

A SPEECH ACTS ANALYSIS OF *BON APPÉTITE* FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS

Written by : Lutfiyaningsih Naufalina
 First Supervisor : Susana Widyastuti, Ph.D.
 Second Supervisor : Paulus Kurnianta, M.Hum.

English Literature Study Program
 Faculty of Languages and Arts
 Yogyakarta State University

12211141040@student.uny.ac.id

Abstract

This research mainly examines speech acts used in *Bon Appetite* food advertisements by (1) identifying the types of speech acts, and (2) figuring out the speech act patterns in the advertisements.

This research was conducted by using a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected from *Bon Appetite* published in March to May 2016 which were in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. After being collected, the data were analysed based on two theories of speech acts, Yule & Searle. Data trustworthiness was achieved through triangulation.

The findings of this research reveal two important things. Firstly, from 30 data, it is found that statements serve as the highest type of locutionary acts which are aimed at providing information of the products, commissives serve as the highest type of illocutionary acts which are aimed at offering the benefits of the products, and to get the readers to expect something serve as the highest type of perlocutionary acts which are aimed at giving impact to the readers. Secondly, there is Statements-Commissives-Expect as the most frequent pattern used by the copywriters.

Keywords: *pragmatics, speech acts, food advertisements, Bon Appetite*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs can advertise their products in order to keep their business exist in the community buzz. Advertising has served a critical purpose in the business world by enabling sellers to effectively compete for the attention of buyers. These purposes have served in the form of lingual units, i.e. words,

phrases, clauses, or sentences in their headline of the advertisement. These lingual units only make sense when they were used in the proper contexts. Many advertisers provide their context via illustration behind headline. This is the first thing that leads the researcher to the choice of investigating advertising goals

towards the reader. There are many ways to promote products. Promotion decision must be integrated and co-ordinated with the rest of the marketing mix, particularly product or brand decisions, so that it may effectively support an entire marketing mix strategy. Acheoah (2012:35) suggests that ‘advertisers are not unaware of the nature of communication; they have known that communication could make or destruct society, unite or separate people, foster or destroy ties, promote or hinder patronage’. From this point, language should be appropriately used in advertisements. From the linguistic point of view advertisers can achieve their illocutionary goals by skilfully manipulating linguistic and paralinguistic elements of communication. However, there is still a gap of miscommunication between advertisers and the readers. The researcher is encouraged to reveal the hidden meaning that might be found on the selected advertisements.

Speech Acts theories which are widely known as “How to Do Things

with Words Theory” (Austin, 1976) are taken into account in this research. Speech acts is a part of pragmatics since pragmatics is the study of the relationship between the linguistic forms and the users of those forms (Yule, 1996:4). From the definition, it is seen that pragmatics has many aspects that can be studied in linguistics. It can be used not only to analyse the linguistic forms like what can be done by other branches of linguistics, but also to analyse the context of utterances. Since pragmatics does not simply study about a certain linguistic form, some aspects related to the context of communication have to be considered.

The theory was further modified by Searle (1977) in which he classified speech acts categories. According to Austin in Mey (2004:111), there are three aspects of speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Those three aspects cannot be separated from context since it is possible for one utterance to mean differently from different speakers,

for different hearers, at different times, or different places.

Locutionary acts are the real word that is uttered by the speaker and contains the speaker's verbalized message. It can be in the form of statements (declarative locution), questions (interrogative locution), and commands (imperative locution). The interpretation of the locutionary acts are concerned with meaning, for example: "I am going to the market".

Illocutionary acts are the power or intention behind the words that is uttered by the speaker. It indicates the speaker's purpose in saying something. The speaker's expression can be in the form of recommends, offers, promises, etc. The interpretation of the illocutionary acts are concerned with force, for example: "I will go to campus at 8.am". In this utterance, the speaker has made an action of "promise" via language to go to the campus at 8 a.m.

Perlocutionary acts is the effect of the illocution on the hearer, such as the effect on the feelings, thoughts, or action of hearers. According to Austin (1976:108), it is

what people bring about or achieve by saying something such as to get hearer to know, to get hearer to do something, to get hearer to expect something, to get hearer to show pleasant feeling and to get hearer to praise, for example: if someone shouts "Fire!" and by that act causes people to exit a building which they believe to be on fire. There is another example: a teacher says to the students "please study hard or you'll fail on final examination". The illocutionary act might be advising or suggesting but the perlocutionary act may be intimidating for students.

The researcher chooses magazines for several characteristics. Firstly, magazines have loyal subscribers which can maintain the existence of the magazines. Secondly, magazines are generally financed by advertisements. Thirdly, magazines always provide up-to-date information about certain lifestyles to the reader. According to www.rogersmagazineservice.com, *Bon Appétite* is one of the North America's favourite food magazines. This website conducted a simple survey about the interest of the

subscribers about their favourite magazines. There are five characteristics in the survey which support the significance of carrying out a speech acts research on *Bon Appétite*. *Bon Appétite* contains high quality photos, well written articles, engaging articles, up-to-date content, and insightful analysis. Adam Rapoport, the newest editor in chief of *Bon Appétite*, claims that *Bon Appétite* was relaunched with freshest concept about five years ago. From the linguistic point of view advertisers can achieve their illocutionary goals by skilfully manipulating linguistic and paralinguistic elements of communication. However, there is still a gap of miscommunication between advertisers and the readers. The researcher is encouraged to reveal the hidden meaning that might be found on the selected advertisements. The objectives of the research are to identify the types of speech acts of *Bon Appétite* food advertisements and to find out the patterns of speech acts types in the advertisements.

RESEARCH METHOD

To answer the problems formulation, this research employed a descriptive qualitative research. The analysis of descriptive research is aimed at providing a complicated description or illustrating phenomena (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:3). This research paid high attention to every prominent phenomenon that occurs during investigation of the main data, *Bon Appetite* food advertisements. The sources of the data in this research were *Bon Appétite* issued in March to May 2016. The data were in the form of words, clauses, phrases and sentences. The context of the data was the illustration provided by the advertisers. The researcher found 30 advertisements related to the topics which were chosen from its classification that has been prepared before. The researcher was the primary instrument in this research. However, to obtain data more accurately, the researcher also used supporting instrument. Data sheets were used as the secondary instrument.

The researcher did the following procedures for data collection: reading and note taking

the advertisements, determining the selected advertisements, choosing only English advertisements to be investigated, taking notes to the raw data, making and fulfilling the data sheet, and cross-checking the advertisements as the final step. The process of the data analysis was started by reducing the raw data by sorting out the irrelevant data. The researcher applied content analysis methods in which the data were analysed based on the explored theory (Cohen, Manion, & Marrison, 2007:475). Next, the researcher classified the data into data sheet based on the classification of two objectives of the study. After that, the data were analysed according to the applied theories. To gain trustworthiness, the data were triangulated by two students of English Language and Literature study program. The final step of data analysing process was drawing the conclusion based on the result of the research in order to answer the formulation of the problem.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

The findings of speech acts in *Bon Appétite* food advertisements are illustrated in the following table.

Table 2: The Types of Speech Acts in *Bon Appétite* Food Advertisements

No	Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Locutionary Acts	30	100
	Statements	24	80
	Questions Commands	1 5	3.3 16.7
2.	Illocutionary Acts	30	100
	Assertives	1	3.3
	Directives	4	13.3
	Commissives	25	83.3
	Expressives Declarations	- -	- -
3.	Perlocutionary Acts	30	100
	Get readers to do something	4	13.3
	Get readers to know	-	-
	Get readers to express feeling	- 26	- 86.7
	Get readers to expect something	-	-
	Get readers to praise	-	-

The findings of speech act patterns in *Bon Appétite* food

advertisements are illustrated in the following table.

Table 3: The Speech Act Patterns in Food Advertisements

No	Patterns	Freq	Percentage (100%)
1	Statements-Commissives-Expect	23	76.7
2	Statements-Assertives-Expect	1	3.3
3	Commands-Directives-Do	4	13.3
4	Commands-Commissives-Expect	1	3.3
5	Questions-Commissives-Expect	1	3.3
Total		30	100

Based on 30 data, the types of speech acts in *Bon Appetite* food advertisements are explained in this section. More explanation can be presented as follows.

1. The Types of Speech Acts in *Bon Appétite* Food Advertisements

a. Locutionary Acts



In datum 7, the advertisers intend to present *Starbucks* instant coffee package. It is an instant coffee that everyone can enjoy at home. This package claims to be as good as fresh-brewed Starbucks coffee. Just open a packet of Starbucks via Instant Coffee

Colombia, add hot water, wait 10 seconds, and stir. The advertisement helps the readers to find new experience of drinking coffee at home. This craft is the answer of the *Starbucks'* lover who wants *Starbucks'* experiences at their home. The instant packages offer the same high quality coffee which is ethically sourced, artfully blended, and masterfully roasted. The headline is used to describe the same experiences that the readers will get whether they drink the product at home or in the coffee shop itself. The headline above is using **statements (declarative acts)** to inform the readers their quality. The copywriters use a bigger font than the name of the product itself in the word "*always rich and flavor*" to get readers attention about the taste of the product. The copywriters apply commissives to do the act of recommending by telling the readers that this product is rich and full of flavor. The headline is more than stating information but convincing the readers about the taste. The perlocutionary effect to the readers is clear: they are made to expect that

even drinking at home, they can feel the same bar-taste. By the appearance of the new coffee instant package from *Starbucks*, everyone has an opportunity to be a barista at home.



The headline in datum 2 is about an intense dark chocolate bar named *Ghirardelli*. INTENSE DARK-Sea Salt is a line of exquisite dark chocolates from the master chocolatiers at *Ghirardelli*. Made with a high quality cacao, these decadent bars are luxuriously deep and velvety, with a rich, glossy sheen. Infused with superior-quality ingredients that add another level of flavour and texture, they are perfect for enjoying alongside fine wines and spirits, and a diverse array of other complementary foods. The advertisers give a mild command to the readers to try the product by using **commands**. Instead of using direct command word, the

advertisers use the word “savor”. This headline also can be seen as directives in the perspective of illocutionary acts. The product invites the consumer to taste the product with their favourite pairing. Every consumer is free to choose their favourite pairing to satisfy themselves. The brand suggests an idea for the readers to consider but the readers are free to choose whether consume the chocolate directly or add their pairing. The product itself already shows its exclusivity by referring it as “the dark”. The use of the noun phrase “the dark” can be seen as a trial from the copywriters to get readers attention that this product is more than ordinary chocolate. The perlocutionary acts on the consumer is clear: the consumers are expected to buy the product after see the advertisement. Hopefully, the readers can understand that this product can be consumed according to their taste.



The advertisement datum 15 uses **questions or interrogatives** that has a form of an auxiliary verb (did) + a question mark (?). The interrogative above is used to evoke the sense of personal communication with the readers. It causes the readers to cooperate with the text by having their own individual situation in mind about what is being advertised. The advertisement offers special sausage which is 100% natural, inclusive, and delicious. According to the advertisement as the context, the copywriters try to describe the happiness of eating delicious sausage from *Al Fresco* with the happiness of entering a heaven which contains delicious food as a heaven for the eaters. The headline above is regarded as commissives. The copywriters bold the word *foodie heaven* in order to show the perfect word that can represent a product

guarantee to the readers. The headline above is more than simply stating about the existence of foodie heaven but also invite the readers to believe that such place does exist. The copywriters offer a foodie heaven through interrogative form. The perlocutionary effect to the consumers is clear: they are made to expect something. The consumers are made to expect delicious taste from perfect sausage which can bring them to a foodie heaven.

b. Illocutionary Acts



In datum 20, the copywriters use statements easily to describe a package of instant coffee. The advertisement above is about Arabica house blend coffee labelled *Gevalia*. In a single statement, the copywriters aimed to inform the readers that the product has a better coffee taste than its rival, *Starbucks*. To convince the readers, the copywriters show them a result

from January 2016 national taste test of coffee drinkers carried out by an independent third party comparing *Gevalia House Blend* and *Starbucks House Blend*. The copywriters give a recommendation with confidence. When a reputation as strong as a warrant, the copywriters may make a strong recommendation to the readers. The statement is regarded as **commissives**. The advertisers give a recommendation to the readers about a better coffee to choose. The perlocutionary effect is clear: get the readers to expect a better taste house blend.

The headline of datum 9 is coming from *Peets Coffee*. The copywriters convince the readers to put drinking coffee into their top list of their daily activity. Sometimes, people buy such product by considering some reasons. Certainly, it must be positive reasons. In the headline, instead of directly offering the product, the advertisement is offering a high-class habit. Drinking coffee indicates a high-class habit in European country. The readers can raise their self-respect by doing it. By raising a habit, the brand wants to

increase the demand of the product. The brand invites the readers to identify which of the coffee bean that has a superior quality. In this advertisement, the copywriters use declaratives to give a mild command to drink coffee to the readers. From the illocutionary dimension, a mild command can be seen as **directives**. The perlocutionary effect is clear: to get the readers to do something that is brewing coffee from the advertised coffee product in every morning before start their activity.

In datum 12, the headline above is regarded as declaratives (statements). The copywriters use statement to describe Italy's favourite cheese brand labelled *Galbani*. The headline contains

information that the product has been exist over 130 years ago.

From illocutionar

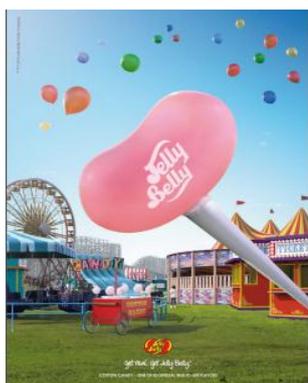
y dimension, the headline can be seen as an **assertives** which is doing the act of informing. The headline



helps the readers to understand the history of the Italian craftsmanship. From the headline, the readers would understand that over 130 years the Italian craft cheese, especially this product.

The perlocutionary effect to the readers is clear: to get the readers to expect number one quality from the brand. The readers are shaped to believe that their ricotta and mozzarella is the best America's choices. As the America's choice, American would believe that this brand would be the perfect representation of Italian cheese craftsmanship.

c. Perlocutionary Acts



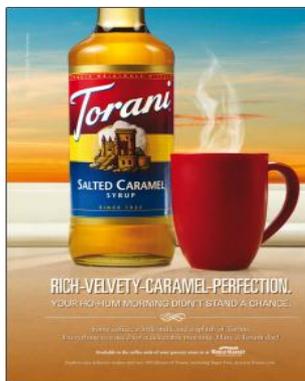
The statement in datum 1 is the headline of the original of gourmet jelly bean advertisement labelled *Jelly Belly*. Jelly Belly jelly beans are gluten free, peanut free, dairy free, fat free and vegetarian friendly. This brand

offers one of 50 official flavours, namely, cotton candy. The headline is identified as imperative acts which is showed in the word *get* as an indirect order from the advertisers. It means that the readers are unconsciously motivated or persuaded to buy the product. Commands leads to the appearance of commissives which can be identified by the occurrence of the adjective *real*. The copywriters use the word *real* to guarantee the readers that they will get the real taste of cotton candy from *Jelly Belly*. From the headline, the perlocutionary effect is expected to be getting the readers expect something. The copywriters intend to give an offer to the readers to try cotton candy, *one of 50 official true-to-life flavours*, from *Jelly Belly*. **The readers are expected to be excited to try the new variant.**

2. The Speech Act Patterns in *Bon Appétite Food Advertisements*

As presented in the previous section, it can be concluded that Statements-Commissives-Expect is the most dominant pattern in the dimension of speech acts in written

advertisements. This can imply that, based on table 2 advertising language can be effectively used to communicate, that is to offer products to the consumers. Whether new or classic, the product must be packaged in a fresh and attractive way to get consumers attention. More explanation can be seen below.



The headline in datum 3 occurs in the advertisement of salted caramel syrup labelled *Torani*. The advertisement use **statements (declaratives)** to inform their quality to the readers. The advertisers simply state the quality of the products in the headline namely rich, velvety, and caramel. By reading the headline, the consumers will not hesitate to guess the quality because the copywriters describe its perfection as guarantees in a single headline. From illocutionary dimension, the headline is

categorized as **commisives**. To a certain point, advertisements have to offer benefit of the product. The offer is made to influence the readers to buy the syrup. The product offers perfection. With the unique taste of rich, velvety, and full with caramel, hopefully the readers will be convinced to try the syrup. The perlocutionary effect is clear: the consumer is shaped **to expect** perfection in every drop of the syrup. Unconsciously, the consumers will prefer this advertised product rather than others.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the research show three main points. Firstly, declaratives are the most frequent type of locutionary acts found in *Bon Appétite* food advertisements. The use of declaratives is common in the advertisement since it is aimed at providing the readers with the information about the products. Secondly, the highest frequency of the types of illocutionary acts is commisives. Commisives are common in advertising since advertising mainly offers the products to the consumers. The

copywriters need to make a certain promise such as giving benefits or enjoyment. Therefore, the consumers would have an interest to buy the product or to use the service. Thirdly, to get the readers to expect something becomes the most dominant type of perlocutionary acts. The perlocutionary acts are the act of affecting someone to do something or in other words, creating an utterance with a function to have an effect on the readers. A further analyses on the speech act patterns reveals that Statements-Commissives-Expect is the most frequent pattern.

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