serving as the condition in logical relation is *if you keep voting for the same people.* The same people refers to his opponent, Hillary Clinton, because she is the secretary of the State in the incumbent regime. It means that the available options for the people are two; first, voting his opponent and status quo of suffering will continue, or second, voting him and they get a better future. It sounds more convincing.

(4). *If you keep voting for the same people you will keep getting the same, exactly the same, results.* (excerpt no. 25)

The function to convince his audiences can also be found from the use of imperative and interrogative sentences in the speeches. The imperative sentence (5) is meant to convince them by confirming the fear they feel. It says about the riots and chaos in Detroit which he believes as the result of incapabilities of government in taking care of the situation. It is as if he asks them to confirm what is happening in Detroit is fear he himself feels. Imperative sentence is chosen to sound more convincing.

(5). *Look at how much African-American communities are suffering from democratic control.* (excerpt no. 17)

(6). *But has she ever apologized for the death and destruction she has caused?* (excerpt no. 60)
The speaker also uses interrogative sentence to convince his audiences. In (6), he does not actually ask them whether Hillary has apologized or not. He, in fact, already has the answer that she has not. He actually wants to say to his audiences that during her regime as government, she has produced many policies which results more harm than good. The harmfulness is represented by the word death and destruction which, at the same time, resonances the fear emotion.

In short, the most dominant Mood employed in expressing the speaker’s emotion is declarative followed by imperative and interrogative sentences. His use of declarative sentences has three functions. The first, it is to describe and to explain the fear emotion to his audiences. The second, it expresses his warm emotion to encourage them to hope. The third, it is used to convince them the fear still exists if they do not elect him as the president. However, the imperative and the interrogative sentences are mostly utilized to convince them.

3.2 The Speaker’s Use of Modality

Exposing the Mood preferences is just the beginning of investigation on how the speaker communicates with his audiences. The next step to be carried out is to examine the modality in emotional expressions because it evaluates his attitude in utilizing them. Modality deals with the intermediate degree of proposition between two opposing system of polarity, positive yes and negative no. This intermediate degree is an available medium at which the speaker expresses his attitude towards the proposition he is going to utter. It is possible because each utilized modality carries value in it either high, median, or low. The data shows there are only 51 excerpts (32%) out of 158 emotional expressions containing modality. It means that the dominant 68% are expressed using positive or negative polarity system with no modality.

It is argued that the speaker has a firm position either yes or no towards his proposition he delivers to his audiences, for example when he labels his opponent as the legacy of death and destruction as in (7), he puts no modality even though it is possible for him to say it this way, Hillary Clinton may be the legacy of death and destruction.

(7). Hillary Clinton is a legacy of death, destruction, and terrorism. (excerpt no. 66)

Among those modalities, it is found that the speaker prefers modulation than modalization. Modulation talks about obligation or inclination meanwhile modalization is about probability or usuality (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 620). The most used modal items found in the excerpts are will-modulation, will-modalization, and can. The use of will is very dominant since it is campaign speeches which enables the speaker saying something he is going to achieve in the future when he is elected. It is also typical like any other speeches delivered by political figures such as Obama and Nelson Mandela (Nur, 2015; Ye, 2010). However, the different use of will carry its own value so that they should be treated accordingly.

Will in modalization type carry the median value of probability. It means that the action may probably happen in the future. The sentence (8) indicates that if Hillary wins the election, she will approve Trans Pacific Partnership. The partnership will bring bad impact in automobile business in the country which makes it get out of it. When the business is moving away, the job will of course go away. However, the speaker cannot be certain that the partnership will bring bad result, in his calculation it will, that is why the modality probability is selected. Referring to other studies, Nur (2015) and Ye (2010) argue this function as the predictor of the future.
Both studies explain there is another function of *will* besides predicting the future. It also functions as strong wish of determination. In Halliday and Matthiessen’s SFL, it belongs to modulation type of *will*. The sentence (9) and (10) are the examples. In both sentences, *will* carry the median value of obligation. The speaker’s popular slogan Make America Great Again (MAGA), which is basically imperative in nature, is modulated as indicative when he delivers it in the speech as in (10). This is why *will* in the sentence serves as his determination or obligation in the future to make America great and safe again. It is very different with *will* in (8).

(8). *Just imagine how many more automobile jobs will be lost if Hillary gets her wish and approves TPP.* (excerpt no. 53)

(9). *We Will Make America Safe Again.* (excerpt no. 145)

(10). *And We Will Make America Great Again.* (excerpt no. 153)

After *will*, the next dominant modal item is *can*. *Can* carry the low value of inclination. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) groups it in the subcategory of inclination as the low variant of willingness. The sentence (11) shows how African-Americans, referred as they in the sentence, are unable to find the job. It represents the speaker’s attitude on economic situation in Michigan which he believes many citizens are lack of ability in finding job, represented by the negative form of *can*. He usually employs it to express and to deliver his fear because it shows the failure of the current government.

(11). *They cannot find a job.* (excerpt no. 33)

The distribution of modal item indicates that the speaker employs modulation more often compared to modalization. This preference implies that, as presidential candidate, he is obliged to realize his proposition because modulation talks about obligation or inclination. On the other hand, he employs modalization to convince his audiences that his proposition is possibly realized when he is elected president.

### 3.3 The Speaker’s Appraisal Technique

The last investigation to reveal the speaker’s interpersonal style is by examining his appraisal technique. It is a technique which is part of language evaluation that has been developed by Martin and White still with SFL as the basis. Eventhough previous modality analysis does so, it has not fully described his interpersonal style in terms of uniqueness of language use. It aims to expose his style in expressing his emotions.

The speaker utilizes appraisal technique in 93 out of 158 sentences. The 93 sentences consist of 70 sentences of graduation, 21 sentences of attitude, and 2 sentences of engagement. The last technique can be found from the sentences (5) and (8) when discussing about the function of imperative sentences. It is the proof that he uses it to engage with his audience, in this case, to feel their fear. The discussion should focus on the other two since they frequently appear.

The 70 sentences using graduation technique employs both force (50 sentences) and focus (20 sentences). This study figures out that the type of force which dominantly appears is intensification rather than quantification (see Martin and White (2005, p. 140) to understand the differences). And the modes of intensification which is frequently utilized is repetition. Although there have been studies stressing the use of repetition in Trump’s language such as Sclafani (2018) who proves that he frequently repeats the phrases “believe me” and Flores-Ferrán (2017) who claims he utters multiple repetition of first singular pronoun, the finding shows to what extent he uses it.
First, it is realized in the lexical item, for example the repeatedly use of the word *job* as in (12) or the use of word *disaster* as in (13). The repeated use of *job* in (12) is to deliver a powerful message that the speaker will solve the main economic problem in the country which is providing job to the citizen. As a matter of fact, it also creates sense of humour because *three beautiful words* he mentioned are not three different words but the same word repeated in three times. On the other hand, the word disaster in (13) is meant to emphasize how bad the economy is in Michigan. The word disaster alone embeds his fear, moreover, when it is repeated, it influences the resonance of fear towards his audiences.

(12). *My economic agenda can be summed up in three very beautiful words: jobs, jobs, jobs.* (excerpt no. 157)

(13). *Now, you have to understand, the Michigan manufacturing sector is a disaster. Is a disaster.* (excerpt no. 35)

(14). *Half of all Detroit residents do not work, and cannot work, and can't get a job.* (excerpt no. 13)

Second, it is realized in closely related terms. The sentence (14) above highlights it in which there are two closely related items; *cannot work* and *can't get a job*. Those two distinct terms are exactly the same in meaning. The sentence describes the difficulties experienced by Detroit residents which he claims that half of the residents do not work because of losing job. He does not stop at that but goes further by claiming that they cannot work even if they want to because there are no jobs. This repetition clearly describes the message.

The repetition in (14) is related terms under the clause. However, there can be found related terms above the clause meaning that the same message is repeated in more than one clause or sentence as in (15), (16), (17), and (18). Those clauses may be shortened as *We Will Make America Wealthy, Strong, Safe, and Great Again*. The words wealthy, strong, safe, and great are closely related items indicating good condition. When attached to a country, the speaker as presidential candidate has strong determination to make it good instead of bad. The way he convinces his audiences is by characterizing what good means in which it means wealthy, strong, safe, and great. To sound more convincing and to amplify the messages, he articulates them not under a clause but different clauses repeatedly.

(15). *We Will Make America Wealthy Again.* (excerpt no. 150)

(16). *We Will Make America Strong Again.* (excerpt no. 151)

(17). *We Will Make America Safe Again.* (excerpt no. 152)

(18). *And We Will Make America Great Again.* (excerpt no. 153)

Repetition is not the only mode of intensification the speaker uses. The data shows he also uses maximisation mode which aims to up-scale the spectrum of intensity in his speech. It can be seen from the sentence (19). He uses adverb *totally* to maximize his message that it is divided. What he means by divided in this case is the polarity of the campaign supporters which may happen because there are only two candidates available, one side supports him and another side support his rival. This maximisation emphasizes the strong differences between them. His side represents strong demand of change while his opponent side continue the status quo.

(19). *It's totally divided.* (excerpt no. 73)

Having exposed the force graduation technique, it comes to the discussion of focus which also appears several times in the speech. The indicator of focus is whether the proposition value is sharpened or softened. The data shows that he often sharpens it. In (20), he sharpens
the value of enemy to be radical Islamic terrorism. Here, he conveys the biggest threat his country is facing to his audiences, terrorism. However, the kind of terror is specified as Islam, and it is further specified not all Islam but only radical Islam. This breakdown indicates that there is potential enemy other than radical Islamic terrorism but for now it is as there can be other forms of terrorism other radical Islam but he focuses on it.

(20). And we will be clear in naming our enemy: Radical Islamic Terrorism. (excerpt no. 100)

The last appraisal technique that should be taken into account from the speech is the use of appreciation attitude. In his speech, the data shows he expresses negative appreciation more often compared to the positive one. The negative appreciation complies with the description of his fear emotion, for example the use of no good in (21). On the contrary, the positive appreciation complies with the expression of his warm emotion, for instance the use of fantastic in (22) responding his rally in Michigan which is filled by the full crowd of people.

(21). Your schools are no good. (excerpt no. 20)
(22). That's fantastic. (excerpt no. 127)

To make it simple, the appraisal techniques the speaker employs are repetition, maximization, sharpened value, and negative appreciation. Among them, repetition takes the highest degree of appearance. Its appearance varying from lexical item, closely related terms, and clausal level amplifies the messages stronger and make them sound more convincing. It also confirms what has been studied by other researcher in terms of the repetition use but goes further into the extentation it can be applied.

SFL theorists argue that repetition is meant to create cohesiveness in the text (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Butt et al., 2000; Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Fundell (2008) in her thesis on ideational function and lexical repetition found it functioning as rhetorical device in political speech. However, this study suggests more than those. It confirms Johnstone’s theory in which she explains that it is a persuasive device (Johnstone, 1996, p. 175). It is normal for politicians to influence their audiences in speech because they want their vote. They are going to try any communication strategies to look as attractive as they want to be.

Johnstone’s theory on repetition is firstly confirmed by Sclafani in her book Talking Donald Trump published in 2018 at which she examines his language in the process of candidacy including debates, interviews, and speeches. She found two discourse markers which he uses them very often; by the way and believe me. The former is uttered mostly during interview or debate to steer the topic shifting in his interest. The later functions as involvement strategy to encourage the audience participation in monologic situation as well as self-branding (Sclafani, 2018, pp. 32-39). Although those discourse markers are not found repeatedly in the exploitation of emotional expressions, this study firmly supports her argumentation that repetition is a means of persuasive strategy.

The persuasiveness is achieved through the message intensification which in appraisal theory classified as mode of intensification in force graduation technique. The repetition of the adjective same in the sentence If you keep voting for the same people you will keep getting the same, exactly the same, results intensifies the modified noun results. This example shows how the speaker amplifies his message that his audiences must vote him if they do not want
the same results. The same results here represents bad results of economic condition and security which are associated with fear. Sclafani (2018, p. 3) quoting linguist George Lakoff states that this kind of repetition can strengthen hearer’s neural circuitry and beliefs. This explains why a hearer sometimes does not believe a message at the first time, but slowly change his or her mind later when it is repeated again and again.

This paper argues that repetition is not only effective in intensifying fear emotion but also warm emotion. It is proven by the repeated utterance of his slogan Make America Great Again (MAGA) which is modulated in declarative sentence in all his speeches. It serves as involvement strategy which effectively arouses his audience to hope in him.

To conclude his communication strategies in delivering his emotional expressions, the speaker expresses his emotion in the form of declarative sentences. The most dominant modality is median value of obligation with will as modal item. And the dominant appraisal technique is repetition. However, those three components, Mood, Modality, and Appraisal Technique, do not stand in one line at a time. Declarative sentences is often implemented to express his fear emotion. But the fear emotion does not go in line with the dominant use of will as median value of obligation. It is usually accompanied by negative use of can as low value of ability. On the other hand, the dominant use of will is in line with the expression of warm emotion. It turns out that the repetition is in line with all emotional expressions. It can be inferred that, in one speech, he delivers his fear to his audiences using declarative sentences articulated with repetition. Then, he follows it with the strong determination of hope and warmth to overcome it. It is strongly resonanced, again, by the repetition technique.

4. Conclusion

The speaker’s communication strategies can be traced back from the use of Mood, Modality, and Appraisal Technique. The speaker’s Mood shows the utilization of declarative dominantly supported with imperative and interrogative. Overall, its purposes are to describe the information, to encourage his audiences, and to convince them. The domination of declarative sentences to describe the information is in line with the domination of material process which serves to describe what is happening in the outer world. The use of imperative and interrogative is merely to convince his audiences in his information not to command and to ask for question.

The speaker seems quite confident with all information he brings in the speech. It supported by the fact that the use of modality in the expressions is minimum. In other words, he seldom uses intermediate degree to carry his proposition or proposal instead his utterances are mostly positive declarative. However, his abundant use of will represents both obligation and probability. Will as obligation reveals his determination to achieve the goal meanwhile will as probability shows his prediction of what is coming in the near future, mostly used to expose his fear. This application is very much the same as what is used by Obama’s and Nelson Mandela’s (Nur, 2015; Ye, 2010).

What is interesting to find from his communication strategies is his language style in intensifying the message in which he uses repetition technique. It varies from lexical item to clausal level. The various lexicons such as disaster, lost, and poverty are found several times. At clausal level, the sentence like We will make America Great Again is repeated with slight modification of related item such as We will make America Safe Again or We will make America Strong Again. It does mark his language style.
5. References


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