



## A Speech Act analysis: Illocutionary Acts produced by teacher in ESL classroom

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### ABSTRACT

Speech acts determine classroom interaction. Speech acts consist of all verbal utterances used in classroom communication. This study identified and described the forms of speech acts based on Searle's illocutionary act theory produced by the teacher to the seventh grader of the International class program at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo. The primary focus was on the utterances of the English as a second language teacher. In this study, researchers employed a descriptive qualitative method. Observations and recordings were used to acquire the data. The obtained data were then transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12 Pro. The teacher produces two hundred and sixty-six utterances and four kinds of Searle's illocutionary acts in the English as a second language classroom. Sixty-eight of their statements were representative, one hundred fifty-one were directive, five were commissive, and forty-two were expressive. The teacher's frequent use of instructions suggests that she was conscious of her position as a more powerful individual than her students and efficiently managed and commanded the classroom.

**Keywords:** *English as a Second Language Teacher, Illocutionary Acts, Speech Acts*

E-ISSN: 2621-9158

P-ISSN: 2356-0401

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Submitted: 15 November 2022

Approved: 20 Mei 2023

Published: 29 Mei 2023

Citation:

Yulian, Arif A., & Mandarani, V. (2023). A Speech Act analysis produced by teacher in ESL classroom. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, 10(1), 1-12. .Doi: 10.22219/celtic.v10i1.23276

### ABSTRAK

Tindak tutur menentukan interaksi kelas yang mencakup segala ucapan verbal yang digunakan sebagai media dalam komunikasi di kelas. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan jenis tindak tutur yang dilakukan oleh guru selama kelas bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua di kelas 7 program kelas internasional 1 SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo dengan melihat teori tindakan ilokusi Searle. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan metode Deskriptif Kualitatif. Subyek utama penelitian ini adalah seorang guru bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan rekaman. Kemudian, data yang terkumpul ditranskrip dan dianalisis menggunakan NVivo 12 Pro. Peneliti menemukan ada 266 ucapan dan empat jenis tindak ilokusi Searle yang dihasilkan oleh guru dalam bahasa Inggris sebagai kelas bahasa kedua. Mereka adalah perwakilan dengan 68 ucapan, direktif dengan 151 ucapan, komisif dengan 5 ucapan, dan ekspresif dengan 42 ucapan. Penggunaan direktif yang sering menunjukkan bahwa guru menyadari posisinya sebagai orang yang memiliki kekuatan lebih dari siswanya dan guru secara efektif mengelola dan mengontrol kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** *Guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Kedua, Tindak Ilokusi, Tindak Tutur*

## INTRODUCTION

Generally, human activity cannot be separated from language activity. Language is pivotal in human communication and interaction, including classroom

life. Language serves three general functions that make communication essential in education: to help teachers convey curriculum, to control communication (including the construction and preservation of social relationships), and reflect personal identity and attitudes (Cazden, 2001). Learning a language entails more than just picking up a set of linguistic abilities. It also involves learning how to use language appropriately in different contexts. Communication is an essential matter, including the use of language to perform successful learning (Andewi & Waziana, 2019). The effectiveness of the English teaching and learning process in the classroom is contingent on several elements, including the language used by the teacher. Each speaker uses a particular greeting or word with a language partner to help the language partner understand their purpose. It could lead to misunderstandings, which then cause communication to break down (Bijad Alharbi, 2018). Thus, a teacher has the option of either speaking explicitly or implicitly.

Pragmatics is the term given to the subfield of linguistics that focuses on studying language concerning its context. Morphology, phonology, syntax, and even semantics are part of this linguistics subfield. It is the concept that each language has a unique set of users and is influenced by the norms, morals, and beliefs of the community where the users live (Matiki & Kgoro, 2017). It also investigates meanings that are not stated or written down and how we might establish the intended meaning (Setyawan & Wiraatmaja, 2018). It examines all connections between language and context, one of which is called the speech act. According to Searle (Mey, 2001), the fundamental or minimum units of linguistic communication are called speech acts. It is produced by actors portraying actual situations in which language conveys ideas.

Speech acts are any vocal utterances used to communicate in a school context. It determines interactions in the classroom. It also helps teachers realize their regular teaching behaviors when communicating with students (Merdana et al., 2013). Austin (1962, p.94) first proposed the notion of speech acts by stating that "to say anything is to do something." In other terms, a speech act is an activity performed through speaking. According to Yule (1996), speech act theory is an action performed using language. In line with it, Cutting (2002) explained that a speech act is the purpose of utterances such as promises, apologies, and threats. While someone exhibits communicative energy when uttering a speech, it indicates they are doing an illocutionary act. For instance, the phrase "put it out" may have a distinct power behind it. The speaker may say this if he attempts to stop a woman from smoking in a smoke-free environment or observes a window curtain on fire. Intentionally uttering certain words contributes to the concept of illocutionary acts. Speech acts allow people to make a single utterance by combining several different actions. People can carry out various tasks, including requests, directions, apologies, and promises.

As the principal originator of the speech actions' notions, Austin (1962) distinguished between performative and constative speech acts. The performative act is then classified as locutionary, illocutionary, or perlocutionary. The locutionary act is the actual act of speech or the formation of a meaningful linguistic phrase (Yule, 1996). Illocutionary acts are statements having a specific (conventional) power, such as informing, commanding, warning, promising, and others (Austin,

1962). A statement is given its literal and textual meaning through the locutionary act. In addition, the illocutionary act's function is to provide an intended meaning behind a statement. As a result, the illocutionary act affects the specific activities the listeners carry out.

The term "perlocutionary act" refers to these actions (Akmal et al., 2020). According to speech-act theory, a perlocutionary act is an action or psychological state resulting from speaking (Yuliani, 2020). From the three classifications, Austin further divides illocutionary acts into five parts: *Verdictives*, which refers to decisions made by a judge, jury, arbitrator, or umpire. It is just deciding on anything (e.g., a truth, a value.). *Exercitives* relate to the actual use of power, jurisdiction, or influence. It pertains to supporting or opposing action or cause (Bijad Alharbi, 2018). *Commissives* are characterized by pledges or other commitments.; *Behabitives* consist of a wide variety of individuals who share similar attitudes and patterns of social behavior, such as expressing condolences, applauding, commending, cursing, and challenging someone. *Expositives* either clarify how our comments fit into an argument or debate flow, how we use the language or are generally explanatory.

Searle (1979) then put forward his theory of illocutionary acts: assertive or representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarative. *Assertive or representative* is the act of connecting the speaker (or other forceful members of the class) to something being true, to the reality of the thought that is being transmitted. Words such as belief, commitment, report, conclusions, and descriptions are examples of this speech act. The speakers use the words they choose to fit the world for conveying their viewpoint. A spoken act used by speakers to persuade another person to do something is known as a *directive*. Ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, implore, entreat, invite, permit, and advise are used to describe this class. The speaker uses *directives* to fit the world into words (through the listener). *Commissives* are non-verbal actions that make the speaker (again, to varying degrees) commit to some future action. The speaker himself or a member of the group can make assertions such as promises, threats, refusals, or offers. There is always a future action that the speaker takes as part of the propositional content. The purpose of *expressive* language is to convey how the person in the sincere condition feels about the circumstance described in the propositional content. In an expressive speech, the speaker is not attempting to make the world or the words suit the world. Instead, it is accepted that what is being communicated is accurate. The congruence that distinguishes *declarative* between propositional content and actuality is achieved by the performance of one of its parts.

Further, this study aims to identify and explain the speech acts performed by the teacher during the ESL classroom in 7th grade International Class Program (ICP) 1 of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo. The theory, scope, and subject matter distinguish this research from others. The discussion of illocutionary acts in this research is more comprehensive than Romadani et al. (2019), which just explained forms of directive speech acts in an EFL Classroom. Yulistiana and Widyastuti (2022) centered on Searle's assertive illocutionary acts. The results of the study show that in the first presidential debate in 2020, Joe Biden's assertive illocutionary

acts in the form of three types of interruptions were part of how he presents his thoughts, information, views, and facts in his debate replies. Shahrudin and Harun (2022) centered on female student leaders' speech acts in a Malaysian secondary school, and theory by Bach and Harnish was used as the underlying framework of their research. Rohma and Wafa (2022) focused on speech act that used by doctors in communicating with patients at Waluyo Jati Hospital. The result showed that asking became the most dominant type that used by the doctor to improve interaction with patient, provide new information about the disease, and know the difference between diseases, and understand the patient's complaints.

Also, it is opposed to Christianto's (2020) investigation of Cruse's types of speech acts found in the interactions between the teachers and students. According to his research, there are three sorts of speech acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Teachers and students conducted a locutionary act when they said phrases with unclear meanings. Conversely, an illocutionary act was committed when the utterances conveyed specific intentions for the listener. Perlocutionary performance was conducted when the audience responded to the speaker's words and provided feedback. From those studies, the researchers found that no one has comprehensively undertaken a specific study of illocutionary acts. Therefore, the researchers limited the scope to the types of illocutionary speech proposed by Searle (1979): assertive, directive, commissives, expressive, and declarative.

In addition, this research is similar to the study of Basra and Thooyibah (2017), who analyzed the speech acts classification used by an EFL teacher during the learning process. They found out that the choice of speech act classification affects the teaching approach and vice versa. The teacher argued that her reasons for using more directive speech act were only to get students to talk more. However, in this research, the researchers took a different subject and place from the previous researchers. SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo, one of Sidoarjo's Islamic junior high school levels, was chosen as the site of this research. In grades 7 and 8, classes are divided into several programs: boarding, entrepreneur, international, and science and technology. All students in the International Class Program (ICP) are expected to have superior English language skills while at school. Therefore, they have an additional program called "ESL classroom", where they must actively communicate in English. The term "ESL classroom" is used by the school to indicate that English is the second language that is regularly used at the school, especially for the ICP students.

This research provides theoretical insights into linguistics, particularly the study of pragmatics with a focus on speech acts, which is one of the most critical areas of study in linguistics presently. In a more specific sense, it is envisaged that the outcomes of this research will contribute to the implementation of speech actions in educational environments. This research may be employed to reflect on the correct execution of speech acts throughout the teaching and learning process. Future English instruction may be evaluated in terms of speech acts. Moreover, this study's research question addresses the illocutionary acts and types of illocutionary produced by the ESL teacher in the seventh-grade International Class Program (ICP) 1 classroom.

## METHOD

In this study, descriptive qualitative methodology was used to characterize (explain) current happenings. The researchers focus more on describing and analyzing speech from teachers in English as a second language class, so that it is more appropriate to use descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell & Poth (2016), collecting data in a natural context is one of the defining traits of qualitative research. In this research, the primary data to examine was a natural context of interaction between an ESL teacher of grade 7 ICP 1 of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo and 24 students of grade 7 ICP 1 during the ESL classroom.

The primary focus of this study was the ESL teacher. The students were also a part of this study since the teacher conversed with them while instructing and studying how to sustain contact with students. Since this research depended on classroom talks for data collection, a sample was selected using purposive sampling. It is a sampling technique that includes specific considerations or criteria. The criteria used in this sampling were: teachers who have good communication with students, since students and teachers must actively participate in the learning process; and teachers who produce a lot of speech acts during the teaching and learning process.

The data were collected through observation and recordings for approximately 103 minutes, in which note-taking and a mobile phone were used. Moreover, photographs may be used as credible documentation of the learning process. The gathered data was then evaluated as described below. First, researchers watched and videotaped teacher-student interactions throughout two classroom sessions. The second step was transcribing the audio data collected by the researchers. The transcribed data is then imported to NVivo 12 Pro for further coding and analysis. A content analysis method can be used with NVivo 12 Pro. It is data analysis software that can compile various data types (e.g., text, audio, video, photos, news articles, spreadsheets, online surveys, web content, and social media). It is also a user-friendly interface (Gandasari & Dwidienawati, 2020). NVivo 12 Pro was used to organize and analyze the word-formatted data for this investigation. The researchers analyze solely the teacher's speech actions, which are then classed according to Searle's (1979) illocutionary act theory: representational or assertive, directive, declarative, commissive, and expressive.

## FINDINGS

In this section, a detailed description of the data analysis is presented. The ESL teacher in the ESL classroom at grade 7 ICP 1 of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo generated various speech acts, including these data results. Searle (1979) classified illocutionary acts into five: representative or assertive, directive, declarative, commissive, and expressive. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of each speech act performed by an ESL teacher:

**Table 1.** ESL Teacher Examples of Searle's Illocutionary Acts

Speech Acts	Frequency
Assertive or Representative	68
Directive	151
Declarative	0
Commissive	5
Expressive	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>

The researchers identified 266 utterances and four categories of Searle's illocutionary actions made by the ESL instructor in the ESL classroom based on Table 1. They were representative, directive, commissive, and expressive, but the teacher made no declarative remark. In addition, the table reveals that the teacher's most frequent speech behavior was directive, with 151 utterances. Among the other categories, representative speech performances ranked second. Representatives were referenced 68 times out of the total number of utterances. Subsequently, expressive occurred 42 times across all utterances. In addition, the category with the fewest occurrences is commissive, with just five instances.

### **Directive Illocutionary Acts**

The first form of speech act the teacher employs is directive. There may have been as many as 151 statements. A directive is a speech act used by the speaker to urge the listener to undertake a particular action (Rizma Yanti & Amin, 2021). It includes asking (88 utterances), ordering (15 utterances), warning (6 utterances), pleading (2 utterances), requesting (19 utterances), prohibiting (1 utterance), inviting (12 utterances), directing (3 utterances), suggesting (4 utterances), and advising (1 utterance). These two directive functions, along with several instances drawn from the data supplied below, will be discussed in depth in this study.

#### ***Asking***

---

(01) T: **"Where did you watch the movie? Netflix?"**  
S7: "In theater"

---

With 89 occurrences, asking is the most frequent phrase. The teacher inquired where the students had seen their most recent film. The utterance is a directed illocutionary act since the teacher employs this query style to collect information from students.

#### ***Request***

---

(02) T: **"If you don't want to take off your mask, please speak louder"**

---

The example above depicts the teacher's request to the student to speak louder if they do not want to take off their masks. It is communicated by the teacher so that she can hear the students' voices.

### **Representative Illocutionary Acts**

A representative speech is an utterance in which the speaker's objective is to persuade the listener that the promotional content of the utterance is actual. In other words, the speaker is trying to sell something. During the ESL classroom process, it was found that the representative appeared in 68 utterances. The representative illocutionary acts performed by the teacher include informing (9 utterances), assuming (4 utterances), explaining (17 utterances), asserting (12 utterances), stating (13 utterances), agreeing (8 utterances), and disagreeing (5 utterances). The following data will be used to demonstrate two representative or assertive functions and provide instances from those functions.

### ***Informing***

---

(03) T: **"You have to do is just to put on the words in correct order and ask the question from here to your friend. After you... after these questions, em... You have to present to me, you got to tell me"**

---

The preceding utterance may be categorized as an informing illocutionary act. The teacher informs the student of expectations throughout the teaching and learning process. The teacher instructed the students to rearrange the jumbled questions on their papers. Then, they must conduct brief interviews with one another using the questions they have gathered. After obtaining each other's response, they must deliver it to the teacher.

### ***Asserting***

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(04) S3: "Miss, why didn't you tell us before? We, the boys, have only completed Part A"

T: **"All. You have to do all."**

---

The above assertions may be categorized as illocutionary acts. The teacher insists that all the jumbled questions on the student worksheets must be completed and organized.

### **Expressive Illocutionary Acts**

Expressive acts emphasize the speaker's feelings or attitude toward a particular circumstance (Searle, 1976). Based on research findings, expressive occupied third place with 42 utterances. Among them are thanking (12 utterances), apologizing (5 utterances), joking (2 utterances), sorrow (3 utterances), stating surprise (8 utterances), stating annoyance (1 utterance), deploring (2 utterances), greeting (1 utterance), leave-taking (3 utterances), hoping (2 utterances), and praising (3

utterances). In the data supplied below, two expressive functions will be discussed along with examples.

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(05) T: "Okay, already six questions. **Thank you**"

---

### ***Thanking***

The utterance "thank you" is mainly spoken by teachers of the expressive type. The teacher said thanks to the students as a form of appreciation for being brave and willing to present themselves. It is also an excellent example for students always to be grateful and appreciative.

### ***Praising***

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(06) T: "**Yeah. It is beautiful. Beautiful handwriting**"

---

The utterance mentioned above is a sort of praise that is part of the expressive act. The teacher spoke these phrases to compliment the students' work, which was quite remarkable, and she did so without hesitation.

### **Commissive Illocutionary Acts**

A commissive is a form of speaking act used to make a future commitment. The commissive type is present in at least five utterances. The categories of commissives discovered in this research were promising (3 utterances) and offering (2 utterances).

### ***Promising***

---

(07) T: "You're the last. Because it's time for another subject. **We can continue tomorrow**"

---

The preceding statement is an example of a promise, a form of compassionate action. The teacher assured students that today's activities would resume tomorrow since the allotted time for learning had passed.

### ***Offering***

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(08) T: "Come on. **You first?**"  
S13: "Yes. But which one?"

---

The objective of an offering is to inquire about someone's willingness to perform or participate in something. The utterance above contains an offer since the teacher asks the student whether she wants to perform first.

### **Declarative Illocutionary Acts**

Yule (1996) highlighted that the declarative act affects the world of the hearer with the words spoken by the speaker. The teacher employs only four categories of illocutionary acts in the classroom. The teacher does not utter declarative speech acts.

### **DISCUSSION**

This section discusses the information received from the observation. In this study, the researchers discuss on illocutionary acts used by the teacher based on Searle's (1979). The core of the theory of speech actions is illocutionary acts, which indicate how the entire utterance is interpreted in conversation (Juvrianto, 2018). In this study, the researchers revealed that the SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo ESL teacher uses four unique forms of illocutionary in the classroom. These communication styles are directive, representative, commissive, and expressive.

In the directive utterances uttered by the teacher, it appears that the teacher asks something to stimulate response to the questions posed by the teacher so that communication goes well. Apart from asking questions, the teacher also directly asks students to do something, such as when the teacher wants students to be louder, the teacher asks students to take off their masks. This has the same goal of facilitating the process of communication between teachers and students. Communication can also be done with **suggesting, directing, recalling, warning, banning, persuading** (Swastiana & Putra IN, 2020), interrupting, and motivating (Nuruddin Hidayat et al., 2022). This research comprises requesting, banning, pleading, inviting, directing, proposing, and advising. It also involves asking, ordering, threatening, pleading, and requesting. The "ask" command was discovered to appear more often than any other kind. The purposes of the assertive speaking act of asking are to seek clarification, explanation, or understanding about something the listener wants to know more about (Sinaga et al., 2019). In using directive illocutionary acts, the teacher can communicate well to students, because students can give the right response as intended by the teacher. This shows that the illocutionary acts used by the teacher in the form of asking, ordering, warning, pleading, requesting, prohibiting, inviting, directing, suggesting, and advising are well conveyed and understood by students.

Regarding representative, it is a speech intended to transmit a specific notion, where the speakers connect to the reality of the proposition expressed or confidence expressed to the speaker's partners (Budiasih, 2018). Searle (1979) narrated that the verbs included hypothesizing, stating, complaining, boasting, concluding, and deducing. All members of the assertive class are evaluable on the true and false assessment dimension (Searle, 1979). Therefore, the word confirming, correcting, agreeing, disagreeing, explaining, informing, stating, predicting, describing, identifying (Swastiana & Putra IN, 2020), announcing, clarifying, asserting, and completion (Nuruddin Hidayat et al., 2022), support, deduce, assuming, suspect (Mukhroji, 2020), claiming, arguing, swearing (Subagiasih et al., 2018), telling, demanding, and reporting (Yuliani, 2020). In this study, it was found that representative acts occurred with 68 utterances. It includes

informing, assuming, explaining, asserting, stating, agreeing, and disagreeing. The teacher might communicate the truth to the students by employing a representative since the truth can be confirmed. The teacher used “explaining” the most because the teacher had a specific purpose of telling students what they should do and what they did not get in the teacher’s explanation at the beginning.

Expressive acts express the speaker’s feelings or views (Puspitorini & Atmapratiwi, 2019). The speaker is not seeking to make the reality correspond with the words or the words correspond with the world; instead, the truth of the message is presumed. “thanking,” “congratulate,” “apologize,” “condole,” “deplore,” and “welcome” are examples of expressive verbs (Searle, 1979). Other verbs are **greeting, praising, wishing, stating surprise, stating pleasure, stating annoyance, stating dislike, stating anger, leave-taking** (Swastiana & Putra IN, 2020), and appreciating (Nuruddin Hidayat et al., 2022), and sorrow (Mukhroji, 2020). Among those found in this study are thanking, apologizing, joking, sorrowing, stating surprise, annoyance, deploring, greeting, leave-taking, hoping, and praising, with a total of 42 utterances. The teacher tended to express the word “thank you” during class interactions. The teacher expressed those words the most because the teacher felt grateful for what the students had done.

Commissives are illocutionary acts that intend to obligate the speaker to some future action (again, to varying degrees) (Searle, 1979). The verbs included in commissive are promising, offering, granting (Swastiana & Putra IN, 2020), threats, rejections, and guarantees (Wahyu Santosa & Kurniadi, 2020). Here, commissive illocutionary act is used by the teacher when performing promising, namely when the teacher promises to continue class at the next schedule and offering is done when the teacher appoints students to answer questions.

## CONCLUSION

The researchers discovered four illocutionary forms an ESL teacher used during the ESL Class in SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Sidoarjo: directive, representative, commissive, and expressive. The teacher uses directive illocutionary act when the teacher asks students to do something as ordered by the teacher. In representative illocutionary act, the teacher is more focused on providing knowledge or information to students about the material being discussed. In expressive illocutionary act, the teacher expresses thanks and praises students. In the commissive illocutionary act, the teacher makes a promise and offers to students to answer questions. Future researchers who plan to do similar studies must incorporate an enormous number and diversity of data since it has not yet been examined in this study. Moreover, they may achieve some advancement as a result of this research.

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