

COMMISSIVE SPEECH ACTS IN THE FIRST PUBLIC DEBATE OF THE 2024 RIAU GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

Fadillah Fitri¹⁾, Asnawi²⁾

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Riau

Jalan Kaharuddin Nasution No.113, Marpoyan, Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia

¹E-mail: asnawiedufac.fkip@uir.ac.id

²Email: fadillahfitri678@student.uir.ac.id

Abstrak

Debat publik pertama Pemilihan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Riau 2024 merupakan peristiwa linguistik dan politik yang penting, di mana para kandidat memanfaatkan panggung debat sebagai sarana membangun kredibilitas melalui strategi wacana. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis bentuk tindak tutur ilokusi komisif menjanjikan dalam debat tersebut dengan pendekatan pragmatik. Fokus utama adalah mengidentifikasi janji politik yang diucapkan sebagai bentuk komitmen masa depan oleh masing-masing pasangan calon. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan data utama berupa transkrip video debat berdurasi 1 jam 59 menit yang disiarkan oleh Kompas TV. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi dan transkripsi, dengan analisis berdasarkan teori tindak tutur Searle (1969), terutama pada kategori komisif. Data dianalisis dengan metode Miles & Huberman melalui tahapan reduksi, penyajian, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tindak tutur komisif menjanjikan mendominasi komunikasi para kandidat dan terbagi dalam tiga ranah utama: (1) pembangunan infrastruktur dan teknologi, (2) peningkatan kesejahteraan dan pengentasan kemiskinan, serta (3) integritas tata kelola dan pendidikan. Kandidat menggunakan kata kerja futuristik seperti "akan" dan "ingin" sebagai strategi retorik untuk membangun kepercayaan publik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian pragmatik politik dan literasi kebahasaan, terutama dalam konteks debat kepala daerah. Namun, keterbatasan terletak pada tidak ditelitinya realisasi janji pasca debat. Temuan ini membuka peluang riset lanjutan yang mengkaji kesenjangan antara tuturan dan pelaksanaan kebijakan.

Kata Kunci: tindak tutur komisif, debat politik, janji, pragmatik, Pilkada Riau

Abstract

The first public debate of the 2024 Riau gubernatorial election is a significant political and linguistic event, where candidates utilize the debate platform to construct political credibility through discursive strategies. This study aims to describe and analyze the forms of commissive illocutionary speech acts, particularly promises, used by candidates during the debate. The focus is on identifying verbal commitments as indicators of future policy intentions. This research employs a qualitative-descriptive approach, with the primary data sourced from a 1-hour-59-minute debate video broadcast by Kompas TV. Data were collected through documentation and transcription methods, and analyzed using Searle's (1969) speech act theory, specifically the commissive category. The data analysis followed the Miles & Huberman model through stages of reduction, display, and verification. The findings reveal that commissive speech acts, especially promises, dominate the candidates' communication strategies and fall into three thematic domains: (1) infrastructure and technological development, (2) welfare improvement and poverty alleviation, and (3) governance integrity and education reform. Candidates frequently employ futuristic verbs such as "will" and "intend" as rhetorical tools to establish public trust. This study contributes to the field of political pragmatics and language literacy, especially in the context of regional political debates. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single debate session, without examining post-election promise fulfillment. Future research is encouraged to explore the gap between political utterances and policy implementation.

Keywords: commissive speech act, political debate, promise, pragmatics, Riau election

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Riau Governor and Deputy Governor Election is a very important democratic momentum for the people of Riau Province. In every election process, public debate plays a central role as a medium of political communication between candidates and voters (Iqbal Jatmiko, 2019; Rabiah, 2016; Yodiansyah, 2017). The first public debate of the 2024 Riau Governor and Deputy Governor candidates presented three candidate pairs, namely Abdul Wahid - S.F. Hariyanto, M. Nasir - M. Wardan, and H. Syamsuar - M. Mawardi, moderated by Jihan Novita. This debate discussed crucial issues such as conveying the vision and mission, eradicating money politics, utilizing information technology, managing natural resources (SDA), developing clean water, and governance with integrity, innovation, and adaptation.

In this competitive debate atmosphere, candidates not only deliver strategic programs, but also verbally commit in the form of political promises to the public. These promises are a form of commissive speech acts (Aminuddin, 2015; Habiburrahman et al., 2020; Juwita, 2017; Setyawan et al., 2023; Widyaningrum & Hasanudin, 2019), which has a deep pragmatic dimension in the context of political communication.

In pragmatic linguistics, speech acts refer to the functions or actions performed by speakers through their utterances. One of the main types of speech acts according to Austin's theory (1962) and developed by Searle (1979) is the commissive speech act, which is a speech act that states the speaker's intention to perform an action in the future (Astri, 2020; Habiburrahman et al., 2020; Suryawin et al., 2022; Suyitno, 2005). Promises, vows, and determinations fall into this category. In political debates, commissive speech acts are

commonly used by candidates to express their commitment to public policies and work programs.

The public debate of the Riau Governor and Deputy Governor candidates became a medium that showed how each candidate constructed their political identity and credibility through commissive speech acts. They promised infrastructure improvements, governance reform, poverty alleviation, and sustainable management of natural resources. However, political promises are not only linguistic statements, but also have social and moral implications because they contain public expectations to be realized after the candidate is elected (Kuntarto, 2018; Purwanti, 2021).

Humans as social beings always communicate, both in private and public life. Language is the main medium in conveying intentions, thoughts, and hopes (Aminuddin, 2015; Santoso, 2008; Suhaebah et al., 1996; Suladi, 2015; Sulistyarini, D. & Zainal, 2018; Wiratno, 2018). The success of communication is determined by the clarity of the message and the interlocutor's understanding of the content and context. In the context of public debate, the effectiveness of a candidate's communication is measured by the ability to convey a vision logically and convincingly, as well as the ability to form a positive perception in the minds of voters.

The study of commissive speech acts in political debates is important for educating society to be more critical in responding to political promises (Habiburrahman et al., 2020). In addition, this research contributes to the world of education, especially in learning Indonesian, pragmatic linguistics, and political communication science, so that students are able to identify and evaluate language functions in the socio-political realm.

Although speech acts in political communication are often discussed in the media and society, in-depth scientific studies

on them are still limited, especially those focusing on local political debates such as in Riau Province. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the form, context, and meaning of commissive speech acts expressed by each candidate pair in the first debate of the 2024 Riau Gubernatorial Election.

With a pragmatic discourse analysis approach, this study not only describes the promises made, but also relates them to the socio-political context and public expectations. This study can reveal how language strategies are used to build political images and gain public trust.

One of the main focuses of this study is to see to what extent commissive statements reflect the real commitment of prospective leaders. It is not uncommon in political practice for campaign promises to not be realized after the election (Iqbal Jatmiko, 2019). Therefore, this study will also examine the potential gap between verbal commitment and policy realization. Such analysis is essential to foster an accountable and transparent political culture.

The study of commissive speech acts is not only important from a linguistic perspective, but also from the perspective of communication ethics and social responsibility (Juwita, 2017; Setyawan et al., 2023). In a democratic society, language is not only a tool of persuasion, but also a tool of public accountability (Arifin, 2018; Busri, H., & Badrih, 2022; Purwanti, 2021; Syamsuri, 2013; Wiratno, 2018). Therefore, commissive speech in political debate is not merely rhetoric, but rather a public statement that can be collected and audited.

This research is based on John Searle's speech act theory, which classifies speech acts into five categories: representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative (Astri, 2020; Kaswanti Purwo, 1987; Puspitasari, 2023; Taha et al., 2022). The focus of this

study is commissive speech acts, which reflect the speaker's intention to do something in the future. Within this framework, the researcher will identify the forms of commissives that appear, such as promises, conditional commitments, threats, and willingness. In addition, the pragmatic approach also involves the context of speech, such as the relationship between participants, the purpose of communication, and the social situation. In this case, the context of public debate greatly determines the meaning and implications of commissive speech acts. Researchers will also consider prosodic and non-verbal aspects that strengthen or weaken the commitment power of an utterance.

This study has high originality because it takes a specific and actual object, namely the 2024 Riau gubernatorial election public debate. Unlike previous studies that have focused more on presidential or national debates, this study targets local areas that have not been widely explored. In addition, this study combines linguistic and political communication approaches to produce a more holistic understanding of the dynamics of language in political campaigns. The scientific contributions of this study include: (1) developing a study of speech acts in the context of local political debates; (2) providing authentic data on candidate communication strategies; (3) understanding the relationship between commissive speech and public expectations; and (4) contributing to political and linguistic literacy in society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Speech Acts

Conceptually, speech acts are understood as actions that are realized through utterances—not just a series of words, but the “deeds” that a speaker performs when speaking (Brown & Yule, 1983; Yule, 1985). Yule's statement emphasizes the performative

dimension of language: when someone speaks, he or she is actually doing something—asking, ordering, promising, and so on.

This awareness of the central role of language is supported by Noermanzah (2019), which places language as the “property” of society. Language—through speech acts—becomes a collective means to build meaning and maintain social cohesion. Thus, every spoken or written discourse is always intertwined with the norms, values, and social relations of its speakers (Rani et al., 2013).

Astri (2020) provides a taxonomy of speech act forms, including requests, apologies, complaints, compliments, invitations, and promises. This division is important, because each type contains a different illocutionary force, thus demanding a different pragmatic response from the speech partner. Suyitno (2005) calls speech acts an “umbrella category” that accommodates a variety of pragmatic phenomena—from politeness, implicature, to presupposition—so that speech act research has the potential to open up a comprehensive understanding of interpersonal communication. Artati et al. (2020) adding that the medium of communication can be oral or written discourse, but the essence remains the same: every utterance is an action that is bound by social, cultural and situational contexts.

Debate as a Speech Event

In the realm of political communication, debate is a form of direct interaction that demands a real-time response from the interlocutor and the audience. Juwita (2017) emphasizes that the success of a debate can be measured instantly because the speaker—in this case the candidate—knows immediately whether his/her message has been accepted or rejected. Debates are classified as direct speech acts; the correlation between linguistic form and its illocutionary force (e.g. claims,

objections, criticisms) is explicit because it is delivered face-to-face and witnessed by the public. This distinguishes it from indirect speech acts that often use written media, radio, or television—where feedback is delayed and visual context is limited.

Because public debate is inherently persuasive and competitive, the language strategies participants choose—intonation, choice of diction, argumentation patterns—are aimed at building ethos (credibility), logos (logic), and pathos (emotion) all at once (Safnil, 2010). Pragmatic analysis of debates is therefore relevant to mapping how candidates construct self-images, attack opponents, and negotiate meaning with audiences.

Commission

Among the various types of speech acts, commissives occupy a vital position in political discourse because they are related to future commitments. Taha et al. (2022) defines a commissive speech act as an utterance that “binds” the speaker to do something in the future—for example, promising, swearing, offering, refusing, or even threatening.

The subtle distinction between promises and threats is outlined by Brown & Yule (1983): A promise is a vow to “do something for you,” while a threat is a vow to “do something against you.” A promise becomes defective if the thing promised is not desired by the recipient, or if the speaker himself doubts the recipient’s willingness to accept the promise. The practical implication is that in the context of political contestation, campaign promises that are not in line with public needs have the potential to be interpreted as empty rhetoric—or even as veiled threats (e.g., “If you don’t vote for me, program X won’t be realized”).

Thus, the analysis of commissive speech acts on the debate stage is not only concerned with what is said, but also how and to whom

the promise is offered, and the extent to which the speaker is aware of the ethical and social consequences of his commitment.

3. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, which aims to describe and analyze the forms of commissive illocutionary speech acts that appear in the First Public Debate of the Candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of Riau in 2024. Qualitative research was chosen because it provides researchers with the freedom to understand the meaning of speech in depth according to its context. According to Sugiyono (2013), Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observed behavior. In this context, data is obtained from direct observation of political debate broadcasts that take place naturally, without intervention from the researcher. Descriptive research focuses on efforts to describe linguistic phenomena systematically, factually, and accurately.

The main data source in this study is the video of the First Public Debate of the Riau Gubernatorial Candidates 2024 with a duration of 1 hour 59 minutes broadcast by Kompas TV and available on the YouTube platform. Primary data in the form of direct speech from the candidate pairs was analyzed to identify the types and functions of commissive speech acts such as promises, oaths, offers, and threats. In addition to primary data, researchers also used secondary data in the form of documents and supporting references to enrich the context and strengthen the validity of the interpretation.

The data collection technique was carried out through the documentation method, namely by downloading, watching, and transcribing the video in its entirety, then noting the parts that contain elements of commissive speech acts. In the data collection

process, researchers followed systematic steps. First, researchers watched the video repeatedly at different times (morning, afternoon, evening) to avoid misunderstandings and increase the accuracy of speech identification. Second, researchers understood each utterance and its context, then noted sentences that contained commissive elements. Third, the data that had been collected was then grouped based on the type of speech act and analyzed contextually. This approach allows researchers to obtain a high variety of data and capture the implicit meaning of candidates' verbal commitments.

The data analysis technique in this study refers to the model Miles et al. (2014), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is done by filtering and summarizing the most relevant information, while data presentation is done in the form of tables or thematic matrices to facilitate tracing certain patterns. After that, temporary conclusions are drawn and verified by comparing data across time and through triangulation techniques. The validity and reliability of the data are maintained by re-listening to the video, matching the transcript, and linking it to theory and secondary data. This study also considers academic ethics by clearly stating the data sources and not providing interpretations outside of empirical evidence.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate promising commissive speech acts in the First Public Debate of the Riau Governor Candidates and Riau Deputy Governor Candidates in 2024 from three aspects (a) Infrastructure & Technology Development, (b) Improving Welfare & Poverty Alleviation, and (c) Governance & Education Integrity. The three are explained below.

Infrastructure & Technology Development

The promising commissive speech acts that emerged in the First Public Debate of the Candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of Riau in 2024 emphasized the realm of infrastructure and technology development. These commitments are represented through promises of physical and digital development to meet the needs of the community evenly. The following presents data on this.

Data 1

Moderator: "Baik pemirsa dan hadirin semua Public debate of the candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor of Riau Province 2024 will begin with the presentation of the vision and mission of each pair of candidates for Governor and Deputy Governor and the time given to convey the vision and mission is 1 minute 30 seconds and for the first we give the opportunity for candidate pair number 1 to Mr. Abdul Wahid and Mr. S.F Hariyanto to be able to convey their vision and mission with a time of 1 minute 30 seconds the time will start when you speak please" (Minute 17:54)

Candidate 1: Riau religious Malay culture, dynamic, ecologically advanced is our vision for the next 5 years we realize it by building infrastructure, increasing the strengthening of the economic industry we ensure it grows by prioritizing public services besides that we improve technology so that society is safe, smart, healthy and happy and prosperous we build Riau fairly and evenly and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor by opening up employment opportunities increasing food and energy security and building an Islamic Center. (Minute 18:39)

Context: The speech occurred when the moderator asked candidate pair number 1, namely Mr. Abdul Wahid and Mr. S.F. Hariyanto about conveying their vision and mission.

The speech above is included in the category of promising commissive speech acts.

This is reflected in the candidate's statement stating his willingness to "realize it by building infrastructure, increasing industrial strengthening, ensuring economic growth by prioritizing public services, and improving technology so that society is safe, smart, healthy, and happy." This commitment also includes equitable development in Riau, reducing the gap between the rich and the poor through job creation, increasing food and energy security, and building an Islamic Center. This speech act shows a promise or willingness from the speech partner to realize these programs in the future, thus reflecting the main characteristics of a commissive speech act.

Data 2

Moderator: Okay, I will give the opportunity for gubernatorial candidate number 1 to respond to gubernatorial candidate number 2's answer, the response duration is 45 seconds starting when you speak, please (Minute 40:17)

Gubernatorial Candidate 1: Digitalization Technology and Information is important because in accordance with our vision, it is the first improvement so that people feel safe, so we ensure that all kinds of data are safe, the second is increasing the intelligence of public services, schools must have information technology and digitalization so that intelligence is increased, the third is we want this technology to also make people prosperous, not only safe, not only intelligent and must also be prosperous because we must adopt technology for the sake of humanity, that is our target, God willing (Minute 40:34)

Konteks: Context: The speech occurs when the moderator gives the opportunity for gubernatorial candidate number 1 to respond to the answer of gubernatorial candidate number 2 regarding what policies the candidate pair will implement so that the use and utilization of social media does not damage the morals of

the younger generation and does not become a threat to Malay cultural values.

The speech is classified as a promising commissive speech act. This is evident in the candidate's statement emphasizing the importance of technology and information digitalization as part of the development vision. The statement includes three main commitments: first, improving the aspect of public security through data protection guarantees; second, increasing intelligence through optimizing technology-based public services in schools; and third, creating public welfare through the use of technology for the benefit of humanity. Expressions such as "this technology also makes society prosperous" and "that is our target, God willing" emphasize the form of promise or ability to realize these programs in the future. Thus, this speech fulfills the characteristics of a commissive speech act, namely a statement that represents the speaker's intention to carry out certain actions as a form of future commitment.

Improving Welfare & Poverty Alleviation

This area reflects the seriousness of the candidates to address the issue of social inequality and basic needs of society. The promises made emphasize distributional justice and improving the quality of life. The following presents data on this.

Data 3

Deputy Governor Candidate 1: We have a smart Riau program, one house, one graduate, free education, free clothes and we have a healthy program with free medical treatment and we have a steady Riau with a smooth road to build habitable houses, Riau builds from the village to build the city of Riau, the people of Riau are prosperous, that is our program, we are sure and believe that the program we are offering will be realized because Riau has potential (Minute 19:23)

Candidate for Deputy Governor 1, Mr. S.F. Hariyanto, added to the vision and mission previously conveyed by Candidate for Governor 1, Mr. Abdul Wahid. The utterance above is a form of a commissive illocutionary act of promising.

This can be seen in the candidate's statement that confirms his commitment to a number of strategic programs, such as "Smart Riau, one house, one graduate", "free education costs", "free clothes", "healthy program, free medical treatment", and "Riau is steady, smooth road to building decent housing". The utterance reflects the ability or promise to build Riau by improving the quality of education, health, and basic infrastructure, as well as equitable development from villages to cities. The speaker's belief is reflected in the statement "we are sure and believe that the program we are offering will be realized because Riau has potential". These forms of utterances show the intention to implement these policies, thus meeting the criteria as a commissive speech act that confirms the speaker's intentions and commitments in a political context.

Data 4

Moderator: And then we will invite Mr. M. Nasir and Muhammad Wardan to explain their vision and mission for 1 minute 30 seconds, the time will start when you speak, please (Minute 20:44)

Cagub 2: Our vision and mission for the future, we are not willing for Riau to be called bad, we are not willing for the people of Riau to be treated badly, we are ordered by Mr. Prabowo Subianto to move towards advancing Riau Province, we will eliminate the poor in Riau Province, this is what we are doing on the orders of Mr. Prabowo, this is our vision and mission and we want to improve this regulation properly (Minute 21:05)

Context: The utterance occurred when

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Context: The speech occurred when the moderator asked candidate pair number 2, namely Mr. M. Nasir and Muhammad Wardan about conveying their vision and mission. The speech above is included in the category of promising commissive illocutionary acts.

This is clearly seen in the candidate's statement which emphasizes his commitment to the welfare of the Riau community through the expressions, "we are not willing for Riau to be called bad, we are not willing for the Riau community to be treated badly, we were ordered by Mr. Prabowo Subianto to advance Riau Province, we will eliminate the poor in Riau Province, and we want to improve this regulation properly." The speech shows the speaker's ability or promise to eradicate poverty in Riau Province and to improve regulations for the progress of the region. The use of futuristic verbs such as "we will" and "we want" indicates an intention to realize actions in the future, which is a characteristic of commissive speech acts. Thus, the speaker shows an explicit commitment to the goals of social policy and bureaucratic reform as part of his political vision and mission.

Data 5

Gubernatorial Candidate 2: "We invite our brother Wardan to continue" (Minute 21:42)

Deputy Gubernatorial Candidate 2: Riau, which is rich, must be able to provide prosperity and welfare for all its people. There will no longer be people crying and sad because they are poor and have no property. There will no longer be roads full of holes, bad roads that reach the village niches. There will no longer be rickety collapsed bridges. Riau must be able to (Minute 21:49)

Context: The utterance occurs when the gubernatorial candidate 2, Mr. M. Nasir, asks the deputy gubernatorial candidate 2, Mr. M. Wardan to continue delivering his vision and

mission.

The utterance is included in the category of promising commissive speech acts. This can be seen from the statement, "Riau, which is rich, must be able to provide prosperity and welfare for all its people. There will be no more people crying because they are poor and have no property. There will be no more potholes or damaged roads to remote villages, and no more collapsed or rickety bridges." The utterance represents the speaker's commitment to improving the quality of life of the community as a whole through equitable infrastructure development and poverty alleviation. Repetitive phrases such as "no more" are used as emotional affirmations to emphasize the sincerity of the promise. Thus, this utterance shows that the speaker has the ability to realize prosperity and welfare that is evenly distributed for the people of Riau.

Governance & Education Integrity

Commitment in this area highlights the importance of clean, orderly governance and an education system that supports character building and family closeness. The following data is presented on this.

Data 6

Moderator: And I will give the opportunity for gubernatorial candidate number 2 to respond to the answer of gubernatorial candidate number 1, the duration of response is 45 seconds, counted from when you start speaking, please (Minute 33:41)

Gubernatorial Candidate 2: We, candidate pair number 2, want this Pilkada to run well and be sporting and there is no money campaign and we are sure that the public believes that the government will not do anything wrong, also under the supervision of the KPU and Bawaslu, we will be orderly in carrying out trust for the public and we are sure Nasir Wardan can Nasir Wardan knows how, don't forget to vote for number 2, let us lead Riau (Minute 33:48)

Context: The speech occurred when the Moderator gave the opportunity for the gubernatorial candidate number 2 to respond to the answer of the gubernatorial candidate number 1 regarding the question that anyone who intentionally commits an unlawful act of promising or giving money or giving rewards is threatened with criminal penalties, even exchanging political money to buy ballots up to Rp. 500,000 per head.

Currently, the election organizers, especially Bawaslu, are still ineffective in being able to take action against this condition because it is considered not to have met the elements. The speech above is included in the type of promising commissive speech act. This is reflected in the statement, "We, candidate pair number 2, want this Pilkada to run well and be sporting and there is no money campaign. We are sure that the public believes that the government will not do anything wrong. Under the supervision of the KPU and Bawaslu, we will be orderly in building public trust, and we are sure Nasir-Wardan can, Nasir-Wardan know how. Don't forget to vote for number 2, let us lead Riau." This speech shows the commitment of the candidate pair to carry out the Pilkada process honestly, cleanly, and according to the rules. The use of phrases such as "we want," "we will," and "we are sure" indicates the speaker's ability to maintain the integrity of the election and build public trust. Thus, this utterance contains an element of political promise that binds the speaker morally to run an ethical and transparent election.

Data 7

Moderator: Please allow candidate number 2 to answer your time 1 minute starting when you speak (Minute 37:58)

Candidate 2: The internet must reach the village to improve a good technology system for the community to make free wifi we will use later to distribute throughout the village because this wifi is important to

improve the entire performance of how we monitor the entire system from upstream to downstream how this internet can run well and we want how children now their morals need to be strengthened with a system to improve education in schools so that they don't hold cellphones too much and other activities this improves a good system maybe this is what needs to be strengthened because today education is quite long at 4 pm just going home it's hard to be close to parents so school improvements must be strengthened school hours are reduced (Minute 38:12)

Context: The speech occurs when the Moderator invites the gubernatorial candidate number 2 to answer questions about what policies the candidate pair will implement so that the use and utilization of social media does not damage the morals of the younger generation and does not become a threat to Malay cultural values.

The speech above is included in the type of promising commissive illocutionary speech act. This can be seen from the statement, "The internet must reach the village to improve the technology system that is good for the community. We will distribute free wifi to all villages because wifi is important to improve the entire performance and supervision of the system from upstream to downstream. We also want the morals of today's children to be strengthened through a better education system, so that they do not hold cellphones too much and are involved in less productive activities. Education must be improved, because currently children come home too late, making it difficult to be close to their parents. Therefore, school hours need to be reduced." The statement shows the speaker's ability to improve two important aspects: access to technology and education reform. The commitment to providing free wifi and fixing the education system reflects a concrete promise aimed at improving the quality of life

of rural communities and strengthening the character of the younger generation. The use of sentences such as “we want” and “we will distribute wifi” emphasizes the speaker's intention to realize the policy.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that all candidate pairs for Governor and Deputy Governor of Riau 2024 utilize the promising commissive speech act as the main rhetorical strategy in conveying their vision and mission. This speech act explicitly represents a commitment to future actions, which strengthens their political credibility before the public.

In Searle's (1969) speech act theory, the type of commissive reflects the speaker's intention to do something after the statement is uttered (Artati et al., 2020; Juwita, 2017; Setyawan et al., 2023). In the context of political debate, these promises become more than just words; they become a form of moral contract between the speaker and the listener. This is all the more meaningful because voters can use these utterances as parameters of political accountability.

This study also supports the findings, which state that regional head candidates tend to emphasize futuristic verbs such as "will", "want", and "ready" as a form of political capability (Purwanti, 2021; Rabiah, 2016). The use of these verbs in the Riau 2024 debate implies a collective intention to affirm support for the people through concrete steps, such as infrastructure development, provision of free wifi, and poverty eradication.

Furthermore, commitments in the realm of infrastructure and technology show the candidates' efforts to respond to the needs of the times. Promises to build special coal roads or reach villages with internet access are not only symbols of physical development, but also concrete manifestations of modernization

and digital inclusion in the Riau region. In the context of political language, promises like this represent efforts to build the candidate's ethos as a progressive and adaptive figure to global challenges, while also utilizing language as a persuasive tool to gain support (Kuntarto, 2018; Purwanti, 2021; Rabiah, 2016).

Meanwhile, promises in the welfare sector indicate the direction of populist policies that directly target the basic needs of the community such as education, health, and housing. This reflects that commissive speech is used strategically to build emotional relationships as well as public trust.

Commitment to the integrity of governance and education reform in the debate also shows the candidates' understanding of voters' sensitivity to the importance of ethics in government and the formation of the character of the next generation. Promises to reject money politics and improve the education system indicate a pragmatic awareness of the moral demands of society.

Thus, the use of the commissive speech act of promising in political debate is not merely a rhetorical formality, but has broad social and political implications (Habiburrahman et al., 2020). It is a means to design the future, build relationships between prospective leaders and the people, and offer a discourse on change that can be verified in the democratic process.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the promising commissive speech act dominates the first public debate of the 2024 Riau Governor and Deputy Governor candidates. This form of speech is used as a strategic means by all candidate pairs to convey their vision, mission, and work programs explicitly and convincingly. These promises are thematically focused on three main areas, namely infrastructure and technology development,

improving welfare and poverty alleviation, and strengthening the integrity of governance and education.

In its use, promising commissive speech in political debates shows a tendency to use futuristic verbs and concrete narratives as a form of symbolic and practical commitment to society. This shows that this rhetorical strategy is not only linguistic, but also has significant ideological and electoral content. The weakness of this study lies in the scope of the data which is limited to one public debate session. Although the data taken is quite representative, the results of this study do not yet cover other performative dimensions, such as the realization of promises after being elected or the public's response to the promises. However, this study makes an important contribution to the study of political pragmatics and communication science, especially in the context of regional head elections. This study also offers a thematic classification model that can be used to analyze political debates at local and national levels more systematically and in depth.

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