

Assertive Speech Acts of Princess Mako's Speech Concerning Her Marriage to Kei Komuro at Press Conference

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the assertive illocutionary speech acts of Princess Mako's speech regarding her marriage to Kei Komuro. The purpose of the study was to describe the form, function, and use of assertive speech acts. The data source was taken from Princess Mako's speech on October 26, 2021. The research method was descriptive qualitative and the data collection method involved reading and listening techniques. The study employed speech acts and politeness theories. The results showed that assertive speech acts might function as expressing opinions, defending opinions, stating reasons and rejection, providing explanations, showing, providing clarification, and delivering reports. All expressions were in the form of direct literal speech acts using a variety of words of respect (*keigo*) in the form of humbling oneself (*kenjougo*). Assertive speech acts were used when voicing one's own opinion, defending one's own goals, expressing dissatisfaction, indicating objections, regretting untrue accusations, indicating pride, expressing anger, and expressing gratitude.

Keywords: speech act, assertive illocution, function, Princess Mako

INTRODUCTION

Yule in Arifsetiawati defined speech acts as actions carried out through speech [1] or as utterances [2]. Speech acts could be carried out by a speaker in different psychological conditions, then the results from the speech act could also be different. Searle in Rahardi stated that in practice there are three types of speech acts, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts [3]. Searle in Arifsetiawati stated that assertive illocutionary acts have several functions, namely to state, suggest, boast, complain, demand, inform, report, and brag [1].

According to Saleh, assertive illocutionary acts when combined with politeness would produce functions in the form of expressing opinions, defending opinions, stating reasons, stating rejections, answering questions, providing explanations, showing, providing clarification, and submitting reports [4]. Nomura in Pangestu stated that *keigo* in Japanese functions as a linguistic expression that raises the status of the listener or the person who is the topic of discussion [5].

Problem formulation

This study used Saleh's theory stating that assertive illocutionary acts, when being used with politeness, would produce functions in the forms of expressing and defending opinions, stating reasons and rejections, answering questions, providing explanations and clarification, showing, and sending

reports [4]. So, the study formulated the problem as follows: what are the forms and functions of assertive illocutionary speech acts in Princess Mako's speech and how is assertive illocutionary speech acts in her speech used?

Research objectives

The study was aimed to describe the forms and functions as well as to analyse the use of assertive illocutionary speech acts in Princess Mako's speech.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research conducted by Arifsetiawati indicated that speech acts are found in language communication in verbal and in writing and to convey that intention, a speaker must express it in the form of speech or utterance [1]. The author's research discussed the assertive illocutionary speech acts, but the data of the research was a speech text. Research by Arfianty et al. in 2023 explained that Japanese women's politeness had functions of expressing polite feelings, etiquette, and emotions [6]. Japanese women used politeness in their language to maintain their image in the eyes of their conversation partners. The similarity between the author's research and other articles lies in the use of Japanese women as the object of research, while other articles focused on the context of situation in which they used in their politeness.

The theories in the study are related to theories of pragmatics, context, speech act, assertive illocutionary speech act, and politeness. Yule stated that pragmatics is the study of meaning conveyed by speakers to interlocutor or interlocutors [7] and Leech defined pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations, involving speakers, interlocutors, context, purpose, speech acts, speech, time, and place [8].

Context according to Mulyana (in Rahmawati) refers to the situation or background of a communication and can be considered as the cause and reason for a conversation or dialogue [9]. Yule defined speech acts as actions carried out through

speech [10] and according to Hymes in a speech situation there are eight components which are abbreviated as SPEAKING: physical and psychological background (setting and scene, or S), speech participants (participants, or P), speech objectives (or ends or E), sequence of acts (or acts or A), speech tone (or keys or K), speech channels (or instruments or I), speech norms (or norms or N), and speech types (or genres or G) [11].

Searle in Rahardi stated that in practice there are three types of speech acts, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts [3]. Illocutionary speech acts are defined by Searle (in Rahardi) as the act of doing something with a certain purpose and function [3] and there are five types of illocutionary speech acts, namely; assertive, directive, expressive, commissive and declarative [12]. Searle in Tarigan also argued that the assertive illocutionary speech act is bound to the truth of the proposition expressed, for example, stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, demanding, informing, reporting, and bragging [13].

Sulistyo stated that politeness in language refers to a firm concept related to polite social behavior that exists in a culture or society [14]. Politeness is a rule of behaviour that is established and agreed upon by a particular society so that it is also a prerequisite agreed upon by social behaviour [2]. According to Leech the principles of speakers' politeness when they want to show respect for their interlocutors include six maxims, including the maxim of wisdom (tact maxim), the maxim of generosity (generosity maxim), the maxim of praise (approbation maxim), the maxim of humility (modesty maxim), the maxim of agreement (agreement maxim), and the maxim of sympathy (sympathy maxim) [8].

Wijana and Rohmadi stated that, based on its form, speech acts are divided into four forms, namely, direct and indirect literal speech act, and direct and indirect non-literal speech act [15]. Searle in Rahardi stated that in practice there are three types

of speech acts, i.e., locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary acts [3]. According to Searle illocutionary speech acts are categorized into five types, for instance, assertive (representative), directive (impositive), expressive (evaluative), commissive, and declarative [13]. Assertive becomes one of forms in illocutionary speech acts. According to Leech in Sudaryat, assertive sentences are the ones functioning to express the truth of information [16]. The truth of a sentence has three forms, namely analytical, contradictory, and synthetic sentences. According to Parera, analytical sentences contain the whole truth that is basically known to everyone [17]. Synthetic sentences refer to the ones whose truth depends on facts outside of language. A synthetic sentence means a sentence whose truth is based on the results of observation.

Based on research conducted by Takahashi, it was found that in general Japanese people are not very active in expressing personal opinions directly, especially if their opinions are not asked for [18]. According to Searle in Dardjowidjojo, assertive or representative is a statement about a situation in the world; in this case, what is stated contains truth [19]. Searle in Tarigan argued that assertive illocutionary speech acts are bound to the truth of the proposition expressed, for example, stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, demanding, informing, reporting and bragging [13].

Politeness is a variety of language used to show respect by the speaker to the interlocutor. Politeness is a firm concept related to polite social behaviour that exists in a culture or society [14]. Politeness is a rule of behaviour that is established and agreed upon by a particular society so that politeness is also a prerequisite agreed upon by social behaviour [2].

Maxims are linguistic rules in lingual interaction--rules that regulate their actions, use of language, and interpretations of the actions and statements of their interlocutors [22]. In addition, maxims are also referred to as pragmatic forms based on the principles

of cooperation and of politeness. Leech argued a person can be said to have polite language if he can fulfil the principles of politeness maxims [21], namely:

1. Tact maxim
The principle of politeness put forward by Leech in Rahardi stated that the tact maxim outlines that each participant in the speech must minimize the losses of others, or maximize the benefits for others [3].
2. Maxim of generosity or generosity maxim
Leech in Rahardi defined the maxim of generosity means that speakers are expected to be able to respect others [3].
3. Maxim of acceptance or praise or appreciation (approbation maxim)
Leech in Rahardi stated that a person can be considered polite if in communication, the speaker tries to give appreciation to others [3].
4. Maxim of modesty or modest maxim
According to Leech in Rahardi in the maxim of modesty or the maxim of humility, in speaking activities, it is expected that speakers can have a humble attitude by reducing praise for themselves [3].
5. Maxim of agreement or agreement maxim
Leech in Rahardi stated that the maxim of agreement emphasizes that the speaker and the speech partner can mutually foster compatibility, agreement or consensus in speaking activities [3].
6. Maxim of sympathy (sympathy maxim)
Leech in Rahardi argued that the maxim of sympathy gives an attitude of attention [3].

Brown and Levinson stated that, in politeness, there are several strategies that can be used by speakers in order to achieve certain goals without ignoring the aspect of politeness in language [22]. Dobelli stated that if a message is communicated in a different way, then the message will be received in a different way [23]. The essence of communication is not the content but the way it is delivered and in the jargon of

psychologists, this technique is called framing. Politeness in Japanese is called *keigo*, consisting of the markers *uyamau* (respect) and *go* (language). Machida argued *keigo* is a systematic expression for speakers to express things related to respect for the person (or with an official attitude) [224].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method in the study was qualitative research which was used to reveal, understand something behind a phenomenon, and add insight into something that was little known, or previously unknown, and could provide complex details about the details of a phenomenon that was difficult to reveal [25]. Data collection techniques were carried out through reading, and listening and noting techniques. Reading technique is a technique that follows up on the process of the documentation method, so that it can find the things needed from inanimate objects, such as books, magazines, minutes, and others [26]. The steps of the reading technique include intensively reading existing materials and data, selecting data, and reading the materials that have been collected [26]. Listening and noting technique is a method used in language research by listening to the use of language in the object to be studied [27]. The steps for carrying out the listening and noting technique can be done by playing the video of the data that has been obtained repeatedly, listening to data that is in accordance with the research, and recording data that is in accordance with the research.

The data source and main reference in the study is a video taken live during a press conference which was uploaded by the ShanghaiEye YouTube channel [28] on October 26, 2021 with the title FULL VIDEO: Japan's Princess Mako met the press after marrying lawyer Kei Komuro at Tokyo Hotel. The duration of the video was 11 minutes 23 seconds, containing speeches by Princess Mako and her husband Kei Komuro in turns. Princess Mako is the first

niece of Emperor Naruhito, who was born on October 23, 1991. The public protested the union of the couple because Kei Komuro is just a commoner who does not come from a prominent background in society. In addition, Princess Mako as an imperial member is required to give up her honorary title if she marries someone who is not a noble. It was reported that Princess Mako had experienced pressure due to complaints from various parties to her. A total of 50 representatives from various Japanese media organizations attended the press conference, including the Imperial Household Association Press Club, the Japanese Magazine Publishers Association, and the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Forms and functions of assertive illocutionary speech acts

Princess Mako's speech script are entirely direct literal speech acts; this is because all the sentences spoken are in accordance with the intention of the sentence utterance.

Function of stating reasons

(1). *Watakushi ni totte Kei-san wa kakegae no nai sonzai desu.*

‘For me, Kei is an irreplaceable figure’

In data 1, the expression is categorized as an assertive function of stating reasons because the speaker gives reasons to the speech partner that the speaker's decision was taken because her lover was an irreplaceable figure.

Function of expressing rejection

(2). *Soshite watakushi tachi ni totte kekkon wa, jibun tachi no kokoro wo taisetsu ni mamorinagara ikiteiku tame ni hitsuyou na sentaku deshita.*

‘For us, marriage is an important choice to live our lives and protect each of our hearts’

Data 2 shows the expression is categorized as an assertive function of expressing rejection because the speaker emphasizes the reasons why marriage is important for the speaker, where the decision is opposed

by various audiences in society. By issuing such an expression, the speaker has expressed rejection of the wishes of society.

Function of providing explanation

(3). *Soshite watakushi tachi ni totte kekkon wa, jibun tachi no kokoro wo taisetsu ni mamorinagara ikiteiku tame ni hitsuyou na sentaku deshita.*

‘For us, marriage is an important choice to live our lives and protect each of our hearts’ In data 3, the expression is categorized as an assertive function of providing explanation because the speaker explains to the speech partner that marriage is an important decision for the speaker because the speaker feels that they are living their lives while protecting each other's feelings.

Function of showing

(4). *Koremade oyasashii omichibiki no moto, kouzoku toshite no shigoto wo jibun nari ni dekiru kagiri taisetsu ni hatasou to tsutomete mairimashita.*

‘With the guidance so far, I have tried my best to fulfil my duties as a member of the imperial family’

In data 4, the expression is categorized as an assertive function to show the interlocutor that he has fulfilled his obligations as a member of the imperial family. The expression is emphasized in the form of the speaker showing that he has tried his best. The assertive function also shows the role of reminding the interlocutor of their services or hard work.

Function of providing clarification

(5). *Honjitsu, minna-sama ni otsutaeshitai koto ga aru tame, kono youna ba wo moukemashita.*

‘Today, because there is something that (we) want to convey to all of you, this place has been prepared’

Data 5 indicates the expression shows assertiveness is categorized as an assertive function to provide clarification because the speaker states that there is something that he wants to convey to the interlocutor, so the place has been prepared.

Function of delivering reports

(6). *Honjitsu, minna-sama ni otsutaeshitai koto ga aru tame, kono youna ba wo moukemashita.*

‘Today, because there is anything we want to convey to all of you, this place has been prepared’

In data 6, the expression that shows assertiveness is categorized as an assertive function of delivering reports because the speaker conveys it directly to the speech partner.

Use of assertive illocutionary speech acts

(7). *Honjitsu, minna-sama ni otsutaeshitai koto ga aru tame, kono youna ba wo moukemashita.*

‘Today, because there is anything we want to convey to all of you, this place has been prepared’

The expression in data 7 is the opening of the assertive illocutionary speech act. It begins with the expression *Honjitsu, minna-sama ni otsutaeshitai koto ga aru tame...* (Today, because there is anything we want to convey to all of you...). *Honjitsu* (today) is a formal expression that is used only in formal situations and places and in polite conversation situations. This is in accordance with the place and situation where the speaker is speaking. Then, the expression *minna-sama* (all of you), which is used by the speaker to greet the audience, with the aim of showing the speaker's respectful attitude towards the speech partner as a guest who is present and listening. This expression is part of *keigo*, namely *sonkeigo* which functions to respect the position and status of the interlocutor. As for the expression *otsutaeshitai* (I want to convey), this is a *kenjougo*. The speaker uses *kenjougo* to show that the speaker's status as a member of the imperial family should serve the community and show humility when talking about the speaker himself. In this case, the use of speech acts accompanied by *kenjougo* is used by the speaker when talking about himself and uses

sonkeigo when talking about things related to the interlocutor.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

From the study, it can be concluded that there are data on the functions of expressing opinions, defending opinions, stating reasons and rejection, providing explanations and clarification, showing, and delivering reports. It was also found that in one sentence there can be more than one assertive illocutionary function in it. All the expressions in are in the form of direct literal speech acts. Assertive illocutionary speech acts in Princess Mako's speech are used to voice her own opinions, defend her own goals, express dissatisfaction, indicate objections, regret incorrect accusations, indicate pride, express anger, and express gratitude. Meanwhile, Princess Mako's purpose in adding assertive expressions with respectful language (*keigo*) in the form of humility (*kenjougo*) is to elevate the status of the speech partner so that it reflects the speaker's humility so that it does not seem patronizing.

Declaration by Authors

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