

# SPEECH FUNCTION USED BY DONALD TRUMPS IN HIS SPEECHES ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

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## Abstrak

Penelitian ini terutama ditujukan untuk menganalisis fungsi-fungsi wicara yang terdapat pada pidato Donald Trump tentang virus corona dan juga konteks pidatonya. Belakangan ini ada beberapa fenomena yang berpotensi menimbulkan kepanikan massal, salah satunya adalah virus corona. Oleh karena itu, pidato pemimpin di masing-masing negara menjadi penting, guna menciptakan situasi yang kondusif dan mengatasi kepanikan massa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui fungsi tuturan yang digunakan oleh Donald Trump dalam pidatonya tentang virus corona dan mendeskripsikan konteks fungsi tuturan yang digunakan oleh Donald Trump dalam pidatonya tentang virus corona. Peneliti menggunakan teori Holmes untuk menganalisis fungsi bicara dan teori Hymes untuk mendeskripsikan konteks fungsi bicara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hanya ada tujuh dari delapan jenis fungsi bicara yang dikategorikan oleh Holmes yang ditemukan dalam pidato Trump tentang virus corona. Mereka adalah fungsi bahasa ekspresif, direktif, referensial, metalinguistik, phatic, puitis dan komisif. Kemudian, detail konteks situasi dalam pidato Trump dipaparkan oleh peneliti dalam penelitian ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Analisis Wacana, Fungsi Pidato, Konteks, Donald Trump.

## Abstract

*This research was mainly intended to analyze speech functions found in Donald Trump speeches about coronavirus and also the context of the speeches. Recently there are a few of phenomena which potentially create a mass panic, and the biggest one is coronavirus. Therefore, the speech from the leader in each country is important, in order to create a conducive situation and handle the mass panic. The objectives of the research are to find speech functions are used by Donald Trump in his speeches about coronavirus and to describe the context of speech functions that used by Donald Trump in his speeches about coronavirus. The researcher uses Holmes's theory to analyze speech functions and Hymes' theory to describe the context of the speech functions. The result of this research shows there are only seven from eight types of speech functions categorized by Holmes that found in Trump's speeches about coronavirus. They are expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, phatic, poetic and commissive functions of language. Then, the details of the context of situations in Trump's speeches are presented by the researcher in this study.*

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis, Speech function, Context, Donald Trump.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human as social beings need communicate to each other. People use language as medium to communicate. Buck and Arthur in (Usman, 2013) divided language into two, spoken language or direct communication and written language or indirect communication. The representation of that direct and indirect Communication can be seen from an activity called public speaking.

Based on Ruth Parsons and S.J. Henderson (2003: 1), Public speaking is a skill that is used throughout our lives, in simple word, public speaking is speaking in front of public. It sounds simple, but it is very important and it has a lot of use. It is use for teaching and learning activities, promoting something, presenting the show or entertainment, and many more. Thus, the main purpose in public speaking is influence the public, especially when speaking in the form of speech.

Anwar in (Priatmoko, 2013) stated that Speech is a public speaking activity that is in form of formal talk performed by a leader to share his opinion, or give an overview about a thing or event that is important and should be delivered. Speech has many functions, one of them is to create a conducive situation. It can create mass panic or in other hand it can handle the mass panic.

Recently there are a few of phenomena which potentially create a mass panic, and the biggest one is coronavirus. Coronavirus or COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. First case of COVID-19 was on December 2019, but it became pandemic on 2020. The dead probability caused by this virus is not that high, it is only about 3%. However, what makes this virus so scary is how fast it infect people. It only needs a few months to attack almost all of the countries in this world. More than two hundred countries have confirmed that has COVID-19 cases and more than forty-hundred people died (who.int).

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Therefore, the speech from the leader in each country is important, in order to create a conducive situation and handle the mass panic.

COVID-19 also attack America, even though America is one of the biggest countries. Moreover, the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world is in America. Based on (Who.int) until May 2020 There are more than one million cases in America and It killed thousands of people. It affects many sectors, and a lot of industries in America are closed temporarily. Donald Trump as the president of America do a several speeches in order to handle the mass panic.

Donald Trump is known as controversial president. Sometimes his speech is controversial, but the matters that he always sounds right. His speech is one of his weapons to make American people trust him and make a conducive situation. He shows his power and emotion in it. By using speech functions, Trump tries to convey what is he intend to do, what he wants, and what he expects from the American people.

According to Halliday in (Tahta, 2015), a functional approach to language means, investigating how language is used; try to find out what the purpose that language serves, and how people are able to achieve these purposes through speaking and listening, reading and writing. Thus, the speech functions lead the hearers to achieve the purpose of someone's speech, in this case to handle the mass panic. However, the use of language that serves the function is influenced by many factors. People use the utterances in a different language and different context. The meanings of the speaker utterances are depended on the interpretation of the hearer and the situation. The situation here means the context of the utterances that make acceptable by the hearer. Hymes in (Tahta, 2015), stated that the role of context in interpretation as, on the one hand, limiting the range of possible interpretations and, on the other, as supporting the intended

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interpretation.

By all of these, this research analyzes trump's speeches about coronavirus in order to find the function of language which is made by Donald Trump in his speeches to handle the mass panic based on theory by Holmes (2013) along with the examination of context by the proposed framework of Hymes (1974).

## 2. METHOD

In general, this research conducted in descriptive-qualitative research. The data analysis is presented through interpretation and the description of detail information about the kinds of speech functions by Donald Trump in his speeches about coronavirus and the context of the speeches.

The source of data of this research was the textual transcript of Trump's speeches from nytimes.com. The researcher used the whole text to explore the speech function that is used by Donald Trump. The speeches that the writer use is the speech by Donald Trump in his speeches about coronavirus. Since March until May 2020, there are three important speeches by Trumps about coronavirus.

The first speech is the Speech on Coronavirus Pandemic. It is delivered at the moment the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that Coronavirus became pandemic on March 11, 2020. Before that, many people were quite skeptical and thought that the virus is unreal (Pollino, 2020).

This speech itself seemed to be an effort of President Donald Trump to ensure people that America was capable to handle this pandemic and there was no need to panic. As the first speech addressing the coronavirus, this speech showed that America admitted the pandemic status of the virus.

The second speech is Donald Trump's coronavirus emergency declaration, on 13 March 2020. It was when panic buying

has become a serious issue to the extent of doing real damage towards the society (Alstedter and Hong, 2020). The national emergency declaration resulted in the closure of practically a lot of sectors. The speech itself was aimed at calming people down and ensure people that proper measurements are conducted to keep everything under control. This speech marked the point in which America experienced a national emergency.

The third speech is Trump's speech about vaccine development for coronavirus, on 15 May 2020. At that moment, the America has the highest case number of Coronavirus in the world. According to WHO (2020), there are more than one million people confirmed positive in America. Furthermore, one in every four deaths caused by coronavirus in the world has occurred in America (fox23.com). By informing on the vaccine development, President Trump attempted to decrease the panic caused by the high number of infected people in America.

After getting and collecting the data from the data source, the researcher analyzed the data by following the steps below: 1. The utterances of Trump are categorized based on the types of speech function by Holmes. 2. The types of speech functions are counted to find out the speech function that mostly and rarely used by Donald Trump. 3. The context also analyzed based on Hymes's SPEAKING model.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher has found many utterances contained the speech function used by Donald Trump as the president. Therefore, the researcher takes some of the data finding analysis to be displayed in this section. By firstly, the researcher put on the type of speech function found in Trump's utterance on the following table:

Table 1. The frequencies and percentages of Speech functions in Donald Trump in His

Coronavirus Emergency Declaration

No	Type of Speech functions	Speech			Total Frequency	Percentage (%)
		A	B	C		
1	Expressive	6	6	5	17	14%
2	Directive	7	4	0	11	9%
3	Referential	10	13	18	41	33%
4	Metalinguistic	0	1	2	3	2%
5	Poetic	5	7	5	17	14%
6	Phatic	2	2	4	8	6%
7	Heuristic	0	0	0	0	0%
8	Commisive	11	11	5	27	22%
<b>Total</b>					<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*A= Speech on Coronavirus Pandemic, 11 March 2020

B= Trump’s Declaration of Coronavirus Emergency, 13 March 2020

C= Speech on Vaccine Development for Coronavirus, 15 May 2020

Based on the table above, the percentages of speech functions show 33% refers to referential functions. In the second with totally around 22% data is commisive function. Expressive functions and Poetic functions with total 14% are regarded as the third rank. Directive functions are found around 9% data. Phatic is about 6% and Metalinguistic functions are found in only 2% data. The next one is Heuristic function with totally 0% data. Therefore, looking at the results, it can be concluded that the overall maximum of all speech functions in The Trump’s Declaration deals with referential functions with totally 33%, while the overall minimum refers to heuristic functions with totally 0% data. After the data are gathered in the table, the researcher analyzes the data by presents the description of speech function’s type. After the data are gathered in the table and researched by the speech function, the researcher analyzes the data by explanation of the context of situation as follows:

**1. Speech on Coronavirus Pandemic, 11 March 2020**

The target of the speech are all of the American people. The speech is in the

white house especially in the oval office, at the night. The purpose of the speech is president Donald Trump responded to the coronavirus outbreak. On the same date, World Health Organization officially announced that coronavirus became a pandemic and became a threat for a whole world. The cases increase thirteen times on march. Donald Trump as the president of America made a response. He makes a speech in order to handle the mass panic. When he delivers this speech, he tends to use denotative words, it is because he does not want to make a bias and make the speech understandable. In this speech, Trump is serious, he uses a flat tone, but this is the key. He uses flat tone and flat expression to show that America is not panic and America can handle this situation. This speech is formal online speech and it is broadcasted on many media. American people can watch it live on the Tv, Youtube, and official website. Therefore, there is no interruption, eye contact, and question from the audience or participant.

**2. Trump’s Declaration of Coronavirus Emergency, 13 March**

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This speech uses the combination between offline and online speech. Donald Trump as the president made a speech directly in the white house especially in the rose garden, at the morning. This speech is only attended by the official, a few governments, and journalist. Thus, the interaction from the audience is minor. However, this speech also broadcasted on many media such as, Tv, Youtube, and official website. The target of the speech are all of the American people. The purpose of the speech is president Donald Trump declared national emergency over coronavirus. The number of positive test is more than two thousand people in the America. Donald Trump had to declare the national emergency in order to “unleash the full power” of America. By using speech, he tries to reduce the panic. He uses flat tone and flat expression with a minor gesture to show that everything is under control. He delivers the declaration calmly. Further, Trump tends to use denotative words, it means that if he says something, he really means it and it is not a sarcasm. He wants this declaration is understandable and there is no misconception about it.

### 3. Speech on Vaccine Development for Coronavirus, 15 May 2020

The hearer of the speech are all of the American people, this speech is combination between offline and online speech. Trump made a speech directly in the white house especially in the rose garden, at the afternoon. However, due to keep the social distancing, this speech is not open for public, but this speech is broadcasted to all of the American people. That is why the interaction from the audience is minor. The purpose of the speech is Donald Trump as the president of America want to tell the American people about the coronavirus vaccine

development. He says that America will find the coronavirus vaccine as soon as possible in order to handle the mass panic in America. It is an important speech because there are more than one million people confirmed positive in America at this point. Thus, Donald Trump as the president of America made this speech. He delivers this formal speech calmly and uses flat tone and flat expression. Besides it is his character in speech, he wants to make the hearer believe in him that everything going to be okay.

### 4. CONCLUSION

This research is about the speech function used by Donald Trump in his speeches about coronavirus and its context. In this research, the researcher limits the data source by only focused on three important speeches about coronavirus by Donald Trump. The researcher wants to investigate the context and type of speech functions used by Donald Trump in his speech since the language provides several functions, which in each function can help people easily express their feelings, wishes and thoughts to each other. Furthermore, the researcher wants to explore the context of situation behind the speeches.

Based on the result of data findings, the researcher concluded there are only seven from eight types of speech function categorized by Holmes (2013) found in Trump’s utterance in his three important speeches about coronavirus. They are expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, phatic, poetic and commissive functions of language. Furthermore, the researcher found that the function of language mostly used by Trump in his speeches is referential functions with total in 33%. Commissive function is considered as the second most frequently used in his utterances, the total is 22%. Expressive functions and Poetic

functions with total 14% are regarded as the third rank. Directive functions are used in around 9%. Phatic is about 6% and Metalinguistic functions are used in only 2% of his utterances. In this research, the researcher did not find any heuristic function occurs in Trump's utterance. Therefore, looking at the results, it can be concluded that the overall maximum of all speech functions in The Trump's Declaration deals with referential functions with totally 33%, while the overall minimum refers to heuristic functions with totally 0% data.

The researcher also found the context of situation of Trump's speeches based on Hymes' theory. It is in line with Hymes's SPEAKING model in (Tahta,2015), which is abbreviation for setting, participants, ends, act sequences, key, instrumentalities, norms and genre. The most minor elements in those three speeches is norms. Norms is the interaction from the hearer, whereas Trump speeches about coronavirus was not open speech, it was broadcasted through media. Thus, the hearer or American people could not interact directly. Then, the purpose from all of those speeches are same, to handle the mass panic. Furthermore, the details of the context of situations in Trump's speeches are presented by the researcher in this study

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