Downgraders as Directive Speech Act's Internal Modifications in the Official Talkshow of Covid-19 in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This research which used qualitative method aims to describe the types of directive speech acts that use downgraders as internal modifications and classify the illocutionary directive speech acts in the Covid-19 talk show, as well as, classify the types of downgraders used. This research is interesting to do because the official covid-19 talk show, especially, at the beginning of the pandemic, contains many directives from the government to prevent the spread of covid-19 more widely. However, on the other hand, the use of directive speech acts which can have a strong effect of damaging the face, rarely used in direct speech, so that speakers can save their face and their positive image can be maintained. Therefore, it is very interesting to know what downgraders are used to reduce the face damage in directive utterances. Using the speech act theory of Trosborg (1995) and Blum-kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) to analyze 25 contexts of conversation themes, it was found that there are six functions of directive speech acts that use internal modification of downgraders, such as request, direct, prohibit, suggest, command, and urge. Then, 19 variations of the downgraders markers were found. From the research findings, it can be said that the use of downgraders is important in directive speech acts, especially this can be used to maintain a positive image of the speakers and protect the face of the speech partners, so that communication can be well established.

KEYWORDS: Internal Modification, Directive Speech Act, Downgraders, Covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

The year of 2020 was the beginning of the emergence of covid-19, which had changed many things in the joints of life. Many social activities were stopped, and many people had to stay at home and were not allowed to go out. The existence of these changes, of course, could not be easily accepted by the community, given that many social activities require physical activity outside the home, such as phsycal work, trade, school, etc. This, then, triggered many violations in the community. Many people were ignoring the government's orders to stay indoors; making the pandemic even more difficult to control. Worse, in early 2020, the vaccine had not been found, so many victims had fallen to death. Therefore, the government formed a team to convey information, suggestions, and prohibitions to the public to participate in reminding the public about the importance of maintaining health protocols. Then, to facilitate information to the public throughout Indonesia, a talk show was formed that aired on national television, namely the Covid-19 Talkshow.

This COVID-19 talkshow presents many speakers who are experts in their fields, especially the medical field. From this, there are interesting things, namely language research in the health sphere is still quite rarely done. In speech act research, many were done by taking contexts, such as social, political, and cultural contexts. Some examples of speech act research on talk shows are Sagita and Setiawan (2019) and Fajarini (2017); whose research focus are on talk shows related to the social, economic, and political contexts. As an addition, other studies such as Mualimin (2018); Fitria (2019); Siritman and Meilantina (2020), discuss speech acts in many variations of discourse such as films, series, poetry, literary works, public meetings, and teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Meanwhile, the focus of speech act research is also only on the classification of speech acts which focuses on the form and function of speech acts. It is certainly very interesting to study speech act research, especially, on the internal modifications that occur in speech acts. Some examples of research related to the internal modification research are Wahyuni (2010), Halupka-Resetar (2014), and Kusumawati (2020) that discuss cross-cultural internal modification, such as English and Japanese. In addition, the discussion carried out is still relatively general and has not discussed the internal modification markers. What's even more interesting is that this research is also different from previous studies because this research is not cross-language, so studies in one language can focus more on; moreover, a speech act research realated to internal modiffication in Indonesia is still not yet done by many.

Research on downgraders, especially in directive speech acts is very interesting; considering that directive speech acts have an illocutionary force that easily damages the face of the speech partner, so the use of downgraders certainly has an

important role, one of which is to maintain a well established communication between the speaker and the speech partner. Based on the background of the study, there are two research questions to be discussed, namely what are the types of directive speech acts that use internal modifications of downgraders and what types and markers of downgraders are used in the reserach data.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review on Internal Modification of Downgraders

Downgraders can be used to soften the illocutionary force of speech acts for example as directive orders or requests and assertive speech acts of disagreement. Here are the types of downgraders in English on Trosborg (1995) and Blum-Kulka, House, and Kaper (1989).

There are lexical or phrasal type of downgraders which are as follows.

1. Politeness Markers: please, etc.

2. Consutative devices: do you mind?, etc.

3. Hedging: a bit of, sort of, etc.

4. Hesitatos: oh, er, uh, uhm, etc.

5. Interpersonal markers: you know, right?, etc.

As those are downgraders in English, the markers of downgraders in different language can be diffferent. It can happen since people in diffferent countries can have their own culture so they can face or handle a particular situation in a diffferent way.

B. Review on Face Strategies

It can be said that the approach of the face concept which is part of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is a theory that is still very influential today. The concept of face from Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasizes that every individual has two faces (desire) namely positive and negative. Positive face is an individual's desire to be recognized socially. Face which refers to the self-description of a person who wants to do, have, and the values that exist in him which he believes are recognized by others as something good and worthy of respect. This positive face is related to the value of solidarity, a sense of wanting to be appreciated, and a sense of being recognized. Meanwhile, negative face is the desire not to be disturbed. It can be said that negative face refers to a person's self-image who wishes to be appreciated by freely taking action without getting a barrier from his interlocutor. Negative face stems from a person's desire to remain independent and get respect for his independence. The difference that can be seen from the sense of wanting to be appreciated on a positive and negative face is that a positive face has a desire to get appreciation for the opinions or results of thoughts or actions from the speaker, while in a negative face, the feeling of wanting to be appreciated is the desire for freedom to do an action that is not restricted and one can appreciate the wish.

III. METHOD

This research is a type of descriptive qualitative research that describes and explains the phenomena exist in the data. The data was taken from the video recordings of the official talkshow of the Covid-19's team from March to July 2020. The data was taken from the youtube channel of one of the television stations in Indonesia, namely Metro Tv. Metro Tv has a good reputation as the nation tv that broadcasts news daily. In addition, the recorded data on the youtube channel is complete and easy to access compared to the other channels. Then, data analysis was carried out by context analysis using the theory of Trosborg (1995) and Blum-kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) as the references. Furthermore, the findings and data analysis are drawn into a conclusion.

IV. DISCUSSION

The following is a description and the analysis of the calssification of the directive speech act and the downgraders used in the directive speech acts of the data.

Table 1. The Classification of Directive Speech Acts Using Downgraders

Types of Speech Act	Speech Act's Ilocutionary	Total	Percentage	*Downgrader's Markers*
Directive	Request	140	72%	Mungkin, belum, barangkali, maaf, Pak, Bu, Dok, Mas, ya...kan?, seharusnya, sebaiknya, ya...ya?, bisa...?, boleh...?, silahkan, ayo, mari
	Direct	1	0,5%	Silahkan, bisa...?, maaf,
	Prohibit	1	0,5%	Ah, mungkin
	Suggest	1	0,5%	Eh, seharusnya, sebaiknya
	Command	20	10%	Silahkan, mungkin, belum, menurut saya, saya kira, mari, ayo, eh, ah
	Urge	31	16%	Mungkin, bisa...?, ya...ya?, silahkan,

			sebaiknya, saya kira, kira-kira, Pak, Bu, eh
Total	**194**	**100%**	**19 Variations of Markers**

In table 1, there are 6 ilocutionaries of the directive speech act which are request (72%), urge (16%), command (10%), direct (0,5%), prohibit (0,5%), and suggest (0,5%). Then, there are 19 variations of the downgrader markers, such as mungkin (perhaps), belum (haven't/not yet), barangkali (perhaps), maaf (sorry), seharusnya (should), sebaiknya (should), ah, eh, tag questions (ya...ya?, ya...kan?), bisa...? (could...?), boleh...? (could?), silahkan (please), ayo (let's), mari (let's), menurut saya (I think...), saya kira (I think...), kira-kira (more or less), Pak (sir), Bu (ma'am), Dok (doc/doctor), and Mas (bro); Pak, Bu, Dok, Mas are pronouns. As for the explanation of the findings is as follows.

a. **Directive Speech Act Request**

Ari: "**Mungkin** boleh diceritakan oleh Pak Anas, ya, Pak Anas, sudah lama kita tidak bertemu tentunya dengan Pak Anas, yang terakhir, ada pengumuman ketatnya peraturan terbang saat itu, saat ini, seperti apa Pak Anas?"

(Ari: "**Perhaps** Pak Anas could tell, yes, Pak Anas, we have not met for a long time with Pak Anas, the last, there was a notice at that time of how strict the flight was, what about now, Pak Anas?")

Above is an excerpt of a dialog in the talkshow which shows Ari, the speaker, was requesting Pak Anas, who is the speech partner about the the notice o flight right now whether there is a change in the order of the goverment or not compared to the last time. The directive speech act is shown in the question of asking Pak Anas to tell with 'could' instead of using an affirmative sentence, for example "**Pak Anas, tell about...**". Then, in the excerpt, we also can see the use of '**mungkin**' (perhaps) as the downgraders. In that context above, the use of downgraders and the indirect form of the speech act are ways to decrease the damaging face of Pak Anas (the speech partner) from Ari (the speaker). In the context, Ari is also younger than Pak Anas, so another reason to use downgraders and the indirect form of request is ffor politeness purposes.

b. **Directive Speech Act Direct**

Lula: "**Maaf**, microfonnya. Ya, **silahkan**, Pak Jati."

(Lula: "**Sorry**, the microphone, Yes, **please**, Pak Jati.")

The excerpt is from a dialog between Lula (the speaker) and Pak Jati (the speech partner) from one of the theme of the talkshow which is taken as the ressearch data. In that example above, Lula is younger than Pak Jati. During that example o utterence, Lula used '**maaf**' (sorry) and '**silahkan**' (please) when Lula was directing Pak Jati to take the microphone before Pak Jati was going to speak. Although there is not a specific word that describe the context to be a direct ilocutionary, it can be seen from the context that Lula said to Pak Jati to take the microphone that the sentence consists of a direct ilocutionary. Then, the use of the downgraders '**maaf**' and '**silahkan**' are ways to make the sentence more polite. The sentence is in a direct form, so using a direct form without downgrader markers would sound more rude compared to when we use the downgrader markers. "**The microphone, Pak Jati**" sounds ruder than "**Sorry**, the microphone." especially when the speaker (Lula) is younger than Pak Jati. In this case, the use of downgraders can also save Pak Jati's face since directing someone to do something can intrerfere someone else's freedom (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

c. **Directive Speech Act Prohibit**

Andhika: "Yang sekarang bilangnya baru beli sepeda kemarin, gitu, ya, **mungkin** jangan langsung."

(Andhika: "Those who said they just bought a bycicle yesterday, **perhaps** don't go on a bike right to kilometers.")

In the excerpt, Andhika prohibited people or the Indonesia citizen to not go on a bike right to kilometers when they never go on a bike at the daily basis. The sentence was uttered in a direct form. And the use of '**mungkin**' (perhaps) as the downgrader markers is a way to show politeness. It can be said that Andhika wanted the people to listen to his opinion, but Andhika also did not want the citizen to be forced not to do it eventhough based on the medical suggestion, the right method to go on a bike is like what Andhika said. In this context, Andhika is a doctor, so he knows the knowledge. So, the use off the downgraders can be said as a way to not directly interfere others' freedom or face.

d. **Directive Speech Act Suggest**

Reza: "Untuk kasus kematian di rumah sakit darurat memang kita menjalankan protokol amat sangat ketat, ya. Untuk pihak keluarga, **sebaiknya**, **eh**, tidak perlu khawatir karena sudah ditangani pihak manajemen rumah sakit darurat."

(Reza: "For the death case in hospitals, we run a very strict protocols. For the family members, they **should**, **eh**, not be worried since the handling of the dead has been maintained properly by the hopital's management.")

The context of the excerpt is that a lot of family members did not want to listen to the hospital's management not to open the body cover of the deads. Opening the body cover could spread the virus, so the management suggest the family members to obey the order which is not to open the body cover since the management had already did it by a proper method. The suggestion can be seen by the use of '**sebaiknya**' (should). The interesting thing is that '**should**' is also a downgrader marker along with '**eh**'. The use of downgraders in this context can be for a way to soften a command, so that people would want to listen to the command. It also can be said that this is a primary command. If the people still did the same thing, the management would use the direct command not a suggestion.

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e. **Directive Speech Act Command**

Lula: "Kita akan sama-sama buka masker terlebih dahulu seperti biasanya, **silahkan,** dibersihkan tangannya masing-masing."

(Lula: We will open our masks first like always, **please**, wash your hands.")

In the context, Lula was actually talking to speech partners who are older than Lula. The use of '**silahkan**' (please) indicates that Lula wanted to sound more polite since Lula talked to people who are older than her. If it was said as '**wash your hands**', it would sound not propriate if it is used to talk to older people. The absence of the downgrader '**silahkan**' would cause a lot of face damaging.

f. **Directive Speech Act Urge**

Haekal: "...yang paling utama adalah bagaimana kita mencegah supaya kita tidak tertular dari penyakit ini dengan menerapkan protokol kesehatan seketat dan disiplin mungkin; antaranya, dengan rutin mencuci tangan, menggunakan masker ketika keluar rumah, menjaga jarak, hindari kerumunan, dan jaga pola hidup sehat dengan makan makanan yang bergizi seimbang, tidur cukup, rutin olahraga, dan **mungkin** juga harus selektif dan bijaksana dalam memilih pemberitaan yang muncul mengenai covid-19 agar kita tetap sehat secara fisik maupun psikis."

(Haekal: "...the most important thing is how we prevent ourselves from contracting this disease by implementing the health protocols as strict and disciplined as possible; these include, by regularly washing hands, using masks when leaving the house, keeping a distance, avoiding crowds, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced nutritious diet, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and **perhaps** also being selective and wise in choosing the news that appears about the news. Covid-19 so that we stay healthy physically and psychologically.")

The excerpt, all of those are the urge in the context uttered by Haekal. Using a lot of direct speech form would surely interfere the face or freedom of the hearers. So, the use of '**mungkin**' (perhaps) can be a way not to increase the ilocutionary force of the urge. The talkshow was held uring the pandemi and many people did not want to listen to the government's order. So, the government started using a soft and kind approach to spread information to the citizen. If the government did not use that approach, people could be more rebelious.

Then, from the findings of the 19 downgrader markers, the markers can be classified based on the theory of Trosborg (1995) and Blum-Kulka, House, and Kaper (1989). The classification is as follows.

Table. 2 The Classification of The Downgrader Markers

Type of Downgraders	Word's Class	Downgrader Markers
Downtoner	Adverb	Barangkali
	Adverb	Mungkin
	Adjective	Belum
	Adverb	Maaf
Modals	Adverb	Sebaiknya
	Adverb	Seharusnya
Tag Questions	Adverbial Phrase	Ya...ya?
	Adverbial Phrase	Ya...kan?
Pronouns	Noun	Pak, Bu, Mas, Dok
Future Remarks	Verb	Mari
	Verb	Ayo
Politeness Marker	Adverb	Silahkan
Modal Questions	Verbal Phrase	Bisa...?
	Verbal Phrase	Boleh...?
Hesitators	Adverb	Eh, ah
Interpersonal Markers	Verbal Phrase	Saya kira...
	Verbal Phrase	Menurut saya...

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that downgrader markers have important functions in the use of directive speech acts. There are some functions of them, such as an act of being polite, saving someone else's face, and softening the ilocutionary forces off the directive speech act. The use of downgrader markers can also have some background factor which in this research the background factor can be the age difference between the speaker and the speech partner. The difference of age can lead the one who is younger to speak more polite, especially, when the younger person need someone who is older to do something using the directive speech act. In the findings, there is also a difference between English downgraders and Indonesian downgraders. In the Indonesian downgraders, there is 'pronouns' which is included as downgraders. In Indonesian context, calling someone older or someone

who are not close enough using their real names is consider as rude. Then, this study is deffinitely still far from perfect. The future researcher can explore more, for example related to the difference of use of downgraders based on gender and many more.

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