

# THE USE OF SPEECH ACTS TYPES IN FACEBOOK STATUS UPDATES

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**Abstract:** *Saat ini, Facebook tidak bisa dipisahkan dari kehidupan sehari-hari penggunaannya. Saat ini, facebook telah menjadi gaya hidup untuk menginformasikan apa yang dilakukan dan apa yang ditulis di facebook. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari tahu jenis tindak tutur pada status di facebook. Jenis penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi dan note taking. Data diambil dari 116 pengguna facebook dengan usia antara 18-20 tahun. Data yang terkumpul dianalisa dengan menggunakan Miles and Hubberman technique. Hasil yang diperoleh menunjukkan adanya variasi penggunaan bahasa yang unik dari tiap penulis status. Hal tersebut dapat diamati dari kutipan, ekspresi bahasa, gurauan dan puisi. Dalam penelitian ini, jenis tindak tutur yang dipakai merupakan teori Searle, yang terdiri dari representatif, direktif, komisif, ekspresif, dan deklaratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ekspresif merupakan jenis tindak tutur yang paling sering muncul dalam status di facebook, yakni 62%, diikuti representatif (24%), komisif (8%), direktif (3%) dan kutipan (4%).*

**Kata Kunci:** *Facebook, Status Updates, Tindak Tutur*

**Abstract:** *At present, Facebook cannot be separated in today's life of the users. It has become life style to broadcasts what they did or what they are up to in Facebook. This study is aimed at finding out the types of speech acts in Facebook status updates. The language used is quite unique and vary from one person to another. It can be through quotations, expressive language, jokes, or poetry. In this case, the Searle's types of speech acts was used, covers representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.. There have to be speakers and hearers involving in a conversation. However, this study analyzed Facebook status updates where no hearers available, thus the readers were best to replace the hearers. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The data was taken from 116 Facebook users ranging from 18-20 of their ages. The result showed that the most frequent type of speech acts used by the users were expressive utterances (62%), 28 representative utterances (24%), 9 commissive utterances (8%), and 3 directive utterances (3%), and the other 4 are quotations (3%).*

**Keywords:** *Facebook, Speech Acts, Status Updates*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of Facebook has been world-widely known by people in all continents on earth. The members are more than millions of people from all countries in the world. By joining social networking, they can have more friends from around the world and get benefits from them. For example, they can exchange ideas about certain information. In addition, they use Facebook as well as other social networking in order to share about what happen with them yesterday, today or even their plans on following days. The language used is quite unique and vary from one person to another.

In recent years, we have seen a drastic revolution in how people interact with each other in social networkings. The social networks, such as Facebook, is interactive in a way that it gives people power to choose what they do, what they want to communicate and how they would do it. In Facebook, individuals' activities (e.g., connecting to others, expressing preferences, status updates) provide observable data for studying human behavior. Status updates are generally used to broadcast current states or make statements with own written words. Indonesia is not far behind in the Facebook race. Currently, there are more than 63 million people of Indonesia joining in Facebook. In addition, Indonesian Facebook users have been increasing. This phenomenon has placed Indonesia in the fourth rank in the world. The users' age ranges from 13-100. However, most of the active users range from 18-24 years old.

Facebook is very popular in Indonesia. According to Putra (2011), an IT consultant in multi national company in Indonesia, in <http://www.quora.com/Why-is-Facebook-so-popular-in-Indonesia>, he mentions several reasons why Facebook is so popular in Indonesia. He said that culture plays important role in Indonesian culture. Sharing, communicating, and solidarity are some of basic Indonesian culture. Facebook facilitates Indonesian to connect with their relatives, friends, and people they love most in their life. Besides, Indonesian are aware what is up to date in social networks. Indonesian may join more than one social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Path, etc.

Another opinion mentioned by Ronny Hartanto who says that many Indonesians like to show off, or don't want to lose face. Status updates, photos, etc. are good for that. e.g. "Dinner at , again. ", "Enjoying holiday in Bali, again.", "Liking my new

Louboutin shoes”, and so on. This point is debatable, and is probably not the main reason.

In the status updates, users express what they feel about what they are doing or what they have done. The way they express or the language they use depends on the person as to how they want to express themselves. It can be through quotations, expressive language, jokes, or poetry. This study is aimed at exploring what kind of speech acts used in Facebook status updates. Speech act theory was chosen because it is so practical that has been used in studies of natural language processing and computer-mediated communication. Speech act theory allows the researcher to explain intended meaning of messages identified and coded as illocutionary acts.

The similar studies in analyzing the status updates were conducted by some researchers, such as Natri (2006), Carr (2009) and also Ilyas and Kushi (2012). The first study is conducted by Natri, et.al in 2006. He investigated the extent to which the communicative goals of “away messages” were reflected in their language structure. The results showed that the messages were constructed, primarily, with assertives, followed by expressives and commissives but rarely with directives. This finding confirms that away messages tend to reflect both informational and entertainment goals.

The second study is from Carr et.al (2009). He examined how individuals used the status messages of social network sites like Facebook and MySpace socially to communicate and construct their identity. The analysis revealed that status messages were, basically, constructed with expressives (60%), followed by assertives (39%), directives (6%) and commissives (3%).

The third study is from Ilyas and Khushi (2012). They explored the communicative functions of status updates on Facebook, drawing on Searle’s speech act taxonomy. The results, confirming Carr et al.’s studies, revealed that status messages were most frequently constructed with expressives, followed by assertives and directives.

People use language for many purposes. They tell others what they know or think, express their feelings, ask questions, make requests, protest, criticize, insult, apologize, promise, thank, say hello and goodbye. Language seems to have as many different functions as there are occasions for using language. Speech acts is speech that accompany an action from the speakers. Das (2005: p172) explains that in the

framework of speech act theory there have to be two or more participants speaking the language and making their intentions known. One is the addressor and the other is the addressee. In written forms, sentences consist of declarative (if they tell something), imperative (if they request action), and interrogative sentences (if they ask). Cited in Holtgraves (2002: 10-11), in every speech act we can distinguish three things, following Austin (1962). What is said, the utterance, can be called the locution. What the speaker intends to communicate to the addressee is the illocution. The message that the addressee gets, his interpretation of what the speaker says, is the perlocution. Speech acts differ in their purposes, whether they deal with real or potential facts, prospective or retrospective, in the role of speaker or addressee in these facts, and of course in felicity conditions. According to Searle, cited in Levinson (1983, 240), there are five types of speech acts. Firstly, representative utterances, they function to tell what they know or believe; representative language is concerned with facts. The purpose is to inform. They include allege, announce, agree, report, remind, predict, protest. For example, *most plastics are made from soy bean*. Secondly, declarative utterances, speech acts that describe the state of affairs are called declarative: bids, blessings, firings, baptisms, arrests, marrying, declaring a mistrial. The verbs include bet, declare, baptize, name, nominate, pronounce. For example, *I declare this meeting adjourned*. Thirdly, Expressive utterances, an expressive utterance springs from the previous actions. Expressive utterances are retrospective and speaker-involved. The most common expressive verbs (in this sense of 'expressive') are: acknowledge, admit, confess, deny, apologize. For example, *we admit that we were mistaken*. Fourthly, directive utterances. Directive utterances are those in which the speaker tries to get the addressee to perform some acts. A directive utterance has the pronoun *you* as actor. Three kinds of directive utterances can be recognized: commands, requests and suggestions. For example, *(You) wait here*. Lastly, commissive utterances. They are prospective and concerned with the speaker's commitment to future action. Commissive verbs are illustrated by *agree, ask, offer, refuse, swear*. These include promises, pledges, threats and vows. For example, *I promise to be on time*.

Based on the explanation above, this study focuses on finding out the types of speech acts in Facebook status updates.

## METHOD

This study employs descriptive qualitative methods with the presence of a simple statistical data for describing the occurrences of the intended features. The study analyses kinds of speech acts found in Facebook status updates.

The data that was taken from a social networking site that nowadays is very familiar to us, facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). The data was taken from the researcher friends's status updates on facebook which include women and men. Steps of analyzing the data is first of all, the researcher copied all of my friends' status updates, taken from 116 random participants. The participants were mostly undergraduates students, ranging from 18-20 year old students. Secondly, the data categorized into five types of speech acts proposed by Searle (1976). Furthermore, in order to protect the subjects or the participants of this research, the researcher omitted the name of the subjects.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, the researcher found 72 expressive utterances (62%), 28 representative utterances (24%), 9 commissive utterances (8%), and 3 directive utterances (3%), and the other 4 are quotations (3%). The quotations found in the status updates were new findings, other than those seven types of speech acts. The quotations were mostly taken from holy Qur'an or Bible.

### Expressive

In this category, the speaker is involved in the action. For example:

2. *Huah... Bank ga buka hr sabtu... Damn it... Aq ke lupa,ga bs ambe uang...  
T.T. (13 minutes ago) EXPRESSIVE*
4. *Sepanjang jalan kenangan.. (22 minutes ago) EXPRESSIVE*
5. *is loving the weather. This is Salatiga. (26 minutes ago) EXPRESSIVE*

The above example proved that the speaker had involved in the actions. In (2), the speaker used sarcastic word to express his annoyance for not being able to withdraw money in a bank for it was Saturday, where many of which were day off. In (4), the speaker was recalling her memory through memory lane with her beloved in the past. The action had happened and is currently happening. In (5), the speaker was experiencing the action of loving the weather in his hometown, Salatiga.

### **Representative**

16. *Imagine me without U.. (about an hour ago) REPRESENTATIVE*

22. *Think positive toward herself and everything that happens in her life. ^^. (8 hours ago) REPRESENTATIVE*

54. *coz i love u so much & i want u back.. so i'll wait for you, no matter if i have to wait forever... :) :). (20 hours ago) REPRESENTATIVE*

The purpose of representative utterances is to inform what the speaker believe. In (16), the speaker believed what would happen to her without the presence of someone she loves. In (22), the speaker was trying think positively in her life. She believed good things would follow up by thinking positively. In (54), the speaker expressed her feeling toward her beloved. She informed her friends in Facebook that she would wait for her boy forever.

### **Commissive**

In commissive, the action is about to happen and the speaker is committed to do the action in the future. For example:

8. *gonna attend a seminar (again) today and tomorrow... \*phew\* hopefully it will recharge my, and others', life-battery... (44 minutes ago) COMMISSIVE*

14. *mau prgi ke rmh akang.. (about an hour ago) COMMISSIVE*

24. *tutup novelnya mati'in lampu kamarnya berdoa teruz tidur bsk bngun trz pergi berenang. :-D. (8 hours ago) COMMISSIVE*

The above examples showed that all the speakers were preparing for activities they were going to do in the future to come. In (8), the speaker was probably taking rest for another activity tomorrow in a seminar. The action was about to come tomorrow. In (14), the person, who was going to her husband's house, was the speaker. She was not going there yet. Whereas in (24), the speaker was planning for activity tomorrow. At the same time she was broadcasting her status update that she was ready for bed.

### **Directive**

This category demands other person or addressee to do something. For example:

35. *sista2 AQ BRUSAN UP LOAD TAS2 MDEL2 TERBARU YH DGN REASONABLE PRICE N RATA2 KEBANYAKAN KW 1 ,, SO MAMPIR YH DI LIAT2 ,, N KLO MW*

ORDER LNSNG SMS AZA YH KE 0813 832 100 55...TQ^. (12 hours ago)

**DIRECTIVE**

75. ohhhh....cari artikel ae.... mumethh..... panjang kpanjangen,pendek kpendeken...

hupppffhgggg somebody....pliss help me..... (on Thursday) **EXPRESSIVE AND**

**DIRECTIVE**

106. vote Jokowi =p. (on Sunday) **DIRECTIVE**

The speakers in the examples above were asking for their friends to do what they were requesting. In (35), an online seller was trying to get her customer updated with her new collection of bags. The language she used is quite persuasive for a customer to see her Facebook. In (75), interestingly, the speaker combined the expressive and directive utterances. She felt frustrated in finding an appropriate article, so she asked anyone in Facebook for help. The readers could post comment in her comment box, and it means she is successful in demanding her friend to do something for her. In (106), the speaker made use of today's politic situation, where Indonesia is about to have presidential election this month. Thus, she did a little campaign in her Facebook by asking for her friends to vote one of the candidate, who was also her number one choice. She used straightforward word to vote the candidate.

**Quotation**

Interestingly, even in Facebook status updates, the researcher found new findings out of the seven types of speech acts. It is called quotation, which were taken from a song, a poem, an Al Quran, and a Bible. For example:

28. Bismikallahumma ahya wabismika amud...zzzz. (11 hours ago) **QUOTATION**

29. Jagalah hatimu dengan segala kewaspadaan, karena dari situlah terpancar kehidupan. Amsal 4: 23. ^^ (11 hours ago) **QUOTATION**

56. " You're not alone...I'm here with you.." (20 hours ago) **QUOTATION**

87. you shared my darkest moment..coz the road is so long to walk alone..but you gave me strength..you've got to believe it..Love is the answer it heals soar heart..gives you the light when the night is dark..Love is the answer and love is forever..Love is what makes us going on. (on Wednesday) **QUOTATION**

Aside from speech acts analysis above, I was also interested in commenting the the language style used by those 116 Facebook users . It varied from one another, there

were flowery words, symbols or something cute in their speech to emphasize what they are saying, and straightforward sentences. However, I found rude or swear words in the status update to express bad feeling. In my opinion, there were some factors should be considered as the reasons why Facebook users used that words. It could be caused by their social background, social status, and environment. If we look at some of the swear words like *fucking, stupid, moron, idiot, damn, shit, and motherfucker*, I know that this particular person was influenced by English background because he or she preferred English words rather than Indonesian or Javanese language.

Also, some Facebook users like to use/ type “emotion” characters such as T\_T, T-T, \*\_^, >\_<, ^\_^, @\_@. They put it at the end of a sentence and it shows cuteness. Besides that, they used empty adjectives and intensifiers, such as *very thankful, so much, awesome, amazing, ya ampunn, hiks..hik..., huh*, and even some sexist language like the words *akang* and *suami*. It made their speech sounds more hyperbolic and dramatic.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, Facebook is a media through which people share what is going on in their life or how they are feeling. Language in this aspect plays a major role. The Facebook users convey their messages or idea through language. People produce a sentence through language. A sentence consists of three main types: declarative, interrogative and imperative. In this study, the researcher found that most of the sentence used by Facebook users are in form of declarative sentence. It is obvious because the sentences consists of a subject, a predicate and a object. In addition, since this study is trying to explore the type of speech acts, the findings are expressive utterance reaches 62% , followed by assertive utterances 24%. Next, commissive utterances has 8%, and directive utterances has 3%. The new finding, quotation, gets 3% of total 116 status updates being analyzed. Beside that, the language style are varied from one another, such as flowery words, straightforward, and even rude or swear words. They describe the users feeling at the time they are writing the status updates on Facebook.

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