The Relations between Male and Female Participants in Using Assertive Speech Acts for Interactions in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*

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Article Info	Abstract
	As an act of communication, people prefer to speak up with what is coming up to their mind and belief which is called *assertive* or *representative* speech acts concerning what the speaker believes to be the case or not. In this regard, this study aims to explain the realization of assertive speech acts of male and female interactions in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and the relationship between male and female participants in realizing the assertive speech acts in terms of power, social distance, and rank of imposition. To expound this research more detail, a qualitative method was applied through direct observation of the videos and transcripts downloaded. Those data were supported by the theory of Searle and Vanderveken (1985) and Brown and Levinson (1987). From the data collected, it was found that there are 22 out of 32 types of assertive speech acts employed by male and female participants. There are no disclaim, notify, retrodict, insist, hypothesize, swear, testify, admit, accuse, and blame in their interactions. Mostly, males use affirm, inform, and state during their shows representing that they act to exert dominance and achieve obvious outcomes. Whereas, female ones used state, affirm, and followed by inform acts to deliver their thoughts indicating that they use communication as a tool to enhance social connection and create relationships. It is in line that men are goal-oriented, while women are relationship-oriented. Moreover, adult participants have the same level in terms of power and social distance which affect how they interact through more multifarious assertive speech acts than the young ones. Besides, there are a few impositions between male and female as the topic given has already talked before, hence the possibility of threatening speaker's face is not very highly occurred. Based on this study, hopefully, people will know how to make words fit the world appropriately. © 2020Universitas Negeri Semarang

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INTRODUCTION

Language has a big role in communication which can determine the goal of the communication itself. Mujiyanto (2011) states (as cited in Ulum, 2018) that language is a competence for two or more people to communicate with each other. It may express information, ideas, feelings, and desires that should consider several aspects, such as environment, facial expression, tone, linguistic feature, culture, and so on.

Unfortunately, sometimes people misunderstand the interlocutor's intention. Whereas in communication, people have their own goal towards the utterance conveyed, which they want action with the words (Austin, 1962). To cope with such phenomena, people should know not only the meaning but also the intention within it. This term is related to the dimension of an act; (1) *locutionary act* is the basic act of utterance (literal meaning), such as the utterance of 'I don't understand', (2) *illocutionary act* is the communicative purpose of the utterances. Utterance 'I don't understand' might be a request, a complain, an explanation, etc. (3), *perlocutionary act* is the act which comes from the effect of the utterance which is depending on the circumstances. If we utter 'I don't understand', it will have an assumption on the hearer; to help you to teach, to answer the question, to find out the easiest explanation. Therefore, as a speaker, we should know how to use language effectively and as a hearer, we should recognize the intention of the act uttered to avoid miscommunication.

As an act of communication, speech act has an important role in daily life since this term cannot be separated with human desire. People tend to speak up with what is coming up to their mind and belief which unconsciously causes an action to the interlocutor. They may offer information, explanation, description, argument, and so on. This analogy belongs to one of the characteristics of speech act types; it is *an assertive* or *representative* speech act. It is avowed by renowned linguists that this speech

act refers to what the speaker believes to be the case or not.

Moreover, males and females are different individuals from various aspects; mindset, attitude, language style, language perform, and other characteristics. Gray (1992) reveals that men and women have diversity in the goals, needs, and values of their communication. Men are goal-oriented; they define their sense of self through their ability to achieve results. On the other hand, women are relationship-oriented as they generally use their sense of self by their feelings and by the quality of their relationships. Furthermore, men cope with stress by withdrawing themselves from the conversation or situation while women solve it by reaching out and talking about the cause of their stress.

One of the spoken languages representing natural human communication interactions is a talk show. One of the well-known shows is *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, there are lots of illocutionary acts applied, namely assertive or representative.

There were numerous studies conducted related to those issues, such as Orin and Issy (2016) analyzed representative speech acts in English Debate Competition, which arguing was the highest one to embrace and persuade the hearers. Moreover, the representative acts to develop the argumentation came often from explaining. In the teaching and learning process, Junaidi (2017) found that 14 types of representative performed by the lecturer on the speaking class, and notifying was the most frequently used, yet rebut was only the lowest usage.

However, for gender diversity, Shams and Afgari (2011), and Rahmawati (2014) concerned about request speech acts. Then, the results showed that females had more polite requests than males. Unlikely, Subon (2013) focused on linguistic features in which women used more polite forms of address than men, ask more questions and use more humor than men. Remarkably, men used slightly more of fillers, hedges, and affirmatives than

women. However, both of them used direct speech.

Moreover, in the platform of The Ellen Show, Saragi (2016) discussed flouting maxims in conversational implicature. There were quantity and quality maxims flouted in generalized conversational implicature and maxim relevance and maxim manner flouted in particularized conversational implicature. Likewise, Zebua, Rukmini, and Saleh (2017) concluded that male participants mostly did the flouting than violating which quantity maxim was dominantly flouted by them. They used an exaggerated statement to convey their opinion which is too strong and appears worse than the reality they are. Meanwhile, the female participants dominantly violated the relevance maxim to avoid talking about something.

Conversely, to have more understanding of those phenomena, the researcher analyzed assertive speech acts of male and female interactions through Searle and Vanderveken's theory by way of detail categories. Besides, the popularity of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* provides information on how both males and females react with various speech acts reflecting daily communication. Therefore, to accomplish and overcome such speech acts phenomena, the researcher analyzed the speech acts in a talk show that is rare to observe by considering gender diversity.

METHOD

Typically, this research was designed as descriptive qualitative research which belonged to the case study because the researcher analyzed the data from different angles based on the speech acts, social parameters, and gender differences.

Through the direct observation of the video, the researcher re-transcribed the available transcripts found in the show, followed by the codification of each utterance. Here, the data taken were from the interactions occurred in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, and those utterances were classified into their own types. During the interactions, the researcher also examined the social variables of the assertive speech acts conveyed by both males and females. Then, they were interpreted based on the existing context and situation occurred.

To gain the data related to each research question, the researcher watched the downloaded videos from the Youtube channel of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* that had current issues and the most viewers. By watching those videos for several times, the researcher would be familiar with the interactions among the participants. Then, the researcher also re-transcribed the data, in case if the videos did not provide the transcripts, the researcher should transcribe the data well. Last, to get maximum results in gathering the data, the researcher codified the data based on their own categories and took some notes to detect not only the participants' characteristics but also the background knowledge as the supported data analysis of social aspects that could influence their speech acts.

After collecting the data, the researcher identified the utterances whether they were assertive speech acts or not. Then, the researcher reduced the data to make them more detail and complex to classify. The classification was done by coding the data into their own types of assertive speech acts. The classification was adopted by using Searle and Vanderveken's theory. Later, the data were both analyzed and interpreted according to the socio-pragmatic perspective of Brown and Levinson by looking at the context and the situation of the participants in the show.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher explains the realization of assertive speech acts in male and female speech on *The Ellen DeGeneres*

Show, and the relationship between male and female participants in realizing the assertive speech acts in terms of power, social distance, and degree of imposition.

Based on the data collected, it was found that 237 containing assertive speech acts in which 22 out 32 types of assertive speech acts were applied by male and female participants. Besides, there were no disclaim, notify, retrodict, insist, hypothesize, swear, testify, admit, accuse, and blame in their interactions.

The Realization of Assertive Speech Acts in Male Speech in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*

There were 12 assertive speech acts in the transcription sheets of Kid Astronomy Expert, Kid Geography Experts, Adam Sandler, Henry Wrinkler, and Stedman Graham. Those acts were affirming, reporting, asserting, praising, informing, stating, assuring, objecting, denying, rebutting, reminding, and suggesting. Generally, affirm was the most frequently used form by those males, except the astronomy boy. Besides, they also employed inform and state acts during the interaction, yet Stedman Graham did affirm, assert, and inform twice than others. For conjecture, argue, object, and confess, the adult males did not do them at all. Differ from adult guests, those kids only relied on upon affirm, report, assert, inform, state, object, and deny to communicate with the host. To have further clarification in male participants, one of assertive speech acts as follows:

Ellen   : ….(cont.) There's a tooth missing.
Jerry   : **Yeah. There is a tooth**.
Ellen   : OK. Yeah, I see there is. When did that happen?
Jerry   : So after my space presentation, when I went home, …..
Ellen   : ……… So you had a girlfriend, I understand. I read up about what happened last time.
Jerry   : **Yeah**.
Ellen   : Her name is Brianna?
Jerry   : **Yeah.**
Ellen   : Yup. You still with her?

Jerry   : **Yeah**. *I have to tell you a secret.*

(Jerry Morrison)
Sandler : … Just like, whoa, you lock with daddy's eyes, man.
Ellen   : That's kind of creepy, too.
Sandler : **That's a good one, Ellen. You're right. That is gross**.
(Adam Sandler)

The findings explained that affirm style (the bold words) was commonly used by males. It corresponds to Subon's (2013) investigation that men used more affirmatives than women as well as the frequency of affirms in the show. Holmes (2003) mentioned that males' character is goal-oriented. They tend to seek the truth by dominating the time and turn-taking. Consequently, they were direct to the heart of the matter by giving affirm, state, and inform.

Affirm speech acts here carry the notion of making a positive assertion to state something to be true (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985). The male's tendency of confirming something was proven by giving reinforcement towards the statement given based on the fact, or sometimes, they added discourse markers to strengthen the truth. Oppositely, the pattern of kids' affirms was very simple, it was only in the form of discourse marker 'yeah', or repeating the simple statement before, considering their age was still in the elementary level. Therefore, language acquisition and language used were limited. They could not expand their language complex as adults did.

The Realization of Assertive Speech Acts in Female Speech in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*

The data exposed that females expressed more assertive speech acts than males since women are relationship-oriented. They attempted to establish and maintain the communication in 17 acts, namely inform, complain, affirm, praise, state, object, assert, lament, confess, argue, criticize, predict, boast, suggest, claim, guess, and report. State, affirm, and inform were in a similar position as excellent as the male did. The difference was

only in the first position performed if females typically preferred to use state whilst males used affirm more often. To find out more the realization of assertive speech acts in females side such in the following example:

Ellen : Tell everyone the name and
          where they can go buy it.
Pink : It's called Two Wolves, and it is
  my heart project. …..(cont.)
Ellen : Wait, where do I fit into it?
          Am I—
Pink : **You're there, you're there.**
Ellen : OK, OK.

(Pink)

More specifically, both guest stars and the host did more state speech acts than others. It is caused that those females are fond of stating something they know whether it is true or not. They also like making opinions based on how they feel. Leaper, 1991; Maltz and Borker, 1982; Wood, 1996; and Mason, 1994 argued that women use communication as a tool to enhance social connection and create relationships. Hence, they are more expressive, tentative, and polite in conversation (Basow & Rubenfield, 2003).

The guest stars, Pink and Jennifer Garner, presented stating to handle their interactions with the host. While, Ellen used it to express something she knows, and to respond to the related issues. In addition, they also applied affirm and inform to satisfy the communication. The usage of stating here merited with Afifah's (2018) observation that female uttered in declarative. State was the highest percentage since it was less offensive. Moreover, Searle and Vandervaken (1985) cited that stating something is related to the benefit of the hearer. It aims to express something clearly by giving a full account or taking an official position on something. This tendency was applied solely for supporting and replying to the questions, and it was seen from the application of state and affirm which differed only one point.

Additionally, as a host, Ellen tried to either maintain or attract the attention of the guest stars through some praise with the intention of opponents feels comfortable to not

only answer but also share the upcoming issues. It is in accordance with previous research from Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1977; Eagly, 1987; Grilligan, 1982; and Miller, 1976 that women are to be more social in their interactions.

The Relationship between Male and Female Participants in Realizing the Assertive Speech Acts in terms of Power

The relationship between male and female assertive speech acts in terms of power was different based on their functions. For Ellen, she relied on legitimate and expert power. Legitimate here implied that she was older than other guest stars, except two old men. Also, her role was as a host of the show, and her status in social life was undoubted. Expert power defined that she was an expert in controlling the show. Commonly, Ellen expressed stating form to give her opinion related to the topic, to establish and to maintain the communication as well as to change to another topic. Also, affirm, assert, argue, suggest, predict, and conjecture was to express her argument and to draw more information related to interlocutors' issues.

But guest stars could have power because of their role. It could be proven from the assertive speech acts used by some stars. Starting from affirming, it intended to confirm the truth of the issues asked. Sometimes, they reinforced the truth to avoid misconception through assert and assure speech acts. Then, they interrupted the conversation with informing plus reporting to avoid further question or confusion, and to explain the real story.

Furthermore, adult guest stars also propounded stating to give respond related issue they got. Besides, it was useful for them to not only answer the questions but also to protect themselves from incorrect statements. Argue, deny, and rebut were as a way of not only rejecting but also defending with what is said before. While suggesting was done because they knew about the question given and they were experts in that field. For

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women, they also expressed criticize, claim, and guess about the issue they were facing to avoid misunderstanding. It is according to women's character that women are more expressive and tentative people. Thus, women are likely to talk about actual problems faced to create and to nurture close relationships (Gray, 1992 & Tannen, 1990). But it should be noted that not all assertive speech acts conveyed (such as state, affirm, assert, etc) have power to influence someone's behavior or face, they depend on the context and situation occurred.

The Relationship between Male and Female Participants in Realizing the Assertive Speech Acts in terms of Social Distance

The relationship between male and female assertive speech acts concerned social distance obviously exhibited that almost all guest stars and the host had a close relationships, except the kids because the intensity of their meeting was not too intense and their ages were far away causing their communication to seem rather formal and orderly. As a result, the assertive acts used were also simple, such as affirm, report, assert, inform, state, object, and deny. Otherwise, adult ones were more varied with many additional forms such as praise, assure, rebut, remind, suggest, complain, lament, confess, argue, criticize, predict, boast, claim, and guess.

However, in the women side, they created more multifarious assertive acts than men even their ages were not quite difference; they are younger than Ellen. But, Pink and Jennifer had close relationships as well as other actors because they have the same level of occupation, age, and interest.

Based on some previous reasons, they had less social distance (D-) that made them easier not to require a polite language in sharing their argument. The closer the speaker, the more direct linguistic form (Marquez, 2000). They also did not feel awkward and rigid to speak with one another.

The Relationship between Male and Female Participants in Realizing the Assertive Speech Acts in terms of the Degree of Imposition

Normally, the degree of imposition was done by the host. She acted state and inform to attract the guest stars to the topic discussed, instead of doing assertive speech acts of conjecture acts. She thought that it was a better strategy to reveal her opinion regarding the issue happened. The high imposition done by Ellen through the direct utterance of stating acts to the ones who have intimacy. She did it because she just wanted to give a response to the problems, and to construct the atmosphere more lively. But, there were a few low impositions on conjectures and states which were told through implicit meaning, it was due to avoid the interlocutors lose face.

The rank of imposition was less frequent in guest stars. Only the adult one who could impose the interlocutor by stating. It was only to make a joke with his friend (i.e. the host) who have not seen each other for a long time. On the other hand, there was no high imposition in kid participants, because they were in low power and high social distance.

Briefly, there was no significant imposition in this show, because they were in an informal situation, and the topic discussed had already occurred, hence the participants just asked for opinions and found out the truth.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Summing up these findings and discussion obtained, there are only 22 out of 32 types of assertive speech acts applied by males and females in their interactions. There are no significant differences between males and females in using those assertive acts.

Males tend to produce affirm and inform than state, because they are goal-oriented. They use language to exert dominance and achieve obvious outcomes. Whereas, female's character is relationship-

oriented making women tend to state and respond to the questions. It can be seen from the usage of state and affirm dominantly. They prefer making opinions to confirming the truth. It is caused by the fact that women are more expressive and tentative thus they are always based on their feelings.

Pertaining to social parameters, both males and females noticeably attempt to realize the casual talk during the conversation since they have different power in terms of their functions. For Ellen, she relies on legitimate and expert power. While, as a guest star, they are in legitimate power. Besides, in terms of social distance, those kids are not intimate, even the geography kid, Nathan has ever been in that show several times. However, adult guest stars have a close relationship since they are friends as well as the interest, even though some of them have a long vulnerable long age.

There are a few degree of impositions in this show, because they have a good intimacy and the topic given has already occurred, so the possibility of threatening the speakers' face is not very highly occurred. Mostly, the imposition happened is done by Ellen in the way of state and conjecture speech acts to response to the interlocutors and to establish the interactions.

In short, the data taken is already available on youtube. It should be better if the researcher records them directly in order to obtain more natural data. However, at the moment, it is difficult to get English full version data naturally as most of people communicate in Indonesian.

Besides, this gender difference analysis is not used as a reason to discriminate against male or female participants but rather it is acknowledged and realized that they have their own position and characters that cannot be separated from their natural habits.

Because this research only focuses on the utterances conveyed by considering the facial expression under the context and existing situation. Therefore, for individuals who plan to carry the same theme of such

speech acts, they are expected to be able to observe more specific, it may be in the form of the audiovisual such as eye contact, body language, intonation or language used specifically by men and women to have broader results. Or else they may investigate classroom interactions between or among lecturers and lecturers, and students to students.

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