

The Analysis of Booster Expression in Complaining Speech Act

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Abstract— Complaint speech act is part of expressive speech acts. However, these potentially threaten the face of the hearer. The speaker will use boosters expression in complaining strategy to express their emotion. Boosters expression as a linguistic marker is not only appeared in real life communication but also literary works. The issues are cultural differences and each language may have an effect of using it. Thus it raises a question of how booster expression used in complaining speech acts as a strategy to communicate between speaker and hearer in the novel. This paper aims to explore boosters expression in complaining speech acts used by the characters in the novel *The A.B.C Murders* written by Agatha Christie (1936). Data were the utterance made by the characters in the novel *The A.B.C Murder*. Data were taken by document analysis in classifying boosters expression in complaining speech acts. The results show that 1) there are fifteen characters used boosters expression in employing complaint speech acts, 2) Boosters' expression form used by the characters in employing complaint speech acts are adjunct, comment adjunct, intrinsic booster, and fixed expression.

Keywords—*booster; expression; complaint speech acts; strategy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Complaint speech acts may appear in real life interaction between speaker and hearer. These are the illocutionary act where the speakers demonstrate their disapproval or negative feelings toward to hearer in a proposition to receive the hearer responsibility, both direct or indirect (Trosborg, 1995, pp. 311-312). In addition, Searle & Vanderveken (1985, p. 127) argue that the speaker articulates this expression on account of they do not satisfied with the condition represented by the propositional content by their utterance.

The condition who is represented by the speaker to hearer may be employing booster expression in his utterances, on account of these expression representing the emotion of their user in making a statement (Hyland, 1998). Boosters expression is a common expression that has a function as a linguistic marker (Holmes, 1982; Hyland, 1999) to indicate that the speaker has a strong proposition toward the hearer. In addition, Holmes (1982) and Meyer (1997) view the term of the booster as lexical items employing which the writer can show how strong his confidence for a claim. We might have heard our speaker express something such as " Definitely, we are the leader of this nation." The underlined word of adverb is known as a booster expression. It is often

used if the speaker realizes that he is very confident in the information he is conveying toward his hearer. Moreover, its expression used to express both interpersonal and ideational (or conceptual) information (Halliday, 2014) and used as a communication strategy (Hyland, 1998).

Furthermore, Novel is a literary work which there is a communication strategy made by the Speaker toward the Hearers. Boosters expression in complaining speech acts also appear in literary work, e.g., a novel, and the speaker uses it as communication strategies to add weight in expressing what the speaker feels of utterance (Aijmer, 1997). However, the issues of cultural differences and languages of each speaker may affect the forms of using it (Ivanić 1998; Jalilifar & Alavi-Nia, 2012; Dontcheva Navratilova, 2013). Thus it leads us to a question of how expression-booster used in complaining speech acts by the characters in the novel.

Many researchers have not studied studies of boosters expressions in speech acts context. Previous study related to booster expression is still limited to cross-cultural variation in the use of hedges and boosters in academic discourse (Dontcheva Navratilova, 2013; Salichah, Irawati, & Basthomi, 2015; Demir, 2017; Farnia & Mohammadi, 2018), promotional brochure (Ilham, Bulkani, & Darlan, 2018), research article (Sanjaya, 2013; Takimoto, 2015; Hryniuk, 2018; Aull, 2019) critical discourse analysis of in election debates of presidential candidates (Elhambakhsh & Masoome, 2015), patterns of metadiscourse (Kondowe, 2014; Hyland & Jiang, 2018), English newspaper editorial (Zarza, 2018; Al-Ghoweri & Al Kayed, 2019; Ahmad, Mahmood, Mahmood, & Siddique, 2019), gender (Shrivastava, 2016; Shakirova & Safina, 2019), and translation studies (Herriman, 2014; Martikainen, 2018; Ilham, Nababan, Kristina, & Wiratno, 2018). However, those studies focused on the use of boosters in academic discourse, direct communication, newspaper articles, gender, and do not yet discuss booster expression employed in speech act at literary works.

Moreover, Hyland (2005) states that the use of metadiscourse marker (boosters) differs with the variation in culture, communities, and genre. For instance, cursing someone by using booster expression, e.g., "You are such **bloody** idiot." It differs in Indonesia which uses, e.g. *bodoh* or *tolol*. For instance, in the novel "*The A.B.C Murder*," Hercule Poirot as the main character of its novel indicate an expression that contains booster in complaining speech act "**Truly** disgusting..it makes one despair of human nature". He mentioned "Truly" as the marker of certainty that has a function to boost his complaining to the hearer. Thus it may create a finding of how boosters expression used by the speakers (characters in the novel) towards to hearers.

This paper aims at exploring boosters expression in employing complaint speech acts used by the characters in the novel *The A.B.C Murder* written by Agatha Christie (1936). The paper has two research questions, they are: 1) how the frequency lists of characters who used complaint speech act in the novel *The A.B.C Murder*, and 2) what form of boosters' expression in complaint speech acts used by the characters in the novel *The A.B.C Murder*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Expressive Act & Complaint Speech Act

Expressive speech acts are the speech act which allows the speaker to articulate their psychological attitude, i.e. apologizing, blaming, pardoning, congratulating, praising, condoling, and thanking (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985; Djatmika, 2016). Gilbert (1999, p. 5) regards these act as the emotional message which used the actual demonstration of emotional content itself. For instance, that I really love you, I am so angry, and others. They are stated as the utterance, which expresses the speakers' psychological state (Yule, 1996). Thus it makes of the hearer being understood what the speaker' feels. However, it is not only directive speech acts which have high face-threatening act (FTA), expressive speech act also having it.

Complain speech act is a speech act where the speakers can express their negative feeling to the hearer. Moreover, Trosborg (1995:311) states "*the acts of complaints belong to the category of expressive functions. It includes moral judgments which express the speaker's approval as well as disapproval of the behaviour mentioned in the judgment.*". It means that this speech act is reflected in the conflict situation that happened. Boxer (1993) argues that there are two categories of complaint speech act, they are (1) direct complaints, and (2) indirect complaints. The indirect complaint may often be addressed to (1) self, (2) particular situation, and (3) others people and its function as negative feelings.

As mentioned, Trosborg (1995:311) speech acts potentially threat the hearer's face, such as blaming, accusing, swearing. The selection of booster expressions in speech acts is also affected by the context of the situation (power/P, distance/D, distance/D (see. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Grundy, 2000). For instance, the weights of the face-threatening act (FTA) between Speaker and Hearer is increase when the D/distance higher the speaker than the hearer, and vice versa (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 74-76).

In the study of Boxer (1993, p. 103) mentioned that social distance influences complaint behaviour of utterance. Moreover, these speech acts have a diverse impact on employ depend on the context of the situation. Trosborg proposes that at least four categories of complaints, they are (1) no explicit reproach, (2) expression of disapproval, (3) accusations, and (4) blame, and its eight strategies, they are (1) hints, (2) Annoyance, (3) ill consequences, (4) indirect, (5) direct, (6) modified blame, (7) explicit blame (behavior), and (8) explicit blame (person) (Trosborg, 1995, p. 315). Further, Eslami and Rasekh (2004, p. 180) state complaint is verbal, entirely intentional and indicates "something bad happened" to the speaker. In this paper, complaint speech acts employed in analysing boosters expression by the speakers of characters in the novel are classified based on the theory

Hyland (1998). The classification is adjunct, comment adjunct, intrinsic booster, and fixed expression. This category has a form of elaboration (Hyland, personal communication, May 27, 2019) from Hyland's booster taxonomy (Hyland, 1998, 2004).

B. Booster Expression

Boosters expression are sub-categories of metadiscourse marker by Hyland's (2005) taxonomy. They are the expression used by the speaker to increase the force of his argument (Elhambakhsh & Masoome, 2015). In addition, Elhambakhsh & Masoome (2015, p. 32) states they indicate both the speakers' confidence in the truth of proposition toward the hearer, e.g. clearly, obviously, and of course. They have let speakers expressing conviction and assert a proposition with a high degree of confidence (Hyland, 1998). Thus it appears are often from speech acts. Moreover, Vassileva (2001, pp. 88-90) states that boosters expression are used to increase the degree of commitment, assertiveness, honesty, and confidence.

There are some models in analysing booster expression proposed by experts. Jalilifar & Alavi-Nia (2012, pp. 139-140) classify them into (1) propositional boosters which include intensifiers and personal involvement as pronouns, (2) illocutionary force boosters which include boosting epistemic commitment marker, (3) content oriented boosters emphatic, and (4) hearer oriented boosters expression which aims at seeking solidarity. Then, Hyland (1998) classified them into three types; they are (1) universal pronoun, (2) Amplifiers, and (3) Emphatic. However, Hyland (2004) modified the category of them types into four categories; they are (1) tentative verb and modal, (2) tentative adjective and adverb, (3) solidarity features, and (4) self-mention reference.

Moreover, Hyland (1998) argues that boosters expression allow the writer to negotiate the status of their information, helping to establish its perceived truth by strategically presenting it as consensually given. It indicates that boosters expression are essential ways of making scientific statements in social contexts. Thus they refer to the textual strategies of using a linguistic marker that means in a particular speech acts.

III. METHOD

This was qualitative research. Source of data was the novel *The A.B.C Murder* written by Agatha Christie (1936). Data were the utterances of complaint speech acts which have boosters expression made by characters in the novel *The A.B.C Murder*. The data of utterances were collected from main and participant characters in the novel. Data were taken by document analysis in classifying booster expression (Hyland, 1998) in complaining speech acts based on Trosborg strategies (1995:315). Data were analyzed by domain, taxonomy, and componential analysis (Spradley, 1980; Santosa, 2017).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the felicity condition of complaint speech act, there are limited characters that produce its utterance. There are fifteen (15) characters who produce the utterances containing boosters expression of complaint speech acts. The frequency of occurrence is relatively medium (43 data) because there are not many utterances that meet the criteria, e.g. another speech acts. Furthermore, the following explanation shows the result of the result.

A. Characters Used Boosters' Expression in Complaint Speech Acts in *The A.B.C Murder* Novel

This research focuses on the utterances made by the characters in the novel of *The ABC Murder*. After conducting document analysis, it was found there are only fifteen (15) characters that produced complaint speech acts containing boosters expression. Based on the analysis number of boosters expression in complaint speech acts found in the novel performed by the characters are shown in Table I.

TABLE I. FREQUENCY OF BOOSTERS EXPRESSION IN COMPLAINT SPEECH ACTS BY THE CHARACTER

Booster Expression		Complaint Speech Acts Strategies (1995, p. 315)							
Speaker	Freq	No Explicit Reproach	Expression of Disapproval		Accusation		Blame		
		Hints	Annoyance	Ill consequences	Indirect	Direct	Modified	Explicit Behavior	Explicit Person
HP	11	1	3	-	-	1	1	4	1
AH	5	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	1
ABC	5	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	1
MC	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
LC	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
MsB	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
MG	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

IC	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
MeB	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
MM	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
MD	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
RED	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
FA	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
PA	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
DF	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	43	1	13	4	2	3	1	9	10

Table I show that there are only fifteen (15) characters produced complaint speech acts, they are Hercule Poirot (HP), Arthur Hastings (AH), Franz Ascher (FA), Marry Drower (MD), Police Agent (PA), Miss Merrion (MM), Mrs. Barnard (MsB), Megan Barnard (MeB), Donald Fraser (DF), Inspektur Chrome (IC), Mr. Clarke (MC), Miss Grey (MG), , Lady Clarke (LC), Alexander Bonaparte Cust (ABC), and Roger Emmanuel Downes (RED). In addition, there are eight strategies of complaint acts employed by the characters in the novel, such as hints, annoyance, ill consequences, indirect accusation, direct accusation, modified blame, explicit blame (behavior/action), and explicit blame (person).

According to the Table I, based on the context of the situation (P/D/R) Hercule Poirot (HP) produced a great deal of the utterance complaint speech acts that containing booster expression in the novel. There are eleventh (11) the utterances employed by Hercule Poirot (HP) as the main character.

The utterances of booster expression in complaint speech act performed by HP are given to his colleague, Inspector Japp (IJ) from Scotland Yard. Speech act strategies used towards to IJ by HP is explicitly blaming to person. He expresses what he is feeling about the murderer who sent him a threatening letter regarding murder as shown in example 1.

Example 1/HP-IJ

HP : "I have **indeed** been foolish to take the matter **so** seriously." (13)

Data above show that HP used explicit blaming strategy to person by using booster expression marker "indeed" and "so" to self-blame. This strategy indicates that the speaker used indirect complaints addressed to himself (Boxer, 1993a, pp. 30-31). Moreover, HP puts the subject "I" as a pronoun in the sentence. It demonstrates this expression as blaming himself.

The second Example shows a direct accusation speech act strategy produced by AH to his partner, HP. They discussed whom the murderer that has initial of A.B.C, and AH guesses the murderer is Riddell.

Example 2/AH-HP

AH : "That **great** hulking brute, Riddell, perhaps," I admitted." (45)

This complaint act that told to AH is a direct accusation strategy. It is used by the speaker to look for the man accused. He tried to accused Riddell as a murder. It was due to the utterances who made Mr Albert Ridell was quite rude and lacked a cooperative attitude for the police and the main characters in the novel to find clues in finding the killer who named himself, A.B.C Murder (Christie, 1936, p.41). He uses **great** as booster marker expression to emphasise that Riddell has a big giant man (Christie, 1936, p.41). However, there is a hedges marker "...perhaps..." of this argument of AH (Holmes, 1982; Hyland, 1998, 2005). He puts two markers of this direct accusation, hedging and boosting expression marker.

The third Example shows an expression of annoyance or disapproval strategy produced by Alexander Bonaparte Cust (ABC) is given to Hercule Poirot (HP) about his suffering.

Example 3/ABC-HP

ABC: "My head I suffer **very** badly with my head . . . The headaches are something cruel sometimes. Moreover, then there are times when I don't know—when I don't know—" (183)

ABC confessed that he felt did not know that he had committed as a murder. ABC expressed his disappointment at his suffering. He was a veteran in a war. Now, he is a travelling salesman who sells stockings. However, he was an epileptic man. It possibly caused fought in the war, and sometimes he got a headache. The context of the situation of this speech act at police headquarters when HP interrogated ABC. He used "very" as the marker of boosting the expression of his annoyance. In addition, the expression is also followed by a statement of his suffering. Related to their Power, ABC has a lower position than his hearer,

HP. It possibly caused by HP as a famous detective, and ABC is an ordinary civilian. In that expression, ABC tried to share his problem with HP (Boxer, 1993a).

The last Example shows the expression made by Hercule Poirot (HP); it is a Hint strategy. He is the only one who produced the expression (see Table. 1), and it is given to Arthur Hastings (AH). He discusses the murders that occur and try to discover the clues.

Example 4/AH-HP

HP: "No, Hastings. It is not worse. It is only more difficult."

This hint strategy was given to HP is a hint strategy. It is a strategy that the speaker never show his complaint used hint strategy by using "worse" and "more" as a booster expression marker. The speaker did not mention about the murderer and what he does. He used this strategy on account of he refuses an argument from his hearer (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1985, 1993; Trosborg, 1995:316). He only mentions about killer behaviour by using hint strategy. This is a weak strategy of complaint acts. However, this may be a success to use to prepare a strong strategy (Trosborg, 1995).

Based on a few examples above, the characters tend to show the relationship in giving complaint strategies. It functions to mitigate face face-threatening act on account of complaints represented by conflict functions. However, Mostly, the utterances and findings of complaint act strategies given by the speaker are using an indirect complaint (Trosborg, 1995, pp. 311-312). Complaints acts are not only has a function to express his blaming or complaining and ask for their responsibility towards to hearer, but it can a report from the speaker towards the hearer. In Indonesia, we called it "*curhat* or *curahan hati*."

The next question is what boosters' expression used in complaint speech act? The next finding reflects how the form of booster expression employed in complaint act strategies.

B. The Form of Boosters' Expression in Complaint Speech Act Used in The A.B.C Murder Novel

The result of boosters' expression form in complaint speech act used by the characters in the novel of The A.B.C Murder can be shown in table II.

TABLE II. FREQUENCY OF BOOSTERS EXPRESSION FORM IN COMPLAINT SPEECH ACTS USED BY THE CHARACTER

Complaint speech Act		The Form of Booster Expression			
Speaker	Freq	Adjunct	Comment Adjunct	Intrinsic Booster	Fixed Expression
HP	11	9	2	-	-
AH	5	5	-	-	-
ABC	5	5	-	-	-
MC	3	1	1	-	1
LC	3	2	1	-	-
MsB	3	3	-	-	-
MG	2	2	-	-	-
IC	2	2	-	-	-
MeB	2	1	-	1	-
MM	2	2	-	-	-
MD	1	1	-	-	-
RED	1	1	-	-	-
FA	1	-	-	-	1
PA	1	1	-	-	-
DF	1	-	-	-	1
Total	43	35	4	1	3

The number of Adjuncts is higher than other boosters expression form. Meanwhile, the number of Intrinsic boosters is lower than other form used in the complaint speech act. It indicates that the speaker tends to add adjunct to boosters expression in the complaint act.

The example below was the utterance of the explicit blaming (behaviour) made by Hercule Poirot (HP) to Arthur Hastings (AH).

Example 5/Adj/HP-AH

HP : "It is **utterly** senseless." (14)

This strategy told by HP to AH to blame another character (IJ) by using indirect complaint. HP is blaming his colleague who likes bullying someone (IJ's Attitude). The explicit blaming strategy by using booster expression marked by adjunct "utterly" to powerfully its complaint act. Adjunct used to modify "senseless" as an adjective word.

The sixth example was the utterance of modified blam made by Hercule Poirot (HP) to Arthur Hastings (AH).

Example 6/C.Adj/HP-AH

HP : "**In truth I** sympathize with you, but what will you? It is a question of murder, is it not?

One has to be very, very careful." (39)

Modified blam strategy used by the character of HP to complain AH by using direct complaint. He complains to him about the eyewitnesses, Mr Riddell, who quite rude and lacked a cooperative attitude. HP feels afraid if AH gets angry on him. The strategy employs booster expression marked by comment adjunct "In truth" to boost his complaining. The function of comment adjunct is to modify the clause of the expression above as a proposition about the evaluation of his AH's attitude (Halliday, 2014). He reminds AH to more careful in interrogating eyewitnesses.

The seventh example was the utterance of Megan Bernard (MeB) to Hercule Poirot (HP)

Example 7/IB/MeB-HP

MeB : "She drew a deep breath. "Oh! Betty—Betty—**How**—how ghastly!." (65)

The utterance above expressed by MeB to HP. It is complaining speech act of annoyance. These acts demonstrate by someone who feels disappointed by something worse for himself. The context of the situation about the utterance above is in Barnard's house. HP investigates eyewitnesses in that house, one of them is Megan Barnard, and then she heard the explanation by HP about the death tragedy of her young sister. Thus she feels it is not fair and feels depressed.

In the seventh example above, the form of booster expression in annoyance strategy act is an intrinsic booster marked by "how" expression. An intrinsic booster is a single lexical form, and it does not modify anything, and it depends on the context and the situation. "how" expression emphasise MeB feeling about to feel disappointed in her young sister death.

The eighth example was the utterance of Franz Ascher (FA) to Inspector Glen (IG)

Example 8/FE/MeB-IG

FA : "I did not kill her! I did not kill her! It is all lies! You are **goddamned** English pigs—all against me. I never kill her—never." (21)

The strategy above told by FA to IG is blaming explicit (person). The context of the situation above is the police suspected FA. On account of he often threatens and asked for money in his wife's shop (Mrs. Ascher). The indication of using this strategy is that the speaker often used sworn words or threats speech act. He used direct speech strategy towards his hearer (Boxer, 1993). It is clear that he directly told to the hearer by using the pronoun "you" and "goddamn" as a threatening word. The use of "goddamn" is a booster expression marker for his complaining act. It is a fixed expression of a marker, which is a clause and cannot be divided or separated between booster expressions and their meanings. As a power (P) relation, distance (D) and Rank of Imposition (R), FA does not give respect to his hearer, although his hearer has a power than him. Their social distance is also very far away. It proves in the use of the pronoun "You" by the speaker toward to hearer, even though the hearer has a higher power.

V. CONCLUSION

This study is still limited to complaints speech act. Thus, there are still many gaps that will be lifted in subsequent studies that will focus on booster expression. It's expression influences to increase the strength of the speakers' proposition to the hearer. As a result, not all of the characters use the direct complaint to the hearer. It is based on power (P), distance (D) and Rank of Imposition (R) between the speaker and the hearer. As stated of Trosborg (1995:311), complaint speech act potentially threatens the hearer's face. Based on this research, Hercule Poirot (HP) produced a great deal of the utterance complaint speech acts that containing booster expression in the novel. However, the utterance produced by HP is often a great deal of annoyance and blaming of behaviour. It can be concluded the selection of booster expression in complaint speech act strategies depends on the relation between the speaker and the hearer.

Moreover, adjunct more used of the characters in the novel as a modifier in the complaint speech act. It indicates that the speaker used this form to emphasize adjective and verb words in what they express assertion to the hearer.

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