

CONTEXTUALIZING SPEECH ACTS PERFORMED BY SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN AT ST. FRANSISKUS ASSISI CHURCH MEDAN

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SUBMISSION TRACK	A B S T R A C T
Submitted : 24 February 2022 Accepted : 10 March 2022 Published : 18 March 2022	<p>Although several types of research on speech acts have been widely conducted in many communication activities in Indonesia, studies on speech acts in religious communication inside the church, particularly those involving instructors and Sunday school pupils, are still uncovered. The study deals with the analysis of Speech Acts of The Sunday School Children of St. Fransiskus Assisi Church Medan. The purpose of this study is to describe the presentation of Illocutionary acts and their types which are dominantly used by the Sunday School Teachers. Utilizing Searle's theory, the research was conducted by using a Qualitative Descriptive Research Method by using a case study research design. The participants of the study were 3 Sunday school teachers and 75 Sunday school children drawn by using purposive sampling technique with a total data of 200 utterances collected using recording and observations, which were analyzed in the study using qualitative data analysis technique to find out the pattern of speech acts. The study shows that there are five types of illocutionary acts used by Sunday school teachers: <i>directives, assertive, expressive, commissions, and declarative</i>. The most dominant type of speech acts in communication presentations were directives reaching up to 68,91%, whereas the least to occur was the declarative type (0.51%). The results of this study restate that the communication aspects that should be practiced in Sunday schools' children should emphasize persuasive expressions to persuade Sunday school children to be more active in worshipping and listening to God's word as well as to grow their faith.</p>
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Speech Acts, The Sunday School Children, Pragmatics	
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Introduction

The speech act is a prominent area for research since it serves as a scope of pragmatic science in various communication activities (Gunel & Yesildag-Hasancebi, 2016). This issue focuses on how people communicate with one another in society via the use of language. They utilized a vocabulary that needed to be understood. Some of them articulate or voice what they are thinking or feeling. Others hear what they say, or they are communication participants who merely interact. Only the speakers and hearers are involved in communication, but the audience may also be present.

A language that is a system of communication by sound, i.e., through the organs of speech and hearing, among human beings of a certain group or community can be analyzed in various linguistic features and elements (Masrai & Milton, 2015). As a medium of communication, it plays important role in all aspects of human life such as expressing ideas, feeling, purposes to someone by using sound, gestures, and signals not only in formal communication settings but in informal ones.

Communication refers to a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior (Robin, et. al, 2022). It always becomes an important topic of investigation by language researchers. As one of the community activities that involve a speaker and listener, communication is carried out in various forms such as greeting, asking, pleading, announcing, persuading, threatening, and so on. In greeting, they can say "Hello" or "good morning".

When someone gets a message or information, he considers several things in addition to the language. When speaking with others, he must pay close attention to the interlocutor's bodily parts, such as their eyes, faces, gestures, and other body language, as well as their facial expressions, such as grins, gazes, and appearances (Rao, 2017). All of these characteristics have a significant impact on the development of effective communication.

The participants in communication are required to speak well and related to cooperative principles (Baybabayeva, 2021). Good communication contains participant, place, time, and topic, too. Participants can communicate in different places and at different times and with different topics, they wish to share. Ultimately, time refers to when the participants communicate. The study of language and context, often known as pragmatics, is the study of how language is used and how it relates to context and meaning which is still an important topic to be discussed in recent years (Grandinetti et al., 2013). Pragmatic is a term that refers to a person who speaks or uses a language. The study's main focus is on the interaction between language and context. It means that when individuals interact with one another, they must be able to utilize language or utterances that are appropriate for the context, circumstance, social, and participants.

In the philosophy of language, Holtgraves (2013) argues that the term 'speech act' refers to an utterance that not only serves to provide information but also to an action to do something. For example, the phrase "*I would like the sugar; could you please pass it to me?*" is considered a speech act as it expresses the speaker's desire to acquire the sugar, as well as presenting a request that someone pass sugar to them. In this sense, almost every speech act is the simultaneous performance of several acts, each distinguished by different aspects of the speaker's intention: "there is the act of saying something, what one does while saying it, such as requesting or promising, and how one is attempting to affect one's audience." The term's modern meaning may be traced back to J. L. Austin's work on performative utterances and his locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary deeds theory. Once uttered or transmitted, speech actions fulfill their purpose. Acts such as these are frequently included in this category; *apologizing, promising, ordering, answering, requesting, complaining, warning, inviting, refusing, and congratulating*.

According to Searle, speech acts can be classified into 5 categories; *assertive, directives, commissive, expressive, and declarative* which were then developed and extended by Searle (Simon & Dejica-Cartis, 2015). Searle is interested in the speaker's illocutionary activities. Assertive refers to the act of suggesting, putting forward, swearing, concluding, etc. For example, "I suggest you take care of your health". Directive refers to addressing someone to act. This act can be in the form of asking, ordering, requesting, advising, begging, etc. For example, "Would you please explain it to me clearly?". Commissive refers to committing the speaker to do some action in the future. This act includes promising, planning, vowing, betting, opposing, etc. For example, "*I am going to Jakarta tomorrow.*" Expressive refers to the expression of the speaker to feel about a certain situation. The act covers thanking, apologizing, welcoming, deploring, etc. For example, "*I am sorry that I could not help you*". The last act is a

declaration that refers to changing the state of the world immediately. For example, “*You pass the test!*”.

All elements of communication activities, including formal and informal communication activities involving meaning and context, may be studied from a pragmatic standpoint (Laughlin et al., 2015) including speech acts. Sunday school instruction is an object of communication that has to be explored as one of the formal communication activities carried out interactively in the church every Sunday. Previous studies have looked at almost every area of communication from the formal learning process at schools (Azhari et al., 2018; Mohammad Zayed, 2014; Faturrochman et al., 2021); however, only a few researchers have looked at how communication happens in Sunday school events when the participants are instructors and children.

Research on the application of speech acts in Sunday school children needs to be performed for several reasons. First, this research can comprehensively reveal how the process of communication and interaction between teachers and students in Sunday schools is. Second, Sunday school teachers need to be equipped with good and persuasive communication procedures so that the religious values contained in the teaching content in Sunday schools can be conveyed properly.

This study aims to explore the patterns of speech acts used in Sunday school and reveal the dominant types of speech acts used in this communication event. The results of this study are expected to provide a clear and complete description of the phenomenon of speech acts in this communication activity. In addition, the results of this study can contribute to the development of a more persuasive aspect of communication to Sunday school children in addition to enriching reading material on pragmatic literature in the context of formal education for children in Indonesia.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the types of speech acts used in Sunday School communication at ST. Fransiskus Asissi Medan located at Jalan Bunga Ester No. 93B Medan, North Sumatra. The participants involved in this study were 3 Sunday school teachers at the Catholic church from 3 classes, each of which consisted of 25 Sunday school children. This research took place for 4 weeks in December 2021. To comply with the code of ethics for research using humans as subjects, the subjects of this study had first confirmed their willingness to be used as research subjects.

The procedures used in collecting data in this study were observing the teaching of Sunday school material, collecting data using recordings, transcribing research data, analyzing research data, and drawing conclusions. The instrument used in this study was a recording of learning activities. Furthermore, the speech acts that were collected as research data were then analyzed using the theory of speech acts proposed by Searle’s theory of speech acts. The research data were then analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods which included data collection, data reduction, data categories, analyzing data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions.

The data of this research were primary data of qualitative research in the form of presentation and the types of speech acts used by Sunday school teachers in providing worship subject matter. Although this research design is only a case study; However, the design of this study was considered capable of describing the types of speech acts that occurred in Sunday school practices and determining which types of speech acts were more dominantly used.

Result and Discussion

Result

200 utterances were collected and included as data in this study taken from 9 speech events Sunday school sessions from 3 teachers at ST. Fransiskus Assisi Medan for 4 weeks in December 2021. The utterances were derived from 98 utterances from the first class, 28 utterances from the second class, and 74 utterances from the third class. The composition of raw data in this research is displayed in the following table.

Table 1. Distribution of Utterances

Class	Number of Utterances	Percentage
Class 1	98	49%
Class 2	28	14%
Class 3	74	37%
Total	200	100%

The number of utterances used as data in this study is not evenly distributed in each class, because of the proportion of communication activities carried out by the three teachers in the Sunday school class. Class 1 has the most data utterances because of the topics presented. When recording and data retrieval is carried out, it requires explanation and interaction, while class 2 only requires little interaction in the activities of the teacher and student learning processes.

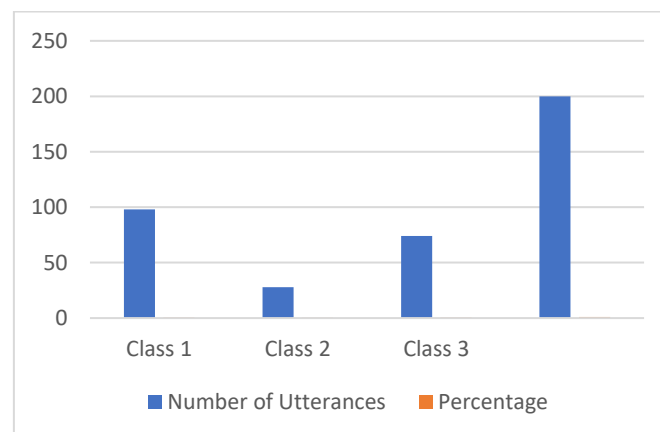


Figure 1. Distribution of Occurrences in Classes

Based on the observations of the research team, Sunday school students who are in grade 1 are 3-5 years old or called toddler class. Students in grade 2 range from 5-12 years old, while those in grade 3 are children aged 12-15 years.

Table 2. Distribution of Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary Acts	Total	Percentage
Declarative	4	2%
Assertive	47	23.5%
Expressives	13	7.5%
Directives	133	66.5%
Commissives	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

The data in table 2 above shows that the distribution of illocutionary acts can be considered uneven for each type. Illocutionary acts in the directives category rank the

highest (66.5%), followed by assertive (47%), expressive 7.5%, and the lowest percentages are declarative (2%) and commissive (1.5%). The examples of each illocutionary act are presented in the following excerpts:

1. SST: "*Good morning, Brother and sister.*"

SSC: "*Good Morning Sisters.*"

Based on the utterances above, the speech act is categorized as *expressive* which refers to welcoming. The utterance expressed that the teacher wanted the Sunday School Children to give respond to her greeting.

2. SST: "*Let's sing a song together, Dari terbit matahari. satu..dua..ya..*."

SSC: "*Dari terbit matahari, sampai pada waktunya.....*"

Based on the utterances above, the speech act functions as to request (*directive*). The utterance expresses that the school teacher commands the Sunday School Children sing the song.

3. SSC : "*Adik adik semua, semua berdoa, lipat tangan, tutup mata*"

SST : "*Baik kak..*"

Based on the utterances above, the speech act function to suggest something (assertive). The utterance function was to request SSC to put themselves in a praying position and the Sunday School Teacher-led them in prayer.

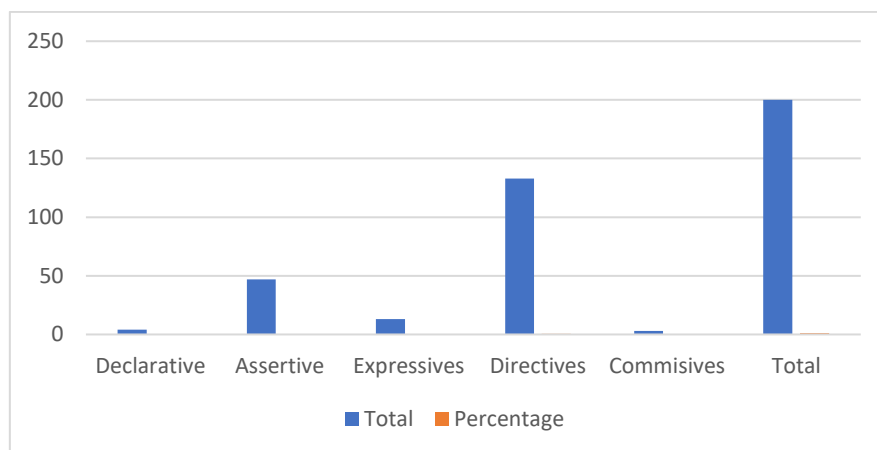


Figure 2. Distribution of Illocutionary Acts

4. SSC : "*Kamu berdosa, jika bermain main dalam mendengarkan firman Tuhan*"

SST : "*Baik kak..*"

Based on the utterances above, the speech act function to declare that whoever is not serious in listening to God's words will fall into sin.

5. SSC : "*Tuhan berjanji untuk memelihara anak anaknya yang setia*". Ada yang ragu?"

SST : "*Tidak kak..*"

Based on the utterances above, the speech act function to commit something (commissive). In this utterance, the SST restates God's commitment to take care of whoever believes in Him.

Discussion

From the results of data analysis and the findings of this study, it is known that all types of illocutionary acts can be found in the practice of teaching and learning at the

Sunday school at the location of this research that is similar to other findings in other classroom settings (Thuruvan & Yunus, 2017; Kurdghelashvili, 2015; Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). This finding proves that the theory of speech acts does not only apply in the daily communication process but also the communication process in educational activities, including in learning activities in Sunday school activities.

The results of this study reveal that the most dominant illocutionary act category is directive, which accounts for more than half of the utterances collected as research data. This finding confirms the findings of other studies (Herfina, 2021; Sari, 2020; Rizma Yanti & Amin, 2021) which state that this type of illocutionary act directive is very dominant in the teaching and learning process both in formal education and in informal education which involves interaction between teachers and students.

Meanwhile, the rarest category of illocutionary acts is commissive, which is a type of speech act that expresses a promise, which is rarely found in the context of learning communication. This also confirms the findings of other studies (Tursunovich, 2021; Tsoumou, 2020) which state that this type of speech act only appears at certain times, where participants in a communication event make a promise to do something that is considered very important.

The results of this study provide new information in the study of pragmatic speech acts in the context of religious education such as for Sunday school children. Although the object of the research is the interaction of communication in the field of informal education; however, aspects of pragmatic speech acts that are applied in the learning process are not much different from the learning process in conventional schools (Faturrochman et al., 2021). The results of this study imply that the existence of one speech act is determined by the function and purpose of communication in the context of language activity (Grandinetti et al., 2013). At least, the results of this study can describe the phenomenon of speech acts in the context of children's education (Sri Fatmaning Hartatik, 2020), which is very identical in this study. Although this research was conducted simply and took a limited object of research; however, the implementation procedure was following the research design so that the results were reliable and could be used as a reference in future pragmatic research.

Conclusion

This study found that all categories of speech acts mentioned in Searle's theory were found in this study, namely in the context of teaching Sunday school service at ST. Fransiskus Assisi Medan. In addition, this study also found that the most dominant speech act category found in this study was directive. These findings also corroborate the results of previous studies in the context of the learning process. The thing that distinguishes this finding from previous research is in the selection of communication events, where this study chose the learning process in Sunday school learning as the object of research. Although the results of this study have provided a clear description of the description and distribution of illocutionary acts in the context of Sunday school service, future research needs to follow up on the findings of this study by including a larger number of respondents and using different methods to get a sharper picture of the speech phenomenon. acts in Sunday school settings.

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