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Expressive Speech Act during Disasters: Pragmatic Analysis of the Aceh Tsunami Oral History Archive

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Abstract

The Aceh Tsunami Oral History archive transcribes firsthand accounts from survivors of the December 26, 2004, tsunami, capturing their experiences as direct witnesses to the disaster. These narratives express emotions such as anxiety, panic, worry, distress, and disorientation. This frame of mind reflects the psychological turmoil faced during the earthquake and tsunami waves. This study focuses on expressive speech acts (ESAs), aiming to identify their types, strategies, and patterns in the oral history archive. A qualitative pragmatic approach was employed, with data collected through reading, recording, coding, tabulating, and categorizing. The process of data analysis followed five stages: description, selection, analysis, interpretation, and conclusion. The findings reveal that Aceh tsunami survivors used 22 types of ESAs, both direct and indirect. A number of 65 strategy patterns emerged from two primary strategies, shaping communication based on the survivors' intended interlocutors. The expressions directed toward Allah, the one God, were dominant, featuring religious language and strong Islamic references. The use of hadih maja (Acehnese proverbs) was also identified, illustrating how the survivors' speech acts integrate cultural and religious elements in their communication. The findings have inclusively presented the deep interconnection between faith, Acehnese cultural wisdom, and the ESAs of tsunami survivors.

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Keywords: Expressive speech act, oral history archive, religious and cultural values, tsunami Aceh.

1. INTRODUCTION

Oral history serves as a valuable source of information for recollecting historical events and understanding various aspects of culture, traditions, and significant occurrences (Hutagaol, 2023; Yulianti et al., 2023). It can also be used to recover and interpret natural disasters within the context of local cultures (Mulya & Bramantya, 2022; Wulan & Nurhayati, 2021). This study examines the oral history archives of the 2004 Aceh tsunami in Indonesia to explore how survivors employed expressive speech acts (ESAs), speech strategies, and strategy patterns in response to the disaster.

The tsunami was a terrifying experience for many, drawing out fear, panic, illness, confusion, and resignation among survivors (Damanhuri et al., 2005). In such moments, people often express their emotions through screaming, crying, or moaning as the natural responses to distress (Lascaratou, 2007). Additionally, subjective experiences during disasters are frequently articulated verbally, as seen in expressions like “I’m frightened” or “Where shall I go?” (Carretero et al., 2015). This verbal expressiveness is commonly referred to as the “language of expression”. In pragmatic studies, it aligns with ESAs, which convey a speaker’s mental state or emotions in response to a situation (Aguert et al., 2010; Yule, 2014). Moreover, ESAs are deeply influenced by cultural factors (Proklawati et al., 2021; Santoso, 2007). In this study, the cultural context is embedded in Aceh’s Islamic values, which are integral to Acehnese society.

Islamic principles are deeply rooted in Acehnese culture and are often reflected in language use (Faizin, 2023). Religious expressions are commonly used in daily speech. For example, *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to Allah) is frequently uttered when expressing gratitude, receiving good news, celebrating accomplishments, or resolving challenges (Bakri, 2018). Similarly, *Insyallah* (God willing) is often used when making promises, outlining plans, or offering encouragement. These expressions are integral to speech patterns in everyday conversations, reinforcing the presence of God as an implicit speech partner.

However, in extraordinary circumstances, such as during a tsunami, the way people speak shifts. Consider the following example: “Oh God, I lost my child and my wife”. This expression, spoken by a father who witnessed his home destroyed while his family was inside, highlights how survivors instinctively turn to God in moments of psychological distress. The phrase “Oh God” at the beginning of the utterance serves as a speech strategy, shaped by religious and cultural beliefs (Rohmah et al., 2023). This pattern reflects the deep spiritual connection that Acehnese tsunami survivors maintained in their speech acts. Beyond divine interaction, survivors’ ESAs also demonstrated engagement with their surroundings, other people, and themselves (Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Wijana, 1996). Consequently, these interactions influenced their speech strategies and patterns (Dhika, 2023). To maintain research consistency, this study considers both situational and cultural contexts when analyzing ESAs (Santoso, 2008).

Over the past five years, extensive research has explored disaster-related speech behavior (Horsti, 2023; Maghfira & Matsukawa, 2021; Wang et al., 2023; Wu, 2023), as well as speech acts linked to cultural and religious values. For example, studies have examined the role of culture in celebratory speech acts in Jordan (Ammari et al., 2023), and the act of confessing sins to God (Yamanaka, 2024). Prior research on Aceh tsunami survivors has largely focused on narrative studies, such as exploring the vulnerability and resilience of survivor children (Rahiem et al., 2021), and examining how children coped with the disaster’s aftermath (Rahiem & Krauss, 2018). While there has been significant research on speech acts in the context of disasters, as well as on speech acts related to cultural and religious values, very few studies have specifically examined the ESAs of tsunami survivors. By utilizing the rich information available in the Aceh Tsunami Oral History Archive, this study seeks to answer the question:

1. What are the forms, strategies, and patterns of expressive speech acts used by the survivors of the 2004 Aceh tsunami?

By examining forms, strategies, and patterns of ESAs within the Aceh Tsunami Oral History Archive, this study highlights the profound interconnection between language, culture, and religion in survivors' communication. Its findings contribute to a broader understanding of how disaster survivors express emotions, resilience, and faith through speech acts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Speech Acts

Speech acts play a crucial role in communication, as they represent the fundamental unit of interaction. Searle (1969, p. 16) asserts that "the speech act is the basic unit of communication," emphasizing that while other forms of communication exist, speech acts are central to conveying meaning. The way speech acts are used depends on the context of the conversation, influencing how speakers and listeners interpret verbal exchanges (Abels et al., 2021). A key aspect of speech acts is the intentional action expressed by the speaker, which highlights the performative nature of language. Essentially, speakers use language not only to convey information but also to perform specific communicative actions (Apriastuti, 2017; Chen et al., 2023).

To fully grasp the intention behind speech acts, it is essential to analyze their structural elements, Leech (1993) identifies five critical components that contribute to the interpretation of speech acts: (1) the speaker and listener, who engage in the communicative exchange, (2) the context in which the speech act occurs, shaping its meaning, (3) the objective of the speech, determining the speaker's intended impact, (4) speech acts as actions performed through language, and (5) the result of the speech act, which reflects the effect on the listener. These elements shape speech acts in real-world communication, defining their role in human interaction.

2.2 Expressive Speech Acts

Speech acts representing a speaker's psychological state and how he/she truly feels in a particular situation are known as expressive speech acts (hereafter, ESAs) (Defina, 2018). According to individuals who have experienced it, a speaker uses ESAs to convey genuine and honest feelings (Searle, 1969). Consider the following example.

- (1) "The seminar made me jubilant."
- (2) "Very good."

Speech acts in (1) and (2) illustrate ESAs that convey the speaker's feelings (Aguert et al., 2010). According to the views of Bach and Robert (1979), Thomas (1995), Verschueren (1999), and Weigand (2010), ESAs can be classified into two categories: speaker-centered ESAs and speech partner-centered ESAs (Carretero et al., 2015). Speaker-centered ESAs are speech acts related to the speaker's feelings. These ESAs include positive emotional reactions (i.e., liking something or someone), expressions of concern (i.e., drowning), and expressions stating the truth of propositions that should or should not happen (i.e., wanting something or someone) (Carretero et al., 2015). In other words, speaker-centered ESAs explain the psychological conditions of speakers' actual feelings (Yule, 2014). Examples of speaker-centered ESAs can be observed in the following speech examples (3), (4), and (5).

- (3) "Wow, it's very beautiful!"
- (4) "I will definitely drown because I cannot swim!"
- (5) "Oh, yes, good!"

The speech in (3) explains the speaker's pleasure in seeing something that is beautiful. Conversely, the speech in (4) explains the deep worry experienced by the speaker because he cannot swim. In addition, the speech in (5) explains the speaker's agreement with what his/her speech partner said to him. The expressions used in the three speeches are speaker-centered.

Next, speech acts of expression centered on speech partners are speech acts that focus on the feelings of the speech partners. In this speech act, the listener is required to perform or perform any action, especially physical action, to respond to the speech act (Carretero et al., 2015; Dardjowidjojo, 2005). This concept is demonstrated in the following three examples.

- (6) “Mom, I’m sorry for your loss. May their soul be accepted by His side.”
- (7) “Congratulations, yes, may you live a long and happy life.”
- (8) “Damn you, you have a debt you don’t want to pay.”

After understanding the propositional and thematic content of speech in (6), the speech partner only needs to silently keep the meaning of the speech in his mind or simply say “Thank you” or give another short verbal response. In sentence (7), the speech partner should also simply respond by saying “Thank you”. Similarly, in speech (8), the speech partner does not need to react. It is sufficient for the speech partner to understand the speaker’s intention and retain it in memory (Dardjowidjojo, 2005).

2.3 Speech Strategy

A speaker has certain strategies when delivering a speech to the listener (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Speech strategy is the way a speaker expresses the function of his/her speech. Two strategies can be used by speakers in conveying their intentions, namely direct speech strategies and indirect speech strategies (Prastio, 2019). Direct and indirect speech strategies are used to show speech behavior related to two aspects, namely form and content aspects. The form aspect refers to the formal features or how the statement is constructed. The content dimension is directly related to the meaning contained in the speech (Wijana, 1996).

In the direct speech strategy, there is a unidirectional relationship between the intention of the utterance and its constituent elements. There is a direct and explicit relationship between the linguistic form (sentence) and its communicative function (speaker’s intention) (Searle, 1969). In contrast, in indirect speech strategies, the intention of the utterance cannot be directly found in the words or the constituent elements of the utterance, but an in-depth analysis of the situational and cultural context of the utterance is required (Wijana, 1996). Furthermore, Yule (2014) explains that indirect speech strategy is another way of conveying information by involving knowledge beyond language, namely the context of the speech. Indirect speech strategies are used by speakers not because they are unable to speak directly, but are used to build communication effects in accordance with what the speaker wants.

It can be emphasized that in building an utterance with a direct speech strategy, it is necessary to organize the utterance by involving words that have the same or similar meaning to the intention that the speaker wants to express. Meanwhile, the indirect speech strategy conveys the intention implicitly. To understand it requires a deep understanding of the context of the speech (Wijana, 1996; Yule, 2014).

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This research used a qualitative technique with a pragmatic approach (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). Survivors of disasters typically exhibit various speech-action methods (Lindahl, 2019), and thus, the purpose of this research is to describe the forms, strategies, and patterns of ESAs used by the survivors of the 2004 Aceh tsunami from two books.

3.2 Data and Data Sources

This research used the direct speech of survivors' expressive speech, including prayers, mourning, praise, and other expressions from the 2004 Aceh tsunami disaster. The research data were gathered from 105 oral histories of Aceh tsunami survivors published in two books: *Reflections on Tsunami, an Oral History* (Mualim, 2006) and *Tsunami dan Kisah Mereka* (Damanhuri et al., 2005). These oral histories are in Indonesian (Ind.) and Acehese (Ach.) as Acehese people speak both languages, while religious terms appear in Arabic (Arb.) due to their Muslim faith. Data sources were obtained from the Static and Tsunami Archive Office and the Disaster Archive Study Center at ANRI in Aceh Province.

3.3 Instrument

The instruments used in this research were the researchers themselves, data collection, and data analysis guidelines. Researchers play an important role in qualitative research. Researchers act as planners, observers, interviewers, data processors, interpreters, and reporting of research results (Nasim et al., 2016). The researchers' involvement is crucial in identifying biased aspects of the study, addressing strategic, ethical, and personal concerns, and developing data collection guidelines that effectively capture the depth and complexity of pragmatic research data (Sugiyono, 2019). Table 1 presents the data collection guide used in this study.

Table 1. Data collection guidelines.

Data source	Context	Data	Interpretation
<p>Title: I Have Not Lost You</p> <p>Data Position: page 30</p> <p>Survivor: Fisherman 1, 36 years old, security guard, Lampulo, Syiah Kuala subdistrict, Banda Aceh</p>	<p>During the tsunami, Fisherman 1 was carried by the waves until he reached a two-story house about 700 meters from the shore. He was stranded on the house's window canopy. He attempted to climb onto the roof using drifting timber. Upon reaching the roof, he prostrated in gratitude, uttered <i>Subhanallah</i> (Glory be to Allah), and prayed (see data column).</p>	<p>"O Allah, I lost my children, I lost my wife, I lost my property, but I did not lose You, O Allah".</p>	<p>These data are expressed as follows: These data consist of Fisherman 1's speech acts, which convey acceptance of God's provisions. The text norm system reflects the deep faith of a tsunami survivor in Allah.</p>

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection followed a pragmatic approach, starting with an analysis of 105 oral history texts from 2004 Aceh tsunami survivors, where ESA data were identified, marked, and recorded. Following Miles' et al. (2014) qualitative model, data were refined by removing irrelevant elements and categorizing essential ones for verification. The ESA data were analyzed based on context, descriptions, interpretations, and expert discussions, focusing on forms, strategies, and patterns. Key findings were then summarized to formulate the study's conclusions.

4. RESULT

4.1 Expressive Speech Act Types, Strategies and Patterns

After analyzing 105 oral history reports about the tsunami in Aceh, 22 types of ESA data were identified. Each ESA is constructed using various strategies and patterns. The types of ESAs, strategies, and patterns are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. ESA, strategies, and strategy patterns.

No.	Expressive speech acts	Description	Percentage
1.	Thanking	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
2.	Condoling	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%

Table 2 continued...

3.	Angry	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
4.	Panic	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
5.	Love	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
6.	Responsible	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
7.	Toughness	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
8.	Amazed	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	1.58%
9.	Disagree	using 2 strategy patterns of 2 strategies	3.17%
10.	Feel aided	using 2 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	3.17%
11.	Lamenting	using 3 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	4.76%
12.	Forgiving	using 2 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	3.17%
13.	Resignation	using 3 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	4.76%
14.	Similarities	using 2 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	3.17%
15.	Grateful	using 3 strategy patterns of 2 strategies	4.76%
16.	Worried	using 3 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	4.76%
17.	Disappointed	using 2 strategy patterns of 1 strategy	3.17%
18.	Confused	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	9.52%
19.	Surrender/resignation	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	9.52%
20.	Believe	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	9.52%
21.	Dedication	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	7.93%
22.	Pray	using 1 strategy pattern of 1 strategy	19.0%

Two examples of ESA findings are provided below, with their context and explanation. The discovery was the teaching of a thanking ESA by a 70-year-old survivor who was codded, Fisherman 1.

- (1) *“Selamat tinggal fiber dan sofa.”* (Ind.)
[Goodbye, fiber and sofa]

The context in (1) describes Fisherman 1 drifting in the vast ocean. Initially, he was afloat with a cuboid fiber container used for storing fish. In the afternoon, he moved onto a sofa and spent the night there. The following morning, he noticed a spring bed floating nearby, circling him and climbed onto it. Once he felt safe, Fisherman 1 made the statement in (1). This finding indicates that Fisherman 1, as a survivor, used expressive language to convey gratitude toward the fiber container and sofa.

The second finding was from Student 1, a 28-year-old survivor of the 2004 Aceh tsunami. His speech was identified as a condolatory statement:

- (2) *Innalillahi waiina ilaihi rajiun.* (Arb.)
[Surely we belong to Allah and Him shall we return]

The context in (2) describes a student making his way to the front of a salon on the fourth floor, where he sought shelter. He was shocked to see overturned automobiles and demolished school buildings. Expressing his condolences, he also noticed many people around him before uttering the statement recorded as data (2). This statement reflects an ESA of condolence, spoken by Student 1.

Findings (1) and (2) reveal distinct strategies. The speech act *“Selamat tinggal, fiber dan sofa”* employs a straightforward communication style without any specific linguistic patterns. In contrast, the speech act *“Innalillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun”* utilizes indirect discourse, incorporating religious terminology.

4.2 Expressive Speech Act Strategy Patterns

Based on a comprehensive analysis of 22 distinct forms of ESAs, Acehnese people who have experienced a tsunami employ two primary methods: direct and indirect speech strategies. The patterns of these methods vary depending on the speech partner and the characteristics of each ESA. The analysis identified 23 different types of ESAs, which generated 63 unique strategy

patterns. Each form of ESA followed a different number of strategy patterns. Additionally, the findings revealed the types of ESAs, speech strategies, pattern variations, and the role of the speech partner.

Table 3 presents eight different types of speech acts, each employing a single strategy pattern for both direct and indirect speech techniques.

Table 3. ESA strategies that use one strategy pattern.

Expressive speech acts	ESA strategies	Strategy pattern	Speech partner
Thanking	Direct	No special patterns	Nature
Condoling	Indirect	Using religious terms	Nature
Angry	Indirect	Prohibiting asking questions	Fellow
Panic	Indirect	Describe the condition	Fellow
Love	Direct	Religious terms + ESA	God
Responsible	Indirect	Describe the condition	God
Toughness	Indirect	Describe the condition	God
Amazed	Indirect	Rate provided	Self

Table 3 illustrates the use of direct and indirect speech methods in different types of ESAs. In direct speech, two types of ESA are identified: thanking without a specific pattern and thanking with an initial pattern incorporating religious terms. Meanwhile, three ESAs, ‘panic’, ‘responsible’, and ‘toughness’, utilize indirect communication strategies by explaining situations. The remaining three ESAs follow distinct indirect speech patterns: condolences incorporate religious expressions, anger includes forbidden phrases, and amazement employs an assessment strategy.

Table 4 shows each of the nine ESA categories employs two or three strategy patterns.

Table 4. ESA strategies that use 2-3 strategy patterns.

Expressive speech acts	ESA strategies	Strategy pattern	Speech partner
Disagree	Indirect	Through Acehnese language phrase	Fellow
	Direct	ESA+ Rationalization	Fellow
Feel aided	Indirect	Requires objects + ESA	Self
	Indirect	Requires situation + ESA	Self
Lamenting	Direct	Religious terms 1 + ESA	God
	Direct	Religious terms 2 + ESA	God
	Direct	No special patterns	Self
Forgiving	Direct	Rumination + ESA	Fellow
	Direct	ESA + Explain the law	Nature
Resignation	Direct	ESA + Declares Commitment	Self
	Direct	ESA + Add cause	Fellow
	Direct	Declare Commitment + ESA	Self
Similarities	Direct	Explain the nature and purpose	Nature
	Direct	Explain the purpose	Nature
Grateful	Indirect	Describe the condition	Self
	Indirect	No special patterns	God
	Direct	Religious terms + ESA	God
Worried	Indirect	Expose conditions	Fellow
	Indirect	Describe the experience	Fellow
	Indirect	Presenting presumption	Self
Disappointed	Indirect	Expose conditions	Fellow
	Indirect	Mention the cause	Fellow

Table 4 presents the diverse patterns of direct speech strategies used in four ESA categories: ‘lamenting’, ‘forgiving’, ‘resignation’, and ‘similarities’. The direct speech strategy for ‘lamenting’ ESA follows two patterns, both incorporating religious phrases at the beginning of the speech. In the case of ‘forgiving’, two patterns emerge: one where the ESA is followed by a legal explanation and another where it is followed by introspection. ‘Resignation’ employs three direct speech patterns: ESA followed by commitment, ESA followed by cause, and commitment followed by ESA.

Additionally, Table 4 identifies two categories of indirect speech strategies used in ESA: ‘feel aided’ and ‘worried’. The indirect speech act for ‘feel aided’ follows two patterns: object followed by ESA and situation followed by ESA. Meanwhile, the indirect speech act for ‘worried’ follows three patterns: explaining a condition, combining presumption and experience, and presumption alone.

Table 4 also highlights two ESA types that employ both direct and indirect mixed speech strategies. The ‘disagree’ type follows one indirect strategy using Acehnese expressions and one direct strategy combining ESA with rationalization. Meanwhile, ‘grateful’ employs two indirect strategies: one with an explanatory condition pattern and one without a pattern, alongside one direct speech strategy incorporating religious terms.

Table 5 indicates that all four ESA types employ at least five strategies.

Table 5. ESA strategies that use 5-6 strategy patterns.

Expressive speech acts	ESA strategies	Strategy pattern	Speech partner
Confused	Indirect	Asking the apocalypse to God	God
	Indirect	Asking the position of self and family	Self
	Indirect	Asking what and where to go	Self
	Indirect	Asking about the existence of apocalypse	Self
	Indirect	Asking why people run around	Self
Surrender/ Resignation	Direct	Conditional + ESA + promise	God
	Direct	Cause + ESA	Fellow
	Direct	Make a choice	God
	Direct	Take notes	God
	Direct	No special patterns	God
	Direct	Praying for others	God
Belief	Indirect	Reason + ESA	Self
	Indirect	Religious terms + ESA	God
	Indirect	Explaining the nature	Self
	Indirect	Conclude	Self
	Indirect	Calling the self-kindness	God
	Indirect	Stating the believed	Self
Dedication	Indirect	Religious terms 3	God
	Indirect	Religious terms 4	God
	Indirect	Religious terms 5	God
	Indirect	Religious terms 6	God
	Indirect	Religious terms 7	God

Table 5 shows that Aceh tsunami survivors expressed confusion through six types of direct speech act strategies, including: asking God about the apocalypse, inquiring about their own and their family’s situation, questioning what happened and where to go, asking if this is the end of the world, questioning why people are running, and seeking clarification about reality.

The survivors used five direct speech strategies to express surrender, including condition, reasoning, choice, notes, and praying for others patterns. Table 5 also shows six direct speech patterns for expressing belief: reasoning, religious terms, explaining nature, concluding, self-kindness, and belief patterns, all followed by ESA. For ESAs of dedication, survivors employed five indirect speech patterns using Arabic religious terminology, including *Asyhaduallailahailallah* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah), *Subhanallah* (glory be to Allah), *Ya Wali, Ya Wali* (O Protector), and *Lailahailallah* (There is no god but Allah).

Table 6 shows expressive prayer speech acts conveyed through 11 direct speech patterns.

Table 6: ESA strategies using 12 strategy patterns.

Expressive speech acts	ESA strategies	Strategy pattern	Speech partner
Prayer	Direct	Mention good deeds+ ESA	God
	Direct	Asking + ESA	God
	Direct	Glorifying+ ESA	God
	Direct	ESA + repentance purpose	God
	Direct	ESA + repentance purpose	God

Table 6 continued...

	Direct	Praise the God	God
	Direct	Pitiful	God
	Direct	Questioning Sin+ ESA	God
	Direct	Hope	God
	Direct	ESA + religious terms	God
	Direct	Presumptions + ESA	God
	Direct	No special patterns	God

Table 6 illustrates how the ESA of ‘prayer’ utilizes a direct speech act strategy with various patterns. These patterns include good deeds followed by ESA, asking God, glorifying God, ESA followed by the aim of repentance, praising God, expressing remorse for sins, questioning one’s sins before God, expressing hope, ESA followed by religious terms, and presumption followed by ESA.

The key findings on ESAs, categorized by type, strategy, and strategic pattern, are influenced by the roles of the speech partners with whom the speaker interacts. In this study, the speech partners (SP) of Aceh tsunami survivors included God, fellow humans, nature (such as corpses, inanimate objects, and animals), and other survivors.

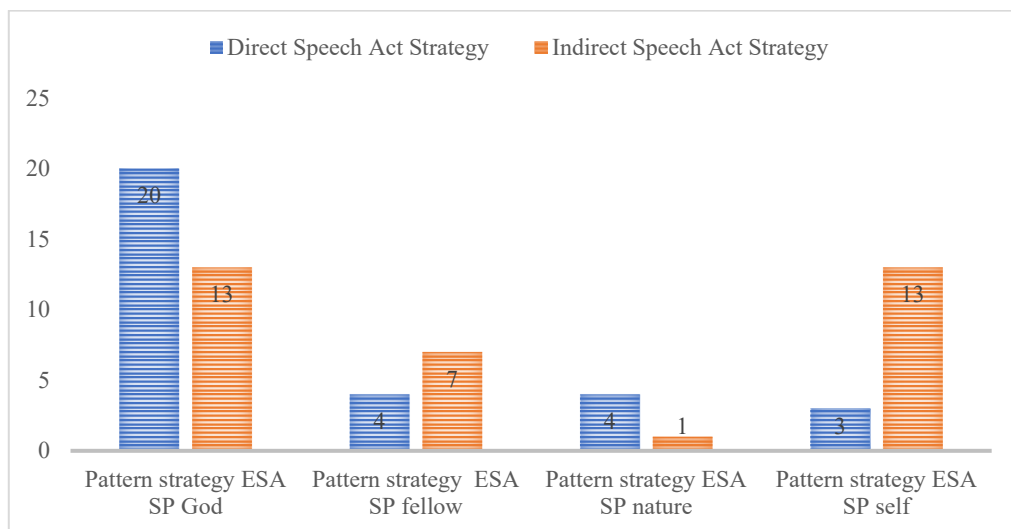


Figure 1. ESA strategies and their corresponding patterns in relation to speech partners (SP).

The survivors utilized 10 types of ESA when communicating with God, eight types of ESA when interacting with others, four types of ESA when communicating with nature, and seven types of ESA when engaging in self-talk, incorporating both direct and indirect speech acts in various patterns.

4.2.1 *Expressive speech acts in relationships with God*

The study’s findings demonstrate that survivors’ ESAs in the oral history archives of the Aceh tsunami reveal a strong bond with God. The data include evidence of up to 10 different forms of ESAs, 2 speech methods, and 33 distinct strategy patterns used when speaking to God during the tsunami disaster (see Figure 1). The findings on ESAs related to God are classified into two categories: relationships with God as options and those with God as absolute.

a. *Expressive speech act in relationship with God as an option*

The ESA with God as an option highlights that God is not necessarily a speech partner in acts such as gratitude, responsibility, resilience, lament, and confusion. The speaker does not

explicitly address God in these cases, making His involvement optional. The following sections present three examples of ESAs where God is an optional reference.

First, the ESA of gratitude. Data on this speech act, spoken by a 21-year-old survivor of the 2004 Aceh tsunami (coded as Entrepreneur 1), are summarized as follows.

- (3) *Allahu Akbar. Terima kasih, ya Allah.* (Ind.)
[God is the Greatest, thank you, O Allah]

The context in (3) describes how Entrepreneur 1 struggled to reach the ocean's surface and then a hill while repeatedly being submerged by the tsunami waves and swallowing the harsh waters. The waves continued to crash over him. After swimming for a while, he finally reached the hill and uttered the statement recorded as data (3). In this statement, he directly expressed gratitude to Allah for saving him from the tsunami. This speech act employed a direct speech strategy based on religious terms, beginning with *Allahu Akbar* and ending with *Ya Allah*.

Second, there is an expressive act of responsibility. The data on responsible ESAs, spoken by a 31-year-old survivor of the 2004 Aceh tsunami (coded as Citizen 1), are summarized as follows.

- (4) *Ya Allah, tak ada pemilik rumah, saya memerlukan obat ini, saya minta pada-Mu, Ya Allah.* (Ind.)
[O Allah, there is no homeowner, I need this medicine, I ask of You, O Allah]

The context in (4) describes how, after being bathed and dressed at home, Citizen 1's husband performed the noon prayer. While in the room, Citizen 1 noticed a medicine box and uttered the statement recorded as data (4). She then treated and bandaged the wound. In this instance, Citizen 1, a survivor, indirectly expressed her sense of responsibility for using someone else's belongings while the owner was absent. She then asked God for a conclusive solution. The speech in data (4) employed an indirect speech act strategy with a pattern of explaining conditions.

The third pathway involves ESAs. The data spoken by the survivor, coded as Security 1, a 36-year-old, are expressed as follows.

- (5) *Ya Allah, saya kehilangan anak, kehilangan istri, kehilangan harta benda, tapi saya tak kehilangan-Mu ya Allah.* (Ind.)
[O Allah, I lost my child, lost my wife, lost my property, but I have not lost on You, O Allah]

The context in (5) describes how Security 1 expressed his feelings to God after surviving an attempt to climb the tree beside his house. His words conveyed his resilience in facing the tsunami. In this instance, as a survivor, he demonstrated a strong attitude in dealing with the disaster. The speech act in data (5) employed indirect speech strategies to explain the conditions of facing God.

b. Expressive speech acts in an absolute relationship with God

The findings on ESAs in an absolute relationship with God positioned God as a direct partner in communication. In this context, God was the sole recipient of expressions such as gratitude, devotion, prayer, and dedication, indicating that the speaker actively involved God in their expressive speech. The following sections present three examples of ESAs that portrayed God as absolute.

First, the expressive act of resignation. The data on the resignation ESA, spoken by a survivor coded as Mother 1, 32 years old, are as follows:

- (6) *Seandainya dosa saya telah engkau hapuskan ya Allah, ambillah nyawa saya. Kalau belum, selamatkan untuk bisa menjalankan semua perintahmu Ya Allah.* (Ind.)
[If You have forgiven my sins, O Allah, take my life. But if not, save me so that I may fulfill all Your commands, O Allah]

The context in (6) was that Mother 1 fell and tumbled into the dark sea after being struck by powerful waves. With her child still in her arms, she struggled against the roaring waters. Another wave then struck her and her son, separating them. In the chaos of the tsunami's storm surge, she uttered the words recorded in data (6). As a survivor, she expressed a sense of surrender to God despite the overwhelming disaster. The direct speech act strategy used in data (6) began with a request and concluded with a promise, or a request followed by an ESA, ultimately pledging to obey God's commands.

Second, the expressive act of praying. The data on the praying ESA, spoken by a survivor coded as Employee 1, 58 years old, are as follows.

- (7) *Neuseulamatkan lon ya Allah, Neuseulamatkan aneuk dan ureung inong lon.* (Ach.)
[Save me, Oh God Almighty, save my son and wife]

The context in (7) is that Employee 1 swallowed water three times while being caught in the tsunami's waves. To protect his eyes from direct impact, he covered them with his hands. Then, he uttered the statement in (7). He prayed to God for the safety of his wife and children. The speech act in (7) employed a direct speech act strategy without following any specific pattern.

Third, the expressive act of resignation. The data on the resignation ESA, spoken by a survivor, was coded as Entrepreneur 1, 37 years old. The data are expressed as follows.

- (8) *Lailahailallah.* (Arb.)
[There is no God except Allah]

In the context of (8), Entrepreneur 1 panicked upon realizing that the sea level was rising. He stopped at a dead end. Turning back, he saw massive waves aggressively approaching him. The waves were pitch black, filled with debris from destroyed buildings and concrete. He surrendered and said, "*Lailahailallah* [There is no God except Allah]." While holding his wife and child, they were struck by the waves. In this data, the survivor's dedication to God is illustrated through the statement, "There is no God but Allah," intended to seek God's mercy. In generating data (8), an indirect speech act strategy was used, incorporating religious terms such as "*Lailahailallah*."

4.2.2 *Expressive speech acts in relationships with fellow humans*

The results revealed that the ESAs of survivors in the oral history archives of the Aceh tsunami were deeply rooted in Acehnese cultural elements. This was evident in the use of ESAs that incorporated cultural critiques, often delivered through traditional Acehnese expressions. For example, one critique expressed by a survivor, coded as Student 2, a 28-year-old, is as follows.

- (9) *Nyan keuh ureung tanyoe, meudo'a teungoh sakèt, meuratèp teungoh geumpa.* (Ind.)
[We pray in sickness, *dhikr* during earthquake]

The context in (9) describes how Student 2 returned to a coffee shop to pay for his coffee after the earthquake had occurred. Upon arrival, he noticed the disarray of items in the shop, including tables, cookie racks, cups, and plates. After settling his payment, he engaged in a discussion about people's behavior during earthquakes. During this discussion, he delivered the utterances captured in data (9). This critical statement reflected an ESA, specifically critiquing the tendency of Acehnese people to engage in *dhikr* (refers to remembering and glorifying Allah through repetitive prayer recitations) and prayer only in certain circumstances.

4.2.3 *Expressive speech acts in relation to nature*

The study's findings revealed a strong cultural connection between the ESAs of Aceh tsunami survivors, as recorded in oral history archives, and elements of nature. The evidence highlighted ESAs that reflected interactions with corpses, snakes, and fish.

First, the ESA of similarity. An example of a similarity-based ESA, spoken by a 21-year-old survivor coded as Seller 2, is as follows.

- (10) *Kamu menyelamatkan dirimu dan kami menyelamatkan diri kami.* (Ind.)
[You saved yourself and we saved ourselves]

In the context of (10), Seller 2 attempted to move someone to a garbage pile when he saw three snakes, one of which was on the person's thigh. While carefully moving the snake, he uttered the statement recorded in data (10). This data expressed the similarity between the speaker and the speech partner about the snakes. The speaker employed direct speech acts by describing the same objective pattern.

Second, the expressive act of similarity. A similarity-based ESA, spoken by a survivor coded as Mother 2, a 31-year-old, is as follows.

- (11) *Kita sama-sama hamba Allah.* (Ind.)
[We are both the creation of God]

In the context of (11), Mother 2 was carried away by a wave when a snake crawled onto her hand. She felt afraid and communicated with the snake, saying, "*Kita sama-sama hamba Allah* [We are both the creation of God]." Shortly after, the snake disappeared. Data (11) express the similarity between the speaker and the speech partner in their situation with the snake. The speaker used a direct speech act strategy to emphasize the equality of their positions.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on these findings, various forms of expressive speech acts (ESAs) have been found in the Aceh Tsunami oral history archive. These speech acts include expressing gratitude, congratulating, condoling, apologizing, thanking, feeling guilty, and expressing anger (Searle, 1969). Specifically, 22 forms of expressive speech identified about natural disasters (particularly tsunamis) include panic, worry, resignation, confusion, determination, disappointment, confidence, awe, feeling helped, expressing similarity, resignation, prayer, servitude, lamenting, disagreeing, and worry. The diversity of ESA forms reflects the actual psychological condition and feelings of survivors. This agrees with the view expressed by Yule (2014) who states that ESAs are expressions of the speakers' true feelings. According to Searle (1969), the speaker's psychological state is the basis for the emergence of ESAs.

Aceh tsunami survivors communicate with four types of speech partners in their ESAs: God, others, self, and nature (objects). An important component of studying speech acts is the speech partner, which Leech (1993) included as a key element. God is considered the most important speech partner in the Aceh tsunami oral history archive, followed by other people and natural speech partners. The diminishing strength of the Islamic culture in Acehnese society is at the root of this problem. This finding supports the theory that culture significantly impacts language development, highlighting the inseparable nature of the two (Nasrullah, 2024).

Based on the position of speech partners, it is possible to categorize the strategies, patterns of strategies, and ESAs that survivors employ during a tsunami disaster. First, God is a speech partner. ESAs addressing God appear fully in 5 of the 22 types of ESAs; gratitude, surrender, prayer, toughness, and obedience. In interactions with God, speakers predominantly use direct speech strategies, with 20 and 13 patterns of direct and indirect speech strategies. Terms like *Alhamdulillah* [Praise be to Allah], *Lailahailallah* [There is no God except Allah], and *Allahu Akbar* [Allah is the Greatest] are frequently used to begin or conclude conversations with God. For example, "*Lailahailallah, anak istri saya tidak ada lagi* [There is no God except Allah, my wife, and child are no more]". The survivors of the Aceh tsunami also expressed fear of being alone without family left, as seen in the statement "*Ya Allah kalau saya sendiri yang selamat*

ambil saja nayawaku [O Allah, if I am the only one who survives, take my life as well].” The speech technique used is direct speaking, with patterns of either providing notes or conditions.

The most important aspect of interactions between survivors of the Aceh disaster and other people is the type of ESA dispute, which has two subtypes; cultural critique and disclosure. In cultural criticism, survivors use indirect speech strategies that include Acehese expressions. One such expression is “*Nyan keuh ureung tanyoe, meudoa teungoh sakèt, meuratèp teungoh geumpa* [We pray in sickness, *dhikr* during earthquake]”, which a survivor said to his friends in a coffee shop. This expression is part of an Acehese proverb (*hadih maja*). The full version of *hadih maja* is “*Seumbahyang wajèb uroe Jum’at, seumbahyang sunat uroe raya. Meudoa watée ceurèt, meuratèb watée geumpa* [Just as the obligatory prayer is performed on Friday and the sunnah prayer on Eid, people pray when they have diarrhea and recite *dhikr* during an earthquake]” (Adnan, 2018). The Acehese proverb, known as *hadih maja*, are crucial component of their local knowledge and sense of self (Pratama et al., 2022).

The Aceh tsunami survivors employed various direct speech act strategies in their ESAs when interacting with nature, including corpses, objects, and animals. The types of ESAs involving natural elements as speech partners included congratulatory expressions directed at inanimate objects like fibers and sofas, permission requests when dealing with corpses, and expressions of similarity when encountering snakes. The speech act strategy of requesting permission from a corpse reflects the survivors’ awareness of religious obligations. Specifically, the survivors emphasized the duty to cover the intimate parts (*aurat*) both of a living person and of the deceased because covering the *aurat* is regarded as a way to safeguard oneself, uphold dignity, and maintain moral integrity (Purhasanah et al., 2023). Their expressions highlighted Islamic teachings on the importance of bodily modesty.

When addressing a fiber and a sofa as speech partners, the speech act used was an expression of gratitude, employing a direct speech act strategy without a specific pattern. The survivor simply said, “*Selamat tinggal, fiber dan sofa* [Goodbye, fiber, and sofa]”. Similarly, when speaking to snakes, survivors used an ESA strategy to convey similarity, employing a direct approach that acknowledges nature. This is illustrated in the following speech: “*Hai ular, kamu makhluk Allah, saya juga makhluk Allah. Kita sama-sama ingin menyelamatkan diri.* [Hi, snake. You are a creature of God, and I am also a creature of God. We both want to save ourselves].” The essence of this speech act is that, as fellow creatures of God, humans, and animals share the same survival instinct. Two of the three instances of ESAs positioned natural elements as speech partners, utilizing a strategic pattern to convey meaning within the context of Islam. This pattern reflects a shared religious identity and the invocation of God’s name as part of the speech act strategy. The Aceh tsunami survivors exemplified the influence of Islamic culture on their language through ESAs, with distinct techniques and patterns emerging in response to the disaster.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the expressive speech acts (ESAs) of Aceh tsunami survivors reflect a deep interconnection between faith, cultural wisdom, and communication strategies. The survivors employed 22 types of ESAs, both direct and indirect. They revealed various uses of language in response to the disaster. A total of 65 strategy patterns emerged from two primary strategies, shaping communication based on the intended interlocutors. Expressions directed toward Allah were dominant, characterized by religious language and strong Islamic references. Additionally, the use of *hadih maja* (Acehese proverbs) highlights the integration of cultural and religious elements in their speech acts. These findings emphasize how faith and local wisdom shaped the linguistic expressions of Aceh tsunami survivors, and reinforce the role of religion and tradition in coping with disaster.

While this study identified the ESAs of Aceh tsunami survivors, certain limitations should be noted. First, it broadly examined survivors’ speech acts but did not differentiate between those occurring before, during, and after the disaster, which could provide valuable time-based comparisons. Second, the study focused solely on Aceh, excluding other regions affected by the

2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Future research could explore survivors' speech acts in other impacted areas or in communities with unique tsunami-related wisdom, such as the Simeulue District in Aceh, where the *Smong* tradition serves as an oral disaster mitigation practice.

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