

## The Communication Style of Americans In ‘The Stars Shine Down’ by Sidney Sheldon

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the communication style of Americans in novel titled “The Stars Shine Down” by Sidney Sheldon. It is important to be analyzed because if people control their communication style, they can control the outcome of most interactions and avoid the conflict or misunderstanding that caused by communication problem. The analysis of characters’ communication was based on McCallister’s theory (1994) to determine the patterns of communication style. The patterns were divided into three communication styles. It was Dominant Style which was included Noble, Reflective, and Socratic. Then, Blended Style consisted of Magistrate and Candidate. Also, Dual Style was known as Senator. Furthermore, this study was designed in the form of a content analysis of qualitative design. The source of data was the dialog of the main and supporting characters in the novel “The Stars Shine Down” by Sidney Sheldon which supported by the author’s narrative of novel. Moreover, this study used two validators, to increase the credibility of the findings and interpretation the communication style. The results for the research question showed that Magistrate and Senator were mostly used by Lara for communication. Then, Noble was utilized dominantly by Paul in his communication which was influenced by the social status. Meanwhile, other style such as Socratic and Candidate were found in most of Howard’s interaction. Even if all of the communication styles were reflected to the characters, the difference of frequency figures in using communication style was not too excessive for each style. Also, with using of communication style, both of main and supporting character can control the outcome of interaction. It can be related to students’ communication and material of teaching and learning English. Thus, it is important for the students and lecturers to understand communication style in their interaction with foreign language speakers, especially Americans to avoid the misunderstanding of communication and control the outcome of interaction.

**Keywords:** Communication, Style, Novel, Characters

### 1. Introduction

Communication is one of human behaviors in a society. It means that communication as a tool of interaction in human daily life, can not be separated from society because it is important part of them and give an influential role for people in society. According to Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thil in Franksiska (2016), communication is a process of delivering and accepting the messages. They said that communication can be effective when people who receive the information have the same understanding as the one who sends them, and it causes a new way of thinking (Franksiska, 2016).

Moreover, in transmitting or delivering the message, people have and use their own style because it is related to their social and cultural aspect. According to Gudykunst et al. in Ibrahim & Ismail, (2007), people have a mode or style of communicating based on their norms, rules, and values of the culture. This is supported by Littlejohn (2002) in Ibrahim & Ismail, (2007) that the difference of communication patterns both direct and indirect is determined by cultural values and social interaction. Urea & Muscalu (2012) also stated that

communication style is all of the characteristic feature of people's communicative act with their personality, temperament, culture and social environment where they live.

## 2. Literature review

Furthermore, Chaika in Haqo (2016) told that style creates communication in the right way and determines how a social interaction will be proceed. McCallister (1994) also added that communication style can be used to control the outcome of the interaction, and improve a tolerance for communication style differences. It means that if people control their communication style, they can control the outcome of most interactions and avoid the conflict or misunderstanding that caused by communication problem.

However, Norton (1983) in Ibrahim & Ismail, (2007), said that individuals use various style of communication to correspond differently with each other in different settings, purposes and groups. Then, the various style of communication is classified by McCallister (1994) into Dominant Style (Noble, Reflective, and Socratic), Blended Style (Candidate and Magistrate), and Dual Style (Senator) that exist in North America and perhaps the world.

Nevertheless, many people do not only use their own style in communicating directly in their daily conversation, but also through media as a tool of communication to convey their messages. One of them is novel. It is very closely related to communication because many dialogues in some different characters. This is same term with conversation in daily life and it represents the way how they communicate each other verbally.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze communication style based on the McCallister's theory that might be reflected in novel through the dialogues of the main and supporting characters as the representative of human in real life, especially Americans as the foreign language speakers and supported by the author's narrative.

In addition, "The Stars Shine Down" is one of the novels by Sidney Sheldon which represented the Americans in 20th century. Meanwhile, Sidney Sheldon is an American writer and producer who got some Academy Awards in drama, film, and novel. His novels have sold over 300 million copies to over 108 countries and have been translated in 57 languages. Through one of his novels, "The Stars Shine Down", the researcher also purposes to show that communication styles of Americans could be identified verbally in written text?

## 3. Research method

The researcher chose content analysis as the design of this descriptive study to clearly explain and give understanding of culture about communication style of Americans in novel The Stars Shine Down. The data of research were conversations or dialog of characters that describe the events as representative of Americans communication style in the novel. The collection of data was be conducted through the process of reading by using theory of communication style in "I wish I'd said that!" by McCallister (1994) for analyzing the Americans culture of communication that reflect in dialog from the novel.

In data analysis, the researcher used technique by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) said that analysis techniques consists of three concurrent flows of activity, that is preparation, organizing and reporting. Moreover, the researcher also used investigator triangulation in this study. First, the researcher analyzed the communication styles by giving the code to the sentence, paragraph or dialogue as the data that related to the theory of McCallister (1994) and made the conclusion about the data. Then, the researcher asked two experts from scholar sociolinguistic to analyze the data by using the McCallister's theory.

Afterwards, the result of the data that had been analyzed by researcher before, could be matched with the data that analyzed by the experts.

#### 4. Findings

The researcher found out the communication style which was reflected to Lara Cameron as the main character and also Howard Keller, Paul Martin, and Philip Adler as supporting characters in novel "The Stars Shine Down". Furthermore, it can be presented by following:

First, The Dominant Style is pattern of communication that someone used most of time even if he or she can use all patterns of communication. The researcher identified this pattern in all characters of the novel, which was divided into three communication styles such as:

##### a.) Noble

According to McCallister (1994), the main purpose of communication for Noble is the exchange of information and opinions honestly. The Noble is the type of communicator who speaks directly. One of the characters of the novel who speak as Noble was Lara;

"The Fortune interview is set for this afternoon."

"I changed it."

(Chapter 2, Page 5, Line 14)

He looked surprised. "Why?"

"I'm having their reporter here for lunch."

(Chapter 2, Page 5, Line 14)

"Soften him up a little?"

"That's all, Jerry. I want you and your staff to concentrate on Cameron Towers."

(Chapter 2, Page 5, Line 16)

At the time, Jerry Townsend talked about her interview for an article to her. Lara answered it briefly that she changed it. Jerry was surprised and asked her reason, but she just answered that she was going to have a lunch with the reporter. Her answer had unfavorable connotation and Jerry asked her to make it clear. In this case, Lara said her thought by using words sparingly. The words "That's all" meant that she was concise and did not engage in lengthy discussions about something in detail. Then, she asked him to focus on Cameron Towers. From the dialog above, it showed that Lara interacted with Jerry using Noble style.

##### b.) Socratic

McCallister (1994) stated that Socratic is pattern of communication which focused on the analysis of details because the purpose of communication is verbal interaction. This communication style reflected to the characters in the novel such as Howard was saying:

"First of all, we're going to get you the best team money can buy. We'll start out with a real estate lawyer to work out the contract with the Diamond brothers. Then we want to get you a top architect. I have someone in mind. After that, we want to hire a top construction company. I've done a little arithmetic of my own. The soft costs for the project will come to about three hundred thousand dollars a room. The cost of the hotel will be about seven million dollars. If we plan it right, it can work."

(Chapter 9, Page 45, Line

3)

At that time, Howard discussed with Lara about how to start the business of real estate. Howard explained what should Lara do to build boutique hotel as her first project. The word “First of all,..... Then... After that.....” identified that He was talkative in discussions by giving more attention in detail for every possible aspect of the topic in order to get agreement. Simultaneously, he used hypothetical (if-then-therefore) statement by saying “If we plan it right, it can work.” to show a point and benefit of the topic during discussions. It meant that if the plans which had been analyzed by Howard did well, the goal that wanted to reach would be successful. This pattern of communication style is called Socratic.

c.) Reflective

The Reflective is pattern of communication that concerns with the human aspects of the communication interaction. It is due to the main purpose of communication for Reflective is the improvement of the interpersonal relationship. The people who talked as Reflective are known as the best listeners and pleasant to talk with. Besides, someone whose Reflective style in his or her communication, usually uses qualifiers to reduce hostility. For example, it can be seen in Philip’s statement

“You've made this tour wonderful for me. The bad news is that I have to leave for Venice tomorrow. I'm going to miss you a lot.”

(Chapter 23, Page 128, Line

17)

It happened when Philip had a dinner with Lara in the restaurant. Philip has a lot of fans due to be pianist. During the dinner, they talked and it was as though they had known each other forever. Yet, they were constantly interrupted by people who asked his autographs. After that, he had more time for Lara to say “You've made this tour wonderful for me” which indicated that Philip gave positive statements before he conveyed bad-news message to her. He knew that Lara loved him and intended to be together with him. But, unfortunately, he had lots of piano concert. One of them was in Venice and he understood that it would be impossible for Lara to go wherever he go because of her business.

Second, the researcher had found that one pattern of communication style was blended with the other one. It named blended style. The Blended Style is two patterns of communication which are blended and used simultaneously (McCallister:1994). Moreover, the researcher identified blended style which was reflected in the novel below:

a.) Magistrate

Magistrate is Noble-Socratic blended communicator. McCallister (1994) described that people who utilize Magistrate as their communication styles, focus more on rhetoric, the analysis of detail, and the straightforward presentation of opinions and information. This kind

of communication style was found by researcher through one of the characters in the novel when Lara said:

“Before you say anything, Howard, let me point out a few things. The location is perfect. It's in the heart of the business district. Tenants will be fighting to get office space there. And remember, it's going to be the tallest skyscraper in the world. That's a big sizzle. It's going to be our flagship. We'll call it Cameron Towers.”

(Chapter 16, Page 90, Line

24)

At that moment, Lara was interested to buy a huge waterfront property in the Wall Street area as her tallest skyscraper in the world. She talked about it in the meeting with Howard and her staff. She knew what Howard was going to say about it and she did not want him to stop her. So, when she said “Before you say anything, Howard, let me point out a few things”, it showed that Lara wanted to win the discussion without listening other person's opinion. The extract above also supported that Lara used Magistrate due to her argumentation was detail, straightforward and certain when speaking.

b.) Candidate

According to McCallister (1994), Candidate is Reflective-Socratic blended communicator which is very pleasant, patient, warm, supportive, analytical, quite verbose and lovable person in communication. Also, the communicator whose Candidate as his or her communication style, can be assertive and not a patient listener for others (McCallister:1994). Besides, candidates usually create a feeling of liking on the self by using self-disclosure statement to establish a personal relationship

Moreover, the characteristic of Candidate can be identified from one of characters in the novel, Paul, when he stated;

“What are friends for? I notice that you have some heavyweight gamblers here. Be careful with them, Lara. Some of them are going to lose big, and you have to make them feel like they're winners. Get them a new car or girls or anything that will make them feel important”

(Chapter 27, Page 145, Line

5)

At that time, Lara held the opening of the Cameron Palace in Reno without Philip. She invited Paul to come. Paul met Lara in the event, and offered her to dance. Lara rose and stepped into his arms. While they were dancing, Paul asked about her feeling so far in her achievement of the business and he suggested her to make the gamblers feel important.

The statement “I notice that you...” meant that Paul created a feeling of liking on the self by using self-disclosure statement to establish a personal relationship. Paul also used parenthetical phrases such as “Be careful with them, Lara” . The word “Lara” was a noun of direct address and a parenthesis and the statement “that will make them feel important” was also a parenthesis.

However, the researched found a pattern of communication which was switched back and forth between two different styles of communication, that was Noble and Refelctive. McCallister (1994) called it as Dual Style, and Senator is the only one type of dual style communication that alternate between Noble style and Reflective style (McCallister:1994). It can been seen in these extract;

"Yes, those ugly, stripped-down, three-story stucco boxes. We're interested in designs that won't increase the noise level or reduce the light or change the feel of the neighborhood....."

(Chapter 17, Page 98, Line 1)

The statement showed that Lara was straightforward to say what she thought to Edith Benson. She used Noble as her communication style at that time, but when Edith did not agree with her idea, so that Lara changed her communication style into Reflective in order to get her project as can been seen in this extract:

I can't lose this, Lara thought desperately. Can't they see it's for the good of their neighborhood? I'm trying to do something for them and they won't let me. And suddenly she had a wild idea. "Wait a minute," Lara said. "I understand that the other members of the board are willing to make the deal but you are the one blocking it."

(Chapter 17, Page 98, Line 9)

Then, she lied by saying that she had a daughter.

"I love my daughter very much, and I assure you that I would never do anything in the world that would hurt her....."

(Chapter 17, Page 98, Line 21)

The way of modifying her communication style from Noble to Reflective above brings Lara's project successful. It was proven by the approval to go ahead with her project three weeks after her meeting with Edith.

## 5. Conclusions

The researcher can draw some conclusions after analyzing the data of American communication style. According to the findings and the discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that:

1. This study analyzed communication style of American in *The Stars Shine Down* by Sidney Sheldon which is reflected to the main character (Lara Cameron) and supporting characters (Howard Keller, Paul Martin, and Philip Adler) by using theory of McCallister.
2. Noble, Reflective and Magistrate were mostly used by Lara. Thus, most of his communication is influenced by switching back and forth between the Noble and Reflective style. This pattern of communication style is named dual style and Senator is the only one type of dual style in communication that alternate between Noble and Reflective style. Therefore, Magistrate is not the only one style that used by Lara in most of her interaction, but also Senator style.

3. Noble was utilized dominantly by Paul in his communication. The researcher analyzed that the prominent characteristic of Noble is direction and it was influenced by the social status. The higher status of the communicator in society, his or her communication will sound abrupt and directive to others. Meanwhile, other style such as Socratic and Candidate were found in most of Howard's interaction, and Reflective was more intensive used by Philip.
4. The result of study found that even if all of the communication styles were reflected to the main and supporting characters, the difference of frequency figures in using communication style is not too excessive for each styles (see in appendix).
5. Both of main and supporting character can control the outcome of interaction with their own communication style.

## 6. Suggestions

After conducting the analysis, the researcher needs to convey some suggestions for lecturer, students, and the future researchers as follows:

1. The lecturer should be aware to used novel as media in teaching and learning English and its culture.
2. The lecturer could give more examples about culture of target language, especially in communication style, both verbal and non-verbal communication.
3. The researcher expects the students of English Department to read more literature works especially English novel. It is because reading novel can be a good way in understanding other people's culture. Through novel, we can learn how they live as well as their communication and social life.
4. Students of English Department should not only understand about communication style of Americans, but also apply it in their interaction with foreign language speakers, especially Americans to avoid the misunderstanding of communication, either directly through conversation or social media.
5. The researcher also expected that there will be next study related to this topic that can discuss non-verbal communication style. Moreover, future researcher might be able to analyze either verbal or non-verbal communication style which can be taken in movie, social media, or the foreign language speakers itself.

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