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Communicating Hospitality: A Speech Act Analysis of Tourism Services at Lake Toba

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ABSTRACT

As a national super-priority tourist attraction, Lake Toba must improve several facets of its tourism services, particularly the communicative practices of tourism service providers. This research examines speech actions within the linguistic register of tourism services in the Lake Toba region. In this research setting, comprehending linguistic elements and language registers, particularly pragmatics, is essential for advancing the Lake Toba tourism region. The research employs Austin and Searle's speech act theory to delineate speech acts. The dataset comprises speech actions from tourism services in Lake Toba, derived from three sectors: souvenir shops, lodging, and dining establishments. This research will significantly enhance the tourism industry in Lake Toba by providing insights that improve communication quality and tourism services, while reducing potential communication obstacles. The findings identify three primary categories of speech actions in Lake Toba's tourism services according to the theories of Austin and Searle: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts provide fundamental information or pose inquiries, illocutionary acts include requests or directives for prompt action, and perlocutionary acts emphasize the consequences of communication. The roles of these speech acts—issuing commands, granting permits, offering ideas, and making requests—are essential for efficient service delivery and improving the tourism experience.

Keywords: Speech Act, Tourism Language Register, Pragmatics, Tourist communication, Lake Toba

1. Introduction

Lake Toba, classified as one of Indonesia's Super Priority Tourism Destinations, plays a central role in national tourism development initiatives (Darmawan et al., 2018; Sarmoko et al., 2023; Setpres, 2019; Tarigan et al., 2021). Renowned for its breathtaking natural scenery, rich cultural heritage, and diverse attractions, the region offers exceptional tourist experiences to remain a top destination.

An essential element of tourism services in Lake Toba is the language and speech acts utilized in interactions between visitors and residents. The region is primarily populated by the Batak Toba community, characterized by their unique intonation and assertive communication style (Mogot et al., 2018; Nugroho et al., 2012; Pujiono, 2022; Pujiono & Nelvita, 2017); along with the cultural philosophy of sahala harajaon (royal charisma) (Pujiono et al., 2018), which may affect service dynamics. The language and cultural nuances may create communication obstacles, possibly impacting visitor experiences.

Comprehending the pragmatic aspects of language utilization—primarily speech actions in tourism services—is crucial. Pragmatics examines the impact of social context, intent, and situational circumstances on everyday communication (Maros & Halim, 2018; Márquez Reiter et al., 2023; Rasa et al., 2019; Taulia & Nasution, 2021). Examining the categories of speech acts employed by locals in tourist encounters might yield practical insights to improve service quality, alleviate communication barriers, and promote favorable visitor experiences. These findings would enhance Lake Toba's reputation as a premier Indonesian destination, fostering tourist expansion and strengthening local economic resilience.

Although previous research has investigated speech acts within linguistic frameworks—such as tourism discourse (Potočnik Topler, 2018), perceptions of politeness in service reservations (Pujiono et al., 2024;

Sultan & Manaf, 2023), and illocutionary acts in Batak Toba traditional weddings (Manurung et al., 2023)—there has been no focused research on speech acts within the tourism service register of Lake Toba. This research fills the gap by utilizing Searle and Austin's (1962) speech act theory to examine interactions within Lake Toba's tourism industry. Notwithstanding these important studies, a considerable research gap persists in comprehending the operation of speech actions within the distinct cultural and linguistic framework of Lake Toba's tourism services. Although Manurung et al. (2023) have explored speech acts in Batak Toba traditional rites and Pujiono et al. (2024) have researched politeness in service bookings, there has been no comprehensive investigation of the pragmatics of quotidian tourism interactions in this Super Priority Destination. This research offers innovative insights by (1) utilizing speech act theory in genuine service interactions within the accommodation, dining, and souvenir contexts; (2) demonstrating the manifestation of Batak Toba's sahala harajaon values in modern tourism communication; and (3) creating a culturally-informed framework for service excellence that reconciles local identity with tourist expectations. These contributions are especially pertinent considering Lake Toba's designation and the pressing necessity for culturally sensitive tourist development methods.

The research aims to address two fundamental questions: What categories of speech acts are employed in the linguistic register of tourism services in Lake Toba? What roles do these speaking acts provide for tourist operators in the region? This research identifies effective communicative techniques and provides practical recommendations for stakeholders to enhance service delivery, increase tourist satisfaction, and promote sustainable tourism growth in Lake Toba.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Speech Acts in Pragmatics

Speech act theory is fundamental to pragmatics, analyzing the contextual use of language to fulfill communicative objectives. This idea, initially suggested by J.L. Austin in How to Do Things with Words (1962) and subsequently elaborated upon by John Searle, asserts that utterances serve not only to transmit information but also to execute actions and affect interlocutors or their surroundings. The core of this idea is the performative aspect of language—its ability to effect change via verbal expression. Austin identifies three fundamental elements of speech actions: the Locutionary Act, which is the process of articulating a statement with particular significance and denotation; A hotel employee remarking, "This is a standard room with full amenities," communicates accurate details on the room's characteristics. Illocutionary Act: The purpose underlying the utterance, such as requesting, demanding, or offering.

A server stating, "Please choose from the menu," does the illocutionary act of urging the patron to select a meal. Perlocutionary Act: The impact of the speech on the listener. A souvenir vendor claims, "This item is ideal for gifts," seeking to convince the traveler to make a purchase. Searle (1983) enhanced Austin's framework by categorizing illocutionary behaviors into five distinct types. Delegates: Statements that affirm the veracity of a proposition (e.g., declaring, notifying, relaying). Directives: Statements to affect the listener's behavior (e.g., asking, commanding, advising). Expressive: Utterances that communicate the speaker's feelings or attitudes (e.g., commendation, gratitude, apology). Commissive: Utterances that obligate the speaker to undertake future acts (e.g., promising, offering). Declaratives: Utterances that modify institutional or social reality (e.g., appointing, retiring, baptizing).

2.2. Language Register in the Context of Tourism Services

Language register refers to the variety of language used in specific circumstances or settings (Suryawin et al., 2022). A language register is essential for effective communication between service providers and visitors in the tourism industry. In tourist contexts, the register is often professional, courteous, and informative to ensure guest comfort and pleasure.

The principal attributes of the tourism service language register (Abdullah & Wulung, 2023; Gapur et al., 2024; Purnomo, 2011; Rijal, 2022) include politeness, which entails the utilization of courteous language, using expressions such as "please," "thank you," and "sorry." Lucidity, Concise, and comprehensible information communication, especially when conveying directions or service particulars. Respectful, affable, and inviting phrases like "Welcome" or "How may I assist you?" Transparency: A proactive and accommodating demeanor when resolving visitor queries or demands.

2.3. Relevance of Speech Act Theory in Tourism Services

Speech act theory is particularly pertinent in tourist service situations since interactions between service professionals and visitors often entail specific verbal acts, such as information giving, requests, or influencing visitor decisions. For example, when a hotel receptionist says, "Your room is ready; please complete this form," the statement includes a locutionary act: factual information about the room's condition. Illocutionary act: A command to fill out the form; perlocutionary act: The resultant compliance of the visitor in completing the form.

Furthermore, the judicious implementation of speech actions can significantly enhance service quality and the visitor experience. Polite commands (e.g., "Please wait a moment") can create favorable impressions and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. Conversely, incorrect or disrespectful expressions may cause guests discomfort or disagreement.

2.4. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research theoretically enhances the understanding of speech act theory's application in tourist services, particularly in key locations such as Lake Toba. The findings may serve as a reference for tourist service providers to enhance the quality of communication and service delivery, thereby facilitating sustainable tourism growth.

3. Method

This research constitutes a field investigation employing a qualitative methodology. Data collection took place immediately in the Parapat tourist region, near Lake Toba, North Sumatra, on July 8 and 9, 2024. The researcher selected three sites from each category of tourism services—accommodations, restaurants, and souvenirs—yielding a total of nine data-gathering sites.

The data in this research comprised oral discourse gathered from informants. Data sources encompass primary data, comprising words, phrases, or sentences articulated by tourism service providers, and secondary data derived from documentation, literature, and scholarly papers. Data gathering is conducted using the observation method, which includes several methodologies. The fundamental approaches employed are the Listen-in-close method and the recording technique, which are applied consecutively to get the necessary data (Sudaryanto, 2015). Audio recording devices were utilized to document direct interactions between researchers and tourism service providers. This method was employed to ensure the precision and comprehensiveness of the data, particularly in documenting speech acts within their contextual situations. Audio recording enables comprehensive documentation of each discussion, encompassing paralinguistic characteristics such as intonation, pauses, and emphasis, which influence the meaning of speech.

After the recording procedure, the gathered data were transcribed verbatim by Jefferson's transcription convention to maintain conversational nuances, including pauses, overlapping speech, and intonation patterns (Hepburn & Bolden, 2017; Park & Hepburn, 2022). The transcriptions were subsequently studied using a qualitative discourse analysis method to ascertain the forms and functions of speech acts employed by tourism service providers. This approach concentrated on three aspects of speech acts: locution, illocution, and perlocution.

The analysis of data was performed utilizing matching and distribution techniques. The matching approach employs fundamental techniques for identifying deciding components and comparison connectives to analyze the language of tourism service providers about politeness rules. The distribution approach is employed to ascertain the factors influencing speech actions in tourism services that impact linguistic politeness.

The presentation of data analysis findings employs informal techniques. The informal approach involves using colloquial language, incorporating narrative descriptions, and providing illustrative examples of dialogue.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The results of this research reveal two primary conclusions about the application of speech acts in tourism service interactions within the Lake Toba region. The analysis of speech act forms reveals that tourist service providers primarily utilize three categories of speech acts: directive (including requests and instructions), expressive (encompassing expressions of gratitude and apologies), and commissive (comprising promises and offers). Secondly, the examination of speech act functions demonstrates that these speech acts facilitate information dissemination and markedly enhance service quality and the visitor experience.

4.1.1. Forms of speech acts in the language barrel of tourist services on Lake Toba

Table 1. Forms of Speech Acts of tourist services on Lake Toba based on Austin (1962)

No.	Location	Form of Speech	Example Speech
1	Accommodation (Hotel)	Locution	Receptionist: "*Bisa lihat vouchernya, Pak?*" (Can I see the voucher, Sir?) Guest: *"Ini. (menunjukkan Hp)"* (This (showing cellphone))
		Illocution	Receptionist: *"Sudah kami terima. Kamar 203, lantai dua. Minta KTP untuk verifikasi, Pak."* (We have received it. Room 203, second floor. Please show your ID card for verification, Sir.) Guest: (Menyerahkan KTP) "Ini." (Handing over ID card) "Here."
		perlocution	Receptionist: "Kunci kamar. Naik tangga di sebelah kanan." (Room key. Go up the stairs on the right.)
2	Seller Souvenir	Locution.	Customer: *"Berapaan harga baju motif ini?"* (How much does this patterned shirt cost?) Seller: *"yang ini kak? Dua ratus ribu rupiah."* (This one, sis? Two hundred thousand rupiah.)
		Illocution	Seller: *"seratus enam puluh ribu la Bu, harga pas."* (One hundred and sixty thousand, ma'am, the price is right) Customer: "*yaudah, saya ambil dua ya*." (Okay, I'll take two.)
		perlocution	Customer: *"oke, saya ambil tas ini."* (Okay, I will take this bag) Seller: "*Ini Bu, terima kasih ya Bu."* (This is it, ma'am, thank you, ma'am)
3	Restoran	Locution	Customer: *"Ada menu ayam goreng?"* (Is there fried chicken on the menu?) Waiter : *"Ada, lima puluh ribu satu porsi."* (Yes, fifty thousand a portion.)

	Illocution	Customer: *"Oke, satu porsi ayam goreng dan es teh manis."* (Okay, one serving of fried chicken and sweet iced tea) Waiter: *"Es teh manis habis, tidak yang lain aja Pak?"* (We have run out of sweet iced tea; isn't there anything else, Sir?)
	perlocution	Customer: *"Ya sudah, pesan ayamnya saja."* (Okay, just order the chicken.) Waiter: "(just keep quiet)."

Table 2. Forms of Speech Acts of tourist services in Lake Toba based on Searle (2007; 1983)

No.	Location	Form of Speech
1	Accommodation (Hotel)	Assertive
2	Souvenir Seller	Assertive, instructive, expressive
3	Restaurant	Assertive instructions and commissions

The following is an example of a conversation with a situation where a guest has booked a room online, and the hotel receptionist provides a straight-to-the-point service without much ado.

DATA (1)

Guest:
"Mba, saya sudah booking kamar online. Atas nama Abdul."
("Miss, I have booked a room online. Under the name Abdul.")

Receptionist (Locutionary Act):
"Bisa lihat vouchernya, Pak?"
("May I see your voucher, Sir?")

Guest:
"Ini. (menunjukkan Hp)"
("Here. (showing phone)")

Resepsionis/Receptionist (Tindak Illocution/Illocutionary Act):
"Sudah kami terima. Kamar 203, lantai dua. Minta KTP untuk verifikasi, Pak."
("We have received it. Room 203, second floor. May I have your ID for verification, Sir.")

Guest:
(Menyerahkan KTP) "Ini."
(Handing over ID) "Here."

Receptionist (Perlocutionary Act):
"Kunci kamar. Naik tangga di sebelah kanan."
("Room key. The stairs are on the right side.")

The analysis of DATA (1) reveals that the speech actions executed by the receptionist adhere to the speech act theories provided by Austin (2018; 1962) and Searle (2007; 1983). According to Searle, the passenger initially asserts that he has reserved a room online, which constitutes an illocutionary behavior categorized as assertive, wherein the guest aligns himself with the veracity of his claim (that he has booked a room). The receptionist's request for a voucher constitutes a locutionary act, essentially a statement soliciting evidence of booking. When the guest presents the voucher and submits the ID card, it signifies compliance with the instruction, and the receptionist's act of receiving and validating the information constitutes an illocutionary

act of confirmation. The receptionist thereafter provides the room key while indicating the direction of the stairs, constituting a perlocutionary act due to its direct influence on the guest's subsequent action of proceeding to the room. This area is included in the commission, as the receptionist is dedicated to offering further services after the client has demonstrated the completeness of the paperwork.

Below are instances of speech actions in dialogues between souvenir sellers and consumers in Lake Toba, encompassing locution, illocution, and perlocution. The discussion centers on acquiring a Batak Batik shirt and a knitting bag.

DATA (2) - Clothing Purchase

Customer:
"Berapaan harga baju motif ini?"
("How much is this patterned shirt?")

Seller (Locution/Locutionary Act):
"Yang ini kak? Dua ratus ribu rupiah."
("This one, Miss? Two hundred thousand rupiah.")

Customer:
"Bisa kurang?"
("Can it be cheaper?")

Seller (Tindak Illocution/Illocutionary Act):
"Seratus enam puluh ribu la Bu, harga pas."
("One hundred sixty thousand then, Ma'am, final price.")

Customer (Tindak Perlocution/Perlocutionary Act):
"Yaudah, saya ambil dua ya."
("All right, I will take two then.")

Seller:
"Terima kasih ya Bu. Ini bajunya."
("Thank you, Ma'am. Here are the shirts.")

DATA (3) - Woven Bag Purchase

Customer:
"Tas rajut ini berapa harganya?"
("How much is this woven bag?")

Seller (Locution/Locutionary Act):
"Tiga ratus ribu."
("Three hundred thousand.")

Customer:
"Boleh kurang? Kalau dua ratus ribu, saya beli."
("Can it be less? If two hundred thousand, I will buy.")

Seller (Tindak Illocution/Illocutionary Act):
"Mau yang warna apa Buk? Kalau yang ini bolehlah, dua ratus saja."
("What color do you want Ma'am? For this one, two hundred is fine.")

Customer (Tindak Perlocution/Perlocutionary Act):
"Oke, saya ambil tas ini."
("Okay, I will take this bag.")

Seller:
"Ini Bu, terima kasih ya Bu."
("Here, Ma'am, thank you.")

The three provided conversations allow for an analysis of the speech acts present, utilizing the theories of Austin and Searle. The locutionary activities in the dialogues pertain to the explicit expressions of vendors and

customers. For instance, when purchasers inquire about the cost of garments or accessories, they engage in locutionary activities by explicitly articulating the issue. This locutionary act represents an initial phase in the communication process, characterized by the literal expression of speech without consideration of further context.

Illocutionary activities in this dialogue signify the intention or objective of the statement. For instance, when a vendor responds to an inquiry regarding pricing by presenting an offer, such as "one hundred and sixty thousand, ma'am, the price is right," the seller aims to persuade the customer that the proposed price is optimal. Searle classifies this behavior as assertive or instructional, wherein the vendor articulates a proposition deemed actual or attempts to push the consumer to undertake an action, such as purchasing the goods.

The perlocutionary act in this dialogue refers to the outcome or impact of the statement on the interlocutor. In the initial two instances, the resultant perlocutionary act is that the buyer resolves to purchase the item, signifying that the seller's offer is compelling. In the third scenario, the buyer opts not to proceed with the purchase, stating, "I will think about it then," indicating that the seller's illocutionary act lacks sufficient persuasion to fulfill its objective. This suggests that the impact of communication does not always align with the initial purpose, and the interlocutor's interpretation of speech actions may influence the outcome of the interaction.

The following are two dialogues that illustrate the interplay between locution, illocution, and perlocution within a restaurant near Lake Toba. These dialogues depict exchanges between patrons and servers.

DATA (5) - Successful Order Taking

Customer/Customer:
"Permisi, menu spesial hari ini apa ya?"
("Excuse me, what is today's special?")

Waiter/Waiter (Locution/Locutionary Act):
"Hari ini kami ada ikan nila bakar khas Toba dan sup ikan asam pedas."
("Today we have grilled Toba tilapia and spicy, sour fish soup.")

Customer/Customer (Tindak Illocution/Illocutionary Act):
"Saya pesan ikan nila bakar dan satu porsi nasi putih, tolong jangan terlalu pedas."
("I will order the grilled tilapia and one portion of white rice, please not too spicy.")

Waiter/Waiter (Tindak Perlocution/Perlocutionary Act):
"Baik, saya catat pesanannya. Pesanan akan segera kami siapkan."
("All right, I will note your order. It will be prepared shortly.")

Customer/Customer:
"Terima kasih."
("Thank you.")

Waiter/Waiter:
"Silakan menunggu."
("Please wait.")

DATA (6) - Failed Order Completion

Customer/Customer:
"Ada menu ayam goreng?"
("Do you have fried chicken?")

Waiter/Waiter (Locution/Locutionary Act):
"Ada, lima puluh ribu satu porsi."
("Yes, fifty thousand per portion.")

Customer/Customer:
"Oke, satu porsi ayam goreng dan es teh manis."
("Okay, one fried chicken and sweet iced tea.")

Waiter/Waiter (Tindak Illocution/Illocutionary Act):
"Es teh manis habis, tidak yang lain aja Pak?"
("Sweet iced tea is sold out; maybe something else Sir?")

Customer/Customer (Tindak Perlocution/Perlocutionary Act):
"Ya sudah, pesan ayamnya saja."
("Then just the chicken.")

Waiter/Waiter:
"(remains silent)"

The dialogues between Data (5) and Data (6) allow for the identification and analysis of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts by the theories of Austin and Searle. In Data (5), locution transpires when the diner inquires about the special menu, to which the server replies by enumerating the available options: "Toba specialty grilled tilapia and spicy sour fish soup." This becomes a form of aggressive behavior, as the waiter articulates a remark that links the speaker to the veracity of the information. An illocutionary act transpires when the customer requests grilled tilapia and white rice, specifying that it should not be overly spicy. This demonstrates the intention behind the utterance, categorizing it as an act of instruction wherein the customer directs the waiter to fulfill his preferences. The perlocutionary act, resulting from the illocutionary act, is evident when the waiter documents and makes the order as asked, alongside the customer expressing gratitude, signifying that the communication aligns with the original meaning. This perlocutionary act verifies that the communication's objective was effectively accomplished.

In Data (6), the dialogue starts with a locutionary act when the client inquires about the availability of the fried chicken menu, to which the server affirms its availability at a certain price, also encompassed inside the assertive act. The consumer then performs an illocutionary act by ordering fried chicken and sweet iced tea, indicating an intention to obtain both items, which constitutes an instructive act. When the server announces that the sweet iced tea is unavailable, this constitutes an illocutionary act that communicates the circumstance and presents an alternative. A perlocutionary act occurs when the consumer chooses to persist in ordering fried chicken without iced tea, modifying the order based on the information provided by the waiter. This activity illustrates the dynamic nature of communication contingent upon the circumstances. This research demonstrates that each discussion encompasses a range of speech acts, aligning with Austin and Searle's classification, including assertive, directive, and commissive actions, which underpin effective communication.

4.1.2. Speech act functions of tourist service actors in the Lake Toba region

The speech act roles employed by tour guides in halal tourism may be categorized into four functions: teaching, persuasion, suggestion, and appeal. The context of speech act functions is primarily categorized based on tourist activities facilitating visitor services, accompanied by a detailed explanation and interpretation of the analysis.

4.1.2.1. Function of Instruction

The function of speech acts in the Lake Toba region to express instructions is reflected in the guidance provided by tourism service actors to ensure tourists' compliance with specific rules or procedures. For example, in a hotel conversation, the receptionist instructs guests to show vouchers and ID cards and directs them to the room by saying, "Room key. Take the stairs on the right." This form of perlocutionary action compels the guest to follow the directions in order to obtain the desired service. This instruction is important to maintain a smooth check-in process and ensure guests can enjoy the available facilities immediately.

4.1.2.2. The function of please

The function of speaking acts to convey pleasure in Lake Toba is evident when tourism service providers offer possibilities or amenities that allow tourists to enjoy their experiences. In the realm of souvenir vendors, when a purchaser opts to acquire an item, and the vendor presents it with the phrase, "Here, ma'am, thank you, ma'am," the vendor facilitates the transaction in a kind and grateful manner towards the consumer. This politeness aims to enhance the purchasing experience for travelers, making it more enjoyable and rewarding.

4.1.2.3. The function of suggestion

Speech acts that convey suggestions are evident in scenarios when tourism service providers offer advice or recommendations to tourists. For instance, during a dialogue in a restaurant, if the server recommends the day's special menu, stating, "Today we have grilled tilapia characteristic of Toba and spicy, sour fish soup," this is a proposal. The waiter proposes selections that can elevate the customer's eating experience, indicating that they offer recommendations informed by their familiarity with the menu.

4.1.2.4. Appeal Function

The speech act of appealing regarding Lake Toba communicates essential information that travelers must heed. For instance, the server may inquire about the menu options at a dining establishment by stating, "Sweet iced tea is unavailable; would you like to consider an alternative, sir?" This notification informs consumers of changes that may affect their choices, enabling them to make more informed decisions about their orders. This function facilitates transparency and efficient communication between service providers and passengers.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The Pragmatic Functions of Speech Acts in Lake Toba's Tourism Services

Examining speech acts in Lake Toba's tourism services uncovers specific, pragmatic purposes within service settings, providing empirical support and intricate challenges to traditional speech act theories. In hotel encounters, locutionary acts predominantly facilitate transactional verification (e.g., "May I see your voucher, Sir?"), consistent with Austin's (1962) framework of literal meaning generation. Nonetheless, these actions are culturally influenced by Batak Toba's sahala harajaon ethos, which favors forceful clarity over the indirectness characteristic of Javanese communication (Nurjaleka et al., 2022). Illocutionary acts amalgamate directives ("Minta KTP") with assertive ("Kamar 203 siap"), exemplifying Searle's (1979) classifications while uncovering culture-specific distinctions—where Western hotels may temper directives ("May I...?"), Lake Toba's forthrightness is softened through kinship terms ("Pak/Bu"), corroborating Taulia et al.'s (2023) research on politeness markers in North Sumatran ecotourism.

Souvenir exchanges illustrate a dynamic interaction of commissives ("harga pas") and expressive ("Terima kasih, Bu"), with the effectiveness of bargaining dependent on perlocutionary effects. This reflects the observations of Sumarlam et al. (2024) on persuasive speech acts in Indonesian e-commerce, but differs in its integration of the Batak social hierarchy. Failed restaurant interactions (DATA 6) reveal the limitations of Searle's taxonomy: when waiters neglect to provide compensatory commissives ("Es teh habis" without alternatives), perlocutionary failure ensues, indicating that the efficacy of speech acts relies on register adaptability—a conclusion supported by Schreurs (2024) in hospitality contexts.

Three key theoretical conclusions emerge from the Cultural Modulation of Directives: Although directions prevail worldwide (Tutuarima et al., 2018), Lake Toba's Batak culture combines directness with localized politeness, thereby contesting universal politeness theories (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This corresponds with the findings of Arnawa et al. (2022) about Balinese passive-voice politeness. However, it diverges from Javanese indirectness (Nurjaleka et al., 2022). Subsequently, Register as Mediator: Effective interactions (DATA 1, 5) utilize register-shifting between transactional and relational modes, similar to Sibarani et al.'s (Sibarani et al., 2024) "text-co-text-context" paradigm in the Toba Caldera geopark. Failed exchanges (DATA 6) demonstrate how inflexible register use interrupts speech act sequences. Subsequently, Pragmatic Competence Deficiencies: Similar to the research conducted by Deveci and Midraj (2021) on Emirati refusals, service personnel in Lake Toba occasionally misinterpret tourist expectations, highlighting the necessity for intercultural pragmatics training—a suggestion reiterated in the banking sector research by Sunendar et al. (2024).

These findings necessitate an updated speech act model for tourist contexts, including Cultural Illocutionary Force, where the efficacy of directives is contingent upon cultural acceptability (e.g., Batak assertiveness vs. Balinese modality phrases [Arnawa et al., 2022]). Sequential Limitations: Perlocution necessitates cohesive locution-illocution sequences, as seen by the failures in DATA 6. Flexibility of Registration: Optimal service integrates the directness of Batak Toba with politeness methods aimed at tourists (Wildan et al., 2024).

This synthesis enhances pragmatics theory by contextualizing Lake Toba's speech actions within the framework of global tourist communication (Al Izyra & Sartini, 2023) and emphasizing its cultural uniqueness, a balance essential for sustainable tourism growth.

4.2.2. Cultural and Linguistic Nuances in Tourism Communication

The communication dynamics within Lake Toba's tourist industry are fundamentally rooted in Batak Toba cultural norms, particularly the concept of sahala harajaon (royal charisma), which is reflected in distinctive speech patterns. This cultural framework promotes an aggressive intonation and directness in speech, characteristics conventionally associated with leadership and confidence in Batak culture. At tourism encounters, this entails service providers conveying information and instructions with unequivocal clarity, as seen at hotel receptions where personnel explicitly request papers ("May I see your voucher, sir?") or articulate room directions ("Ascend the stairs on the right"). This cultural directness is strategically moderated by the extensive use of honorifics ("Pak," "Bu," "Kak") and kinship words, establishing a distinctive politeness

system that harmonizes transactional efficiency with cultural reverence. The honorific system serves as an essential mitigating mechanism, facilitating the preservation of social hierarchy and interpersonal harmony during brief service interactions, thereby averting the perception of directness as rudeness by both local and foreign visitors.

This interaction of cultural directness and language politeness may pose obstacles and possibilities for foreign travelers in conversation. The explicit, authoritative speech style may improve the understanding of practical information; nevertheless, the cultural distinctiveness of honorifics and the foundational communication ethos of sahala harajaon may introduce nuanced obstacles. Tourists who do not know Indonesian may overlook the politeness signals included in honorifics, thus seeing the naturally strong tone as brusqueness. Moreover, the negotiating practices in souvenir sales, which rely on culturally encoded indirectness (e.g., incremental price reductions presented as personal concessions), may perplex tourists accustomed to fixed-price systems or alternative negotiation approaches. The identified gaps underscore the significance of intercultural awareness in tourism training programs, indicating that service providers may gain from tactics that render implicit cultural norms more comprehensible to international guests while maintaining authentic Batak communication styles. The conservation of these linguistic and cultural subtleties significantly enhances Lake Toba's unique tourism character, providing visitors with picturesque landscapes and a singular cultural interaction that embodies the region's legacy.

4.2.3. Speech Acts and Service Quality: Implications for Sustainable Tourism

The efficacy of speech actions in the tourism services of Lake Toba exhibits a clear relationship with service quality and tourist satisfaction, bearing substantial implications for sustainable tourism growth. Our research suggests that effectively performed speech acts, particularly directives and commissives, enhance transactional efficiency while preserving cultural authenticity, aligning with analogous trends observed in Balinese hotel advertisements (Dewi et al., 2024) and Malaysian rural tourism promotions (Al Izyra & Sartini, 2023). In the Batak Toba context, distinct characteristics emerge. At the same time, Balinese service providers employ passive constructions for politeness (Arnawa et al., 2022), and practitioners at Lake Toba combine directness with kinship terms ("Pak/Bu"), achieving similar effectiveness through culturally unique methods. This aligns with Sibarani et al.'s (2024) findings on the importance of contextual adaptation in Toba Caldera's geotourism, suggesting that the effectiveness of speech acts depends on register flexibility rather than universal politeness standards (Nurjaleka et al., 2022).

A critical investigation of service disruptions (DATA 4, 6) demonstrates how pragmatic failures compromise sustainability objectives. When restaurant personnel fail to provide alternative options for unavailable goods ("Es teh habis" without ideas), they reflect the communication deficiencies observed in Emirati tourist encounters (Deveci & Midraj, 2021), where insufficient rejection methods lead to discomfort. These instances illustrate that perlocutionary failure does not arise from cultural directness. However, an inadequate consideration of speech act sequencing leads to a conclusion that contradicts traditional uses of Austin and Searle's frameworks in tourism situations. According to Schreurs (2024), in hospitality studies, effective communication necessitates a balance between transactional clarity and interpersonal sensitivity, a notion especially pertinent in Lake Toba's culturally rooted service interactions.

Three evidence-based solutions arise for improving service quality: Initially, training must prioritize the adaptive application of directives, referencing the politeness maxims proposed by Wildan et al. (2024) while adhering to Batak communication conventions. Secondly, providers must possess competence to address service restrictions, utilizing Taulia et al.'s (2023) Bukit Lawang approach to provide alternatives during refusals. Third, intercultural modules must consider visitor expectations, as demonstrated by Sunendar et al. (2024) in the context of Indonesian banking, which is particularly vital given Lake Toba's global ambitions.

The significance of these suggestions is underscored by Manurung et al.'s (2023) results on Batak Toba's traditional speech acts; similarly, to how Dalihan Na Tolu organizes wedding communication, contemporary tourism needs systematic methodologies for speech act training. The incorporation of these strategies into comprehensive sustainability initiatives may yield substantial benefits, including increased visitor satisfaction (Sumarlam et al., 2024), bolstered local business sustainability, and enhanced cultural preservation—results that strengthen Lake Toba's competitive position in global tourism while respecting its distinctive heritage. This research enhances pragmatic theory by illustrating how optimizing speech acts fosters sustainable tourism when tailored to local cultural contexts, providing a model relevant to historic places globally.

4.2.4. Comparative Analysis with Global Tourism Contexts

The communication patterns in Lake Toba's tourism services reveal cultural uniqueness and universal pragmatics when examined through a global comparative lens. The Batak Toba's sahala harajaon-influenced

directness ("Bisa lihat vouchernya, Pak?") contrasts sharply with Javanese indirectness (Nurjaleka et al., 2022) and Balinese passive-voice politeness (Arnawa et al., 2022), yet achieves comparable transactional efficiency to Western service scripts while maintaining distinct cultural markers. This paradox aligns with Schreurs' (2024) findings in Spanish hospitality contexts, where imperative forms serve welcoming functions despite their typically face-threatening nature. Cross-cultural analysis demonstrates that while directive speech acts dominate universally in tourism (Tutuarima et al., 2018), their realization varies dramatically: where Bukit Lawang guides use smiling and softened requests (Taulia et al., 2023), and Balinese advertisers prefer indirect commissives (Dewi et al., 2024), Lake Toba providers combine unmitigated directives with kinship terms - a strategy echoing Manurung et al.'s (2023) findings on Batak wedding speech acts, where directness coexists with cultural honorifics.

The universal core of tourism communication is rooted in shared functional requirements, including information exchange (assertives), service coordination (directives), and rapport management (expressives), as evident in both Malaysian rural tourism promotions (Al Izyra & Sartini, 2023) and Emirati tourist interactions (Deveci & Midraj, 2021). However, culture-specific variations in performing these acts carry significant implications. Where Japanese service language employs elaborate keigo (Nurjaleka et al., 2022), and Arab cultures utilize ritualized hospitality formulae (Wildan et al., 2024), Lake Toba's approach represents a third way: transactional clarity embedded in Batak social frameworks. This challenges Brown and Levinson's universal politeness theory, supporting instead Sibarani et al.'s (2024) context-dependent model of communication effectiveness.

Notably, Lake Toba's bargaining sequences—structurally similar to global markets but culturally distinct in rhythm and turn-taking—exemplify what Sumarlam et al. (2024) term "culturally coded persuasion." Like the "pragmatic reversal" observed in teen communication, these interactions repurpose directness as a cultural strength rather than a pragmatic liability. For sustainable tourism development, this suggests that training programs should follow Sunendar et al.'s (2024) banking sector model, enhancing providers' meta-pragmatic awareness without erasing cultural distinctiveness. The Lake Toba case demonstrates how destinations can leverage their unique communication styles as a competitive advantage while meeting global expectations, offering a model for heritage destinations worldwide.

4.2.5. Theoretical Contributions

The empirical results from the tourism encounters at Lake Toba provide substantial theoretical progress that corroborates and enhances traditional speech act theories, while also incorporating essential cultural aspects into pragmatic analysis. Our data unequivocally substantiates Austin's (1962) tripartite model of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts within tourism contexts, notably exemplified by the hotel receptionist's verification sequence ("Bisa lihat vouchernya, Pak?"), which concurrently communicates information (locution), executes a request (illocution), and elicits guest compliance (perlocution). The Lake Toba instance requires significant revisions to Searle's (1979) categorization, questioning its universal applicability by illustrating how cultural context significantly influences directive force. Searle's framework categorizes directives as uniform speech acts; however, our research indicates a culturally nuanced continuum in Batak Toba service contexts, varying from direct commands ("Kunci kamar") to kinship-based requests ("Bisa lihat vouchernya, Pak?"). The efficacy of these directives relies not solely on illocutionary force but also on culturally specific standards of appropriateness (Manurung et al., 2023; Nurjaleka et al., 2022).

This research provides three significant theoretical contributions to pragmatics and tourist studies. Initially, it presents the notion of "cultural register alignment" - the deliberate modification of speech actions to conform to local communication ideals while preserving transactional efficacy. The phenomenon observed in Lake Toba's concurrent application of Batak directness and kinship terminology mirrors Schreurs' (2024) findings in Spanish hospitality contexts, yet it contests Brown and Levinson's universal politeness theory by illustrating culture-specific approaches to facework (Arnawa et al., 2022; Wildan et al., 2024). Secondly, our analysis highlights the crucial role of sequential patterning in tourism speech acts, where effective interactions follow culturally appropriate locution-illocution-perlocution sequences, aligning with Sibarani et al.'s (2024) "text-co-text-context" framework while incorporating temporal sequencing as a significant variable. The research illustrates that the efficacy of speech acts is contingent upon register flexibility in various service contexts, ranging from the transactional directness of hotel check-ins to the negotiated commissives of souvenir bargaining. This aspect, often overlooked in traditional speech act theory, is vital for intercultural pragmatics (Deveci & Midraj, 2021).

These contributions have significant consequences for pragmatic theory. The Lake Toba data bolsters increasing criticisms of universal speech act classifications, advocating for culture-specific frameworks that consider local communication ideology. Our findings specifically contest the direct-indirect speech act

dichotomy, illustrating how the directness impacted by Batak Toba's sahala harajaon attains politeness through culturally significant methods rather than traditional indirectness (Jahdiah et al., 2024; Taulia et al., 2023). The research indicates that the efficacy of speech acts in tourism services is contingent upon what we define as "pragmatic code-switching"—the capacity to alternate between cultural communication styles while preserving transactional clarity. This skill is evident among proficient Lake Toba service providers but necessitates systematic cultivation in others (Sunendar et al., 2024).

This research presents a theoretical model that synthesizes three hitherto unrelated dimensions: 1) fundamental speech act structures (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979), 2) cultural communication norms (Manurung et al., 2023), and 3) register adaptation mechanisms (Sumarlam et al., 2024). This tripartite paradigm offers a more refined understanding of pragmatic competence in tourist contexts compared to current models, particularly relevant to historic locations worldwide. The Lake Toba case exemplifies how culturally rooted speech acts can preserve authenticity while meeting tourist expectations, providing a theoretical framework for sustainable tourism communication that respects local traditions and ensures service efficiency (Al Izyra & Sartini, 2023; Dewi et al., 2024). These achievements establish speech act theory as a crucial instrument for examining and enhancing intercultural service interactions while maintaining cultural uniqueness in global tourist settings.

4. Conclusion

This research's findings indicate that the speech actions in the language of tourism services in the Lake Toba region are classified into three primary groups based on Austin and Searle's theory: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts. Locutionary speech acts, evident in dialogues within hotels and restaurants, communicate fundamental information or pose inquiries, such as requesting vouchers or stating menu pricing. Illocutionary speech actions encompass directives or requests that necessitate immediate action from the listener, such as guiding a guest to a room or presenting an alternative menu when the original is unavailable. Perlocutionary speech actions emphasize the consequences of communication, such as guiding a visitor to a particular area or influencing a purchasing choice based on an offer. These forms demonstrate the stages of engagement in communication within tourist services at Lake Toba, which impact visitors' experiences and decisions.

The speech actions performed by tourism service providers in Lake Toba encompass several critical activities, including issuing commands, granting permissions, offering advice, and making requests. The command function is evident in the directives issued by the service provider, such as requesting visitors to provide identification or select from the menu, which is crucial for the seamless functioning of the service. The permission function manifests when service providers offer opportunities or facilities to visitors, such as during the transfer of purchased items. The recommendation feature is observed when the service provider proposes exclusive alternatives or menus to elevate the visitor's experience. Finally, the request function provides significant or alternative information, such as notifying visitors of item shortages. These activities facilitate efficient services and effective communication between service providers and guests, thereby enhancing the overall tourism experience in Lake Toba.

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