



The Realization and Responses of Commissive Speech Acts on the Third Presidential Debate in the United States Presidential Election 2016

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Abstract

The aims of this current study are to find out the types of commissive used by the candidates in the debate, to analyze how the commissive speech acts are realized, to reveal how the commissive speech acts are responded by the audiences, to interpret why the commissive speech acts are realized in the debate, and to explain the most dominant types of commissive speech in the debate. The research design was a descriptive qualitative design describing the linguistics phenomena found in the president election debate. It is focused on commissive speech acts based on Searle's categories. Three instruments used in this research, namely: observation, recording technique, and note-taking technique. The data was analysed using description the setting, participants, and topics of the debate, categorization the utterances according to the topics, categorization the collected candidates' utterances based on the topics which are talked in the debate, description the utterances based on the topics, and classification of the utterances based on the theory of speech acts especially illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1976). The research findings indicated that the most common commissive speech act found is a promise. The commissive speech acts realized in the debate expresses some intention (sincerity condition). The importance of commissive speech acts realized in the debate is to convince the audiences based on the candidates' ideas, vision, and mission and their works ahead after one of the two candidates wins the presidential election.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of conversation is related to the study of speech acts. People perform speech acts when they offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, compliment, or refusal. A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. When we produce utterances, we do not simply make statements or say something without any intention. Austin (in Tsui, 1994: 4) states that speech acts are acts that refer to the action performed by produced utterances.

Pragmatics deals with what people do with language, beyond what they literally say. Therefore, the context of the language is very important in pragmatics study because it determines the intention of the speaker. Language is realized as text. It is not isolated sentences. To be more specific, they should have a better idea of what text is, how to categorize and describe them in terms of their genre, function organization and style (Sutopo : 2014). The most common definition of pragmatics were: meaning in use or meaning in context (Thomas, 1995:2). In addition, pragmatics is a branch of linguistics which learns about the use of language deals with the use of its context.

In pragmatics, studying about speech acts means study about the utterances. In attempting to express themselves, people not only produce utterance containing grammatical structures of words and sentences, but also perform actions via the utterances. Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts (Yule, 1996:47). The domain of speech acts is then focused on the intended meanings or illocutionary acts.

One type of speech acts that commonly happens in conversation between one person and another is commissive. Commissive is one type of speech acts in which the speaker commits to a future action and it is exploited in many interactions. People often utter promise, guarantee, refusal, swear, threat, etc., to express their intention of future action. According to Mey (2001:120-121), commissives also act like directives and 'operate a change in

the world by means of creating an obligation; however, this obligation is created in the speaker, not in the hearer, as in the case of the directives'. In commissive speech acts, the speaker commits himself for some future course of action. This class includes promising, vowing, offering, refusing, threatening, volunteering, agreeing, guaranteeing, inviting, swearing, etc.

Searle classifies the types of speech act into five major classes. One of those classifications is commissives. Commissives are those kinds of speech acts that speaker use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends. They are promises, threats, refusals, guarantee, and pledges. They can be performed by the speaker alone or by the speaker as member of a group. In using a commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words (via the speaker) (Yule, 1996: 54). When people perform commissives, they may say their speech by using the performative verbs such a promise, guarantee, swear, vow, etc. Performative verbs are the verbs showing the type of speech act explicitly. Those speech acts can be affirmed by the non-verbal expressions via facial expression, eyes gaze, body movement, or gesture.

The last debate on Wednesday, October 19, 2016. The format for the third debate will be identical to the first presidential debate. A debate may be examined in a variety of disciplines, including pragmatics. Within pragmatics a debate may also be examined from different points of view, including the theory of speech acts, which was originally developed by Austin (1962). The theory explains how speakers use utterances to perform intended actions and how hearers interpret intended meaning from what is said. As Searle (1969: 42) puts it, "all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts". This is to say that there is an act in every communication that people perform.

Debate is a tool for governmental campaign. Hornby (2005), defines debates as a "formal discussion to show skill and ability and arguing". To convince the opponent and all the audiences towards the candidate's in the essence of debate. The debate can be considered not only

as a session arguing and stating the argument, but also an expression of beliefs, opinions, feelings, and ideas. Verbal speech and its politeness may also be taken into account from the perspective of the participants' socio-cultural background like face, power, status, age, gender, social distance, kinship, participants' role, and membership within a speech community (Mujiyanto : 2017).

This study is important to be analyzed and studied since commissive speech act is used to state intention, make a promise, taken an oath or vow and as the language of communication among people as well. Commissive speech act is useful to reduce misunderstanding as well as to reduce possibilities for conflict and provide clear information, especially those that are related to development. Moreover, the use of commissive speech as the part of speech act is in the same function of the general communication and either for conducting political-debate.

METHODS

The writer used descriptive qualitative design in the study. A qualitative approach is an approach that attempts to describe the linguistics phenomena found in the president election debate. It is focused on commissive speech acts based on Searle's categories.

The subject of the study was videotaped debate performed by the United States presidential candidates. The data was analyzed by downloading the video of the debate session organized by the commission presidential election on November 2016 from

This part explains the result and interpretation of data analysis of the third debate of the United States Presidential Election 2016. The utterances that are used for the future action are called commissives. Based on Searle (in

www.youtube.com which reported by NBC News and the writer took notes from the utterances of the debate to result the findings. Youtube could be used to find, watch, download and upload the video for various purposes.

The unit analysis of this study was the utterances from the debate of candidates of Democratic nominee for president, Hillary Clinton, and the Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump in the U.S Presidential Election Debate 2016. The analysis was based on the illocutionary act focusing on commissive speech act and the types of illocutionary force indication devices (IFIDs), they were promise, guarantee, refusal, threat, volunteer, and offer.

In the data analysis, the writer took the utterances of the debate in every part. He watched and took the debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton on the third U.S Presidential Election, November 2016. In that case, we analyzed the data using commissive speech act theory that have been explained in previous chapter. Subsequently, the writer analyzed what commissive speech act was, its types and the use of it that occurred in the debate

The instruments for collecting the data is by doing observation, recording technique, and note-taking technique. The study is analyzed by classifying the utterances based on the theory of speech acts especially illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1976) which supported by Yule (1996).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Yule, 1996: 54) the forms of commissives are divided into four classes namely threat, promise, warning, and refusal. This research was based on the Searle's theory about commissive utterances.

Table 1. The Commissive Speech Act by Two Candidates

No	Commissive	Candidates	
		Trump	Clinton
1	Promise	7	9
2	Threat	4	5
3	Refusal	6	5
4	Guarantee	2	4
5	Offer	2	5
6	Volunteer		1
	Total	21	29

From the table 1, we can see how each candidate uttered commissive acts in their vision and mission speech. The candidates that show the most commissive acts in their utterances is the second candidate with 50%. The most common found is a promise. In a campaign, promise probably gives a positive effect that brings hope to the audiences.

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Second, the results of the analysis are presented, explain that the main attributes of commissives is needed in daily conversation and real situation. This means that when someone makes a promise, which is the paradigmatic example of this class, the world must change in order to match the propositional content.

Example 1

Clinton: We will not build a wall.

This utterance is a promise, it has a future reference committing the speaker (again with the above addressed we) not to do something. This

time, however, the propositional content is negative which is expressed by the adverb not. This promise could be as well a promise (when not beneficial for the hearers and committing only the speaker, although strongly) or assuring (in case the audience needed to know for sure that no wall would be built).

Example 2

Trump: I pledge to never sign any trade agreement that hurts our workers, or that diminishes our freedom and independence.

As Example 1, this case has a negative propositional content, too, but now expressed by the adverb never. Using never instead of not sign increases the emphasis of the speaker. There is a performative verb in this utterance which reveals the subclass of this commissive pledge. According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985, 1934) a promise is a strong commitment which is mostly neutral in connection with the hearer, in other words, not done for or against the hearer. This explanation suggests that the use of pledge in this sentence may not be the best possible option. A simple promise would be better because it is (usually) more focused on the positive outcome for the speaker.

Third, the response of the audiences to the commissive speech act in the debate is the audiences can get what they mean by hearing the utterances. As the example from Trump that he still shows his utterances are just trying to debate Clinton's ideas and does not lead to the vision and mission needed by the U.S. as the

state and its citizenship, and some others are just sounded like a theory.

Fourth, the importance of the Commissive Speech Acts Realized in the Debate is when someone makes a promise, which is the paradigmatic example of this class, the world must change in order to match the propositional content. Commissives always express some intention (sincerity condition) and, at last, the illocutionary point is that this group commits the speaker to some future action. Examples below demonstrates these features and the way they were recognized.

Fifth, there are six commissive speech acts that were analyzed in this research, such as guarantee, promise, threat, refusal, offer and volunteer. the writer concludes that commissive type that mostly found in this article is a promise. Promise is a statement of the candidate that will do or not to do something in the future. It will determine the candidate's act to commit to all American citizens whether they will do something in future or not. In order to be chosen by the citizens, promise perhaps brings a good emotion because it is convincing. The citizens could have a high expectation.

U.D.01/ Pr/ p.14

I will stand up for families against powerful interests, against corporations. I will do everything that I can to make sure that you have good jobs with rising incomes, that your kids have good educations from preschool through college. I hope you will give me a chance to serve as your president.

This sentence is promise. Promise is one of the forms of commissive utterance. The point or purpose of the promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something. Thus, it has a function to persuade the hearer.

U.D.01/ Pr/ p.15

I will do more for African-Americans and Latinos that she can do for ten lifetimes. All she's done is talk to the African-Americans and to the Latinos, but they get the vote and then they come back, they say 'we'll see you in four

years. We are going to make America strong again and we are going to make America great again and it has to start now. We cannot take four more years of Barack Obama, and that's what you get when you get her.

This sentence is promise. Promise is one of the forms of commissive utterance. The point or purpose of the promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something. Thus, it has a function to persuade the hearer.

U.D.01/ Pr/ p.15

Well, first of all, I support the second amendment. I lived in Arkansas for 18 wonderful years. I represented upstate New York. I understand and respect the tradition of gun ownership that goes back to the founding of our country, but I also believe that there can be and must be reasonable regulation. Because I support the second amendment doesn't mean that I want people who shouldn't have guns to be able to threaten you, kill you or members of your family.

The sentence above is a promise from Hillary. She proves that there must be a fixed-rule about gun's ownership among American people for it can threaten somebody. Promise is one of the forms of commissive utterance. The point or purpose of the promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something. Thus, it has a function to persuade the hearer believe to the speaker.

CONCLUSION

As stated in problem formulation, the results of the article are:

First, the writer finds important points as the discussion about the commissive utterance shown by the candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the third debate of the U.S. Presidential election. The debate uses the commissive speech acts. The total utterances of the types of the commissive speech acts that appears in the third debate are 50 utterances. The fifty data are categorized as follows:

1. Promise type is sixteen utterances

2. Threat types is nine utterances
3. Refusal type is eleven utterances
4. Guarantee type is six utterances
5. Offer type is seven data
6. Volunteer type is one utterances

The most common found is a promise. In a campaign, promise probably gives a positive effect that brings hope to the audiences. In this explanation, the candidates showed their intention to develop and improve the condition of the United States.

Second, the results of the analysis are presented, explain that the main attributes of commissives is needed in daily conversation and real situation. This means that when someone makes a promise, which is the paradigmatic example of this class, the world must change in order to match the propositional content. Commissives always express some intention (sincerity condition) and, at last, the illocutionary point is that this group commits the speaker to some future action.

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This finding is expected to be useful to enrich the English subject on how applying the use of commissive speech acts into the teaching and learning process of linguistics and either analyze the use and classifications of speech act that are used in the debate, especially political debate. It is hoped that future research could be focus on the politeness of commissive speech acts and its phenomena in the context of weightiness and its strategies. Politeness strategy in commissive speech acts will be aimed to appraisal from the hearers (audiences) that the speaker is a good person.

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