



Natural Semantic Metalanguage Analysis of English Speech Act Verb 'Inform'

Desak Putu Salshabila Ardiantari^{1*} 

¹ English Department, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: ssardiantari@gmail.com

Abstrak

Umumnya, setiap bahasa memiliki leksikon yang dikelompokkan ke dalam kata kerja yang terklasifikasi. Setiap kata kerja dapat dipecah menjadi beberapa subtipe tertentu. Khususnya dalam bahasa Inggris, kata kerja secara semantik dibagi menjadi beberapa subtipe. Kata kerja seperti memberitahu, meminta, menginformasikan, menawarkan, memaafkan, dan lain-lain termasuk ke dalam jenis kata kerja tindak tutur atau tindak tutur. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis analisis metabahasa natural semantik verba tindak tutur bahasa Inggris *inform*. Dalam pengumpulan data menggunakan metode observasi. Oleh karena itu, teori natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang diambil dari American Corpus (COCA). Melalui penjelasan, leksikon tertentu dijelaskan secara menyeluruh untuk mengungkap makna halus dari fitur semantik tanpa bias. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa keempat subtipe tindak tutur verba "menginformasikan" menunjukkan bentuk dan struktur semantik yang bervariasi. Perbedaan dalam leksikon menjadi jelas dalam domain semantik umum mereka. Selain itu, empat leksikon terkait dengan kata kerja "menginformasikan" memiliki sifat semantik yang unik dan melayani tujuan tertentu dalam tindak tutur.

Kata Kunci: Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), Kata Kerja Tindak Tutur, Penjelasan

Abstract

Generally, every language has a lexicon that is grouped into classified verbs. Each verb can be broken down into some specific subtypes. Particularly in English, verbs are semantically divided into several subtypes. Verbs such as *tell*, *ask*, *inform*, *offer*, *forgive*, and others are belonging to the types of verbs of speech or speech acts. This study aims to analyze natural semantic metalanguage analysis of English speech act verb of *inform*. In collecting data is using observational method. Therefore, the theory of natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) is used to analyze the data taken from the American Corpus (COCA). By way of explication, the particular lexicon is explained thoroughly to reveal the subtle meaning of semantic features without any bias. The research argues that the four subtypes of the speech act verb "inform" demonstrate varying semantic forms and structures. The distinctions in lexicon become evident within their common semantic domain. Moreover, the four associated lexicons with the verb "inform" possess unique semantic traits and serve specific purposes within speech acts.

Keywords: Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), Speech Act Verb, Explication

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has a very important role in human civilization. Humans, as the only ones who can apprehend cognitive-communication, language function as a tool of communication that allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others (Howarth, 2016; Kecskes, 2021; Rina Devianty, 2017). Languages provide a variety of ways of saying the same thing – addressing and greeting others, describing things, and paying compliments (Eom & Papi, 2022; Salam El-Dakhs, 2020; Saputra et al., 2019). Since there are many languages spoken worldwide, linguistic variations appear as a term that refers to how languages differ from each other concerning different aspects of their structures including their syntax, morphology, phonology, lexicon, and so forth (Pesina & Yusupova, 2015; Suwonsichon, 2019; Yuniawan et al., 2018). Therefore, it has some attention to emphasize the social nature of language, for instance, to give understanding that meaning is so vague and how it is used to definite conclusions. Thereby, it is

History:

Received : May 25, 2022

Revised : May 28, 2022

Accepted : January 20, 2023

Published : May 25, 2023

Publisher: Undiksha Press

Licensed: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License



referred to as a semantic field (Gosselin & Sabourin, 2021; Kristiano & Ardi, 2018; Rohbiah, 2020).

Semantics is a study concerned with meaning in language. The meaning of words and sentences in a language can safely be taken as known to competent speakers of specific languages (Ren et al., 2021; Riantani & Tambunan, 2013; Zaim, 2019). Semantics provides the understanding related to familiar words that colloquially have simple and general meanings that allow their use in many situations, as well as uncommon words that generally have complex and specific meanings (Fonseca, 2020; Goddard, 2015). The study of semantics also covered the relationship between a words compared to another word. When a word is intuitively felt to be related, one can find its true meaning (Anderson, 2009; Andewi & Waziana, 2019). The similarities and differences in the semantic components of words can be determined so that the semantic structure can also be explained in the end.

English, which is favored as the predominant language of communication, has six main lexical categories distinguished by their morphological properties and semantic features: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, determiner, and exclamation (Gizatulina et al., 2020; Suwastini et al., 2023). From the extent of the study that discusses language and linguistics, this study is intended to analyze verbs in English, seeing their use as the main feature in a sentence (Krismayani et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2017; Yusefi et al., 2015). Amongst those many types of English verb, the discussion in this study is focused on the use of speech act verbs, specifically the verb 'inform.' By attempt to give a thorough discussion, there is an approach that is well known to be used – including the method of the lexicon configuration and the explication (Budasi & Satyawati, 2021; Suwonsichon, 2019; Yayuk, 2018).

This notion is basically applied upon reductive paraphrasing, that is breaking words down into a combination of simpler words and using a small collective semantic prime namely Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) Theory attempted to identify the core meaning of a word, which is the simplest meaning of a word by using a single criterion, namely reductive paraphrase, which means that the meaning of complex words is expressed in simple words (Gladkova et al., 2016; Swarniti, 2021). Furthermore, NSM combines philosophical traditions and logic in the study of semantics with a typological approach to language studies based on cross-cultural empirical research.

This theory is considered to be an appropriate tool for a semantic study approach that can describe the results of the analysis of acceptable meanings, which are designed to explain either lexical meaning, illocutionary meaning, and grammatical meaning. Throughout this study, natural semantic metalanguage theoretical natural semantic metalanguage analysis of english speech act verb 'inform'. Hopefully this study can contribute to the analysis and contrastive study of meaning-related phenomena in English languages.

2. METHOD

This study is descriptive-analytical and is a literature study (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Nassaji, 2015). Qualitative analysis is used in order to gain insights into the use of the English speech act verb 'inform'. Therefore, the writing of this study is undertaken throughout three substantial stages, including the methods and techniques for collecting data, data analysis, and presenting the analysis.

In collecting data, the writer applies the observational method in which the examples of sentences in the context of their use are taken from the search result on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) data corpus (Gladkova et al., 2016; Goddard, 2008). The text was the primary data source since it was related to observation and tapping

techniques in written language. The data retrieved is analyzed based on the conceptual framework and using the intralingual method. It is a way of analysis by comparing the lingual elements, both contained in one language or several different languages. After all, the data is presented in an informal method since the result of the analysis will be delivered by using a verbal statement.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The verb *inform* in English is one of the representations of the semantic primes with the categories of speech. Based on the original meaning, the verb "inform" in English is a prototype of "say" because it emphasizes speech acts verb that causing the addressee to know something by "telling" the addressee with no doubtness. Semantic primes classified into related categories are show in [Table 1](#).

Table 1 Semantic Primes Classified Into Related Categories

Semantic Primes Classified	Categories
I, You, Someone, Something/Thing, People, Body Kind,	Substantives
Part	Relational Substantives
This, The Same, Other/Else	Determiners
One, Two, Some, All, Much/Many	Quantifiers
Good, Bad	Evaluators
Big, Small	Descriptors
Know, Think, Want, Feel, See, Hear	Mental Predicates
Say, Words, True	Speech
Do, Happen, Move, Touch	Actions, Events, Movement, Contact
Be (Somewhere), There Is, Have,	Location, Existence,
Be (Someone/Something)	Possession,
Live, Die	Specification
When/Time, Now, Before, After, A Long Time, A Short	Life And Death
Time, For Some Time, Moment	Time
Where/Place, Here, Above, Below, Far, Near, Side,	Space
Inside	
Not, Maybe, Can, Because, If	Logical Concepts
Very, More	Intensifier, Augmentor
Like/Way	Similarity
	Similarity

With regard to the scope of discussion, the verb "inform" in English speech act verb, afterwards, "say" can be polycemic with "happened" to describe a semantic situation that a speaker say something to the speaker because he wants an event to happen to speaker. A number of lexicons those who have "inform" in English language classified as: *inform on*; *notify*; *announce*; and *reveal*. Each lexicon it will be known its distinguishing features, which differentiate the lexicon one lexicon to another. Furthermore, the verb will be mapped and paraphrased one by one to identify the slight meaning based on the distinguishing characteristics.

Inform On

Inform on is a phrasal verb that can be used in two different ways, i.e. the use that seems to be accountable for in terms of the meaning "inform" and the meaning of the postposition "on" which implies an ongoing process of speech; and other use that takes a human object that implies a number of specific things about the object, the speaker, and the addressee. Regarding the data, COCA provides 125 results for the word "inform on" of the verb part of speech.

Indicating the speech act verb, the person who *informs on* someone says that the addressee has done something "bad" or rather something the addressee will suffer as a result of that. In addition, generally, the use of this phrase is restricted to certain social groups, or the people belonging to the same circle as the speaker.

Notify

The lexicon of *notify* normally refers to something that can be seen as "hot news," thus, the content of the message is much more specific and indicating the recent news. *Notify* is similar in this respect to *announce*, however, they are obviously different regarding the focus. *Notify* will focus on the addressee, a more specific addressee, that there is no implication that the message may be important in general. By contrast, *announce* focuses on the message, and since no addressee is specified, it invites inference that it may be important to a wide target audience. The example provided by COCA for the search pattern of *notify* as a "verb".

Announce

Announcing is an act which has to be performed in a certain characteristic manner. As a declarative speech act, *announcing* is similar to *informing*, *declaring*, or *stating*. However, the distinctive thing is that *announcing* refers to forthcoming event, in particular, to intended actions. In addition, by looking at its context, *announcing* is sound formal and is an official act. The person who is *announcing* something must have, or must assume a special role – simply on the fact that he/or she is the only person who has access to the information that will be announced.

Reveal

The lexicon *reveal* is presumably similar to *announce*, however, *reveal* implies a secret i.e. something that someone (perhaps the speaker and his association) had kept from other. *Revealing* is not necessarily public, on the other hand, someone is not necessarily "people in general". In addition, the content of what is *revealed* is presumed important and extraordinary to be known by other people. The content of "revelation" can also be said is something that people wouldn't have expected. The example provided by COCA for the search pattern of *reveal* as a "verb" shown 28.762 results that mostly occur on blog.

Discussion

This research asserts that the four subtypes of the speech act verb "inform" exhibit different semantic forms and semantic structures. The lexical differences can be observed in their shared semantic field. Additionally, the four lexicons correlated with the verb "inform" have distinct semantic characteristics and purposes in speech acts.

It is in line with previous study that is analyzed with the theory of natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) (Erawati & Sulibra, 2017). Based on the analysis of each speech verb lexicon of Old Javanese, then every lexicon reflects two important components of semantics, namely: dictum and illocutionary purposes which reveal subtle meaning features that have a field of similar meaning. By way of explication, each lexicon can be analyzed thoroughly without any bias. The similar research also found the NSM is applicable to the

communicative interaction routines in Persian (Zamanian, 2012), and cultural scripts can be used to develop an awareness of cultural differences in the learners.

So it can also be concluded that NSM is a linguistic approach that seeks to create a set of basic semantic concepts that can be found in all human languages. This means that NSM can be used to analyze and understand the structure of meaning in various languages without relying on a particular vocabulary richness or syntactical structure (Goddard, 2008; Zamanian, 2012). NSM seeks to decompose meaning into simpler and intuitive components, which are called "semantic primitives". It is supported by previous study state by using NSM semantic concepts easier to understand and explain, thereby increasing readability and communication skills (Gladkova et al., 2016).

This research provides deeper insight into the meaning of the verb 'inform' in English through the NSM approach. This can help understand the basic semantic concepts involved in 'inform' speech acts and how they relate to social and cultural contexts. By applying NSM to the analysis of 'inform' verbs in English, this research contributes to the development of a cross-language analytical model that can be used to understand similar verbs in other languages. The implication is that the use of NSM can be extended to other languages to analyze speech act verbs with a similar approach.

Thus, since this study is undertaken within a limited scope, perhaps, further research will be conducted to contribute novel knowledge in the linguistic field, especially within the framework theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage. Far more, producing as many references contribute to cross-cultural communication, considering that language is a dynamic system in human lives.

4. CONCLUSION

Up to this point, this study confirmed that the four subtypes of speech act verb "inform" have different semantic forms and semantic structures. The differences in those lexicons can be seen in the semantic features that have the same meaning field. To be added, the four lexicons that correlate with the verb "inform" have different semantic characteristics as well as the purpose of the speech act verb. The lexicons have a similar metalanguage Semantic pattern, as X says this because X wants to cause Y to know it.

5. REFERENCES

- Anderson, K. (2009). Applying positioning theory to the analysis of classroom interactions: Mediating micro-identities, macro-kinds, and ideologies of knowing. *Linguistics and Education*, 20, 291–310. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2009.08.001>.
- Andewi, W., & Waziana, W. (2019). An Analysis of Teacher's Speech Acts in Teaching and Learning Process. *Teknosastik*, 17(1), 29. <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v17i1.207>.
- Budasi, I. G., & Satyawati, M. S. (2021). An Ethnolinguistic Perspective on Lexicons of Traditional House in Menyali Village, North Bali. *Jurnal Kajian Bali (Journal of Bali Studies)*, 11(1), 115. <https://doi.org/10.24843/jkb.2021.v11.i01.p07>.
- Eom, M., & Papi, M. (2022). Interplay of a Learner's Regulatory Focus and Genre on Second Language Writing. *English Teaching(South Korea)*, 77(1), 41–66. <https://doi.org/10.15858/ENGTEA.77.1.202203.41>.
- Erawati, N. K. R., & Sulibra, I. K. N. (2017). Speech Act Verb in Old Javanese: Natural Semantics Metalanguage Analysis. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 4(2), 71–80. <https://www.academia.edu/download/99389074/9.pdf>.
- Fonseca, M. da C. F. R. (2020). Numeracy in Youth and Adult Basic Education: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of a discursive practice. *ZDM*, 52(3), 395–406.

- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-019-01110-3>.
- Gizatulina, D., Ismaeva, F., Solnyshkina, M., Martynova, E., & Yarmakeev, I. (2020). Fluctuations of text complexity: the case of Basic State Examination in English. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 88, 02001. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20208802001>.
- Gladkova, A., Vanhatalo, U., & Goddard, C. (2016). The semantics of interjections: An experimental study with natural semantic metalanguage. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 37(4), 841–865. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716415000260>.
- Goddard, C. (2008). *Natural Semantic Metalanguage: The state of the art*. Cross-linguistic semantics.
- Goddard, C. (2015). “Swear words” and “curse words” in Australian (and American) English. *At the Crossroads of Pragmatics, Semantics and Sociolinguistics. Intercultural Pragmatics*, 12(2), 189–218. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2015-0010>.
- Gosselin, L., & Sabourin, L. (2021). Lexical-semantic processing costs are not inherent to intra-sentential code-switching: The role of switching habits. *Neuropsychologia*, 159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2021.107922>.
- Howarth, C. (2016). Representations, identity, and resistance in communication. In *The Social Psychology of Communication*. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230297616_8.
- Keckses, I. (2021). Processing implicatures in English as a Lingua Franca communication. *Lingua*, 256, 103067. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2021.103067>.
- Krismayani, ni wayan, Suastra, I. M., & Suparwa, i nyoman. (2021). Ecolinguistic Approaches in Development of English Teaching Materials for English for Business. *E-Journal of Linguistics*, 15(1), 16–24. <https://doi.org/10.24843/e-jl.2021.v15.i01.p03> Ecolinguistic.
- Kristiano, J. T., & Ardi, P. (2018). Swear words in Bad Boys II: A semantic analysis. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 21(2), 191–198. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v21i2.1586>.
- Lambert, V. A., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative Descriptive Research: An Acceptable Design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255–256. <http://antispam.kmutt.ac.th/index.php/PRIJNR/article/download/5805/5064>.
- Lin, W.-C., Shie, J.-S., & Holmes, P. (2017). Enhancing intercultural communicative competence through online foreign language exchange: Taiwanese students' experiences. *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 44(0), 0–19. <http://wportfolio.wzu.edu.tw/ezfiles/0/1000/academic/44>.
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 129–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815572747>.
- Pesina, S., & Yusupova, L. G. (2015). Words Functioning in Lexicon. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 38–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.006>.
- Ren, X., Sun, X., Wang, H., & Liu, Q. (2021). Towards semantics-enhanced pre-training: Can lexicon definitions help learning sentence meanings? *In Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, 35(15), 13736–13744. <https://doi.org/10.1609/aaai.v35i15.17619>.
- Riantani, S., & Tambunan, M. (2013). Analysis of the effect of macroeconomic variables and global indices on stock returns. *Semantics*, 3(1). <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/289220277.pdf>.
- Rina Devianty. (2017). Bahasa Sebagai Cermin Kebudayaan. *Jurnal Tarbiyah*, 24(2), 226–245. <https://doi.org/10.30829/tar.v24i2.167>.
- Rohbiah, T. S. (2020). An analysis of Semantic changes of English lexical borrowings in Indonesia Tourism field. *Loquen: English Studies Journal*, 13(1), 40. <https://doi.org/10.32678/loquen.v13i1.2554>.

- Salam El-Dakhs, D. A. (2020). Variation of metadiscourse in L2 writing: Focus on language proficiency and learning context. *Ampersand*, 7, 100069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2020.100069>.
- Saputra, J., Rahmadeny, M., & Jazzawi, I. (2019). The Importance of Sociolinguistics in Foreign Language Education: A Review of Selected Paper. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies*, 1(4), 299–303. <https://doi.org/10.29103/ijevs.v1i4.1415>.
- Suwastini, N. K. A., Wiraningsih, P., & Adnyani, K. E. K. (2023). Representation of Gendered Language in English Textbook for Indonesian Junior High School. *International Journal of Language Education*, 7(1), 94–119. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v1i1.37632>.
- Suwonsichon, S. (2019). The Importance of Sensory Lexicons for Research and Development of Food Products. *Foods*, 8(1), 27. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods8010027>.
- Swarniti, N. W. (2021). The Meaning of The Verb “Destroy” in the Balinese Language: A Natural Semantic Meta Language Approach. *HUMANIS: Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 25(3), 292–298. <https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/sastra/article/download/72920/41009>.
- Yayuk, R. (2018). Lexicon of Characteristic Disclosure of River Culture at Banjarmansin and Nagara Societies: An Ethnosemantic Study. *Naditira Widya*, 12(2), 131–146. <https://doi.org/10.24832/nw.v12i2.312>.
- Yuniawan, T., Rokhman, F., & Mardikantoro, H. B. (2018). The Journal of Educational Development Eco-Lexicons in Conservation News Text in Mass Media: Ecolinguistics Study. *The Journal of Educational Development*, 6(1), 1–15. <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/jed/article/view/16270>.
- Yusefi, M., Gowhary, H., & Azizifar, A. (2015). Investigating the Effect of Formal Training of Topic-hood on Writing and Reading Comprehension Ability of Iranian EFL Learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199(1994), 248–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.513>.
- Zaim, M. (2019). 5r strategy for implementing content and language integrated learning (clil). *Proceedings Semirata 2019: International Seminar & Annual Meeting, September*, 101–105. <http://fkip.umrah.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2020>.
- Zamanian, M. (2012). Analysis of cultural scripts of suggestions and rejection of suggestions in Persian and English within natural semantic metalanguage framework. *Journal of Studies in Learning and Teaching English*, 1(2), 19–39. http://jslte.iaushiraz.ac.ir/article_518885_eb7ad57238cc6cf886959b7351017c87.pdf.