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Commissives Speech Acts on COVID-19 News in *The Jakarta Post*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the felicity conditions of commissive speech acts in *The Jakarta Post* regarding COVID-19 news, which contain promises, threats, and offers. Drawing on frameworks developed by Austin and Searle, and later elaborated by Levinson, this study applies a pragmatic lens to assess whether these speech acts are felicitous or infelicitous. Misleading or infelicitous reporting may contribute to the spread of misinformation, potentially shaping public perceptions of health risks during the pandemic. Individuals should be careful when producing or interpreting utterances. This qualitative study analyzed news articles published between September 2020 and January 2021, as it focuses on understanding and interpreting the underlying meaning and context of commissives speech acts (promise, threat, and offer) in COVID-19 news articles in *The Jakarta Post*. The analysis reveals three distinct sorts of commissives speech acts: promise, threat, and offer. None of these speech acts are expressed by the performative verbs “to promise”, “to threaten”, or “to offer”, implying that the illocutionary-verb fallacy is frequent in the data. However, the language form that can be used to indicate commissives is futurity, accompanied by the utterance's content, which refers to the absence or presence of obligation or advantage. Additionally, the context of the utterance is critical in determining the speech acts. The findings of this study support Leech's hypothesis about the illocutionary-verb fallacy.

Keywords: Felicity Condition; Pragmatics; Context; Indonesia; Utterance

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1. Introduction

The world is facing the most threatening and frightening disease today. Starting from Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, COVID-19 has been recognized as the source of an outbreak of infectious respiratory disease since December 2019. On January 31, 2020, COVID-19 had spread to 19 countries with 11,791 confirmed cases including 213 deaths ^[1]. By March 31, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 719,758 confirmed cases globally and 33,673 related deaths ^[2]. In Indonesia, as of December 14, 2020, the Health Ministry recorded 623,309 confirmed cases, 18,956 deaths, and 510,957 recoveries. Realizing the fact that more and more deaths occur because of COVID-19, people need to work hand in hand to heal the world.

People produce millions of utterances on a daily basis to fulfill their needs as they communicate with each other to transfer messages or merely express their feelings. In this pandemic situation, people need to be cautious when they make statements related to COVID-19. Using the wrong choice of words can hurt others emotionally, leading to psychological distress and harm. For example, the government must prepare medicine and treatment for those infected by the virus. They need to guarantee their people that they will provide the medicine and treatment for the needs equally. They also must be able to calm their people and avoid panic in order to maintain state security and safety. One way to do this is by promising. The government promises their people sincerely that they will do their best to combat COVID-19. On the other hand, citizens are required to be very careful in expressing their opinions on this issue. Sharing information about the issue is essential. However, caution is necessary because some people may share false information or hoaxes. Hoaxes must be ignored and refused because they can threaten the human immune system by harming emotional and psychological well-being.

The psychological impact of misinformation and fearmongering is closely linked, as both can heighten anxiety, confusion, and distrust among the public. Misinformation spreads false or misleading information that distorts reality, while fearmongering intentionally amplifies threats or dangers, often without basis or by exaggerating the risks. Together, these practices can create a heightened sense of fear, leading people to make irrational decisions, panic, or ignore public health guidelines. This psychological distress not only undermines individual well-being but can also hinder collective efforts to manage crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

People can do something for humanity by offering or volunteering themselves to be vaccine-tested. In doing so, they have also helped the government to fight COVID-19. Utterances to express promising, guaranteeing, refusing,

threatening, volunteering, and offering are classified as commissives—a speech act that creates an obligation for the speaker to perform some action in the future ^[3,4]. However, not all refusals necessarily fall under commissive speech acts, because commissives are specifically characterized by the speaker's commitment to doing something in the future, such as making promises, offers, or threats. In contrast, refusals typically involve rejecting or denying something, which doesn't inherently imply a commitment or promise to act. To win this war, we need to make commitments in all possible ways.

Speech acts are particularly relevant in the context of COVID-19 communication because they shape how information is conveyed, interpreted, and acted upon by the public. During a global health crisis, the way promises, threats, and offers are presented in the media can significantly influence people's behavior and perceptions. For instance, promises made by health authorities about vaccines or treatments can build trust and compliance, while threats—such as warnings about severe consequences for non-compliance with health measures—can motivate precautionary actions. Offers related to aid, support, or resources can provide reassurance and guide citizens toward available assistance. Given the crucial role of communication in managing public health crises, understanding how speech acts function within COVID-19 discourse helps identify whether information is being communicated effectively and responsibly. Inaccurate or misleading speech acts can contribute to confusion, anxiety, or even the spread of misinformation, which can exacerbate the crisis. Therefore, analyzing speech acts within COVID-19 communication provides insights into the effectiveness and potential risks of media messaging during the pandemic.

As the spread of the COVID-19 virus is global, news about it can be accessed easily. Consequently, more and more utterances sharing COVID-19-related information have become our daily menu. Austin identified two types of utterances that humans produce—constatives and performatives—based on their truthfulness and felicity ^[5]. Truthfulness is applied to utterances to assess whether they fit the world, while felicity conditions are used to determine whether an utterance is performed appropriately. A constative utterance can typically be evaluated as true or false based on whether it aligns with reality. In contrast, a performative utterance must be assessed using Austin's felicity conditions to determine whether it is felicitous or infelicitous. Furthermore, both constatives and performatives can realize commissive speech acts, either directly or indirectly.

Commissive acts can be expressed directly or indirectly. A direct commissive explicitly marks the speaker's commitment with performative language—using verbs like promise, guarantee, or clear future-tense constructions—so that the structural form and illocutionary function align, and felicity conditions are straightforward to

evaluate ^[6]. In contrast, an indirect commissive conveys a commitment through a structure whose surface form differs from its intended commissive force—for example, saying, “We’ll see what happens tomorrow,” which implicitly commits to making a decision or taking action, even though no performative verb appears ^[7]. Indirect commissives rely heavily on contextual inference and shared background knowledge, making the assessment of preparatory and sincerity conditions more dependent on pragmatic cues and thus potentially more variable in interpretation.

Infelicitous utterances potentially contain hoaxes. The most relevant part of the felicity condition to hoaxes in COVID-19 news during the pandemic era is the sincerity condition. According to Austin and Searle’s framework, a speech act is felicitous when the speaker genuinely intends to carry out the act, and the listener can rely on this intention. In the context of hoaxes, the sincerity condition is violated when false or misleading promises, threats, or offers are made without the intention of being truthful or responsible. In the case of COVID-19 news, hoaxes often involve the intentional spread of misleading information about health measures, treatments, or vaccine efficacy. These deceptive acts fail the sincerity condition because they do not reflect genuine intentions to inform or protect the public. Instead, they mislead, creating confusion, fear, or complacency. As a result, the public may take dangerous actions or ignore safety guidelines, exacerbating the health crisis. Therefore, ensuring that the sincerity condition is met is crucial in preventing hoaxes and ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of COVID-19 communication.

Several studies have been conducted related to felicity conditions. Rabiah Rustam et al. found that news headlines are not just pieces of information—they are associated with communicating a range of messages, such as committing to future actions, announcing future activities, or pledging speaker intentions ^[8]. Hall’s study on UK broadsheet newspapers found that speech acts of informing, deliberating, and witnessing were used in reporting the 2010 student protests, revealing distinct linguistic strategies that shaped reader engagement and reflected each paper’s political stance ^[9]. Hadiati revealed that felicity condition is essential in calculating whether a speech is felicitous or infelicitous on a daily basis ^[10].

Despite these insights, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the application of felicity conditions to COVID-19-related news. Given the proliferation of misinformation during the pandemic, analyzing the felicity conditions of speech acts in COVID-19 news is crucial. Such an investigation can aid in discerning the reliability of information, thereby helping the public to avoid hoaxes and make informed decisions. The result of this study can help the public interpret commissive speech acts in the news. The study of commissive speech acts in COVID-19 news in *The Jakarta Post* focuses on

how the public interprets these speech acts because such an analysis helps understand the role of language in shaping public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors during a public health crisis. Commissive speech acts refer to statements where a speaker commits to a certain course of action, such as promises, vows, or offers. In the context of news about COVID-19, these speech acts might include government commitments, expert assurances, or public health recommendations. This article tries to depict the felicity condition of commissive speech acts in COVID-19 news to provide a deeper understanding of a language phenomenon in the current state of human life.

This study of commissive speech acts in COVID-19 news from *The Jakarta Post* contributes to pragmatic research by revealing how promises, threats, and offers shape public perception and behavior during crises. It further contributes to crisis communication studies by highlighting the role of felicity conditions in maintaining credibility and demonstrating how language used in news can influence trust, compliance, and the overall effectiveness of public health messaging.

2. Literature Review

Felicity condition falls into the field of pragmatic since it investigates the meaning of certain utterance based on context. Pragmatics has long been recognized as the wastebasket of linguistics ^[11]. However, this stigmatized thought has shifted as pragmatics is required if we want to understand human language fuller, deeper, and more comprehensively. Millions of utterances are produced to meet human communication’ needs. In uttering their utterance, the speaker does not only convey a message; they also perform something known as speech acts.

Speech acts have been classified by some linguists ^[4,5]. Austin initially proposed five categories of speech acts into five types such as verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. However, his classification faced several challenges, as even Austin acknowledged his dissatisfaction with it—particularly noting the difficulty in defining behabitives and expositives ^[5]. In response to these limitations, other linguists, including Searle, developed alternative frameworks ^[5]. Searle refined and reorganized Austin’s ideas, offering a more systematic classification into representatives, commissives, expressives, directives, and declarations. His model is generally preferred, as it addresses overlaps and inconsistencies in Austin’s categories. Searle also criticized Austin for not aligning his categories with clear definitions and for overlapping criteria. Furthermore, Leech identified what he called the illocutionary-verb fallacy in Austin’s model, pointing out confusion between speech acts and speech act verbs ^[12], an argument was also supported by Vanderveken^[13]. Based on

these considerations, this research adopts Searle's classification of speech acts.

Initially, Austin distinguished between two types of utterances: constative and performative. Constative utterances are statements that describe a situation or state of affairs and can be evaluated as true or false. For example, saying "It is raining" asserts a fact that can be verified. In contrast, performative utterances are not about describing but about performing an action through the act of speaking itself. When someone says, "I apologize", they are not describing an apology but actually performing the act of apologizing. These utterances are not judged by truth or falsity but by their felicity, that is, whether they successfully accomplish the intended action under appropriate circumstances. For a performative utterance to be felicitous, certain conditions must be met, such as the speaker having the authority to perform the act and the context being suitable for the action. If these conditions are not satisfied, the performative act is considered infelicitous or unsuccessful.

Commissives is one of Searle's classifications of speech act which occurs when a speaker makes his/her own future obligation via utterances. Levinson further classified commissives into three types that include promise, threat, and offer. Promise is a kind of speech act in which a speaker commits himself or herself to some future action ^[14]. Promise can only be performed in the future, which means people cannot make promises for the past. Promise is a speech act that will benefit the addressee or hearer. In addition, promise can be executed in various ways, and women tend to use body expression in promise ^[15]. A threat is the opposite of a promise. In performing threats, the speaker also commits himself or herself to some future action, but it will give no benefit to the addressee. Instead, it will harm the hearer. Threat has been classified into six types such as references to threats, generic reported threats, implied threats, indirect reported threats, direct reported threats, and ambiguous speech acts ^[16]. An offer can be executed when a speaker voluntarily offers something for the benefit of the hearer. A speaker cannot be considered making an offer when the thing she or he offers may harm the hearer or addressee. Vanderveken considered an offer as a conditional commissive, which means it can be either accepted or rejected ^[13]. **Table 1** shows the characteristics of commissives proposed by Levinson ^[14].

Table 1. The characteristics of commissives.

	Futurity	Obligation	Advantage
Promise	+	+	+
Threat	+	-	-
Offer	+	-	+

Table 1 shows the characteristics of commissives. It can be highlighted that futurity is obligatory which means it must be present in all commissives speech acts. Promise is indicated by futurity and the presence of obligation and advantage. Threat is signaled by futurity and the absence both of obligation and advantage. Meanwhile, offer is signaled by futurity and the absence of obligation and the presence of advantage.

To make the speech act felicitous, they must meet the felicity condition. This concept was initially introduced by Austin and was further developed by Searle ^[4,5]. Felicity conditions cover four basic conditions that must be fulfilled to make speech acts felicitous. Those are preparatory condition, propositional content, sincerity condition, and essential condition. A condition in which the speaker believes that he or she can perform a certain act (X) in the future or that the speaker has the status/ authority to produce the act is termed a preparatory condition. A propositional content refers to the condition that a speaker can express the act (X) without any hesitation or obstacle so that the hearer can catch the intention. Sincerity condition happens when the speaker believes that the act (X) will give benefit or disadvantage to the hearer and essential condition takes place when speaker is attempting to commit himself/herself to some future action which means changing the situation from non-obligation to obligation.

Table 2 has shown the felicity condition of commissives. A promise can be a promise if it fulfills the felicity condition. The preparatory condition of a promise, for example, is when a speaker has the capacity to make his promise come true and the propositional content takes place when speaker can clearly convey his message to the hearer which means speaker can linguistically produce proper utterance. Sincerity condition occurs when the hearer believes that the utterance will benefit to them as the essential condition happens when the speaker commits himself to some future action or when the speaker finally fulfils his promise.

Table 2. The felicity condition of commissives.

Felicity Condition	Commissives		
	Promise	Threat	Offer
Preparatory Condition	+	+	+
Propositional Content	+	+	+
Sincerity Condition	+	-	+
Essential Condition	+	+	+

Promise, threat, and offer can be easily recognized from its performative verb as it is illustrated below:

(1) I will fire you.

Utterance (1) can be classified as threat which is

indicated by the verb fire, and utterance (2) below is an example of a promise as it is indicated by the verb promise.

(2) I promise I will come to your house.

The difference between these two utterances is that the first utterance will give a disadvantage to the hearer, and the second utterance may bring an advantage to the hearer. The existence of performative verbs is helpful in classifying the type of speech act; however, some utterances are produced without specific performative verbs so that the acknowledgement of context will be a must. Utterance (2) can be interpreted as a threat in a certain context. For example, if a speaker lends a car to the hearer and the hearer has just got an accident with the car, utterance (2) can be a threat for the hearer. Thus, context is essential in pragmatics. Several linguists have formulated context in pragmatics [14,17,18]. We can highlight that context is any circumstances that take place around the process of transferring message from speaker to hearer. Context can be helpful information for both speaker and hearer to achieve the goal of communication. The information may include who the speakers are, what topics they talk about, the place where the conversation takes place, and the instrumentalities used by both parties.

Contemporary scholars such as Hadiati et al. explore the use of felicity conditions on news, focusing on expressive speech acts [19]. They found that the utterances on the news met the condition of felicity indicating the appropriateness and sincerity of the news. Al-Hussaeni and Al-Shaibani examined the applicability of Austin's felicity conditions to same-sex marriage within Christian and Islamic cultures [20]. They concluded that same-sex marriage lacks the necessary social, religious, and linguistic conventions to fulfill these conditions in both cultures. Specifically, traditional marriage rituals and language, such as the pronouncement "I now pronounce you husband and wife," do not accommodate same-sex unions, rendering such marriages infelicitous within these cultural contexts. This study highlights the cultural specificity of speech acts and the importance of conventional procedures in their successful performance. By demonstrating that same-sex marriage does not meet the established felicity conditions in certain cultures, the research underscores the role of societal norms and language in the recognition and legitimacy of social acts.

Although expressive and declarative speech acts have been widely studied in news discourse, commissive speech acts remain underexplored, especially in the context of public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research has focused on emotional expressions and sociocultural declarations, overlooking how commitments are communicated and interpreted. This gap is significant because, during the pandemic, institutions frequently issue promises and pledges that influenced public behavior and trust. Commissive speech acts are particularly impactful

due to their illocutionary force, binding the speaker to future actions. Therefore, examining how these acts function in news reporting is essential to understanding the role of language in crisis communication.

This study is necessary to address the lack of research on commissive speech acts in pandemic-related news reporting, particularly within the context of *The Jakarta Post*. It provides valuable insights into how institutional commitments are linguistically constructed during crises. By analyzing an English-language media outlet in a non-native English-speaking country, the study uncovers culturally specific or hybrid pragmatic strategies. It also explores how commissives influence public trust and the reception of policies. Lastly, examining the felicity conditions of these speech acts assesses their communicative success and effectiveness in crisis communication.

3. Methods

The research on commissives speech acts on coronavirus news in *The Jakarta Post* belongs to descriptive qualitative research as it tries to describe human language behavior which was depicted in the news about coronavirus in *The Jakarta Post*. *The Jakarta Post*, with its tagline *Always bold Always independent*, is chosen as the data source for analyzing Commissives Speech Acts in COVID-19 news due to its credibility, wide readership, and influence on public perception. Its English-language reporting offers rich, accessible content that reflects both national and global discourse, making it highly relevant for pragmatic research on crisis communication.

The data for this research were manually collected from COVID-19-related news articles published on *The Jakarta Post* website (<https://www.thejakartapost.com>) between April and December 2020. This time frame was purposefully chosen because it represents a crucial and dynamic period in the spread of the coronavirus in Indonesia. April 2020 marks the onset of major government responses, including the implementation of large-scale work-from-home policies and public health measures. Meanwhile, by December 2020, significant developments had occurred, such as preparations for vaccination programs and the introduction of recovery policies. This period captures a wide range of commissives speech acts—especially those involving promises, plans, and commitments made by authorities in response to the pandemic. The recurrence of commissives utterances throughout this period further confirms that it is representative of the broader discursive patterns found in COVID-19 news reporting.

A total of 198 news articles were selected as data. The inclusion criteria for article selection were: (1) the article must address themes related to COVID-19, and (2) the

article must contain at least one utterance that qualifies as a commissive speech act, either explicit or implicit. Articles that did not fulfill both criteria were excluded from the analysis. This selection process ensured that only relevant and contextually rich data were included for pragmatic analysis.

The unit of analysis of this research is commissives or utterance that create speakers' future obligation. Commissives speech acts are identified by the presence of futurity; it is obligatory. In addition, the absence and presence of obligation and advantage can identify commissives speech act. Data were analyzed using Austin's felicity condition that embraces preparatory condition, propositional content, sincerity condition, and essential content to indicate the felicity of the news.

To analyze the data, the study employed Austin's felicity conditions—which include the preparatory condition, propositional content, sincerity condition, and essential condition—to evaluate the effectiveness and contextual appropriateness of each commissive utterance. These conditions help determine whether a speech act is performed successfully, based on the context and intention behind the statement. In this study, the application of Austin's felicity conditions was further adapted from Hadiati ^[10], who developed a context-sensitive framework for analyzing speech acts in Banyumasan daily conversation. Hadiati's adaptation emphasizes cultural and situational relevance, highlighting the need to consider the speaker's authority, the hearer's expectations, social norms, and the pragmatic function of the speech act within a given communicative setting. This adaptation was particularly useful in analyzing the nuanced expression of commissive speech acts in media discourse, where directness and explicitness are often shaped by institutional and sociopolitical contexts.

To differentiate explicit and implicit commissives speech acts, clear operational definitions and coding criteria were established. Explicit commissives are utterances that contain performative verbs such as promise, guarantee, offer, or commit, making the speaker's intention directly recognizable (e.g., "We promise to deliver vaccines by March"). In contrast, implicit commissives do not use performative verbs but still convey a future obligation or commitment through context, tone, or structure (e.g., "The government will provide financial aid to affected families," which implies a promise). The coding scheme required the presence of futurity, implied or stated obligation, and a benefit or burden resulting from the utterance.

To minimize subjectivity and enhance analytical reliability, the study implemented a systematic inter-coder reliability process. Two trained coders independently analyzed the data to identify commissive speech acts, including promises, threats, and offers. Prior to coding, both coders participated in a structured training session, which involved a review of the theoretical framework behind speech act theory and commissive acts, joint coding of a pilot sample of 10 articles (not included in the main data set), and detailed discussions to clarify category definitions. A coding manual was developed to ensure consistency and reduce ambiguity during the classification process.

All coding disagreements were reviewed and resolved through discussion. If consensus could not be immediately reached, a third expert in discourse analysis was consulted to make the final determination. This triangulation approach strengthened the validity of the analysis and ensured that classifications were both consistent and theoretically grounded.

The inclusion of contextual information—such as speaker identity, timing, and co-text—was also crucial in interpreting implicit commissives, particularly because many instances did not include performative verbs. Contextual interpretation provided a richer, more accurate understanding of how commissives acts functioned in the discourse of COVID-19 news. This methodological approach ensures that the study remains systematic, transparent, and replicable.

The inclusion of contextual information—such as speaker identity, timing, and co-text—was also crucial in interpreting implicit commissives, particularly because many instances did not include performative verbs. Contextual interpretation, supported by Hadiati's adaptation of felicity conditions, provided a richer, more accurate understanding of how commissive acts functioned in COVID-19 news discourse. This methodological approach ensures that the study remains systematic, transparent, and replicable.

To demonstrate how the felicity conditions were applied in the analysis, consider the following utterance from one of the articles:

"Next week, Insya Allah [God willing], we will start the [immunization] simulation."

This utterance was classified as a commissive speech act, specifically a mitigated promise. The application of Austin's felicity conditions—adapted from Hadiati (2019)—is summarized as follows (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Felicity conditions of the mitigated promise.

Felicity Condition	Explanation for the Utterance	Status
Preparatory Condition	The speaker (likely a government or health authority) has the capacity and institutional power to conduct an immunization simulation.	Met
Propositional Content	The utterance refers to a future action (<i>starting the simulation</i>), which is a necessary condition for commissives.	Met
Sincerity Condition	The use of " <i>Insyah Allah [God willing]</i> " indicates sincerity, but with religious or cultural humility —showing intent, yet recognizing divine will.	Partially Met (contextualized)
Essential Condition	The speaker commits themselves to a course of action (starting the simulation), thus fulfilling the basic function of a commissive.	Met

The use of “Insyah Allah” illustrates how religious or cultural modifiers in Indonesian discourse may mitigate the strength of commitment without negating the commissive function. This culturally nuanced interpretation reflects Hadiati’s framework, which emphasizes the role of local norms in assessing pragmatic felicity ^[10].

Despite the efforts to minimize bias and subjectivity, the study has some limitations. First, the analysis is based solely on *The Jakarta Post*, a single news source, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other media outlets in Indonesia or globally. Other newspapers or broadcast media may employ different linguistic strategies or have varying editorial slants that influence the presentation of commissives speech acts. Additionally, since the study focuses on data from April to December 2020, it does not account for any subsequent shifts in language use or new patterns in crisis communication as the pandemic evolved. Lastly, while inter-coder reliability was addressed, there is still a possibility of subjectivity in the interpretation of implicit commissives, especially when context or speaker intention is ambiguous.

4. Results

The result depicts the type of commissive based on Levinson that includes promise, threat, and offer. **Table 4** shows the frequency of different commissives speech acts identified in COVID-19 news articles from *The Jakarta Post*. The data highlights how frequently promises, threats, and offers appear in the articles during the specified period.

The analysis of commissives speech acts in *The Jakarta Post* reveals important trends in the way the newspaper approached COVID-19 coverage through promises, threats, and offers. The largest number of commissives speech acts, 50, are promises, indicating that the newspaper heavily emphasizes assurances from health authorities, government officials, or organizations. These promises often relate to the availability of vaccines, healthcare infrastructure, and other forms of support.

This focus on promises highlights a strategy aimed at fostering trust and hope, which are crucial in times of crisis. By emphasizing reassurance, *The Jakarta Post* plays an important role in maintaining public confidence and encouraging compliance with health measures.

Table 4. Result of commissive speech act in *the jakarta post* news on corona virus.

Speech Act	Frequency
Promise	50
Threat	15
Offer	30
Total	95

In contrast, the relatively small number of threats—just 15—suggests that the newspaper adopts a cautious approach to fear-based communication. Threats could include warnings about the consequences of non-compliance with health measures like lockdowns, mask-wearing, or social distancing. The low frequency of threats indicates that *The Jakarta Post* prioritizes messages that balance caution with optimism, avoiding panic or distress. This choice aligns with a more constructive approach to crisis communication, which focuses on providing actionable information while steering clear of fearmongering.

The presence of 30 offers, which fall between promises and threats in frequency, implies a balanced approach. Offers typically refer to resources or support available to the public, such as healthcare services, government aid, or community initiatives. The prevalence of offers in the newspaper’s coverage suggests that *The Jakarta Post* actively informs the public about how they can access assistance during the pandemic. This focus on offers shows that the media is presenting practical solutions and resources, helping the public navigate the crisis more effectively.

In analyzing commissive speech acts found in *The Jakarta Post*'s coverage of COVID-19, it is evident that "promise" is the most dominant form, comprising 52.6% of all commissive expressions. This suggests that the news frequently reported commitments or assurances made by public officials, government bodies, or institutions during the pandemic. These could include promises related to vaccine distribution, economic recovery efforts, healthcare support, or public safety measures—reflecting an attempt to instill hope and maintain public trust in uncertain times.

Conversely, "threats" appear far less frequently (15.8%), indicating that the language used in the news tended to avoid coercive or fear-inducing statements. This aligns with a more measured journalistic tone where threats—such as penalties for violating health protocols or consequences of non-compliance—were mentioned less often, potentially to prevent public panic or backlash.

"Offers" account for 31.6%, reflecting instances where authorities or organizations extended help or resources—such as offering free vaccinations, financial aid, or public services. This suggests a supportive narrative, focusing on solutions and collective responsibility during the pandemic.

The mean occurrence of commissive acts (~32.7) indicates that, on average, each speech act type appeared around 33 times in the data set. However, this average is skewed by the high frequency of promises, which inflates the central tendency. The standard deviation of approximately 15.38 further shows that there is moderate variability across the categories, pointing to an uneven

distribution of speech act types, with promises significantly outnumbering threats and offers.

The implications of these findings reveal a trust-building approach in the newspaper's communication strategy. The prominence of promises and offers over threats indicates that *The Jakarta Post* seeks to foster cooperation and engagement with the public rather than relying on fear-based tactics. This is aimed at helping the public feel more in control and confident in the steps being taken to combat the pandemic. Moreover, the relatively balanced use of promises and offers reflects a constructive crisis communication approach, focusing on providing information and resources, which is essential in managing anxiety and guiding the public toward positive actions such as vaccination and adherence to health protocols.

However, the lower frequency of threats might suggest a gap in the emphasis on the consequences of non-compliance with health guidelines. While avoiding panic is beneficial, it may also understate the seriousness of failing to follow certain measures. In conclusion, the distribution of commissives speech acts in *The Jakarta Post*'s COVID-19 coverage shows a communication strategy that prioritizes reassurance and positive engagement, with the goal of instilling confidence and promoting cooperative behavior without resorting to excessive fear tactics.

Table 5 illustrates examples of the three types of commissives speech acts—promises, threats, and offers—found in the COVID-19 news articles from *The Jakarta Post*. The examples provided help to clarify how each type of commissives speech act is used in context ^[14].

Table 5. The commissive speech act in *the jakarta post* news on corona virus.

Promise	Bio Farma will focus on storing the vaccine as well as making several preparations for its distribution after obtaining a license to use from the BPOM.
	Next week, Insya Allah [God willing], we will start the [immunization] simulation.
	We've gotten used to working virtually since April, so [the public] should not be worried that our productivity and other policy-making processes will be disrupted.
Threat	If we are even just a little careless and ignore the health protocols, we will be exposed. COVID-19 will continue to exist.
Offer	At first, I thought only certain groups of people could apply to be volunteers. But then I heard that 1,620 volunteers would be needed from among the general public, so I became more convinced to sign up as a volunteer.
	We sent a letter to the ministry on Sept, 17 and we're still waiting for a response.

In the promise category, the first example explicitly commits Bio Farma to future action, meeting all felicity conditions, particularly those related to authority and propositional content. The second example, although softened by the culturally embedded expression *Insya Allah*, still constitutes a mitigated promise—showing intent moderated by religious and social norms, as outlined in Hadiati's adaptation of felicity conditions ^[10]. The third promise subtly assures readers of continued policy

performance, functioning as an implicit promise grounded in institutional stability.

The threats identified include both direct and indirect warnings. The first threat uses conditional logic to forecast negative outcomes if health protocols are neglected, fulfilling the sincerity and essential conditions. The second threat, though phrased as a factual statement, implies an ongoing danger, performing a generalized threat by emphasizing persistence rather than specific consequences.

For offers, the first example reflects an extension of opportunity to the general public, indicating the institution's willingness to involve citizens in vaccination trials—an offer implicitly communicated through personal reflection. The second example suggests a pending institutional interaction, implying a willingness to proceed if the other party responds. Though subtle, it functions as a standing offer, especially relevant in administrative or governmental discourse.

These distinctions reinforce the need for nuanced, context-sensitive analysis of speech acts in media texts, particularly during crisis periods, where communicative intent often balances between reassurance, caution, and mobilization.

5. Discussion

Commissives contains promise, threat, and offer as proposed by Levinson. The discussion portraits the analysis of felicity condition of each type.

5.1. Promise

Promise takes place when a speaker commits himself or herself to the future action that will give benefits to the hearer. Utterances that belong to this type can be seen in utterances (3) and (4).

(3) Next week, Insya Allah [God willing], we will start the [immunization] simulation.

Utterance (3) fulfils the characteristics of promise. 'Will start' indicates the futurity of utterance (3). Obligation is made as the speaker, the President of Indonesia, is obliged to do what he has said in utterance (3). As for the advantage, utterance (3) gives benefits to the listeners by giving them assurance that the vaccine will be administered soon, so they can be immune to Covid-19 virus. Thus, utterance (3) indicates futurity and the presence of both obligation and advantage.

Crucially, this utterance gains its full commissives force not only from its content but also from the institutional power of the speaker. As the President of the Republic of Indonesia, the speaker holds both the authority and the resources to realize the promised action. His position lends credibility and enforceability to utterance, making it a strong, high stakes promise in the public eye. However, if the same utterance were spoken by someone without institutional authority—such as a private citizen, journalist, or unofficial spokesperson, the felicity of the promise could be questioned. Without the power to enact the proposed immunization simulation, the speaker might be seen as speculating or expressing hope rather than making a binding commitment. In such cases, the felicity of the commissives act becomes partial or even infelicitous, especially if the speaker lacks the preparatory condition of having control over the promised future action. This

underscores how power dynamics and speaker authority are essential contextual factors in evaluating whether a commissives speech act is truly felicitous.

The preparatory condition of utterance (3) is that the president of the republic of Indonesia can perform the content of his utterance by starting the immunization simulation. President knows the condition that Indonesia will get secured vaccine supplies from Sinovac, Sinopharm, and CanSino Biologics which was scheduled for November 2020. As the president of the Republic Indonesia, he has the authority to command Indonesian Ministry of Health to start the immunization simulation. Thus, utterance no (3) achieves its preparatory condition.

Essential condition of utterance (3) can be completed since this utterance gives benefits to the hearers. When the president says that he will start the immunization simulation people can infer that the vaccine will soon be ready to be distributed, and they hope the vaccine can improve their immune system to combat the disease. Citizens believe that vaccination is essential in maintaining human's immunity and they believe that it will benefit them. Therefore, utterance (3) accomplishes the essential condition.

As utterance (3) is spoken by the president of a country, people of the country believe that the president tells them the truth. The president commits himself to future action as stated in the utterance. It is indicated by futurity expressed by the linguistic form 'will', next week', and 'Insya Allah'. Additionally, the term 'Insya Allah' is used by Indonesians to refer to future commitment ^[21]. He genuinely promises his people that the nation will start the immunization simulation. By producing utterance (4), the speaker is obliged to do some future action.

The absence of verb 'promise' in utterance (3) does not mean that utterance (3) is not a promise. Utterance (3) is still a promise as it commits the speaker to some future action, and it is believed to give benefits to the hearer or readers. The commitment to some future action and that it will be beneficial for the hearer are the characteristics of promise. This finding is in line with who argue that the illocutionary force of commissives acts does not rely solely on explicit performative verbs ^[22]. Instead, promises can be implicitly conveyed through contextual cues, speaker intention, and the structure of the utterance itself. In public discourse, especially in institutional or governmental communication, such implicit commissives are common, as the use of performative verbs may be replaced with more strategic or culturally appropriate expressions. Thus, utterance (3), though indirect, still fulfils the key features of a promise—namely, commitment, futurity, and benefit to the hearer—and should be analyzed as a commissives act despite the absence of the verb 'promise'.

(4) "We've gotten used to working virtually since

April, so [the public] should not be worried that our productivity and other policy-making processes will be disrupted", he said.

The characteristics of promise are fulfilled in utterance (4). The futurity in this utterance is shown in the linguistic form 'should not be worried'. The obligation in this utterance is also fulfilled since the speaker is the Jakarta Governor. Moreover, this utterance also gives advantages to people, especially those who live in Jakarta, because the government will still be able to give their best service during the pandemic.

Utterance (4) is used by the speaker to promise the hearers that pandemic situation will not affect his productivity. This utterance is spoken by Jakarta Governor who has tested positive for COVID-19 the day after his deputy was identified to have the illness. The utterance is produced on December the first. The speaker is also familiar that in September 2020, Jakarta administration secretary tested positive for Covid-19 and died soon after that. Those people work in the same office, and it indicates the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace is high. In addition, the statistics of last November 2020 show that Jakarta has logged massive victims of COVID-19 with a total of 13,6861 confirmed cases and 2,660 deaths.

The felicity condition of utterance (4) can be formulated as follows. The preparatory condition of utterance (4) is that the speaker has the capacity to realize the content of the utterance in the future. As the governor of Jakarta, a speaker can manage to give services to his people even though he has to work virtually. He and his team can work properly so that people do not need to worry about Jakarta administration's productivity. Referring to the previous statement that they have started working virtually since April, all policy-making process will not be disrupted. Considering the circumstance and the speaker himself, utterance (4) has completed the preparatory condition.

The propositional content is realized when the speaker makes his utterance clear so that hearer or reader can catch the information properly. The message conveyed by utterance (4) can be clearly comprehended by the hearer. It portrays that utterance (4) has achieved the propositional content.

Utterance (4) is supposed to give benefit to the hearer because by stating that public should not be worried about the productivity of Jakarta administration office, the speaker makes sure that his utterance will be beneficial for the hearer. This utterance indicates that Jakarta administration office can function properly in this pandemic era, and the fact that they work virtually will not affect their productivity. They still can serve the citizens properly. If the speaker does not produce utterance (4), public may think that they will face some obstacles in handling any administration issues. As utterance (4) is beneficial for the hearer, the essential condition is fulfilled.

Utterance (4) was produced in December the first

2020, and the speaker proves that he can manage his work virtually. On 23 December, Jakarta Governor attended the virtual Christmas celebration and said that Jakarta administration office supported religious events as Jakarta is a city with social justice. It can be said that the speaker of utterance (4), who is also the Jakarta Governor has shown his sincerity to make sure that the pandemic condition will not disrupt his productivity. By showing this evidence, it can be summarized that utterance (4) fulfils the sincerity condition.

Utterance (4) is a promise even though the speaker does not use the performative verb 'promise'. Utterance (4) has made the speaker, the Jakarta Governor, obliged to some future action (making sure that the productivity of Jakarta administration office will not be disrupted during the pandemic era). It can be indicated that the existence of performative verbs is not obligatory since the intention of an utterance can be traced through the context. A promise can be indicated by two characteristics that is a future action and that of beneficial to the hearers. Utterance (3) and (4) are used to express promise without explicitly mentioning the performative verb. This supports the idea of illocutionary-verb fallacy by Leech ^[12].

The illocutionary-verb fallacy, as identified by Leech ^[12], refers to the mistaken assumption that the presence of a verb like "promise" or "offer" automatically indicates a specific speech act, without considering the broader communicative context. In researching Commissives Speech Acts in COVID-19 news, this fallacy may lead to misidentification, oversimplification, and misunderstanding of speech acts by overlooking speaker's intention, felicity conditions, and contextual nuances essential for accurate analysis.

5.2. Threat

A threat is a speech act that indicates future action and the fact that it will harm the hearer. Threats are not neutral; they are shaped by who speaks and who is addressed. A government official using "If we are careless, we will be exposed" presents it as a justified warning, reinforcing the need for state control and surveillance. Speech acts like this help shape public perception of crisis management. Governments may use warnings and threats to legitimize strict policies, control narratives, and enforce obedience. Data shows several utterances that indicate a threat as it can be found in utterance (5).

(5) If we are even just a little careless and ignore the health protocols, we will be exposed.

Utterance (5) has all characteristics of threat. The futurity of 'threat' in this utterance is expressed by linguistic form 'will be exposed'. Besides, threat' is indicated by the absence of advantage. The disadvantage of

this utterance can be identified in the word 'exposed' which means that if people do not apply health protocols, they will be infected with virus Covid-19. Obligation is absent due to the use of verb 'ignore'. It means, the speaker is not obliged to ignore the health protocols if they want to be exposed. In fact, people do not want to be exposed to the virus. Thus, utterance (5) indicates threat as it signals the futurity and the absence of advantage and obligation. Moreover, it has the potential to harm the hearer.

Utterance (5) is meant by the speaker to threaten anyone who ignores the health protocols. Utterance (5) is spoken by Doni Monardo, the chief of the national COVID-19 task force. He has issued a stern warning on the importance of obeying COVID-19 protocols all the time as a person can carry the virus without knowing it and transmit it to their family or coworkers. People need to be extra careful in conducting outdoor activities.

The preparatory condition of utterance (5) is that the speaker has the authority to perform that utterance as he is the chief of the national COVID-19 task force and the head of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). Based on his position, he must remind people to obey health protocols when they do outdoor activities. The health protocols include maintaining physical distance, wearing masks, avoiding crowds, and washing hands. If people disobey the health protocols, they can be the virus carrier and end up transmitting the virus to their family or close relatives. The more people infected by the COVID-19 virus, the more work for the task force may threaten more and more people. Knowing the present condition of COVID-19 in Indonesia, the speaker produces utterance (5) to highlight the potential threat. Realizing the circumstance of the utterance, it can be summed up that utterance (5) fulfills the preparatory condition.

Utterance (5) is clearly spoken by the speaker, and hearer can catch the message evidently. Speakers can transform the message without facing any obstacle. This indicates that the propositional content is achieved.

Utterance (5) is believed to give disadvantage to the hearer as it informs that people can be exposed to the virus if they do not obey the health protocols. If people are exposed to the virus, they must be hospitalized, and they can transform it into their family. Around 7 percent of COVID-19 patients are currently receiving treatment at Wisma Atlet COVID-19 emergency hospital in Jakarta. This shows that the spread of the virus can take place in the house even if the patient does not do any outdoor activity. He or she can be infected by other family members who conduct outdoor activities without obeying health protocols. By stating utterance (5), the speaker shows that there is a threat if people do not obey the health protocols. As utterance (5) is believed to give disadvantages to the hearer, it fulfills the essential condition of a threat.

Utterance (5) was produced on September 28, 2020, and the latest information confirms that the spread of the coronavirus in the country remained uncontrollable. This means that the disobeying health protocols will threaten everyone as they can be exposed to the virus. The threat showed in utterance (5) has finally fulfilled the sincerity condition, which is proved by the increasing number of infected patients.

Considering the felicity condition of utterance (5), we can see that this utterance is meant to threaten people who disobey the health protocols as they may be infected or transmitted the virus. Threatening others can be done by using performative verbs to threaten them, which means that the existence of performative verbs in a speech act is optional. Bearing in mind that the context of the utterance functions as evidence to classify the speech act of each utterance.

The sentence can also be interpreted as coercive, particularly if coming from an authority figure with power to enforce restrictions. By stating that non-compliance will lead to continued suffering, the statement subtly threatens undesirable consequences, possibly justifying punitive measures (e.g., fines, lockdown extensions, loss of freedom). The coercion is not explicit (it does not say, "You will be punished"), but the implication is that non-compliance leads to harm, reinforcing state control over personal choices.

Another example of threat is:

(6) "COVID-19 will continue to exist"

This utterance is also included as a threat. A threat involves a speaker committing to an action that has negative consequences for the hearer. While this sentence does not explicitly state a personal commitment, it implies a negative future scenario: the continued existence of COVID-19. It is spoken in a context where the speaker has some control or influence over the situation, since it is uttered by Doni Monardo, the chief of National COVID-19 task force. Thus, it could be perceived as a warning or a veiled threat.

In addition, many threats are structured as "If you don't X, then Y will happen." While this sentence lacks an explicit condition, it could be an implicit threat depending on the context. An authority figure uses this statement to push for vaccinations which means "If people don't get vaccinated, COVID-19 will not go away." The missing condition makes the threat less explicit, but it can still function as one if the context frames it as an undesirable consequence linked to an expected action.

The preparatory condition of utterance (6) shows that the speaker has power to utter this since he is the chief of National COVID-19 task force and the head of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). This utterance does not explicitly show the threat but there is an implied condition: if people do not get vaccinated, then COVID-19

will continue to exist. Thus, this utterance fulfills the preparatory condition as a threat since it is spoken by an authoritative figure.

The propositional content of utterance (6) is achieved since this utterance is clearly spoken. The readers can understand the information clearly. Even though the condition of threat is not explicit, the readers can catch the message because the speaker previously mentions vaccination. Thus, the context plays an essential role in delivering the message to the readers.

Utterance (6) indicates disadvantages to the readers as it informs that COVID-19 will not go away if people do not get vaccinated. The speaker intends to warn or persuade the hearer by presenting a conditional negative outcome that depends on the public's action or inaction. Some of the disadvantages that people might face if COVID-19 will continue to exist include severe illness and death, job loss and income insecurity, reduced social interaction, travel restriction and lockdown, and healthcare worker burnout. Despite the implicit disadvantages, people can obtain the meaning of this utterance by paying attention to the context of utterance. As utterance (6) is believed to give disadvantages to the hearer, it fulfils the essential condition of a threat.

Utterance (6) exhibits that the speaker genuinely believes that not getting vaccinated will have serious negative consequences. Those consequences do not explicitly mention, instead the speaker hints that COVID-19 will not go away. It means utterance (6) realizes the sincerity condition of a threat as the speaker sincerely holds the belief that failing to get vaccinated will lead to significant harmful outcomes.

Utterance (6) shows that the speaker has power to utter this since he is the chief of National COVID-19 task force and the head of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). In speech act theory, especially from a socio-pragmatic perspective, the illocutionary force of an utterance is not just determined by its linguistic form but also by who is speaking and in what context. While the sentence may appear to be a simple assertive (a statement of fact), in the mouth of a high-ranking official, it gains the character of a commissives speech act with performative intent—pressuring the public to act (i.e., get vaccinated).

This utterance exemplifies how powerful institutional roles transform speech acts: the chief of the National COVID-19 Task Force and BNPB does not merely convey information; he uses language to influence, persuade, and perform policy through speech. The authority of his position gives the statement a force, shaping public interpretation and reinforcing state-endorsed health behaviors.

It is important to clarify how threats differ from warnings, even though both may contain similar linguistic structures such as conditional statements and future

projections. The difference lies primarily in speaker intention, implied power relations, and pragmatic effect. A warning is typically a neutral or benevolent act intended to alert the hearer of potential danger, often motivated by concern or duty. For instance, “Be careful, COVID-19 cases are rising again” is a warning meant to inform and protect. In contrast, a threat often serves an instrumental purpose, particularly in institutional or political contexts. It is designed to deter noncompliance or reinforce authority. While a warning may leave room for personal judgment, a threat constrains behavior through the anticipation of harm—implicitly or explicitly tied to disobedience.

5.3. Offer

An offer is a type of commissives with two characteristics, the first is a future action, and the second is that the speaker offers something to the hearer or to the third party. An offer can be executed by using performative verbs to offer'. However, it is not always the case as it is shown in utterance (6).

(7) We sent a letter to the ministry on Sept 17 and we're still waiting for a response.

Utterance (7) is classified as offer as it is uttered in a future time that is signaled by ‘we’re still waiting’. The construction ‘we’re still waiting’ indicates that the action of waiting is still lasting. Besides futurity, advantage is shown by utterance (7) relates to the content of the utterance. The speaker is Russian Ambassador to Indonesia who is willing to offer their vaccine to Indonesia through the letter of offer which has been sent on September 17, 2020. Offering vaccine from Russia to Indonesia will give advantage to Russia which is represented by the speaker. Obligation is absent in utterance (7) since by uttering it, the speaker is not obliged to get the contract of selling the vaccine to Indonesia. She is only responsible for offering but not obliged to get the contract. The presence of futurity as well as advantage, and the absence of obligation indicate that utterance (7) is an offer.

Utterance (7) is uttered by Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Lyudmila Vorobieva. Knowing the condition COVID-19's spread in Indonesia, the Russian government has officially made an offer to the Indonesian government. They send a letter of offering for the use and further development of coronavirus vaccine, Sputnik V. This vaccine is developed by the Gamaleya research institute in collaboration with the Russian defense ministry. The Russian government has probably been informed that Indonesia plans to get the Sinovac Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine from China. Sputnik V has been developed over 20 years and had created the basis for several vaccines in the past, including those against Ebola. This vaccine has been clinically tested worldwide including in the Philippines.

As utterance (7) is produced by the Russian Ambassador for Indonesia, we may assume that she knows the condition of COVID-19's spread in Indonesia. She knows that her country also produces the possibly needed vaccine for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It is also very probable that she acknowledges that Indonesian government has a plan to get the vaccine from China. Knowing the circumstances in Indonesia, the speaker as the Russian Ambassador makes utterance (7) to show an offer to Indonesian government to buy the vaccine from Russia. Based on the circumstances, utterance (7) has accomplished the preparatory condition of an offer.

The speaker produces utterance (7) without any obstacle as the message can be clearly understood by the hearers or readers. Utterance (7) informs that the Russian government has sent the letter of offering (Sputnik V) vaccine to Indonesian ministry as they still wait for the response (from Indonesia government). Based on utterance (7) Indonesia government has not responded to the offering yet due to Indonesia's previous agreement with China to provide Sinovac Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine. As the information can be clearly understood by the hearer, utterance (7) has accomplished the propositional content.

The essential condition of utterance (7) can be seen from the fact that this utterance is genuinely directed to make an offer by the Russian government to the Indonesian government. They offer Sputnik V as it has already been tested worldwide, and it had long been developed by Russian scientists over 20 years. This vaccine is developed by using similar technology to the COVID-19 vaccine prototype developed by CanSino, a Chinese vaccine-making company. Realizing these convincing data, the Russian government sent a letter of offering to Indonesia government as it is stated in utterance (7). Accordingly, utterance (7) has completed the essential condition of an offer.

The latest information confirmed that Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM) has finally given out the emergency use authorization (EUA) for Chinese firm Sinovac Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine which means that the vaccine is ready to use. This means that Russian government's offer is refused or probably suspended by Indonesian government. Even if the offer is refused or suspended it does not mean that the offer is infelicitous. The offer is still felicitous. One thing to highlight is that the offer stated by utterance (7) is not linguistically realized into verb 'to offer' instead it linguistically informs that speaker (the Russian government) has sent a letter to Indonesian government, and they still wait for the response. The verb used in utterance (7) are sent and wait which has no correlation with the verb 'to offer'. However, the context of the utterance has led us to the decision that utterance (7) is meant to make an offer. Thus, utterance (7) has completed the sincerity condition of an offer.

The analysis has shown that there are two basic characteristics of an offer. At first, the speaker commits herself or himself to the future action, and second, there is an offer. Utterance (7) has shown that speakers commit to the future action, and there is an offer in both utterances. One thing to underline is that both utterances do not use the verb 'to offer'. The message of the utterance is derived from the context instead of the linguistic unit. The analysis is in line with the illocutionary-verb fallacy in which the illocution of a verb does not always be reflected by the verb itself^[12].

The sentence suggests that the speaker (likely a political representative, organization, or diplomat) has taken the initiative to open communication with the ministry. By emphasizing that they are "still waiting for a response," the statement subtly offers the ministry a chance to engage, negotiate, or cooperate. This is not a traditional, explicit offer (e.g., "We offer to negotiate"), but a strategic positioning—framing the speaker as willing to cooperate while placing the burden of response on the ministry.

While utterance (7) could initially be misread as a complaint (due to the delayed response) or a request (due to the implied hope for action), its classification as an offer is more accurate when viewed through a pragmatic lens. A complaint typically expresses dissatisfaction or grievance about an unmet expectation or negative experience. If utterance (7) were a complaint, it would likely include emotionally charged language or evaluative markers (e.g., "We are disappointed that there has been no response").

A request, on the other hand, is a directive speech act that asks the hearer to do something for the benefit of the speaker. It is usually marked by imperative verbs or interrogatives (e.g., "Please respond to our letter," or "Can you confirm receipt?"). In utterance (7), the speaker does not directly ask the Indonesian government to act, but rather signals willingness to cooperate, placing no pressure or demand on the hearer.

By contrast, an offer does not demand action or express dissatisfaction—it extends a possibility for future cooperation. In utterance (7), the speaker informs the hearer of a past action (sending a letter) and a present state (waiting), while implicitly signaling openness to future engagement. This strategic indirectness is typical of diplomatic or institutional communication, where formality, politeness, and face-saving strategies are prioritized.

Therefore, utterance (7) functions not as a complaint or request, but as a diplomatic offer wrapped in a cooperative tone, with all felicity conditions satisfied. It is a prime example of how contextual cues and speaker identity override linguistic form in determining the speech act.

Another example of offer is:

(8) "At first, I thought only certain groups of people could apply to be volunteers. But then I heard that 1,620

volunteers would be needed from among the general public, so I became more convinced to sign up”.

The speaker expresses an intention to volunteer, which suggests a willingness to take part in the action. Offers typically involve the speaker committing themselves to providing something or participating in an activity. While the statement does not explicitly say, "I offer to volunteer," it implies that the speaker is presenting themselves as a candidate, which aligns with the function of an offer.

Offers often arise when there is a recognized demand. Here, the mention of “1,620 volunteers” creates a context where participation is needed, and the speaker responds to this by implying their involvement. One might argue that the statement is merely expressing a decision rather than making a direct offer. However, in contexts where signing up requires approval (e.g., for a job, a program, or an event), this statement functions as an implicit offer because the speaker is signaling their availability to be chosen as a volunteer. Thus, depending on the context, this statement can be interpreted as an implicit offer because it suggests the speaker's readiness to participate in fulfilling the need for volunteers.

Utterance (8) is uttered by Herlina Agustin, a lecturer and a mother of two in Bandung, West Java. As a relative of one of the medical workers in a trial center in Bandung, she has access to information on the situation in Indonesia during COVID-19. She also learns that trial centers need volunteers to participate in the COVID-19 vaccines trial. The speaker assumes that the opportunity to volunteer is genuinely open to the general public, and that their participation is needed and welcome. Thus, utterance (8) has accomplished the preparatory condition of an offer.

The speaker produces utterance (8) without any obstacle as the message can be clearly understood by the hearers or readers. The speaker reflects on a change in their belief about eligibility, leading to their intention to volunteer. She also believes that she is needed as a volunteer since the number of volunteers needed is high. As the information can be clearly understood by the hearer, utterance (8) has accomplished the propositional content.

The essential condition of utterance (8) can be seen from the fact that this utterance is genuinely stated to make an offer of becoming a volunteer in COVID-19 vaccines trial. The speaker commits to a future course action, which is volunteering. This indicates that this utterance is a commissives speech act with intention to offer herself as a volunteer. Accordingly, utterance (8) has completed the essential condition of an offer.

The speaker genuinely intends to volunteer and is motivated by the new information about the need for public involvement. Even though the speaker does not explicitly mention the word “offer”, the word “I become more convinced to sign up” indicates that the speaker offers

herself as a volunteer. Thus, utterance (6) has completed the sincerity condition of an offer.

These examples illustrate how the interpretation of offers—though seemingly cooperative speech acts—is filtered through socio-political power structures that shape access, legitimacy, and communicative authority. The speaker's position within or outside institutions significantly impacts how their language is received and acted upon.

While the study concludes that commissives speech acts in COVID-19 news reports are generally felicitous, it is important to recognize that felicity is not a binary condition. Speech acts are not simply felicitous or infelicitous; rather, they may fulfill some felicity conditions while falling short on others, resulting in partial felicity. This is especially relevant in public discourse, where indirect illocutionary acts and varying reader interpretations can affect how an utterance is perceived. For instance, in the statement:

(3) “Next week, Insya Allah [God willing], we will start the [immunization] simulation”,

The speaker appears to commit to a future action, fulfilling the essential and propositional conditions of a commissives act. However, the inclusion of Insya Allah introduces a degree of uncertainty, which may raise questions about the speaker's full commitment or capability, thereby complicating the sincerity or preparatory conditions. A statement like this may be interpreted as only partially felicitous, depending on how readers perceive the speaker's intent and the contextual cues. Therefore, assessing felicity should involve a more nuanced analysis that considers the gradience of fulfillment and the interpretive role of the audience.

The findings reflect that pragmatic theories do recognize that interpretation involves hearer agency and that misunderstandings occur, this does not undermine the claim that context is fundamental. Instead, it emphasizes that context provides the conditions for meaning to emerge, even if not always with full determinacy.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that commissive speech acts related to COVID-19 in *The Jakarta Post* are largely felicitous, as they fulfill Austin's core felicity conditions—preparatory, propositional content, essential, and sincerity. The analysis demonstrates that speakers, particularly institutional actors such as government officials and diplomats, generally exhibit an awareness of their social role, intent, and capacity to act, all of which are essential for making successful commitments in speech. This strategic awareness contributes not only to effective communication but also helps prevent misinterpretation or the unintentional spread of misinformation during a public health crisis.

However, the study also highlights that felicity conditions are deeply context-dependent, challenging the conventional speech act theory, especially Searle's formalist model that emphasizes rule-governed illocutionary acts. The success of a commissive act is not guaranteed by the mere presence of performative verbs or syntactic structure. Instead, contextual factors such as the speaker's institutional authority, cultural expectations, crisis urgency, and background knowledge critically influence how utterances are interpreted and whether they are perceived as sincere or binding.

This study reinforces critiques of the illocutionary-verb fallacy, demonstrating that an utterance can perform a commissive function even without explicit markers of commitment, provided the socio-political context signals intent. It suggests that speech act theory must be flexibly applied to real-world, mediated discourse where indirectness, diplomatic language, and strategic ambiguity are pervasive.

Importantly, in the context of a health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, commissive speech acts carry significant power in shaping public behavior, trust, and emotional response. Promises, threats, and offers made by public authorities directly influence citizens' expectations, sense of security, or fear, and their willingness to comply with government policies. For instance, promises of vaccine availability generate hope and encourage public patience, threats of viral exposure heighten vigilance and conformity, while offers of cooperation (such as international vaccine aid) reinforce solidarity and global trust. Thus, the clarity, sincerity, and perceived reliability of commissive acts become crucial in building or eroding public trust during a crisis. Misleading or ambiguous commissives could result not only in miscommunication but also in diminished public confidence, hesitancy to follow health directives, or even heightened public anxiety.

Moreover, this study emphasizes that the interpretation of commissives is not solely the responsibility of the reader. Writers and journalists have an ethical obligation to frame commissive acts clearly and provide sufficient context to ensure that public understanding is accurate, especially in high-stakes communication where public health behaviors are on the line. Nonetheless, this research has its limitations. It focuses on a single type of speech act (commissives) from one news outlet over a specific period. It does not explore audience reception or trace the long-term effects of commissive acts on actual public behavior or trust levels. Future research could expand on these findings by analyzing other types of speech acts, comparing multiple news sources, or conducting audience-based studies to investigate how different groups interpret and react to commissive acts during crises.

In sum, this study not only affirms the relevance of speech act theory for analyzing media discourse but also

complicates and enriches traditional models by demonstrating the crucial role of context, speaker identity, implicitness, and emotional effect. It advocates for a more dynamic, context-sensitive approach to speech act analysis, especially when examining public communication during health emergencies where language becomes a vital tool for governance, reassurance, and social control.

Author Contributions

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