

Depicting reflections of power on illocutionary acts of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe’s speeches on Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Speeches are often construed to exert one’s power while projecting a political intent towards the audience. This research examines how power is reflected in speeches by Shinzō Abe, a former Prime Minister of Japan, through the categorisation of speech acts. The speeches were delivered in many of his press conferences during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research employed a quantitative approach, and the analysis largely drew on Searle’s classification of speech acts to identify and categorise Mr Abe’s expressions of power. Data for this study focused on various formal press briefings, interviews, or other communicative exchanges he conducted in his role as a prime minister. Eight texts were selected for the analysis, and they were collected from the website of the Japanese Prime Minister’s Secretariat office from February to May 2020. Findings from the analysis indicated that the prime minister mostly utilised performative verb utterance directions, such as informing (66%), asking (78%), promising (90%), thanking (54%), and deciding (76%), in a form of polite and respectful language, Keigo, to demonstrate reverence towards diplomatic entities. In addition, he frequently highlighted statistical data regarding the circumstances and the prevailing factors of the pandemic that led to a regime of truth and knowledge about Covid-19 in Japan. The findings provided better understanding of Shinzō Abe’s exercise of authority in managing the variability of Covid-19 incidences in Japan, as reflected in the movement of relations with the society and with those diplomatic entities. This suggests that Shinzo Abe’s speeches during the pandemic have a potential pathway that world leaders, linguists or students can traverse and inquire into to ensure community resilience to counteract the fragility caused by a pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19; illocutionary acts; reflections of power; speeches

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INTRODUCTION

Communication possesses significant power with language as its potent tool. It holds the capacity to exert power beyond transmitting messages or facilitating linguistic transactions (Fairclough, 2001; Karman, 2017). With careful use of language, an orator’s power can be imparted effectively to

persuade the listeners to accept and potentially act upon the conveyed ideas. It is also important to note, however, that power encompasses a multifaceted discipline of elements and behaviors, and to some extent with certain negative associations, rather than mere possession of language resources (Foucault, 1977, 1995). Nevertheless, on account of the

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language capacity, politicians often secure acceptance of their authority in an already established social hierarchy from their constituents and audience through speeches. They can, for instance, gain their listeners' approval on a set of policies or retain their sympathy.

Shinzo Abe's speeches can be regarded as compelling evidence of how politicians exercise their authority through language. Mr Abe, a politician from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), held the record for being the longest-serving Prime Minister in the history of the Japanese government (Naikakukanbou, 2020). He demonstrated visionary governance and effective policy initiatives. This was particularly apparent in his speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic in Japan, making the Japanese people hold him in high regard and trust his character and leadership qualities. He succeeded in managing equilibrium and addressing issues holistically, which Labolo (2014) believed of substantial significance in establishing a system of responsible government, as reflected in the utterances he thoughtfully selected in many of his speeches.

From a pragmatic perspective, beyond the act of the utterances that a speaker produces in communication, speech acts can be categorised into three distinct levels of action (Leech, 1983). They include the literal delivery of a communication (locutionary act) at the semantic level, the specific purpose or intention behind the act (illocutionary act) at the pragmatic level, and the intended effect or influence on the recipient (perlocutionary act) as desired by the speaker. This categorisation of speech acts has been explored by scholars in various fields, such as language utterance in Padang (Kartika, 2019a), in pragmatic cyber analysis of the news in the Middle East conflict (Faisol, et.al, 2022) and in the use of social media among young people (Rahmat, et.al., 2023).

The conveyed utterances and their specific purpose, or illocutionary acts, have been classified further into five categories (Searle, 1976, 1979). The categories include assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Assertive is a statement of something seen from the proposition of the truth of the speech that can be distinguished by the use of performative verbs, such as 'asserting,' 'reporting,' and 'informing.' Directive functions to exert influence with the speech delivered by the speaker, as indicated by the verbs 'requesting,' 'suggesting,' 'commanding,' and 'ordering'. Meanwhile, commissive acts as a binding for the speaker to do or realize the various things they say, denoted by verbs like 'promising,' 'vowing,' 'pledging,' and 'volunteering.' Expressive is related to attitudes, feeling, or psychological response of the speaker to a situation, which can be realised by verbs such as 'apologizing,' 'congratulating', and 'thanking.' Declarative acts as justification or determination of

an utterance and even action against existing situations with verbs, such as 'resigning', 'establishing', 'revoking', and 'appointing.'

These five categories of illocutionary acts can also be employed to exert one's power in a speech and project a particular intention towards the audience. Power involves influencing another person or group to accomplish a goal (Gibson et al., 2012). It can be defined as one's ability and potential to influence or target another party (Robbins & Judge, 2007; Ottman et al., 2023). Another definition of power is related to the potential influence of a leader over followers (Lussier & Achua, 2010). However, Foucault (1977, 1978, 1995) argues that power is not possession as property or privilege owned, which operates negatively through actions as a dominant function of a class, or an institution, but a positive and productive view used within the scope of a complex strategy in a society. It can be a necessary, productive, and positive societal force with strategic implications (Gaventa, 2003; Sari et al., 2021). It can symbolise accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding, and truth.

Studies on power have been conducted in various fields. The studies include the emergence of power during a trial focusing on the connections between language and power in contemporary social linguistics. The connections were examined with the use of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis at the micro-textual level to produce a broader societal phenomenon in the form of social action (civil courts), social institutions (legal establishments), and social formations (the ideologies that inform and shape social formations) (Al-Gublan, 2015; Rahmat et al., 2022). The same critical discourse analysis was employed in a study to examine the functions and strategies of power discourse in the Indonesian President Joko Widodo's speech. Data for this study were collected from the president's utterances in several news interviews in the form of recordings or videos, analysed using qualitative content analysis (Abadi et al., 2016; Rahmat et al., 2023). Another study investigated the former American President Donald Trump's political speeches (Munawar, 2018). The study focused on linguistic and stylistic styles deployed in the speeches, including repetitions, ellipses, parallelism, political jargon, and anaphoric references. The theory also became the foundation in an analysis to determine power struggles as reflected in the utterances used in the speech of the General Counsel of the State of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, regarding the Rohingya Muslim issue (in Setyowati, 2018). These previous studies revealed that knowledge and power were inextricably linked (Priyanto, 2017).

In reference to the previous research, the present study examined the different modes of power expressions that the former Japanese Prime

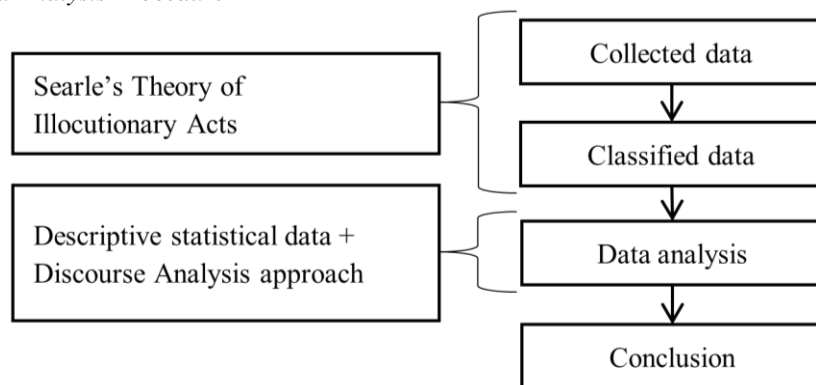
Minister Shinzō Abe employed through his illocutionary speech acts during his press conference speeches. The study focused on the extent of power reflections in the speech acts through a discourse analysis. It led to an intriguing avenue of investigation of how Shinzō Abe's speeches reflected his authority in addressing the challenges due to Covid-19.

METHOD

The present study was designed in reference to a quantitative approach (Sheppard, 2019). Data for the study came from the documentation or archives of speech acts. The data sourced from the website of the Japanese Prime Minister's Secretariat office, www.kantei.go.jp. about Covid-19 press conferences (kantei.go.jp, 2020) were collected by using the library research techniques from February to May 2020. They encompassed transcripts of official speeches, press briefings, interviews, or other communicative exchanges that were performed by Mr Shinzō Abe during the pandemic in his tenure as the Prime Minister of Japan. Eight transcripts were selected to be analysed. The procedure for the transcript analysis consisted of three research techniques: The first technique was content analysis that involved reading and an in-

depth investigation of the contents of the documents collected from the secretariat's website. The investigation focused on official speeches, press conferences, interviews or other publications related to his handling of the pandemic. Patterns, themes, or messages expressed in the spoken communication were identified and analysed. The second technique was based on discourse analysis. This technique involved analysing the language, the structure, and the context of communication. It focused on Shinzō Abe's expressions, speaking styles, rhetorical strategies, or the impact of communication generated by his speech actions. This analysis led to further understanding of Abe's way of communicating with the public, the purpose of his communications, and the response that emerged from the public. The final technique was policy analysis. The technique took into account reviewing policies and handling measures announced by the Japanese government through kantei.go.jp website. It traced policy evolutions, changes in approach, or justifications from the Japanese government in managing the pandemic. This analysis resulted in understanding the strategies and decisions taken and the impact on handling COVID-19 in Japan. The data analysis procedure is depicted in the following Figure 1:

Figure 1
Data Analysis Procedure



FINDINGS

This section used quantitative methods in the form of descriptive statistics concepts with the assistance of Microsoft Office-Excel applications to describe the findings from the data analysis. The applications deployed commands that automatically searched and calculated numerical data (frequency and percentage) and determined the dominant speech forms used by Shinzo Abe. It resulted in 395 data classifications in 8 texts of Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches. These classifications consisted of 127 Assertive data (32%), 68 Directive data (17%), 123 Commissive data (31%), 52 Expressive data (13%), and 25 Declarative data (7%). Figure 2

depicts the distribution of the data in each classification of illocutionary acts.

As shown in Figure 2, Assertive speech dominated in all of the 8 of Shinzo Abe's speech texts, while declarative speech was the least frequent. Thus, Shinzo Abe's speech about Covid-19 was relatively close to information/statement (in the form of an informative speech) as a reflection of his power as Japan's prime minister. The following Table 1 consists of a recapitulation of illocutionary speech acts in eight of Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speech texts.

Figure 2
Spread of Illocutionary Act of Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches

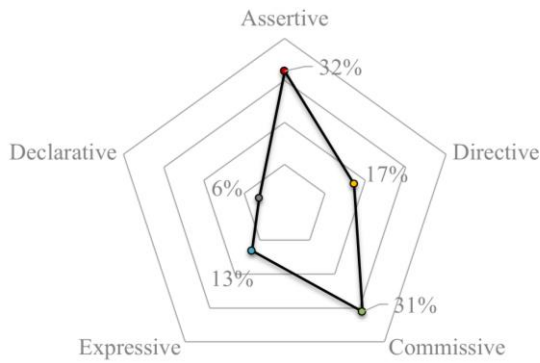


Table 1
Recapitulation of Illocutionary Acts in 8 Texts of Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches

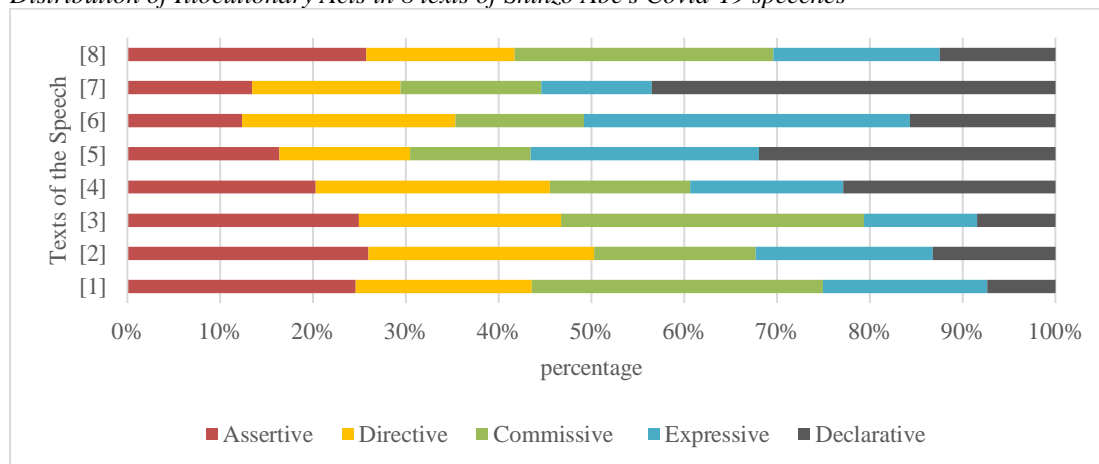
| No. | Texts | Assertive | | Directive | | Commissive | | Expressive | | Declarative | |
|-----|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | | Freq. | Perc. | Freq. | Perc. | Freq. | Perc. | Freq. | Perc. | Freq. | Perc. |
| 1 | [1] | 17 | 13% | 7 | 10% | 21 | 17% | 5 | 10% | 1 | 4% |
| 2 | [2] | 20 | 16% | 10 | 15% | 13 | 11% | 6 | 12% | 2 | 8% |
| 3 | [3] | 15 | 12% | 7 | 10% | 19 | 15% | 3 | 6% | 1 | 4% |
| 4 | [4] | 18 | 14% | 12 | 18% | 13 | 11% | 6 | 12% | 4 | 16% |
| 5 | [5] | 13 | 10% | 6 | 9% | 10 | 8% | 8 | 15% | 5 | 20% |
| 6 | [6] | 12 | 9% | 12 | 18% | 13 | 11% | 14 | 27% | 3 | 12% |
| 7 | [7] | 11 | 9% | 7 | 10% | 12 | 10% | 4 | 8% | 7 | 28% |
| 8 | [8] | 21 | 17% | 7 | 10% | 22 | 18% | 6 | 12% | 2 | 8% |
| sum | | 127 | 100% | 68 | 100% | 123 | 100% | 52 | 100% | 25 | 100% |

Note: Perc. = percentage; Freq. = frequency

Additionally, Shinzo Abe's speech texts contained various types of illocutionary acts as illustrated in Figure 3. Figure 3 shows that Assertive speech was more frequent in the 8th press conference (17%), Directive speech was more prevalent in the 4th and 6th press conference speeches (18%), while Commissive speech was more apparent in the 8th press conference (18%). Expressive utterances were more common in the 6th press conference speech (27%), while declarative

utterances were more frequent in the 7th press conference speech (28%). The development of the situation in the past and the future prediction could all impact the delivery of his speeches about Covid-19. A state government leader is expected to do this by providing information, making requests, and even expressing feelings to the society to harmonize the nation's situation from a condition that can disrupt the way of life.

Figure 3
Distribution of Illocutionary Acts in 8 texts of Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches



Performative Verbs of Illocutionary Acts in Shinzo Abe's Speech

Shinzo Abe's speeches contained several uses of Performative Verbs as a marker of Illocutionary Acts. The following provisions distinguish Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, and Declarative. Assertive speech gives meaning to an expression by examining the truth proposition of the expression. It commits the speaker to something being described. Shinzo Abe tried to accept the situation that occurred (Speaker [Sr] believes in Situation [Sn]). Directive speech is an expression intended to persuade the listener to do something. Then, the Hearer does an action in the future. Shinzo Abe attempted to shape nature through his speech (Speaker [Sr] wants Situation [Sn]). Meanwhile, Commissive speech can express something that the speaker will do or realize. It commits the speaker to some future course of action, or the speaker does action in the future. Shinzo Abe attempted to make nature (situation) comply with his speech (Speaker [Sr] means Situation [Sn]). Expressive speech can convey the speaker's feelings and attitudes toward an event or action. It commits the speaker to the

expression of a psychological state. Shinzo Abe attempted to tailor his speech to nature (the situation) by expressing his feelings and attitudes toward it (Speaker [Sr] feels the Situation [Sn]). Lastly, Declarative utterances specify actions to be taken in response to changes in previous circumstances. It commits the speaker to try to create guaranteed correspondence. Shinzo Abe expressed a willingness to change (situation) (Speaker [Sr] causes Situation [Sn]).

It was discovered that the use of performative verbs markers, such as assertive (n=127), included describing (4%), informing (66%), claiming (12%), and predicting (18%). The directive (n=68) involved requesting (78%), inviting (3%), and suggesting (19%). The commissive (n=123) consisted of promising (90%) and intending (10%). The expressive (n=52) contained condolences (6%), sympathizing (2%), thanking (54%), fear (4%), worried (6%), apologizing (12%), respect (15%), and congratulations (2%). Finally, the declarative (n=25) was for establishing (76%) and revoking (24%). These findings can be seen in the following Table 2.

Table 2
Performative Verbs of Illocutionary Acts in Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches

| No. | Illocutionary Acts | Performative Verbs | Freq. | Perc. |
|-----|------------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. | Assertive Utterances | Describing | 5 | 4% |
| | | Informing | 84 | 66% |
| | | Claiming | 15 | 12% |
| | | Predicting | 23 | 18% |
| | | sum | 127 | 100% |
| 2. | Directive Utterances | Requesting | 53 | 78% |
| | | Inviting | 2 | 3% |
| | | Suggesting | 13 | 19% |
| | | sum | 68 | 100% |
| 3. | Commissive Utterances | Promising | 111 | 90% |
| | | Intending | 12 | 10% |
| | | sum | 123 | 100% |
| 4. | Expressive Utterances | Condolences | 3 | 6% |
| | | Sympathizing | 1 | 2% |
| | | Thanking | 28 | 54% |
| | | Fear | 2 | 4% |
| | | Worried | 3 | 6% |
| | | Apologizing | 6 | 12% |
| | | Respect | 8 | 15% |
| | | Congratulations | 1 | 2% |
| | | sum | 52 | 100% |
| 5. | Declarative Utterances | Establishing | 19 | 76% |
| | | Revoking | 6 | 24% |
| | | sum | 25 | 100% |

Note: Perc. = percentage; Freq. = frequency

DISCUSSION

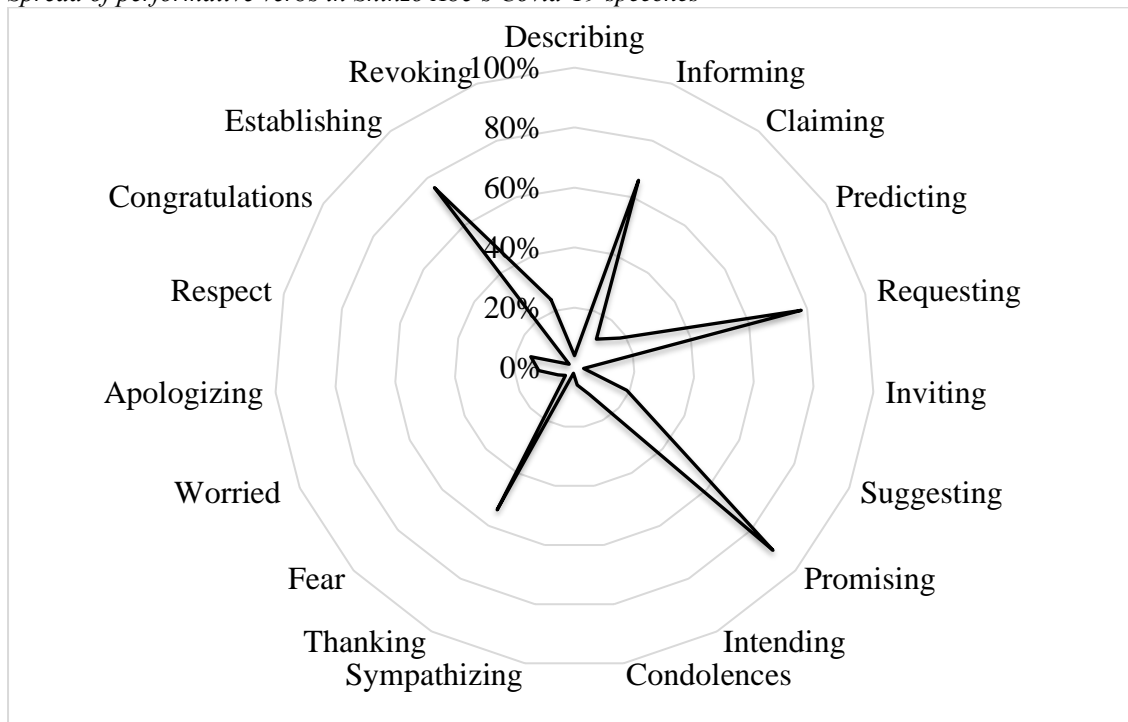
As the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe had the authority to regulate and mobilize the state government and the implementation was conducted in relation to the development of Japanese society. Mr Abe performed various speeches during the

Covid-19 pandemic to inform and even request cooperation from other government institutions, the citizens, and even diplomatic relations with other countries. This discussion focused on the use of performative verbs, which appeared frequently or dominated in the transcripts of Shinzo Abe's

speeches. In the assertive speech, a marker is in ‘informing’, directive speech in ‘asking’, commissive speech in ‘promising’, expressive speech in ‘thanking’, and declarative speech in the

form of ‘determining’. The following Figure 4 depicts the distribution of markers for each Illocutionary Act.

Figure 4
Spread of performative verbs in Shinzo Abe’s Covid-19 speeches



The analysis of Mr Shinzo Abe's power reflection was based on the classification of utterance forms for each type of Illocutionary Acts that appeared in his eight speech texts about the Covid-19 pandemic management.

Assertive – Informing

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted human existence. The pandemic has resulted in many fatalities, leading to widespread suffering and loss of life. Several action strategies and rigorous measures have been implemented to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on people’s lives. As the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzō Abe was expected to furnish pertinent details regarding the current affairs about the pandemic, encompassing the tally of confirmed cases and the measures implemented thus far. The informing speech form was identified as it occurred frequently with a prevalence of 84 instances (66%), as depicted in Figure 4. The following excerpt illustrates the prevalence of informing speech.

新型コロナウイルスが世界全体に広がりつつあります。中国での感染の広がりに続き、韓国やイタリアなどでも感染者が急増しています。我が国では、そこまでの拡大傾向にはないものの、連日、感染者が確認される状況です。

Shingata koronairusu ga sekai zentai ni **hirogaritsutsu arimasu**. Chūgoku de no kansen no hirogari ni tsudzuki, Kankoku ya Itaria nado demo **kansen-sha ga kyūzō shite imasu**. Wagakunide wa, soko made no kakudai keikō ni wanai mono no, renjitsu, kansen-sha ga **kakunin sa reru jōkyōdesu**.

A new type of coronavirus is **spreading throughout the world**. **Following the spread of infection** in China, the number of infected people is **increasing rapidly** in South Korea, Italy, and other countries. Although the spread of the disease has not reached that level in Japan, infected people **are being confirmed daily**. (AsT1)

The swift spread of Covid-19 in several countries, including China, South Korea, and Italy was assumed to have enabled the practice of anti-power. Such practice served as a regime of truth under the influence of inequality and relations, as many people still ignored the health safety directions. As a result, many national leaders often referred to events related to the spread of the disease in another country in their speeches and viewed them as public consumption. This was done to anticipate any problems related to the Covid-19 pandemic that could appear, making the people fully comprehend the pandemic and the ways to protect themselves.

The data related to the use of Assertive speech were obtained from the Japanese prime minister's inaugural speech on the spread of Covid-19 in Japan on February 29th, 2020. The Assertive speech act was in the form of an 'Informing' speech act. This utterance was distinguished by 広がりつつあります 'hirogaritsutsu arimasu' in discourse, which means 'to spread widely', 急増しています 'kyūzō shite imasu' in discourse, which means 'increasing rapidly', and 確認される状況です 'kakunin sa reru jōkyōdesu' in discourse, which means 'confirmed situation'. In this inaugural speech, Mr Abe used various forms of performative verbs, in particular informational verbs.

His use of informational verbs was believed to have led to the reduction of the number of Covid-19 patients in Japan significantly. It showed the importance of delivering statements that contained an assertive dimension for a nation's leader. The assertive dimension helped the minister to convince the Japanese people in facing the pandemic, building their self-confidence and resilience. Therefore, assertiveness statements are considered necessary to calm and alert people to any threats.

Directive - Requesting

The Covid-19 pandemic also made many government leaders around the world issue public health orders and restrictions, many of which were in the form of requests, to prevent the wide spread of the disease. The 'requesting' speech in Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 official communicative exchanges was discovered in 53 data (78%). An excerpt from one of the data is shown as follows.

既に自分は感染者かもしれないという意識を、特に若い皆さんを中心に全ての皆さんに持っていただきたい。外出する際にも、人混みを避け、他の人との距離を保つ、飛沫を飛ばさないようにマスクを着けるなどの行動をお願いいたします。そのことが他の人の命を守ることになります。そして、ひいては自分の命を守ることになります。国民の皆様の御協力をお願いいたします。

Sudeni jibun wa kansan-sha kamo shirenai to iu ishiki o, tokuni **wakai minasan** o chūshin ni subete no minasan ni motte itadakitai. Gaishutsu suru sai ni mo, hitogomi o sake, hokanohito to no kyori o tamotsu, shibuki (matsu) o tobasanai yō ni masuku o tsukeru nado no kōdō o onegai itashimasu. Sono koto ga hokanohito no inochi o mamoru koto ni narimasu. Soshite, hīteha jibun no inochi o mamoru koto ni narimasu. Kokumin no minasama no o kyōryoku o **onegai itashimasu**.

We want all of you, especially the **young people**, to know you may already be infected. Therefore, when going out, please avoid crowds, keep your distance from other people, and wear a mask to avoid flying droplets. Doing so will protect the lives of others. This will, in turn protect your own life. **We ask** for the cooperation of all citizens. (DiT4)

This statement was delivered during the fourth press conference, which took place on April 7th, 2020. According to Kawashima et al. (2021) and Worldometer (2021), Japan had been experiencing an increase in Covid-19 cases, with people of all ages and backgrounds being exposed to the virus and receiving intensive care. Shinzo Abe's request for the society to work together to overcome Covid-19 was expressed by...をお願いいたします '...o onegai itashimasu' in discourse means 'to ask...' in a polite form (*Keigo*) (Makino & Tsutsui, 2008). This expression reflected his power or position as a leader by conveying respect and formal feelings in the form of *Keigo* towards the Japanese society. This request is specifically aimed at young people who are believed to have a robust immune system and who frequently violated regulations by constantly interacting with others, to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. This means that the submission of a request does not have to be rude, negative, or authoritarian. It can be conveyed as a form of politeness or respect towards each other.

The use of requests or '*Keigo*' aimed to encourage the younger generations' actions for collective survival. This type of power takes the form of a productive role, with each positive action coming from them. Shinzo Abe conveyed a directive with a requesting dimension at that time, as human interactions seemed to be unavoidable and difficult to limit to significantly reduce the spread of Covid-19. Many young people in Japan were asked to be careful with their health condition to prevent the more fatal consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. The older generation, on the other hand, was predicted to experience more fatalities to survive the ferocity of the pandemic, given their vulnerable health and immune condition.

Commissive - Promising

The upsurge in the number of Covid-19 cases in Japan prompted Shinzo Abe to make several promises. These promises were expected to give the Japanese people hope in dealing with the issues around the pandemic. 111 promising data in Shinzo Abe's Covid-19 speeches were obtained. The following excerpt depicts some of the promises made. The excerpt was delivered during the first press conference on February 29th, 2020. It indicated that the Covid-19 spike was still under control and had not yet significantly impacted various aspects of life and the nation.

今後とも国民の健康と安全を守ることを何よりも最優先に、必要な措置は躊躇なく実施する考えであります。

Kongo tomo kokumin no kenkō to anzen o mamoru koto o **naniyori mo sai yūsen ni**, hitsuyōna sochi wa chūcho naku jissshi suru kangaedearimasu.

We will continue to **prioritize** protecting the health and safety of our citizens and will not hesitate to implement any necessary measures.

(CoT1)

In response to the Covid-19 situation, Shinzo Abe promised the public a self-declaration commitment to always protect the society's health and safety by implementing various definite policies as a first step in dealing with Covid-19. It is indicated by the phrase を何よりも最優先に 'o naniyori mo sai yūsen ni', which can be translated as 'to give top priority'. Shinzo Abe demonstrated his power as the leader of the Japanese government during the press conference with the use of Commissive speech act. It functions to make a promise to the citizen of Japan. Protecting their health and safety was of great importance for the prime minister, particularly in the early days of the development of the pandemic. These promises to the public were to make the nation strong in enduring a pandemic that had never occurred before. In other words, it was necessary for Shinzo Abe to build the nation's self-confidence so that the people did not fall into fear.

Expressive - Thanking

Shinzo Abe articulated his appreciation to the various groups that collaborated and were active in their respective fields during the pandemic. These groups were recognised for their multivarious actions and cooperation conducted in Japan throughout the fight against Covid-19. Mr Abe's utterances that were employed to express his gratitude in a press conference were discovered in 28 data (54%). This excerpt illustrates the prime minister's utterances of gratitude.

この2週間余り、感染拡大を防止するため、現場で、学校で、職場で、そして地域で、大変な御協力を頂いた全ての国民の皆様にご心より感謝申し上げます。

Kono 2-shūkan-amari, kansen kakudai o bōshi suru tame, genba de, gakkō de, shokuba de, soshite chiiki de, taihen'na o kyōryoku o itadaita subete no kokumin no minasama ni kokoroyori kansha mōshiagemasu.

I want to thank all the people who have worked so hard over the past two weeks in the field, in schools, in the workplace, and their communities to prevent the spread of the disease.

(ExT2)

Shinzo Abe also often conveyed his expressions of gratitude in his speech, and this was evident particularly during his second press conference on March 14th, 2020. In this speech, he expressed his gratitude to every group that had conducted various actions in many locations to deal with Covid-19. A marker indicated this in the polite language (*Keigo*) was に心より感謝申し上げます '...ni kokoroyori kansha mōshiagemasu', which can be translated as '...thank you...' in this context. This expression showed that the prime minister respected all parties involved in dealing with Covid-19. He raised power in a relationship that did not come from a superstructure position but rather from each

agency's direct productive role. Shinzo Abe's subtlety and politeness could be seen very clearly in the speech, which focused on gratitude for the involvement of many parties both from Japan and other countries. With the cooperation of these various parties, public confidence became apparent in that the issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic would slowly but surely be resolved.

Declarative - Establishing

The highs and lows of Covid-19's emergence prompted the Japanese prime minister to declare certain strategies to improve the country's conditions. Various decisions made at the beginning of the development of Covid-19 in Japan, and they were particularly published at the first press conference. Establishing phrases were substantially evident (76%), and these phrases were deemed to significantly affect current and future conditions. A notable excerpt depicting establishing phrases is seen in the following:

これから1、2週間が、急速な拡大に進むか、終息できるかの瀬戸際となる。こうした専門家の皆さんの意見を踏まえれば、今からの2週間程度、国内の感染拡大を防止するため、あらゆる手を尽くすべきである。そのように判断いたしました。

Korekara 1, 2-shūkan ga, kyūsokuna kakudai ni susumu ka, shūsoku dekiru ka no setogiwa to naru. Kōshita senmonka no minasan no iken o fumaereba, ima kara no 2-shūkan-teido, kokunai no kansen kakudai o bōshi suru tame, arayuru te o tsukusubekidearu. Sonoyōni **handan itashimashita**.

The next week or two will be the critical point between a rapid spread and an end to the disease. In light of the opinions of these experts, we should do everything in our power to prevent the spread of infection in Japan during the next two weeks. **We have made this judgment.** (DeT1)

The excerpt was from a speech that was delivered on February 29th, 2020. In this speech, Shinzo Abe determines some actions to combat Covid-19 for the next two weeks, anticipating a spike in the future. This was indicated by the utterance ...判断いたしました '...handan itashimashita', which can be interpreted in this discourse as 'determine.' The prime minister wielded power through the relationships with the team of experts and their opinion on the development of the cases in the society. There was also noticeable anti-power from people who did not follow the instructions. Their non-compliance with the policies enacted for responding to the disease enabled infections to continue to spread.

The power in the speeches that the prime minister created was beneficial to the survival of the Japanese people during the Covid-19 pandemic. Shinzo Abe's speeches in the beginning of 2020 was crucial to awaken public confidence that the pandemic would be overcome. He assured and built

public trust that Covid-19 would be overcome and prevented from spreading. Speeches that awaken and reassure the public are important to ensure community resilience as well as to counteract the fragility caused by the disease.

CONCLUSION

Shinzo Abe demonstrated his power in eight press conference speeches on Covid-19 in Japan with the use of various forms of performative verbs in the illocutionary speech act (n=395). He mostly employed performative verb utterance directions, including informing (66%), asking (78%), promising (90%), thanking (54%), and deciding (76%). The delivery of his speeches frequently took the form of polite or respectful language (*Keigo*) as a statement of respect to various groups of people, government, and other countries that collaborated to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. The prime minister's representation of power had an impact on the making and the conduct of the existing decisions. It emphasised the information he conveyed based on the situation and the conditions in Japan. There was also an anti-power or resistance of power from the society reflected in this discourse as analysed in the eight speech texts. This resistance of power resulted in both the rise and the decline of Covid-19 cases in Japan. As a government leader, Shinzo Abe had the authority to build public understanding based on the available information, and he accomplished this largely with the use of assertive speech. The prime minister also established action policies based on the movement of relations from the society and the diplomatic relationships with other countries. His action policies led to a regime of truth and knowledge about disease, which covered its impact on the society and the manufacturing of medicines. Unfortunately, the previous focus cannot be realised in this research. It was fully acknowledged that this served as the research limitation while simultaneously suggesting an avenue for further research. Possible further research could be conducted to discover the linguistic styles of other Japanese prime ministers in their speeches. It can reveal their involvement in demonstrating their power. Other researchers interested in similar themes are also invited to conduct a similar study to complete this study and widen the usefulness of this research results.

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