



<https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/index.php/jall/index>

JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy), ISSN 2598-8530, September, Vol. 6 No. 2, 2022

Received	Accepted	Published
May 5th 2022	August 9th 2022	September 14th 2022

SPEECH ACT IN BARACK OBAMA’S SPEECH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze Barack Obama's usage of speech acts in speech "A More Perfect Union". The method used in this research is qualitative research. The data were collected and analyzed by collecting and classifying the utterances that are relevant to Searle’s theory on speech act’s classification. Based on the findings, the researchers discover three directives, four commissives, fifteen representatives, one declarative, and five expressive in the speech. The representative is the most common and declarative is the least common.

Keywords: *Pragmatic, Speech Act, Speech*

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is the study of the use of language in context or certain situation. When people speak, they may discuss their intended meanings, assumptions, purpose or aims, and action. The statements that the speaker produces through communication have a meaningful message than the word's or phrase's literal meaning.

When someone says something, it is not without any aims. Yule (1996, p. 47) states that speech acts is an action via utterances. Birner (2013) also states that uttering something is the same as doing something. You must be able to understand the meaning of the utterance through pragmatics, recognizing that the word or phrase include deeper meaning than the literal meaning of what is being said. Through speech act, the speaker can convey the action in words and sentences. The representation of this can be seen from an activity called speech.

Speech is a process delivery of an idea that aims to provide information or change and influence the mindset of the audience. Speech is a type of public speaking action in which a leader expresses their perspective or provides an overview of important topics or events that should be discussed and addressed.

According to Yule (1996, p.3), the study of meaning as transmitted by a speaker or writer and perceived by a listener or reader is called pragmatics. As a result, it is more concerned with determining what individuals mean by their utterances than with determining what the words or phrases in those utterances might signify on their own.

Speech act refers to a language-based action that can be investigated pragmatically. According to Yule (1996), speech act is a study of how language when it is being used by both the speakers and the hearers. Bach (1979) explains that communication is not only about language but also with action. This action has message in itself.

Searle (2005) states that there are five different classification of speech acts. The classifications are directives, commissives, representatives, declaratives, and expressives.

1. Directive

Speech acts in which the speaker is focusing to persuade people to do something are known as directives. They convey the speaker's desire for the addressee to take action. Advice, commands, orders, queries, and requests are examples of paradigm cases. The speaker seeks to elicit some future course of action from the addressee by utilizing a directive, thus making the world match the words through the addressee.

For example: Open your window!

2. Commissive

Commissive is speech acts in which the speaker commits to a future course of action.. They convey the speaker's desire to act. Offers, promises, refusals, and threats are examples of this speech act. The reality adapts to the words via the speaker himself in the event of a commissive.

For example: I will be back in three days.

3. Representative

Representatives (or assertives) are speech acts that bind the speaker to the truth of the articulated proposition and hence have truth-value. They convey the speaker's point of view. Asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating are examples of paradigm cases. The speaker depicts the world as he or she believes it is in this type of speech act.

4. Declarative

Declarative is spoken acts that cause immediate changes in the current condition of circumstances. They are referred to as 'institutionalized performatives' since they rely on sophisticated extra linguistic institutions for their successful presentation.

For example: Gary, you are fired!

5. Expressive

Expressive is speaking acts that convey a speaker's psychological attitude or state, such as joy, sorrow, or likes/dislikes. This types of speech act includes apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, and thanking..

For example: Wow that was remarkable!

The purpose of this study is to analyze Barack Obama's usage of speech acts in his speech "A More Perfect Union". The researchers choose this speech because it is arguably the biggest political event of the campaign in the 2008. This research focuses on Searle's speech act classification: directive, commissive, representative, declarative, and expressive. Similar with this, Dewi&Jannah (2022) conducted their research which focused on the illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979). There are five types of illocutionary acts found in their research : representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative.

METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative research. Moleong (2007) states that the data collected in qualitative research are in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers. In this research, The data were taken from Barack Obama's speech "A More Perfect Union" in the course of the contest for the 2008 Democratic Party

presidential nomination, on March 18, 2018. The data is analyzed by collecting and classifying the utterances that are relevant to Searle's theory on speech act's classification. In this research, the data is collected through the following steps:

1. Searching the video of the speech and the script.
2. Watching the speech and reading the script.
3. Grouping the utterances to Searle's speech act classification.
4. Analyze the data.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are 5 types of Speech Act that are found in this speech. They are directive, commissive, representative, declarative, and expressive. All of these are explained:

1. Directive

No	Data	Speech Act
1.	We cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together.	Directive
2.	But we do need to remind ourselves that so many of the disparities that exist in the African-American community today can be directly traced to inequalities passed on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow.	
3.	Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well.	

- a. In the first data of the table, speech act in this sentence is directive, because it is about Barack Obama's advice on solving the problem.
- b. In the second data of the table, speech act in this sentence is directive, because Barack Obama reminds the audience about disparities.
- c. In the third data of the table, speech act in this sentence is directive, because Barack Obama advice the audience about politics.

2. Commisive

No	Data	Speech Act
1.	I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.	<u>Commissive</u>
2.	Given my background, my politics, and my professed values and ideals, there will no doubt be those for whom my statements of condemnation are not enough.	
3.	We can dismiss Reverend Wright as a crank or a demagogue.	
4.	In the next election, we'll be talking about some other distraction.	

- a. In the first data of the table, speech act in this sentence is commissive, because it shows Barack Obama's promise of his story.
- b. In the second data of the table, speech act in this sentence is commissive, because Barack Obama confirms his statement.
- c. In the third data of the table, speech act in this sentence is commissive, because Barack Obama is refusing him.
- d. In the fourth data of the table, speech act in this sentence is commissive, because it is about what Barack Obama will do in the next election

3. Representative

No.	Data	Speech Act
1.	This belief comes from my unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people.	Representative
2.	In my first book, <i>Dreams From My Father</i> , I described the experience of my first service at Trinity.	
3.	Some will see this as an attempt to justify or excuse comments that are simply inexcusable.	
4.	And if we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care, or education, or the need to find good jobs for every American.	
5.	We would be making the same mistake that Reverend Wright made in his offending sermons about America - to simplify	

No.	Data	Speech Act
6	Legalized discrimination - where blacks were prevented, often through violence, from owning property, or loans were not granted to African-American business owners, or black homeowners could not access FHA mortgages, or blacks were excluded from unions, or the police force, or fire departments - meant that black families could not amass any meaningful wealth to bequeath to future generations.	Representative
7	A lack of economic opportunity among black men, and the shame and frustration that came from not being able to provide for one's family, contributed to the erosion of black families.	
8	For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years.	

No.	Data	Speech Act
9.	The fact that so many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning.	Representative
10.	That anger is not always productive; indeed, all too often it distracts attention from solving real problems.	
11.	Most working and middle-class white Americans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race.	
12.	The profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society.	
13.	This time we want to reject the cynicism that tells us that these kids can't learn.	
14.	There is a young, twenty-three year old white woman named Ashley <u>Baia</u> who organized for our campaign in Florence, South Carolina.	
15.	I am here because of Ashley	

Speech act in the first data until the fifteen data of the table is representative. Because all of the data in this table include about Barack Obama's statement, he give some information about his knowledge or believes that support his statement to let the audience know about a more perfect union, he also reject some of the action that can distracts attention from solving the issues to form the perfect union.

4. Declarative

No.	Data	Speech Act
1.	At this moment, in this election, we can come together and say, "Not this time."	Declarative

Based on the data of the table, speech act in this sentence is declarative, because Barack Obama gives declaration to change their action.

5. Expressive

No.	Data	Speech Act
1.	The man I met more than twenty years ago is a man who helped introduce me to my Christian faith, a man who spoke to me about our obligations to love one another; to care for the sick and lift up the poor.	Expressive
2.	A woman who once confesses her fear of black men who passed by her on the street.	
3.	And they are a part of America, this country that I love.	
4.	I somehow believe or sympathize with his most offensive words.	
5.	Whenever I find myself feeling doubtful or cynical about this possibility.	

- a. In the first data of the table, speech act in this sentence is expressive, because it shows Barack Obama's praising about the man.
- b. In the second data of the table, speech act in this sentence is expressive because it shows her fear about black men.
- c. In the third data of the table, speech act in this sentence is expressive, because it is about Barack Obama's feeling about America.
- d. In the fourth data of the table, speech act in this sentence is Expressive, because it shows about Barack Obama's sympathize about someone's words.
- e. In the fifth data of the table, speech act in this sentence is expressive, because it shows Barack Obama's feeling about the possibility.

CONCLUSION

The researchers discovered five forms of speech act in Barack Obama's speech which are Directive, commissive, representative, declarative, and expressive. The researchers discover three directives, four commissives, fifteen representatives, one declarative, and five expressives. Based on the findings, representative is the most common speech act in Barack Obama's speech, while declarative is the least common. We advice readers to look up and study more about the speech act in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Since speech act can be discovered in any speech, readers can readily grasp speech act by reading books or other sources such as speeches, films, short stories, etc.

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