

**THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND PERFORMATIVE SPEECH
THAT PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA USED IN HIS DIALOGUE
WITH CHRIS WALLACE ON ECONOMIC ISSUES IN AMERICA**

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ABSTRACT

Talking to someone will produce speech such as giving information or reporting on the right thing and speech as a form of action such as promise, order, and request. This means we often produce two forms of speech that is constructive and performative in everyday communication. We use constructive in particular to say or describe something that is right or wrong and uses performative to perform actions beyond words. Speech delivered by a state official usually contains an interesting aspect both from the aspect of speech or sentence structure. In this study researchers used descriptive qualitative methods using the theory of Austin on the theory of speech acts. The results of constructive and performative of Obama's speech were based on the context, it is clear that speakers take action through their utterances. The speaker not only said something but also he did something by expressing his gratitude and accepting Wallace's arrival to the White House. By saying this utterance, the speaker did not state or described the actual facts but he wanted to act with his words. These utterances were regarded as performative speech. Whereas Obama used constructive to say the right things about reality, stating the real situation in the world and describing something about whether it is right or wrong.

Key words: Constructive, Performative, Speech, Economic.

I. INTRODUCTION

We realize that, when we speak to someone, we produce speech such as providing information or reporting on the right thing and speech as a form of action such as promise, order, and request. This means that, we often produce two forms of speech that is constructive and performative in everyday communication. We use constructive in particular to say or describe something that is right or wrong and uses performative to perform actions beyond words.

Unfortunately, not all speakers or listeners have sufficient knowledge and understand the form of these utterances. Some people may not understand well what form of speech they produce or hear, whether speakers describe something or act in words, as a consequence is that they can not interpret and understand the meaning of the desired utterance well. For example: when President Obama says "I will to do my best of my ability ...," some listeners may interpret that the speaker is describing or expressing the fact of

his desire to do the best he can, but the speaker is actually doing the action promising to do the best suited to his ability. Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing the two forms of speech that is constructive and performative utterances expressed by Austin.

Based on the description above, the researcher considers that constructive and performative action is very important to be studied. In this study, Obama's dialogue as an object of research for several reasons. *Firstly*, Obama's speech or conversation now becomes an attractive and widely recognized around the world. *Second*, Obama's dialogue has a linguistic uniqueness. Ireland states that Obama's language is very good and the rhythm in English sounds good because he uses metaphorical words, easy to understand and uses decorative words, for example Obama's speech "Let it be told to the future world that in the depth of winter, when nothing but

hope and virtue can survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet it ". *Third*, utterances and sentences in Obama's dialogue show the use of constructive and performative speech.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Austin's Speech Act Theoretical

Shiffrin states that Austin developed the theory of speech acts based on the belief that language is used for action. While Brown and Yule states that the act of speech is a form of action performed by a speaker in the utterance of a sentence. He also said that when people produce speech, they do action through speech. As well as Austin in Shiffrin said that the theory of speech acts focus on meaning, usage, and action. So it can be said that the act of speech is a science that learns about the meaning desired by the speaker when he uses the language and take action.

Shiffrin also said that Austin

in his early thought on speech acts, he began his theory by distinguishing the form of speech expression performative from constructive speech. Thus, constructive and performative are part of the theory of speech acts. He identifies the constructive declaring something right or wrong, while the performative does not describe something at all and does not say anything is right or wrong. Austin in Coulthard concluded that the fact that all speech is performative. Then Austin said that "to say something may be to do something".

2.2 Constructive Speech

Austin states that constructive speech comes from the Latin (constate 'to be manifest; to be an established fact'). The term constructive is a statement or utterance that describes the fact or states the state of whether it is right or wrong. In other words, constructive is the utterance used to describe or state something whether it is right or wrong.

In addition, Austin also says

that constrictive is a speech class that states facts, utterances that say something is right or wrong. Includes reports, statements, images, demands, predictions etc.

Devitt and Hanley provide examples of constructive expressions:

- a. Affirmation (declaring something formally true and confident). Example: Tom told his friend to assert about the economic condition of America "it is a fact that American economy is so bad".
- b. Allegations (accusing someone). Example: James says "You are thief." James meets an unknown person at night in his house, he thinks it's a thief. Then he said this utterance to state the accusation to the listener.
- c. Announcement (announcing something). For example: a staff member said "The train will leave at 13.00 o'clock" Answers (answer questions). For example: Crish asks the brother (Ik) who is walking with a girl "who is she?"

And then she answers "she is my friend".

- d. Approval (express approval). For example: Wawan told his friend "How about going to Mall after dinner?" And then his friend replied "Ok. It is a good idea".
- e. Disclaimer (denying something). Example: John says "your opinion is wrong" in the context of the debate.

2.3 Performative Speech

According to Bach and Harnish, performative refers to speech in a performative utterance in a particular situation or a person performing an action. A performative comment is a section performing a certain type of action; not just "say" something, but more than do the action. According to Beck, performative has two different types: performative that does not say something right or wrong, and someone who performs performative speech to do something rather than say something. As well as performative speech is not right or wrong: in this

case, when something is not right then they are "happy or unhappy", felicity or infelicity ".Allan states that constructive utterances have true or false characteristics whereas distinct performative is not correct nor wrong: having their respective roles used to perform actions. He also said that the strong limits on performative speech are first, the subject of the sentence should be me or us. This he advises you to study hard is not a performance speech because it uses the subject "he". Second, the verb must be present tense. And the most important is the submissive must be known to have the authority to declare and must be in accordance with the situation, for example: "I open this meeting by reading Basmalah". It is said to be legitimate when one says the right person and has the authority to preach. While Kreidler also said that the condition of felicity in speech performative said happy when speakers have the authority, timing matches, places and circumstances at the time of speech. While the concept of speech

performative has more general applications, for example when it says "I promise," "I warn", someone actually do the promise and warning.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Design research appropriate in this study is qualitative descriptive based on the purpose and form data. It is called descriptive because it describes the constructive and performative utterances used in the Obama dialogue descriptively and is designed to get a detailed description of how constructive and performative are used in Obama's dialogue using Austin's theory. While called qualitative research because the data are not analyzed statistically.

IV. DISCUSSION

Dialogue between Obama and Chris Wallace took place on Tuesday afternoon, February 3, 2009 at the White House. They talked for about 15 minutes. On that occasion, Wallace and President Obama discussed about Tom Daschel because President Obama is

fully responsible for what he called the mistake of nominating a cabinet officer with huge tax issues. Then they also discussed about the economic stimulus package in America (Edwards, 2009) .

The data to be analyzed using constructive and performative actions is shown in the following discussion.

Data 1

At the beginning of the interview, Wallace thanked President Obama for the time to be interviewed about the economic stimulus package in America. Later, Obama thanked Wallace for coming to the White House.

WALLACE : "Mr. President, thanks for talking with us."

OBAMA : "Thank you so much for being here."(1)

"Thank you so much for being here" is spoken by President Obama in the opening interview to respond to Wallace's earlier expression of gratitude. This means that President Obama expressed his gratitude to

Wallace for coming to the White House to interview him about Tom Daschel and the economic stimulus package.

Having understood the utterances and what the speakers mean by their utterances. Let's discuss the form of speech applied in this utterance, whether it is constructive or performative speech. Based on the context, it is clear that speakers take action through their utterances. Here, the speaker not only says something but also he does something by expressing his gratitude and accepting Wallace's arrival to the White House. By saying this utterance, the speaker does not state or describe the actual facts but he wants to act with his words. Thus, the purpose of this utterance can be regarded as performative speech.

Data 2

Wallace asked President Obama whether the economic stimulus package will work or not in America. Then President Obama

answered it. Unfortunately, Wallace interrupted his conversation. However, President Obama asked to hold his talks temporarily.

WALLACE:

"...will it work? You are taking hits right now from all sides: right and left. Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs calls it a, quote, "astounding mish-mash of tax cuts, public investments, transfer payments, and special treats for insiders. Why not just pull it back, forget about the February 16 deadline, and get it right?"

OBAMA:

"Well, I think, actually, that we are closer to getting it right than all these critics, partly because all these critics..."

WALLACE: "Have..."

(CROSSTALK)

OBAMA:

"Hold on-hold on a second, Chris. You want met answer your questions, right?" (2)

Based on the intent and purpose of the above utterances, utterances can be identified as performative utterances. In this case, the speaker does not state something like information but he

does certain actions through his words. By saying "Hold on - hold on a second, Chris", the speaker passes the course of course telling the listener to hold back the conversation and to listen to the speaker's answer. In addition, he also performs such actions as asking a question to the listener whether he wants answers or not. In this context, the speaker emphasizes the action by saying "You want me to answer your questions, right?". Thus, it is called performative speech.

Data 3

President Obama asked Wallace to detain his talks while interrupting his conversation. Wallace then held for a few minutes. Then President Obama went on to answer the package's work in America.

WALLACE :

"Yes. Yes, sir."

OBAMA:

"..There is no magic bullet to these situations. Here's what this package does. It provides payments, like unemployment insurance, to people who've lost

their jobs and are in desperate need of help. And every economist says that that's a smart thing to do, because that gets the money out right away."(3)

The above remarks are expressed by Obama to continue to answer Wallace's questions about the economic stimulus package in America. Here, the speaker asserts that the economic stimulus package provides payment, insurance to unemployment. Besides, he also asserted that every economist says better to help them.

This remark indicates that the speaker expresses or describes reality and he does not emphasize action with words. Here, the speaker just wants to answer the question by describing the real evidence about the economic stimulus package benefits, the speaker also wants the listener to believe that the answer is correct. This means that speakers use constructive utterances to answer the question.

The purpose and context of this utterance will be very helpful to

prove that this utterance is a constructive utterance. First, the purpose of this utterance indicates the revelation used to express the true fact based on fact. Second, the context shows that speakers say this utterance answers the question and confirms something, does not do something beyond its words. Here, the speaker emphasizes the truth of his speech rather than his actions. This explanation proves clearly that this utterance emphasizes the statement, so called constructive speech.

Data 4

Wallace asked to President Obama about *the firm of February 16 dead line after President Obama explains the economic stimulus package.*

WALLACE :

"Is the February 16 dead line firm?"

OBAMA:

"Yes, because no body disagrees with the idea that, if we keep on putting this off, that we're going to end up seeing more months with half a million people losing their jobs each month. We can't

afford to wait.”(4)

The above statement is President Obama's answer to the firm of 16 deadlines (the 16-month timeline for a withdrawal from Iraq). He said that it is firm because everyone agrees with this idea. In addition, he also mentioned if American putt the 16 deadline off, they will see half a million people lose their jobs each month.

The above is categorized as a constructive utterance because speakers make answers and predict statements by declaring circumstances or facts in the world.

Data 5

Wallace asked President Obama to give an argument or an assessment of whether the tax credit for people who buy a home or business is good or bad. Then President Obama gave the argument about tax credits for people who bought a home or business and made an implicit promise to see the tax credit in the future.

WALLACE :

“You reportedly told Senate Democratic leaders, when you met with them yesterday, that you want some changes in the bill. Solet's do what we can, sir – I used to do this with you as a candidate, but I'm going to ask you as president –do a lightning round of quick questions and answers a bout specific changes. Tax credits for people who buy homes or business? Good or bad?”

OBAMA:

“I think it has some potential, and I'm willing to take a look at it.”(5)

The above utterances are categorized as performative utterances because by saying the utterance "I think it has some potential, and I'm willing to take a look at it" the speaker takes action like giving an argument and making an appointment. Here the speaker emphasizes action through his speech.

Data6

Wallace asked President Obama about 'buy American' for steel and iron in a bill. Then, he also asked about "allies perception that it

is considered too protectionist". President Obama replied that he agreed with them. He said that they could not send the news of the protectionists and he said that it was wrong if Americans paid attention only to him when world trade declined.

WALLACE :

"Strip out the "buy American" provision for steel and iron in the bill, which a number of our allies are saying is too protectionist?"

OBAMA:

"I agree that we can't send a protectionist message. (6) I want to see what kind of language we can—we can work on this issue. I think it would be a mistake, though, at a time when world wide trade is declining, for us to start sending a message that somehow we're just looking after our selves and not concerned with world trade."

Utterance "*I'm a greet that we can't send a protectionist message*" is categorized as a performative utterance because the speaker not

only says that he agrees but he tries to do something like answer, give approval, and support the perception of his "protectionist message to emphasize his agreement"

V. CONCLUSION

- 1) This analysis states the use of performative and constructive utterances used in President Obama's dialogue which took place on 13 February 2009.
- 2) Obama uses constructive to say the right things about reality, stating the real situation in the world and describing something about whether it is right or wrong.
- 3) Obama also emphasizes the value of truth and expresses trust with the same intentions as the listener. Verbs used such as, promise, thank, request, rejection, and approval.

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