Assertive speech acts in Kompas.com news texts: a pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines assertive speech acts in Kompas.com news texts using a pragmatic approach grounded in Searle's speech act theory. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data drawn from a Kompas.com news article reporting the Jakarta floods. The data consist of clauses and sentences containing assertive speech acts, which were collected through documentation and analyzed based on their types and pragmatic functions. The findings reveal that assertive speech acts dominate the news text, appearing in various forms such as stating, reporting, explaining, and confirming. These speech acts function to deliver factual information, describe situational conditions, report official data, and reinforce the credibility of news reporting. The predominance of assertive speech acts reflects the informative nature of journalistic discourse and demonstrates how language is used to construct objectivity and social reality in online news media. This study contributes to pragmatic and discourse analysis research by providing insights into the role of assertive speech acts in shaping meaning and credibility in news reporting.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Speech acts, Assertive speech acts, News
discourse, Kompas.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Language holds an essential role in journalistic practice because it functions as the main instrument for delivering information to the public in a clear, accurate, and factual manner. In news texts, language is not solely used to transmit facts, but also serves to construct meaning, express attitudes, and guide readers in interpreting events. Within online news

media, especially in headlines, language becomes a strategic element that influences how information is received and understood by the audience (Lestari & Prabawa, 2024). Pragmatics is a linguistic field that examines meaning in relation to context. One of its fundamental concepts is speech act theory, which views utterances as forms of action in communication. Speech acts can be categorized into several types, one of which is assertive speech acts. Assertive speech acts function to convey statements, information, reports, or explanations that can be judged as true or false, as proposed by (Searle, J.R. 1979)

In news discourse, assertive speech acts appear dominantly due to the primary function of news as a medium of information. News headlines frequently employ assertive expressions to state facts, report events, and inform readers concisely. This dominance reflects the role of the news media in constructing social reality and shaping public understanding through language use (Lestari & Prabawa, 2024). As a leading online news portal in Indonesia, Kompas.com presents headlines that extensively utilize assertive speech acts. These acts include stating, informing, reporting, suggesting, explaining, and other assertive functions that appear in news headlines. Through such linguistic choices, Kompas.com represents events and constructs meanings that influence readers' interpretations (Lestari & Prabawa, 2024).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the types and functions of assertive speech acts found in Kompas.com news texts using a pragmatic approach grounded in speech act theory. The analysis is expected to contribute to pragmatic studies and provide insights into language use in online news media, particularly in the construction of meaning within news headlines (Searle, J.R. 1979)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Pragmatics*

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines language use in relation to context. The focus of pragmatic studies extends beyond linguistic forms to include meaning as it is shaped by the interaction between speakers, utterances, and situational contexts. Therefore, the interpretation of meaning cannot be separated from social context and communicative intentions (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996).

In news discourse, a pragmatic approach is particularly relevant because journalistic language is always produced with specific communicative purposes. News texts are constructed not only to deliver information but also to shape readers' understanding and represent social reality. Consequently, pragmatic analysis enables researchers to explore how language functions as social action within media discourse (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1988).

2.2. Speech Acts

The concept of speech acts is based on the view that language is not merely a tool for forming sentences but also a means of performing actions. Every utterance produced by a speaker carries a particular intention and represents a communicative act. In other words, speaking is understood as doing something through language (Austin, 1962).

Within pragmatic studies, speech acts are classified into several types according to their functions and purposes. In written communication, including news texts, speech acts are deliberately employed to convey the writer's intentions to readers. For this reason, speech act analysis is considered an appropriate framework for examining journalistic language (Searle, 1979).

2.3. Assertive Speech Acts

Assertive speech acts are a type of speech act that commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition expressed. Through assertive speech acts, speakers state, report, explain, or describe situations that they believe to be factual. The speaker assumes responsibility for the accuracy of the information conveyed (Searle, 1979).

In news texts, assertive speech acts play a dominant role because the primary function of news is to deliver factual information to the public. Journalists rely on assertive speech acts to present events, report data, and convey statements from authoritative sources. The use of assertive speech acts contributes to the construction of objectivity and credibility in news reporting (Lestari & Prabawa, 2024).

Common forms of assertive speech acts in news discourse include stating facts, reporting developments, explaining causes and effects, and confirming information from official institutions. The prevalence of these forms indicates that journalistic language is largely declarative and informative in nature.

2.4. Assertive Speech Acts in News Texts

Journalistic language possesses distinctive characteristics that emphasize clarity, accuracy, and neutrality. News texts are designed to present events concisely, factually, and in a manner that is easily understood by readers. As a result, journalists tend to employ direct and verifiable utterances (Bell, 1991).

In disaster reporting, the use of assertive speech acts becomes particularly crucial. Information concerning casualties, affected areas, and causes of disasters must be conveyed accurately and responsibly. Assertive speech acts allow the media to present such information without introducing subjective judgments or emotional exaggeration.

Beyond their informative function, assertive speech acts also contribute to the framing of events. The selection of linguistic forms and types of utterances can influence how readers perceive the severity of an event and the responses of relevant authorities. Thus, analyzing assertive speech acts provides insight into how language participates in the construction of social reality through news reporting (van Dijk, 1988).

2.5. Previous Studies

Numerous previous studies have demonstrated that assertive speech acts dominate online news discourse. These studies consistently report that acts of stating and reporting are the most frequently used forms, as they align with the core function of news as a medium for factual information dissemination (Lestari & Prabawa, 2024).

However, research that specifically focuses on assertive speech acts in disaster-related news published by national online media, such as Kompas.com, remains limited. Therefore, the present study seeks to complement previous research by concentrating on the analysis of assertive speech acts in flood-related news texts. This study is expected to contribute to the development of pragmatic studies, particularly in the field of media discourse analysis.

3. METHODS

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to examine assertive speech acts in a Kompas.com news article concerning the Jakarta floods. A qualitative design is selected because the analysis focuses on linguistic forms and their pragmatic functions within a specific discourse context rather than on statistical data. The data source of the study is a

Kompas.com news article entitled "Jakarta Floods and Gridlock as Torrential Rain Batters Capital." The data comprise clauses and sentences in the news text that contain assertive speech acts. Data collection was carried out through a text-based documentation technique, involving careful reading and systematic identification of relevant utterances.

Data analysis was conducted in several steps. Initially, the identified utterances were grouped according to Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts, with particular attention to the assertive category. Subsequently, each utterance was examined to determine its communicative function in the news discourse, such as reporting events, describing situational conditions, or conveying information from official sources. The final stage involved interpreting the findings to explain how assertive speech acts contribute to the construction of factuality and objectivity in news reporting. To enhance the credibility of the findings, theoretical triangulation was employed by relating the results of the analysis to established pragmatic theories and relevant previous studies on assertive speech acts in journalistic discourse.

4. RESULT

Based on the results of the analysis, a number of utterances containing assertive speech acts were identified in Kompas.com news texts. These utterances were classified according to their types and pragmatic functions, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Assertive Speech Acts in Kompas.com News Texts

NO	Kutipan tuturan	Jenis Asertif	Fungsi Pragmatis
1	Statement regarding heavy rainfall that hit Jakarta and caused widespread disruption	Stating	Providing initial information
2	Report on road damage and fatalities	Reporting	Conveying the impact of the event
3	Explanation of serve traffic congestion	Explaining	Describing the situation
4	Official data on the number of flood-affected areas	reporting	Presenting factual data
5	Explanation of the causes of flooding	Explaining	Provoding a cause-effect relationship
6	Confirmation of reported fatalities	Confirming	Reinforcing information
7	Scientific explanation of extreme weather factors	Explaining	Provoding scientific understanding

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that assertive speech acts are employed in various forms within the analysed Kompas.com news texts. These forms include stating, reporting, explaining, and confirming. The findings indicate that news discourse is predominantly characterized by utterances oriented toward the delivery of factual information to readers. The most frequently occurring type of assertive speech act is stating. This type is used to present the main facts related to flood events as well as the initial conditions in affected areas. The use of stating assertive acts in the opening sections of news articles functions to provide a general overview and enables readers to quickly grasp the context of the reported events.

In addition, assertive speech acts of reporting are found in significant frequency. Reporting acts are employed to convey the impacts of flooding, including damage to public infrastructure, disruption of community activities, and the number of casualties. Information delivered through reporting assertive acts is typically supported by data and statements from official sources, thereby strengthening the objective and factual nature of the news coverage. Assertive speech acts of explaining play an important role in providing deeper insight into the background of the events. These utterances include explanations of the causes of flooding and the causal relationship between high rainfall intensity and the occurrence of inundation in various areas. Thus, explaining assertive acts not only convey information but also serve an educational function for readers. Meanwhile, confirming assertive speech acts are used to emphasize the accuracy of specific information, particularly information that is sensitive in nature, such as reports of fatalities. The use of confirming utterances reflects journalistic caution in ensuring the reliability and accuracy of information before it is presented to the public.

5.   DISCUSSION

This section explores the forms and functions of assertive speech acts identified in the Kompas.com news article entitled "Jakarta Floods and Gridlock as Torrential Rain Batters Capital." The analysis is grounded in Searle's (1979) speech act theory, which conceptualizes assertive speech acts as utterances through which speakers express propositions they hold to be true. Within journalistic discourse, assertive speech acts are essential for delivering factual information and shaping an

objective account of events. The analysis shows that assertive speech acts are the most prevalent category in the news text. This finding reflects the fundamental role of news media as a source of information and aligns with earlier studies on Kompas.com, particularly the work of Lestari and Prabawa (2024), who report that assertive speech acts dominate online news headlines due to their function in stating facts, reporting events, and informing the public. The frequent use of assertive acts in the analyzed text indicates a strong emphasis on accuracy and informational reliability.

Assertive speech acts are commonly realized through statements describing the occurrence and consequences of heavy rainfall in Jakarta. For instance, the sentence "Torrential rain that drenched Jakarta on Thursday afternoon triggered chaos across the Indonesian capital" functions as an assertive act of stating, as it presents a factual assertion regarding both the cause and the immediate impact of the weather conditions. According to Searle (1979), such utterances exemplify assertive acts because they demonstrate the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition conveyed. Moreover, assertive speech acts appear in the form of detailed descriptions of flooding, traffic disruption, and infrastructural damage. Utterances such as "Floodwaters covered sections of the main road near ITC Fatmawati, making it impassable to vehicles" and "Traffic across the city came to a near standstill" serve as descriptive assertives. These expressions aim to portray actual conditions experienced by the public and enhance the credibility of the report by providing specific and observable details. This pattern supports the findings of Lestari and Prabawa (2024), who argue that descriptive assertives play a crucial role in reinforcing objectivity in news reporting.

Another significant manifestation of assertive speech acts is found in reported speech and direct quotations from official institutions, including the Jakarta Metropolitan Police, BPBD DKI Jakarta, and BMKG. Statements such as "Tonight's flooding was caused by exceptionally high rainfall" and "Currently, floodwaters persist in 11 areas" function as assertive acts of reporting and verification. By incorporating statements from authoritative sources, the journalist strengthens the factual legitimacy of the news content and reinforces the credibility of the information presented. This strategy corresponds with Searle's view that assertive speech acts convey the speaker's belief in the truthfulness of the proposition. In addition, assertive speech acts are used to report casualties

and material damage, as illustrated by the utterance "He confirmed one fatality in the incident." This form of assertive serves to inform readers about the seriousness of the disaster while maintaining an impersonal and neutral tone. The absence of emotional or evaluative language reflects journalistic conventions that prioritize objectivity and factual reporting.

Furthermore, statements issued by BMKG concerning the continuation of extreme weather conditions function as assertive speech acts of prediction and information. Although these utterances refer to future events, they remain within the assertive category because they are presented as evidence-based conclusions derived from meteorological analysis rather than as commands or persuasive appeals. This finding further supports Searle's classification of assertive speech acts as including predictive statements grounded in factual evidence.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that assertive speech acts in the Kompas.com Jakarta floods news text serve several key functions: reporting factual events, describing the impacts of a natural disaster, conveying official information from authoritative institutions, and constructing a credible and objective news narrative. The dominance of assertive speech acts confirms the relevance of Searle's theoretical framework in analyzing news discourse and supports previous research indicating that assertive speech acts are central to the communicative purpose of journalism, namely, to inform the public.

6. CONCLUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that assertive speech acts constitute the most prominent type of speech act in online news discourse, particularly in news articles published by Kompas.com. Journalists frequently utilize assertive forms to present factual statements, report events, provide explanations, and verify information obtained from official sources. This pattern underscores the fundamental role of news media as a provider of accurate and trustworthy information for the public. Moreover, the extensive use of assertive speech acts supports the creation of objectivity and reliability in news reporting. Through assertive expressions, journalists can convey disaster-related information, such as flood reports, in a precise and accountable manner while minimizing subjective interpretation and emotional emphasis. As a result, assertive

speech acts function not only to transmit information but also to uphold professional journalistic standards.

Additionally, assertive speech acts contribute to the framing of social reality within news texts. The choice of linguistic forms and assertive utterances shapes readers' perceptions of events and influences their evaluation of institutional responses. Therefore, this study confirms the importance of pragmatic approaches, especially speech act theory, in the analysis of media discourse. The results of this research are expected to enrich pragmatic and media discourse studies by offering a clearer understanding of how language operates as a form of social practice in online journalism.

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