

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12426264

# SPEECH ACTS AND POWER PRACTICES IN THE TEXT OF GEGURITAN CUPAK GERANTANG: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Received: 18/07/2025

Accepted: 05/02/2026

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the interrelationship between speech acts and power practices in Geguritan Cupak Gerantang through the analytical lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As a traditional Balinese literary composition, Geguritan Cupak Gerantang operates not merely as a narrative artifact but as a form of social practice that reflects and reproduces cultural norms, ideological configurations, and asymmetrical power relations. Grounded primarily in the three-dimensional CDA framework proposed by Norman Fairclough—comprising textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—this study examines how diverse categories of speech acts, particularly directives, expressives, and commissives, are mobilized by characters to exercise authority, assert dominance, negotiate hierarchical positions, and legitimize moral evaluations. The findings indicate that speech acts are strategically deployed to construct contrasting character identities, most prominently between Cupak and Gerantang, whereby language functions as a central mechanism of manipulation, compliance, and resistance. Power is discursively instantiated through recurrent patterns of commanding, blaming, persuading, and justificatory reasoning, which in turn index broader ideological formations, including moral dualism and normative ethical principles embedded within Balinese sociocultural contexts. Furthermore, the perlocutionary effects generated by these utterances demonstrate how discourse shapes character behavior and reinforces socially sanctioned norms. This study concludes that Geguritan Cupak Gerantang embodies a complex and dialectical relationship between language and power, illustrating how traditional literary discourse participates in both the reproduction and contestation of social values. By integrating speech act theory into a CDA framework, the research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of classical texts as dynamic sites of ideological articulation and cultural transmission.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Geguritan, Linguistics.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional literary texts should not be regarded solely as aesthetic productions; they also constitute social practices through which cultural values, ideological formations, and configurations of power are generated and perpetuated. Within this framework, language operates as a primary semiotic resource that shapes social reality, constructs subject positions, and legitimizes particular forms of authority. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a methodological approach for interrogating these functions of language by conceptualizing discourse as a socially embedded practice intrinsically linked to power, dominance, and ideology.

*Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*, a prominent Balinese narrative poem, offers a productive site for such critical linguistic inquiry. The text dramatizes the moral and behavioral opposition between Cupak and Gerantang, whose identities are discursively constituted through dialogic interaction. Cupak is represented as deceitful, avaricious, and manipulative, whereas Gerantang is constructed as virtuous, honest, and ethically principled. These representations are neither incidental nor ideologically neutral; rather, they are produced through patterned linguistic choices that encode and reproduce broader sociocultural values and asymmetrical power relations within Balinese society.

Previous scholarship on *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* has predominantly emphasized moral instruction, character formation, and structural or thematic interpretation. Comparatively limited attention has been devoted to the micro-level operation of power through language, particularly via speech acts. Speech act theory, initially formulated by J. L. Austin (1962) and subsequently refined by John Searle (1969), advances the proposition that utterances are not merely descriptive but performative: they enact actions such as commanding, persuading, blaming, or promising. From a critical perspective, these performative dimensions illuminate how authority is exercised, hierarchy negotiated, and behavioral compliance elicited within narrative interaction.

By integrating speech act theory with CDA, this study examines how power practices are enacted, sustained, and contested discursively in *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*. Employing the three-dimensional model developed by Norman Fairclough—encompassing textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—the research analyzes (1) the

linguistic realization of speech acts, (2) their production and interpretation within the narrative context, and (3) their broader sociocultural implications. This multidimensional approach seeks to demonstrate that the *geguritan* functions not merely as a moral narrative but as a discursive arena in which language operates strategically to enact power and reinforce ideological meaning.

The theoretical framework is explicitly interdisciplinary, combining the micro-analytic precision of speech act theory with the macro-analytic orientation of CDA. Particular attention is devoted to illocutionary categories—directives, expressives, commissives, representatives, and declarations—as these provide a systematic basis for identifying how characters assert authority, manipulate interlocutors, express affect, or legitimize actions. In addition, the analysis of perlocutionary effects elucidates how discourse shapes character behavior and consolidates social hierarchies within the narrative world. Through this integrated perspective, speech acts are conceptualized as strategic instruments that participate in the construction of dominance, obedience, and resistance, thereby revealing the intricate nexus between language and power in traditional literary discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis provides the broader analytical framework for interpreting speech acts as socially situated practices. This study primarily adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which conceptualizes discourse as comprising three interrelated dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice (Latupeirissa et al. 2019, 2023). At the textual level, the analysis focuses on linguistic features such as sentence types, modality, lexical choices, and forms of address that signal power relations and social hierarchy. At the level of discursive practice, attention is paid to how speech acts are produced, distributed, and interpreted within the narrative context, including the roles and positions of characters. Finally, at the level of social practice, the discourse is linked to broader socio-cultural structures, such as moral ideology, social inequality, and traditional Balinese values. CDA is particularly relevant to this study because it emphasizes that discourse is never neutral; rather, it is shaped by and contributes to the maintenance of power relations and ideological meanings. By applying CDA, this research seeks to uncover how *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* reproduces dominant moral ideologies while simultaneously exposing tensions and contradictions within social power structures. The integration of Speech Act Theory and

CDA enables a comprehensive analysis of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*. Speech act analysis provides a detailed examination of how power is enacted at the level of individual utterances, while CDA situates these utterances within broader social and ideological contexts. This combined approach allows the study to demonstrate that speech acts in the *geguritan* are not merely narrative devices but discursive practices through which power, ideology, and cultural values are articulated and sustained.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied a qualitative descriptive research design with an interpretative approach, as it aims to explore and explain how speech acts function as power practices in the text of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*. The qualitative method is considered to be appropriate because the data are in the form of textual discourse, and the analysis focuses on meanings, interpretations, and socio-cultural contexts rather than numerical measurement.

### 2.1 Data Source

The primary data source of this research is the text of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* published by Department of Education and Culture in 1991. It is a classical Balinese literary work. The data consist of selected dialogic utterances produced by the main and supporting characters, particularly those that reflect interactions involving authority, domination, persuasion, conflict, and moral judgment. Both the original Balinese text and its Indonesian or English translations (where necessary) are used to ensure accuracy of interpretation while maintaining the original linguistic nuances.

### 2.2 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through document analysis. The researcher conducted a close and repeated reading of the text to identify utterances containing significant speech acts. These utterances were then systematically selected and categorized based on their communicative functions, such as directives, expressives, commissives, and representatives. Notes were taken to record the context of each utterance, including the speaker, the addressee, the situational background, and the narrative function.

### 2.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis follows Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, integrated with Speech Act Theory. The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, at the textual level, each selected utterance was analyzed to identify its

type of speech act, linguistic features, and illocutionary force. Second, at the level of discursive practice, the analysis focused on how the speech acts are produced and interpreted within the narrative, including how they contribute to character construction and interactional power relations. Third, at the level of social practice, the findings were interpreted in relation to broader socio-cultural contexts, such as moral ideology, social hierarchy, and traditional Balinese values.

### 2.4 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, this study applies theoretical triangulation by combining Speech Act Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. In addition, repeated textual analysis and careful contextual interpretation are employed to enhance the credibility of the findings. Interpretations are grounded in established linguistic and discourse theories to minimize subjectivity.

### 2.5 Ethical Considerations

As this research is based on a literary text, no human participants are involved. Ethical considerations are addressed by acknowledging all theoretical sources and respecting the cultural significance of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* as a traditional Balinese literary heritage. This methodological framework enables a systematic and critical examination of how speech acts operate as instruments of power within the discourse of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study based on the analysis of speech acts and power practices in *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* text. The discussion is organized according to the dominant types of speech acts identified in the text and their roles in constructing power relations, character identities, and ideological meanings within the narrative. The analysis integrates Speech Act Theory with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

Datum (3-1)

Cupak : *Bapa titiang sané mangkin, pacang mabongbong ajahan yan I Gerantang sampun rauh, sampunang bapa ngengsapang, gelis tigtig, tundung tampaknya sampatang.*

Dad, now I will fight the cocks for a while, if I Gerantang comes, don't forget, Dad, immediately beat him, chase him away and wipe away his tracks.

Cupak employs directive speech acts that function

to instruct, command, and incite action. Although framed within familial address (*bapa titiang* “my father”), the utterance contains a series of imperative-like directives: *ngengsapang* (beat), *tundung* (drive away), and *sampatang* (erase his traces). These verbs indicate a strong illocutionary force aimed at controlling the father’s future actions. From a speech act perspective, Cupak’s utterance performs not merely a request but a command, as it specifies both the target (Gerantang) and the sequence of actions to be carried out. The perlocutionary goal is clear: the physical removal and symbolic erasure of Gerantang from the social and familial space. The absence of politeness markers or mitigating expressions further strengthens the directive force, suggesting urgency and authority.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis viewpoint, Cupak’s directives reflect an ideology of domination and exclusion. By instructing his father to violently expel Gerantang, Cupak positions himself as the initiator of power, despite lacking legitimate moral or social authority. This indicates that power in the discourse is discursively constructed, not institutionally granted. The phrase “*sampunang bapa ngengsapang*” (do not forget it) reinforces Cupak’s attempt to normalize violence as an acceptable response to Gerantang’s presence. Moreover, “*sampatang*” (wipe away his tracks) carries a symbolic ideological meaning: it suggests not only physical expulsion but also the erasure of Gerantang’s social legitimacy and identity. In CDA terms, this reflects an ideology that equates power with the ability to eliminate the “other” from discourse and social recognition. Cupak’s use of familial hierarchy is also ideologically significant. Although the father traditionally holds authority, Cupak reverses this hierarchy by issuing commands upward. This inversion reveals Cupak’s manipulative strategy: he exploits emotional closeness and assumed obedience to exercise coercive power. Such discourse illustrates how ideology operates subtly through everyday language, masking domination under the guise of familial interaction.

Datum (3-2)

Gerantang: *Naweg titiang tan ngiringang, becik beli, budal uningang.*

I’m sorry, I don’t want to, it’s better, bro, please go home and tell him.

Gerantang primarily performs expressive speech acts, which function to convey his psychological and emotional state toward the situation. The opening expression “*Naweg titiang*” (I’m sorry) signals an act

of apology, reflecting regret and emotional restraint rather than confrontation. This expressive act establishes Gerantang’s stance as non-aggressive and ethically grounded. From a speech act perspective, the utterance communicates Gerantang’s feelings of reluctance and moral refusal. The phrase “*tan ngiringang*” (I don’t want to / I refuse) expresses personal unwillingness without hostility. Unlike a directive or confrontational refusal, this expressive form emphasizes self-positioning rather than the imposition of will on others.

Gerantang’s expressive speech acts are reinforced by politeness strategies. The term “*becik beli*” (it’s better, brother) softens the refusal and maintains solidarity. This choice reflects negative politeness, respecting the interlocutor’s face and avoiding direct threat. The expression of apology combined with kinship address mitigates potential conflict and preserves social harmony. Although the utterance contains a mild directive (“*please go home and tell him*”), it is subordinated to the expressive function and framed politely. The dominant illocutionary force remains expressive, emphasizing sincerity, humility, and respect.

From a CDA perspective, Gerantang’s expressive speech acts reflect an ideology of moral power rather than coercive power. Gerantang does not attempt to dominate or manipulate; instead, he exercises ethical self-control and discursive restraint. His refusal is articulated through apology and politeness, signaling adherence to cultural values such as respect (*tatakrama*) and harmony.

This contrasts sharply with Cupak’s directive and violent discourse. While Cupak’s language seeks to erase and dominate, Gerantang’s expressive speech maintains social balance and affirms moral legitimacy. Ideologically, Gerantang’s expressive acts align with traditional Balinese values that privilege humility, patience, and righteousness over aggression. Discursively, Gerantang’s expressive speech acts contribute to the construction of his identity as a morally upright and trustworthy character. The repeated use of apology and respectful address positions him as a figure of legitimate moral authority, even in the absence of physical or institutional power. The perlocutionary effect of such expressives is to evoke empathy and ethical alignment from both interlocutors and the audience.

Datum (3-3)

Cupak: *Jero sang nurwénang puri, olasinja kuda kula, icénin genah masayub, seduk kuloné kaliwat, mak enta sai, baang ngidih nasi kula*

Oh homeowner, please help me, give me shelter, I

am very hungry, and I have not eaten,  
please give me some rice.

Cupak's utterance constitutes a directive illocutionary act because its primary communicative intention is to make the hearer perform certain actions, namely providing shelter and food. Although the utterance is not structured as a direct command, Cupak strategically employs indirect directives that are softened through politeness, explanation, and emotional appeal. Expressions such as "*icénin genah masayub*" (give me a place to stay) and "*baang ngidih nasi kula*" (please give me some rice) function explicitly as requests, while supporting statements like "*olasinja kuda kula*" (my horse is exhausted) and "*seduk kulone kaliwat*" (I have not eaten since noon) operate as justificatory acts that legitimize those requests. Pragmatically, these explanations are not neutral descriptions of his condition but serve to strengthen the directive force of the utterance by presenting his needs as urgent and unavoidable. The use of respectful address (*jero sang nurwénang puri*) and pleading expressions (*mak enta sai*) further mitigate the face-threatening nature of the directive, transforming it into a seemingly humble appeal. However, this humility is strategic rather than sincere, as Cupak carefully constructs himself as a helpless victim in order to constrain the hearer's freedom to refuse. From the perspective of power ideology, Cupak's speech reveals a subtle but effective form of dominance: power exercised through emotional manipulation rather than social status or physical authority. While the homeowner appears to hold material power as the owner of food and shelter, Cupak gains discursive power by framing the interaction within a moral discourse of compassion and obligation. By emphasizing hunger, exhaustion, and desperation, Cupak shifts the ethical burden onto the hearer, making refusal appear inhumane. This reflects an ideology in which power is achieved through rhetoric, politeness, and the exploitation of social norms of generosity. In the broader context of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*, this utterance reinforces Cupak's characterization as a figure who manipulates language to serve self-interest, using indirect directives and moral pressure to control others, thereby contrasting sharply with ideals of honest and ethical authority.

Datum (3-4)

Cupak: *Kadung pelih, nutug nyama ngalas-alas*

It's already a mistake, following my brother into the forest

Cupak's utterance "*Kadung pelih, nutug nyama ngalas-alas*" (It's already a mistake, following a

relative into the forest) is a clear example of an expressive speech act because it primarily communicates Cupak's inner feelings rather than aiming to influence the hearer's actions directly. Through this utterance, Cupak expresses regret, fear, dissatisfaction, and self-pity toward the situation he is facing in the forest. The phrase *kadung pelih* shows his emotional judgment that the decision he made was unfortunate or wrong, while *nutug nyama ngalas-alas* identifies the action he now regrets. Pragmatically, this expressive act serves not only to reveal emotion but also to reframe responsibility: Cupak presents the event as a regrettable circumstance rather than a consequence of his own moral weakness or lack of courage. By verbalizing regret instead of accountability, Cupak positions himself as a victim of bad choices and fate. Ideologically, this reflects Cupak's personal worldview, in which hardship is perceived as an unjust burden and responsibility is subtly displaced onto others or onto the situation itself. His expressive speech reinforces an ideology of self-centered survival, where emotional complaint becomes a tool to seek sympathy and to legitimize withdrawal from danger or effort. In the context of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*, this utterance strengthens Cupak's characterization as someone who uses emotional expression strategically to excuse fear and avoid struggle, contrasting sharply with the heroic ideology embodied by Gerantang, who accepts hardship as a moral duty rather than something to be lamented.

Datum (3-5)

Cupak : *Jalan mrérén adi malu, takilané melah gagah, rasa mati, seduk beliné kaliwat.*

Let's take a break. It's better to open our lunch. I feel like I'm dying. I'm so hungry.

In datum (3-5), Cupak's utterance can be clearly analyzed as a directive speech act that functions to influence and control the actions of his interlocutor. By saying "*Let's take a break. It's better to open our lunch. I feel like I'm dying. I'm so hungry,*" Cupak is not merely expressing his physical condition but is implicitly directing Gerantang to stop walking and eat. Although the directive is delivered in an indirect and seemingly polite form through the inclusive expression "*let's,*" its pragmatic force remains strong because it pressures the hearer to comply. Cupak strengthens this directive by exaggerating his weakness and hunger, using emotive language such as "*I feel like I'm dying,*" which functions as a persuasive strategy rather than a neutral statement. This indirect directive speech act reflects Cupak's

power ideology, where power is exercised not through explicit authority or commands but through manipulation, emotional appeal, and self-centered reasoning. Cupak positions himself as the most suffering participant, thereby legitimizing his desire as an urgent necessity that must be prioritized over the collective goal of continuing the journey. Through this utterance, Cupak subtly dominates decision-making and controls the pace and direction of the journey, revealing an ideology that privileges personal comfort and immediate gratification. In the broader narrative of *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang*, this linguistic behavior reinforces Cupak's characterization as lazy, greedy, and opportunistic, while also illustrating how language operates as an instrument of domination. Thus, Cupak's directive speech act not only directs action but also reproduces unequal power relations, demonstrating how discourse becomes a vehicle for exercising symbolic power over others.

### **Ideology**

The text *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* contains several interrelated ideologies that are conveyed through characterization, dialogue, and narrative events, especially through the contrast between Cupak and Gerantang. At the core of the text is a moral ideology that emphasizes the opposition between good and bad behavior. Gerantang represents honesty, diligence, loyalty, and self-control, while Cupak embodies greed, laziness, deceit, and selfishness. This binary opposition reflects a traditional didactic ideology in Balinese literature, where narratives function as moral instruction, teaching that virtuous behavior will ultimately be rewarded, whereas immoral actions will lead to downfall. Through this contrast, the text reinforces the belief that moral integrity is a fundamental social value that sustains harmony and justice.

Another prominent ideology in the text is the ideology of power and domination, which is mainly represented by Cupak. Cupak consistently uses language as a tool to dominate others, especially Gerantang. His speech is often manipulative, indirect, and self-serving, allowing him to control situations without possessing legitimate authority. This reflects an ideology of symbolic power, where dominance is exercised through discourse, emotional pressure, and deception rather than physical strength or moral right. Cupak's ability to temporarily control decisions such as when to stop, eat, or act shows how power can be constructed through language and personality, even when it is ethically unjustified.

However, the text ultimately delegitimizes this form of power by exposing its destructive consequences. The *geguritan* also conveys an ideology of social justice and cosmic balance, which is deeply rooted in Balinese Hindu worldview. Actions are governed by the law of *karma phala*, meaning that every deed brings corresponding consequences. Cupak's betrayal, greed, and dishonesty eventually result in punishment and humiliation, while Gerantang's patience and righteousness lead to recognition and reward. This ideology suggests that social and moral order may be disrupted temporarily by unethical power, but cosmic justice will inevitably restore balance. In this sense, the text criticizes unjust authority and affirms that true power must align with moral and spiritual values.

Additionally, *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* reflects an ideology of ideal leadership and brotherhood. Gerantang's behavior illustrates that leadership should be based on responsibility, sacrifice, and moral strength, not dominance or manipulation. The betrayal by Cupak also functions as a critique of familial disloyalty, emphasizing that blood relations alone do not guarantee ethical conduct. Through this, the text promotes an ideology that values ethical responsibility over kinship privilege. Overall, the ideologies found in *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* moral didacticism, symbolic power, social justice, and ethical leadership work together to convey a strong cultural message: language and power must be grounded in morality, and any form of authority that contradicts ethical and spiritual principles is ultimately unstable and self-destructive.

**Table: Percentage of Speech Acts in *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* text.**

No	Type of Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Assertive	45	37.5%
2	Directive	38	31.7%
3	Expressive	22	18.3%
4	Commissive	10	8.3%
5	Declarative speech acts	5	4.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table presents the distribution and proportional frequency of speech acts identified in *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* according to John Searle's taxonomy.

1. Assertive speech acts constitute the largest proportion, accounting for 37.5% of the total data. These utterances function to assert, describe, or explain events, circumstances, and character dispositions. Their predominance underscores the narrative orientation of the *geguritan*, in which characters frequently articulate information, recount experiences, and convey evaluative

beliefs about situations and other figures within the story world.

2. Directive speech acts represent 31.7% of the corpus, making them the second most prevalent category. This substantial proportion indicates that characters regularly issue commands, requests, admonitions, and counsel. Such frequency is closely linked to the dynamics of authority, manipulation, and moral instruction that structure the interpersonal conflicts of the narrative.
3. Expressive speech acts comprise 18.3% of the data. These utterances communicate affective states, including anger, disappointment, gratitude, and sorrow. Their presence accentuates the emotional intensity of the text and reinforces the moral polarity between central characters such as Cupak and Gerantang.
4. Commissive speech acts account for 8.3% of the identified instances. These forms involve commitments to future action, including promises and vows, thereby reflecting moments in which characters bind themselves to trajectories of loyalty, bravery, or deception.
5. Declaration speech acts occur least frequently, representing 4.2% of the data set. The relative scarcity of declarations suggests that performative utterances effecting immediate changes in social status or institutional reality—such as formal judgments or authoritative pronouncements—play a comparatively limited role in the textual structure.

Overall, the predominance of assertive and directive speech acts suggests that *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* foregrounds narrative exposition, moral explication, and the negotiation of power through

linguistic interaction. The distributional pattern of these speech acts demonstrates that language functions not merely as a vehicle for recounting events, but as a strategic instrument for regulating conduct, legitimizing authority, and constructing moral meaning within the narrative framework.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* may be understood as a didactic literary work that articulates profound moral, social, and ideological dimensions through its narrative structure and dialogic exchanges. The antithetical characterization of Cupak and Gerantang serves as a symbolic representation of competing ideological orientations: Cupak signifies egocentrism, manipulation, and the illegitimate exercise of power mediated through discourse, whereas Gerantang exemplifies honesty, perseverance, and ethical integrity. The text demonstrates how power is discursively constructed and strategically deployed to legitimize domination. Simultaneously, however, it offers an implicit critique of such domination by foregrounding its destructive consequences. Through the philosophical framework of *karma phala*, the geguritan affirms a cosmological doctrine of moral causality, emphasizing that unethical conduct ultimately results in retribution, while virtuous action yields just recompense. Accordingly, the narrative advances the normative proposition that authentic authority and leadership must be grounded in ethical principles, social accountability, and moral rectitude. In this respect, *Geguritan Cupak Gerantang* functions not merely as a cultural artifact but as a prescriptive moral discourse that contributes to the ethical formation of social life.

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