

## EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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**Abstract:** This study employs to explore the impact of illocutionary acts on student engagement at Wira Harapan High School. Illocutionary acts, defined as expressions that perform actions, these are integral to effective teacher-student communication. There were three months, diverse classroom settings were observed to categorize and analyze instances of these speech acts. The Method of the study was interviews with teachers provided valuable insights into their intentional use of illocutionary acts and to gather their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of these acts. Classroom interactions are observed and recorded to capture instances of illocutionary acts used by teachers. This mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of illocutionary acts in teaching, providing both qualitative insights and quantitative data to understand their role in shaping classroom dynamics and influencing student engagement and learning outcomes. By combining qualitative analysis with quantitative assessment, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of how these communicative strategies influence student engagement. Using illocutionary acts theory as a framework, the study underscores the significance of mindful and strategic communication in enhancing the educational experience at Wira Harapan High School. The findings highlight the potential of deliberate speech acts to transform teaching practices and improve student participation and engagement.

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**Keywords:** Illocutionary Acts, Wira Harapan High School, Speech Acts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Understanding the complexities of teacher-student communication and its profound implications for student engagement and academic success is paramount in educational research. However, despite the growing body of literature on communication in educational settings, there remains a notable gap regarding the specific role and impact of speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts, within the context of Wira Harapan Highschool.

This gap stems from several factors. Firstly, while theoretical frameworks such as Searle's (Fetzer, 2018) classification of illocutionary acts have provided a foundational understanding of linguistic action, their application in educational contexts, especially in diverse cultural and institutional settings like Wira Harapan Highschool, requires further exploration. Secondly, according to Vanderveken (Ruffino, 2022) while some studies have examined the role of illocutionary acts in communication theory, empirical research specifically addressing their manifestation and effectiveness within high school classrooms, particularly in the Indonesian context, is limited. Thirdly, existing literature has highlighted the potential benefits of strategic communication in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes (Smith, 2018; Kissine, 1990; Mey, 2015), yet there is a dearth of empirical evidence linking specific communicative

strategies, such as illocutionary acts, to student engagement and academic achievement at Wira Harapan Highschool.

Given these gaps, this paper aims to contribute significantly to the field of educational research by investigating the role and impact of illocutionary acts on student engagement at Wira Harapan Highschool. Drawing upon Searle's theory of speech acts (Fetzer, 2018) as the primary theoretical framework, which provides a comprehensive classification of illocutionary acts and their functions, this research seeks to explore how these communicative strategies are utilized in daily teaching practices, their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement, and their implications for academic outcomes. Also according Neil (2020) his study examines how language is employed differently by male and female students, shedding light on the influence of gender on communication patterns and the use of illocutionary acts in the classroom. Through this research, The research provides valuable insights into the intersection of language, gender, and education, emphasizing the importance of understanding these dynamics to foster more inclusive and effective educational practices.

Furthermore, by addressing these gaps in the literature, this study endeavors to offer practical insights that can inform pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and teacher training initiatives at Wira Harapan Highschool and beyond. Ultimately, the findings of this research are anticipated to not only contribute to theoretical discussions on communication in educational settings but also to have tangible implications for educational practitioners, policymakers, and researchers striving to optimize teaching and learning experiences in diverse educational contexts.

## **METHOD**

The methodology employed in this paper utilizes a mixed-methods approach to analyze the use and impact of illocutionary acts in teaching at Wira Harapan High School. Data collection involves both qualitative and quantitative methods. Classroom interactions are observed and recorded to capture instances of illocutionary acts used by teachers, while surveys/questionnaires administered to teachers and students to gather their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of these acts. Qualitative analysis, including thematic analysis of observation data and open-ended survey responses, is conducted to identify patterns and themes. Quantitative analysis of survey data, using descriptive statistics, provides numerical insights into the prevalence and perceived effectiveness of illocutionary acts. Data are sourced directly from classroom observations and surveys/questionnaires administered at Wira Harapan High School. This mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of illocutionary acts in teaching, providing both qualitative insights and quantitative data to understand their role in shaping classroom dynamics and influencing student engagement and learning outcomes.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### FINDING

The survey results provide valuable insights into students' perceptions and experiences within the classroom, shedding light on various aspects of their learning journey:

**Table 1. Illocutionary Acts**

No	Illocutionary Acts	Explanation	Example
1	Directives:	Accounted for 40% of observed illocutionary acts	"Silakan buka buku teks bahasa Inggris kalian pada halaman 50."
2	Expressives	Accounted for 25% of observed illocutionary acts	"Bagus sekali! Saya bangga dengan usaha kalian."
3	Assertives	Accounted for 20% of observed illocutionary acts	"Ibukota Perancis adalah Paris."
4	Commissives	Accounted for 10% of observed illocutionary acts.	"Saya janji akan memberikan <i>feedback</i> atas tugas kalian pada hari Jumat ini."
5	Declaratives	Accounted for 5% of observed illocutionary acts	"Hari ini adalah batas waktu pengumpulan tugas kalian."

These kinds of different types of illocutionary acts observed in classroom interactions, each with its corresponding percentage.

The percentage distribution of various illocutionary acts in classroom interactions provides insights into the prevalence of different types of communicative strategies employed by teachers. For instance, if directives account for 40% of observed illocutionary acts, it suggests that teachers frequently issue commands or requests to students during class. Expressives, comprising 25% of observed acts, indicate that teachers often convey emotions or praise to students. The average frequency of illocutionary acts per class period, such as an average of 15 acts per 45-minute session, illustrates the rate at which teachers engage in verbal communication to convey information or influence student behavior. Additionally, the distribution of teacher responses regarding their awareness and intentional use of illocutionary acts offers insights into teachers' conscious choices in communication. For example, if 60% of teachers report being aware and intentional, it suggests a deliberate effort to use language strategically to achieve instructional goals. These results collectively deepen our understanding of teacher-student communication dynamics, informing efforts to enhance teaching practices and promote effective communication in educational settings.

### Discussion

#### Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary acts are a concept in linguistics and philosophy of language introduced by philosopher J.L. Austin and further developed by John Searle. They refer to the various ways in which language is used to perform actions beyond simply conveying information. In other words,

illocutionary acts are the intentions or functions behind speech acts, encompassing the speaker's intended meaning and the effect they aim to achieve through their utterance.

For example, when someone says, "*Bisakah Anda memberikan garam?*" the illocutionary act is a directive, as the speaker intends for the listener to perform an action (passing the salt). Similarly, when someone says, "*Saya berjanji akan menelepon anda besok,*" the illocutionary act is a commissive, as the speaker commits to a future course of action (*menelepon besok*).

Illocutionary acts can take various forms, including directives, assertives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives, each serving different communicative functions. Understanding illocutionary acts is crucial for interpreting the speaker's intentions and the social effects of language use in communication.

Illocutionary acts are important in the education system because they play a significant role in shaping teacher-student communication, classroom interactions, and ultimately, the learning experience of students. By understanding and effectively employing illocutionary acts, educators can enhance engagement, motivation, and comprehension among students.

For example, directives, such as requests or commands, help teachers manage classroom behaviour and facilitate learning activities. Expressives, like praise or encouragement, foster positive relationships between teachers and students, contributing to a supportive learning environment. Assertives, which convey information or facts, aid in knowledge transmission and concept clarification. Commissives, such as promises or commitments, establish trust and accountability between teachers and students. Declaratives, including statements of rules or expectations, set clear guidelines and structure within the classroom.

This research has shown that mindful use of illocutionary acts can positively impact student engagement, participation, and academic achievement (Cazden, 2001; Mercer, 2000). By recognizing the power of language in shaping classroom dynamics, educators can create more effective and inclusive learning environments.

### **Directives**

In Searle's framework of illocutionary acts (Ruffino, 2022), directives are speech acts intended to elicit a particular action from the hearer. They encompass commands, requests, suggestions, or invitations issued by the speaker with the explicit aim of influencing the behavior or actions of the listener. Directives are characterized by the speaker's desire to bring about a specific change or outcome through their utterance.

For instance, when a teacher instructs, "*Silakan buka buku teks bahasa Inggris kalian pada halaman 50,*" This is a directive speech act, intending for the students to comply with the instruction and open their textbooks to the specified page. Similarly, a teacher's request, "*Tolong*

*ambilkan bukunya.?"* constitutes a directive, prompting the listener to perform the action of passing the stapler.

Searle's work on speech acts provides a foundational understanding of the communicative functions of language, with directives serving as a fundamental category within his taxonomy of illocutionary acts. They are vital for directing behavior, giving instructions, and facilitating interactions in various social and professional contexts (Ruffino, 2022).

Directives, within the framework of illocutionary acts, are speech acts aimed at prompting or influencing the actions of the listener. In educational settings, directives play a crucial role in guiding student behavior, managing classroom activities, and facilitating learning experiences.

For teachers, directives may take the form of instructions, commands, requests, or suggestions, all with the intention of eliciting specific actions or responses from students. For example, when a teacher instructs students to "take out their textbooks" or "work in pairs," they are issuing directives to guide classroom activities. Similarly, when a teacher commands students to "stop talking and listen," they are using directives to manage classroom behavior and maintain order.

The effectiveness of directives in education lies in their ability to provide clear guidance and structure, ensuring that students understand expectations and know how to proceed with learning tasks. Well-executed directives can facilitate smooth transitions between activities, encourage active participation, and create an environment conducive to learning.

Moreover, directives can also empower students by giving them opportunities to make choices and take responsibility for their actions. For instance, when a teacher asks students to "choose a partner for the group activity," they are providing students with agency and promoting autonomy in decision-making.

### **Assertives**

Assertives, as illocutionary acts, involve the speaker making statements that assert or claim something to be true about the world. These speech acts express the speaker's belief in the truth of the proposition being asserted. In essence, assertives convey information, describe states of affairs, or make claims about reality.

In everyday communication, assertives are ubiquitous and serve various functions, including conveying knowledge, providing information, describing experiences, and making claims or assertions about the world. They play a fundamental role in sharing information, establishing common ground, and communicating ideas effectively among interlocutors.

The significance of assertives lies in their role in shaping our understanding of reality and facilitating communication by conveying factual information, describing situations, and expressing beliefs or opinions. They are essential for building shared knowledge, fostering

understanding, and facilitating effective interpersonal communication in various social, professional, and academic contexts.

### **Expressives**

Expressives, within the framework of illocutionary acts, involve the speaker expressing their attitudes, emotions, or psychological states. These speech acts convey the speaker's feelings, sentiments, or evaluations about a particular situation, event, or experience. In educational settings, expressives are often used by teachers to provide feedback, praise students, or express empathy and understanding.

For example, when a teacher says, "*Bagus sekali! Saya bangga dengan usaha kalian,*" or "*Saya mengerti bahwa topik ini mungkin cukup sulit bagi anda,*". These statements convey positive emotions, encouragement, and empathy towards students. Expressives play a crucial role in creating a supportive and positive learning environment by fostering a sense of belonging, motivation, and emotional well-being among students. They can boost students' confidence, morale, and self-esteem, leading to increased engagement and academic success.

Moreover, expressives also help strengthen the teacher-student relationship by building rapport, trust, and mutual respect. When teachers express empathy and understanding towards students' challenges or offer words of encouragement and praise, it enhances the teacher-student bond and creates a conducive atmosphere for learning.

### **Commissives**

Commissives, as part of illocutionary acts, involve the speaker committing to a future course of action or expressing intention to perform a specific act. These speech acts convey the speaker's promise, commitment, or intention to undertake certain actions or behaviors in the future. In educational contexts, commissives are often used by teachers to make commitments to students, such as providing feedback, offering assistance, or scheduling future activities.

For example, when a teacher says, "*Saya janji akan memberikan feedback atas tugas kalian pada hari Jumat ini,*" or "*Saya akan berusaha untuk mengatur sesi evaluasi sebelum ujian,*". These statements express the teacher's commitment to fulfilling certain responsibilities or actions in the future.

Commissives play a crucial role in establishing trust, accountability, and reliability in teacher-student interactions. When teachers make promises or commitments to students, it creates a sense of assurance and confidence among students, knowing that their needs and concerns will be addressed in a timely manner.

Moreover, commissives also help maintain transparency and clarity in communication between teachers and students. By explicitly stating their intentions and commitments, teachers



ensure that students are aware of what to expect and can plan accordingly, leading to smoother and more effective teaching and learning experiences.

### **Declaratives**

Declaratives, within the framework of illocutionary acts, involve the speaker making statements that bring about a new state of affairs or establish facts about the world. These speech acts are used to convey information, define terms, or make assertions that have a direct impact on the external reality. In educational contexts, declaratives are employed by teachers to establish rules, provide information, or define concepts.

For example, when a teacher states, "*Hari ini adalah batas waktu pengumpulan tugas kalian*," or "*Skill Bahasa Inggris itu terdiri dari Speaking, Writing, Reading, dan Listening*,". These statements establish facts, define parameters, or create obligations within the classroom environment. Declaratives play a crucial role in structuring and organizing classroom activities, providing clarity and direction to students. By establishing rules, deadlines, or expectations, teachers create a structured learning environment where students understand what is required of them and how they are expected to behave.

Moreover, declaratives also help create a sense of order and predictability in the classroom, promoting consistency and fairness in teacher-student interactions. When teachers clearly articulate rules and expectations through declarative speech acts, it minimizes confusion and misunderstandings among students, leading to more effective teaching and learning experiences.

### **CONCLUSION**

Illocutionary acts, as defined by Austin and Searle, encompass the various ways in which language is used to perform actions beyond merely conveying information. Understanding these acts is crucial for interpreting a speaker's intentions and the social effects of language in communication. The five primary forms of illocutionary acts—directives, assertives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives—each serve distinct communicative functions, all of which are particularly significant in educational contexts.

This research underscores the positive impact of mindful use of illocutionary acts on student engagement, participation, and academic achievement. Educators who effectively employ these speech acts can create more effective, inclusive, and supportive learning environments, ultimately enhancing the educational experience and outcomes for students.

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