

A STUDY OF SPEECH ACTS IN MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S SPEECH "I'VE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP"
(SEBUAH KAJIAN TINDAK TUTUR DALAM PIDATO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. "I'VE BEEN TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP")

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Abstract

Communication as a tool to deliver information become an essential thing in our daily life. It is the way people transfer the ideas, feelings, thought and messages to other people. Communication cannot be separated by language. Language is a bridge in order to make communication runs well. One of the manifestation of language can be found in speech. This study deals with pragmatics and concerns with speech act theory proposed by John Searle that aims to identify and analyse types of speech acts and to find the intended meaning of the text. The research is to find out the speech acts understanding in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech "I've Been To The Mountain Top". The purpose of this study is to explain what kind of speech acts that are found in King's speech and to reveal what is the dominant speech acts in the study. This study is descriptive qualitative because the types of data are in the form of texts and utterances. This study applies documentary research strategy as the technique of collecting data. The finding of this study found 52 utterances, they are 21 utterances belong to Representatives, 18 utterances are Commissives, 7 utterances belong to Directives and 6 utterances are Expressives. Representatives become the dominant speech acts in this study that indicates it commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition.

Keywords: Speech, Speech Acts, Type of Speech Acts

Abstrak

Komunikasi sebagai alat untuk menyampaikan informasi menjadi hal yang perlu di kehidupan kita sehari-hari. Komunikasi itu bagaimana cara seseorang memindahkan informasi mengenai ide, perasaan, pemikiran dan pesan kepada orang lain. Komunikasi tidak bisa dipisahkan dari bahasa. Bahasa adalah sebuah jembatan agar komunikasi berjalan dengan baik. salah satu wujud dari bahasa bisa ditemukan dalam pidato. Studi ini berkaitan dengan pragmatik yang memfokuskan pada teori speech acts (tindak tutur) yang dikemukakan oleh John Searle yang bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi sekaligus menganalisa tipe tindak tutur dan menemukan maksud dari arti teks. Studi ini untuk mengenai pemahaman tindak tutur dalam pidato Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "I've Been To The Mountain Top". Tujuan dari studi ini untuk menjelaskan jenis-jenis tindak tutur yang ditemukan dalam pidato King dan mengungkapkan dominan tindak tutur dalam studi ini. Studi ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif karena tipe datanya dalam bentuk teks dan pengucapan. Studi ini menerapkan penelitian dokumentasi sebagai teknik mengumpulkan data. Penemuan dalam studi ini menemukan 52 ungkapan terdiri dari 21 ungkapan adalah Representative, 18 ungkapan adalah Commissives, 7 ungkapan milik Directives dan 6 ungkapan lainnya adalah Expressives. Representatives menjadi dominan tindak tutur dalam studi ini yang menunjukkan bahwa pembicara menyampaikan kebenaran suatu masalah yang terungkap. A Tim

Kata Kunci: Pidato, Tindak tutur, Tipe tindak tutur

Introduction

Language has been used by people around the world. It becomes an essential instrument of interaction in communication among others. As Carrol defines that:

Language is arbitrary system of speech sounds or sequences of speech sounds which is used or can be used in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings, and which rather

exhaustively catalogs thing, processes, and event in the human environment. (John B. Carrol 1980:53)

From the definition above, people can easily express their ideas, desires and thoughts, even knowledge through language. By using language, speaker achieve certain effect and the interaction will be successful to attain the purpose. Moreover, language plays an important role in communication. Hornby (1995:179) adds that communication is the action of process in communicating. It occurs if both speaker and the hearer exist. In short, language has function as a bridge to communicate between speaker and hearer. It can also establish social relationship, for example speech. Speech is a manifestation of language. In speech, there is always the speaker who become the centre of attention and of course the audience. It aims to deliver and transfer informations about things to audience, to persuade them to do what the speaker says. For instance in persuasive act, it can be found in politic campaign. In order to get people's attention, a speaker should make preparation prior to perform the speech. Leech (1983) states that pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and developed in the late 1970s. It studies how people comprehend and produce communicative act in a concrete situation. There are two distinguishes of meaning in each utterance of communicative act of verbal communication. First is the sentence meaning (informative intent) and the second is communicative intent (speaker meaning). From the statement above, it can be summed up that pragmatics is the study of language as an instrument of communication on what speaker says and there is meaning of speaker's utterances.

Speech act is a root of Pragmatics. It can be found in many kinds of communication and is commonly used in casual conversation even in public speaking. For instance in casual conversation, a speaker asks to someone "Would you like to go to theatre with me?" another replies "I'm on duty". The first speaker tries to ask to second speaker go to theatre, and the second spekaer answer the question with indirect speech act to reject the proposal. The literal meaning of indirect speech act "I'm on duty" doesn't entail any sort of rejection. According to Yule (2010:133) Speech act is the action performed by a speaker through utterances. Besides, Searle (in Levinson, 1983:26) adds that "Speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, etc." It deals with how speakers use language in ways which cannot be predicted from linguistic knowledge alone. Moreover, it also concerns with what people say through the language by looking at the context. Talking about speech acts, it is not always about the meaning of the utterances that people produce, but it also performs some acts behind those utterances. Speech is one of media in communication. It consists of many utterances which can be analysed using speech act theory.

Here, the writer observes a speech "I've Been To The Mountain Top" by King who works for civil right movement. There are some reasons why the writer is interested to analyse the speech: firstly, as King joined in civil right movement particulary non-violance, he fought against racial injustice toward black negro people.

Secondly, the speech "I've Been To The Mountain Top was King's last speech before his assasination. Next, after he delivered the speech, it was followed by rioting in 125 cities and resulted in forty-six people being killed. Since his speeches are so meaningful and memorable, many people around the world paid attention to him through his speeches. In fact, not all of people understand all the implicit meaning in his speeches.

In line with the explanation above, the writer use speech acts to analyse the speech, because it concerns with what people say through the language by looking at the utterances and context. Through speech acts, it can be understood, roughly speaking, the principle according to which an utterance, in conversational setting.

Research Methodology

This thesis uses library research and qualitative method is applied to collect the data. Denscombe (2007:248) states that qualitative method is disposed to be associated with words or images as the unit of analysis. The data are taken from several resources concerning to racism especially racial problems between the blacks and the whites. *A Time to Kill* novel is the primary object and Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic's *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* is the source that concerns to the theory of race and racism under African-American criticism. All data are categorized in forms of narrations and statements. The study begins from the classification of narrations and dialogues about the kinds of racial practice; and the responses of the blacks and the whites toward racism. Then, all the data are processed by using critical race theory. The theory is used to analyze and identify the kinds of racial practices and the responses of the blacks and the whites toward racism seen in the novel.

Result

Based on the data which have been analyzed in this research, it is found that the white racists practice racism against the blacks such as racial prejudice, segregation, discrimination, intimidation, and extermination toward the blacks and the white sympathizers. In responding racism, most of the blacks reject racism through demonstration to demand the equality and justice. However, a few of them are apathetics because they feel that they have no power to stop and to erase racism as long as the whites still control all aspects of life in United States of America especially in the South.

Furthermore, the whites also respond racism. The responses of the whites toward racism emerge two kinds. Those are pro-racism and contra-racism. The first, pro-racism refers to the white racists who agree to racism and practice racism to the blacks and the white sympathizers. Some of them join Ku Klux Klan as their reponse. The second, contra-racism refers to the white anti-racists or the white sympathizers who reject racism by assimilating with the blacks and joining civil rights movements. Moreover, it shows that not all the whites are racist.

Discussion

This thesis has described speech acts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that appeared in his speech "I've Been To

The Mountain Top". In this research, the writer uses Searle's speech act theory. The writer found there are representative speech acts are mostly used in the speech. The amount of speech acts are 21 utterances. They compose asserting, stating, telling and concluding. In this case, Martin Luther King asserted some matters in his speech to the audiences. His speech he covers about the sanitation workers that are mainly from African-American and they have been discriminated in America by the government, particularly in Memphis, Tennessee. Not only that, he also discussed some aspects like nonviolent, inequality and racism.

Commissive is in the second position in his speech. They are about 18 utterances and comprise as willing and threatening, while Directives has 7 utterances and it comprises encouraging, permitting, inviting and suggesting. The last is Expressive and it has praising and thanking.

What are speech acts found in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I've Been to The Mountain Top"?

Representatives

Representative speech acts are kinds of speech acts that state what speaker believes and it commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. Representative speech act can be identified by some speech act verbs such as: asserting, stating, telling, concluding, etc.

a. Asserting

Utterance 1: As I listened to Ralph Abernathy in his eloquent and generous introduction and then thought about myself, I wondered who he was talking about. (p.1 line 1-3)

Base on the utterance above, the illocutionary belongs to representative (assertive). The word "I" is mentioned two times and followed by verb in the past form that indicate it counts as an act of asserting. In this case, King tries to assert Ralph as his partner in his life.

Utterance : We aren't engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody. (p.10 line 53-54)

This utterance is an assertive illocutionary act. The word "we" indicates plural subject followed by verb in past shows it counts as an act of asserting. It affirms that King tells to the audiences in his demonstration for not doing any negative protest and negative arguments. The perlocutionary that might affect the audiences follow the demonstration with peaceful and far from the name of brutal action.

Utterance : I can remember, I can remember when Negroes were just going around as Ralph has said, so often, scratching where they didn't itch, and laughing when they were not tickled. (p. line 28-29)

The utterance is an assertive illocutionary act. The word "I" mentioned twice and followed by modal "can" indicate as an act of asserting. King tries to assert the audiences to remember that Negroes were once have no freedom. They are said if Negroes do not laughing when they were not tickled.

a. Stating

Utterance 2: It's always good to have your closest friend and associate say something good about you. (p.1 line3)

Look up the utterance above. It is representative illocutionary act and it indicates as an action of stating. The utterance also assert about friendshipness of King and Ralph. King also states that Ralph is his best friend that he had in the world. The perlocutionary: audiences could believe Ralph is a kind person and King's best friend.

Utterance 3: And Ralph is the best friend that I have in the world. (p.1 line 4)

This utterance is a representative illocutionary act because the clause "Ralph is the best friend that I have in the world" indicates as an action of stating. King stated that Ralph is his best friend that he has in this world. Here, Ralph as a friend of King, supports King activities particularly fight about human rights and against racial injustice in America.

Utterance : Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. (p. line 4)

In this case, King says that it's not appropriate to make statement about his live in conditional sentence form because it's too late and the world is destructed or messed up by discrimination, nonviolent and inequality. This utterance is representative. The clause "Now that's a strange statement to make" indicates the act of stating. It commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition.

a. Telling

Utterance : You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. (p.6 line 28-29)

The utterance is representative illocutionary act. In this term, the word "You" followed by performative verb "know" indicate as an account of telling. King wants to tell to the audiences that once in Egypt, there is a slavery which has resemblance in King's era. In that time, Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery but the slave get together so the slavery is disappear.

a. Concluding

Utterance : But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here. (p.6 line 119-120)

The adverb of "ultimately" indicates this utterance counts as an action of concluding. It concludes that people need some suits and dresses, shoes to wear in a slum are, it is not only about long white robes with its symbolism. The utterance is representative illocutionary act. It commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. King intends to make concluding statement.

Utterance : It's alright to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the New York, the New Atlanta, The New Philadelphia, the New Los Angeles, the New Memphis, Tennessee. (p.19 line 122)

This sentence is representative illocutionary act. It commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed propotional condition. The clause "but one day" and "must talk about" indicate as an action of concluding. King tries to imagine the God's preacher is not only about the new

Jerusalem, they must talk about the new area in America concerned with slums

Utterance 2: Now, let me say as I move to my conclusion that we've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. (p.25 line163)

This utterance is representative illocutionary act because in the utterance there is a conclusion from speaker. King emphasize to the audience that we have to struggle till the end about something that Negroes has built, in this case like Tri-State-Bank and other Negroes institutions, because the beginning to build a greater process of economic base were Negroes.

Directives

Directive speech acts are kinds of speech acts that speaker use to get someone else to do something. The form of directives can be asking encouraging, inviting, suggesting, advising, etc.

a. Encouraging

Utterance 5: You reveal that you are determined to go on anyhow. (p.2 line 5-6)

This sentence is directive illocutionary act because the clause "*you are determined to go on anyhow*" indicates as an action of encouraging. It expresses psychological state of King that he tries to encourage the hearer to keep going in any condition.

b. Asking

Utterance : Now, what does all of this mean in this great period of history? (p.11 line 57)

This utterance is a directive illocutionary act. It constructed in interrogative structure that indicates as an action of asking. King wants the audiences to produce and action in the future. He tries to interact with audiences and wants all of people should unite and not separated each other. The perlocutionary is the audiences should keep togetherness in the great period of history.

Utterance : Who is it that is supposed to articulate the longings and aspirations of the people more than the preacher? (p.17 line 108-109)

This utterance is a directive illocutionary act. It constructed in interrogative structure that indicates as an action of asking and it needs an answer. The perlocutionary is to emphasize the speaker's answer.

c. Permitting

Utterance : Now let us maintain unity. (p.11 line 62-63)

Directive illocutionary act belongs to this utterance. King wanted to persuade and convince the audiences to do some future action. "Let us" is the key in identifying this object. King tried to get audiences to maintain unity together because at that time, the situation was not so good between the white and american-african people slavery.

d. Inviting

Utterance : I call upon you to be with us on Monday. (p.6 line 98)

King invites the audiences to be with him together on Monday in Memphis as he adjust to set the power to struggle against inequality. The utterance above is directive illocutionary act. The subject "I" followed by performative verb "call" and direct object "you" indicating that it counts as an action of inviting. The perlocutionary is to tell audiences to do something.

Commissives

Commissives speech acts are kinds of speech act that speaker use to commit to some future action. Commissive speech act can be identified by some speech act verb such as: Willing, Threatening, etc.

a. Willing

Utterance 6: As you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" (p.3 line 8-9)

This utterance belongs to commissive illocutionary act because it commits the speaker to some future action. King imagines if he was standing at the beginning of time, he would act as he wish in order to experience and give the best during his life.

Utterance 7: I would take my mental flight by Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. (p.3 line 10-11)

The utterance above belongs to commissives illocutionary because it commits the speaker to some future action, the word "*I would*" indicates strong will to do something and it is an action of promising. Here, the perlocutionary that might happen: King wants to propose that he has choice to take risks through extreme wilderness toward promised land. The perlocutionary: give perspective to audiences, even he reaches his purpose, he will not stop at one point.

Utterance 8: And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there. (p.3 line 12)

Again, the utterance number 8 is commissive illocutionary and it commits the speaker to some future action. The word "I" followed by modal in negative form draws the encouragement of King that he won't stop even he achieved his goal. The perlocutionary that might affect to the audiences is do not be satisfied in achieving something.

b. Threatening

Utterance : Now, if you are not prepared to do that, we do have an agenda that we must follow. (p.21 line 143)

This utterance is commissive illocutionary act because it is constructed in conditional sentence structure in which each clause indicates cause and effect. It commits the speaker to some future action. It indicates as an action of threatening. It shows that King threatened American government if they are not prepared to do the agenda, in this term fair treatment, the Negroes have an agenda that must be followed.

Expressives

Expressives speech act are kinds of speech act that reflects a speaker's attitude, emotional behaviour or feeling about some state of affairs. Expressives aim to express the speaker's inner state toward particular thing. It is preceded by speech act verb such as: thank, praise, etc.

Utterance 4: *I'm delighted to see each of you here tonight in spite of a storm warning.* (p.2 line 5)

This utterance is an expressive illocutionary act because the subject "I" is followed by performative verb in passive that indicates it counts as an action of praising. King states that he is happy seeing the audiences in his last memorable speech even there is an announcement about his assassination before he led the speech. King shows his spirit in front of the audiences and do not want to look afraid of that warning.

a. Praising

Utterance : *Now, I'm just happy that God has allowed me to live in this period, to see what is unfolding.* (p.8 line 46-47)

This utterance is an expressive illocutionary. The word "I'm just happy that God has allowed me" indicates as an action of praising. It expresses the psychological attitude of the speaker (King) to the God for allowing him to live in particular period and to see what is happening.

Utterance : *And I'm happy that he's allowed me to be in Memphis.* (p.8 line 47-48)

Again, this utterance belongs to expressive illocutionary. It has relation with the previous one and it indicates as an action of praising. It expresses psychological attitude to a presupposed state of affairs. King was so happy and grateful to God as he live in Memphis where there are some problems in the city, particularly about sanitation workers who mostly african-american that got discrimination and inequality. So that's why King have a chance to deliver his speech in Memphis against government policy.

Utterance : *And I want to commend the preachers, under the leadership of these noble men: James Lawson, one who has been in this struggle for many years; he's been to jail for struggling; but he's still going on, fighting for the rights of his people.* (p.18 line 113-115)

This sentence is expressive illocutionary act. The word "commend" is similar to appreciate and it counts as an act of congratulating. It expresses psychological attitude to a presupposed state of affairs.

Utterance : *But I want to thank them all.* (p.18 line 116)

This utterance is an expressive illocutionary act. It expresses psychological attitude to a presupposed state of affairs. The word "thank" is the sign of the utterance that indicate as an action of thanking. King deliver his thank to some particular preachers such as like James Lawson and Ralph Jackson and Billy Kiles.

Utterance : *I want you to thank them, because so often, preachers aren't concerned about anything but themselves.* (p.18 line 117)

Again, King tried to convince the audience to say thank to all the preachers because they only concerned with themselves especially fighting for the rights of the people and not concerned about anything. The utterance is expressive illocutionary act and it expresses the psychological attitude to a presupposed state of affairs.

What is the most dominant speech act found in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I've Been to The Mountain Top?"

The speech primarily concerns the Memphis Sanitation Strike. The writer found the main intended meaning of King's speech and he primarily wanted to show the matters happened to Sanitation Workers in Memphis that are being discriminated toward white society. He also showed that Negroes should not be compared with white society because they are as like white people there to attain the same treatments and rights. King calls for unity, economic action and boycott as well as nonviolent protest, while challenging the united States to live up to its ideal.

Conclusion

This thesis has described speech acts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that appeared in his speech "I've Been To The Mountain Top". In this research, the writer uses Searle's speech act theory. The writer found there are representative speech acts are mostly used in the speech. The amount of speech acts are 21 utterances. They composes asserting, stating, telling and concluding. In this case, Martin Luther King asserted some matters in his speech to the audiences. His speech he covers about the sanitation workers that are mainly from African-American and they have been discriminated in America by the government, particularly in Memphis, Tennessee. Not only that, he also discussed some aspects like nonviolent, inequality and racism.

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