

Mood and Interpersonal Metafunction in Japanese Horoscope Texts

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ABSTRACT

Horoscope texts play an important role in building trust and influencing readers through predictions and advice, however, how the moods used can realize the interpersonal metafunction from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) still requires further analysis. This study aims to describe the moods that appear in Japanese horoscope texts and how each mood realizes the interpersonal metafunction. The data consist of annual horoscope texts for the first half of 2026 from the NYLON JAPAN website, which were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative method with a glossing technique based on the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The results show that declarative mood dominates at 74%, followed by suggestive at 18%, while jussive and requestive each account for 3%, and oblique is not found. These findings indicate that, in addition to providing predictions, horoscope texts also offer guidance and invitations to readers. For future research, it is recommended to explore other aspects of SFL, such as the transitivity system or theme-rheme, in order to gain a deeper understanding of communication strategies and meaning construction in horoscope texts.

Keywords: *Horoscope, Mood, Interpersonal Metafunction, SFL, Glossing*

INTRODUCTION

Language is encountered across all social environments as the primary channel of communication. Additionally, language can be described as the channel through which speakers or writers convey their attitudes and ideas and create social ties with their interlocutors and readers. Beyond that, language is crucial in uniting people and easing communication across cultures by establishing a common comprehension amidst a culturally diverse audience (Widiyanti et al., 2024).

In the realm of linguistics, the relationships people create using language can be studied through the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) methodology. Halliday in Wiratno (2018) mentions three prominent metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The interpersonal metafunction concerns the use of language to establish and maintain social relations between the speaker and the listener through some specific linguistic selections (Ilham et al., 2025).

An example of language use that fosters social ties can be illustrated by the linguistic features present in horoscope texts. Horoscope texts are one of the products of astrology, a practice that is considered a pseudoscience but is still widely practiced (Vlavatskaya, 2025). In the present age, the civilization is more modern, and people tend to think more freely, many still maintain the practice of believing what the horoscopes say (Putra, 2020).

Horoscopes are written with the intention of guiding readers through the various situations, actions, and feelings they may encounter over a span of time. The predictive nature of horoscopes is why the language used is so powerful (Petryanina & Revina, 2025). The various mood choices in these texts are indicative of systematic interpersonal choices. This makes the study of these texts fascinating. Many studies on horoscopes and the various ways to interpret

the texts have been done in the past. Pan and Ashir (2023) did a study on the modality of horoscopes, and Ling (2016) did a study on the modal verb usage in horoscope texts. Mubarakshina (2023) did a study from the speech acts point of view. However, there are almost no studies on the mood of Japanese horoscopes.

Given this context, this study aims to discern moods present in Japanese horoscope texts, and to examine how these moods actualize the interpersonal metafunction of the writer and the reader. The NYLON JAPAN magazine website is where the researcher collected data for the annual horoscope texts of the twelve zodiac signs recorded in the first half of 2026. This study hopes to advance SFL studies, especially in elucidating the realization of interpersonal metafunction in Japanese horoscope texts as a form of popular media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a theory first developed by Michael Alexander Halliday in the early 1960s (Wiratno, 2018). Systemic suggests a language is a system of options, whereas functional means every linguistic unit must be contextualized and serve a practical purpose. Hence, SFL conceives of language as a system used within a social context to create meaning.

According to SFL, there are three language functions, which are called metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction is about the role language plays in the construction of experience and the representation of reality. This is embodied in the transitivity system, which consists of processes, participants, and circumstances. The interpersonal metafunction is about the role of language in constructing social relationships in a communicative situation, which is realized through the system of Mood and Modality. Textual metafunction is about the role of language in organizing messages into cohesive and coherent texts appropriate to the context (Thompson, 2014).

The Mood system is one of the most important tools in SFL to express the interpersonal metafunction.

Halliday in Eggins (2004) describes Mood as the grammatical composition of the clause that rules the exchange of information and the goods-and-services interactions. Typically, Mood can be expressed in the form of a declarative statement to provide information, an interrogative statement to elicit information, and an imperative statement to elicit goods and services (i.e., to give a command).

Following a functional-semantic perspective, Mood in Japanese includes categorization into declarative, interrogative, jussive, requestive, suggestive, and oblique Moods (Fukuda, 2021). There is also the Indicative Mood, which includes the declarative Mood, which is used for the relaying of information, exemplified in the form *yomu* (読む, 'to read'). This form can be seen in marked versions via clause-final expressions such as *yomu noda* (読むのだ) or *yomu wake da* (読むわけだ). There is also the Interrogative Mood, which is used in the posit of querying, exemplified in the case of *yomu ka* (読むか) or *yomu no ka* (読むのか). Furthermore, there are Non-Indicative Moods that realize actions in participation. The Jussive Mood conveys what is termed a command, for instance *yome* (読め). The Requestive Mood conveys a request, as in *yonde kure* (読んでくれ). The Suggestive Mood conveys invitations or proposals, for example, *minna de yomou* (皆で読もう). The Oblative Mood, in contrast, conveys the aim or wish of executing an action for the benefit of another, exemplified by *yomou* (読もう). Clause-final expressions such as *noda* (のだ), *wake da* (わけだ), *koto da* (ことだ), and *mono da* (ものだ) are generally termed as marked Mood, as they ascribe additional explanatory or evaluative information without modifying the inherent function of the Mood. The study of Mood in Japanese using the SFL framework shows how the grammatical options made encode the textual interpersonal meanings (Fukuda, 2021).

Numerous studies have been conducted on horoscopes and Mood from different angles. Pan & Ashir (2023) noted that potentiality and futurity are stated in terms of epistemic modalities such as *may* and *will*, while Mubarakshina (2023) noted a predominance of assertive and directive speech acts in the texts of horoscopes. Similarly, Ling (2016) noted that constructions that establish interpersonal relations with the audience are frequent in the texts, and these constructions include the use of *will*, *may* and the pronoun *you*. Conversely, Xie (2014) argues that the Japanese media texts exhibit declarative, imperative and other Moods as do that create interpersonal meaning, while He (2011) noted a cross-linguistic difference in the tendency of meaning in horoscopes. These studies indicate that the texts of

horoscopes are unique in structure and employ different linguistic mechanisms in expressing predictions, and that the use of Mood, particularly, establishes a relation with the audience

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted using qualitative methods focused on the analysis of the use of Mood in the Japanese horoscope texts. This approach is descriptive, as the study aims to provide a systematic portrayal of the text, while qualitative, to understand and contextualise the phenomenon within the texts, Creswell & Poth, (2018).

The researcher analysed horoscopes on the website NYLON JAPAN (nylon.jp). This outlet was chosen because it is one of the prominent lifestyle magazines in Japan and it consistently features the horoscope column (占い). The data comprises annual horoscopes for the first half of 2026 in the aforementioned column. Career-based horoscopes were chosen for this study because of their high urgency regarding professional growth and workplace strategy. The objective is to observe how predictive claims and actionable advice within these texts influence a reader's actual career moves. This specific focus provides a clearer look at the way communication is used to navigate professional obstacles and drive success. Figure 1 below illustrates the interface of NYLON JAPAN.



Figure 1. Home Page of the NYLON JAPAN website

The clauses in horoscope texts are the focus of the study. The clause is selected as the unit of analysis because in the SFL theory, the clause is the unit of language that encapsulates a number of linguistic metafunctions, especially the interpersonal metafunction.

By studying clauses, this research aims to uncover how horoscope authors transmit predictions, advice, or warnings to the audience via Mood selections. The collected data involved using the 'observing and note-taking' method. This commenced with a comprehensive reading of the horoscope texts from the reference website, and subsequently noting down the relevant clauses, which served as the analytical units. The collected data was organized into a digital format to streamline the subsequent stages of categorization and analysis.

The data analysis occurred in stages. The first step involved identifying the units of the horoscope texts and their structural breakdown into clauses. The second step involved a glossing procedure to describe the lexicogrammatical features within the clauses. The glossing presentation followed the Japanese glossing system as per the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The third step involved the classification of these clauses according to the Mood types. The final step encompassed the analysis and interpretation of the data to articulate the realization of interpersonal meanings attributed to Mood selections within the horoscope texts.

The analysis results are accompanied with descriptive and analytical findings, which include supportive data examples of the clauses discussed.

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how different patterns of Mood function in horoscope texts and how they help the writer and the reader connect on an interpersonal level.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis results, it was found that the horoscope texts utilize various mood forms to realize the interpersonal metafunction. These variations demonstrate how the writer establishes a communicative relationship with the reader through the delivery of information, advice, and calls to action. The distribution of usage tendencies for these moods is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Percentage of Mood Usage in NYLON JAPAN Horoscope Texts

Zodiac	Total Clause	Declarative	Suggestive	Jussive	Requestive	Oblative
Aquarius	6	83% (5)	17% (1)	0%	0%	0%
Pisces	5	60% (3)	20% (1)	0%	20% (1)	0%
Aries	10	80% (8)	10% (1)	10% (1)	0%	0%
Taurus	10	80% (8)	10% (1)	10% (1)	0%	0%
Gemini	7	71% (5)	29% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Cancer	5	100% (5)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Leo	9	67% (6)	11% (1)	11% (1)	11% (1)	0%
Virgo	9	78% (7)	22% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Libra	9	67% (6)	22% (2)	11% (1)	0%	0%
Scorpio	5	60% (3)	40% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Sagittarius	6	67% (4)	33% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Capricorn	9	78% (7)	22% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Average	90	74%	18%	3%	3%	0%

According to the results of the research, the average percentage of the declarative mood is 74%. The suggestive mood appears at 18%, while the jussive and requestive moods each have a 3% share, and no cases of the oblique mood were found. The prevailing tendency of the declarative mood shows that horoscope texts primarily function to communicate information, predict, or state possible conditions that readers would face concerning their signs. This means that the type of relationship that the horoscope texts build is predominantly informative, where the writer gives a general description of the situations, prospects, or psychological states that the readers are likely to face. The presence of the suggestive, jussive, and requestive moods, however, means that in addition to informing, the horoscope texts aim at influencing the readers by means of offering, urging, or inviting specifically. Analyzing the data in greater detail by particular zodiac signs shows that there is a difference in the mood pattern. This is the difference in the realization of the interpersonal metafunction of disparate horoscope texts.

Regarding the zodiac sign Aquarius, the 83% dominance of the declarative mood shows that the horoscope text is mainly intended to provide information or predict the situations that the reader is likely to face, and the 17% occurrence of the suggestive mood indicates the presence of persuasive advice. Regarding the interpersonal metafunction, the writer uses the declarative to position themselves as an information source, giving an insight into possible future developments. The use of the suggestive mood, in contrast, represents the writer's effort to give advice or direction to the reader, although this is much less than the case in the informative propositions. The writer, therefore, positions the reader as the receiver of information and advice.

Pisces has also the widest range of moods with 60% declarative, 20% suggestive, and 20% requestive, which shows the text communicates information and also invites the audience to consider a course of action. This shows the realization of the interpersonal metafunction in Pisces texts goes beyond the writer positioning themselves as an

information giver, but involves asking the audience to act upon the writer's instruction or suggestions. As a result, the audience sees themselves as the information and counsel recipient.

Aries and Taurus have 80% dominance of declarative mood with an extra 10% each for suggestive and jussive, which shows the texts are informative but also more assertive calls to action. In this sense, the writer sees themselves as both an information giver and motivator, while the audience sees themselves as the information recipient and an encourager from the writer.

With 71% declarative and 29% suggestive moods, Gemini shows the tendency to guide or advise more often than quite a number of the other signs. Gemini texts may have an instructional relationship, where the writer directs the reader through certain experiences, and the reader follows the direction.

With 100%, Cancer is completely declarative. This means the horoscope text for Cancer is informational and predictive, and does not include any suggestions, orders, or calls to the reader. The Cancer text does not engage or invite an interactive response from the reader. Rather, the writer provides a description or prediction for what could happen to the reader. This is consistent with Pratama et al. (2025), stating that the use of a purely declarative sentence is to impose something on the reader.

Leo has a mood usage distribution of 67% declarative, 11% suggestive, 11% jussive, and 11% requestive. It means that the text serves both an informational purpose and a purpose that involves calls to action or directives. The diversity of moods demonstrates a relatively more complex relationship between the writer and reader. The writer does not simply fulfill an informational role but also provides a type of guidance, prompting the reader to take a specific action or to consider a particular idea.

Virgo (78% declarative, 22% suggestive) and Libra (67% declarative, 22% suggestive, 11% jussive) demonstrate similar trends, especially in terms of the combination of information and persuasive guidance. Therefore, the realization of the interpersonal metafunction in Virgo and Libra texts indicates that the writer assumes the role of both an information supplier and a mentor; in this way, besides receiving information, the reader is also positioned as a guided individual.

A larger share of the suggestive mood is observed in both Scorpio (40%) and Sagittarius (33%). While the provision of information remains an important, and is often the primary, function with the use of the declarative, the suggestive takes control, indicating that the writer plays an active role in the reader's decision-making or in the consideration of specific circumstances. Placing the responsibility of the mentoring role on the writer implies that the reader is being instructed.

Capricorn demonstrates a 78% use of the declarative mood and a 22% use of the suggestive mood. Given this, we see that Capricorn remains predominantly informative yet, also, includes suggestive advice on how to navigate the described situations. As such, the Capricorn text creates an interpersonal relationship where the writer in the role of the informant and the reader in the role of the assisted.

The text analyses grounded on the astrology signs show that the declarative mood prevails in the horoscope texts, which underscores the primary role of these texts in prediction. Capricorn, Pisces, Aries and Gemini are the only four signs that assume predominantly predictive roles, and attempt, through the use of suggestion, exhortation, or requests, to motivate the reader. In the case of Leo, Virgo, and Libra, the dominant moods in these horoscopes can also be suggestive to make the predictive role more active. However, the sheer use of mood variations demonstrates that the predictive role of the texts goes beyond mere information to become more prescriptive and more motivational to the audience to engage with the described situations.

This study found that 74% of horoscope texts use the declarative mood, highlighting their main role as conveyors of information and predictions. This finding is consistent with the study by He (2011), which states that Japanese horoscope texts generally have two main speech functions: the provision of information, realized through conclusive declarative forms, and the request for action or invitation, realized through imperative, jussive, and suggestive forms. Additionally, this finding is supported by Ashir (2023), who states that the structure of horoscope texts consists of an assertive component as the conveyor of propositions and a directive component as the conveyor of recommendations. Although the terminology comes from different theoretical traditions, the assertive category in Speech Act theory parallels the declarative mood in SFL: Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) identify the declarative as the primary grammatical form for information-giving, and Searle (1979) characterizes assertives as speech acts that present

situations or information as factual. The remaining suggestive mood (18%), jussive (3%), and requestive (3%) point to a persuasive function that corresponds to the directive component noted in earlier studies. Within SFL, these mood types functionally align with Searle's (1979) notion of directives, which are meant to prompt the hearer to take action. In the Japanese horoscope texts examined here, that persuasive role appears through mood choices that offer guidance, suggestions, or requests to readers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the mood within the text of horoscopes shows a prevalence of the declarative mood. This shows the horoscopes relate the information to the readers about the possible situations they could find themselves in. Furthermore, the suggestive, jussive, and requestive moods are in the background, and help to show the guidance, advice, or call to action for the readers. The use of the declarative mood shows the writer is trying to convey the most information, along with the other moods providing a convincing argument within the text. Therefore, the readers are not receiving information, and are given a point to act upon the suggestions.

The writer and reader relationship in horoscopes is both informative and persuasive. The use of the declarative mood shows indications and predictions clearly, and the suggestive, jussive, and requestive moods encourage the readers to do or change something.

The insight into this aspect of the interpersonal metafunction illustrates that horoscope texts serve as active information and as communication resources that direct the readers in more detailed ways and inspire them. In this sense, horoscope texts are balanced, in both teaching and predicting.

For further research, it is recommended to examine other facets of SFL theory apart from the mood, such as the systems of transitivity and theme-rheme. Further research in other areas of SFL is likely to deepen the understanding of how horoscope texts construct the readers' experience, or how they are constructed as texts within a particular situation context. This is likely to significantly advance both the linguistic and the interpersonal metafunction studies of horoscope texts.

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