



# The Function of Phatic Language in The Novel Samuel by Itakrn

Zahra <sup>1</sup>, Gazali <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, FKIP Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Central  
Sulawesi

Corresponding E-Mail: zahraaswar2603@gmail.com

Received: 2025-07-03 Accepted: 2025-07-14

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i2.7379

## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the phatic function of language in Itakrn's novel Samuel. This research was conducted using qualitative descriptive research with the content analysis method. The researcher focused this research using Roman Jakobson's language function theory which states that the phatic function of language consists of four parts, namely: conversation starters, conversation continuation, conversation closings, and expressions in casual chats. The data source for this study was obtained from Itakrn's novel Samuel, the second edition in April 2022 published by PT Akad Media Cakrawala in 2022. Data collection in this study used reading and note-taking techniques. The results of this study indicate that there are four parts of the phatic function in Itakrn's novel Samuel.

**Keywords:** *Fatigue, Language Function, Novel.*

## Introduction

Language is a fundamental aspect of human life. In addition to its function to convey information and ideas, language also has an important social role. In language, the phatic function is used to open, maintain, or close communication. This function is not about what is said, but rather where and how the message is communicated—whether the channel and the user's attention remain active. Senft (2009). Phatic language was first introduced by Bronislaw Malinowski in his work entitled "Coral Gardens and Their Magic" (1935: 296-336).

In pragmatics, phatic language is studied as one way in which language use functions to manage social relationships and regulate communication interactions. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on how context plays a role in the use and understanding of language, including language functions that are not only related to literal meaning, but also social and interactional purposes.

Phatic language is not only found in everyday conversation but also in various other communication media, including in literary works. Literature can be in oral or written form, literary works produced by writers always present characters who have character. Novels as one form of literary work, often contain dialogues between characters that not only function to move the storyline, but also describe social dynamics and relationships between characters. In these dialogues, phatic language can play an important role in showing social interactions, building intimacy, and creating a certain atmosphere between characters. (Naji Abu Nowar 2019).

The novel "SAMUEL" by Itakrn is one of the novels that presents social and complex interactions between its characters. In this novel, the characters communicate with each other not only to convey verbal messages, but also to maintain social relationships between them. Through the dialogues contained in this novel, phatic language often appears, especially in informal conversations that occur between the main and supporting characters. However, studies that examine the function of phatic language in the novel Samuel are still rare, so this study is important to further reveal how phatic language functions in the novel.

This study focuses on the analysis of the function of phatic language in dialogue between characters in the novel "SAMUEL" by Itakrn, a novel with a fiction genre that tells the story of a man named Samuel Erlangga who is given the responsibility to look after a girl named Azura. This novel is the second work of the author Itakrn with a total of 260 pages published in October 2021. The function of phatic language here refers to how characters use language to maintain continuity of interaction, show solidarity, reduce tension, or simply open a conversation. Although phatic language looks simply, it has a significant influence in forming relationships between characters and creating social dynamics in the novel.

In literary works such as novels, phatic language appears in the form of dialogue between characters that reflects social interaction. The novel "Samuel" by Itakrn is the object of study because it presents the dynamics of complex social relationships. This study aims to analyze how the function of phatic language is used by characters in forming interpersonal relationships and building the atmosphere of the story. Previous research relevant to the topic of using phatic language has been conducted by the first Prabowo, M (2018) who studied "The Function of Phatic Language in Everyday Conversation: A Case Study in Urban Social Environments." and Sari, R (2020) also studied "The Use of Phatic Language in Film Dialogue and Its Impact on Character Development.

Research conducted by Prabowo, M (2018) examines the function of phatic in everyday conversation among urban communities, in his research using a qualitative approach with observation and interview methods. The results show that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo identified four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating intimacy and closing a

conversation. (Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40), The second study is similar to the study conducted by Sari, R. (2020). The study conducted examined film dialogue and showed that the use of phatic language in character dialogue helps build the atmosphere of the story. According to Sari, phatic language in films is often overlooked, but actually has an important role in creating intimacy between characters and enriching the dynamics of the narrative. (Sari, R. 2020:61) The difference between research on phatic functions in general and in novels lies in the context and purpose of the study. General research focuses on real communication that occurs in everyday life, while in novels it focuses on fictional communication that functions to clarify relationships between characters and build an atmosphere in the story. However, both have similarities in the use of phatic speech types and their main purpose, namely maintaining smooth communication and social relationships.

This study aims to analyze the function of phatic language in the novel "SAMUEL" by Itakrn in building and maintaining social relationships between characters in the novel Samuel.

## **Method**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative-descriptive research. Qualitative research is a systematic process that involves steps to identify problems, collect data, analyze, and make conclusions that can be retested. (Creswell and Poth 2018: 5-6)

This study involves structured activities with the aim of answering questions or solving problems through a logical and directed process. Qualitative research was chosen because it aims to understand the deep meaning of the use of phatic language in the novel, which cannot be measured by numbers or statistics. Identifying qualitative methods as research procedures that produce descriptive data to describe the use of phatic language according to its functions. Data were obtained from dialogues between characters in the novel "Samuel" by Itakrn, which consists of 260 pages. Data collection techniques were carried out by reading thoroughly, marking parts that contain phatic functions, and grouping data based on four categories: opening, guarding, closing conversations, and casual chats.

## **Results**

Based on the research results obtained from data analysis in Itakrn's Samuel novel. The researcher describes 4 functions of phatic language in its use, namely, 1) opening a conversation, 2) maintaining the continuity of the conversation, 3) closing the conversation, and 4) expressions in casual chat. These functions are also found in Itakrn's Samuel novel. In this case, the researcher found 22 data on phatic language functions represented in Itakrn's Samuel novel. The four language functions obtained from the novel are explained as follows:

### **A. Conversation Starter**

#### **Data 1**

*"You trash!" cursed Samuel. He slammed his opponent Raskal's body down, lying helplessly on the field. You're so rude!" Juan threw a punch at Canva, but Samuel immediately blocked it. His eyes stared sharply, making the Chayton member shudder on their own. Believe me, Samuel's gaze was truly deadly. (Samuel, 04)*

#### **Data 2**

*"Still can't forget him?" asked Areksa, starting the conversation. (Samuel, 23)*

#### **Data 3**

*"BABY EL! THE BOTTLE IS LEFT BEHIND!" The resounding scream came from Azura who suddenly came in out of breath. (Samuel, 28)*

#### **Data 4**

*"Zel," called Samuel. (Samuel, 36)*

#### **Data 5**

*"Hi Apan, Ajan, Ilona!" replied Azura with a big smile. (Samuel, 116)*

### **B. Maintaining the Conversation**

#### **Data 6**

*"I want to." Aura replied with sparkling eyes. (Samuel, 14)*

#### **Data 7**

*"E-Eca?" Areksa pointed at herself. "Are you serious about calling me Eca?" (Samuel, 23)*

#### **Data 8**

*"Hurry up and go," Areksa said to Canva who was in front of her and asked the guy to start his motorbike immediately. (Samuel, 42)*

#### **Data 9**

*"These tastes sweet, El. Try it." Kiara said trying to persuade her son. "No, Nda." Samuel shook his head hard. (Samuel, 89)*

#### **Data 10**

*"Do you want me to cure you?" Canva asked. "Why did you become a good person? Why do you always try to make other people happy?" (Samuel, 120)*

#### **Data 11**

*"Sorry..." she muttered. (Samuel, 154)*

#### **Data 12**

*"Let's just pray that he can get well soon. You can come in, Ra." David said. (Samuel, 202)*

### **C. Closing Conversation**

#### **Data 13**

*"On the dining table, El. That's why you looked for it before asking. Okay, I want to sleep with Azura. Bye, devil's child!" (Samuel, 11)*

**Data 14**

*"If that's what you want, I'll take my leave first." Raskal put the paper bag containing the ice cream on the table. (Samuel, 114)*

**Data 15**

*"Sleep well, handsome boy," said Nafisha with tears streaming down her cheeks. She wiped Canva's face which looked thin. (Samuel, 248)*

**D. Expressions in Casual Conversation****Data 16**

*Ilona chuckled. "Use my moves if you're upset, Ra. Do you want me to teach you how to fight with a machete?". (Samuel, 95)*

**Data 17**

*"I'LL KICK YOUR HEAD IF MY BOTTLE FALLS AND SCRATCHES!". (Samuel, 99)*

**Data 18**

*"Marvel, right, is like a devil. He is arrogant but works quietly, his face is flat like a newly repaired asphalt road.". (Samuel, 104)*

**Data 19**

*"Ready, Eca is handsome!" Azura waved her hands in salute and smiled broadly at Areksa. (Samuel, 164)*

**Data 20**

*"Jiaahhh, former OSIS chairman," Canva replied then laughed. (Samuel, 231)*

**Data 21**

*"Then why are you pretending to be heartbroken?" Canva asked in surprise. "You gave the rules, you're the one who lost. HUUUU wimp!" Farzan mocked. (Samuel, 135)*

**Data 22**

*"Baby El, am I pretty?" Azura asked Samuel. "Always pretty." Samuel carved a thin smile. Samuel's answer made the others cheer excitedly. The guy was increasingly open in showing his love for Azura. Compared to before, now it felt very different. (Samuel, 235)*

**Discussion**

This discussion explains the results of the study based on Senf's language function theory (2009). This function is not about what is said, but where and how the message is communicated, whether the channel and user attention remain active. More in the form of "good morning", "how are you?", "how are you?". which plays a role in building social ties and ensuring that communication continues.

From the results of the analysis, data on the phatic language function was found which was represented in the novel Samuel by Itakrn. The following is data from the four language functions obtained from the novel:

**A. Conversation Starter****Data 1**

*"You trash!" cursed Samuel. He slammed his opponent Raskal's body down, lying helplessly on the field. You're so rude!" Juan threw a punch at Canva, but Samuel*

*immediately blocked it. His eyes stared sharply, making the Chayton member shudder on their own. Believe me, Samuel's gaze was truly deadly.* (Samuel, 04)

Analysis:

In the quote above, the sentences, although angry or mocking, have a primary function as a communication channel opener. The sentence "you're trash!" appears at the beginning of the dialogue, this is the first word that comes out of the character's mouth to initiate contact with the opponent. The aim is to provoke a reaction, attract attention, and initiate a communication relationship even though in an aggressive form this is a rude form of hey!" which functions to open an interaction. The same is true for the sentence "you're rude!" (data 02) so, although these sentences are not like "hello" or "good morning", in a social context they function to start a conversation. This data is in line with Sari, R (2020) who stated that phatic language is often overlooked, but actually has an important role in creating intimacy between characters and enriching the dynamics between communication.

#### **Data 2**

*"Still can't forget him?" asked Areksa, starting the conversation.* (Samuel, 23)

Analysis:

This question is intended to start a conversation with Samuel. Its phatic function is seen from Areksa's intention to provoke communication and open a topic. This data is in line with Prabowo, M (2018) who stated that phatic language is often ignored, used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers.

#### **Data 3**

*"BABY EL! THE BOTTLE IS LEFT BEHIND!" The resounding scream came from Azura who suddenly came in out of breath.* (Samuel, 28)

Analysis:

This shout is not only a notification, but also serves to re-open communication with Samuel and show his presence in the group. The tone of his shout also reflects a close and informal social relationship. This data is in line with Senf (2009) This function is not about what is said, but where and how the message is communicated, whether the channel and the user's attention remain active.

#### **Data 4**

*"Zel," called Samuel.* (Samuel, 36)

Analysis:

This call serves to open a communication channel between Samuel and Azura. The goal is not to convey information, but to ensure that the other person is paying attention and is ready to engage in conversation. This data is in line with Prabowo, M (2018) that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social engagement between speakers.

### **Data 5**

*"Hi Apan, Ajan, Ilona!" replied Azura with a big smile. (Samuel, 116)*

Analysis:

Greetings as an opener of communication. This is the most basic form of phatic greeting to maintain social connections. This data is in line with Prabowo, M (2018) that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers.

## **B. Maintaining the Conversation**

### **Data 6**

*"I want to." Aura replied with sparkling eyes. (Samuel, 14)*

Analysis:

Azura's statement is a light response from the previous context. It is not informative or explanatory, but only keeps communication going. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and present social between speakers. Prabowo develops four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating familiarity and closing a conversation.

### **Data 7**

*"E-Eca?" Areksa pointed at herself. "Are you serious about calling me Eca?" (Samuel, 23)*

Analysis:

This sentence is a spontaneous and light reaction from Areksa. He is not conveying an important idea, but continuing and responding to social interactions. This data is in line with Sari, R (2020) who stated that phatic language is often overlooked, but actually has an important role in creating intimacy between characters and enriching the dynamics between communications.

### **Data 8**

*"Hurry up and go," Areksa said to Canva who was in front of her and asked the guy to start his motorbike immediately. (Samuel, 42)*

Analysis:

Areksa's direction is also part of maintaining the rhythm of the conversation. This data is in line with Prabowo, M (2018) that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers.

### **Data 9**

*"These tastes sweet, El. Try it." Kiara said trying to persuade her son. "No, Nda." Samuel shook his head hard. (Samuel, 89)*

Analysis:

The conversation between Kiara and Samuel shows the affective relationship between mother and child. Kiara's words are not only to order, but to maintain a warm relationship in the midst of Samuel's sick condition. This data is in line with Sari, R (2020) who stated that phatic language is often overlooked, but actually has an important role in creating intimacy between characters and enriching the dynamics between communication.

**Data 10**

*"Do you want me to cure you?" Canva asked. "Why did you become a good person? Why do you always try to make other people happy?"* (Samuel, 120)

Analysis:

This sentence is a form of attention that builds an emotional connection, not just a medical offer. Azura is expressing admiration and maintaining interpersonal communication. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo (2018) identifies four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating intimacy and closing a conversation.

**Data 11**

*"Sorry..." she muttered.* (Samuel, 154)

Analysis:

Short utterances to show awareness and maintain communication harmony, although not part of important information. This data is in line with Coupland & Jaworski 2019: 133 In the context of everyday communication, phatic language still has high social significance in maintaining polite rituals and in building a person's social identity.

**Data 12**

*"Let's just pray that he can get well soon. You can come in, Ra."* David said. (Samuel, 202)

Analysis:

Keeping the conversation going, showing empathy and giving permission that prolongs the interaction. This data is in line with (Kadar & Hause 2021: 313) The importance of phatic language in maintaining social politeness and harmony between speakers, especially in interpersonal and professional interactions. Such as greetings or small talk, can help reduce tension in formal situations, maintain harmony in hierarchical environments.



### C. Closing Conversation

#### Data 13

*"On the dining table, El. That's why you looked for it before asking. Okay, I want to sleep with Azura. Bye, devil's child!"* (Samuel, 11)

Analysis:

This data is in line with Senft (2009) This function is not about what is said, but where and how the message is communicated, whether the channel and the user's attention remain active.

#### Data 14

*"If that's what you want, I'll take my leave first." Raskal put the paper bag containing the ice cream on the table.* (Samuel, 114)

Analysis:

The sentences "Enough" and "bye" are markers of the end of a conversation where someone wants to end the interaction, even with a relaxed and light tone. This data is in line with Senft (2009) This function is not about what is said, but where and how the message is communicated, whether the channel and the user's attention remain active.

#### Data 15

*"Sleep well, handsome boy," said Nafisha with tears streaming down her cheeks. She wiped Canva's face which looked thin.* (Samuel, 248)

Analysis:

The closing sentence from a mother to her deceased child, signifies an emotional separation. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo (2009) identifies four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating intimacy and closing the conversation.

### D. Expressions in Casual Conversation

#### Data 16

*Ilona chuckled. "Use my moves if you're upset, Ra. Do you want me to teach you how to fight with a machete?"* (Samuel, 95)

This greeting maintains intimacy and indicates a relaxed and joking friendship. This data is in line with (Kadar & Hause 2021: 313) The importance of phatic language in maintaining social politeness and harmony between speakers, especially in interpersonal and professional interactions. Like greetings or small talk, it can help reduce tension in formal situations, maintaining harmony in a hierarchical environment.

**Data 17**

*"I'LL KICK YOUR HEAD IF MY BOTTLE FALLS AND SCRATCHES!"*. (Samuel, 99)

Analysis:

This utterance remains within the corridor of familiarity and maintains a humorous relationship between the characters. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo (2009) identifies four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating familiarity and closing a conversation.

**Data 18**

*"Marvel, right, is like a devil. He is arrogant but works quietly, his face is flat like a newly repaired asphalt road."* (Samuel, 104)

Analysis:

Phatic function in the form of jokes, this utterance is used to strengthen relationships with friends through jokes, not to convey serious information. This data is in line with (Kadar & Hause 2021: 313) The importance of phatic language in maintaining social politeness and harmony between speakers, especially in interpersonal and professional interactions. Like greetings or small talk, it can help reduce tension in formal situations, maintain harmony in a hierarchical environment.

**Data 19**

*"Ready, Eca is handsome!" Azura waved her hands in salute and smiled broadly at Areksa.* (Samuel, 164)

Analysis:

Social relations and strengthening closeness between characters. This sentence is more humorous and does not convey important information, but strengthens. This data is in line with (Kadar & Hause 2021: 313) The importance of phatic language in maintaining social politeness and harmony between speakers, especially in interpersonal and professional interactions. Such as greetings or small talk, can help reduce tension in formal situations, maintain harmony in a hierarchical environment.

**Data 20**

*"Jiaahhh, former OSIS chairman," Canva replied then laughed.* (Samuel, 231)

Analysis:

This sentence is used to lighten the mood and strengthen friendship through jokes. Phatic often appears in the form of humor like this. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo (2009) identifies four

main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating intimacy and closing a conversation.

### **Data 21**

*"Then why are you pretending to be heartbroken?" Canva asked in surprise. "You gave the rules, you're the one who lost. HUUUU wimp!" Farzan mocked. (Samuel, 135)*

Analysis:

Not a serious question, but part of a light conversation to lighten the mood. Fatik. Taunts as part of friends' jokes, used to strengthen social relationships. This data is in line with Prabowo, M. 2018:38-40 that phatic language, such as greetings and small talk, is used to maintain comfort and social ties between speakers. Prabowo (2009) identifies four main functions of phatic: opening a conversation, filling in the gaps, creating familiarity and closing a conversation.

### **Data 22**

*"Baby El, am I pretty?" Azura asked Samuel. "Always pretty." Samuel carved a thin smile. Samuel's answer made the others cheer excitedly. The guy was increasingly open in showing his love for Azura. Compared to before, now it felt very different. (Samuel, 235)*

Analysis:

This sweet sentence lightens the mood and strengthens interpersonal relationships. This shows the intimacy that is now more open between them. This data is in line with (Kadar & Hause 2021: 313) The importance of phatic language in maintaining social politeness and harmony between speakers, especially in interpersonal and professional interactions. Like greetings or small talk, it can help reduce tension in formal situations, maintaining harmony in a hierarchical environment.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the function of phatic language in Itakrn's novel "Samuel" plays an important role in shaping the dynamics of social interaction between characters. This function helps build atmosphere, reflects interpersonal relationships, and strengthens characterization. This finding shows the importance of paying attention to pragmatic aspects in literary studies to understand the social dimension of language used in fictional works.

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