

## ***ASSERTIVE UTTERANCE USED IN READERS' FORUM ON JAKARTA POST NEWSPAPER***

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### ***Abstract***

*This research aims to describe the forms, the types and the focus of assertive utterance used in readers' forum on Jakarta post newspaper. This research is descriptive qualitative research. In collecting assertive utterances, the researcher uses observation method combined with noting technique. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. The result of analysis shows there are two forms of assertive namely direct and indirect assertive. The types of assertive are categorized into five; asserting, reporting, explaining, showing something, and suggesting. They focus on information, truth-value of utterance, speaker's commitment in what is reported, and focus on aspect.*

**Keywords:** *Assertive utterance, readers' forum, pragmatic, readers' forum.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In delivering information, people may use kinds of sentences such as declarative to tell something, imperative to request action, and interrogative to ask something. Those kinds of sentence are categorized based on the form of sentence. In this case, actual utterances can have various functions that are independent from those forms. The use of interrogative sentence does not always mean to ask something to someone else; it can be to inform something to someone else. For example: “*do you know, it is raining?*”

this utterance may mean not to ask other about the condition, but to inform them about the condition. The form of utterance such as the example above relates to the speaker intentions about what they say. According to Hatch (1992:260) when someone listens to a speech, usually he tries to understand the meaning of the words and he also tries to understand what a speaker means. The study of what speaker means to convey when he/she uses a particular structure in context is called pragmatics. Pragmatics is the study of the relation of signs to interpreters (Morris in Mey,

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2001:4). It focuses on the process of producing language and on its producers, not just in the end-product, language (Mey, 2001:5). Pragmatics can also mean the study of the way in which language is used to express or interpret real intentions in particular situation, especially when the actual words that are used to mean something different (Hornby, 1995:905). Leech (1993: 6) says that pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situation. To understand the meaning of someone's utterances, it is important to have the same comprehension between the speakers and the listener or the writers and the readers, so the meaning of utterances or sentences can be reached. Austin classified the utterance as the speech act which occurs in everything we say.

Speech act theory provides this research with a mean of the acts performed by the speaker through the words (Yule, 1996:47). In delivering idea, feeling, and message through utterances, people do not only produce utterances with acceptable grammar and structure, but also produce kinds of action via the utterances.

In particular, Searle (1975: 344), expanding upon work in Austin (1962) and Crystal (2008: 446) create another

level of categorization, termed "illocutionary points". They split all utterances into some categories, one of them is assertive utterance which states something the speaker thinks, is true or false (to some degree).

Assertive is types of speech act which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (Levinson, 1983: 240). It is the type of speech act in which the speaker asserts 'a proposition to be true, using such verbs as affirm, believe, conclude, report, deny, etc (Searle,1998: 148). They include allege, announce, agree, report, remind, predict, and protest (Kreidler, 1998: 184). For example, the utterance "*the weather is very hot today*" shows that the writer is proud of him/herself and that is true. As Kreidler (1998:183) says that in the assertive function speakers and writers use language to tell what they know or believe; assertive language is concerned with facts. The main objective of assertive utterance is people should be able to deliver information concerned with facts. Hopefully they are capable of how to understand something that is commanded by the writers or speakers.

In this research, the researcher analyzed the discourse used by the reader in readers' forum on Jakarta post. To study discourse means to investigate

the relationship between forms and function in verbal communication (Renkema, 2004: 1). Moreover Paltridge (2006: 53) adds that an understanding of how language functions in context is central to an understanding of the relationship between what is said and what is understood in spoken and written discourse. The writer takes the written information in Newspaper (Jakarta Post) especially in reader's forum as the data to be analyzed and described in area of assertive utterance in written communication. The result of analysis can be used as an additional teaching material of pragmatic especially on assertive speech act. Moreover, the analysis may increase readers' understanding about intended meaning from what others say through observing the context of the utterance.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a pragmatic analysis. The data in this research are in the form of sentences taken from readers' forum on Jakarta Post Newspaper. The object of this study is assertive utterances used in readers' forum on Jakarta Post Newspaper. The writer analyzes the sentences which contain pragmatic meaning. In collecting the data, the writer uses observation

method. The observation method here is combined with writing technique or noting technique. It is the continuation technique which applies the observation method. In this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. Basically, the purpose of analyzing the data is to help the researcher to get the data into their shape and suggest how to interpret them.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the data analysis, the researcher found 130 assertive utterances uttered by the reader from 24 issues in readers' forum on Jakarta post. For the explanation detail of each finding, the researcher will explain the data in the following section.

### **3.1 Form of Assertive Utterance**

According to the result of analysis, the researcher found both of the forms of assertive utterance, direct and indirect assertive utterance. From 130 assertive utterances, the researcher found 3 data of direct assertive utterance and 127 data of indirect assertive utterance. Here are the percentage of occurrence and explanations of each category:

**Table 1: The Percentage of Assertive Utterance Form in Readers' Forum**

No	Form of Assertive	Number of Occurrence	Percentage
1.	Indirect Assertive	127	97.7
2.	Direct Assertive	3	2.31
<b>TOTAL</b>		130	100

### 3.1.1 Indirect Assertive Utterance

In indirect assertive utterance, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information. According to the result of the analysis, the researcher found 127 assertive utterances which include in indirect assertive act. Here are some examples of the data:

- (1) *It's getting real tiring hearing about these bribery cases. What is there to think, really?*
- (2) *They are more handy making their own oplosan (blended liquor) and killing themselves.*

Datum (1) is taken from readers' forum on April 07 2016 about "bribery in reclamation project". In utterance (1) the speaker said that "*It's getting real tiring hearing about these bribery cases. What is there to think, really?*" This assertive utterance may function as a protest to the news about bribery. The

speaker tended to say it indirectly. He means more than what he said. The speaker did not mean that it was really tiring to hearing that case but he meant that the cases should be immediately resolved. In utterance (2), the speaker said "*Power tends to corrupt. Good people focus on their job.*" What he uttered means that he reminded the readers or people to be said as good people, people should focus on their jobs not on their powers. Through his utterance, what he meant was more than what he said. He hoped that people need to concentrate on their jobs and they do not devote themselves to power.

Meanwhile, in datum (2), the speaker uttered *They are more handy making their own oplosan (blended liquor) and killing themselves*. The speaker was denying the third utterance through his utterance. In the beginning of his utterance he agreed with the third utterance but in the end of his utterance, he said *and killing themselves*. In this case, through the speaker's utterance, he means that he agreed with Papuan Governor Lukas Enembe's policy to ban the distribution of alcoholic beverages in the province. Agreeing statement by the speaker in the first utterance actually is not an agreement because he continued his utterance by saying *and killing*

themselves. It is impossible for someone who agrees with something that can kill people's life. So, the researcher could conclude that, in the case of datum (4), the speaker has indirectly conveyed more information than what he said through his utterance.

### 3.1.2 Direct Assertive Utterance

According to the result of analysis, the researcher found 3 direct assertive utterances in reader forum on Jakarta post newspaper. Here are some of the data:

- (3) On Indonesian-Chinese bilateral ties *I absolute agree with Prof. Christopher Roberts about Indonesia's dispute-settlement capacity on issues surrounding maritime borders and resources. Pak Jokowi , you've been under the thumb of the Chinese since day one of your presidency.*
- (4) It also says kill the unbelievers wherever you find them. These monsters find justification for their evil actions in the Holy Koran and the Hadiths. *You or I may not agree with their interpretation, but that is what they do.*

According to the data above, the speakers used direct assertive utterance in giving their comments in readers' forum. Utterance (3) is taken from

readers' forum on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 on the issue of "Indonesia-Chinese bilateral ties". The speaker *I* (Eduard Iseli) asserted that he agreed with prof. Christopher Roberts about Indonesia's dispute-settlement capacity on issues surrounding maritime borders and resources. The utterance has literal meaning telling about the truth condition of the speaker that he agreed with someone's statement.

Datum (4) is direct assertive utterance by Cash in readers' forum on the issue of "Taliban claims Lahore bombing" (Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The speaker used the words *You* or *I* in delivering the comment. In this case, the speaker conveyed his disagreement of the previous utterance about killing unbelievers. Through his utterance, the speaker expresses his meaning directly and it has literal meaning that is disagreement of other interpretation about killing innocent persons.

### 3.2 Type of Assertive utterance

From the data analysis, the researcher found five types of assertive utterance namely asserting, reporting, explaining, showing something, and suggesting. The researcher did not find the type of refusing in readers' forum on Jakarta post. The highest number of occurrence for the type of assertive

utterance is asserting followed by suggesting, reporting, showing something and the least occurrence is explaining. For the explanation detail of each type, the researcher will show the percentage of occurrence and describe them in the following section:

**Table 2: The Percentage of Assertive Utterance Type in Readers’ Forum**

No	Type of Assertive	Number of Occurrence	Percentage
1.	Asserting	84	64.6
2.	Reporting	10	7.69
3.	Explaining	5	3.85
4.	Showing Something	8	6.15
5.	Suggesting	23	17.7
6.	Refusing	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

**3.2.1 Asserting**

Asserting is a term used in pragmatics and semantics not only in its ordinary sense of presenting information as true, but also more technically for that portion of the information encoded in a sentence which is presented by the speaker as true, as opposed to that portion which is merely presupposed (Crystal, 2008: 39). As Hornby 1995:61 defines that asserting is the act of conveying information about the truth and fact. According to the result of

analysis, the researcher classified asserting into eight categories such as stating, claiming, affirming, alleging, agreeing, reminding, predicting, and protesting. The analysis of asserting act found in readers’ forum is presented below:

(5) *There is no problem and the most important thing is that the cooperation is expected to boost ties between the two countries.*

Examples (5) asserting utterance taken from readers’ forum on April 15, 2016 on the issue of “how to make China-RI railway co-op work”. The form of asserting on those utterances is stating. Stating means expressing something definitely or clearly in speech or writing. In the utterance (5) the speaker expresses his opinion about China-RI cooperation work clearly by adding the expectation in the end of his utterance.

(6) *It seems to be like taking candy from a never-emptying candy jar.*

Utterances (6) asserting utterance taken from readers’ forum on April 06 and April 07, 2016 on the issue of “Indonesia-Chinese bilateral ties” and “bribery in the reclamation project”. The asserting utterance in that example include in claiming something. Claiming means stating or asserting something is the case, typically without providing

evidence or proof. In that utterance, the speaker has claimed that the news about bribery is like taking candy from a never-emptying candy jar. Through her utterance, the speaker intended to inform that the case about bribery has never done. Moreover, according to the context of her utterance, she expected that corruption eradication commission (KPK) could resolve the problem soon.

(7) *It is a very difficult problem. There are social harms and this has a lot to do with the physiological reality that Melanesians don't have the thousands of years of alcohol conditioning that other ethnicities do, but a ban will only strengthen the unregulated moonshine scene and deliver even worse social outcomes.*

Utterance (7) is taken from the issue of "Papua bans alcohol consumption" on April 13, 2016. In this utterance, the speaker uttered that *a ban will only strengthen the unregulated moonshine scene and deliver even worse social outcomes*. Through his utterance, the speaker affirmed that prohibition alcohol in Papua will only give a worse impact in a society. Through his utterance, he implied that this issue becomes a serious problem and should be considered again.

(8) *She was forced to disembark the aircraft by the cabin crew. Meaning, she passed the on-ground crew checks. Meaning, she had already informed them of her condition beforehand. Just my common sense.*

Utterance (8) is taken from the issue of "Etihad apologizes for denying service to disabled Indonesian woman" on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Utterance (8) is the response of previous comment in readers forum that is "*Did she (or the ticket agent if she was using one) inform the airline of her condition when she booked the ticket?*" Through his response, he tended to allege his statement by using words *just my common sense*. In this case, the speaker actually did not have any authentic data to prove his utterance. He only used his sense to analyze the situation. Through his utterance, he implied indirectly that he agreed with the reader in the first comment that the passengers should not inform their physical condition to the airline services.

(9) *Alcohol kills the future generation and banning the consumption as well as the production is a very good idea.*

Utterance (9) is taken from the reader forum on April 13, 2016 on the

issue of “Papua bans alcohol production”. That utterance is asserting in the form of agreeing with something. Agree means consent to do something that has been suggested by another person. Utterance (9) is an agreement form of the speaker which is uttered indirectly. Through his statement, he agreed with the governor of Papua to ban alcohol. He implied that the governor should ban alcohol in order not to kill future generations.

(10) *Buildings can be sealed by thoughtless officials, but they cannot seal the hearts of people of faith. No matter what faith that is.*

Utterance (10) is taken from the issue of “Govt must reopen churches in Bekasi, Bogor” on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2106. Through his utterance, the speaker reminded the government indirectly that the hearts of people of faith can be sealed as they sealed the building. He intends that the government only does a wasteful work because believers will remain faithful even if they are in trouble with their places of worship.

(11) *They might call it an “enhanced interrogation technique”. Of course it’s torture and every year at least a couple of news stories come through in which suspects suddenly die of “heart attacks” or for “unknown*

*reasons” during interrogation. I wonder though how many really die — surely more than just a couple.*

Datum (11) is taken from the issue of “Siyono’s death from torture” on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The speaker indirectly asserted the utterance in form of predicting. Predict means saying or estimating that (a specified thing) will happen in the future or will be a consequence of something. In statement (11), the speaker predicted that by applying that interrogation technique, there will be more than just a couple deaths. Through his prediction, the speaker implied that the interrogation techniques needed to be questioned to reduce mortality.

(12) *How come a public official like the BPK chairman has an account in an offshore bank? What does this mean? If he is a businessman it would make sense. A state official is depositing his money in a country known as a tax haven? I am just curious about whether he also has bank accounts in Switzerland, Cayman Islands, Singapore and other places.*

Utterance (12) is taken from the issue of “Jokowi summons BPK chairman over Panama Papers” on April 15, 2016. In this utterance, the speaker

asserted some questions and statements in his utterance. The questions uttered actually were not questions to be answered. Through the questions and statements, the speaker tended to protest about BPK chairman. Protest is a statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something. In this case, the speaker protests that how can BPK can have an account in an offshore bank. The speaker thought that it did not make sense because BPK chairman is not a businessman. Through his utterance, he implied that BPK chairman should have worked in accordance with their respective portions.

### **3.2.2 Reporting**

Reporting is one of the functions of assertive illocutionary act that aims to inform something that has been done (Hornby, 1995:993). The speaker tries to embrace the hearer to know about something that happens in speaker's life. According to the research finding, the researcher found 14 assertive utterances in the form of reporting. Here is the example:

(13) *Yes, I live in Medan and PLN cut the power from 8:30 a.m. to 10: 45 a.m. When I phoned PLN they said a transformer had to be checked. It is an insult to all church-going*

*Indonesian people on this special day of the Easter celebration. No, I don't visit any church, but find this action as a complete negative reaction to suppress all religions other than their own.*

Datum (13) is assertive utterance in form of reporting taken from the issue of "government must reopen churches in Bekasi, Bogor" on April 05, 2016. In this utterance, the speaker tried to report what he had done when the power was cut by PLN. He reported PLN's response towards his question. Through his utterance, the speaker tended to criticize the government performance in serving the community primarily power cutting on Easter celebration. In the end of his utterance, he intended indirectly that the government did not do things that caused negative reaction from certain circles.

### **3.2.3 Suggesting**

Suggesting is the act to say that something to be chosen. In this type of assertive, the speaker usually conveys an idea or a plan to be considered by the hearer (Hornby, 1995: 1195). In this research, the researcher found 20 data of suggesting uttered by the speakers in readers forum. Here is the example:

(14) *The President has to order the immigration office, the police and*

*the Manpower Ministry to heighten supervision at all international airports, seaports and illegal gates along the Malacca Straits and the Indonesia-Malaysia border areas in Kalimantan. Human and child trafficking is rampant in the border areas.*

Data (14) is taken from the issue of “authorities could stop human trafficking” on April 01, 2016. In accordance to the data, the speakers tended to give suggestions to the president and immigration officers. In utterance (14), the speaker suggested the president to order the immigration office, the police, and the Manpower Ministry to heighten supervision at all international airports, seaports, and illegal gates long the Malacca Straits and the Indonesia-Malaysia border areas in Kalimantan. The speaker might think that it becomes a serious problem. Therefore through this utterance; the speaker intended to request someone to do something.

### **3.2.4 Explaining**

Explaining is the way to tell something in detail (Hornby, 1995:405). The speaker usually utters long sentences to describe something. It is the way to make something clear enough to be understood by the hearer. In this

research, the researcher found 5 assertive utterances in the form of explaining. Here is the example:

(15) *What the parishioners don't understand is that faith is in the heart and does not need buildings. Just like the Muslims in France do not need burqas to be Muslims, the Christians in Bogor will still be Christians with or without a physical church.*

*In the Christian Bible, Jesus said, “Whenever two or three of you are gathered together in my name, I will be there.” They don't need a permit from the mayor or his mates in the Islam Defenders Front (FPI) for that.*

Utterance (15) is taken from the issue of “government must reopen churches in Bekasi, Bogor”. In this utterance, the speaker explained clearly about what faith mean to parishioners who do not understand about faith. Through his utterance, the speaker intended indirectly to ask parishioner to understand that faith did not need a building. In this case, he impliedly asked the parishioner not to hold Easter services in front of the state palace as a protest.

### **3.2.5 Showing Something**

Showing something is the way how the speaker indicates something (Hornby, 1995:1093). Usually the speaker informs, gives a sign or points out on something to be clear. In this research, the writer found 8 assertive utterances in the form of showing something. Here is the example:

(16) *In the Koran Allah says that suicide in any form is haram, and not forgivable. Another verse says, "If you kill one innocent person, it is equal to killing the whole of humanity." Clearly, Islam forbids such atrocities, but commentators prefer to ignore this, and try to tar the whole of Islam with the same brush.*

Utterance (16) is taken from the issue of "Taliban claims Lahore bombing" on April 01, 2016. In this utterance, the speaker showed that *Allah says about suicide in any form is haram, and not forgivable*. The speaker's reason in uttering that utterance is because there are still many bombing incidents that hurt many parties. By uttering that utterance, the speaker intends to affirm that killing innocent person is forbidden as showed in the Koran mention in the previous explanation.

### **3.3 Focus of Assertive Utterance**

In this research, the researcher found four focuses of assertive utterance; those are focus on information, on truth-value of utterance, on speaker's commitment or involvement in what is reported, and on aspect. For the detail information about the focus of assertive utterance, the researcher explains in following section:

#### **3.3.1 Focus on information**

Based on the data analysis, the researcher found some of the data which focus on information. Information is facts provided or learned about something or someone. In readers' forum on Jakarta post, some data are the facts about something such as corruption, bribery, alcohol, taxes, and about someone such as the president, immigrant officer, minister, tobacco farmer, police, and so forth. In relation to the focus of assertive utterance especially on information, the researcher found that the speakers in readers' forum convey their information via assertive utterance. For the detail explanation, the researcher provides some of the data of assertive utterance which focus on information. Here is the example:

(17) *Iceland brings down its own president for tax evasion. President Jokowi says he doesn't really care if a government member is involved.*

*Different cultures, different values, different morals.*

Looking at the datum of assertive utterance above, it can be seen that speakers in readers' forum were focusing their utterance on information. They give some information which they believed is true according their knowledge. Datum or utterance (17) is taken from the issue of "Jokowi summons BPK chairman over Panama Papers" on April 15, 2016. The assertive utterance above focuses on information about the dismissal of Iceland president and each nation which has different culture, values, and morals. The speaker tried to explain an event that had occurred in other countries to describe the differences between countries with each other.

### **3.3.2 Focus on truth-value of utterance**

The truth-value of utterance here means the attribute assigned to a proposition in respect of its truth or falsehood, which in classical logic has only two possible values (true or false). In this case, the speakers believe their utterances have the truth-value based on their beliefs. Here is the example of assertive utterance uttered by the speakers which focus on truth-value of utterance:

(18) *Sure, China makes high-quality products, and can make products better than many other countries. These days, Chinese companies and several foreign companies, like Foxconn, have 66 percent of shares of Sharp (Japan), Skyworth bought Toshiba TV (Japan) and Haier bought HA.*

Datum or utterance (18) is taken from the issue about "how to make China-RI railway co-op work" (April 15, 2016). The assertive utterance here focuses on the truth-value of utterance. The speaker believed that some products made by China had high-quality and were better than products from other countries.

### **3.3.3 Focus on speaker's commitment or involvement in what is reported**

In relation to the analysis of assertive utterance, the researcher found some data which focus on speaker's commitment in what they reported or said. Commitment is a strong belief in an idea or system. It means the speakers have strong belief in what they said or in some ideas of people. Here is the example:

(19) *Oh stop your apologist nonsense. If Muslims globally were not committing massive murder on innocents, or if they were not forcing others to do what they say*

*or die, then all would be fine. I truly don't give a hoot what you do to yourself or what you believe; all I ask is that you leave the rest of us alone while you do it.*

Datum (19) is taken from the issue of "Taliban claims Lahore bombing" (Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016). By observing the utterance above, the speaker tried to respond another speaker's statement or previous comment. In this case, the speaker had strong belief in what he said. Through his utterance, he believed that if Muslims globally were not committing massive murder on innocents or if they were not forcing others to do what they say or die, then all would be fine. The speaker's idea is reported to argue the previous statement from another speaker.

### **3.3.4 Focus on aspect**

Based on the analysis, some data of assertive utterance focus on aspect. Aspect is a foresight or a view of how the future will be. Moreover, Kreidler mentions that utterance focusing on aspect means the utterance is about future events and previous events. Here is the example of assertive utterance which focuses on aspect:

(20)*Alcohol is a serious issue in Papua. They are quite good at making their own alcoholic drinks from local*

*ingredients. I think this action by the government coupled with awareness education would work well.*

Looking at the datum above, the speakers focused the utterance on the aspect that is how the future events will be according to their beliefs. Utterance (20) is a comment on the issue of "Papua bans Alcohol consumption". In this comment, the speaker agreed with Papuan governor to ban alcohol, and he predicted that prohibition of alcohol would be successful if the governor coupled it with education awareness.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

In referring to the analysis above, it is known that the speakers in readers' forum often used indirect assertive utterance. As stated by Kreidler (1998:183), in indirect assertive utterance, the speakers communicate more than what they say. In this case, what actually said by the speakers cannot be interpreted literally by looking at the form of utterance itself but it should be interpreted through the understanding of the context of the utterance such as the issue is being talked and the comment of other commentators in readers forum. Indirect assertive utterances were used by the speaker to convey their opinions or

comments implicitly. As stated by Yule, (1996: 55), in indirect speech act, there will be an indirect relationship between the structure of utterance and its function. According to Yule's statement, to understand the implicit meaning of speakers' utterances in readers' forum, the readers or people need to observe not only the form but also the function of the utterance itself.

In referring to the function of utterance, the researcher found some types of assertive utterance. The types of assertive utterance used by the speakers in readers' forum are to respond the news provided includes the writer of Jakarta post and someone or something is being talked in the news. Besides that, assertive utterance is also used to respond other commentators towards their arguments or comments. Assertive utterances in readers' forum focus on four categories namely focus on information, focus on truth-value of utterance, focus on speakers' commitment in what they reported, and focus on aspect.

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