

THE ILLOCUTIONARY TYPES OF SPEECH ACTS FOUND IN TREVOR NOAH'S STAND-UP COMEDY SHOW CALLED 'AFRAID OF THE DARK'

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ABSTRACT

Humor contains various components that lend itself to the study of language. This study focuses on the usage of illocutionary speech acts in Trevor Noah's "Afraid of the Dark" stand-up comedy show in 2017. In order attract audiences, this study aims to investigate the types and functions of speech acts. The writer discovered that Noah's usage of Searle's five illocutionary speech acts may improve the material and humor he would present. Assertive speech acts are the ones most used by Noah. The writer found 9 functions of assertive speech acts in the show. The used of illocutionary speech acts on the subject that Noah has presented can help many people broaden their perspectives.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Stand-Up Comedy, Humor

ABSTRAK

Humor memiliki berbagai komponen yang dapat dipelajari di bidang bahasa. Penelitian ini berfokus pada penggunaan tindak tutur ilokusi dalam acara *stand-up comedy* yaitu "*Afraid of the Dark*" oleh Trevor Noah pada tahun 2017. Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis dan fungsi tindak tutur ilokusi yang Noah gunakan dalam pertunjukannya untuk menarik perhatian penonton. Penulis menemukan bahwa penggunaan lima jenis tindak tutur ilokusi berdasarkan teori Searle oleh Noah dapat meningkatkan materi dan humor yang akan ia tampilkan. Tindak tutur asertif merupakan tindak tutur yang paling banyak digunakan oleh Noah. Terdapat 9 fungsi tindak tutur asertif dalam pertunjukannya. Penggunaan tindak tutur ilokusi pada topik yang disampaikan Noah dapat membantu banyak orang memperluas wawasannya.

Kata Kunci: Tindak Tutur, *Stand-Up Comedy*, Humor

INTRODUCTION

Language is a basic human ability that is used for communication, emotion expression, and social group identity. It is a set of symbols that is common and shaped by social norms. A discipline of linguistics studies how people use language in social contexts to produce and comprehend meaning, which is pragmatics. Competence in pragmatics is essential for language users. Pragmatics is the study of the relationships between language and context, which are essential for the understanding of how language is interpreted (Levinson, 1983)

Speech acts are a subfield of pragmatics that are crucial to communication. J.L. Austin, a British philosopher of language, is the person who presented speech acts for the first time in his book "How to do things with words" in 1962. The idea that "to say something is to do something" is how Austin emphasized the value of speech acts. Speech acts require both language ability and culturally appropriate linguistic usage in real-life interactions. According to Schiffrin (1994), speech acts are grouped into three levels: locutionary act (producing meaningful comments), illocutionary act (making a statement with a certain force), and perlocutionary act (the real acts attained through statements). The illocutionary act involves forcing an utterance on the addressee in exchange for a specific action. Searle (1979) divides illocutionary speech acts into five categories, which are: Assertive, Directive, Expressive, Commissive, and Declarative.

According to Searle (1999: 148), an assertive is invariably a statement of belief. Meanwhile, a directive speech act is the speaker's intention for the recipient to follow the given instructions. Searle (1979:15) explained expressive speech acts expressed the emotional state regarding a situation that is stated in the real condition. Afterwards, commissive speech acts bind the speaker to a particular way of actions. Declarative speech acts, the fifth type of speech acts, are utterances made by a speaker with the goal of influencing the future after the speech act has been delivered.

Speech acts are often employed in humorous conditions, which tend to attract larger audiences because the speakers are easier to comprehend and seem more casual, which makes the speech easier to listen to. It is related to humor. Humor is a type of communication where something makes the recipient laugh (Koestler, 2024). Stand-up comedy contains humor. The term "stand-up comedy" describes a distinct kind of humor in which the comedian, also referred to as a stand-up comic, delivers his ideas to the crowd while standing on stage.

In his book "Stand-up Comedy in Theory, Or, Abjection in America," Limon (2000:12) claimed that since humor is a social phenomena, the value of stand-up comedy is particularly audience-dependent. Stand-up comedy has grown in popularity in America. One of the comics that stands out in this field is Trevor Noah, a comic, writer, and host known for his skill at blending humor with exposure to current topics including politics, race, and culture. In 2017, he presented the show "Afraid of the Dark"

in New York. Trevor Noah's performance, "Afraid of the Dark," is full of comedic aspects that touch on a wide range of topics, from severe social commentary to personal hardships.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested to learn more about the analysis of illocutionary types of speech acts in humor. It is possible to see how comedians like Trevor Noah do more than just "tell jokes" by applying this theory to the analysis of humor in stand-up comedy performances. They also engage in particular actions that have an emotional and social influence on the audience. The writer also analyze the functions of each types of illocutionary speech acts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze the illocutionary speech acts of Trevor Noah's show called 'Afraid of the Dark', the writer used qualitative method. This approach enables a deeper explanation of the humorous speech act in Noah's show. Secondary data were employed in this research. The data is derived from Trevor Noah's 2017 stand-up comedy special 'Afraid of the Dark' on Netflix. The transcript was retrieved from *scrapsfromtheloft.com*. Although the author collected secondary data in addition to primary data, the data examined by the author for this study are primary data.

The writer collected data by taking notes and watching the one-hour, eight-minute video repeatedly in order to analyze Noah's stand-up comedy speech performances and the audience's response to it. The writer identified each sentence in the stand-up performance

and made a note of the different speech acts that were used. The author classified each of the 69 utterances to the 5 types speech acts after gathering the data. Every statement is then explained in terms of Searle's theory. For the analysis to be classified and used as a speech act, the writer must match each utterance to Searle's theoretical explanation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The writer identified 5 sorts of illocutionary speech acts by Searle in Noah's stand-up comedy. Every type of speech has a certain function.

1. Assertive Speech Acts

Assertive speech acts persuades the listener that the proposition is true. It can be validated to be true or false. In this analysis, 9 assertive functions were found that were used by Noah in his comedy. Noah used it mostly to create a statements and beliefs. Noah employs the following as an example of an assertive speech act.

a. Statement

Noah used statement in order to give emphasize his utterances. One of the quotations stated:

"...I just thought it was a city of people almost getting run over..."

Noah's impression of New York City, which is the setting for multiple car crashes depicted in the film, is discussed in this quotation. In actuality, New York City has a high number of hit-and-run incidents.

b. Believe

Noah used believe to express his beliefs and emotions. One of the quotations stated:

"...The Scottish drink to die..."
"...We all believe that the French are romantic..."

"...The Russians, the most feared people on the planet. Why? Because of how they speak..."

It is believed that the three quotations represent stereotypes of every nation. The Scots are stereotyped as strong drinkers. In the meantime, the French are renowned for their extraordinary romanticism and accent. Sharp accents are a common characteristic of Russians. Under these circumstances, when hearing the accent, Noah sensed danger.

c. Complaint

In order to make the subject matter more in-depth and genuine, Noah employs assertive speaking acts as a complaint. This can be seen from this quotation below:

"...“Why are they coming here? Why the hell are you coming here?!”..."

The quotation refers to the situation in which British citizens turn away foreigners who try to enter their nation. They believed that their country had been stolen. They rejected immigration and drove them out because they feel they have lost their sense of national identity.

d. Information

The information in Noah's stand-up provides a lot of additional detail about the topics he discusses. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"...No black people. But not in a bad way. Not in a bad way. Just in a matter-of-fact way, you know? When I say there's no black people in

Scotland, I just mean there's no black people..."

This quotation shows how rare it is to find Black people throughout Scotland. Noah offers an intriguing concept, which claims that people are barely always the same.

e. Deny

Noah used deny as a contradiction of what he says and what he means.

"...I'm not saying it's impossible, I'm just saying that would be the toughest James Bond movie that was ever made..."

f. Claim

Noah used claim as an attempt to emphasize his point while also making people laugh. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"...I have never seen anybody with that complexion in my life, okay? ..."

Noah acts to be an Indian who sees a white person for the first time in the moment. As a result, he claimed that he had never before seen someone so pale.

g. Argument

Noah used arguments to satirize real-life debates or societal issues. It can be seen from these quotation below:

"...They're like, “James Bond cannot be played by Idris Elba because Idris Elba is black, and James Bond is white!” I was like, “Well, actually, James Bond is a fictional character, so he can be played by anyone, because it is fiction!” They were

like, "When you think about it, James Bond was based on a real man, who was white, and so, he should be played by a real white man."

Many individuals disagreed about the portrayal of black men as heroes because of the stereotype of white men being the protagonist. The disagreement that arises dispels the common misconception that black people in American society do not belong to heroes. This is grounded on racial history and problems that are still common there.

h. Rebut

In comedies, rebuttals can be employed to increase the humor. In this context, rebut is used as social criticism.

"...That was what Brexit was all about. Right? They made it seem like it was about the economy, but it wasn't. The truth was it was fundamentally people who wanted their country back..."

Noah explains Brexit's success as a result of many immigrants arriving in Britain, leading to widespread support of Brexit. He was watching TV reactions and clarifies that economic concerns were not the primary cause. Locals claimed immigrants caused loss of national identity, as they brought their own culture.

i. Remind

Noah used remind to introduce his point. It functions as the explanation prior to the punchline.

"...I remember the first time I came out. I was staying on the West Coast, and I met a young African American man in Compton. And we were hanging out at a comedy club..."

Noah's comical debut involves meeting a black friend who struggles with adjusting to life in America. He uses assertive speech to remind others of past events.

2. Directive Speech Acts

The speaker's illocutionary purpose is to urge the listener to take action. In this research, the writer found 5 functions of directive.

a. Intrusion

Noah gave an instruction to someone during his show about New York, focusing on the run-overs he saw in a movie. He wanted to ensure if the audience want to feel the sensation by providing the ideal timing for the audience. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"...You have to get out at the exact same time that the taxi is there, so it stops, so you can hit the hood..."

b. Command

In addition to including details into his topic, Noah delivers commands as calls for. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"...Come here. No. Come closer, please. I want to tell you a secret. Come here..."

c. Warn

Noah used warn in order to alert the audience. In his comedy, he related it to the experience he got. It can be seen from this quotation below:

*“...you are ever offered a drink...
don’t...”*

Noah cautioned the audience in Scotland to refuse alcohol, citing a painful episode after a small amount due to its strong effects. He emphasized the important of cultural differences and being mindful of others' cultures.

d. Tell

Tell is a directive speech act that Noah uses in order to emphasize his points of view. It can be seen from this quotation below:

*“...Tell me all about the
motherland, baby. I want to go to a
place I can call my own. I want to go
to a place where people don't look at
me like I don't belong. Tell me all
about Africa, baby. Tell me all
about it...”*

Noah's friend shares the hardships faced by the African American community in America, using tell as a directive speech act to ask for knowledge or answer questions.

e. Suggestion

Noah used suggestion in his speech in order to add detail in his comedy topic. It can be seen from this quotation below:

*“...Shouldn't you wait for other
people to tell you how great you are?
Shouldn't you just go around the
world and just do good things, good
things?...”*

This quotation is a suggesting of British soldier not to pick a name based solely on opinion.

Expressive speech acts meant to convey a speaker's thoughts and feelings about the world and themselves. Noah used it as the highlight his feelings. The writer found 5 function of expressive speech act in Noah's stand-up comedy, which are:

a. Thank

Noah used thank as his gratitude to the audience. It can be seen from this quotation below:

*“...Thank you so much for coming
out...Thank you to every single
one of you that came tonight. Thank
you...”*

Noah expressed his gratitude to the audience, using the phrase "thank you" throughout his show. This expression of genuine gratitude is an expressive speech act, demonstrating Noah's ability to develop his feelings before moving on to speaking.

b. Apologize

Noah used apologize to express his feeling for what happened in society. It can be seen from this quotation below:

“...On behalf of all men, I apologize...”

Noah apologized for men's behavior to women, expressing regret for verbal and nonverbal harassment. He acknowledged the particularly derogatory remarks that marginalize women and reinforce negative preconceptions.

c. Complaint

3. Expressive Speech Acts

Noah used complain as detail to the topic he brought. It is explained below:

"...I hate these bloody immigrants..."
"...You're not welcome here..."

Noah's quotes express hatred, anger, and unwelcomeness towards immigrants, demonstrating the British feeling of losing their national identity and using complain as an expressive speech act.

d. Boast

Noah used boast to clarifies his admiration or proud for something. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"I love this city...There's an energy in the city that exists nowhere in the world. New York, New York! Love it, everything about it..."

Noah's excitement over hosting a performance in his dream city, New York City, is reflected in his intense emotions, expressing his love for the city and its vibrancy, a testament to the use of expressive speech acts as boasts.

e. Lament

Noah used lamenting as a detail of sad and disappointed feelings. It is explained below:

"...And when I found out that Daniel Craig no longer wanted to be James Bond, I was heartbroken..."

Noah enjoyed the Daniel Craig-starring James Bond movie but was devastated when he learned he would not appear in the following picture,

exemplifying his emotional lamentations through his words.

4. Commissive Speech Acts

Through the use of commissive, a speaker can ensure that they will act in the future. The writer found 4 functions of commissive speech acts in Noah's stand-up comedy.

a. Offer

"...[New York accent] 'I'm walking over here! What's wrong with you? You want some coffee?..."

Noah's utterance in a New York accent is a humorous satire of a New Yorker who always drinks coffee. He offers to grab a drink and talk if the listener has problems, making an offer to someone else. This can be a commissive if the speaker got coffee in the future.

b. Threat

Noah used threat Noah uses threats as a foreshadowing of what he feels will happen. It is explained below:

"...[Russian accent] 'Yeah. Going to kill you, break you. I'll destroy your family.' Even if they say nice things, it still sounds menacing and dangerous..."

Noah's perception of Russians as dangerous mafia is perpetuated by their accented speech patterns, reflecting a harmful stereotype perpetuated by Noah's fear of their language.

c. Refusal

Refusal is an added that Noah gives to the topic that he brings up. It can be seen from this quotation below:

"...Mick, I thought I was gonna die. I'm not gonna drink..."

This refusal was a result of his friend's toxic masculinity. After being deeply insulted, Noah realized severing his relationship with his friend was the right move.

d. Promise

Noah used promise as an emphasis on the future. It is explained below:

"...And... I'll never forget how every time I came to America... one of the biggest things I noticed was how black Americans were having a tough time..."

Noah encounters a memorable event when he meets new black friends who share difficult experiences. Through their experiences, Noah learns the importance of speaking out against racial injustice and pursuing equality for all. This made Noah promised not to forget the moment.

5. Declarative Speech Acts

A declarative is a statement that a speaker makes with the aim of changing the situation after the speech act is finished. It is function as declaration as Noah used it to be the example that add humor. It can be seen from this quotation:

"...I am here to tell you that India is now under the British Empire..."

In this situation, the declarations were intended to inform people that India's natural resources, population, and territory were under British control.

CONCLUSION

Speech acts give humor additional complexity and may entertain audiences. Using illocutionary speech acts on the subject that Noah has presented can help many people broaden their perspectives.

The writer concludes that Noah's stand-up comedy contains a wide variety of speech act. Noah uses 5 different types of illocutionary speech acts in his comedy. It was expertly assembled by him. The script outlines each function, resulting in an amusing yet realistic comedy. Assertive speech acts were found to be the most used speech acts. Noah used 9 functions of assertives speech acts in his show.

He also takes a humorous approach to addressing many current issues by using the illocutionary speech acts. Noah's words and actions continue to have a positive impact on both his audience and people around the world.

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