



Illocutionary Act of Michelle Obama Speech on YouTube Video

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ABSTRACT

There are two objectives of this research, these are (1) to determine the type of Illocutionary Act in Michelle Obama speech that she told on The Power of Education through YouTube media; and (2) to find out the way of Michelle Obama speech conveying indirect or direct speech. The researcher used Searle theory concerning of Illocutionary Act, while used Yule theory to find out Michelle Obama speech conveying indirect or direct speech act. The method used descriptive qualitative method. Meanwhile, in obtaining the data the researcher used documentary technique. Based on the research results, the researcher found 0 data for declaration; 56 data for representative (assertive) and mostly are concerning as suggestions; 8 data for expressive; 4 data for directive; and 3 data for commissive. Meanwhile, the researcher has found some data regarding direct and indirect speech act from Michelle Obama speech, these are 145 data that refers as direct speech act and 3 data for indirect speech act. The researcher can conclude that in Michelle Obama speech most used the representative speech act and she mostly conveyed her speech in direct speech act. This research is dedicated to anyone who want to learn about pragmatics, especially about Illocutionary Act specifically. They can use others media to analyze about it, such as music, television program, in teaching learning, and so on.

Keywords: *Direct-Indirect Speech, Illocutionary Act, Speech Act*

INTRODUCTION

Communication between humans requires an intermediary called language. According to Sitti Rabiah, language is a communication device that used to interact between each other, convey ideas, concepts or even a feeling (Rabiah, 2018). She also stated that Participants in communication with language can communicate with each other. It means that a speaker can be a symbol sender and at the same time a symbol receiver. Therefore, communication system is an important thing for community. The way we communicate can be through speech (McLeod, Sharynne & McCormack, 2015). Illocutionary Act including pragmatics and it can be found in various literary works, one of them is speech. Pragmatics concerns in examining what other individuals mean when they speak for themselves about similar topics. There are numerous scopes in pragmatics. Speech act is one of them. According to Yule, speech act is an actions that are conducted through the speech (Hidayat, 2016). In addition, Birner stated that when individuals say something, they actually do it (Birner, 2012). Based on those expert statements, speech act is an action of expressing a speaker's desire for their remarks to be understood by the listener.

There are two theories that concerned about speech act, these are Austin theory and Searle theory. In this case, the researcher analyzed about speech act, especially about Illocutionary act by using Searle theory. In Yule, Searle theory can be classified into five categories, such as declarations, representatives, expressive, directives and commissive (Hidayat, 2016).

The researcher interested to analyze of Illocutionary act found in Michelle Obama speech YouTube video concerning “*The Power of Education*.” Michelle Obama is the first African-American first lady of the United States from the 44th U.S. president 2009 to 2017 that is Barack Obama. She is also a lawyer and writer which focused on social issues, such as poverty, healthy living and education (Biography.com Editors, 2014). In addition, she has given a number of powerful speeches, one of her speeches is about “*The Power of Education*” which delivered to sophomore class at Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C. in 2013 and her speech uploaded through “The Obama White House” YouTube channel (The Obama White House, 2013). Because of those reasons, the researcher interested to analyze about Illocutionary Act. First, in her speech which titled “*The Power of Education*” contained many Illocutionary Act that will be analyzed based on the context. The second reason, her speech included educational speech which means that there are several speech act contexts, such as informing, telling, suggesting, commanding, warning and so on. Therefore, the objectives of this research are determining the type of Illocutionary Act and the way of her speech conveyed, indirect or directly speech act.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics

According to Ali Siddiqui, pragmatic is an analysis of intended meanings from the listeners or the readers in order to determine their real purposes in the form of behaviour or different actions (Siddiqui, 2018). Meanwhile, according to James Slotta, pragmatic is one of linguistics branch that used language in accordance with its function of the context (Slotta, 2018). Yule also agreed that there are various aspects in pragmatic, such as who was spoken to, when the conversation took place, where the conversation took place, and under what circumstances, all of those will determine the way of the speaker say and the speaker's intention. There are four aspects which pragmatics focused on, such as (1) speaker meaning; (2) contextual meaning; (3) the way in getting more communication than it is said; and (4) the expression of relative distance (Yule, 1996).

Speech Acts

Speech acts is a study of common pragmatic topics including deixis, presupposition, speech acts, implicatures, politeness, and information structure has been motivated by a variety of challenges and disconnections in the context of decontextualizing language analysis (Slotta, 2018). Speech act is when someone speaks about something while also expressing an action through their words (Yule, 1996). Yule also stated that speech act has several verbs in English, such as promise, request, invitation, apology, complaint, or compliment. There is one of example, "You are too down to earth to help this poor kitty." Based on this example, this sentence included into the type of compliment to someone. Speech act told that utterance is important things in communication. One feature of language that is practical, concrete, and easily observable is a speech act (Bahing et al., 2018). Yule stated that if there is no circumstance surrounding a speech or utterance, it cannot be understood. A speech event is the set of circumstances that affect an utterance. Based on previous discussion, the researcher can conclude that language is the basic component of communication, and people all over the world use it to promise, ask, demand, command, request, refuse, declare, and complain among other things. Speech acts are the basic components of communication that all people must be able to execute.

Illocutionary Act Classification

John Roger Searle classified Illocutionary Act into five categories, such following below (Yule, 1996):

1. Declaration

According to Sanford Schane, declaration is an illocutionary act that causes the circumstance to which it refers into to happen (Schane, 2008).

It means that a declaration is an expression that directly affects

institutional circumstances and that frequently depends on the complicated language of the institution. There are several declaration verbs, such as blessing, firing, baptizing, bidding, and excommunicating. For example, “Bless you that you are still safe from terrible tragedy.” The meaning of this sentence that the person were still granted or blessed her/his life by God from the danger situation.

2. Representative (Assertive)

Representative or it commonly known as assertive is an illocutionary act that conveys a situation (Schane, 2008). It means that representative is the act of utterance that convince the speaker of a truth revealed based on observations made by the speaker through his/her opinion of that truth. According to Hidayat, there are several representative verbs, such as predict, report, describe, inform, insist, assure, remind, tell, assert, deny, correct, state, guess, agree, claim, conclude, suggest and beliefs (Hidayat, 2016). For example, “Your daughter is beautiful.” The meaning of this sentence is providing the truth of someone physical condition to the hearer to believe the speaker’s belief.

3. Expressive

An illocutionary act that conveys the speaker's emotional condition towards a situation that is assumed to be real (Schane, 2008). Meanwhile, according to Yule that expressive is the speaker expresses his/her feeling, such as pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow through his/her utterance. In addition, the speaker also expressed their attitude, such as condolences, greetings, apologies, congratulations, thanksgiving. The speaker's experience is what they are talking about, but their expression can be influenced by the speaker's activity or the hearer's action, as according Yule (1996). For the example, “My deepest condolences to the Royal family caused the death of Queen Elizabeth II.” The meaning of this sentence is the speaker can express that utterance because she/he felt sad and giving condolence of that obituary.

4. Directives

According to Yule, directives means that the speaker’s utterance wants the hearer to do something like he/she uttered. Similarly the statement of Sanford Schane, directive is an illocutionary act for getting the addressee to do something. There are some of directive verbs, such as commands, orders, requests, and suggestions. For example, “I prefer you to not to go tonight because it was too late to go.” The meaning of this sentence is the speaker gave suggestion to the hearer to not to go to that place because time delay.

5. Commissive

Commissive is the act of the utterance that will be conducted in future or later moment. It means that the speaker commit to do something in the

future through his/her utterance. There are some of commissive verbs such as, promising, threatening, refusal, pledges, warning or offering. For example, "I will graduate on January 19 next year." This sentence is uttered by the speaker who promised that his/her graduation will be held on January 19 in the next year.

Direct Speech Act

According to Yule, there is a direct relationship with the function in direct speech act. The structural forms (declarative, interrogative, and imperative) and general communicative functions (statement, argument, command or request) of direct speech are immediately recognizable and can be taken at face value. It means that if we must speak directly, we must think carefully before doing so, especially when speaking to those who are not very close to us. It is because we must consider their social hierarchy of other people as well, and our opinion may come across as an insult, sound like we are bossing people around, or otherwise annoy them. For example, "Would you revise this data or I would fire you?" The utterance represents an imperative structure, as an expression of asking question for someone to choose between two option for his/her job.

Indirect Speech Act

As indicated by Yule's statement, indirect speech acts are more politely expressed than direct speech acts. Meanwhile, according to Nicholas Asher and Alex Lascarides, indirect speech act is an utterance in which one speech act is performed indirectly by performing another (Asher & Lascarides, 2001), for example "Can you pass the salt?" this utterance included indirect speech act because this utterance indirect ask help to someone to take the salt for them. Therefore, indirect speech act is more polite manner to use than direct speech act.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The researcher conducted this research using a systematic approach and the suitability of the facts in order to discover the answers to the problem statement. Because the qualitative research approach naturally uses direct data collection and uses the researcher as a primary instrument. Qualitative descriptive is the least "theoretical" of all qualitative research methods are qualitative descriptive research. Comparing qualitative techniques, qualitative descriptive researches are already the least constrained by a pre-existing theoretical or philosophical commitment. For instance, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography all rely on certain methodological frameworks that were developed as a result of particular disciplinary traditions (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This research analysis used library research which is applied in the descriptive qualitative method. Library research is a technique for gathering data by obtaining and comprehending

information that is directly related to the problems from books, theories, notes, and papers. It is a type of library that accumulates resources for use in extensive research tasks, whether it be general or specialized (George, 2008). The data in this research gathered through primary data and secondary data as completing data in a research. This research used the speech transcript from the researcher transcribed herself in accordance with Michelle Obama speech video. The transcript of Michelle Obama speech is a secondary data or supporting data. While, the primary data is Michelle Obama in the titled “*The Power of Education*” which downloaded from “The Obama White House” YouTube channel. The duration of this speech video is around 17 minutes and 33 seconds. There are some steps of collecting data in this research, such as (1) searching some speech videos from world-famous speakers through YouTube; (2) determining one speech video that appropriates with the education field, that is Michelle Obama speech titled “*The Power of Education*” which downloaded from “The Obama White House” YouTube channel; (3) watching downloaded video in several time; (4) transcribing by herself the downloaded video; and (5) checking the transcript and her utterances in her video to adjust whether the transcript and what she utter in the video is the same or not. The researcher only focuses on Searle’s theory to analyze the types of Illocutionary Acts and Yule’s theory to determine how to convey their utterances directly or indirectly. There are several steps of analyzing the data, such as (1) taking notes on all of her utterances which contain type of Illocutionary Act based on Searle theory; (2) classifying the data based on the type of illocutionary act based on Searle theory; and (3) identifying of direct and indirect speech act based on Yule theory from all of her utterances containing the type of Illocutionary Act.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Illocutionary Act Classification

John Roger Searle classified Illocutionary Act into five categories, such as declaration, representative (assertive), expressive, directive, and commissive. The researcher also provide some signs in her research’s result, such as D for datum, A for Alinea, and L for line in the paragraph.

1. Declaration

Declaration is an expression that directly affects institutional circumstances and that frequently depends on the complicated language of the institution. There are several declaration verbs, such as blessing, firing, baptizing, bidding, and excommunicating. In the Michelle Obama’s speech “*The Power of Education*”, the researcher did not find any utterances that indicated as the declaration because the content of her speech was directing suggestions on how to commit ourselves in getting better education.

2. Representative (assertive)

Representative is the act of utterance that convince the speaker of a truth revealed based on observations made by the speaker through his/her opinion of that truth. According to Hidayat, there are several representative verbs, such as predict, report, describe, inform, insist, assure, remind, tell, assert, deny, correct, state, guess, agree, claim, conclude, suggest and beliefs.

In the utterance *"She is a proud representative of what this school can do, and her story is one that we want you all to emulate (D:1, A:1, L:7),"* it refers to the statement of truth. The reason of the researcher decided this utterance as an informing in representative because this utterance refers to the truth of successful person based on his/her true story.

Meanwhile, in **(D:2, A:2, L:16)** which contained the utterance *"Now, Barack set this goal because as a generation ago, we were number one in college graduates."* This utterance refers to asserting. The reason of the researcher decided this utterance as an asserting in representative because this utterance based on the husband of the speaker experience as the president which means that the speaker assured the listeners to believe that her husband had issued some regulation in developing education in America.

In **(D:3, A:2, L:20-21)** which contained the utterance *"But Barack didn't just set this goal because it's good for our country. He did it because he knows how important higher education is to all of you as individuals."* The reason of the researcher decided this utterance as an asserting in representative because this utterance based on the speaker's husband true experienced story that she want to assure her listeners about policy planning that Barack will be implemented for education in America.

Then, in **(D:4, A:2, L:24-27)** which contained the utterance *"And that's why the President and Secretary Duncan have been doing everything they can to make sure that kids like you get the best education possible and that you have everything you need to continue your education after high school. They've been fighting to strengthen your schools and to support your teachers. They've been working hard to make college more affordable for all young people in this country no matter where you come from or how much money your parents have. They've been working with parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders all across this country just to help you succeed."* The reason of the researcher decided this utterance as an asserting in representative because this utterance based on the speaker's husband true experienced story that she want to assure her listeners about policies that Barack and his staff have implemented for education in America.

In **(D:5, A:2, L:28)** which contained the utterance *“But here’s the thing and I want you to listen to this, at the end of the day, no matter what the President does, no matter what your teachers and principals do or whatever is going on in your home or in your neighborhood, the person with the biggest impact on your education is you.”* The reason of the researcher decided this utterance as concluding and asserting in representative because this utterance based on the truth. It means this utterance to assert the listeners to realize that whatever the policies that have been implemented by President, the final decision maker for education is the listeners themselves.

3. Expressive

Expressive means that the speaker expresses his/her feeling, such as pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow, and their attitudes, such as condolences, greetings, apologies, congratulations, thanksgiving through his/her utterance.

In **(D:1, A:1, L:6)** which contained the utterance *“So let me start by thanking Menbere for that very kind introduction.”* The speaker uttered this utterance as a gratitude. It means that Michelle Obama thanked to the Menbere as a host in letting her to speak in that wonderful event.

Then, in **(D:2, A:1, L:10-11)** which contained the utterance *“Thank you for hosting us. Of course, I want to thank Secretary Duncan for joining me today, as well as Jeff and Keshia and everyone from 106 & Park for helping to facilitate today’s discussion.”* The speaker uttered this utterance as a gratitude. It means that Michelle Obama thanked to the all staffs and participants who support that the event is able to held smoothly.

In **(D:3, A:4, L:54)** which contained the utterance *“I still hear that doubt ringing in my head.”* The speaker uttered this utterance as a form of disappointment. It means that the speaker told to her listeners about her sorrow and disappointed which is caused by terrible word to her in the last times.

Meanwhile, in **(D:4, A:6, L:85)** which contained the utterance *“That’s how me, that’s how Menbere, that’s how so many other students have overcome adversities to reach our goals.”* The speaker uttered this utterance as a honor which means that the speaker and other people she told is proud because of their effort in resolving the difficulties to reach their goals.

In **(D:5, A:8, L:146-148)** which contained the utterance *“You all, thank you so much. We love you, and I’m so proud of you all. Keep going.”* This utterance is a gratitude. It means that the speaker thanked to the listeners in which they have taken their time to come and listen well to her speech.

4. Directive

Directive is an illocutionary act for getting the addressee to do something. There are some verbs in directive, such as command, orders, request, and suggestions.

In **(D:1, A:2, L:23)** which contained the utterance *“That means whether it’s a vocational program, community college, a four-year university, you all are going to need some form of higher education in order to build the kind of lives that you want for yourselves, good careers, to be able to provide for your family.”* The utterance is uttered by the speaker as a suggestion in directive. It can be seen from the speaker’s utterance that the speaker has suggested to the listeners to be brave in making decisions to reach better life.

Then in **(D:2, A:8, L:139-141)** which contained the utterance *“We’re going to ask you some questions, you’re going to ask us some questions. We’ll listen. I don’t want you go be shy, I want you to be relaxed, okay? And we’ll talk more about how do we get you to your goals, okay? And hopefully, this conversation here will help students around the country.”* This utterance is uttered by the speaker as a command in directive. It can be seen from the speaker’s utterance that the speaker has commanded to the listeners to ask some question to her and to not afraid in asking some question that plagued their minds.

5. Commissive

Commissive is the act of the utterance that will be made in future or later moment. There are some of commissive verbs such as, promising, threatening, refusal, pledges, planning, warning or offering.

In **(D:1, A:4, L:45)** which contained the utterance *“I decided I was going to Princeton.”* The utterance refers to Michelle Obama’s planning about going to Princeton University. It can be seen from Michelle’s utterance which is she had her sights set on being a student in Princeton University and she had succeed in realizing her dream come true.

Then in **(D:2, A:5, L:69)** which contained the utterance *“Graduating from Princeton was my ultimate goal.”* The utterance refers to Michelle Obama’s planning about graduating from Princeton University as her life goals in the past. It can be seen from Michelle’s utterance which is she had her sights set to graduate from Princeton University and she had succeed in realizing her dream come true.

While, in **(D:3, A:8, L:128)** which contained the utterance *“And over these next few years, I’m going to continue sharing that message all across the country and all across the world to students just like you.”* This utterance refers as promise in commissive. It can be known from the speaker’s utterance that she would to spread good information about this education throughout America and even the world.

Direct-Indirect Speech Act

Speech acts serve a specific function that is intrinsically linked to the situation in which they are used. The two categories of speech act situations, such as (1) direct speech act and (2) indirect speech act, which are separated based on the context of the circumstance that one Yule described. Based on Yule's theory, the researcher employed direct and indirect speech acts.

1. Direct Speech Act

Direct speech act means that if we must speak directly, we must think carefully before doing so, especially when speaking to those who are not very close to us. It is because we must consider their social hierarchy of other people as well, and our opinion may come across as an insult, sound like we are bossing people around, or otherwise annoy them.

In **(D:1, A:1, L:1)** which contained the utterance *"Let me tell you, I'm thrilled to be back here at the Columbia Heights Education Campus."* This utterance was uttered by Michelle Obama directly. It can be seen from the speaker's utterance that Michelle Obama immediately tell her listeners that she ever spoken to there place in previous time.

In **(D:2, A:2, L:32-34)** which contained the utterance *"And that's what we're going to talk about today. We're going to talk about the power that each of you has to commit to your education. We're going to talk about the power that you have to fulfill your potential and unlock opportunities that you can't even begin to imagine for yourselves right now."* Michelle Obama uttered this utterance directly. It can be seen from the speaker's utterance that Michelle Obama immediately explain main discussion for her public speaking to her listeners.

Meanwhile, in **(D:3, A:3, L:35)** which contained the utterance *"And when I talk about students needing to take responsibility for their education, I want you all to know that I'm speaking from my own personal life experience."* Michelle Obama uttered this utterance directly. It can be seen from the speaker's utterance that Michelle Obama immediately tell her listeners that event's discussion came from her true story experience.

In **(D:4, A:3, L:37-38)** which contained the utterance *"Even though my parents didn't have a lot of money, they never went to college themselves, they had an unwavering belief in the power of education. So, they always pushed me and my brother to do whatever it took to succeed in school."* This utterance was uttered by Michelle Obama directly. It can be seen from the speaker's utterance that Michelle immediately tell her listeners about the truth of the speaker's experience about her parent's economic condition in the past and her parent's ambition to continue schooling.

Then in **(D:5, A:4, L:41-42)** which contained *“And listening to Menbere's story, it was so similar, because my school was way across the other side of the city from where I lived. So, at 6:00 a.m. every morning, I had to get on a city bus and ride for an hour, sometimes more, just to get to school.”* This utterance was uttered by Michelle Obama directly. It can be seen from the speaker's utterance that Michelle immediately tell her listeners about the truth of the speaker's experience about her effort going to school in the past.

2. Indirect Speech Act

In contrast to direct speech act, indirect speech act is more politely conveyed. In socially distant situations, speaking in an indirect way helps you maintain your better courteous side.

In **(D:1, A:1, L:14)** which contained the utterance *“And I wanted to come here today because you guys and students like you across America are at the heart of one of my husband's most important goals as President.”* This utterance was uttered by the speaker indirectly because the speaker would tell her listeners that in this context of her husband's planning on developing the education in America as main purpose.

Then in **(D:2, A:1, L:15)** which contained the utterance *“See, when Barack came into office, one of the very first things he did was to set what he calls a North Star goal for the entire country -- that by the year 2020, the year that all of you will be graduating from college, that this country will have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.”* This utterance was uttered by the speaker indirectly because the speaker would tell her listeners that North Star goal means setting a goal that is so broad and ambitious that you must dedicate time to pursuing it every day.

In **(D:3, A:3, L:36)** which contained the utterance *“Like Menbere, growing up, I considered myself pretty lucky.”* This utterance was uttered by the speaker indirectly because the speaker would tell her listeners that her past life lucky enough than Menbere.

CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis conducted by the researcher in the speech of Michelle Obama in the titled *“The Power of Education”* which downloaded from “The Obama White House” YouTube channel, the researcher can conclude several research results, such as these are 0 data for declaration because of the contents of the speech was more directing suggestions on how to commit ourselves in getting better education based on the true life experience of the speaker; 56 data for representative (assertive) and mostly are concerning as suggestions; 8 data for expressive; 4 data for directive; and 3 data for commissive. Meanwhile, the

researcher has found some data regarding direct and indirect speech act from Michelle Obama speech, these are 145 data that refers as direct speech act and 3 data for indirect speech act. Based on these research result, in Michelle Obama speech entitled “*The Power of Education*” most used the representative speech act and she mostly conveyed her speech in direct speech act.

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