**A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF JÜRGEN HABERMAS’ COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY**

**ON THE PRESIDENTS OF REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA’S SPEECHES**

**AT ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCES**

**By:**

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1. **Introduction**

Among the greatest gift of Allah Swt to human beings is the ability to communicate. In social life and culture, communication activities play a very important role. With communicating human beings relate to one another, thus allowing them to live together in a variety of society.

Human beings are distinguished from animals since they communicate through language. It is a coding system and a means by which information may be transmitted or shared between two or more communicators for the purposes of command, instruction or play. Human beings speech as a whole may become an instrument which could serve for various purposes.

Speech itself is the main element which distinguishes a man from other living beings. Though also the other animals use various kinds of signs or even sounds in order to convey information and come to an understanding, only the human beings are able to decode several codes as people speak different languages. These human beings ability depend on the knowledge of these particular languages.

If people do not know some of them it follows that they would not be able to communicate in these languages. However, in order to understand what the speaker or writer wants really to tell, the hearer or reader has to be able to decode the speaker's or writer's aim in particular speech. The problem of how to use effective linguistics acts in public speaking is not immediately clear.

Based on the problems stated above, in this study, the writer assumes that performing communicative action by producing speech in public interaction is significant to build the right communication between speaker and audiences. Communicative action is a minimal unit of communication which performs the intention of speaker, the understanding of hearer, and governing the linguistic elements. Those terms are important to build the communication in order to engage in the effective linguistic act by the speaker in public interaction.

*The theory of communicative action* will be base of this study, and it starts from the basic assumption that the minimal unit of communication is not only sentence and expression but rather the performance of some linguistic acts such as; promise and request. This theory is proposed by the linguistic philosopher, Jürgen Habermas (1981).

The choice of communicative action theory as the linguistic framework is premised on the fact that people perform various actions through the use of words and when utterances are made, a particular act is performed; this is called *communicative action*. The communicative action theory (*also* speech act theory) is also described as *“How to Do Things with Words”* since it has its roots in the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

The data of this study are the Presidents of Republic of Indonesia’s Speeches at Asian-African Conferences. The writer is very interested in investigating those speeches as viewed from the side of history. This high-level conference has a very high historical value for the people of Asian and African especially for Indonesia. This summit brought enormous influence in creating world peace and put an end to the occupation throughout the world peacefully, particularly in Asia and Africa. Moreover Indonesia in the eyes of the world became increasingly shine and became a country that counts in the arena of world affairs. Given that at that time Indonesia had just won its status as an independent country, but was able to spark the idea to garner cooperation and solidarity between countries in Asia and Africa to unite against colonialism and imperialism.

However, the writer assumes that the theory of communicative action is very agreeable to be applied as the framework of thought to analyze the Presidents of Republic of Indonesia’s speeches, it is due to the claim of Jürgen Habermas as the owner of this theory who stated that this communicative action theory is very apt in every types of communication, thus the writer really want to prove that claim. And also it is due to the relevancy of this theory and the selected speeches are very closely related.

The reason of choosing the Presidents of Republic of Indonesia’s speeches as the object of this study is due to their power in influencing audiences by their graceful words which is delivered rhetorically. They are able to build a good interaction on public speaking.

It can be seen by referring to some realities such as; the first President of the Republic of Indonesia Soekarno spoke for 40 minutes and interspersed with applause. Bung Karno's speech delivered fiery urged to fight colonialism, became an independent state. The 6th President of the Republic of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono got applause during a speech at the parliamentary forum of the conference. He landed a standing ovation and gained wild applause from the audiences as proof that the speech was a success attracting the attention of the audiences. While the speech of President Jokowi rated by some experts as a very courageous speech because he strongly criticized some of the world institutions.

In this case, they were able to engage the communicative way of speech to interest the audiences. They were able to combine some things, namely statesman attitude and rhetoric ability, those were power to deliver their speech with graceful intentions. Most of all are not far from their communicative speaking abilities as great orators.

1. **Objective of the Study**

This study is aimed at identifying the types of communicative action that manifest in the selected speeches of Presidents of Republic of Indonesia at Asian-African Conferences and to explore the most dominant communicative actions used in the speeches.

1. **Theoretical Framework**

*The theory of communicative action* belongs to the set of modern post-Marxist theories. Its author is Jürgen Habermas(1929-), the German philosopher and sociologist who pertains to the second generation of the Frankfurt philosophical circle.

And this theory is an elaboration between Austin and Searle speech acts theory. Habermas developed the previous theory of linguistic acts because Searle and Austin did not distinguish the used of three claims above.

Habermas (1981:131) stated that:

“The claim to truth entails that speaker contends to represent the factual contents of the speech act as they are. The claim to justice regards the adequacy of the projected interpersonal relation between X and Y. The claim to sincerity entails that S is genuine in the performance of the speech act. With regard to the propositional content of a speech act, Habermas distinguishes between three worlds of reference; the objective world, the social world and the subjective world. The claim to truth refers to the objective world, the claim to justice refers to the social world of participants and the claim to sincerity refers to the subjective world of the speaker.”

Habermas (1981) has also presented a classification of speech acts which is based on a critique of the classification of Searle. The classification consist of four classes of speech acts, such as; 1).Imperative, 2).Constative, 3).Regulative, and 4).Expressive. Its classification is based on three dimensions; *an ontology of three worlds,* *claims of validity and power*, and *the pragmatic language functions of Bühler.*

*An ontology of three worlds* implies that the world can be divided into a *subjective (internal) world* that is constituted by the feelings, beliefs, desires, experiences and intentions of the actors, and a common *social world* that is constituted by norms, actor relationships, institutions and to which the actors belong themselves (part of the external world), and an *objective world* of objects and state of affairs (part of the external world).

Habermas contends that a speaker who performs a speech act at same time raises four *validity claims; comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and rightness* which must be recognised by the listener if the speech act is tosucceed. The claim for comprehensibility is a presupposition for the recognition of the other three claims: thetruth claim which is related to objective world, the sincerity claim which is related to the subjective world and theclaim for rightness which is related to the social world. It is the three claims truth, sincerity and rightness claimsthose are used for the classification of speech acts. Habermas also uses the claim for power, which is not a validityclaim in the classification.

The third dimension that is used in the classification is the *pragmatic language functions* defined by Bühler (1934). Bühler defined an organon model of language that serves three different and interconnected functions. *The function of representation (symbol)* is to make references to objects and state of affairs*. The* *expressive (symptom)* function which is used to express the speaker’s intentions, feelings, etc. *The appellative* *(signal) function* is focused on the listener that the speaker wants to influence. According to Habermas it is these pragmatic functions that makes in possible to relate the propositional content of the speech act to the three worlds.

With the three dimensions *different worlds*, *validity claims* and *Bühler’s pragmatic functions* Habermas has classified communicative action theory into the following four classes.

1. **Imperative**

Habermas defines the class of imperatives by relating these speech acts to *the objective world, a claim for power* and the *appellative (signal) function of Bühler*. The speech acts in this class are used by the speaker to refer to a desired state in such a way that the listener would bring about that state. For examples, *Open the window!, Shut Up!.*

According to Habermas imperatives can only be criticised from the aspect of conditions for satisfaction i.e. whether the action demanded can be carried out. However it is not the recognition of the conditions of satisfaction that motivates the listener to accept the speech act. What motivates the listener to join the interaction is that the speaker can force the listener to interact, e.g. with the help of sanctions.

1. **Constatives**

Habermas defines the class of constatives by relating these speech acts to *the objective world*, *the claim for truth*, and *the representation (symbol) function of Bühler*. This class is used to present states of affairs in the objective world. For examples, *I assert to you that the window is opened, There is a book on the table.*

If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act it implies a criticism of the claim for truth that has been raised by the speaker. The listener may be motivated to accept the claim for truth if he realises that the speaker has good reasons to claim that his proposition is true.

1. **Regulatives**

Habermas defines the class of regulatives by relating these speech acts to *the social world, the claim for rightness/justice* and *the appellative (signal) function of Bühler*. The speech acts in this class are used to regulate the interaction between the actors in the social world, or to establish interpersonal relationships between the actors. For examples, *Open the window please, I promise to take you home as soon as possible*.

If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act it is a contest about the normative rightness of the speech act. The listener may be motivated to accept the claim for rightness raised by the speaker if the listener can recognise the normative context which makes the speech act valid.

1. **Expressives**

Habermas defines the class of expressives by relating these speech acts to the *subjective world, the claim for sincerity* and the *expressive function of Bühler*. The speech acts in this class is used to present something from the subjective world of the speaker. For examples, *I wish the window was open, Thank you for coming*.

If the listener chooses to criticise the speech act it means a criticism of the speaker’s sincerity. The listener can be motivated to accept the claim for sincerity raised by the speaker if the speaker can assure the listener that he really means what he says. If the listener still has doubts about the speakers sincerity the speaker can only show his sincerity in the consistency of his subsequent actions.

*Table 1; the relations between taxonomy of action claim and world;*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Classifications | Claim | Functions | World |
| 1  2  3  4 | Imperative  Constative  Regulative  Expressive | Power  Truth  Rightness/Justice  Sincerity | Appellative  Representation  Appellative  Expressive | Objective  Objective  Social  Subjective |

The table above shows that the speech acts taxonomy have different claim as the control on their classification. See constative which has a claim truth to the objective world will inform us about the reality of the world. For example; *Ir. Soekarno is a former president of Republic of Indonesia*. This statement is constative because it is truth.

1. **Data findings**

The data finding of this study is analyzed by employing communicative action theory of Jurgen Habermas which is focused on the four classification of this theory, i.e. imperatives, constatives, regulative, and expressive. Through the period of data collection, the writer had found and gathered totally **249** examples of communicative actions in the form of sentences, phrases, questions, etc.

The total numbers of words from the three speeches delivered by those presidents detected as many as 6858 words. And a total 249 types of communicative occurrence in the three speeches were found.

The figure above illustrates the statistic of classification of Jurgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action. And the total frequencies of communicative action type occurrence are 249, and the President Soekarno’s speech is the most dominant speech in which each types of communicative action occurred with the total numbers of examples 141, and then followed by the speech of President Joko Widodo with 60 cases. And the last speech in which the communicative actions type occurred was in the President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s speech. The writer found as many as 48 examples manifested in his speech.

The figure also shows that the term of expressive is the most dominant type of communicative actions with 89 cases based on the object of this study, and followed by regulative type with 63 cases, imperative type with 52 cases, and the least type is in the term of constatives, with 45 cases.

From the figure that shows about the frequencies of the communicative actions type occurrence above, the writer concluded that President Soekarno widely performed the use of the four types of communicative actions in the delivering a speech at Asian-African conference. And expressive type was the most dominant used by each President in their speeches if it compared with the other types.

1. **Conclusions**

Leading to the inferences of every single speech, firstly, this study sees that the type of expressive action was mainly performed in the speeches of Presidents of Republic of Indonesia at Asian-African conferences. It was about 89 examples indentified as the classification of this type. It means that those three presidents built the belief of the audiences and tent to express their sincerity condition by performing their psychological state in order to obtain audiences’ support and agreement to his speech. In spite of, only two of the three Presidents were commonly performed this act in his speech.

Secondly, the using of regulative actions in the three speeches was more dominant performed, with the total examples as many as 63. This data can be concluded that those three Presidents desired to build the interpersonal relationship by claiming justice and rightness in their speeches. It can be seen from the speeches that those presidents did not place themselves as the men who had power as presidents of Republic of Indonesia, but placed themselves equal with the audiences.

And the third type commonly used was an imperative act. Even those three Presidents’ speeches seem to be different, in which one of them did not use any kind of utterance indicate to the type of imperative act, hence the writer only found about 52 examples. From the data above, it was President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who did not perform any imperative actions at all. It was changed into the other types, i.e. in which he mainly performed his speech in the form of regulative type. The writher assumed that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono wanted to keep focus on the establishing of interpersonal relationship without merely seeing the aspect of different position between a president and audiences. Indirectly, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as a president of Indonesia tent to share rightness and justice in order to support his statements in establishing the aims of his speech.

Finally this study claimed that the speakers in this case those three presidents of Republic of Indonesia applied the communicative action theory on their speeches as the theory of Jurgen Habermas proposed in the term of constatives, it was the least type manifested in the speeches, with the numbers of examples about 45 cases that can be found by the writer.

1. **Suggestions**

This study focused only on the classification communicative actions theory of Jurgen Habermas; imperatives, constatives, regulative, and expressive. Therefore, it is highly recommended by the writer for future studies not to be only focused on one theories of speech act, on the other hand, the future writer make a combination or even comparison between the three theories of speech acts that is proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) with this current theory. And the last, the data of this study were quite limited; hence it would be better if further studies use more varied and greater number of data.

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