

Speech Acts of Religious Moderation in Vakil and Vakil's Digital Comic 40 Sufi

DOI: 10.22515/ljbs.v9i2.8477



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submitted: 3/1/2024 revised: 20/2/2025 accepted: 23/2/2025 published: 24/2/2025 pages: 193-203

ABSTRACT

This study discusses representative speech acts in digital comic discourse created by Mohammed Arif Vakil and Mohammed Ali Vakil reflecting the religious moderation among societies. The comic discourse campaigns for the importance of tolerance between human beings. The analysis focuses on the reflection of religious moderation in one chapter entitled 'Ethic' which describes the relation among human beings. The chapter is chosen due to its message which focuses on relation among people. The data of this research were obtained from the whole texts and pictures in the chapter. The texts in the comic became the main data whereas the images were put as secondary data. These data were then processed and classified into several speech act classifications proposed by Searle. The result shows that the most dominant speech act performed by the comic maker is representative speech acts. Meanwhile the directive speech acts are commonly used to give the direct moral lessons. The chapter reflects religious moderation in three points i.e. (1) applying good attitudes to others; (2) reflecting the moral value; (3) helping others without hurting the feelings by applying the representative and directive speech acts to convey the religious moderation. The representative speech acts function as the utterances of giving statement and admitting about something related with good deeds and never hurting others while the directive speech acts functions as the utterances of requesting, asking, and recommending certain things. The directive speech acts take the roles as the directive meanings on moral values.

Keywords: digital comic, religious moderation, speech act

INTRODUCTION

The trends of digital media are related with nowadays situation where all people can access all information and entertainment by digital media. The situation makes the products of creative works more various. One of them is the story about religious moderation. Religious moderation is an interesting focus in a multicultural society. Sinaga (2022) defined religious moderation as a perspective, attitude, and action outside from extreme or discriminatory paths when believers express their religion. In addition, moderation is an important indicator of community diversity. Not only in terms of worship, moderation must also be applied in everyday lives.

Not only through verbal communication, religious moderation can also be voiced through written communication. The media act as mediators so that the messages can be convey effectively and can be accessed by anyone at any time. The emergence of gaps between generations will add to the distraction of messages of diversity. In this case the role of digital media is very important. The use of digital comics is an option as a medium for conveying messages and tends to be relevant to current trends where people are familiar with the digital world. In addition to convey messages with pictures and dialogue narration, the presentation of comic discourse can add to the attractiveness of a medium.

Digital comics are published digitally by using the software. The final creation will be published in online platform which can easily be accessed by the readers. The image is actually the additional components to give the implied

meaning for the whole story. Angleton (2019) stated that there are serial images and there is a semi-guided reading flow. The combination of these elements is arranged into a digital comic discourse.

A digital comic cannot be separated from its dialogues. Dialogue is one of the most important components in speech acts. Utterances in a dialogue are classified as verbal action. Austin (1962) stated that speech acts are verbal actions that occur in the world. An utterance indicates something which the speaker wants to imply whether it is in spoken or written.

Regarding this research, the digital comic entitled *40 Sufi* conveys messages of religious moderation. Representative speech acts become the main discussion of this research by using one of the chapters entitled 'Ethic', which illustrates human relations reflecting religious moderation, as the object of analysis. The representative, however, is derived from illocutionary act. It is used to consider what the implied meanings are. Wijana (1996) stated that illocutionary acts tend not only to be used to inform something but also to do something as long as the situation is spoken and carefully considered. Cummings (2007) added that since the meaning of the utterance is intended by the speaker, there must be strong appeal to factors such as context and the speaker's intent. Meanwhile, the response from the illocutionary act is perlocutionary act whose utterances are intended to influence the interlocutor. Austin (1962) argued that the essence of the perlocution is the response by saying something the action is carried out. Thus, to analyze the meanings of the dialogues in the digital comic, it needs the speech act theory. Not only classify the data and their sub-classifications, but this research also dig the illocutionary force and how the utterances imply the meaning of religious moderation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research has the new perspective on how the speech act has the contribution in speech act analysis. The studies conducted by Veranto and Ege (2018) and Izar et al. (2021) are considered relevant to this current study due to the sameness in approach, namely speech act. However, there is a significant difference in the objects. The previous research does not use digital comic as the object of the data on religious moderation. In addition, the research by Tsomou (2020) shows similarity as well, dealing with speech acts in discourse. However, there are differences in the theme of the research object since Tsomou (2020) emphasized more on speech acts in comments on Facebook regarding political dynamics. On the other hand, the research conducted by Rijadi (2018) and Almwajeh (2019) focus on studying speech acts between religious communities with field research as the type of research. The former emphasizes on speech acts between religious communities in East Java, which are related to ecological knowledge, whereas the latter focuses on speech acts performed by Jordanian and American students, who, in fact, are students with different religions and ethnicities.

Compared to the research above, this current research has several differences in terms of themes and objects studied. Therefore, this research is considered relatively new because it focuses on analyzing digital comic discourse which carries the theme of religious moderation. This research uses the speech act theory proposed by Searle as the approach. The results of analyses are expected to show deep meanings and can give a significant contribution in digital comic analysis.

UNDERLYING THEORIES

Searle and Vanderveken (1985) divide speech acts into five types with an emphasis on illocutionary speech acts. The basis of branching refers to illocutionary power or speech situations that cause the utterance to refer to

illocutionary speech acts. The five types of speech acts are representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. These categories have subcategories, including the paradigms of claiming, informing, admitting, and stating in representative speech acts and the paradigms of asking, suggesting, recommending, and commanding under directive speech acts. By seeing the characteristics of comics which have the contexts of situation and cannot be seen just from the semantic point of view, this research used the speech act theories to analyze the implementation of religious moderation from *40 Sufi* digital comic.

There are several terms regarding the illocutionary points of classification based on Searle and Vanderveken (1985) as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) Classification in Speech Acts

Speech Act	Definition	Verbs / Subclassification
Representative	The speaker commit to the truth of what asserted	Assert, claim, argue, assure, predict, report, inform, admit, remind, testify, confess, conjecture, guess, state, hypothesize, swear, and insist
Directive	The speaker makes an attempt to get the subject to do	Request, ask, order, command, solicit, incite, invite, beg, suggest, advise, recommend, supplicate, entreat, and pray
Commissive	The speaker commits to take an action to the future	Commit, promise, threaten, accept, pledge, vow, consent, covenant, and guarantee
Expressive	The speaker expresses a variety of psychological states	Congratulate, apologize, thank, compliment, deplore, condole, and welcome
Declarative	The speaker brings about a change in the world via words.	Declare, approve, endorse, excommunicate, name, christen, resign, abbreviate, and bless

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method by describing of language phenomena that occur in the research object. The data source for this research is the digital comic entitled *40 Sufi* created by Mohammed Arif Vakil and Mohammed Ali Vakil., the data were obtained by purposive sampling from the chapter entitled 'Ethic'. The chapter has unique characteristics because it tells the relations among people in a society and has religious moderation values which is applicable in real life from the perspective of humanity.

The data of this research were the speech acts of the main characters in the comic series. The data were collected by note-taking technique from the chosen stories which were then classified based on Seale's Speech Act theory. The process of classification includes subclassification to know the functions of the utterances.

The analysis was then made by interpreting the results of data classification and subclassification. It also involves the description of the speech situation behind each utterance. In accordance with the realm of speech act study, the

involvement of speech situation is very important to see what the speaker implies from his/her utterance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the digital comic *40 Sufi*, there are found several acts performed by the characters which indicate religious moderation values. The values can be divided into three actions, namely applying good attitudes to others, reflecting the moral values, and helping others without hurting the feelings. The detailed descriptions of the speech acts representing religious moderation in the digital comic are as follow.

Applying Good Attitudes to Others

The religious moderation value in the form of applying good attitudes to other people can be seen in the subchapter 'Good Manners Melt a Hard Heart', 'The Forgiving Commander', and 'Follow Principles'.

Datum 1



MAN : Are you a baqara (cow) ?

ALI : *I am not a Baqara, My name is Baqir* (1a)

MAN : Whatever your name is, I've heard your mother was just a cook

ALI : *Yes, That was her profession. There is no shame in it.* (1b)

MAN : Your mother was impudent and rude!

ALI : *If the things you say about my mother are true, then may Alloh forgive her, if they are false then may Alloh forgive you.* (1c)

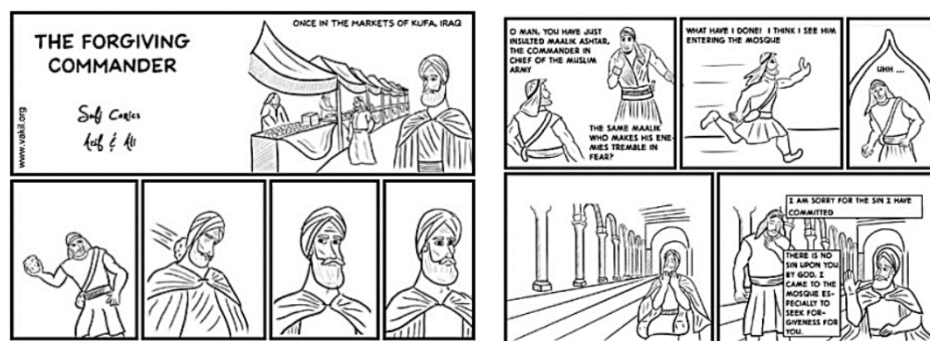
MAN : I am amazed by your calm and polite behavior

O Imam! Forgive me for my insolence and accept me as one of your followers.

The context of situation is when Imam as the main character is insulted by someone who he does not know. The man directly says rude words to Imam but he is still calm. The (1a) reflects the representative speech act classified as denying. The using of good words affects the response so that Imam says in a good manner without judging back. Although the man still directly say the rude word by insulting Imam's mother's profession, Imam still have a good manner in responding the words by saying that he is not ashamed by his mother profession. Data (1c) is the word to make the man calmer. Imam says in a good way without insulting back or arguing in bad manner. The (1c) is classified as stating. The statement is to make all clear without any miscommunication. The (1a), (1b), (1c) reflect the religious moderation which focuses on the behavior when someone applied a good attitude and religion.

Datum 2

Once in the markets of Kufa, Iraq, a man throws the rocks on Maalik Ashtar but Maalik keeps continuing his journey to the mosque.



MAALIK'S FOLLOWER: O Man, you have just insulted Maalik Ashtar, the commander in chief of the muslim army. The Same Maalik who makes his enemies trembles in fear?

MAN : What have I done! I think I see him entering the mosque (While running)

MAN : I am sorry for the sin I have committed.

MAALIK : *There is no sin upon you by God. I came to the mosque, especially to seek forgiveness for you. (2)*

In Datum 2, there is dialogue between the commander and the man who throws the rock to commander without knowing who he is. The commander still continues his journey to the mosque. After the commander's people say to the man that the one whom he throws the rock is the Maalik Ashtar. The man directly run toward the mosque to ask the forgiveness. Maalik Asthar is not angry because he knows that the man does not throw the rock intentionally. Maalik Astar forgives the man and prays to God. The event reflects a good behavior to forgive someone and it is also reflect the religious moderation which is applied in a good behavior among the people and be patient. The data is classified as forgiving in speech act.

Datum 3



Imam Ali had cornered his opponent during a battle... (Imam Ali gives his sword to his opponent).

IMAM ALI : *Here it is.* (3a)

MAN : Who's going to protect you now?

IMAM ALI : *My protection lies with the one ... in whose hand is my destiny.* (3b)

MAN : What confidence he has.

O Imam, I would like to be your follower.

IMAM ALI : Do not follow personalities. Follow Principle!

The context of the situation of the event is when Imam Ali involves in a warfare and has to face to face with the enemy. The enemy asks Imam Ali to give a mercy by not killing him. In fact, the man just traps Imam Ali by asking him his sword. Imam Ali gives his swords as the enemy asks but he soon directly prepares to attack to Imam Ali. Even the situation could be dangerous for him, Imam Ali still believes that Allah always beside him. The utterance 3a is classified as admitting. In this case, Imam Ali admits that he always gives mercy to people, even to his enemy. In the utterance 3b, religious moderation is reflected. Even though Imam Ali has been trapped by his enemy, he still believes that God always on his side. It is not only about saying something but he insists to the enemy not to be wrong in doing something. The strong belief makes the enemy melt and decide to be Imam Ali's follower. It can be concluded that both utterances, 3a and 3b, indicate religious moderation values that is to make the other people believe that God does exist. The utterances also reflect mercy from one to others.

Reflecting the Moral Values

The second value of religious moderation in the form of reflecting moral values can be found in the parts of the comic entitled 'Childish Behaviour', 'Truth about Lies', and 'How Far Is Heaven'.

Datum 4



Said the servant of Imam thought...

SA'ID : I've never seen my master Imam Ali get angry. Today I will get him angry.

IMAM ALI : *Sa'id do come here.* (4a)

Said, where are you. Sa'id... Sa'id...

(Imam Malik finally finds Sa'id)

IMAM ALI : *Why are you not answering to me Sa'id?* (4b)

SA'ID : Sorry master, I wanted to incite anger in you by disobeying you

IMAM ALI : *Dear said, I don't get angry at such childish behavior.* (4c)

The context of the situation is when Sa'id tried to test Imam Ali, his master. He intentionally disobeys when Imam Ali call him to come. Surprisingly, Imam Ali does not angry and Sa'id feels ashamed due to his wrong action. 4a and 4b are the utterances of the main character which are classified as directive speech acts of inviting and asking. The speaker utters it to invite someone because he needs him. The utterance 4c reflects the religious moderation which correlates with the easiness to forgive someone who has tried to make another angry by seeing from a wider perspective. It also constitutes a representative speech act which can be categorized into stating. The person who states has the purpose to give more than information about something. In this case, Imam Ali tries to give a statement of not to be angry because such action is considered a childish behavior. The

statement is not merely an information but it also gives a good example and contains a moral value.

Datum 5



MAN : O Imam! I've never heard you speak a lie. Why don't you say a lie just once.

IMAM ALI : *Hmm... Why don't you put your hand down the toilet?* (5a)

MAN : Yuck! That is just disgusting

IMAM ALI : *That's exactly how I felt when you asked me to lie.* (5b)

(The man feels ashamed).

The theme of the subchapter is about the effect of lying and how it feels. Imam Ali, in this case, is asked by a man about his principle why he never lied to people. The man asks it intentionally to know about Imam Ali's principle. The utterance 5a is not only a statement but the speaker intentionally wants to give a direct example about something he wants to show. The directive speech act is uttered to give the direction in order the hearer remember what the speaker says. The utterance is classified as suggesting. It functions as a recommendation to do something. In addition, the utterance 5b is spoken in the form of a statement. Imam Ali feel that the man feels disgusting about lying so that he wants to give the man a direct lesson. The statement is classified as reminding something, that is for not lying to others because it is a bad manner. The speech act can be a clear explanation that not only the statement does the speaker want to imply but it can be a reminder for someone not to do the forbidden things.

Datum 6



The followers are asking to Imam Ali about how far the heaven is in forum.

THE FOLLOWERS : O Imam Ali can you tell us how far is heaven?

IMAM ALI : *Just two steps away.* (6a)

THE FOLLOWER : Which two steps?

IMAM ALI : *The first step is on your Nafs (Lower Self/ Ego)...* (6b)

...The next step is in Heaven. (6c)

The situation of the dialogue is when Imam Ali is asked by their followers about how far the heaven is. Imam Ali just gives the clue that it is two steps away from them. The followers ask about the steps. Imam Ali answers wisely and gives the direct explanation. The (6a) is the clue about the step of heaven. It is classified as giving the statement. The reason is that the speaker wants to give clear explanation about something. The same as the (6b) and (6c) become the detail explanation about the first and the second step. The illocutionary force from the three statements is to give explanation about something that Imam Ali believes that the best way to get the way of heaven is to step away our Ego and be lower self.

Helping Others without Hurting the Feelings

The last practice of religious moderation in the form of helping others without hurting the feelings are exemplified in the following scenes of 'Teaching Beautifully' and 'The Stranger'.

Datum 7



HASSAN : *Brother, he's doing his wudhu incorrectly.* (7a)

HUSSAIN : *How do we tell him without hurting his feeling?*

HASSAN : *I have plan.* (7b)

(Hasan comes to the old Badouin)

HASSAN : *Sir, My brother and I disagree who performs wudhu the best. Would you watch and judge who is the best?* (7c)

(Hassan and Hussain perform the wudhu)

OLD BEDOUIN : *By Allah, I did not know how to perform wudhu...*

One of the points of the story is telling about helping others even though we do not know them. The context of the situation is when two brothers, Imam Hasan and Hussain, see an old Bedouin performing his *wudhu* (cleaning parts of the body with water before praying) in a wrong way. Hasan and Husain have a plan to remind the old man without hurting his feeling by telling him that they will do a competition in *wudhu*. Actually, it is just a plan in order not to hurt the old man's feeling. The utterances 7a and 7b indicate giving an idea about something or giving a statement about the idea. Meanwhile, utterance 7c is the action of the idea which reflects religious moderation value in the form of giving a good

example without hurting others. The speaker uses an indirect strategy, which can be categorized into a directive speech act, by requesting something to the hearer. Actually, it is just a trick on how Hasan and Husain can give a direct example of performing *wudhu* by acting like they are being in a competition. The action can be the proof of what the comic implies in the story related to the religious moderation.

Datum 8



(Caliph Ali sees the old woman carrying her load alone....)

CALIPH ALI: *It seems there is no one to carry your load. Allow me.* (8a)

WOMAN : Thank you sir.

My husband was a soldier. Caliph Ali sent him to the frontlines where he was killed. Now I'm left alone with my children.

(The next morning...)

CALIPH ALI : *I brought some food for you. I can help around as well.* (8b)

WOMAN : O Thank you kind Sir!

You can take care of the kids while I cook.

CALIPH ALI : *Dear children. Forgive Ali if he has failed his duty towards you.* (8c)

WOMAN : Sir, start the fire in the oven, please.

CALIPH ALI : *Taste the heat of the fire it is for those who fail in their duty to widows and orphans.* (8d)

(Just then, the neighbor walks in and.....)

NEIGHBOUR : O Woman! It is the Caliph Ali working in your home.

WOMAN : Oh... I feel ashamed. Please forgive me.

CALIPH ALI : *No. Forgive me for I have failed my duty towards you.* (8e)

The context of the story is when Caliph Ali helps the women to carry the things. She is the wife of the soldier of Caliph Ali. The woman does not know that the man who helps him is Caliph Ali. The next morning Caliph Ali gives her the food and gives his services to the woman. Caliph Ali does this because he feels responsible for the death of her husband in the war. The woman knows that he is the Caliph Ali after her neighbor comes and tells her about it. The woman directly asks for forgiveness to Caliph Ali. The utterance 8a is the action of Caliph Ali to do a good deed. He does it intentionally because he feels that he has failed in the war, so that the woman's husband died on the battlefield. The utterance 8a is classified as a directive speech act with the function of recommending something. On the other side, the utterance 8b shows that Caliph Ali does his good deeds by giving some food and helping the woman in her house because she stays alone with two kids. Caliph Ali feels so sorry and he tries to help the woman as he can. Meanwhile, The utterance 8c is also a directive speech act with the function of requesting. It is asking for the children to forgive Ali. It is done by the speaker because he feels he has failed in the war. The utterance 8d tells the sorrow of

Caliph Ali by admitting that he has failed in the war. This utterance is classified as admitting in representative speech act. When someone feels so sorry about something and it is because of him, he will admit something in his sadness. As a commander, Caliph Ali tries to do his best after the death of his soldier in the war. Lastly, the utterance 8e is the answer of Ali on why he helped the women. He feels so sorry about her husband and wants to do the service because of his failure in the war. The utterance is classified as representative speech act by admitting something. The utterances 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, and 8e reflects a religious moderation value, that is helping others snidely without considering their different statuses. Whether someone is a commoner or a commander he/she is only a human being.

CONCLUSION

The speech acts reflected in the digital comic *40 Sufi* created by Mohammed Arif Vakil and Mohammed Ali Vakil in the chapter entitled 'Ethic' reflects religious moderation values in three points, namely: (1) applying the good attitudes among others; (2) reflecting the moral value; and (3) helping others without hurting the feelings by performing representative and directive speech acts to convey the values.

The representative acts function for giving statement and admitting about something related with a good deeds and never hurting others while the directive speech acts function for requesting, asking, and recommending something. The directive speech acts takes the role to convey directive meanings about moral values. Representative becomes the most dominant speech act in the subchapters. It manifests in the messages for giving the meanings on how beautiful Islam is. It is the idea of from which the religious moderation comes.

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ARTICLE CITATION IN *THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE 16*

In-text Citation

Hidayatulloh et al. (2024, 198)
..... (Hidayatulloh et al. 2024, 198)

Reference List Entry

Hidayatulloh, Aris, Abdul Ayiz, Hilal Rahmadan, and Lukman Abdul Mukti. 2024. "Speech Acts of Religious Moderation in Vakil and Vakil's Digital Comic 40 Sufi". *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 9 (2): 193-203. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v9i2.8477>.



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