Language and Power in Presidential Speech Campaign Discourse: Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton

Edward1, Sorta Hutahaean1, Kurniawan2 & Budianto Hamuddin2

1Dept. of English Literature, Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia 28265
2Dept. of English Language Teaching, Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru, Indonesia 28265
Telp. +6276153536 hp. +6281266110787
Email: budihamuddin@unilak.ac.id

Abstract: This paper is dealing with the discussion of concepts and theoretical constructs that have contributed to a clear portrait of the relationship between language and power regarding types and functions of speech acts or language use. The description of the discussion based on Austin's central innovation, that is, acts done in speaking mainly the sort of actions to use the performative sentence. This research is a descriptive qualitative, and the research instrument is documentation. The data was, then, taken from official website issuing the debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. This research is, firstly, aimed at finding out the nuance of language and power based on the speech acts type and functions uttered by influential figures of the United States of America. Secondly, this is to investigate what and how the illocutionary speech acts work to manifest the power of language. The result shows that most of the types and functions of the speech acts are directive, expressive, commissive and declarative. Donald Trump tends to be more directive. Unlike Donald Trump, Clinton is more indirect and tends to be expressive.

Keywords: Language and Power, Speech Acts, Types, Function

1. Introduction

Language considered as having emerged when early human beings started conducting social contact and adapted their communication in such a way. Since language works in the human brain, the use of language has become deeply rooted in human life apart from being used to communicate and share information. The emergence of language, then, develops in line with the developments of humankind. Therefore, the language should not only be learned internally but externally as well - the structures versus the use or function. It is worth discussing how language tied to a speech community and what constitutes the meaning of an utterance uttered by different people. Such this fact gives an insight into the role of language as a social base phenomenon.

As far as language is concerned, the function of the language is inseparable with the lifestyles of its speech community. The way people communicate varies from one another. The forms or structures of the expressions are also different because language works by its social movement. By this condition, one's utterance can function socially or culturally regarding signifying identities of a social group, stratification and intragroup communication. Communication defined as an act of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving information to other people. Every human being in the world, therefore, is supposed to communicate one another to fulfill his or her own needs. In reaching the goal of communication, at least, there will be two parties; speaker and hearer. Successful discussion can be reached if the speaker and hearer can convey and understand the message expressed. When the speaker communicates to the hearer, he or she is acting utterance, which is, in linguistics, generally known as speech acts.
Austin proposed that speech acts were the action which was performed in saying something. It is stated further that saying something can be detected as doing something. Austin's concept is trying to say that every utterance has its distinct function by the speaker's intentions. It means that in every utterance or conversation there must be various meanings, either implicitly or explicitly stated by the speaker. This paper tries to explore Austin's theory of speech acts.

The concept is described and elaborated in regards to its forms and function along with its social concerns. The language use or the utterances of the two prominent figures of the United States were examined by the classifications of the speech acts, propositional content, and intention of the utterances. By considering how sentences are produced, along with examining the situation or condition, one can catch a glimpse into how an utterance constitutes meaning and function within the power. Furthermore, there are five forms of an illocutionary act, namely assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. Regarding on the previous discussions this study seen the illocutionary act as an act in a complete form of sentences made in a specific utterance to express an attitude with a certain function. Moreover, this study believes within the context of this the topic of the study consists of:

1) **Assertive** are utterances that are supposed to tell on how things are in the world represents in reality. An assertive is a speech act that constrains the speaker to the reality of a proposition

2) **Directive** are the speech acts that have in common aimed at provoking action from the addressee: orders, commands, requests, pleas and so on

3) **Expressive** is state what the speaker psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. Thus, it is speech acts that express the speaker's gesture body and emotions towards the proposition. There are gesture bodies of expressive such as a motion of body, motion of hand, motion of the eye, etc. (Herlina, 2010:1). Kinds of expressive can be thanking, greeting, and praising.

4) **Commissive** are those kinds of speech acts the speaker use commit her/himself to some future course of action. It expresses the speaker's intention and belief that his utterance obligates him to do something. Commissives can be in the form of promise, guarantee, refusal, volunteer, offer or threat

5) **Declarative** is a unique form of speech act which states a fact. This *word* can be used to define any act or speech that makes a statement. The successful performance of using it depends upon the status of the speaker, and the precise circumstances surrounding the event.

Furthermore, among these five forms of an illocutionary acts. It can be underlined that the first is used when a speaker responds to the actual condition which is expressed as the representation of speaker's mind, such as statement, assertion, and explanation. Directive form constitutes a request or command. Expressive is a kind of speech acts which states feelings or beliefs. The next is commissive, the type reflecting speaker's promise to do something in the future, and the last is declarative. This classification is considered as changing a thing, naming, declaring or pronouncing it through utterance.

To date, the study of language has been developing since it highlights the issue of social concerns. Thus, it should not be seen in its internal aspects but its external factors as well, that is, the relations between language barriers and how language keeps its functional role manifesting power relations. Fairclough stated the emergence of language in social life emphasizes the importance of language that generates issues of social concerns in the sense that ‘having influenced' or ‘being influenced' by the structures and forces of social institutions. The core is how language serves as a wheel in maintaining and changing power relations in recent settings of the society. In short, the amount of power is revealed by social relations.
2. Methodology

This research is a descriptive qualitative which is aimed at investigating and showing the phenomenon of the relationship between language and power. This research was to inquire speech acts of the most prominent public figures in the United States when conducting the prospective presidential debate in 2016. The research instrument was documentation taking from the speech transcription of the debate of presidential campaign between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The data, then, was qualitatively analyzed based on the classifications of the speech acts. The analysis of the structure of illocutionary speech acts, together with the implication, indicates the power of the acts. The conclusion was drawn inductively based on the number of occurrences.

3. Result and Discussion

During the campaign trail, many people both academician or non-academician political commentators and discourse analysts sought after to identify the key features of the 2016 presidential candidate in their profile as speakers including this study. This study only seeks generalizations about Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump’s speeches. On the one hand, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has been widely portrayed as a speaker who emphasizes the importance of objective facts, logical arguments, detailed management and in-depth knowledge of public policy. Her discursive style is clearly influenced and maintained by her multiplicity 30 years serving as a public servant, where he served as Secretary of State, Senate Member and First Lady of the United States. Compared to its rival, Republican candidates Donald Trump have been described as straightforward, confrontational, vague regarding policies that elaborate and free from mainstream politicians and “deceit” styles.

The conversation scheme was dealing with a debate or dialogue between two candidates of the prospective president of The United States of America hosting by Hofstra University in 2016. Both candidates were required to express their responses regarding with three major parts, that is, American prosperity, economic development, and security. Within two minutes the candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, respectively, should have mentioned the policy which was about to be implemented if elected.

From the conversation held during the first debate between Donald Trump and Clinton, it was found that there were more or less 367 assertions uttered by the two figures. The occurrence was focused on discourse level since the debate should be understood as a whole. Out of the whole responds or assertions, it was found that the occurrence of directive class uttered by Clinton was 9.54 %. Expressive occurrence was 10.08 %, commissive 1.6 %, and declarative was 0.27 %. The trends of the utterances were expressive, directive, commissive and the least was declarative. On the contrary, Trump seemed to dominate the occurrence in all classes. It was 13.6 % for directive, 13.9 % expressive, 5.4 % commissive, and 0.54 % declarative. The whole classifications of the utterances were aimed at representing, telling, requesting, ordering, promising, expressing, and declaring an opinion. The data found likewise in data number three there are three classifications of the directive type were found during the debate such as [I want us to invest in you, [...] I want us to invest in your future, [...] We also have to make the economy fairer[...]. In this sentence, Donald Trump seemed to emphasize the nuance of power in giving direction to ask and invite people to invest as well as to develop economic sector hand in hand. The invitation was due to the prosperity of American people, either today or to the future of the country. The utterance was quite interesting because of the performative verb ‘want’ which created a sense of commanding but, then, it changed because of the presence of pronominal object ‘us’ that turned out the function of commanding to be inviting or urging. The object of pronoun ‘us’ states that the speaker ‘I’ gets involved in the action.

It is interesting to see that directive types play an important role because the occurrence is nearly the same with expressive types. So, the power is seen because the directive forms reveal the power of commanding or requesting. Unlike expressive and directive, commissive and declarative classes take not more than 50 % of the expressive or of the directive. The forms of the commissive are
mostly promising, while declarative class is formed in performative verb ‘calling’. The most dominant classifications of the structures are expressive and directive. The power is mostly revealed by the directive speech acts. The other trend of how language manifests power is in declarative form even though it is less distributed. The use of the declarative form is more obvious and more powerful because it identifies social relations of authority. The higher the position is, the more obvious the power becomes.

4. Conclusion

The theory of speech acts proposed by the experts, discussed above, is of practical relevance to the concept of social phenomenon regarding the study of pragmatics. Language role should be learned and understood in line with its functions because the structure of the speech acts and the function are running at once. In one hand, the structure takes as a model, and it has its own characteristic of linguistic elements describing meaning on the level of phrase or sentence. On the other hand, since language functions to communicate there must be meaning intended by the speaker which is empowered by illocutionary force.

The relation between language and power is displayed in the speech assertions. The illocutions reveal the power. Directive and declarative classifications of speech acts are seen to have executed the power – power influence. Also, language is power in the sense that it drives social mobility.

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