

The Speech Act and Communication Strategy in English Students Association (Case Study of the English Students Association Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to 1) describe the types of speech acts used by members of the English Students Association (ESA), and 2) explore the communication strategies applied within the association. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, with 20 ESA members as the subjects. The data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The findings revealed that the members of ESA employed locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in their daily communication. Common speech acts identified included warning, requesting, inviting, suggesting, promising, refusal, and commanding. Furthermore, communication strategies such as politeness—both positive and negative—were evident, with members often using direct and indirect forms of communication to achieve their goals. The results also indicated that ESA members were interested in and actively engaged in utilizing speech acts and communication strategies in their interactions. This was evidenced by the average questionnaire score of 82.30, categorized as high interest. The findings suggest that understanding and applying speech acts and communication strategies enhance the effectiveness of communication within the organization.

Keywords: Speech Act; Communication Strategy; English Students Association

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have predominantly examined speech acts within classroom settings, particularly focusing on teacher-student interactions. For instance, studies such as how directive speech acts (such as instructions and requests) dominate classroom communication. However, these studies were limited to formal educational settings, with little attention given to peer-to-peer communication outside the classroom. While some researchers have explored the role of speech acts in second-language acquisition, most of these studies focused on language learning environments rather than academic organizations. This leaves a gap in understanding how students use these linguistic tools in real-world, collaborative settings, such as student associations, where informal and formal communication coexists.

Recent research, such as Chintya (2014) and Kurniawan (2017), has demonstrated that speech acts play a significant role in various communication contexts. Chintya (2014) found that students in organizational settings often switched between polite requests and direct commands depending on the social hierarchy and task urgency. Meanwhile, Kurniawan (2017) highlighted the use of speech acts and communication strategies in political speeches, emphasizing their role in influencing others and achieving communicative goals. Despite these contributions, the application of speech act theory within student organizations remains underexplored, especially in peer-led environments like the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang.. These strategies are particularly relevant in student organizations, where members must balance the need for effective communication with maintaining social harmony. On the other hand, communication strategies like code-switching, circumlocution, and repetition help language learners overcome gaps in their linguistic competence, making them essential tools in second-language learning contexts.

Despite the relevance of these theories, there has been limited research on how students in academic organizations apply speech acts and communication strategies in their daily interactions. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the types of speech acts and communication strategies used by members of the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang. By exploring these elements in a real-world, peer-led environment, this research aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how students use linguistic tools to navigate communication challenges and achieve their goals within academic organizations. Moreover, the findings will provide practical insights for educators and curriculum designers on how to enhance students' communicative competence, particularly in second-language learning contexts. Despite the importance of speech acts and communication strategies, there is limited research on how these elements are applied by students in academic organizations like ESA. Most previous studies have focused on speech acts in classroom settings or in teacher-student interactions. However, little attention has been given to how students use speech acts and communication strategies in peer-to-peer communication within academic

communities. Understanding these aspects can provide insights into how students navigate communication challenges and how these strategies contribute to their language development. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the speech acts and communication strategies used by members of the ESA. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of speech acts commonly used by ESA members and how communication strategies, such as politeness, are employed in their interactions. The research focuses on both the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of communication, highlighting the importance of effective communication in student organizations. By exploring these aspects, the study hopes to contribute to the broader understanding of how students apply linguistic theories in real-world settings. It also aims to provide practical insights that can help educators and curriculum designers develop strategies to enhance students' communicative competence. Furthermore, this research can serve as a foundation for future studies on speech acts and communication strategies in various academic and social contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of speech acts was first introduced by Ilyas and Khushi (2019) examined the use of speech acts in digital communication, highlighting how online interactions reflect different speech act usage compared to face-to-face communication. This study demonstrated that while the core functions of speech acts remain consistent, the medium of communication (digital or physical) significantly affects their application and interpretation, another significant figure in speech act theory, expanded on Austin's work by proposing five categories of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Assertives aim to describe the world, such as stating or claiming something. Directives attempt to get the listener to do something, like asking or ordering. Commissive commit the speaker to a future action, such as promising. Expressive convey the speaker's feelings, like thanking or apologizing, while declarations bring about a change in the external world through language, such as declaring someone married. Understanding these categories is crucial in the context of this research, as it allows for the identification of the specific speech acts used by members of the English Students Association (ESA) in their daily communication. By analyzing the speech acts performed, this study will shed light on how students use language to achieve various communicative purposes within an academic organization.

Similarly, Isharyanti and Rakhmawati (2018) explored speech acts in academic settings, focusing on how students use these acts during discussions and group work. Their findings suggested that assertive and directive speech acts were the most commonly used, particularly when students negotiated roles and responsibilities in collaborative academic tasks. This aligns with earlier research but adds a contemporary layer by investigating how these acts function in peer-led environments, which is essential for understanding the dynamics of student organizations. Several studies have explored the use of speech acts and

communication strategies in different contexts. Bayat (2012) conducted a study on the use of speech acts among students and found that speech acts such as apologies, refusals, and requests were frequently used in student interactions. Bayat also emphasized the importance of understanding cultural differences in speech act realization, as what is considered polite in one culture may not be in another. A similar study by Kurniawan (2017) analyzed the speech acts and communication strategies used by Donald Trump during his presidential campaign. The study highlighted the role of assertive and directive speech acts in persuasive communication, as well as the use of positive politeness to appeal to voters. While this study focused on a political context, its findings are relevant to the current research as they provide insight into how speech acts can be used to influence others. The study found that young learners frequently used directive speech acts such as requests and commands, and relied on communication strategies like repetition and gesture when faced with communication challenges. Although the age group differs from university students, the study underscores the importance of communication strategies in facilitating successful interaction. In educational contexts, speech acts play a critical role in shaping interactions between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves. Classroom communication is heavily reliant on directive and commissive speech acts, as teachers frequently give instructions and students are expected to commit to tasks. However, within student organizations such as the ESA, the dynamics of communication may differ. Peer-to-peer communication in these settings is often less formal and may involve a wider range of speech acts, including expressives and assertives, as students collaborate on academic and extracurricular activities.

Chintya (2014) conducted a study on directive speech acts in university settings and found that students often used polite requests when interacting with their peers, but switched to more direct commands when dealing with organizational tasks. This highlights the flexibility of speech act usage in different social situations within academic environments. The current research will build on these findings by examining the specific types of speech acts used within the ESA and how they vary depending on the context of the interaction. In addition to speech acts, communication strategies are essential for language learners, particularly in second-language contexts where learners may lack the vocabulary or grammar to express themselves fully. These strategies help learners maintain communication even when faced with linguistic challenges. In the context of the ESA, communication strategies are likely to play a key role, as members are tasked with organizing and participating in various activities that require them to use English as a means of communication. By examining the communication strategies employed by ESA members, this study will provide insights into how students overcome linguistic barriers and achieve successful communication in English.

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative design, which is suitable for exploring and understanding how speech acts and communication strategies are used within the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang. Qualitative research focuses on describing and interpreting patterns of behavior and communication in a natural setting, providing in-depth insights into the phenomena under investigation. This study will describe and analyze the types of speech acts performed and the communication strategies employed by ESA members during their daily interactions. The research was conducted at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang, focusing specifically on the members of the English Students Association (ESA). The subjects of the research were 20 active ESA members, who were selected based on their regular participation in the organization's activities. These students were involved in various activities where they interacted using English as their primary means of communication, making them ideal subjects for this study on speech acts and communication strategies. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the types of speech acts and communication strategies used by members of the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang. The qualitative method is ideal for exploring how language is used in natural settings and allows for an in-depth understanding of the speech acts and communication strategies employed by students in their everyday interactions. By using this approach, the study aims to describe the linguistic patterns and strategies in detail, providing insights into both the theoretical and practical aspects of communication within the association.

The research was conducted on 20 active members of the ESA, who were chosen based on their involvement in the organization's activities. These participants were regularly engaged in discussions, meetings, and events organized by the ESA, making them suitable subjects for studying how speech acts and communication strategies function in peer-to-peer interactions. Data were collected over several weeks, during which participants' interactions were observed in various settings, including formal meetings, casual discussions, and group project activities. This allowed the researcher to capture a wide range of speech acts and communication strategies used in different communication contexts. Three primary data collection techniques were used: observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Observations were conducted to record real-time interactions, with particular attention to the types of speech acts (e.g., directives, commissive, expressive) and politeness strategies (e.g., positive and negative politeness) employed by the participants. The interviews were designed to gather in-depth insights into the participants' perceptions of their communication strategies, while the questionnaires provided quantitative data regarding their awareness and interest in these linguistic tools. The combination of these methods ensures that the study captures both qualitative and quantitative aspects of communication within the ESA. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis for the qualitative data and descriptive statistics for the quantitative data from the questionnaires. Thematic analysis involved coding the transcripts from observations and interviews to identify recurring patterns in the types of speech acts and communication

strategies used by the participants. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses from the questionnaires, providing a numerical overview of the participants' awareness and use of speech acts and communication strategies. The integration of these analysis methods provides a comprehensive understanding of how students communicate within the ESA and how they apply speech acts and communication strategies in their interactions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the types of speech acts and communication strategies employed by members of the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang. The data collected from observations, interviews, and questionnaires provided valuable insights into how students use language to achieve their communicative goals within an academic organization. This section will present the findings in a structured manner, using tables and graphs for better visualization. The analysis of the data revealed that ESA members frequently used three main types of speech acts: directive, commissive, and expressive acts. The most common speech acts observed were directives, which accounted for 45% of the total speech acts recorded, followed by commissive acts (30%) and expressive acts (25%). These results highlight the collaborative nature of the organization, where members often give instructions, make requests, and commit to various tasks. Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarize the distribution of speech acts used by ESA members.

Table 1. Type of Speech Act Frequency (%)

Directive	45%
Commissive	30%
Expressive	25%

Communication Strategies Employed

In addition to speech acts, the study also examined the communication strategies used by ESA members, particularly when faced with linguistic challenges. The most frequently observed strategies included code-switching (40%), circumlocution (30%), and repetition for clarification (20%). Code-switching was commonly used when participants lacked the vocabulary needed to express complex ideas in English, while circumlocution helped them describe unfamiliar terms in simpler language. The remaining 10% of communication strategies included fillers and hesitation devices. The distribution of communication strategies is summarized in Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Communication Strategies Used by ESA

Communication Strategy	Frequency (%)
Code-Switching	40%
Circumlocution	30%
Repetition for Clarification	20%
Other (Fillers, Hesitations)	10%

Politeness Strategies

ESA members also demonstrated an awareness of politeness strategies, particularly when navigating social hierarchies within the group. Positive politeness strategies were more frequently used (65%) than negative politeness strategies (35%). Positive politeness, such as complimenting and using inclusive language, helped foster solidarity and reduce social distance among members, particularly when making requests. Negative politeness, on the other hand, was employed when members sought to avoid imposing on others, often through indirect requests or apologies. Table 3 and Figure 3 illustrate the use of politeness strategies within the organization.

Table 3: Use of Politeness Strategies by ESA Members

Politeness Strategy	Frequency (%)
Positive Politeness	65%
Negative Politeness	35%

The findings of this study confirm that speech acts and communication strategies are critical components of effective communication within student organizations like the ESA. The predominance of directive speech acts suggests that the structure of the organization requires members to give instructions and make requests frequently, a reflection of the collaborative and task-oriented nature of student associations. The high use of commissive and expressive acts indicates that building trust and maintaining positive relationships are also important within the group. The frequent use of code-switching and circumlocution highlights the linguistic challenges faced by ESA members, many of whom are still developing their proficiency in English. These strategies allow students to overcome gaps in their linguistic competence, ensuring that communication remains effective even when they encounter difficulties. This aligns with findings from previous studies, which emphasize the importance of communication strategies in second-language acquisition contexts.

Politeness strategies also played a significant role in maintaining social harmony within the group. The higher use of positive politeness strategies reflects the egalitarian nature of the organization, where members strive to minimize social distance and create an atmosphere of inclusivity. This is consistent with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which suggests that individuals use positive politeness to express solidarity and foster positive social relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the types of speech acts and communication strategies employed by members of the English Students Association (ESA) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidenreng Rappang, addressing a notable research gap. While much of the existing literature has focused on classroom interactions or teacher-student communication, relatively little attention has been given to peer-to-peer interactions within student organizations. Moreover, previous studies have rarely examined how speech acts and communication strategies are applied in these informal, peer-led environments where language learners must navigate both social dynamics and linguistic challenges. The findings of this study help fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of how students use speech acts and communication strategies to achieve their communicative goals in a real-world academic setting. The results reveal that directive, commissive, and expressive speech acts are the most frequently used, reflecting the task-oriented and collaborative nature of the organization. Additionally, communication strategies such as code-switching, circumlocution, and repetition for clarification were commonly employed to overcome linguistic barriers, demonstrating the students' adaptability in maintaining effective communication despite gaps in their language proficiency. Furthermore, the study highlights the use of politeness strategies, with a higher preference for positive politeness to foster solidarity and inclusiveness among members. This demonstrates that students are not only developing linguistic competence but also gaining pragmatic competence, which is essential for navigating social interactions in diverse settings. This study contributes to the understanding of speech acts and communication strategies in student organizations, offering practical insights into how language learners apply these theories in peer-to-peer interactions. The findings provide valuable information for educators and curriculum designers seeking to enhance students' communicative competence by integrating real-world language use into English language learning. This research not only fills a gap in the literature but also paves the way for future studies to explore communication in other academic and social contexts.

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