

MOTIVATIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN PRINCE EA'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of expressive speech acts in the motivational spoken word performances of Prince EA. Expressive speech acts, which convey the speaker's emotions and attitudes, play a crucial role in persuasive and motivational communication. The aim was to understand how Prince EA effectively engages and inspires his audience through these acts. A qualitative analysis was conducted on a selection of Prince EA's spoken word performances. Using speech act theory as a framework, instances of expressive speech acts were identified and categorized. Data was collected through transcription and thematic analysis of the videos. The analysis revealed a significant presence of expressive speech acts in these performances that cover apologizing, condoling, lamenting, showing attitude, agreeing, using exclamation, wishing, and thanking. These acts were predominantly expressing hope, encouragement, empathy, and personal conviction. The frequent use of these expressions contributed to the emotional resonance and motivational impact of the performances. The findings suggest that the effective use of expressive speech acts enhances the motivational appeal of Prince EA's spoken word performances. By conveying genuine emotions and attitudes, a connection with the audience is created, fostering a sense of empathy and inspiration. Hence, this study highlights the importance of expressive speech acts in motivational speaking and offers insights for speakers aiming to engage and motivate their audiences effectively.

Keyword: pragmatic, ethics, speech acts, motivation

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary digital media, motivational spoken word performances have gained significant attention, resonating deeply with audiences who seek for inspiration and empowerment (Curwood & Jones, 2022). Among the prominent figures in this genre is Prince EA, whose impactful videos have gained millions of views on platforms such as YouTube. His performances blend social commentary with personal reflection, creating a powerful narrative that motivates and engages viewers. From linguistic point of view, this phenomenon is interesting to study as to how he performs and what language features that he uses.

One study on motivational lecture conducted by Kryknitska (2020) reveals that the use of humor, authenticity, emotional appeal, and language means like verbs, nouns, and adjectives are emphasized as key elements in captivating and inspiring the audience. Meanwhile, another investigation on the same genre by means of positive discourse analysis framework exhibits the use of positive constructions, parallelism, storytelling, hyperbole, and framing to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the audience (Sherwani, 2020; Sultan and Rapi, 2020). These studies emphasized the impact of positive



language on cognition, behavior, mindset change, and goal achievement in motivational contexts. These two studies have focused on the content that leads current research to the investigation of different angle of language use.

Motivational speech, as a form of spoken language in social interactions, constitutes an area of language study where pragmatics is fundamentally involved. Every utterance made by the speaker is interpreted by the listener. Yule (1996) notes that "pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)," indicating that pragmatics explores how speakers and listeners communicate in various contexts. It examines how a speaker conveys meaning and how a listener interprets it. Parker (1986) emphasizes the importance of considering how language is used to communicate effectively rather than merely its structural organization. Mazulfah. (2019) further explains that pragmatics studies how language is employed in communication according to societal circumstances.

Effective communication relies not only on linguistic proficiency but also on contextual information, which is crucial for understanding the conveyed meaning. The advantage of studying language through pragmatics lies in its ability to address intended meanings, such as assumptions, intentions, and actions taken during speech. Additionally, pragmatics helps understand how humans interact and communicate within the framework of speech acts.

Speech acts, a significant area within pragmatics, examine actions accomplished through spoken utterances in real-life contexts. Numerous theories explore how people communicate, with Austin's (1962) theory positing that certain sentences and utterances perform actions, termed "performative sentences." Austin elaborates that speech acts involve actions performed through language to alter the state of the object being acted upon.

Expressive speech acts, in particular, communicate psychological conditions arising from specific situations. These acts are commonly used to convey emotions, attitudes, and feelings, such as showing amazement or providing motivation. Taavitsainen and Jucker (2010) note that expressive speech acts focus on politeness and gratitude, reflecting the speaker's state of mind. Abrams (1976) states that language mirrors reality.

This study aims to investigate the use of expressive speech acts in the motivational spoken word performances of Prince EA. By examining these speech acts, which convey the speaker's emotions and attitudes, the study seeks to understand their role in persuasive and motivational communication. Specifically, it analyzes how Prince EA utilizes expressive speech acts to engage and inspire his audience. The study aims to provide insights into Prince EA's techniques and emphasize the significance of expressive speech acts in effective motivational speaking. Additionally, the research intends to offer guidance for speakers aiming to enhance their motivational impact through strategic use of expressive speech acts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An expressive speech act is defined as one that "expresses the speaker's feelings" (Yule, 1996:53). Such acts can convey emotions like pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow, as well as psychological states. These speech acts can be initiated by either the speaker or the listener but are primarily centered on the speaker's personal experiences and attitudes toward others. Expressive speech acts usually appear in a declarative form, with words explicitly indicating the emotion being expressed. Examples include:

- (a) "I'm sorry to hear that!"
- (b) "Congratulation for your graduate!"
- (c) "Thank you for helping me!"

The speaker's words match the psychological reality in this act, and the speaker is also responsible for the deed. There are types of expressive speech acts.

Wishing

Wishing is a strong expectation for something impossible to achieve; it is a desire for something that can't or won't be realized. Wishing is the desire for something to happen or be true, even if it is implausible or unattainable, as well as the desire to do something (Spaulding, 2015). In other words, wishing is a verb that communicates a desire to accomplish something.

Thanking

Thanking is a polite and informal way to express gratitude without using a verb. It is typically employed as a courteous and somewhat casual expression of appreciation in statements that lack a verb. According to Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2008:2), thanking is an acknowledgment of something that has been done by others. Its primary function is to convey sincere gratitude.

Congratulating

To congratulate is to send (someone) one's best wishes when something noteworthy or nice happens in their lives, as well as to express vicarious happiness on the occasion of success or good fortune. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2008:2), congratulations are an expression of anything done in all people's actions.

Apologizing

The term apologize signifies expressing regret for one's mistakes, as in saying, "I'm sorry for all of my mistakes." An apology is a word or statement used to convey regret for something that has gone wrong or caused an issue, or to inform someone that they will be unable to attend a meeting or must leave early (Widyastuti, 2019). In other words, an apology serves as a social function of understanding, including actions such as apologizing, making requests, pleading guilty, stating intentions, and saying sorry to inform the listener.

Condoling

"To sympathize with" or "to mourn with" are the meaning of the word condole. Hemberg & Gustin (2020) defines condolence as "suffering together" and knowing a loss, expressing sadness, or empathizing with someone.

Greeting

A greeting is a courteous statement or display of welcome or acknowledgement (Widyastuti, 2019). A greeting, as well as a message of good health and happiness, is something you say or do to greet someone.

Lamentation

Weeping is a profound expression of grief or sorrow known as lamentation. A lament, also referred to as a lamentation, is a powerful declaration of grief, often conveyed through music, poetry, or song. Grief typically stems from regret or mourning. Lamentations can also be expressed verbally, where the individual laments about something they regret or someone they have lost, usually accompanied by wailing, moaning, and crying (Austin, 1975). Lamentation signifies an expression of deep sadness or disappointment.

Showing Attitude

A positive or negative mental state towards an object that is impacted by social or personal characteristics, or a relational mental state that relates a person to a proposition, is known as attitude (Sherwani, 2020). Attitude refers to the way you think and feel about something. That is to behave toward to something and people to be confident, sometimes aggressive behaviour that shows one's characters not care about other people's opinion and that you want to do things individually.

Agreeing

A term used to indicate someone's wish is an agreement (Saragih, 2019). It shows that the speaker needs an approval.

Using Exclamation

An exclamation is a powerful interjection that can also serve as a greeting. According to G. & C. Merriam (1913), it is an expression of emotion through sound or speech, encompassing feelings such as surprise, pain, grief, joy, rage, and hailing. In relation to the earlier observation, a finite verb is inflected not only for tense but also for agreement, particularly in terms of person and number. It must align with the subject, meaning that the person or number must possess the attributes of a subject.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative approach and employed content analysis techniques, as the data were derived from words, phrases, sentences, and utterances. Qualitative research aims to describe, connect, and classify items or data to gain a deeper understanding of them. The researcher must describe the data to be analyzed and can also interpret, explain, and draw conclusions, which should be subjective to each researcher (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative research method is used to investigate, discover, describe, and explain qualities that cannot be addressed using quantitative methods.

For data collection, three videos from Prince EA's YouTube channel were selected due to their relevance to contemporary issues, such as the environment. These videos are "Dear Future Generation: Sorry," "Why I Think This World Should End," and "Will This Be Humanity's Fate?" Each video was transcribed to ensure the accurate capture of the spoken words. The transcriptions included all verbal expressions and relevant non-verbal cues that could influence the interpretation of the speech acts. This comprehensive transcription process facilitated a detailed analysis of the content. The transcriptions were systematically coded to identify and categorize the expressive speech acts.

The coded data were then analysed to determine the types of expressive speech acts used by the speaker. Each instance of an expressive speech act was highlighted and categorized based on its type and context. The analysis focused on how these speech acts contributed to the overall motivational message of the performances. Special attention was given to how Prince EA's use of expressive speech acts engaged the audience, conveyed emotional authenticity, and reinforced the persuasive elements of his messages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the three Prince Ea videos titled "Dear Future Generation, Sorry," "Why I Think This World Should End," and "Will This Be Humanity's Fate?" the researcher identified several instances of expressive speech acts. Among the ten types of expressive speech acts, eight were found: apologizing, condoling, lamenting, showing attitude, agreeing, exclamation, wishing, and thanking.

Apologizing

Datum 01

"Dear Future Generations, I think I speak for the rest of us when I say sorry. Sorry we left you with our mess of a planet."

(Dear Future Generation, Sorry)

In the video entitled "Dear Future Generations: Sorry", Prince EA uses expressive speech act of apology to express his thoughts by saying "I think I speak for the rest of us when I say sorry." Prince Ea says that what he would say represents what he and people are feeling right now. Prince Ea feels that no one dares to say it so that he would then represent them by making the video. Prince Ea as the representative of other people,

apologizes profusely for the acts of greed and selfishness which lead to chaos on earth. The expression of apology can be seen in "Sorry we left you with our mess of a planet." Prince Ea apologizes for the destroyed nature, animals and everything in the world. Prince Ea hopes that the apology can be accepted.

Condoling

Datum 05

"I'm guessing you probably know what is the Amazon Desert, right? Well believe it or not it was once called once called the Amazon Rain Forest, and there were billions of trees there, and all of them gorgeous and just um... well ..."
(Dear Future Generation, Sorry)

The above utterance is an expressive speech act of condoling where Prince Ea expresses his sympathy towards the future generation. Prince EA, who gave a speech in the Amazon Desert felt that people who watched the video could already guess that the arid place was a field that was once called the Amazon rainforest. Prince EA felt sad that a place called the Amazon which was once filled with trees, green, fertile, inhabited by wild animals, has now become a very hot, arid desert, where not even a single plant or animal can be seen behind him. And again sadly, people will easily recognize the place as a former rainforest because they are destroying it. Meanwhile future generations will never know that the Amazon Desert was once the Amazon Rainforest filled with millions of trees.

Lamenting

Datum 09

"Cut them down with brutal machines, horrific, at a rate of 40 football fields every minute. That's 50% of all the trees in the world all gone in the last 100 years. Why? For this."
(Dear Future Generation, Sorry)

In the video entitled "Dear Future Generation, Sorry", Prince Ea uses expressive speech act of lamenting to express his disappointment towards human. By saying "Cut them down with brutal machines, horrific," Prince Ea was disappointed with humans who cut down a large number of trees every minute. This resulted in the earth losing 50% of the total number of trees in the world in the last 100 years. And what disappointed him even more was the reason the trees were cut down for a precious piece of paper that many people revere called money.

Showing Attitude

Datum 07

"Well let me tell you that trees are amazing. And I mean, we literally breathe the air, they are creating, and they clean up our pollution, our carbon, they store and purify water, give us medicine that cures our diseases, food that feeds us."
(Dear Future Generation, Sorry)

In the utterance above, Prince EA expresses his attitude in "Dear Future Generations: Sorry" which is included in the type of expressive speech act of showing attitude. Prince EA said that trees are one of God's extraordinary creations. Humans can breathe because the tree that has been provided by God absorbs carbon dioxide and produces oxygen that humans breathe every day without stopping. Not only that, but trees also store groundwater and transfer it, thereby lowering temperatures, dampening noise, and reducing wind strength. That's why according to Prince EA more and more droughts are happening everywhere, pollution is increasing, temperatures are getting higher, and winds are getting stronger. Imagine what will happen in the future if no trees are completely

wiped from the earth.

Agreeing

Datum 60

“So yes, the world is coming to an end.”
(Why I Think This World Should End)

In the video entitled “Why I Think This World Should End”, Prince Ea uses expressive speech act of agreeing to try to express his thoughts. By saying “So yes, the world is coming to an end.” Prince Ea agrees with anyone who thinks the world will end and emphasizes it by saying “Yes”. And Prince Ea was sure that other people would agree with what he said.

Using Exclamation

Datum 68

“Wow!”
(Will This Be Humanity's Fate)

In the video entitled “Will This Be Humanity's Fate”, Prince Ea uses expressive speech act of exclamation to try to express his thoughts. By saying “Wow!” Prince Ea showed his surprise at Tommy's words which was something an adult with a mature mind should say. If schoolchildren like Tommy are so upset with the problems that occur in the environment, it means that it is already very serious, that children who should be thinking about what games they will play with their friends that afternoon are replaced with thoughts about the importance of protecting nature. He was shocked because of Tommy is aware of the benefits of the presence of trees around him. Tommy also aware of the fact that factories were built by cutting down land full of trees harm the environment.

Wishing

Datum 27

“We must look at the root.”
(Dear Future Generation, Sorry)

In the utterance above, the expression of wishing can be seen in “We must look at the root.” Furthermore, using speech that is included in the type of expressive speech act of attitude, Prince Ea added his opinion that to be able to solve problems, humans must look at the root of the problem. The root of the problem referred to here is not the government or politicians, but society itself. Therefore, Prince Ea believes that to solve this problem, one must start from the smallest unit, namely the community. By joining hands and setting goals on one thing, new societies can then work together to repair the damage caused by humans. Prince Ea wish that other people will realize about this and start doing something for life.

Thanking

Datum 78

“Thanks to manmade climate change, 100 innocent species go extinct every day.”
(Will This Be Humanity's Fate)

In the video entitled “Dear Future Generations: Sorry”, Prince Ea uses expressive speech act of thanking to try to express his thoughts. By saying “Thanks to manmade climate change,” Prince Ea sarcastically thanked humans for causing climate change, hence many species are becoming extinct every day.

The analysis of the overall eighty-four utterances containing expressive speech acts

revealed the following distribution: 15 instances of apologizing, 7 of condoling, 21 of lamenting, 19 of showing attitude, 4 of agreeing, 2 of using exclamation, 15 of wishing, and 1 of thanking. It can be concluded that lamenting is the most dominant type of expressive speech act in the analyzed videos.

CONCLUSION

When engaging with content that includes educational elements such as seminars, debates, and speeches, it is essential to understand the speaker's intention and purpose as well as the way the speakers deliver their message. There are many ways a speaker can choose to achieve his or her objectives that a researcher can observe semantically or pragmatically. One of which is from speech act lens. Expressive speech act in this study in particular is relevant in the context of motivational speech videos that engages more with the audience. The result shows that the speaker effectively delivers the content and achieves the communication goal of influencing the audience through this speech act.

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