DISSECTING NADIEM ANWAR MAKARIM’S SPEECH AT THE SINGAPORE SUMMIT 2020: A STUDY ON ASSERTIVE SPEECH ACT

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Abstract

This research analyzes Nadiem Anwar Makarim’s speech at the Singapore Summit 2020, aiming to distinguish the types of assertive speech acts and to comprehend their functions with the focus on the context. This research employs descriptive quasi or mixed-method. The qualitative method is used to explain the data, while the quantitative method is used to count the percentage of the data. The findings show that there are 139 assertive utterances used by Makarim. The analysis shows that there are five types of assertive speech act found. They are 28 or 20.14% of stating, 22 of 15.82% of claiming, 54 of 38.84% of reporting, 14 or 10.07% of reminding, and 21 or 15.10% of suggesting. Each type has its function. Reporting is to give information to the hearers, stating is to commit the hearers about the fact and truth, claiming is to say that something is true when some people may say that it is not true, suggesting is to give an opinion to the hearers, and reminding is to remind the hearers not to forget the condition. It is because the way Makarim delivered his speech refers to politeness. After reading this research, it is expected that the readers can realize the language phenomenon, especially speech acts and assertive types in a speech which eventually improves the understanding of filtering an utterance.

Keywords: assertive speech acts, context, function, types, utterances

INTRODUCTION

Humans as speakers of language always act through their words to express meanings, feelings, opinions, and thoughts in communication contexts. Through communication, speakers produce utterances that can influence the interlocutors to do what the speakers meant. In this case, the interlocutors will be influenced by the utterances that contain meaning and purpose because of the speaker, the situation, and the structure of the language itself. When someone talks, he or she does not only produce utterances that contain grammatical sentences (interrogative sentence, imperative sentence, declarative sentence, or other types of sentences) but also takes action through the words.

The level of acceptability of what is conveyed depends on the language ability of the people using it. The factors that affected them are because of the speaker, the situation, and the structure of the language itself. The speaker, in this case, refers to the person who conveys the message or the person who says something and has the appropriate capability in their respective field. The situation refers to the appropriate time or circumstances used by the speaker in delivering his/her message or speech. The structure of language refers to the use or selection of the appropriate diction, such as the choice of words uttered by the speakers in using the language or message to be conveyed.

One of the ways to communicate by conveying ideas is by delivering a speech. A speech is a form of one-way communication. Speech is usually conveyed by a leader to lead and give their thought or opinion in front of many of his/her subordinates or audiences. Speech generally has one or two functions or things like influencing other people to
follow his/her will with volunteers, giving an understanding or information on other people. A speech made in public needs to pay attention to proficiency in rhetoric. This proficiency is needed because it refers to the ability of speakers to express their opinions and ideas. This communication is an ongoing interaction in linguistics study in one or more forms of speech involving two parties, namely the speaker and the interlocutor, with one subject, in a particular time, place, and situation (Chaer, 1994). The communication between these parties in using language will be studied and discussed in the field of speech, especially in the field of pragmatics.

Pragmatics is the study of language use of the relation between language and context which is basic to an account of language understanding and involves the making of inferences that will connect what is said to what is mutually assumed or what has been said before (Levinson, 1983). The wider definition comes from Yule (1996) who states that pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning. Also, pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning. Another definition also states that pragmatics is the study of how more to get communicated than said. This means, that once speakers said a sentence, this sentence may have more than one meaning. It can be meanings in one sentence. In addition, pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. Pragmatics which discusses the speaker’s meaning, also discuses in the speech acts.

According to (Wijana, 2009), “Speech act is an element forming activity language.” While Ibrahim (1993) explains that speech acts are utterances that are actions. From these opinions, it can be said that speech acts are verbal acts that are used to express something at the same time. Therefore, it can be concluded that speech act is a process of activity language in the form of sentences and conversation between the speakers and the interlocutors to produce an action. Yule (1996) stated that speech acts are the study of how the speakers and hearers use language. The types of speech acts themselves are three: (1) locutionary acts, (2) illocutionary acts, and (3) perlocutionary acts. Speech acts are also an utterance that serves a function in communication. There are many kinds of utterances; one of them is assertive utterances. An assertive utterance is a form of speech that bind the speaker to the truth of the proposition expressed, for example stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming, demanding, admitting, showing, reporting, testifying, mentioning, and speculating. In communication, it is important to put forward the truth and facts based on a clear information, and also in an effective and easy-to-understand way for others.

Many speeches were delivered by political figures. One of the well-known people, especially in Indonesia, is the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, Mr. Nadiem Anwar Makarim. He delivered his speech at a famous event, Singapore Summit 2020. His speech was uploaded on the Singapore Summit YouTube channel. The duration of this speech is 32 minutes 52 seconds, entitled “Singapore Summit 2020 – Distinguished Guest Speaker: Nadiem Makarim”. His speech is talking about Redefining the Future of Education. There are aspects that the researcher thought can be highlighted in his speech, such as the administration of the educational system, personalization of the educational system, the COVID-19 situation in Indonesia, the important roles of parents, and the inequality of digital devices. Those aspects are what he delivered. At the same time, his speech talks about a COVID-19 outbreak that is affecting people around the world, especially in Indonesia. The existence of COVID-19 makes him have to be alert in dealing with education issues in Indonesia. It is because COVID-19 has made a big impact on education in Indonesia. Therefore, it is appropriate for him to discuss the issues in these areas at the Singapore Summit.

Based on the explanation, the data in this research consist of many utterances that are interesting because the types spoken are assertive to be analyzed by the researcher. Assertive speech act can be interesting to analyze because assertiveness refers to the ability of people who used it in a way that is honest and respectful. In another sense, assertiveness is interesting because it is a core communication skill. The analysis of this research used pragmatics, speech acts, and context theories, especially the assertive speech act theories. Besides, the researcher
would like to explain the types and functions of assertive utterances themselves. Therefore, the reason why she
analyzes this topic is that she expects to prove the important aspects of using a language in communication. Besides,
the data of this research has not been analyzed.

The researcher examines Makarim’s speech at the Singapore Summit 2020 in redefining the future of education as
the research object. The formulation problems are as follows. (1) What are the types of assertive speech act found in
Makarim’s speech at the Singapore Summit 2020? (2) What are the functions of his assertive types to the hearers?

METHODOLOGY

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. According to Clisset (2008), “Qualitative research covers a
wide range of approaches for the exploration of human experience, perception, motivation, and behavior, and is
concerned with the collection and analysis of words whether in the form of speech or writing.” This method in this
research showed a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words of people who
have been observed and categorized. Another method used in this research is the method of triangulation, credibility,
and dependability (Adhitya & Hapsari, 2022, 125). Hence, this research focuses on analyzing speech acts by using Yule
and Austin’s theory and Halliday’s theory in analyzing the context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are the data that was taken from the video of the Singapore Summit YouTube channel
which duration is 32:52 minutes. The title of this video is “Singapore Summit 2020 – Distinguished Guest Speaker: Nadiem Makarim”, analyzed by using the theories of (Yule, 1996) and (Searle, 1969). There were five types of assertive
utterances were analyzed. They are stating, claiming, reporting, reminding, and suggesting. There are 139 data about
assertive utterances found in Makarim’s speech.

Table 1. Assertive Types found in Makarim’s Utterances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assertive</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stating</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiming</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38.84 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminding</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.07 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that the assertive types found in Makarim’s speech consist of stating, claiming, reporting,
reminding, and suggesting. Reporting has the highest frequency of its occurrence which is 54 times (38.84%). It is then
followed by stating which occurred 28 times (20.14%), claiming which occurred 22 times (15.82%), suggesting which
occurred 21 (15.10%), and reminding which occurred 14 times (10.07%).

The Types of Assertive Speech Act Found in Makarim’s Speech at Singapore Summit 2020

Based on the research data, this research consists of five types of assertive acts. The number of types and the
functions are the same. The data were analyzed by classification made by Searle, concerning assertive speech acts are
primarily based on varied criteria.

(a) Stating is the use of words that contain the truth said by the speaker. The speaker used words that convince the
hearers that what he is saying is true. On the other hand, this type refers to the self-statement of the speaker while
delivering his idea. For example: “I think when we talk about disruption, the conventional kind of image of disruption is a
technology player coming in and transforming the way an industry operates usually you know leaving the old ways of doing things behind." belongs to the type of stating. The sentence "I think..." refers to the speaker convincing that what he is saying is true by his assumption. It is used to say that one believes that something is true, that a particular situation exists, and that something will happen.

(b) Claiming is the use of words that refers to forceful. These words if delivered by the speaker, it will make the hearers have to believe them without any doubt and rejection. For example, “The role of technology here is very interesting." belongs to the type of claiming. The phrase “very interesting” refers to the speaker’s claim. The word “very” used to emphasize or stress something, high degree, extremely, that one should believe that something is true with no doubt. The word “very” also refers to Makarim’s claim.

(c) Reporting is the use of words that refer to the informing of an event that has occurred to the hearers. The words of reporting if used by the speaker will let the hearers know the information that they did not know before. For example: “Teaching is extremely complex, teaching has massively psychological and empathy-based dimensions of what makes learning happen.” belongs to the type of reporting. It can be seen that “teaching is extremely complex” refers to the speaker’s reporting. The sentence is used to inform or give information to the hearers, and also refers to describe the way how teaching works.

(d) Reminding is the use of words that the speaker used to remind the hearers about a condition. This type refers to a hearer with the additional preparatory condition that they once knew and might have forgotten the propositional content (Searle, 1969). For example, "The second thing is don’t expect you know and this is coming from the minister of education that is trying to transform universities to be much more open and collaborative but you cannot wait for the system to change." belongs to the type of reminding. The clauses "is don’t expect you know” and “but you cannot wait for the system to change” are used to remind the hearers not to forget the condition. They refer to reminding hearers not to forget the condition that the speaker delivered.

(e) Suggesting refers to a directive and assertive use. One can suggest that the hearer to do something and that something is the case (Searle, 1969). It is the use of words that refer to the speaker’s suggestion to the hearers to do what is suggested. For example, “You have to take things into your own hands and actually either shape the educational environment that you are in especially in higher education where you are given more ability to do or seek it whatever you can to find the relevant skills that you know you need for your career.” belongs to the type of suggesting. The sentence “You have to take things into your own” is used to give an opinion to the hearers to do what the speaker said that is the hearers should be independent by their own hand.

**The Functions of Assertive found in Makarim’s Speech at Singapore Summit 2020**

Based on the research data, this research consists of five functions of assertive acts. Therefore, the amount of the type and the function are the same. The data were analyzed by classification made by Searle, concerning assertive acts are primarily based on varied criteria.

(a) The function of stating is to commit someone about the fact and truth. On other hand, this type refers to the self-statement of the speaker while delivering his idea. For example, “I think when we talk about disruption, the conventional kind of image of disruption is a technology player coming in and transforming the way an industry operates usually you know leaving the old ways of doing things behind.” belongs to the function of stating. The speaker states his argument regarding the current disruption. Where the disruption today refers to the people in the technology field coming in and transforming the way the industry operates. He states that people in technology changed the way
usually this industry worked before. They changed the old ways to the new ones. This is a disruption that occurs in the field of technology.

He explains the condition of technology disruption right now in the pandemic phases. Disruption causes those who are still using the old system or method to be unable to compete with those who have adopted the new system. Technological disruption is a phenomenon that results in changes in the conventional understanding of society and all the activities they do in a digital technology system. Technological disruption is interpreted as a fundamental change due to the development of digital technology systems, where digital technology or robots begin to replace and change the role of human work. This phenomenon exists in our country right now during the pandemic. He explained this phenomenon based on the condition people faced. He explained this case by fact and truth condition. Therefore, this refers to the type of stating in assertive acts.

(b) The function of claiming is to say that something is true when some people may say that it is not true. Claiming may be treated in the same way as asserting. However, there are significant differences between them that need to be explored. Claiming is more forceful, while asserting is not. For example, “The role of technology here is very interesting.” belongs to the function of claiming. The speaker claims that the technology roles are very interesting. It is because in the pandemic condition right now, most people work using technology. It must be interesting if we can use it well. It is interesting because technology can help them easier. He claimed this because he knows very well about technology because his background is in technology. What he said is talked about the condition right now, and what he explained based on the fact and no doubt about it. Therefore, this refers to the type of claiming in assertive acts.

(c) The function of reporting is assertive utterances that the speaker is giving information and the hearer does not know what the speaker is being informed. Reporting also refers to the give a spoken or written account of something heard, seen, done, studied, etc; to describe something; or to announce something. For example: “Teaching is extremely complex, teaching has massively psychological and empathy-based dimensions of what makes learning happen.” Belongs to the function of reporting. The speaker reports that what he said about teaching to the hearers is to give them information about teaching. He describes that the complexity of teaching can be seen because teaching is also taking a part in making students psychologically and empathy-based. Being a teacher is not easy. It is because when teaching students, the teachers have to make sure that they are also aware of the psychological of students. He informs the hearers about the condition of teaching and described the condition too. Therefore, this refers to the type of reporting in assertive acts.

(d) The function of reminding refers to the reminders of the speaker to a hearer with the additional preparatory condition that the hearer once knew and might have forgotten the propositional content (Searle, 1969). On other hand, the purpose of this type is to remind the hearers not to forget the condition. For example, “The second thing is don’t expect you know and this is coming from the minister of education that is trying to transform universities to be much more open and collaborative but you cannot wait for the system to change.” belongs to the function of reminding. The speaker reminds us that the students do not expect they know anything about the education system right now. It is because they do not know about it. The only one who knows is the speaker himself, it is because he is the minister of education. The speaker also reminds that although he, as the minister of education, tried to transform universities to be much more open and collaborative, the students in this case should not wait for the system to change. The students should have their self-initiation to change first, the smallest thing is to change themselves to be more open and collaborative first.
These two reminders from the speaker to the students remind them not to forget the condition of what is happening. In this context, the speaker reminded the students and the hearers not to forget the condition. Also, remind the students to have their self-initiation to be better again. Therefore, this refers to the type of reminding in assertive acts.

(e) The function of suggesting is to give a speaker's opinion to the hearers to do what is suggested. For example, “You have to take things into your own hands and actually either shape the educational environment that you are in especially in higher education where you are given more ability to do or seek it whatever you can to find the relevant skills that you know you need for your career.” belongs to the suggesting type. The speaker suggests that as students should be independent, especially if they are already in higher education. Higher education makes it more open and get more ability to seek anything that is useful for our education and our career in the future. Being students in higher education makes us the privilege to seek and choose anything they want. It is because they have and get a lot of information that can support their needs.

Therefore, from this ability and privilege, they have to take advantage of them. Because this advantage will support what they want to do and what skills they need for their future career. So, he suggests them to be more independent. In this context, they should be independent.

CONCLUSION

In this research, Makarim as the speaker mostly used the assertive type of reporting. It is because Makarim wants to share the information with the hearers related to all the things he knows to the hearers can do what is best for themselves. The information is related to technology disruption, education disruption, the COVID-19 condition in Indonesia, the important roles of parents, and the inequality of digital devices. Since the research discusses the types and functions of assertive types of Makarim by focusing on the context, it is expected for students to discuss the politeness and implied meaning of Makarim utterances. It is because the way Makarim delivered his speech refers to politeness. After reading this research, it is expected that the readers can realize the language phenomenon, especially speech acts and assertive types in a speech which eventually improves the understanding of filtering an utterance.

References


