Speech Acts in Text Dialogues: An Analysis of English Textbook Merdeka Belajar for Junior High School

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__Abstract.__ This study aims to investigate the types of speech acts and their functions contained in the dialogues of the English textbook titled "English in Mind Second Edition Students' Book Starter Grade VII," which was composed based on the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach, utilizing text dialogues from the English textbook as the primary data source. The speech acts in the dialogues were analyzed based on Searle's (1976) speech act framework. The results indicate a total of 161 speech acts (utterances) across all dialogues in the textbook. The distribution of speech acts is as follows: assertive accounted for 29.2% (47 instances), directive accounted for 24.8% (40 instances), commissive accounted for 9.9% (16 instances), expressive accounted for 35.4% (57 instances), and declaration accounted for 0.6% (1 instance). While the textbook demonstrates good representation of speech acts within Searle's framework, it should be noted that certain functions of speech act types, specifically commissive and declarative speech acts, were not consistently present in all dialogues. Based on these findings, this study suggests that textbook designers and material developers strive to authentically incorporate various functions of speech act types, ensuring authentic interactions and natural language usage. By doing so, they can enhance EFL learners' performances and interactions using speech acts. Please note that this revised version is based on the feedback and suggestions provided earlier. It aims to address the structural and grammatical aspects and provide a clearer representation of the information presented in the abstract.

Keywords: *english textbook; speech act; text dialogue*

A. INTRODUCTION

Communication serves as a means to connect with others, playing a vital role in various settings, including teaching and learning (Lunenburg, 2010; Vakilifard et al., 2015). In the realm of English education, several factors contribute to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, with instructional materials playing a crucial role (Maknun, 2019). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students rely not only on verbal instruction but also on diverse resources, including textbooks and educational media, to enhance their learning experience (Namaziandost et al., 2019).

However, understanding written learning materials, such as dialogues in English textbooks, can be challenging due to the absence of external cues like facial expressions, gestures, tone, or word stressing. Liu (2011) emphasizes the importance of speech acts in using and comprehending language effectively within specific situations and contexts. Speech acts are characterized as utterances that convey the speaker's intentions and have an impact on the listener (Alemi et al., 2015). They play a significant role in interpreting language and eliciting appropriate responses.

Searle (1976) categorizes speech acts into five fundamental types. The first is the assertive speech act, which involves stating, concluding, recommending, bragging, claiming, and presuming (Basra & Thoyyibah, 2017). The second is the directive speech act, encompassing suggestions, permissions, requests, commands, orders, inquiries, and recommendations (Sumedi & Rovino, 2020). The third is the commissive speech act, which involves commitments, plans, refusals, threats, promises, and volunteering. Expressive speech acts, the fourth type, convey the speaker's feelings towards something or someone and include expressions of

gratitude, congratulations, praise, and compliments (Ilma, 2016). The fifth type is the declarative speech act, which brings about a change in the world or a situation through statements of nomination, removal, declaration, or punishment.

In the context of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, various text-based approaches, such as Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT), are employed in teaching English to junior high school students. These approaches encompass different modes, including spoken, written, visual, audio, and multimodal formats. Consequently, English textbooks, as an integral component of the curriculum, play a pivotal role in facilitating students' understanding of diverse texts presented in written and spoken forms, particularly dialogues. Hence, it is essential for textbooks to include accurate and appropriate pragmatic materials that aid students in developing their pragmatic competence in the target language. This necessitates the inclusion of realistic speech act models, such as assertive acts, directive acts, commissive acts, expressive acts, and declarative acts, complemented by a comprehensive explanation of language usage in the target language.

However, the reality often falls short of the ideal. Many students struggle to comprehend the intended meanings conveyed through specific dialogues due to their limited proficiency in translating them into their native language (Moradi et al., 2013; Refualu et al., 2021). Maknun (2019) further highlights the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL learners in accurately conveying messages from various dialogues in English textbooks within the given context.

Furthermore, research has consistently demonstrated that performing speech acts in a second language (L2) presents significant challenges for learners due to inherent differences between their first language (L1), culture, and the target language (TL) and culture (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Moradi et al., 2013). Consequently, these challenges lead to misunderstandings and ambiguities, as learners struggle to comprehend and convey the intended meaning and context of dialogues. Given the profound impact of textbooks on learning outcomes (Alemi et al., 2013), it is crucial to pay careful attention to the inclusion of appropriate speech act materials, particularly in dialogues. The language used in textbooks should be easily understandable and aligned with the writer's objectives, emphasizing clarity to facilitate effective communication between teachers and students (Murniasih, 2022; Swandewi et al., 2017).

As an essential medium in the teaching and learning process, textbooks should provide comprehensive coverage of speech acts. Thus, it is imperative to investigate the utilization of speech acts in the written dialogues of English textbooks. Existing speech act analyses predominantly focus on frequently used types within English textbooks designed for teaching English as a foreign language, primarily those aligned with the 2013 curriculum. Consequently, the researchers have undertaken a novel research study that examines the role of speech acts in written learning materials, particularly dialogues, within the English textbook Merdeka Kurikulum. By teaching speech acts, students can develop the ability to comprehend the intended meaning of speakers in various situations, conditions, and contexts. Therefore, this study aims to determine the presence and adequacy of speech acts employed in the utterances of each dialogue within the English textbook "English in Mind Second Edition-Students' Book Starter Grade VII." The speech acts will be

analyzed based on Searle's classification (1976), encompassing assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative speech acts. The chosen textbook aligns with the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar.

B. METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. The descriptive research was chosen because the researcher intended to identify and analyze the data in speech acts of each utterance presented in every conversation from dialogues from the junior high school English textbook chosen by the researchers (Cresswell, 2009). The data for analysis were collected from the written teaching materials, specifically the dialogues, in the junior high school students' book titled "English in Mind Second Edition-Students' Book Starter Grade VII," which is published by the Ministry of Education and Culture and based on the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar.

To facilitate the research analysis, supplementary instruments in the form of data sheets were used. These data sheets served as guides for the categorization and analysis processes. The data obtained from the textbook dialogues, including words, phrases, clauses, and expressions, were compiled and evaluated using these data sheets. Two types of data sheets were employed: one for data listings and the other for categorizing speech acts. The focus of this study was solely on the dialogues presented in the textbook, as the aim was to identify and analyze the usage of different speech act types in an English textbook.

Meanwhile, the researchers dismissed the incomplete text dialogues since the speakers' intents were unclear in achieving the criteria of speech acts from the

speakers who participated in the dialogues. As a result, the researchers focused on textbook content analysis which analyzed the contexts of utilizing speech acts in the textbook. The speech acts types are analyzed according to Searle's (1976) speech act classification. Furthermore, the researchers used an interactive model by Miles et al. (2014) for analyzing data. The steps were data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of data analysis of the speech acts from the dialogues. It was found that there are fourteen dialogues in the seventh grade of a junior high school textbook. The percentage of occurrence of each type is presented in the following table:

Findings

Table 1. The Number and Percentage of Speech Act Types in Dialogues

No	Types of Speech Act	Number	Percentage
1	Assertive/Representative	47	29.2%
2	Directive	40	24.8%
3	Commissive	16	9.9%
4	Expressive	57	35.4%
5	Declarative	1	0.6%
Total		**161**	100%

As presented in Table 1, the first results related to the types of speech acts of the dialogues in the textbook English in Mind Second Edition-Students' Book Starter Grade VII, there are found 161 speech acts (utterances) in all dialogues of the textbook, namely: assertive (47 data), directive (40 data), commissive (16 data), expressive (57 data), and declaration (1 data). As presented in table 1, it can be seen that expressive acts are more prevalent, with the highest percentage found in

dialogues from the textbook at 35.4% or a total number of 57 data. In addition, the results revealed that almost fifty total assertive acts were found in the textbook, with 47 acts or 29.2%. The directive acts are the third highest percentage obtained from the dialogues in the textbook, with 24.8%. The study also found 16 data from the textbook or 9.9% of commissive acts. Meanwhile, a minority of speech acts found in the textbook dialogues are declarative acts, with only 0.6%. Then, the results of speech act function in each utterance of dialogue contained in the textbook are also shown below:

Table 2. The Subcategories/Speech Act Function presented in each Utterance of the Dialogue

No	Searle's Classification of Speech Act Types	Subcategories/The Function of Speech Act		Number of Speech Act
1	**Assertive/**	a.	Stating	12
	Representative	b.	Informing	18
		c.	Convincing	1
		d.	Affirming	6
		e.	Introducing	2
		f.	Telling	2
		g.	Reassuring	1
		h.	Accepting	3
		i.	Reasoning	1
		j.	Agreeing	1
2	**Directive**	a.	Questioning	26
		b.	Asking	4
		c.	Directing	4
		d.	Ordering	1
		e.	Advising	3
		f.	Suggesting	1

		g.	Requesting	1
3	**Commissive**	a.	Offering	11
		b.	Refusing	4
		c.	Promising	1
4	**Expressive**	a.	Expressing confusion	1
		b.	Thanking	8
		c.	Expressing pleasure	7
		d.	Expressing feeling	5
		e.	Complimenting	5
		f.	Greeting	13
		g.	Surprising	4
		h.	Apologizing	4
		i.	Commanding	1
		j.	Expressing hope/wish	1
		k.	Expressing like	1
		l.	Welcoming	2
		m.	Expressing dislike	3
		n.	Expressing opinion	2
5	**Declarative**	a.	Dismissing	1
	Total			161

Table 2 shows that all the types of speech acts based on Searle's classification are presented in the textbook, especially in the dialogues, such as assertive/representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Moreover, the function of assertive acts found in the dialogues of the textbook are *stating, informing, convincing, affirming, introducing, telling, reassuring, accepting, reasoning, and agreeing*. From the assertive types, informing as the dominant speech acts function found in dialogues with 18 data (utterances). The function types of directive acts consist *of questioning, directing, asking, ordering,*

advising, suggesting, and requesting. It also shows that the function of speech acts in terms of questioning is the highest number with 26 data (utterances).

On the other hand, the functions of commissive acts types presented in the dialogues from the textbook are *offering, promising, and refusing* with 11 data (utterances) of the offering act function. Furthermore, the function of expressive acts could be found in *expressing confusion, thanking, expressing pleasure, expressing feeling (bored, sad, silly, etc.), complimenting, greeting, surprising, apologizing, commanding, expressing hope/wish, expressing like, welcoming, expressing dislike/like, and expressing an opinion.* Meanwhile, the function of a declarative act is only found in *dismissing*.

Discussion

According to the textbook, the study's results have fulfilled and reflected the theory of speech acts based on Searle's (1976) classification. The findings have shown that the five types of speech acts were employed in each dialogue from the English textbook chosen by the researchers, including assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. More precisely, the results revealed that the utterances of dialogues from the scrutinized English textbook enjoyed more expressive, assertive/representative, and directive speech acts. As stated by Refualu et al. (2021) and Maknun (2019), some speech acts such as representative, expressive, and directive were the high frequency of five different types of language speech acts presented in the English textbook of Indonesian junior high schools. This is because the first language cultures reflected the speech acts produced in the Indonesian Textbook. Besides, several studies (Fahik, 2020; Fitri et al., 2018; Syahbana & Pratama, 2017; Inawati (2016); Ilma (2016)) have explained that

behaviors and traditions of Indonesian cultures, including the greeting expressions contained in the textbook, such as introductions, greetings, and expressing gratitude are commonly found in the content of textbooks. It can be seen from the textbook that almost text dialogues contain expressive acts such as greeting, thanking, etc., on pages 2, 8, 16, and 20.

In addition, assertive acts were the most prevalent illocutionary in the textbook. Speakers use assertive speech acts to inform the truthfulness of what was said. Budiasih et al. (2018) noted that performances of assertive speech, such as informing, stating, affirming, describing, explaining, etc., should elevate learners' competence in the target language to make them understand specific ideas or beliefs about the actual state. Additionally, the functions like stating and informing were the highest number of utterances. As speakers, we tend to produce assertive speech utterances to express a point of view or statement of fact.

Similarly, Milal and Kusumajanti (2020) also pointed out that it is significant for textbooks to present straightforward ways in how people interact using some assertive speech acts. The assertive speech acts have been adequate that contained in the text dialogues. For instance, the speech type, such as the function of *telling* presented by Izzie, has shown accurately on page 104. The function of telling used by Izzie is telling the truth to her friends about a minor accident that she got in the morning. By performing some assertive speech acts, the speakers will get a great response from the interlocutors.

Meanwhile, the commissive and declaration almost have come from ignorance (Maknun, 2019; Refualu et al., 2021). The other sorts of speech acts are not included proportionally since there are not some other functions for each type that were not

presented in all dialogues, particularly in commissive and declarative speech acts. Based on the results of the commissive type, there are only three functions of speech acts that exist in all dialogues, namely *offering, refusing, and promising*. Meanwhile, commissive functions, such as *vowing, swearing, and pledging,* could not be found. Commissive speech acts are needed in communication because the speakers' utterances will make the listeners trust the speaker's intention and aim. Through the commissive speech acts, learners will take several future actions carried out to satisfy the interests of others. It signifies that the learners need to know how to express their intentions to proclaim that they will take action, but they have not yet taken action. The textbook needed to present some other types of commissive which have not been contained, including vowing, pledging, and swearing. For instance, *"I will take care of her (pledging), I will buy you a new car if you pass the test (vowing).*

The absence of commissive and declarative speech acts in the seventh-grade English textbook can be considered an important deficiency since these are used frequently in everyday communication (Namaziandost et al., 2019). The absence of declarative speech acts in the textbook is because they are commonly found in movies, novels, and speech. Similarly, a study conducted by Refualu et al. (2021) urged that the functions of commissive and declarative speech acts were the least percentage of all types. The declarative is the only illocutionary act that seldom appears since the specific characteristic of declarative must change the word perception or reality (Aquatama & Damanhuri, 2016). In the present textbook, there is only an utterance that could be categorized as a declarative act, namely dismissing function *"the race is over."* Meanwhile, the other functions, such as *naming, sentencing, declaring, bidding, and naming*, were not found in the textbook.

Additionally, there is essential information missing from the textbook. Most of the materials have been composed based on the writers' intuition. The conversations in the dialogues were integrated with short or simple phrases of speech acts. For example, in the speech act of "offering" from the conversation in the dialogue on page 48, a student said, *"Try one, here you go"* the sentence did not represent the function of offering in the certain situation, although it was implicitly known that the student offered the food another. Another example was the speech act on *expressing like/dislike* in the conversation in dialogue on page 47. From the conversation, the speech acts were limited when the speaker showed expressions like the food *(that sounds great/that is a good idea)*. The speech act of expressing like did not show how he interacted to describe the expression of like. For example, he could say, *"I love it, or It is so fresh and yummy."* The learning materials should explain social language use to the learners. The expressions of speech actions need to be clearly shown to the learners to be used in real conversations in different contexts. Nurdiana (2022) and Zulianti (2018) have suggested that what EFL learners learn from textbooks should be grammatically correct and authentic regarding real interactions and language uses.

Thus, it is essential to incorporate and distribute different speech act subtypes of English textbooks to familiarize the students with sentences and their functions, especially for the commissive and declarative speech act functions. Learners are unlikely to achieve pragmatic competence if they cannot utilize the language correctly in actual conversation. It is believed that by learning different types and functions of speech acts, students can fully develop verbal communication skills, particularly in the areas of personal, interpersonal, and transactional communication in the real context (Castillo, 2015; Nordquist, 2019).

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has examined the presence of five types of speech acts in the dialogues of seventh-grade English textbooks: representative, assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative. The analysis indicates that the textbook adequately incorporates speech acts in accordance with Searle's framework. However, it is worth noting that not all dialogues include additional functions for each type of speech act, particularly in the case of commissive and declarative speech acts. The findings also suggest that the majority of the materials were created based on the writers' intuition, resulting in conversations within the dialogues consisting of short and simple phrases. Therefore, it is essential to provide learners with expressions of speech acts that can be used in authentic conversations across various situations, conditions, and contexts. This underscores the importance of ensuring that materials used for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) are not only grammatically accurate but also reflect the way the target language is spoken in real-life scenarios.

Suggestion

This study suggests that textbook designers and material developers produce various functions of speech act types. The textbooks should be rich and communicative to familiarize the students with all the sentences and functions to develop their verbal communication skills from the early stage, especially at the junior high school level. The results also have implications for textbook designers and material developers to produce various functions of speech act types authentically in terms of real interactions and real language uses to improve EFL learners' performances and interactions using the speech acts among the speakers.

As do all researchers, this study has some inherent limitations, and further studies could be suggested on this topic. Because the present textbook is used for Grade VII, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. For future Indonesian textbooks to be adequately enriched, another area of investigation that may analyze foreign language learners' authentic speech act needs in designing the textbooks. The writer also suggested conducting further research about the speech acts used in English textbooks from every grade, especially with the English textbooks based on the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar.

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