

**SPEECH ERRORS IN THE 2008 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL
DEBATES**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language is a human basic need. It is used to communicate with the others. Human do need language because they are considered as social being that cannot live without the others' hands. When people communicate to the others, there must be aims or purposes they have in order to get something they need, such as: asking information is used to get information, commanding or requesting someone else is used to get someone else's help, etc. So, they need to construct appropriate words to utter particular sentences to produce speech in order to get response, effect, or help from their listeners.

Producing speech is not a difficult thing. Speakers are usually fluent in producing speech, word by word flows fluently, they think a word at the same time their tongues produce it. If they talk about daily conversation everything seems so easy, but, this easiness actually may not be found if they are in a situation like giving speech, telling a story, describing abstract object, debating, etc that they rarely do it or talk about it. As stated by Fauziati (2008: 137):

Producing speech seems require very little thought or effort. The words produced flow effortlessly. Speakers think what they want to say and their tongues automatically put their thoughts into words. They are not aware of how they produce a sentence. On rare occasion, however, such effortlessly of producing speech is not true. When speakers try to talk something difficult, they need considerable planning where to start.

Because of that, if people are talking something difficult that they rarely talk about, not all speech goes well, it also can go wrong. It is called speech error.

Speech error is a mistake in speech production. Speech error occurs because there is breakdown of the speech plan and execution. Clark and Clark (1977: 224) stated that,

There are two activities in speech production—planning and execution. Speakers first plan what they want to say based on how they want to give effect to their listeners. They put their plan into execution, uttering segments, words, phrases, and sentences which make up the plan.

The breakdown or speech error may exist when speaker utters segment, word, phrase, clause, or sentence. The execution is sometimes filled by various types of breakdown or speech error such as pause (can be divided into two, silent pause and filled pause), repeat, false start (there are two kinds of false start, those are: false start retraced and false start unretraced), correction, replacement, and even slip of the tongue.

People usually try to plan word by word in their mind, and then they execute it or produce it. When people produce word, then, they pause for a while before moving on to the next word, it is considered as a silent pause (e.g. *turn on the heater / switch*). If there is filler in their pause such as: *uh, you know, you know what?, guess what?, em*, it is considered as a filled pause (e.g. *turn on, uh, the heater switch*). Repeat, is a speech error when the speakers are repeating one or more than one word in a row (e.g. *turn on the heater / the heater switch*). Next, false start, there are of two kinds of false start: unretraced and retraced. Unretraced false start occurs when speakers

false in starting speech, then the speakers make a correction of a word (e.g. *turn on the stove / heater switch*). And retraced false start is repetition of one or more than one word before the corrected word (e.g. *turn on the stove / the heater switch*). Other type of speech error is correction. It is like a false start, but it contains an explicit correction, such as, *I mean, rather, or that is*, (e.g. *turn on the stove switch—I mean, the heater switch*). The next is interjection. It is like a hesitation pause, it indicates that the speakers have had to stop to think about what to say next. The interjection in English often emerges with the sound *oh, ah, well, say*, (e.g. *turn on, oh, the heater switch*). The next type is stutter. Speakers who stutter speak rapidly the same sound or syllable (e.g. *turn on the h-h-h-heater switch*). The last type of speech errors is slip of the tongue. Speakers may make error in sounds, word parts, words, and even sentence structures. These can be considered as slip of the tongue.

Just what the writer has mentioned above that speech error may occur when speakers face a difficult problem that the speakers talk about, speech error may also occur when speakers face a spontaneous speech. Debate is actually a kind of something difficult that people in common are rarely faced by and it is also kind of spontaneous speech, so it can be indicated that speech error may exist in it. A debate is, basically, to argue. There are two people called debaters (it also can be more than two people if it is a debate team) who argue about a topic which is given. They have different point of view in viewing the topic or problem. They must construct word by word spontaneously because they are not given a clue, answer of the questions or a

specific thing about the topic, they are just given a general topic or problem to be debated. They also have to construct word by word quickly, logically as well as they can so that their argument can be accepted. That is what is called as debate.

Nowadays, there are president and/or vice presidential debates held in order to give the voters in the general election a view about the capacity of the candidates of the president or vice president as well as to know the way how they solve the problem if they are faced by it, and so. Recent presidential debates were also held in United States of America. The debaters were John McCain, United States Senator from Arizona and Barack Obama, United States Senator from Illinois, both were the U.S. presidential candidates. Obama came from Democrat party and Mc Cain came from Republic Party. When they were debating, they produced speech spontaneously about the topic that was given and there were also speech errors they made. Some of their speech errors were, *and I / do have a / sad note tonight*, this utterance contains a speech error, that is silent pause, the speaker pauses one word before he moves to the next word. *Senator Kennedy is, uh, in the hospital* this utterance contains filled pause, this is a kind of a pause error that contains filler uh. Then, *and / and I just fundamentally disagree* this is a repeat error, the speaker repeats a word and for twice. After that, *well, l-l-l-let me just make a couple of points* this is a stutter, the speaker speaks rapidly a syllable l. *John said that, uh, fundamentals of the economy are sound*, this utterance contains an error, it is called interjection, he pauses for a while with filler uh to think the next

word that he is going to say. *Then I want to cut it so that businesses will remain an / in the United States of America* this utterance is considered as a false start unretraced, the speaker corrects an to in. Kinds of slip of the tongue (blend: two words which are mixed and selection error) are also existing in this debate. An utterance *you just want to add anditional tax cut over the loopholes* contains a kind of slip of tongue—blend, which is a mixture from words an and additional. *The /ði:/ policies of President Bush that John McCain wants to / wants to follow* this utterance contains a selection error, the above should be pronounced /ðə/ because the following word is starting by a consonant sound.

Based on the phenomena above, the writer is interested in conducting a study of speech errors which made during the 2008 U.S. presidential debates that uttered by both Barack Obama and John Mc Cain.

B. Limitation of the Study

The researcher gives limitation of the problem, and those are:

1. The writer only takes the 2008 U.S. presidential debates' videos and its transcript as data, because there are many previous U.S. presidential debates as well as other countries' presidential debates and there is also U.S. 2008 vice presidential debates.
2. The writer only takes both Barack Obama and John Mc Cain as the 2008 U.S. presidential debaters as the subject of the research.

C. Problem Statement

The problem statements of this study are:

1. What are the types of speech errors made by both Barack Obama and John Mc Cain in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates?
2. How often do Barack Obama and John Mc Cain commit the speech errors in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates?
3. What are the sources of speech errors that showed up in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates?
4. How often those sources cause the speech errors to occur in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates?

D. Objective of the Study

In relation to the problem statement above, the writer decides the objective of the research as follows:

1. To identify the types of speech errors made by both Barack Obama and John Mc Cain in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates.
2. To investigate the frequency of speech errors made both Barack Obama and John Mc Cain in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates.
3. To investigate the causes of speech errors that made by Barack Obama in the 2008 U.S. presidential debates.
4. To investigate the frequency of causes of speech errors made by Barack Obama and John Mc. Cain.

E. Benefit of the Study

1. Theoretical Benefit

- a. This research will give contribution to develop psycholinguistics study, especially in speech error study.
- b. This research will give more view about speech error to the readers about speech errors.
- c. This research can be used as an additional reference for the next researcher, especially for those who are interested in conducting a study of speech errors and/or any study else that use the 2008 U.S. presidential debates as data.

2. Practical Benefit

- a. This research automatically varies the study of research papers of the English Department at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.
- b. This research will make the reader to be careful in producing speech after knowing that some people do speech error, to keep the effectiveness and efficiency of speaking.
- c. The finding of the study can be a good input for readers in understanding speech errors.

F. Research Paper Organization

The researcher organizes this research paper into five chapters in order to make it easier to understand. Each of them is concerned with different

issues but it is related to each other. The organization of this research paper is as follows:

Chapter I is introduction which consists of the background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and research paper organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature. It covers previous study and underlying theory. Previous study is a study which relates to this study, while the underlying theory is a theory that relates to this study.

Chapter III is research method which consists of type of research, object of research, data and data source, technique of data collection, technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV is research finding and discussion. Research finding consists of types of speech errors in the U.S. presidential debates, the frequency of the speech errors, and the causes of speech error. Discussion talks about type speech error, the frequency its speech errors and sources of speech error.

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion. It consists of conclusion of the study and suggestion from the writer.