

## A PRAGMATIC STUDY ON *MEME COMICS*

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### **Abstract**

*This research is a pragmatic study which discusses speech acts in Meme Comics. The source of data is facebook of Meme Comics. This research applied the descriptive method. The kinds of speech acts in Meme Comics are classified into representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Expressives speech acts is the most frequently found. Then, the least speech acts which are found are commissives speech acts. Furthermore, the functions of representative speech acts contain of the act of asserting and concluding. Meanwhile, there are some functions in directives such as to order and to request. In commissives, there are some functions which are found such as to promise and to offer. The functions in expressives are to express anger, shock, dissapointment, amazement, suspicion, and insinuation. Next, there are some functions in declaratives such as to confirm and to declare. The most frequently functions of speech acts are the act of asserting and the least functions of speech act are the act of expressing suspicion, amazement, and confirmation. The kinds of speech acts are used to express the satire and sarcasm about everyday life in Meme Comics.*

**Keyword:** Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Meme Comics

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The improvement of information technology makes people easier to get any informations from all around the world. Nowadays, comics are also available on the internet. It makes the author easier to publish comics worldwide. *Meme Comics* are one of the kinds of comic which exist on the internet. The comics are available in many languages. This study discusses *Meme Comics* in English. Furthermore, the topics in *Meme Comics* are things in everyday life which are expressed in sarcastic way.

The previous research about *Meme Comics* is conducted by Afrian (2016) in a research entitled *The Use of Meme Comics as Media to Teach Spoof Text*. The finding shows that *Meme Comics* are efficient to use in teaching about spoof text as the comics give a significant difference point of view of the students. Other research about *Meme Comics* by Astika Bangun (2017) shows that *Meme Comics* have eight functions of expressive illocutionary act and it can be used as reading material for writing creativity. This reseach aims at identifying the kinds of speech acts in *Meme Comics* since the previous research did not discuss about this matter. By

discussing speech acts, we know the strategies used by authors to deliver the message in *Meme Comics*

This research uses some theories to analyze the problems. One of the theories is speech acts which is used to analyze the kinds of speech acts in *Meme Comics*. Speech acts are verbal actions happening in the world (Searle, 2011:95). It means that every utterance makes both of speakers and listeners do things which are concerned with the utterances Searle in Mey classified basic action in speech act into five. The five speech acts categories that Searle ends up establishing are representatives (assertives), directives, commissives, expressives, declarations (2011:119-120). According to Searle (2011), representatives described that assertion about a state affairs in the world and thus carry values 'true' or 'false. Directive speech acts embody an effort on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something. Commissives means creating an obligation. It is the action of the speakers to commit an activity or being volunteer to some future action. Expressives acts express inner state of the speaker. Declarations indicated that declarative brings about some alternation in status or condition of the referred to object or objects solely by virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed. It is aimed to state the status or the condition of the listener someone to be a specific role in the world.

The theory of speech acts are used to analyze the kind of speech acts found in the conversations of *Meme Comics*. Furthermore, the theory is also used to classify the more specific acts in each kind of speech act.

The interaction of both listener and speaker is influenced by the context or situation. Mey (2001:39) clarified that context is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible. Here, context plays a very crucial role in the communication process to determine the function of speech acts. The contextual analysis is used to describe the function of speech act in *Meme Comics*.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The method which is applied in this research is descriptive method. It is used to reveal the kinds of speech acts and the functions of speech acts in the conversation of *Meme Comics*.

The population in this study is comic containing of speech acts which is used in conversations of *Meme Comics*. The source of data is the facebooks of *Meme Comics* which are available in <http://m.facebook.com/YourMemeComics> and <http://www.facebook.com/memecomik/timeline>. The data of this research are less than 100 in number so that the whole population becomes sample in the analysis. In other words, all of the data are analyzed one by one. Consequently, total sampling is used.

This research uses observation method in collecting the data. It is accompanied by a technique by downloading the comics from the website, finding the conversations which contain speech acts; classifying the data based on the kinds of speech acts.

To analyze the kinds and the functions of speech acts in *Meme Comics*, pragmatic equivalent method is used. Djadjasudarma stated that pragmatic equivalent method is a method

that relates language with its external aspects, such counterpart, context, etcetra (1993:58). In this case, the function of speech acts in *Meme Comics* are analyzed based on the context.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result and discussion are the most important part of this study to present the finding of the research. The theory of speech acts is applied to classified the kinds of speech acts and the functions of speech acts which is appeared in the conversation of *Meme Comics*.

#### A. The Kinds of Speech Acts in *Meme Comics*

The kinds of speech acts are influenced by the circumstances in the comics, such as context, the gender of the speakers, who they are in the conversation, and what they are discussing. The kinds of speech acts which are analyzed in the research are: representatives (assertives), directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

##### 1) Representatives

The utterances are aimed to clarify statements of fact, or to assert, to conclude, and to describe. The datum numbered (17/RE/3) describes the problem of the fat people. They try to deny that chocolate does not make them fat.



The speaker believes that chocolate is not one of the problems of the fat people. It seems that cocoa is good for him to consume as it is vegetable. The statement *Trees! So that makes chocolate a vegetable* contains the information which makes the comic is included into representatives.

##### 2) Directives

Directives can be a command, request, and beg uttered from speaker to listener. The conversation which contains directive speech act could be seen in datum numbered (36/DI/6).



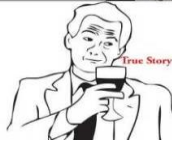
A boy is watching television when suddenly his sister appears. Then, he utters *GET OFF* because he feels uncomfortable with his sister. Yet, the sister does not understand what the brother wants. Then, he answers angrily to his sister *NO, THE TELEVISION*. In fact, he just wants to enjoy the television without his sister.

### 3) Commissives

Vows, pledges, guarantees, or any other kind of commitment are included into this kind of action. The person who makes the commitments will do an action for the listener in the future. Datum numbered (15/CO/3) shows how a girl shows her commitment.



*Le me: "Do you love me Derpina?"*  
*le gf: "Of course I do Derp!"*  
*Le me: "Would you go to the end of the earth with me?"*  
*Le gf: "I would go anywhere with you Derp!"*  
*Le me: "Would you do anything for me?"*  
*Le gf: "Derp! You know I would! I would even die for you that's how much I love you!"*  
*e me: "So making me a sandwich isn't too much trouble then."*  
*Le gf: "Derp! You know I would! I would even die for you that's how much I love you!"*  
 (15/CO/3)



The girl's utterance *Derp! You know I would! I would even die for you that's how much I love you!* indicates that she is really serious about her commitment. After knowing the girl's commitment, the boy orders her to make a sandwich. In conclusion, his questions are only to give an order to the girl.

### 4) Expressives

People express their feeling through utterances and their face expressions. The expression is controlled by the inner state of humanity. The datum numbered (21/EX/4) shows an adult who is shocked when he plays with his cousin.



*Me, with little cousin*  
*Little cousin: "The car, it bumped you!"*  
*Me: "Aww. I mean, Quick! Take me to the hospital!"*  
*Little cousin: "No, you're not insured."*  
*Me: "What?!"*  
 (21/EX/4)

The cousin plays her toys and acts that she crushes the guy. Then, the guy pretends to be the victim and asks the cousin to take him to the hospital. Suddenly, the little girl says that the guy does not have an insurance. It makes the guy shocked and expresses his feeling by uttering *what?!*.

### 5) Declaratives

Declaratives are to state the status or condition of the listener. The first is in datum numbered (33/DE/5) which describes a boy who visits his father in prison because his father will be executed.



*In le prison, dad will be executed.*

*Le sad dad: "Son, I have a last wish. Don't sell the land next to our houses."*

*Le sad son: "B..but..why dad?"*

*Le sad Dad: "It belongs to our neighbour, you idiot!"*

(33/DE/5)

The father says his last wishes not to sell the land as it belongs to their neighbour. Consequently, they do not have the authority to do that. Unfortunately, the son does not know about it and asks to his father. The father's utterance *It belongs to our neighbour, you idiot* classifies into a declaration speech act.

## B. The Functions of Speech Act in the Conversation of Meme Comics

In this part, the comics are classified into the function of speech acts. There are some functions which appear in *Meme Comics* based on the category of speech acts.

### 1) The Functions of Representatives

Speakers believe that their opinion based on the fact. In other words, this opinion is spoken regardless the truth lying in the story of the comic. The representatives may function to assert and to conclude.

#### a. Asserting

To assert means when someone utters an information, the speaker wants to emphasize that the information is important for the listener. The datum numbered (4/RE/1) shows a husband and wife who enjoy their quality time together.

*\*wife teaching English to husband*



*Wife: "I'm beautiful. I'm slim. My face is cute...I'm hot. Which tense is this?"*

*Husband: "Past Tense...!!!"*

(4/RE/1)



In this comic, the wife is expected that the husband is still considering her as a beautiful, slim, and hot woman. However, the man does not give the expected answer to his wife. Nevertheless, the wife utterance contains the information which is happen in the past.

**b. Concluding**

To conclude means someone has his point a view of a thing and tries to explain his own opinion by reasoning. It is shown in datum numbered (12/RE/2).



*\*le mom*  
 “Derp, stop playing those games!! They’ll make you violent!!!!”  
*\*le me*  
 “IF PLAYING THIS MADE ME VIOLENT PLAYING TETRIS WOULD MAKE ME AN ARCHITECT.”  
 (12/RE/2)

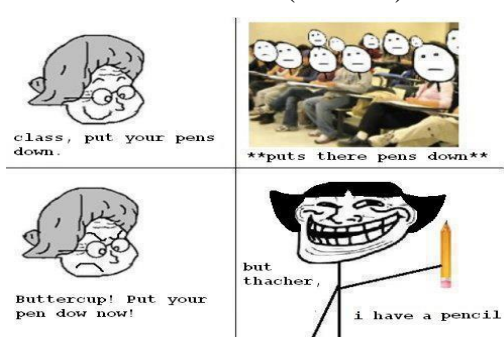
The mother tries to stop her son to play a game. She is afraid that her son will imitate the kind of attitude in real life which is consider as brutality. Yet, the son has his own perception and he makes a conclusion by saying *IF PLAYING THIS MADE ME VIOLENT, PLAYING TETRIS WOULD MAKE ME AN ARCHITECT*. In other words, the son utterances is classified into concluding speech act.

**2) The Functions of Directives**

The data in this research will be discussed and will be classified as to order and to request.

**a. Ordering**

Ordering is to give an authority to the listener to do a thing which the speaker needs. The datum numbered (50/DI/8) shows a condition in a class.



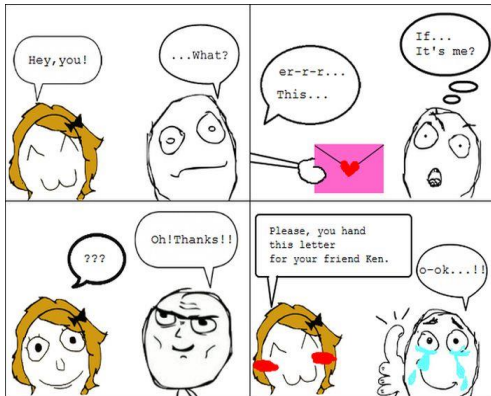
*Teacher: “Class, put your pens down.”*  
*\*\*puts their pens down\*\**  
*Teacher: “Buttercup! Put your pens down now!”*  
*Buttercup: “but teacher, I have a pencil.”(50/DI/8)*

The teacher knows that Buttercup does not put down her tool, so she insists her to put down the pen. The teacher utters *Buttercup! Put your pens down now* to indicate that Buttercup should

obey the order of the teacher. The ordering is the utterance of the teacher *class, put your pens down.*

**b. Requesting**

Request shows how someone asks something in polite and formal way. The datum numbered (54/DI/10) describes that a girl need some help.



*Girl: "Hey you!"*  
*Boy: ("er..r..rrr.....this....?")*  
*Girl: "???"*  
*Boy: "Oh, thanks!!"*  
*Girl: "Please, you hand this letter for your friend Ken.."*  
*Boy: "o..ok...!!"*  
 (54/DI/10)

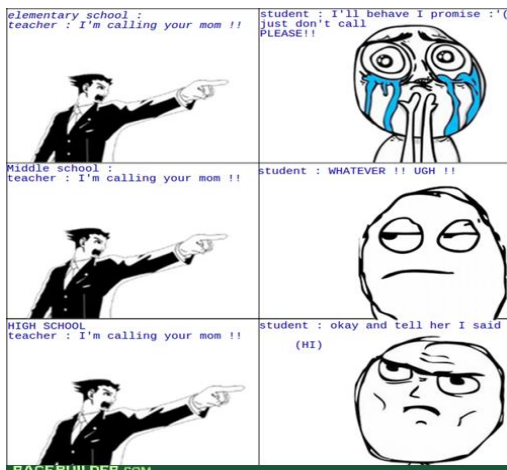
In this comic, the girl writes a letter because she will express her feeling to the boy that she likes. The girl's utterance "*Please, you hand this letter for your friend Ken*" indicates the request of the girl.

**3) The Functions of Commissives**

Commissive is one kind of speech act which requires commitments. It means the speaker commits to do an action for the listener. The functions of commissives found in the data of *Meme Comics* are to promise and to offer.

**a. Promising**

To promise means someone has a commitment to do something to the listener. In *Meme Comics*, datum numbered (42/CO/7) is a condition when student is given a punishment.



**\*elementary school**  
*Teacher: "I'm calling your mom!!"*  
*Student: "I'll behave I promise :( just dont call. PLEASE!"*

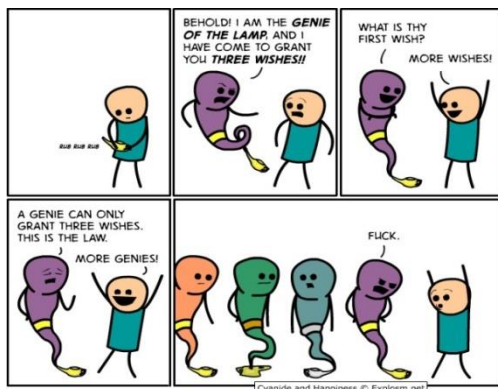
**\*Middle school**  
*Teacher: "I'm calling your mom!!"*  
*Student: "WHATEVER!! UGH!!"*

**\*HIGH SCHOOL**  
*Teacher: "I'm calling your mom!!"*  
*Student: "Okay and tell her I said (HI)."(42/CO/7)*

The comic shows how a student reacted when they did mistake at school. The teacher tried to call his mother in order to report what he had done and to give some advices. The reactions of a student in elementary school is different from the student of high school. The student of elementary school seems so scare if the teacher calls his mother to school. Therefore, he promises to behave and not to do the mistake again. Therefore, the comic contains a promise which is made by the student of elementary school.

**b. Offering**

Offering is the act of proposing an action or being volunteer for someone who needs assist. The speaker may offer himself because he is willing to help the listener. Other example of offering is datum numbered (51/CO/9). It shows a boy who finds out a magic lamp which has a Genie inside.



*Blup lup blup*

*Genie: "Behold! I am the genie of the lamp and I have come to grant you three wishes! What is thy first wish?"*

*Boy: "More wishes!"*

*Genie: "A genie can only grant three wishes. This is the law."*

*Boy: "More Genies!"*

*Genie: "Fuck."*

(51/CO/9)

The genie gives the boy three wishes as a payback to release him. Infact, the boy wants more wishes so he can get anything he wants. Then, the boy tries other wish that is more genies. In conclusion, the genie's offer is the commitments of the genie to the boy for releasing him from the lamp.

**4) The Functions of Expressives**

An expression is controled by the inner state of human. In this case, people express their feelings to other in order to show the reaction from the utterances. The functions of expressives which are found in the comics are to express the feeling of anger, shock, dissapointment, amazement, suspicion, and insinuation.

**a. Anger**

Anger appears when the listener is insulted and humiliated. A person would be angry whenever someone tells such an untrue condition.



*Girl: "Hey baby, I bought you a new shirt!"*

*Boy: "You know I hate Black!"*

*Black: "U hate wut?"*

*Boy: "FFFFFFF UUUUUUUUUU."*

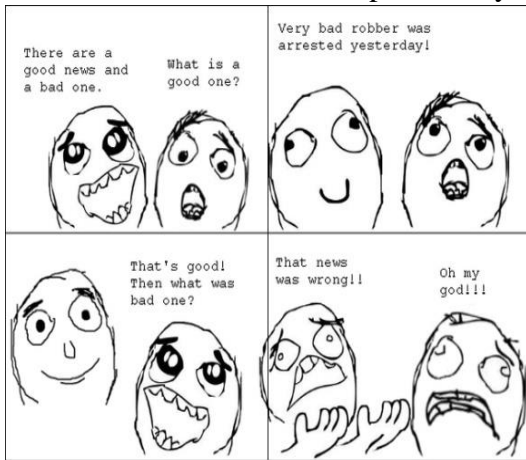
(44/EX/7)



The boy is offered a black t-shirt which he does not like. Then, he utters *I hate black* and his utterance is heard by Negro. Then, the negro misunderstand his sentence. The negro utterance *u hate wut* indicates that they angry being humiliated.

**b. Shock**

It is a feeling when someone is so surprised by something bad that happens unexpectedly. The datum numbered (34/EX/6) shows two boys who discuss about some news. There are two news which is spreaded by the first speaker.



First boy: "There are a good news and bad one."  
 Second boy: "What is a good one?"  
 First boy: "Very bad robber was arrested yesterday!"  
 Second boy: "That's good! Then what was bad one?"  
 First Boy: "Thats news was wrong!!"  
 Second boy: "Oh my God."  
 (34/EX/6)

The second speaker is curious enough and wants to know the news immediately. First, the good news is about a bad robber who were arrested the day before. Unfortunately, the news that the first speaker said is wrong. It means that the news is a hoax. The second boy utterance *Oh my God* indicates that he is shocked to know the bad news.

**c. Disappointment**

It is such a kind of bad feeling when anyone does not get the things he wants. Comic which shows about disappointment is in datum numbered (30/EX/5) which shows a conversation between two students in the classroom who have a sudden exam.

**(Le teacher announces pop quiz)**



**(CHALLENGE ACCEPTED)**  
**(Le both copying off each other)**  
 A: "Hey, what did you get for numbers 2 and 3?"  
 B: "B and D. What did you put for 5?"  
 A: "I put B."  
**(Le quiz finished)**  
**(CHALLENGE ACCEPTED)**  
**(THE NEXT DAY le get quizzes back)**  
 A: "Lol. I got an A+. You?"  
 B: "DAFUQ?? BUT WE COPIED OFF EACH OTHER!!"  
 (30/EX/5)

They share their answer to each other during the test. In the next day, the result is out and they get their paper with different score. Then, B utters *Dafuq but we have copied off each other* to indicate that he should get the same score as A. In conclusion, B's utterance indicates a feeling of dissatisfaction.

**d. Amazement**

The datum numbered (14/EX/3) describes that someone feel amazed with what happen in the eyes of fly.



*You wondered why you cannot catch a midge?  
 MOTHER OF GOD!  
 (14/EX/3)*

The guy wonders why the fly can not be caught and he tries to find the reason. Unfortunately, he has wrong perception which makes him think there is no scientific definition for that. He thinks that the fly has a superpower eye and it makes him utter *Mother of God*. His utterance indicates that he feel amazed.

**e. Suspicion**

Suspicious is a feeling when someone feels something does not right or strange. The datum (56/EX/10) shows how someone is suspicious with a thing he gets from his friend.



*When a girl shares food with you:  
 Girl: "Here you go!"  
 Boy: "Thanks!"  
 When a guy shares food with you:  
 First boy: "Her. You can have it."  
 Second boy: "What the fuck did you do?"  
 (56/EX/10)*

Boys give things to other with a purpose to trick their friend. In this comic, the receiver has a negative thought when he gets food from the other boy. He is suspicious with the food as he sees his friend's expression. Then, he utters *what the fuck did you do* to indicate that he is suspicious that there is something wrong with the food.

**f. Insinuation**

It is an utterance which make the listener feels offended by the speaker. The speaker mock the listener indirectly in order to make the listener annoyed. The datum numbered

(38/EX/6) is a conversation between a boy and a girl. The boy tries to prove whether the girl is materialistic or not.



Man: "I love you."  
 Woman: "Hahahahaha...!!"  
 Man: "I cannot live without you!"  
 Woman: "Hahahahaha...!!"  
 Man: "I am ready to do for You!"  
 Girl: "Hahahahaha...!!"  
 Man: "I will gift you a 24-carat gold ring!!"  
 Girl: "Really?"  
 Man: "Hahahahaha...!!"  
 (38/EX/6)

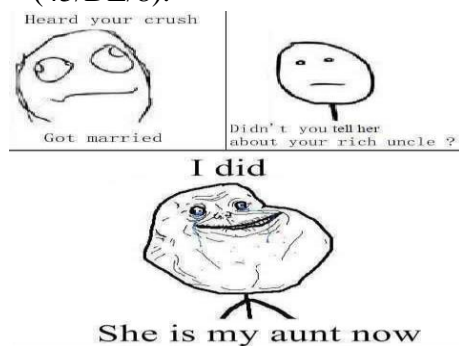
The boy says that he is falling in love with the girl in order to start the conversation. The girl underestimates the boy by laughing at him. Next, the boy tries to insult her promising to give a 24-carat gold ring. Finally, the boy laughs to insinuate the girl. Therefore he knows that the girl is materialistic.

### 5) The Functions of Declarations

Declaration means a statement which change the status or condition of the object.. There are some declarations which are found in the comics such as confirming and declaring.

#### a. Confirming

To confirm means the speaker states and agrees the statements which is given to him. The listener admits the news he heard is true. The example is in the datum numbered (45/DE/8).

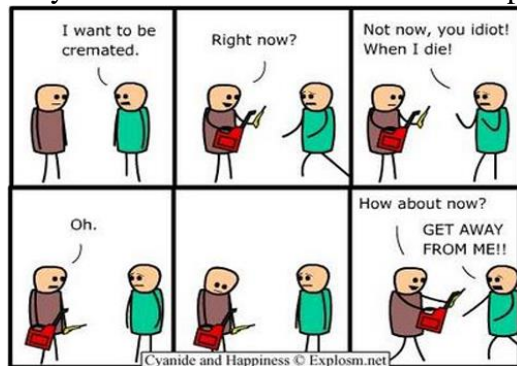


First man: "Heard your crush."  
 "Got married."  
 "Didn't you tell her about your rich uncle?"  
 Second man: "I did."  
 "She is my aunt now."  
 (45/DE/8)

The first boy knows about a marriage news of the second boy's ex-girlfriend. The first boy asks whether the second boy tells her about his rich uncle. Evidently, the second boy has already told her and she got married with his uncle. The second boy says *I did!* to confirm that he had already told his ex-girlfriend about his rich uncle. Unfortunately, she decided to marry his uncle instead of marrying him.

## b. Declaring

The speaker declares something in order to emphasize that something is changed. It may a condition of his life or his possession. The second datum of declaring is datum



numbered (9/DE/2). It is a guy who wants to be cremated when he dies.

A: "I want to be cremated."

B: "Right now?"

A: "Not now, you idiot! When I die!"

B: "Oh."

How about now?"

A: "GET AWAY FROM ME."

(9/DE/2)

The guy with turquoise shirt wants to be cremated. It is a tradition of burning the corpses when the person dies. His friend thinks that he wants to be cremated at that time. The sentence *I want to be cremated* indicates the declaration of the speaker.

The finding of this research shows that *Meme Comics* use speech acts to describe the author sarcastic opinion. Expressives speech act is the most frequently found to show the sarcastic opinion through expressive words. Then, the least kinds of speech acts are declarations speech acts. Declarations speech acts are too formal to show a satire or sarcasm. Therefore, the speech act which are classified into declarations are less found.

## 4. CONCLUSION

There are many topics of pragmatics that could be drawn from *Meme Comics*. This research discusses *Meme Comics* in the point of view of pragmatics based on the theory of speech acts. The results reveal strategies of author in using speech acts to express satire in sarcastic way. Implicature in *Meme Comics* could be an interesting topic to discuss for further research. The result of the research on *Meme Comics* describes the current fact of the use of language in digital comic which enrich the knowledge of everyday practice.

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