

Speech Act Analysis in Indonesian: A Case Study of Buying and Selling Transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the speech acts present in buying and selling transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat, with a focus on how sellers and buyers utilize language to achieve their communication goals. The research examines the forms of illocutionary acts used in these interactions and their roles in facilitating effective transactions. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this field study was conducted from August to September 2024. Data were collected using a combination of observation, recording, interviews, and the listen-and-note technique to ensure comprehensive analysis. The results indicate the presence of five primary types of speech acts in the transactional interactions: (1) assertive acts, which convey the speaker's beliefs or statements of truth, such as product descriptions or price confirmations; (2) directive acts, where speakers attempt to influence the actions of others, such as requesting, advising, or persuading; (3) commissive acts, involving promises or commitments by sellers or buyers, such as agreeing to a price or a delivery time; (4) declarative acts, where speakers make statements that bring about immediate changes in the transaction, such as closing a deal; and (5) expressive acts, which reflect the speakers' emotions or attitudes, such as gratitude or apologies during the negotiation. This study provides a deeper understanding of the communicative strategies used by sellers and buyers in Gelugur Market and highlights the cultural and social factors that influence their interactions.

Keywords: Speech Act; Buying and Selling Interaction; Market Transaction

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool used for communication between individuals. Communication inherently involves at least two parties: the sender and the receiver. Without this duality, communication cannot occur (Holmes & Wilson, 2020). The information exchanged may take the form of ideas, concepts, offers, explanations, or messages. Effective communication requires spoken interaction between two or more people, involving a speaker and a listener. Within pragmatics, these interactions are understood as speech acts, which not only convey messages but also perform actions (Austin, 2017; Searle, 2019).

Speech acts are linguistic actions executed by speakers through the use of language, a concept initially introduced by J.L. Austin and further developed by John Searle. Speech acts encompass three dimensions: locutionary acts (the act of saying something), illocutionary acts (the intention behind the statement), and perlocutionary acts (the effect of the statement on the listener) (Searle, 2019). These acts collectively represent the communicative dynamics between speakers and listeners, embedded in the social and cultural contexts of interaction (Holmes & Wilson, 2020).

Speech acts can be categorized into various types, including declarations, requests, offers, and commands, each serving distinct functions in communication (Leech, 2017). For example, declarative speech acts are used to provide information or state facts, while directive speech acts aim to elicit actions from the listener. In social contexts, the use of speech acts is influenced by unwritten societal norms, with communication styles varying based on an individual's social and cultural background. Understanding these types of speech acts is crucial for analyzing social interactions and fostering effective communication (Holmes & Wilson, 2020; Thomas, 2017).

The study of speech acts in the buying and selling transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat, is particularly intriguing as it provides insights into the communication patterns of the local community within a rich social context (Sugihartono, 2021). Analyzing speech acts in market interactions reveals distinct communication models and their implications for Indonesian language education. This research aims to examine speech acts in the context of transactions at Gelugur Market. Traditional markets serve as vibrant spaces for social interaction, where sellers and buyers engage in direct communication. Here, language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a means of fostering social and economic relationships (Renkema, 2021).

The study focuses on the role of speech acts—locution, illocution, and perlocution—in understanding the intent and purpose of market interactions. In the context of buying and selling, speech acts encapsulate various aspects such as price negotiations, product information exchanges, and the expression of emotions

(Leech, 2017). This analysis seeks to uncover how these elements are manifested in daily conversations at Gelugur Market.

Using a qualitative approach, the research collects data through recorded conversations between sellers and buyers. The data will analyze speech act patterns and explore how social and cultural contexts influence language use. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of communication dynamics in traditional markets, offering valuable insights for linguistics and practical strategies for improving transactional communication (Searle, 2019).

The findings are expected to benefit linguistic studies and provide actionable suggestions for traders to enhance their communication strategies, improving their ability to attract customers. By making market interactions more effective and efficient, the study aims to address the needs of both sellers and buyers. Thus, this research not only focuses on linguistic aspects but also considers the social and economic factors influencing buying and selling interactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language is a system of symbols or sounds used by individuals to communicate, whether orally or in writing. It is composed of units such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Language serves as a vital tool for expressing ideas, sharing information, and building social relationships. As Kartomo and Sudarman (2019) explain, language is integral to human life, enabling the transmission of ideas, emotions, instructions, and other messages. Through language, individuals can socialize, form connections, and enhance their understanding of the world. Its functions include serving as a communication tool, a means of self-expression, a unifying force, a medium for social adaptation, and a mechanism for social control.

A critical aspect of language use is speech acts, which refer to actions performed through spoken words. According to Arifiany (2016), speech acts involve specific intentions and are designed to influence listeners. Originating from J.L. Austin's seminal work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), speech act theory highlights how spoken language extends beyond conveying information to include expressing intentions and influencing relationships between speakers and listeners. Searle (2017) categorizes speech acts into three types: locutionary acts (what is said), illocutionary acts (the intent behind what is said), and perlocutionary acts (the effect of the statement on the listener).

This study focuses on illocutionary acts in the context of buying and selling transactions. Illocutionary acts involve specific intentions, such as informing, commanding, or expressing emotions, and are classified into five types: assertive acts, which convey statements or facts; directive acts, which involve commands or requests; commissive acts, which include promises or commitments; declarative acts, which enact changes in a situation; and expressive acts, which reveal the

speaker's psychological state, such as gratitude or apologies (Ehrenberg et al., 2019).

The context of traditional markets, such as Pasar Gelugur Rantauprapat, offers a rich environment for studying speech acts. Markets are spaces where economic actors—buyers and sellers—engage in direct communication, utilizing language to negotiate, bargain, and share product information. Ehrenberg et al. (2019) describe markets as venues where economic and social exchanges occur, with language serving as a critical tool for persuasion and building trust. For example, illocutionary acts in bargaining may involve assertive statements to describe product benefits, directives to set prices, or commissive promises about delivery times.

The study of speech acts in market transactions provides insights into the cultural and social dynamics that shape communication in these settings. By analyzing speech acts, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the pragmatic use of language in economic exchanges and its role in fostering effective and efficient communication between sellers and buyers. Moreover, it highlights the significance of linguistic strategies in creating trust and mutual understanding in traditional market interactions. Such findings are valuable for enhancing communication strategies and supporting the development of language education in economic and social contexts.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyze the speech acts used during buying and selling transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat. The data consist of spoken words and actions expressed by sellers and buyers as they engage in transactional interactions. The primary sources of data are the sellers and buyers actively participating in these exchanges, providing a rich context for exploring the role of language in economic and social communication.

Instrument and Procedure

Data collection involved a combination of methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the interactions. Observation was conducted to monitor natural communication between sellers and buyers in their everyday environment. Recording was used to capture conversations during transactions, preserving both verbal and non-verbal cues for detailed analysis. To complement these methods, interviews were conducted with participants to gain deeper insights into their communication strategies, motivations, and perspectives. Additionally, a listen-and-note technique was applied, where researchers actively listened to conversations and documented relevant speech acts in real time. This multi-method approach ensured the reliability and richness of the collected data.

Data Analysis

The analysis focused on identifying and categorizing speech acts based on their types, including assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive acts. The recorded and noted interactions were transcribed and examined in detail to interpret the speakers' intentions and the impact of their utterances. Contextual factors, such as the social and cultural dynamics of Gelugur Market, were also considered to provide a nuanced understanding of how language functions in transactional communication. These findings were then used to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the role of speech acts in facilitating effective interactions between sellers and buyers in the market setting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study identifies various types of illocutionary speech acts in interactions between sellers and buyers at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat. These speech acts serve different purposes, such as conveying information, influencing decisions, expressing emotions, or making commitments. Below are the types of illocutionary acts observed in the transactional exchanges.

1. Assertive Speech Acts

Assertive speech acts aim to convey information or state facts. An example can be observed in the interaction between a chili seller, Saulina, and her customer, Sarti. When Sarti asked, *"How much is your chili per kilogram?"*, Saulina responded, *"It's 32,000 per kilogram, but for you, take it for 30,000."* Here, the seller explicitly provides information about the price, fulfilling the purpose of an assertive speech act. By lowering the price for her regular customer, the seller strengthens their transactional relationship while sharing factual information.

2. Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts involve attempting to influence the listener's actions, such as commanding, requesting, or advising. This is evident in the interaction between Zakaria, a palm sugar seller, and Idah, a buyer. When Idah asked about the price differences, Zakaria explained, *"This one is 30,000 per kilogram, and that one is 25,000 because it needs more processing. Take this one instead; it's better quality."* Here, Zakaria encourages Idah to purchase the higher-quality sugar, demonstrating a directive act aimed at persuading the buyer.

3. Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive acts express commitments or promises regarding future actions. This is exemplified in the interaction between Ismayani, a clothing seller, and her customer Juli. When Juli requested a specific type of headscarf, Ismayani replied, *"They're out of stock, but I'll reserve two for you tomorrow morning."* This

statement commits the seller to a future action, provided that Juli pays a deposit. This promise to reserve items reflects a commissive speech act.

4. Declarative Speech Acts

Declarative acts bring about an immediate change in a situation through speech. In an interaction between Melda, a juice seller, and her customer Nisa, the seller declared, *"Sorry, we're closed; I'm in a hurry to leave."* This declaration immediately ends the potential transaction, exemplifying a declarative act where the seller uses her authority to close the sales process.

5. Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive acts communicate the speaker's emotions or attitudes. For instance, Sari, a fruit seller, expressed gratitude to her customer Diah by saying, *"Thank you for buying here; I hope you'll become a regular customer."* This statement reflects Sari's appreciation and her hope to establish a continuing business relationship, demonstrating an expressive speech act.

The findings highlight how different types of illocutionary acts facilitate effective communication in market transactions. Assertive acts provide clarity about products and prices, fostering trust between buyers and sellers. Directive acts aim to guide buyer choices, often enhancing the seller's ability to market higher-value goods. Commissive acts build loyalty by assuring buyers of future benefits, while declarative acts streamline interactions by asserting control over transactional boundaries. Finally, expressive acts strengthen interpersonal relationships, creating goodwill that may encourage repeat business.

The findings of this study reveal the significant role of illocutionary speech acts in facilitating communication during buying and selling transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat. The identified speech acts—assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive—each serve distinct purposes in enhancing transactional efficiency and interpersonal relationships. These results provide deeper insights into the interplay between language and socio-economic exchanges in traditional market settings.

Assertive speech acts, such as providing product prices or explaining differences in quality, align with Yule's (2016) assertion that assertive acts foster trust by conveying clear and factual information. This study highlights a unique feature in traditional markets, where assertive acts are personalized to strengthen relationships with regular customers. Unlike formal retail settings, these interactions emphasize relational dynamics, adding a novel dimension to the role of assertive acts in economic contexts.

Directive speech acts, observed in sellers persuading buyers to choose specific products, support Holmes and Wilson's (2020) argument that directives are vital

for influencing behavior. However, this study emphasizes the cultural nuance in Gelugur Market, where directives are delivered with politeness and indirectness, reflecting local social norms. This cultural adaptability distinguishes traditional market interactions and enriches the understanding of directives in varying socio-economic contexts.

Commissive speech acts, such as promises to reserve items, demonstrate a commitment that reinforces customer loyalty. This aligns with Searle's (2017) concept of commitment in speech acts but provides a fresh perspective by contextualizing it in informal economic settings, where personal relationships are critical. The study showcases how such commitments go beyond mere transactional obligations, fostering long-term trust between sellers and buyers.

Declarative speech acts, like declaring the end of sales or closing a shop, align with Renkema's (2021) perspective that declaratives bring immediate changes in social situations. This study illustrates how sellers in traditional markets exercise situational authority to define transactional boundaries, adding a unique dimension to the use of declaratives in informal economies.

Expressive speech acts, such as gratitude or wishes for future patronage, align with Sugihartono's (2022) findings on their role in enhancing goodwill. The study highlights how these acts are strategically employed to establish and maintain long-term customer relationships, demonstrating their importance in both personal and economic interactions.

The study has several important implications. Academically, it contributes to sociolinguistics and pragmatics by exploring the application of speech acts in traditional markets, a context often overlooked in research. The findings also have practical implications, particularly for market sellers. Understanding the strategic use of speech acts can improve communication skills, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. Training programs for traditional market sellers could benefit from incorporating these insights, helping them strengthen their relationships with customers.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. First, it focuses on a single market, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other socio-cultural settings. Second, the analysis primarily considers verbal communication, overlooking the potential role of non-verbal cues such as gestures and tone. Future research could adopt a multimodal approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of market interactions. Lastly, the sample is limited to specific sellers and buyers, suggesting that broader research involving diverse markets and demographic groups could enhance the robustness of the conclusions.

In summary, this study underscores the adaptability and significance of speech acts in traditional market transactions, highlighting their role in navigating the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of Gelugur Market. The findings provide a novel

perspective on the pragmatics of language in informal economic exchanges, laying a foundation for future research in more diverse contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the critical role of illocutionary speech acts in facilitating communication during buying and selling transactions at Gelugur Market, Rantauprapat. The identified speech acts—assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive—highlight how language serves as a dynamic tool for achieving both transactional and relational goals in a traditional market setting. Assertive speech acts provide clarity and factual information, fostering trust between sellers and buyers. Directive acts guide buyer decisions while reflecting cultural norms of politeness and indirectness. Commissive acts strengthen customer loyalty by establishing commitments, while declarative acts enable sellers to assert authority and manage transactional boundaries effectively. Expressive acts, such as gratitude and well wishes, contribute to building goodwill and long-term relationships, emphasizing the human element of economic interactions. The findings reveal the adaptability of speech acts to the socio-cultural context of traditional markets, illustrating how language reflects and reinforces interpersonal relationships and community norms. These insights contribute to the broader understanding of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, particularly in informal economic settings where personal connections are vital. While the study provides valuable contributions, it also has limitations, including its focus on a single market, its emphasis on verbal communication, and a limited participant pool. Future research could expand to include diverse markets, incorporate non-verbal communication, and explore broader demographic groups to provide a more comprehensive understanding of speech acts in various economic and cultural contexts.

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