

The Analysis of Assertive Speech Acts on The Speech of Barack Obama at The English Speech Channel About Ignorance is Not A Virtue

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Abstract.

This study is about to analyze the speech acts of Barack Obama's speech at Rutgers University especially the assertive speech act. The writer focuses on analyzing the kinds of assertive acts that appear in Barack Obama's speech at Rutgers University. This study was qualitative descriptive which analyzes the utterances of Barack Obama's speech by adopting Searle's theory. This study aims to investigate the types of representative acts in Barack Obama's Ignorance Is Not a Virtue and how assertive speech act realized in Barack Obama's speech. From the results obtained, several types of assertive speech acts were found. There are informing with 16 utterances. Suggesting with 9 utterances. Stating with 8 utterances. Asserting with 7 utterances. Describing with 4 utterances. Predicting with 4 utterances. Assuring and implying have the same total of utterances which is 2 utterances. Then affirming, conjecturing, and classifying also have the same total of utterances which is one utterance. The most dominant that used in Barack Obama's speech is inform act which takes up 16 utterances.

Keywords: assertive speech act, analysis, pragmatics.

Introduction

Living in human society without communicating with others is impossible. Communication is a normal human activity that allows people to communicate with one another. Humans can generate expressions or utterances that will influence the form of action while speaking. Speech is the way a speaker pronounces sounds and terms in a way that the listener understands and interprets the essence of the speaker's utterance. People's speeches aim to convey an opinion or an idea about something to each other with a firm intonation. The hearer must consider the essence of the context of speeches to achieve an understanding with the speaker. Many people deliver speeches on formal and informal occasions to convey their opinions on a subject.

This research also can be related to pragmatics learning. Pragmatics is learning about the meaning of what is uttered by speakers (Yule, 1996) so that speakers can accept and interpret the meaning concerning speakers. Pragmatics studies the science of language concerning the context used or in other words, pragmatics is bound by context. If the context is separated from the language entity that is being analyzed, there will be a misunderstanding in

interpreting the meaning of the language itself. So, this is the basis why human language needs to be studied in terms of its context.

Learning the meaning of words is inextricably linked to speech act theory in pragmatics. Speech acts are crucial because they serve as a human guide for analyzing the context being presented. Speakers and speech partners engage in speech acts. The speakers' speech acts communicate their utterances in accordance with the context, whilst the conversation partners accept and interpret it. Speech acts can be classified into three types, according to Austin: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. According to Searle, speech acts can be classified into five categories: representational, commissive, demissive, descriptive, and assertive. According to Searle (1979), forceful speech acts are classified as illocutionary acts in the taxonomy of speech acts. Assertive acts are illocutionary acts that describe a situation, such as claiming, hypothesizing, indicating, asserting, or swearing that something in the case is true.

Based on the explanation above the writer will aim to answer the question based on the problem statement:

1. What are types of assertive speech acts are used in Barack Obama's Ignorance Is Not a Virtue?
2. How assertive speech acts realized in Barack Obama's Ignorance Is Not a Virtue?
3. Why assertive speech acts can be contribute to the teaching of pragmatics?

Based on the problem statement, the purpose of this study are:

1. To find the types of assertive speech acts are used in Barack Obama's speech
2. To describe the realization of assertive speech acts in Barack Obama's speech.
3. To describe the contribution of assertive speech act to the teaching of pragmatics.

This study should be beneficial for English teachers, readers, and other academics.

1. For the English teachers

This study will be used to help them enhance their teaching materials, particularly in the area of pragmatics.

2. For the readers

This study is intended to include knowledge about speech acts and encourage participants to develop their abilities to analyze speech acts.

3. For the other researchers

Literature Review

1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of how a speaker and speech partner. The speaker can also be a writer, and the speech partner can be a reader, and the speaker's speech must be understood by the audience in meaning. In case, Yule (1996:3) concluded that pragmatics is learning of the meaning of what the speaker says.

Understanding the meaning of words through an utterance is dependent not just on what speakers say in a given context but also on what they say in general. According to Leech

(1985:32), pragmatics is the study of the meaning of the speaker's utterances in a particular situation. On identifying the meaning of the speaker, the speech partner should know the context and situation of the communication.

Mentioning by Thomas (1995, p.22) noted that pragmatics meaning does not only come from the meaning of the speaker or the interpretation of the listener but still involves the meaning created in the interaction. Conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, and communication ethnography are all related fields, according to Thomas.

2. Speech Acts

Speech acts are the simplest form of expression. When a speaker has to say something for others to understand what they are saying, they use speech acts that deal with social action. People can influence others by doing some actions, some examples make a request, ask a question, give statements, make promises, give thank, and offer apologies. Austin (1962) first proposed the concept of speech acts in his book "How to Do Something With Words." Austin claims that the purpose of speech activities is to say something to do something or to do something by uttering words.

According to Yule (1996:47), Speech acts are activities performed with the use of words. In other terms, people engage in behaviors such as pledging, proposing, apologizing and stating their position. The speech act is obtained from the meaning of a speech in the case of a speech act. The speakers' speech actions convey their utterances following the meaning, while the speech partners embrace and interpret it.

According to Austin (1962), he classified the different sense in which action could be said to be performed by utterances are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Locutionary acts are speech acts that say something without a specific purpose. The illocutionary act is the act of saying something to do something, or there is a specific purpose in it. Perlocutionary acts are acts of direct or indirect influence. The speech act's locutionary and perlocutionary levels have sparked a lot of discussions. According to Austin, the illocutionary act must be interpreted and must have consequences.

The illocutionary acts are often explained by Searle. Since the propositional substance specifies the requirements of satisfaction, truth state, and compliance in the case of a promise, he included it in illocutionary acts. As a result, illocutionary acts are divided into five categories: representatives, directives, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

The assertive illocutionary act point, according to Searle and Vandervaken (1985, p.94; also Vandervaken, 1990, p. 22,125), is to reflect how the universe is. The representative's argument or intent is to bind the speaker to the reality of the stated proposition. On the dimension of evaluation, which requires fact or false, all members of the assertive class can be evaluated. According to Searle's concept, assertive illocutionary acts include saying, hypothesizing, implying, asserting, or swearing that anything throughout the event.

Directives are a form of illocutionary act used to persuade the addressee to take action. The illocutionary point of these is that they are efforts by the speaker (of differing degrees and thus) to persuade the listener to do something. asked, order, command, demands, beg, appeal, pray, entreat, invite, authorize, and advise are all verbs that include directive acts.

Commissive is an illocutionary technique for persuading the speaker to perform a task. Promising, warning, planning, vowing to do, or refrain from doing anything are all verbs that have commissive acts.

Expressive. The purpose of this class illocutionary is to represent the expressed mental state. It is assumed that the proposition presented in an expressive is true. Thank, congratulate, apologize, condolence, deplore, and accept are verbs that include expressive acts.

The aspects of a declarative act that are brought on by the good performance of one of its participants concern the correspondence between propositional meaning and fact. Since there is a relationship to suit the arrow, after all, declarations are a very special category of speech act. Blessing, shooting, baptizing, bidding, passing, phrase, and excommunicating are examples of declarative verbs.

3. Assertive Acts

Assertive or representative acts according to Searle and Vandervaken (1985, p.94; also Vandervaken, 1990, p. 22,125) the point of an assertive illocutionary act is to reflect as the world is, while the point of a representative or assertive act is to pledge the speaker to the reality of the stated proposition. On the dimension of evaluation, which includes truthful and wrong, all members of the assertive act class will be evaluated. The course of illocutionary acts with the assertive point is fit is the term to the universe. The assertive argument aims to depict how things are. It's important to note that terms like "belief" and "commitment" are used to indicate depth. According to Searle's theory, assertive illocutionary acts include saying, believing, hypothesizing, implying, asserting, or swearing something.

Method

This study uses qualitative descriptive to analysis the data. According Creswell (2009) qualitative analysis is a method for determining the significance that a person or a community ascribes to a social or human problem. It refers to a study that necessitated a thorough examination. The object of this study uses Barack Obama's speech at Rutgers University in 2016. The writer want to focus to analyze the speech acts through the speech video on English Speeches channel on Youtube and the source of data of this study was taken from script <https://youtu.be/S4ITtvIFvyk> at the English Speeches channel on Youtube. The writer studied the subject by watching the video, reading, and learning the transcript of his speeches.

In collection data, the writer uses several steps, as follow: 1) collected the data by watching the speech video of Barack Obama's speech. 2) collected and selected Barack Obama's utterances in the transcript of the speech video based on theory speech acts. 3) after collected and selected then classified and identified the data by Barack Obama's utterances into specific types of assertive acts.

While the method of the data analysis the writer uses Miles and Huberman (1994) there are several steps to analyze the data: 1) classifying the data. Classifying data sorting used data and unused data. 2) presenting data analysis with the aim of concluding the result of the data obtained. The writer focused on Searle's classification of illocutionary acts to analyze the data. 3) then making drew data and conclusion from the result of the data analysis.

Finding and Discussion

To analysis the data the writer uses Searle's classification of assertive speech acts concept. From the result of the data found out several kinds of assertive acts based on utterances of Barack Obama's speech. The writer serves the data in the table following

Table 1: Total the class of assertive speech acts in Barack Obama's speech

Types of assertive speech act	Utterances	Percentage
Inform	16	29%
Suggest	9	16,30%
Stating	8	14,40%
Assert	7	12,60%
Describing	4	7,30%
Predicting	4	7,20%
Assuring	2	3,60%
Implying	2	3,60%
Affirming	1	2%
Conjecturing	1	2%
Classifying	1	2%
Total	55	100%

From the table shows that there are several types the class of representative speech acts that are used in Barack Obama's speech. In his speech it was found 55 utterances. The first consisted of 16 utterances of *informing* (29%). The second consisted of 9 utterances of *suggesting* (16.3%). The third contained 8 utterances of *stating* (14.4%). The fourth contained 7 utterances of *asserting* (12.6%). The fifth belong to *describing* with 4 utterances (7.3%). The sixth belong to *predicting* with 4 utterances (7.2%). Then, *assuring* and *implying* have the same total of utterance that is 2 utterances (3.6%). Then *affirming*, *conjecturing*, and *classifying* also have the same total of utterance that is one utterance (2%).

From the table above, it can be seen that the dominant assertive of speech acts in his speech is informing with a total of 16 utterances (29%). Then there is suggesting with a total of nine utterances. Then stating with eight utterances. Then asserting with seven utterances. Then there are describing and predicting by having the same total which is four utterances. Then assuring and implying have the same amount for a total which is two utterances. And then affirming, conjecturing, and classifying also have the same total with one utterance. So, the graph above showed that the informing dominated the assertive speech act used. Informing as the dominant assertive act because in his transcript, Barack Obama often provides information related to the context that he brought at Rutgers University.

The result on analysis types of assertive speech acts on Barack Obama's utterances was as follows:

A. Informing

1. Line 1 — Point number one.
2. Line 29 — Twenty million more Americans know the financial security of health insurance.
3. Line 37 — We've got a bunch of big problems to solve.
4. Line 43 — That leads me to my second point.
5. Line 47 — And as citizens, we all rightly put our country first.
6. Line 73 — The answer is to do trade the right way.
7. Line 44 — Building walls won't do that.
8. Line 93 — Facts, evidence, reason, logic, an understanding of science — these are good things.
9. Line 109 — That spirit informed our inventors and our explorers, the Edisons and the Wright Brothers, and the George Washington Carvers and the Grace Hoppers, and the Norman Borlaugs and the Steve Jobses. That's what built this country.

10. Line 113 — And today, in every phone in one of your pockets — we have access to more information.
 11. Line 166 — I only have two more points.
 12. Line 186 — The top 10 percent of earners now take in half of all income in the U.S. In the past, it used to be a top CEO made 20 or 30 times the income of the average worker. Today, it's 300 times more.
 13. Line 202 — In 2014, voter turnout was the lowest since World War II.
 14. Line 217 — one of the reasons that people don't vote is because they don't see the changes they were looking for right away.
 15. Line 252 — That's it, Class of 2016.
 16. Line 253 — Just one.
- B. Suggesting
1. Line 55 — We've got to have the cooperation of other countries in a global financial system to help enforce financial laws.
 2. Line 164 — We have to use our heads.
 3. Line 181 — If you want to change this country for the better, you better start participating.
 4. Line 239 — If you disagree with somebody, bring them in — and ask them tough questions.
 5. Line 242 — Don't be scared to take somebody on.
 6. Line 254 — Gear yourself for the long haul.
 7. Line 263 — So don't lose hope if sometimes you hit a roadblock.
 8. Line 269 — If you doubt you can make a difference.
 9. Line 286 — So get to work.
- C. Stating
1. Line 2 — We live in a great nation and we are rightly proud of our history.
 2. Line 3 — We are beneficiaries of the labor and the grit and the courage of generations who came before.
 3. Line 9 — The "good old days" weren't that good.
 4. Line 33 — America is better, the world is better than when I graduated.
 5. Line 46 — My first responsibility is always the security and prosperity of the United States.
 6. Line 100 — In politics and in life, ignorance is not a virtue.
 7. Line 148 — I mean, listen, climate change is not something subject to political spin.
 8. Line 234 — Now, I don't think it's a secret that I disagree with many of the foreign policies of Dr. Rice and the previous administration.
- D. Asserting
1. Line 39 — And the reason America is better is because we didn't look backwards we didn't fear the future. We seized the future and made it our own.
 2. Line 43 — The world is more interconnected than ever before, and it's becoming more connected every day. Building walls won't change that.
 3. Line 81 — Suggesting that they should be treated differently when it comes to entering this country.
 4. Line 85 — Suggesting that we can build an endless wall along our borders, and blame our challenges on immigrants.
 5. Line 127 — "We can judge our progress by the courage of our questions and the depths of our answers, our willingness to embrace what is true rather than what feels good."

6. Line 264 — A guy named Bruce Springsteen, once sang — “they spend their lives waiting for a moment that just don’t come.”
7. Line 270 — And here at Rutgers, helped found the Muslim Public Relations Council to work with administrators and police to promote inclusion.

E. Describing

1. Line 20 — Since I graduated, crime rates, teenage pregnancy, the share of Americans living in poverty — they’re all down. The share of Americans with college educations have gone way up. Our life expectancy has, as well. Blacks and Latinos have risen up the ranks in business and politics.
2. Line 34 — An Iron Curtain fell, apartheid ended. There’s more democracy. We virtually eliminated certain diseases like polio. We’ve cut extreme poverty drastically. We’ve cut infant mortality by an enormous amount.
3. Line 162 — I’ll give you an example on a lot of people’s minds right now.
4. Line 229 — That’s how democracy works.

F. Predicting

1. Line 40 — And that’s exactly why it’s always been young people like you that have brought about big change — because you don’t fear the future.
2. Line 91 — Four more years!
3. Line 248 — And maybe you’ll learn something and realize you don’t know everything. And you may have a new understanding not only about what your opponents believe but maybe what you believe.
4. Line 286 — Make sure the next 250 years are better than the last.

G. Assuring

1. Line 76 — That’s how we make sure that international rules are consistent with our values— including human rights.
2. Line 247 — And by doing so, you’ll strengthen your own position, and you’ll hone your arguments.

H. Implying

1. Line 4 — But I guess it’s part of human nature.
2. Line 127 — But when our leaders express a disdain for facts.

I. Affirming

1. Line 57 — The point is, to help ourselves we’ve got to help others — not pull up the drawbridge and try to keep the world out.

J. Conjecturing

1. Line 154 — Imagine if Benjamin Franklin had seen that senator with the snowball, what he would think. Imagine if your 5th grade science teacher had seen that. He’d get a D.

K. Classifying

1. Line 105 — Look, our nation’s Founders — Franklin, Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson — they were born of the Enlightenment.

Based on table, the total of types of assertive speech acts can be seen that found types of assertive acts in Barack Obama’s utterances. Obama's assertive speech act takes many forms which presented some examples as follows:

a. Informing

The main of informing is to tell the fact or new information to the audience that the audience does not already know. The function of assertive speech acts is to convey information in social speech.

- b. Suggesting
Suggesting is the type of assertive speech act. The goal of suggesting is to advise the hearer regarding something.
- c. Stating
The function of stating speech is an utterance or expression to provide information to somebody.
- d. Asserting
Asserting is the type of assertive act that has the function to say their statement is true.
- e. Describing
To describe something is to assert it. By describing something, the conversation will become clear.
- f. Predicting
The purpose of predicting is to make statements of things that are likely to happen in the future.
- g. Assuring
Giving effect to a sense of confidence or convincing to the listener about the facts given
- h. Implying
Implying is the type of assertive act that aims to provide evidence or show the listener.
- i. Affirming
Affirming is speech as confirmation of information to the listener so that the listener is sure and cannot avoid it.
- j. Conjecturing
The conjecture has the meaning of presumption that can be real or true. The speaker's purpose is that he has evidence for the truth of the propositional content.
- k. Classifying
The aims of classifying is to classify something into a group or category criteria.

The writer takes many forms which presented some examples as follows:

1. Informing

The main goal of informing is to tell a fact or information to the audience. The function of assertive speech acts is to convey information in social speech. Here the example of informing presented in Barack Obama's speech
"Point number one"

In the example of Barack Obama's speech above, Obama wanted to inform the audience that he will give some facts about his opinion to Donald Trump's campaign. The sentence "point number one" describes that he not only gave one information or fact to the audience but there was some fact that must be to inform to the audience. When he gave that statement, most of the audience gave applause and attention because the object he brought was important in politics. So the audience thought that the topic was Obama's discussion can make people have confidence about politics.

The second example of informing presented in Barack Obama's speech
"We've got a bunch of big problems to solve."

The sentence above describes that Obama gave an important point in his speech about making America great again. Because Barack Obama is president of the

United State the first responsibility is security and prosperity to citizens. The citizen also really put their country first. The sentence above explains that America has had problems for the past two decades that cannot be solved in isolation. In other words, in Obama's speech, he tries to invite the audience to cooperate in building a better America, upholding state law, facing challenges without fear.

2. Suggesting

The purpose of suggesting is to advise the audience regarding something. Here example of suggesting presented in Barack Obama's speech, as follow:

"We've got to have the cooperation of other countries in a global financial system to help enforce financial laws."

The example above is that every country must cooperate with other countries in the political system to help enforce the laws of the country. In Obama's speech as president, he gave the experience that working with other countries, especially in the global financial system is very important in developing state finance laws. He also suggests the audiences do something similar in the next.

The second example of suggesting in Barack Obama's assertive speech acts is

"So get to work."

To get people engaged and have a vision for the future is to give some suggestions. From the example sentence above, Obama advise young people to start working to build a more developed country. It is driven by an overview of past colleagues who have made changes. That's what makes young people work with the suggest given by Obama.

3. Stating

The function of stating speech is an utterance or expression for provide information or tell something to somebody. The example of stating

"In politics and life, ignorance is not a virtue."

Stating is speech that contains information about something. The sentence above state that having the nature ignorance is not a virtue in politics and life.

Conclusion

The writer draws various conclusions from the data analysis as a result of the data. Based on the data analysis, the writer finds that there are numerous sorts of representative speech acts in Barack Obama's speech, according to Searle's theory. Several utterances used in Barack Obama's speech follow these kinds, with a total of 55 utterances in each form of aggressive speaking act. Informed with 16 utterances, suggest with nine utterances, state with eight utterances, assert with seven utterances, describe with four utterances, predict with utterances, assure with two utterances, imply with utterances, affirm with one utterance, conjecture with one utterance, and classify with one utterance are some examples of assertive speech acts. The most prominent assertive speech act in his speech was discovered among the several sorts of aggressive speech actions used.

Ignorance Is Not a Virtue by Barack Obama has 16 utterances, accounting for 29% of the most significant speech act. In addition, the author explains how assertive speech acts were demonstrated in Barack Obama's address. The writer gave two examples of how it was realized in his speech; the function was informing, and the purpose was to tell the audience a fact. The second function is to give two examples, each of which has the goal of advising the

audience about something. The third function is to give an example of a function that tries to offer information or tell someone something.

When explaining the results, the author makes various recommendations for readers or anyone who want to learn more about the same issue as this study and read more books or journals to examine speech acts in greater depth and breadth because there are so many different sorts of speech acts.

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