
The Use of Speech Acts in Prabowo Subianto's 2024 Inaugural Speech

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Abstract

This research examines the use of Prabowo's speech acts in Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech as the President of Indonesia for the 2024–2029 term. This research aims to uncover the implicit meanings in Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech through speech act analysis. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. Data collection is done by reading the transcript of Prabowo's inauguration speech and then the researcher examines the use of speech acts that appeared in the speech. The results showed that the most frequently used type of speech act is assertive, which Prabowo uses to express statements, emphasize the nation's condition, present his vision, and convince the public about his policies and commitments. This finding aligns with previous research on President Reagan's speeches, which also showed that assertive speech acts were the most dominant. Both leaders often use assertive speech acts because they help build trust, show confidence, and strengthen their credibility as national figures. Through assertive language, they can express beliefs and visions, persuade the audience, and project an image of a strong and trustworthy leader.

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election is the biggest political event that has attracted public attention even at the international level. According to Yuvitasari (2020) the Indonesian presidential election is the main focus of international television stations. From the campaign process, debates between president and vice president candidates, to the vote counting, tensions ran high among the Indonesian people. Through this lengthy process, Prabowo Subianto became the elected candidate who received the most votes from Indonesian people. In other words. Prabowo was elected as the winner and officially became the President of the Republic of Indonesia for the next five years. Additionally, Prabowo's victory signifies a change in Indonesia's leadership and also a momentum in Indonesian politics that will bring about improvements over the previous administration.

After winning the long and thrilling competition, the moment most eagerly awaited by the public was Prabowo's inauguration speech. Moreover, Prabowo's inauguration speech became a trending topic of discussion among both the Indonesian public and the international community. Speech are a political tool for shaping national thought (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2023). In politics, speeches are crucial for conveying political messages to the public. Furthermore, the inauguration speech not only contained expressions of gratitude but also conveyed the leader's vision and mission and how it could be strengthened. A leader's future priorities can be seen from the way they delivered their inauguration speech (Garifullina et al., 2021). Also, inauguration speeches often contain messages of unity that emphasize the leader's vision and mission for the future of the nation. Therefore, the inauguration speech not only marks the end of the election process, but also serves as an important tool for a leader to strengthen his position and also build public communication for his people.

A leader's political speech is often characterized by language that not only conveys a direct message, but also has implicit meanings that are not always easily understood by the public. Politicians employ speech acts to reassure the public about the future; however, their meaning must be interpreted within context, as text and context are deeply interconnected (Ramzan et al., 2023). In other words, language plays a strategic role in shaping a leader's public image, as the choice of words and style of expression not only delivers information but also persuades the community. Searle (1969) state that pragmatics focuses on understanding the meaning of utterances through the analysis of the smallest units of communication, namely speech acts. In Prabowo Subianto's inaugural speech,

certain word choices and expressions contain implied messages that need to be analyzed further. According to Austin (1962) a speech act is an action performed in the process of saying something. Additionally, speech acts are understood as the smallest unit of communication that is always related to the situation in which they are uttered, such as who the speaker is, who the listener is, what the context is, the purpose of the utterance, and the impact that comes after.

To analyze this phenomenon of language use in political speeches, the theory of speech acts in pragmatics becomes highly relevant. Moreover, each type has a specific function according to the purpose of communication, and also helps to find the implied meaning behind political speeches. In political speeches, speech act serves to convey messages directly and also to shape messages even if they contain implied meanings. Furthermore, speech act can help us understand how political speeches reveal the hidden meanings and messages behind the language used by a leader. Additionally, political speech analysis has been conducted by several researchers such as (Agustina et al., 2024; Jelita et al., 2025; Muhassin, 2021; Muhsen & Smeer, 2022; Mukminin et al., 2024). In addition, this research aims to explore how speech acts can be used to reveal the function of language in Prabowo's inauguration speech. Also, this research can reveal the implicit meanings in Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech through speech act analysis. The significance of this research lies in providing a deeper understanding of language use in political speeches, broadening insights into the communication strategies of Indonesian political leaders, and providing a new perspective for the public in interpreting messages conveyed through political speeches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies language in context as the basis for explaining the meaning and understanding of language. Pragmatics focuses on examining the impact of context and situation on the interpretation of meaning (Zaynitdinovna, n.d.). Additionally, pragmatics highlights how meaning is formed through interaction between speakers and their interlocutors, as well as the surrounding situation. Yule (1996) states that pragmatic role is important in understanding speech, not only from what is said explicitly, but also from the implied meaning behind it. Moreover, pragmatics is relevant to this research because it helps to understand the hidden meanings of messages that are not always directly expressed through words. In the context of Prabowo Subianto's

inauguration speech, the language used was not merely a string of words, but a means of conveying a deeper message. Also, his statements often contained hidden meanings that could be interpreted differently by listeners, depending on the social context and political situation at the time. Through pragmatics, the implied meaning or hidden message behind the choice of words and style of language can be revealed, providing a deeper understanding of the political communication strategies used.

Speech Act

The concept of speech acts was first introduced by J.L Austin (1962) in his work *How to Do Things with Words*. Austin (1962) argues that language not only serves to describe reality, but also to perform actions, such as promising, commanding, or apologizing. J.L Austin's theory categorizes into three types, locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. This theory was further developed by Searle (1969) who emphasized the illocutionary aspect of the act and classified it into five main categories. His classification is as follows: assertives, which are used to convey something that is bound to the truth expressed e.g. stating, claiming, or reporting; directives, which aim to produce an effect in the form of an action carried out by the speaker e.g. requesting, ordering, advising, or demanding; commissives, which are used to bind the utterance of the speaker to carry out what it mentions in the future e.g. promising, offering, or swearing; expressives, which express the speaker's psychological attitude towards a situation e.g. thanking, greeting, congratulating, or apologising; declarations, which can change the reality of the situation according to proportion e.g. resigning, dismissing, accepting, etc. This classification shows that each utterance has a specific function according to the context and the intention of the speaker. In political speeches, such as Prabowo Subianto's inaugural speech, Searle's speech act theory is very relevant because it helps reveal how language functions not only to provide information, but also to persuade, invite, show commitment, and build a leader's political image.

Inauguration Speech

Inauguration speeches are a form of formal speech that serves a symbolic and performative function for a leader. One type of political speech that often attracts attention is the presidential inauguration speech, delivered immediately after the president-elect is officially inaugurated or takes the oath of office. Additionally, inaugural speeches have become a tradition that is always carried out every time an official leader takes office. Campbell & Jamieson (2008) state that inauguration speeches serve to reinforce the

legitimacy of a new leader while building their image through the delivery of a national vision. Furthermore, the inauguration speech serves as a means to build leadership identity and unite the community after the political competition process. The inauguration speech aims to express appreciation and inform parliament of the direction of the new administration under the new president (Fernandez & Uran, 2021). In other words, inaugural speeches are designed to reinforce the authority of leaders and present them positively to the public.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used descriptive qualitative method to analyze Prabowo Subianto's speech acts in *the Inauguration Speech of the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect of the 2024-2029 Term of Office* on 20 October 2024. Creswell & Creswell (2017) explains that the descriptive qualitative method aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of a social or human phenomenon through in depth data collection from interviews, observations, and documents. Moreover, the research data source was speech transcripts taken from the official website of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia in English. Furthermore, the data were collected through documentation techniques, by transcribing, reading, and thoroughly analyzing the speech transcripts. The data were analyzed using Searle's speech act theory which classified illocutionary acts into five main categories, there are assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The analysis process was carried out through several stages, starting from understanding the context of the speech, identifying utterances in the text, classifying them according to speech act categories, calculating the frequency to find out the most dominant category, to interpreting the results. In addition, this analysis also aimed to reveal the implied meanings in Prabowo's utterances, especially the parts that may not be directly understood by the wider community, so as to provide a clearer picture of the political communication strategy used. In other word, this research not only described the types of speech acts that appear, but also showed the pragmatic functions and implicit messages behind the inaugural speech.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the findings section, the researcher found 73 data of speech acts in Prabowo's Inauguration Speech of the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect of the 2024-2029 Term of Office on 20 October 2024. The data includes words, phrases, sentences, and

clauses summarized from the entire speech. Moreover, the five categories of speech acts according to Searle were successfully identified, namely assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative, which were then grouped according to their respective functions. The results of the classification of speech acts in Prabowo's inauguration speech are shown in Table 1 to show the distribution of speech acts and their functions. Also, it can be observed in the following table.

Table 1. Classification and Frequency of Speech Acts in Prabowo's Inauguration Speech

No.	Type of Speech Act	Function of Speech Act	Frequency
1.	Assertive	Stating	27
		Describing	1
		Reporting	3
2.	Directive	Encouraging	20
3.	Expressive	Greeting	1
		Thanking	8
4.	Commissive	Promising	12
5.	Declarative	Declaring	1
Total			73

Assertive Acts

The data shows that the most frequently used speech act by Prabowo in his inauguration speech was assertive speech act. The results of this research are in line with the research conducted by Muhsen & Smeer (2022) on President Reagan's speeches which also found that assertive speech acts were the most dominant. Moreover, Reagan and Prabowo often uses assertive speech acts to convey statements about the state of the nation and assert the nation's stance on various crucial issues. Additionally, the dominance of assertive speech acts in both presidents shows the strategy they built to establish trust and convince listeners that their statements reflect honesty and truth.

Stating

"Our principle is the principle of anti-colonialism, because we have experienced colonialism. We are against oppression, because we have been oppressed. We are anti-racism; we are anti-apartheid, because we have experienced apartheid."

This utterance can be classified as an assertive speech act functioning as stating, because Prabowo stated the basic principles of the Indonesian nation directly without seeking the listener's approval. In the phrase "*Our principle is...*" and the repetition of "*We are against... / We are anti...*", which indicate a firm statement of Indonesia's stance.

Through this statement, Prabowo intends to emphasize Indonesia's position in the international arena as a nation that consistently rejects colonialism, oppression, racism,

and apartheid. Additionally, he seeks to reinforce the national identity of Indonesia and underline that such a stance emerges from the country's long historical experience.

Describing

"The people must be free from fear, free from poverty, free from hunger, free from illiteracy, free from oppression, free from suffering."

This utterance can be classified as an assertive speech act functioning as describing, because Prabowo illustrates the ideal condition that should be experienced by the Indonesian people. In addition, the phrase "*must be free from fear, free from poverty, free from hunger...*" describes the desired state of society, which is free from various forms of suffering.

Prabowo wants to emphasize the standards or measures of what true independence means. Moreover, he tried to convince listeners that the duty of leaders and the state is to ensure that the people are truly free from suffering. This served to reinforce his administration's commitment to the welfare of the Indonesian people.

Reporting

"President Joko Widodo's Government has sent a lot of aid. Today, we have a medical team working in Gaza, in Rafah, with extremely high risks."

This utterance can be identified as an assertive speech act with the function of reporting, because Prabowo delivers factual information about concrete actions already taken by the Indonesian government. Furthermore, the phrases "*has sent a lot of aid*" and "*we have a medical team working in Gaza*" to convey information about ongoing aid activities.

Prabowo seeks to highlight Indonesia's active role in supporting Palestine, ensuring that the public recognizes the country's real contributions in global humanitarian issues. Moreover, the report serves to strengthen Indonesia's image as a nation that not only cares about justice but is also willing to take significant risks to defend the oppressed.

Directive Acts

The data shows that the use of directive speech acts ranks second among those most frequently used by Prabowo. Through directives, Prabowo shows how he wants to build his image as a president who understands the nation's condition and is able to explain the direction Indonesia will take during his leadership.

Encouraging

"...let us work hard, let us strive without quitting, let us accumulate and safeguard all our resources."

This excerpt can be classified as a directive speech act with the function of encouraging, because it contains an urging. The repetition of the phrase “*let us...*” strongly emphasizes Prabowo’s call for unity and hard work in building the nation.

Prabowo aims to inspire the audience to stay committed and disciplined. Moreover, he also encourages the community to work together to protect resources, as a form of determination and spirit of unity for the Indonesian nation.

Expressive Acts

In his speech, Prabowo used expressive speech acts to show his respect and gratitude to Indonesia’s leaders and people. Moreover, he wanted to convey a polite and humble attitude, and show that he appreciated the support and trust that had been given to him.

Greeting

“Today, we are greatly honored at the occasion of the Inauguration of the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia.”

This excerpt belongs to an expressive speech act with the function of greeting, because Prabowo delivers a formal salutation at the opening of the inauguration ceremony. In addition, it shows respect for the event and everyone present at that moment. Through this greeting, Prabowo seeks to create a polite and warm atmosphere. He also wants to express gratitude for having the opportunity to speak before the people at this important national even.

Thanking

“We must thank President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who led Indonesia during a very severe crisis, faced the tsunami and handled it together with Vice President Jusuf Kalla, who resolved the long-running conflict in Aceh.”

This utterance can be classified as an expressive speech act with the functioning as thanking, as Prabowo shows appreciation to former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla. The phrase “*We must thank*” is strong evidence that the utterance directly conveys thanking.

Prabowo aims to acknowledge the contributions of past leaders in overcoming major crises such as the tsunami and the Aceh conflict. By doing so, he not only honors their achievements but also builds respect and continuity between past and present leadership.

Commissive Acts

Prabowo used commissive speech acts when conveying promises or commitments about his plans for the future. Through these utterances, he wanted to show his sincerity and responsibility as a leader who is ready to keep his promises to the people.

Promising

"Our children should all be able to eat nutritious food at least once a day. And, we will strive for that; we will exert our efforts."

This utterance can be classified as a commissive speech act with a promising function, because Prabowo is committed to taking action in the interests of the people. In the phrase "*we will strive for that; we will exert our efforts*", which shows his promise to strive to ensure that children can eat nutritious food.

Prabowo seeks to convince and promise his people of his dedication to improving people's welfare. Furthermore, by making such promises, he builds trust and presents himself as a leader who prioritizes the basic needs of the nation's children.

Declarative Acts

Declarative speech acts only appeared once in Prabowo's speech, namely at the special moment when he took his oath of office as President. Moreover, his words had the power to establish an official act upon his inauguration as President of Indonesia.

Declaring

"A moment ago, before this esteemed assembly, before the entire people of Indonesia, and most importantly, before the Almighty God, Allah SWT, Mr. Gibran Rakabuming Raka and I, Prabowo Subianto, took an oath to uphold our constitution, to enforce all applicable laws and regulations, and to serve the nation and its people."

This excerpt can be classified as a declarative speech act with the function of declaring, because Prabowo explicitly stated that he and Gibran had officially taken the oath of office. This statement marks their change of status to President and Vice President for the next term.

Prabowo emphasized that the oath was spoken not only before the people of Indonesia, but also before God. This reinforces the legitimacy of his leadership while highlighting the sacredness and the great responsibility attached to the position he now holds.

CONCLUSION(S)

This research aims to identify the types of speech acts used by Prabowo in his inauguration speech and to reveal the implicit meaning behind the message he conveyed.

The findings show five categories of speech acts, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, with the dominant use being assertive speech acts. Additionally, the data shows that Prabowo used 31 assertive speech acts, 20 directive speech acts, 12 commissive speech acts, 9 expressive speech acts, and 1 declarative speech act. Assertive speech acts dominated Prabowo's speech because he often made statements describing the condition of the nation, reinforcing his vision to the public about the direction of his policies for the Indonesian people. Moreover, directive speech acts were used to encourage unity among the Indonesian people, while commissive speech acts were used to make promises and strengthen his commitment to the future of his administration. Furthermore, Prabowo used expressive speech acts to show his gratitude to leaders and the people, while declarative speech acts only appeared once, namely during the presidential oath-taking ceremony. Prabowo uses speech acts not only to convey messages directly but also to insert implicit messages about his vision and mission.

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