

THE MEANING OF PERFORMATIVE VERBS IN ENGLISH MOVIES

Rosaria Mita Amalia

Padjadjaran University, Indonesia
rosaria.mita.amalia@unpad.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The utterance that contains performative verb explicitly has subject pronominal I, present simple tense, and direct object. The meaning of performative verb contains declarative, representative/assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive meaning. The method used in this research is a descriptive method. A descriptive method aims to make descriptions; make pictures, paint a systematic, factual and accurate picture of the information or data, properties, and phenomena under study. The data was taken from conversation on 'Gladiator' and 'A Few Good Men' movies while the conversation on movies reflects the real conversation. Both movies show adequate and enough data for this research. The results show that the performative verbs in the movies are 'warn', 'assume', 'admit' which are categorized into assertive meaning, 'promise', 'bet', 'reject', 'swear' whose meanings are commissive, 'order', 'ask', 'advise', 'beg', 'command' which have directive meaning, 'judge', 'announce', 'declare' which have declarative meaning, and 'apologize', 'thank', 'honor', 'salute' which have expressive meaning. Those verbs show actions by just saying the words. All performative verbs mentioned are found in explicit and implicit performative speech.

Keywords: *Performative verb, assertive, directive, declarative, commissive, and expressive meaning*

ABSTRAK

Ucapan yang mengandung verba performatif secara eksplisit memiliki ciri; subjek pronominal I, dalam bentuk present simple tense, dan direct object. Arti verba performatif mengandung makna deklaratif, representatif / asertif, ekspresif, direktif, dan komisif. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif. Menurut Djajasudarma (1993: 8), metode deskriptif bertujuan untuk membuat deskripsi; membuat gambar, melukiskan gambaran sistematis dari informasi atau data, sifat, dan fenomena yang diteliti Langkah-langkah penelitian ini adalah: (1) tinjauan literatur, (2) pengumpulan data, (3) analisis data, dan (4) kesimpulan. Data diambil dari percakapan para tokoh dalam film 'Gladiator' dan 'A Few Good Men'. Konversasi yang terjadi dalam film merupakan refleksi terhadap konversasi yang sebenarnya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Data yang berhasil dihimpun dari kedua film di atas sangatlah cukup dan valid sebagai representasi penggunaan verba performatif dalam kehidupan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa verba performatif yang ditemukan dalam film-film tersebut adalah *warn*, *assume*, *admit* yang dikategorikan menjadi makna asertif, *promise*, *bet*, *reject*, *swear* termasuk dalam makna komisif. Selanjutnya adalah verba *order*, *ask*, *advise*, *beg*, *command* yang termasuk ke dalam kategori direktif. Lalu untuk kategori makna deklaratif ditemukan dalam verba seperti *judge*, *announce*, *declare*, dan verba *apologize*, *thank*, *honor*, *salute* yang memiliki makna ekspresif. Semua verba performatif yang disebutkan ditemukan dalam tindak tutur performatif eksplisit dan implisit.

Kata kunci: verba performatif, makna asertif, direktif, deklaratif, komisi, dan ekspresif.

INTRODUCTION

In every language system, there is part of speech or words class which consists of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverb, etc. One of the important elements in a language system is a verb because the forms and types of verbs greatly determine the presence of other constituents in a sentence. Alwasilah (1993: 19) states that learning languages, in principle, mean mastering how verbs in language behave. In English, verb is a king of sentence. The hearers or readers cannot understand the meaning of the sentence when they cannot find the verb in a sentence or an utterance.

Performative verb is a verb that has a function to mark the action said. It also has a special intention that distinguishes it from non-performative verb (Austin, 1962:5). The example is 'I baptize you' (1). 'Baptize' is a performative verb that refers to the action carried out together with the utterance of the words. The verb is seen in its present form with "I" as the subject, which directly states the speech made by the speaker when speaking the sentence. The sentence belongs to the utterance which is explicitly containing performative verb, this is because the performative verb is clearly displayed. It shows explicit performative utterance.

On the other hand, Austin also mentions about implicit performative utterance which does not have performative verb explicitly but contain performative verb inside. The utterance needs the context to support the meaning of the verb, for example (1) I feel so cold. The speaker says the utterance not only because he or she feels cold. At the same time he or she asks the hearer to turn on the heater. The complete sentence then 'I ask you to turn on the heater'.

The use of the performative verbs can be easily found in the conversation including the daily situation (casual situation) or the formal one. On this research, the author collects the data from conversations on English movies titled 'Gladiator' (2000) and 'A Few Good Men' (1992). Situation in 'Gladiator' refers to kingdom background and 'A Few Good Man' refers to the trial situation. Both movies give appropriate data and they can be a representative real condition in English native speaker community. The data shows that the use of performative verbs can be in explicit or implicit utterance.

Based on the overview, the researcher focuses the research questions into (1) what are the performative verbs found in these movies and (2) what are categorization of meanings found in these performative verbs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Performative Verbs

McManis et al. (1987: 195) says that language users use language to do various things or activities, such as conveying information (to convey information), requesting information (request of information), giving orders (giving orders), making requests (make requests), make threats, give warnings (give warnings), bet (make

batches), give advice (give advice), and so on. Speech act is an action by using language and verbs which are known as performative verbs. Performative verbs are types of verbs used in the form of present tense positive sentences, with a single person pronoun as the subject, and describing performative utterances (1962:5). The example of performative verb is 'sentence', for example, in the following performative utterance, (2) "*I sentence you to be hanged by the neck*", and also verb 'pronounce' in (3) "*I pronounce you husband and wife*" in a wedding ceremony.

The verbs 'sentence' and 'pronounce' are performative verb types, whose verbs showed explicitly. The use of performative verbs in performative utterances has clear grammatical rules, namely the form must always be present tense, both active and passive, and has single first-person subject.

b. Performative Utterances

The terminology of performative sentence or performative utterance comes from Austin (1962:6) which he often shortens it to 'performative'. The word comes from the verb 'perform' and refers to the noun 'action'. Performative utterances sometimes just simply called performatives, have several characteristics viz.: A first person singular subject followed by a performative verb in active present form (Austin, 1962:5). The sentence containing performative verbs (a) cannot describe or report and cannot be interpreted as a statement of right or wrong, (b) refers to the action and does not describe or say anything about something. Performative utterances are divided into explicit and implicit ones (Austin, 1962:61). In explicit performatives, the performative verb(s) appears explicitly, while in implicit performatives, the verb(s) does not appear, but the verb can be interpreted from the speech that appears. An example of an explicit performative utterance is (4) *Soldier, "I order you to move those catapults forward, they're out of range."*

In utterance (4) the performative types that appear are explicit performatives. This can be seen from the performative verb "order" which clearly appears in the sentence. The sentence has an indicator as a performative utterance, which is to have a person subject 'I', the verb is in a present form 'order', and the utterance has direct object 'you'. Another example is from implicit performative utterance which does not have performative verb explicitly. Supported by the context, we know about verb containing in utterances. For example (5) "Hold the line!". The utterance is implicit performative, because there is no performative verb appeared. But based on the context of the utterance, it can be mentioned that this is an order so that the full sentence is 'I order you to hold the line.' The sentence also fulfills all the requirements of the performative sentence: having a person subject 'I', the verb is in the present form, and direct object 'you'.

In connection with the examples above, the act of carrying out an order has been expressed together by saying the word (explicit). Meanwhile, in the second utterance, the speaker commands without expressing the verbs listed (implicit). The last statement is called implicit because even though the word 'order' is not spoken,

the speaker continues to do what is called an order. Based on the above data it could be concluded that performative utterances are accompanied by performative verbs and some are not. Levinson calls it explicit and implicative performative (1983: 231).

c. Context

Context is one aspect of a speech situation. A different context can create a different meaning for the same speech act. Understanding the context will help us in getting the right meaning from the speech. According to Yule (1996:128), “context is the physical environment in which a word is used.” Showing agreement with what is taught by some linguists in defining context, McManis *et al.* (1998:197) have defined several different aspects of context:

1. Physical context
This includes where the conversation takes place, what objects are present, and what actions are taking place.
2. Epistemic context
This tells us about the background knowledge shared by the speaker(s) and the listener(s).
3. Linguistic context
This relates to utterances previous to the utterance under consideration.
4. Social context
This relates to the social relationship and setting of the speaker and the listener(s).

This performative utterance is inseparable from the context that surrounds it, because every action that is spoken always involves speakers and hearers. The following example is taken from conversations that occur in the film ‘Gladiator’ (2000)/ (6),

Quintus	: Soldier, I order you to move those catapults forward, they’re out of range.
Maximus	: Range is good.
Quintus	: The danger to the cavalry ...
Mazimus [interrupts]	: It is acceptable, agreed?

1. Characters: Quintus, soldier, and Maximus.
2. Relations between characters: Quintus is the Roman war commander in his group (soldiers), while Maximus is a general who lead the Roman war troops and he is the commander in chief of the war.
3. Situation: Conversations occur when Roman troops prepare to face attacks from German forces.
4. Place: The battlefield between Roman and German forces.

This conversation takes place on a battlefield between Roman soldiers and German soldiers. Both of them are dealing on the battlefield. It is a Roman warlord

named General Maximus who head the German army, while Quintus is the leader of the army in his group, subordinate to Maximus. Quintus orders his army to move the bomb they have prepared to attack. The reason is because the distance is out of reach. His statement can be seen from the utterance said, "Soldier, I order you to move forward catapults, they're out of range." Verb 'order' is a performative verb type because the sentence above is performative. When Quintus said the utterance, he took action giving orders. The action used is explicit performative, this is known by the emergence of explicit order verbs. The meaning of the performative utterance above is directive because it is a command.

Looking at the context that emerged, the relationship between Quintus and Maximus is subordinate and superior in the Roman military unit. Maximus is a commander of the Roman war army, while Quintus is the regimental commander. But in his group, for the soldiers, Quintus is their leader. So he has the authority to issue orders against his troops, even though his order does not happen because Maximus as commander in chief do not approve the order.

Another sample of data to show how context really supports the performative verb can be shown below (7).

Maximus: Hold the line!
Solider : Make ready.
Maximus: Hold the line!

Participants: Maximus and his soldiers.
Relationships between participants: warlords and warriors.
Situation: conversations occur during the war.
Place: A battlefield between Roman and German forces.

The utterances stated by Maximus is an act of acting that is implicit, this is due to the absence of explicit performative verbs. The performative verb does not appear explicitly, when it is completed, the utterance becomes "(I order you to) hold the line." The verb 'order' comes by being supported by the context. Because the order comes from a warlord, the order is legal and must be obeyed by the soldiers.

d. Felicity Condition

Felicity condition is a condition of action that must be fulfilled in a situation, so that the speech can take place according to the intention of the speaker (Levinson, 1983: 251). Felicity condition for the act of illocution 'order' is that the speaker must be someone who has the authority and strength so that the utterance uttered really has the meaning of ordering. For example, the phrase (8)"Open the window" which is spoken by a Queen who is in power to her servant, surely this

statement is very fulfilling the requirement to be called felicity condition. On the contrary, if the utterance is uttered by a maid to her employer in this case the Queen, the utterance does not meet the requirements to be considered as felicity conditions but infelicity.

Utterance in the speech act applies with conditions as a prerequisite that follows. Only people who have an appropriate authority and in an appropriate condition (speaking at the appropriate time and place) can only say things like 'christen a ship', 'pronounce a couple married', 'appoint someone to an administrative post', 'declare the proceedings open', or 'rescind an offer'.

e. Meaning of Performative Utterance

Performative utterances that are categorized as illocutionary acts consist of 5 categories (Searle, 1969:20), they are: declarations, assertive, expressives, directives, and commissives. (1) Declarations are those kinds of speech acts that change the world through their utterance (pronounce, sentence). (2) Assertives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not (suggest, state, boast, conclude). (3) Expressives are those kinds of speech act that state what the speaker feels (thank, salute, apologize) (4) Directives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something (ask, order, request, invite, beg). And (5) commissives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future actions (promise, plan, vow,). They express what the speaker intends to do.

RESEACH METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive method. According to Djajasudarma (1993:8), a descriptive method aims to make descriptions; make pictures, paint a systematic, factual and accurate picture of the information or data, properties, and phenomena under study. In this research, the method is applied to the characteristic of the data and the analysis which is explained in qualitative and descriptive method. The data collected from the conversation from 'Gladiator' and 'A Few Good Men' movies. The data are collected from the conversation in 'Gladiator' and 'A Few Good Men' movies. The conversation in the English movies can represent the real utterances used by the English speakers.

The analysis technique used to answer the research questions about the performative verbs found in these movies which can be explicit or implicit and the meaning from the verbs based on Searle (1969) categorization. The steps of this research are: (1) literature review, (2) the collection of data, (3) data analysis, and (4) conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data conducted to find the answer for the questions, (1) what are performative verbs found in the English movies, (2) what are the meanings from performative utterances containing performative verbs. The meaning of the performative verbs brings the meaning of the utterance into five categories. They are assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive. The researcher conducts classification based on the meaning from performative verbs. The classification is divided into five categories, assertive, directive, commissive, declarative and expressive.

Assertive Meaning

This classification shows that the performative verbs can be categorized into assertive meaning. Assertive meaning refers to speech act that states what the speaker believes. This statement can be in the form of statement about a fact, explicit statement, conclusion, and description. Assertive meanings are found in the data below,

(9). I *warn* you, but I shall save you (senator).

The utterance appears in *Gladiator* movie which refers to war context.

(10). I *assume* we will find the term red and its definition in this book, am I correct?

(11). I *admit* cigarettes and magazines, but the tape is not mine.

The utterances (10 and 11) come from 'A Few Good Men' movie, in court setting. Sentences (9,10,11) are performative utterances that have explicit performative verbs, it can be seen from the sentence. These verbs are *warn*, *remind*, and *admit*. Having the characteristics as the first person subject 'I', present tense, and explicit performative verbs, these verbs categorized having assertive meaning because the verbs show what speakers believe about the topic they discuss about.

Commissive Meaning

Commissive meaning is a kind of speech act that the speaker uses to test himself or herself for future actions, or in other words, the speaker does a commitment to himself and will do something in the future. These expressions include promises, threats, refusals, pledges, etc. Commissive meanings are found in the data below,

(12). I *promise* next time to submit it, whether I think you're right or not.

(13). I *bet* you feel pretty silly.

(14). On behalf of the children of New York, I *reject* your money.

(15). I *swear*, he doesn't know where he isn't even know why he's been arrested.

The sentences given as examples are performative utterances that have explicit performative verbs, it can be seen from the presence of performative verbs in the sentences. These verbs are *promise*, *bet*, *reject*, and, *swear*. All of these verbs are included in the verb category meaning commissive.

Directive Meaning

Directive speech is a kind of speech act that the speaker uses in order to make other people do something. This utterance reveals what speakers want and speakers try to make listeners do something what the speaker wants. This is in the form of commands, orders, requests, suggestions, and can be positive and negative. The meaning of the directive is found in the data below,

(16). Soldier, I *order* you to move those catapults forward, they're out of range.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (16) is order.

(17). (to Kaffee) Watch yourself, counselor.

Performative verb in sentence (17) does not appear explicitly, but only implicitly. The performative verb that appears is 'ask', the complete sentence is (I ask you (counselor) to) watch yourself. The speaker of sentence (16) is a judge who presides over the trial, and his interlocutor is a lawyer. This statement is in the form of a warning because the judge feels that the lawyer issued disrespectful words in the court, so that he can be considered insulting to the court.

(18). I *advise* you to seek terms for surrender.

The performative verb that appears in the sentence (17) is advice.

(19). Transfer Santiago.

The performative verb in sentence (19) does not appear explicitly, only implicitly. The performative verb that doesn't appear is the command, the complete sentence should be the (I command you to) transfer of Santiago. This sentence is said by a colonel to rule to his subordinates in the military.

The sentences given as examples are performative utterances that have explicit and implicit performative verbs. These verbs are order, ask, advise, form, and command.

Declarative Meaning

Declarative speech is a type of speech act that changes the world through its utterances. Usually, speakers have special institutions in order to properly carry out a declaration. Declarative meanings are found in the data below,

(20). I *judge* military matters, Captain Winthrop, not you.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (20) is a judge.

(21). I *announce* that public spending will increase next year.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (21) is announce.

(22). By now, I *declare* war on the government.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (22) is declare.

(23). On the charge of Murder, the members find the defendants not guilty.

Sentence (23) does not have explicit performative verbs, but based on the situation we can determine that the performative verbs that appear are declare, so that the full sentence becomes (I, on the charge of murder, declare that the members find the defendants not guilty.) The sentences before are performative utterances which have explicit or implicit performative verbs. These verbs are *judge*, *announce*, and *declare*.

Expressive Meaning

Expressive speech act is a kind of speech act that states what the speaker feels. Expressive speech is related to the psychological state of the speaker and can take the form of statements in the form of pleasure, pain, displeasure, joy, sadness caused by something the speaker does or the listener does. Expressive meaning is found in the data below:

(24). I *apologize*. I was angry and ... I'm sorry about what I said.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (24) is apologize.

(25). I *thank* you for your prayers.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (25) is thank.

(27). *Gladiators*, I *salute* you.

The performative verb that appears in sentence (27) is *salute*.

The sentences presented as examples are performative utterances which have explicit performative verbs. These verbs are *apologize*, *thank*, and *salute*. All verbs included in the verb category are expressive.

CONCLUSION

Performative utterance contained in English sentences have characteristics with the first person subject "I", have good performative verbs that appear either explicitly or implicitly in the present tense or current form, and direct object "you". The performative concept itself can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit performance is performative utterances accompanied by explicit performative verbs. Implicit performance is a performative utterance that contains performative verbs, but not explicitly. The use of performative verbs in performative utterances has clear grammatical rules, namely the form must always be present tense, both active and passive, and has a single first person subject.

It can be said, all performative verbs have semantic action and performative utterances must meet felicity condition (a condition of action that must be fulfilled in a situation, so that the utterance can take place according to the intended speaker or according to the purpose of the speaker).

The meanings that arise from performative verbs include the meaning of assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive. Assertive meanings are found in performative verbs such as 'warn', 'insist', 'remind', 'maintain', and 'admit'. The directive meaning in performative verbs such as 'judge', 'announce', 'sustain', and 'declare'.

Commissive meanings are found in performative verbs such as 'promise', 'bet', 'reject', 'swear', 'accept', and 'admit'. Declarative meanings are found in performative verbs such as 'judge', 'announce', 'sustain', and 'declare'. The directive meaning can be found in performative verbs such as 'order', 'ask', 'advise', 'beg', and 'authorize'. Expressive meanings are found in verbs such as 'apologize', 'thank', 'honor', 'salute', 'appreciate', and 'admire'.

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