

# The Analysis of Speech Acts in “English for Nusantara” Textbook

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**Abstract.** In cross-cultural communication, pragmatic skill is extremely important. In pragmatics, speech acts are considered "one of the most convincing conceptions." It is strongly recommended that the textbook's materials include sufficient pragmatic components to enable learners to be pragmatically competent. The purpose of this study was to look at the speech acts in the textbook English for Nusantara . Qualitative research is used to collect data, analyze the data, and form a conclusion based on the analysis' findings. Content analysis is the type of qualitative study used. In an English text book titled English for Nusantara, data were speech acts in every utterance covered in each conversation. The finding was out of 191 data (utterances), there were 108 assertive/representative data, 49 directive data, 2 commissive data, 32 expressive data, and no declaration datum related to the categories of speech acts in the conversations in the textbook "English for Nusantara". The researcher found that these four types of speech act with their own functions were all existed in a hundred-eight utterances used by the speaker of each conversation in the textbook entitled English for Nusantara. For the functions of speech ach named assertive or representatives contained in the conversations of the textbook chosen by the researcher, there were stating, informing, and agreeing. Meanwhile, the function of speech act commissive that could be found were offering and promising. In the speech act type of directive , there could be found questioning and requesting. Last but not least, the functions of type of speech act expressive were thanking, complimenting, and expressing like.

**Key words:** speech acts; conversation; English for Nusantara.

**How to Cite:** Johan, A.N., Mujiyanto, J., Fitriati, S.W., Hartono, R. (2022). The Analysis of Speech Acts in “English for Nusantara” Textbook. *ISET: International Conference on Science, Education and Technology*, (2022), 137-141.

## INTRODUCTION

When learning a second language, pragmatic competence is a remarkably essential aspect to consider. It is in line with Jiang (2015) which states pragmatic competence plays a very significant role in cross-cultural communication. The correct and culturally acceptable language that the learners produce reflects their pragmatic competence. Koike (1989) defines pragmatic competence as “the speaker’s knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts”. Therefore, it stands to reason that for effective communication in the EFL/ESL contexts to take place, pragmatic competence is a crucial determinant (Derakshan et al., 2021). It is believed that language learners’ proficiency level can influence development of their pragmatic competence in the target language. However, “Even fairly advanced language learners’ communicative acts regularly contain pragmatic errors, or deficits, in that they fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force or politeness value” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Speech acts are regarded as “one of the most compelling notions” in pragmatics, (Eslami-Rasekh, 1993).

According to Thuruvan & Yunus (2017) it was found that students in a rural secondary school in Malaysia, whose first language is Malay, seem to sometimes lack pragmatic competence when trying to speak in English which is their second language. People have to know how to use a language appropriately in order to understand well when they are communicating with each other; this is called speech acts (Fitriani et al., 2020). A number of studies have been conducted on speech act production with a focus on L2 learners’ knowledge of linguistic forms and their knowledge of social and cultural norms to perform different speech functions (Li & Suleiman, 2017). The findings indicated that Turkish EFL learners could not produce completely appropriate request and refusal speech acts both in their written and oral productions (Sanal & Ortactepe, 2019). Speaking a foreign language appropriately requires students to be aware of the cultural norms underlying the linguistic patterns of that language (All-Ghamdi et al., 2019). Furthermore, in order to become a competent L1 or L2 speaker, linguistic competence must be accompanied by the sociopragmatic competence of the particular language itself (Maros & Halim, 2018). The

linguistic scrutiny of any aspect of pragmatics is bound to considering carefully the context in which it is expressed (Pourmousavi & Zenouzagh, 2020). Althawab (2018), for instance, in a review study on the relation of second language acquisition to language transfer states that “the negative pragmatic transfer occurs usually when the L2 learners erroneously generalized to L2 context from pragmatic knowledge of L1”.

Textbook plays significant role in the process of teaching and learning English as second Language. A language textbook provides knowledge of language which is important for the learners. Therefore, according to (Nurdiana, 2022) the materials discussed in the textbook are highly suggested to contain adequate pragmatic aspects to enable the learners to be pragmatically competent.

Meanwhile, speech acts are one discussion in pragmatics in which they can be taught through an English textbook (Nurdiana, 2022). Odlin (1989) said that “cross linguistics influence has considerable potential to affect the course of second language acquisition both inside and outside the classroom” . Several researchers prove that negative L1 transfer mostly occurs due to the socio-cultural variations across languages which are the major causes for any pragmatic failure in L2 production. For instance, (Takahashi, 1996) stated that “inter-cultural miscommunication is often caused by learner's falling down on their L1 socio-cultural norms and conventions in realizing the speech acts in a target language” . In addition, any lack of such cross cultural norms and transfer of L1 cultural patterns may cause a serious communication failure or breakdown as “different culture holds different cultural values and beliefs, which are reflected in the use of language and how people communicate” (Alsohaibani, 2017). Furthermore, in the context of the EFL, textbooks are seen as a crucial element of teaching languages for materials that provide authentic examples of speech act to develop pragmatic skills in EFL students (Farashaiyan, 2017).

In view of the shortcomings mentioned above, this study was conducted to examine the speech acts contained in *English for Nusantara* textbook. In other word, this study aimed to investigate the speech acts contained in conversation model texts found in *English for Nusantara* textbook.

## METHODS

Qualitative research is employed in order to

collect the data, to analyze the data, and to make conclusion from the result of analysis. Type of qualitative research employed is content analysis since the researcher will identify the data and then analyze the data which are in the form of speech act in every utterance contained in each conversation available in an English text book entitled *English for Nusantara*.

The data are classified into five types of speech acts proposed Searle (1976) including Assertives ,Commissives, Directives ,Expressives ,and Declarations. Assertives or representatives represent what the speaker believes to be the case or not. Meanwhile, directives mean that the speech acts which the speaker uses to direct someone else or the addressee to perform an action. Then, commissives indicate that the speaker uses to commit himself or herself to some future action. For expressives, it represents what the speaker feels and also to reveal their attitude. Last but not least, declarations are used to change the reality or the world via the utterance with the provision is they rely upon the status of the speaker and the factual circumstances surrounding the event.

Meanwhile, there are three steps in analyzing the data based on Miles & Huberman (1994), namely: Data Reduction, Data Display, Data Conclusion, and Drawing/Verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions." Not only do the data need to be condensed for the sake of manageability, they also have to be transformed so they can be made intelligible in terms of the issues being addressed. In this step, the speech acts are selected from the conversations model texts found in *English for Nusantara* textbook. The next step is Data Display. Data display goes a step beyond data reduction to provide "an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing. In this level, data are labelled according to the categories of speech acts. The last step in analysis of qualitative data is withdrawing conclusion and verification. After labelling the speech acts , the researcher obtained clear information of the result, and then the researcher withdrew conclusion/verification of the result.

Then, the results of analysis were tested for reliability and validity through triangulation. the data and also make a final conclusion of the data that had been analyzed, interpreted, and identified in the preceding process. Finally, the result of

data reduction, data display, and also the result of triangulation process were elaborated in the form of words, phrases, and sentences through a descriptive qualitative.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Finding related to the types speech acts of the conversations in “English for Nusantara” textbook were 40 assertive/representative data, 23 directive data, 3 commissive data, 18 expressive data, and no declaration datum out of 84 data (utterances) presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Number and Percentage of the Speech Acts Found in the Textbook

No	Types of Speech Acts	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Assertives	108	56.5
2	Commissives	2	1.1
3	Directive	49	25.7
4	Expressive	32	16.7
5	Declaration	0	0
Total		191	100

Table 1 above shows that there were four types of speech acts applied by the speaker of each conversation in the textbook entitled English for Nusantara. From the table, assertives or representatives took the top position and had the highest data with 108 data with the percentage was 56.5%. The second highest number was occupied by directive with 49 data or 25.7%. Then, the next number went to expressive with 32 data or 16.7%. Lastly, commissive took the

lowest position with 2 data or 1.1%. To sum up, this first result shows that the speakers in the conversations of the textbook had applied the whole types of speech act: assertives or representatives, directives, expressives, and commissive.

Meanwhile, for the second finding which was related to functions of speech acts are illustrated in Table 2

**Table 2.** Types of Speech Acts and Their Functions

No	Types of Speech Acts	Functions of Speech acts	Number
1	Assertives (108)	Stating	4
		Informing	99
		Agreeing	5
2	Commissive (2)	Offering	1
		Promising	1
3	Directive (49)	Questioning	42
		Requesting	7
		Thanking	5
4	Expressive (32)	Complimenting	3
		Expressing Like	14
		Greeting	10

Based on the Table 2, it shows that from the four types of speech act, such as assertives or representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. The researcher found that these four types of speech act with their own functions were all existed in one hundred and ninety one utterances used by the speaker of each conversation in the textbook entitled English for Nusantara. For the functions of speech act named assertives or representatives contained in the conversations of the textbook chosen by the researcher, there were stating, informing, and agreeing. Meanwhile, the function of speech act commissive that could be found were offering

and promising. In the speech act type of directive, there could be found questioning and requesting. Last but not least, the functions of type of speech act expressives were thanking, complimenting, and expressing like.

The finding showed that assertive speech act is the most appeared in the data. It is in line with other finding revealed by Refualu et. al (2018). In addition, it could be declared that all of the examples from the 191 data (utterances) as the findings collected by the researcher reflected to the theory of speech acts which was further developed by Searle (1976). The excerpt of each type of speech acts are as follows

**A. Assertive (Stating)**

*Galang : I want to go fishing. It's my hobby. (D14)*

*Andre : That sounds fun.*

The D14 utterance above was classified as assertive speech act with stating function since in his utterance, Galang stated that his hobby is fishing

**A. Assertive (Informing)**

*Andre : By the way, this is Monita. (D30)*

*Galang : Hi, Monita. Nice to meet you*

*Monita : Nice to meet you too , Galang.*

The D30 utterance above was classified as assertive speech act with informing function since in his utterance, Andre informed Galang that there was a new friend named Monita.

**A. Assertive (Agreeing)**

*Pipit: You're right. He loves basketball*

*Monita : Yes (D180). Also, all students must join the scout every Thursday.*

The D180 utterance above was classified as assertive speech act with agreeing function since in her utterance, Monita agreed with Pipit's statement.

**B. Commissive (Promising)**

*Leni : What do you usually do when practicing pencak silat?*

*Pipit : Before we practice, we pray. After that, we do warming ups. Usually, the coach asks us to practice the movements. We also kick and punch the punching bag.*

*Leni: Wow, that sounds interesting. Ok, I will join the pencak silat club next Thursday. (D172)*

The D172 utterance above was classified as commissive speech act with promising function since in her utterance, Leni promised to Pipit that he would join pencak silat club next Thursday .

**B. Commissive (Offering)**

*Galang : What are you having, Monita?*

*Monita : I'm having some banana fritters. Would you like to have some? (D69)*

*Galang : Sure*

The D69 utterance above was classified as commissive speech act with offering function since in her utterance, Monita offered some food to Galang.

**C. Directive (Requesting)**

*Galang : Kak Sinta, do you have English on Tuesday?*

*Sinta : No, I don't. Why are you asking?*

*Galang : I just want to borrow your dictionary. (D115) I have an English on that day.*

*Sinta : Sure, go ahead. Anyway I have English on Monday and Wednesday.*

The D115 utterance above was classified as directive speech act with requesting function since in his utterance, Galang requested Sinta to borrow her dictionary.

**C. Directive (Questioning)**

*Pipit : What is our next subject after the school break, Monita? (D127)*

*Monita : It's science with Pak Romy. We will learn at the science laboratory.*

The D127 utterance above was classified as directive speech act with questioning function since in her utterance, Pipit questioned Monita what the subject after the school break was.

**D. Expressive (Thanking)**

*Pipit : oh really? Where is the science laboratory ?*

*Monita. : It's next to the library. We can go there together.*

*Pipit : Ok, thank you, Monita. (D131) I just can't wait to study with Pak Romy.*

The D131 utterance above was classified as expressive speech act with thanking function since in her utterance, Pipit thanked Monita for giving the information of science laboratory location .

**D. Expressive (Complimenting)**

*Galang : Come in. Sit down in the living room*

*Monita : Galang, you have a nice house. (D107) Are the walls made of wood?*

The D107 utterance above was classified as expressive speech act with complimenting function since in her utterance, Beni complimented Galang's house.

**D. Expressive (Expressing Like)**

*Andre : What do you like having for your meal?*

*Galang : I like tempe bacem. (D101) It's sweet.*

The D101 utterance above was classified as expressive speech act with expressing like function since in his utterance, Galang liked tempe bacem.

**D. Expressive (Greeting)**

*Andre : Hi, Galang. (D45) What's up?*

*Galang : Hi. (D47). I'm about to go to river for fishing.*

The D45 and D47 utterance above were classified as expressive speech act with greeting function since in their utterances, Andre and Galang greeted each other.

According to the excerpts above, the functions of speech act called assertives or representations found in the discussions of the researcher's chosen textbook were stating, informing, and agreeing. In the meantime, the available speech act commissive functions were offering and

promising. There could be questioning and requesting under the speech act category of directives. Lastly, the functions of type of speech act expressives were thanking, complimenting, and expressing like.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion, there are two conclusions that could be drawn. The first is the most appeared speech act found in the textbook is assertive. It consists of 108 data out of 191 utterances. The next conclusion is the most appeared function of speech acts is informing. As noted above, informing is subtype of assertive speech act.

Meanwhile, a further investigation on how speech acts should be presented incorporating three significant pragmatic aspects—metapragmatic, sociopragmatics, and pragmalinguistics— should be conducted in the near future.

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