

**ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS PERFORMED BY MALCOLM X IN “THE BALLOT  
OR THE BULLET”  
PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS**



**Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain a Bachelor Degree in English  
Literature Study Program**

**DIAN SUHANA**

**F041181325**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES**

**HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY**

**MAKASSAR**

**2022**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES  
HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY**

**APPROVAL FORM**

With reference to the letter of the Dean of Cultural Sciences Number 1631/UN4.9.1/KEP/2021 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the thesis draft by **Dian Suhana (F041181325)** to be examined at the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

Makassar, 16 June 2022

Approved by

First Supervisor,



**Dr. Kamsinah, M.Hum.**  
NIP. 195910281985032001

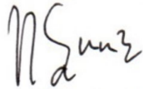
Second Supervisor,



**Drs. Simon Sitoto, M.A.**  
NIP. 196110221989031003

Approved for the Execution of Thesis Examination  
by The Thesis Organizing Committees

On Behalf of Dean  
Head of English Department



**Dra. Nasmilah, M.Hum., Ph.D.**  
NIP 196311031988032001

ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY

LEGITIMATION

THESIS

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS PERFORMED BY MALCOLM X IN “THE BALLOT  
OR THE BULLET”  
PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

BY

**DIAN SUHANA**

Student ID Number: F041181325

It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 and is  
declared to have fulfilled the requirements.

Approved By  
Board of Supervisors

Chairperson

**Dr. Kamsinah, M.Hum.**  
NIP. 195910281985032001

Secretary

**Drs. Simon Sitoto, M.A.**  
NIP. 196110221989031003

Dean Faculty of Cultural Sciences

**Prof. Dr. Akin Duli, M.A.**  
NIP. 19647161991031010

Head of English Department

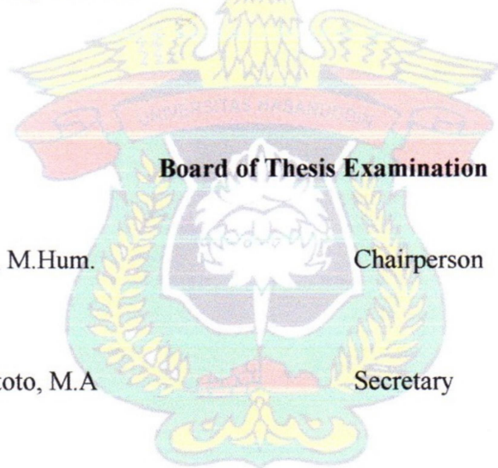
**Dra. Nasmilah, M. Hum., Ph.D.**  
NIP. 196311031988112001







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**FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES**  
**HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY**

**AGREEMENT**

On Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by **Dian Suhana (F041181325)** entitled *Illocutionary Acts Performed by Malcolm X in "The Ballot or The Bullet" Pragmatic Analysis* submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

Makassar, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022



- |                            |               |   |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| 1. Dr. Kamsinah, M.Hum.    | Chairperson   | (.....  .....)  |
| 2. Drs. Simon Sitoto, M.A  | Secretary     | (.....  .....) |
| 3. Dr. Ayub Khan, M.Si     | Examiner I    | (..  ..)       |
| 4. Dr. Sukmawaty, M.Hum    | Examiner II   | (....  .....)  |
| 5. Dr. Kamsinah, M.Hum.    | Supervisor I  | (.....  .....) |
| 6. Drs. Simon Sitoto, M.A. | Supervisor II | (.....  .....) |

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**DECLARATION**

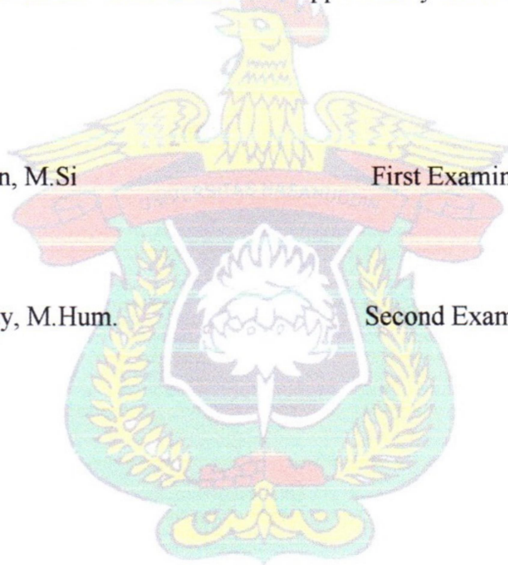
The Thesis by **Dian Suhana (F041181325)** entitled *Illocutionary Acts Performed by Malcolm X in "The Ballot or The Bullet" Pragmatic Analysis* has been revised as during the examination on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and is approved by the Board of Undergraduate Thesis Examiners.

1. Dr. Ayub Khan, M.Si First Examiner

(.  )

2. Dr. Sukmawaty, M.Hum. Second Examiner

(..  ..)



**SURAT PERNYATAAN**  
**(STATEMENT LETTER)**

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Dian Suhana

NIM : F041181325

Judul Skripsi : Illocutionary Acts Performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The  
Bullet” Pragmatic Analysis.

Fakultas/Jurusan : Ilmu Budaya/Sastra Inggris

Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa skripsi ini benar-benar karya saya sendiri. Sepanjang pengetahuan saya tidak terdapat karya yang ditulis atau diterbitkan orang lain kecuali sebagai acuan atau kutipan, dengan mengikuti tata penulisan karya ilmiah yang lazim.

Makassar, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022



Yang Menyatakan

Dian Suhana

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## ABSTRACT

**DIAN SUHANA. 2022** *Illocutionary Acts Performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The Bullet” Pragmatic Analysis*, (supervised by **Kamsinah** and **Simon Sitoto**).

The aims of this research are to (1) describe the types of illocutionary acts performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The Bullet”; and (2) explain the meaning of illocutionary acts performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The Bullet”.

The data were obtained from the utterances spoken by Malcolm X in his speech “The Ballot or The Bullet”. The utterances taken as the data consist of 107 utterances. To collect the data, the writer used note taking and scrutinized method. The data were using descriptive qualitative analysis.

The result shows that there are five types of illocutionary acts. Those are representative (assertive, informing, predicting, insisting), directive (ordering, requesting, suggesting), commissive (assuring, threatening, convincing, offering), expressive (welcoming, complaining, apologizing, suspecting), declarative (declaring, firing, swearing). The result of this study shows that there are 107 illocutionary acts performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The Bullet” speech. These illocutionary acts are divided into five types. They are Representative (47), Directives (38), Declaring (13), Commissive (7) and Expressive (2). The use of illocutionary acts is influenced by the correlation between the context of situation and the understanding of the listeners from the utterances uttered by the speaker.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Illocutionary Acts*

## ABSTRAK

**DIAN SUHANA. 2022** *Tindak Ilokusi yang Dilakukan oleh Malcolm X dalam “The Ballot or The Bullet” Analisis Pragmatik*, (dibimbing oleh **Kamsinah** dan **Simon Sitoto**).

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis tindak ilokusi yang dilakukan oleh Malcolm X dalam “The Ballot or The Bullet”; dan (2) menjelaskan makna tindak ilokusi yang dilakukan oleh Malcolm X dalam “The Ballot or The Bullet”.

Data diperoleh dari tuturan yang diucapkan oleh Malcolm X dalam pidatonya “The Ballot or The Bullet”. Tuturan yang diambil sebagai data terdiri dari 107 tuturan. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penulis menggunakan metode note taking dan scrutinized. Data menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada lima jenis tindak ilokusi. Mereka adalah representatif (tegas, menginformasikan, memprediksi, bersikeras), direktif (memerintah, meminta, menyarankan), komisif (meyakinkan, mengancam, meyakinkan, menawarkan), ekspresif (menyambut, mengeluh, meminta maaf, mencurigai), deklaratif (menyatakan, memecat, bersumpah). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 107 tindak ilokusi yang dilakukan oleh Malcolm X dalam pidato “The Ballot or The Bullet”. Tindak ilokusi ini terbagi menjadi lima jenis. Mereka adalah Representatif (47), Directives (38), Declaring (13), Commissive (7) dan Expressive (2). Penggunaan tindak ilokusi dipengaruhi oleh korelasi antara konteks situasi dan pemahaman pendengar dari ujaran yang diucapkan oleh pembicara.

Kata kunci: *Pragmatik, Tindak Tutur, Tindak Ilokusi*

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

A language is an utterance tool. With language, people can express their feeling, thought, and intentions. On the contrary, people cannot live side by side with others without communicating with one another. In the analysis of language, what people act by saying words named speech acts. Speech acts are the study that contract with how to do things with words. Speech acts can be found in the utterance of a conversation. Each conversation has a particular or specific purpose to ask the participants or the interlocutors that taking part in the conversation.

Communication is very influential in social life as it is used by people to interact with one another. People expressed their feeling in words or even they make them into sentences in order to make the effective communication. Besides, so-called effective communication is when the information or message that has delivered by the speaker is clearly understood by the participant or the hearer. In that case, the study has found that there are varieties of ways that people use to communicate or speak. Each of them has its own advantages and weakness in delivering and comprehending the message. It does not only need the understanding of the utterance but also the comprehending the implicit meaning of those utterances. Therefore, it has the relation about speech act which learns the act of the speaker utters something and the response of the hearer after hearing something.

Pragmatically, through the speaker's utterance, it is not only uttering the sounds of the language for communicating but also performs the act of doing something. For example, the act of asking, the act of giving advice, the act of

making promises and offering, the act of giving order and etc. In other words, through language, people can do an action or do something based on the means of the particular language. In the study of pragmatics, the speech act is the most interesting study and relevant in language teaching and learning. Fromkin (2003) stated that a speech act is an action that the speaker accomplishes when using language in context.

The action that performs via utterances are typically called speech acts as mentioned by George Yule (2000). He defined speech act as the act of making an utterance in which the speaker is performing a certain kind of speech act such as giving advice, asking questions, issuing a comment and etc. During the middle of twentieth century, the speech act was developed. Austin (1962) said that speech act is the actions that performed in saying. There are three different levels that can be analyzed when the action performed and the utterance is produced according to speech act theory. First, locutionary act is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference. Second, illocutionary acts such as warning, undertaking, informing, ordering, etc. Third, perlocutionary act, achieve by saying something, such as persuading, deterring, convincing, surprising, etc. From those three types of speech acts, the illocutionary act is considered quite complicated, since it has been discussed by many previous researches. There are many cases related to pragmatics, especially illocutionary act.

Context of situation is an important thing in the pragmatic study. It is a background knowledge meant to be shared by the speaker and hearer and which contributes to the hearer's interpretation of what the speaker means by a given utterance. Context provides meaning and clarity to the intended message. It also clues in a literary work create a relationship between the writer and reader, giving a

deeper understanding of the intent and direction of the writing. Illocutionary acts carried out by a speaker making an utterance are the act viewed in terms of the utterance's significance within a conventional system of the social infraction. Based on Searle (1976), the illocutionary act can be divided into five general classifications. There are declarations, representatives, expressive, directives, and commissive. The activity of the illocutionary act can be found in a speech whether from a movie, documentary, or short video.

This study will analyze an illocutionary act found in the speech of Malcolm X entitled "The Ballot or The Bullet" This speech had become one of the most popular and controversial speeches by Malcolm X since it was delivered in April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1964 until now. It contains several purposes at a critical point in Malcolm X's life such as part of his effort to keep himself away from the Nation of Islam, and it was purposed to reach out to moderate civil rights leaders. Furthermore, the speech denoted that Malcolm still supported Black Nationalism and self-defense and thus had not made a complete break with his past. "The Ballot or the Bullet" also refers to a notable shift in Malcolm X's rhetoric, as he presented previously undiscussed ways of looking at the relationship between blacks and whites. Since the researcher is interested in his speeches as Malcolm X tried to convince and influence the hearers to trust what he said in it.

## **1.2 Identification of The Problem**

As one of the most influential speakers, Malcolm X is best known for being a minister in the Nation of Islam and a fierce advocate of Black Nationalism. One of his famous speeches that the writer chose to analyze is "The Ballot or The Bullet" in which he argued that African Americans must fight to obtain their freedom by

whatever means necessary. For the writer, there are some problems that exist in Malcolm X's speech. Those problems are:

1. The audiences are difficult to identify what types of acts are spoken in the speech.
2. The audiences are difficult to classify what types of illocutionary act in the speech.
3. The difficulty to find out the purposes behind the literal meaning of the utterances of the illocutionary acts that occur in Malcolm X's speech.

### **1.3 Scope of The Problem**

The writer focuses to discuss the types of illocutionary act in the speech of Malcolm X: The Ballot or The Bullet and to figure out the purpose behind the utterances produced. The writer chose the illocutionary acts as the approach because it is not only used to analyze utterances from its literal meaning, but the illocutionary act is also used in analyzing the purpose why every utterance is stated. To conduct the research, the writer uses the underlying theory from Searle.

### **1.4 Research Question**

- 1.4.1 What types of illocutionary acts performed in the speech of Malcolm X: "The Ballot or The Bullet"?
- 1.4.2 What are the meanings of the illocutionary acts performed in Malcolm X speech: The Ballot or The Bullet?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

- 1.5.1 To describe the types of illocutionary acts performed by Malcolm X in "The Ballot or The Bullet".



1.5.2 To explain the meaning of illocutionary acts performed by Malcolm X in “The Ballot or The Bullet”.

## **1.6 Significance of Study**

### 1.6.1 Theoretical Benefit

After conducting this study, the writer hopes there will be knowledge that will be obtained through this study especially for those who will focus on Pragmatics as their research object. They can make this study as a reference to know the relevance of pragmatics and how it is applied in real life especially in understanding a script or speech. Moreover, the students are also provided with references to broaden their insights in the aspects of using strategies in speech.

### 1.6.1 Practical Benefit

The writer hopes this study can give a contribution to the linguistics field to help students of the English Department at Hasanuddin University in their further study. Furthermore, this research provides information for those who are interested in the public speech and can be a reference for those who want to make research in the field of effective speech.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical background which contains the previous study. It is the previous study that had been conducted by the previous researchers related to this study. It also provides some descriptions about the literature related to the topic of the research like pragmatics, speech act, and an illocutionary act.

#### 2.1 Previous Study

First, Perdian Sapta Putra (2019) writes “An Analysis of Expressive Speech Acts of Main Character in The Greatest Snowman Movie”. The writer analyzed the types of expressive speech acts used by the main character in the movie of The Greatest Snowman Movie. The method’s used is descriptive qualitative method. There are four types of expressive speech acts found in thirty utterances used by the main character.

Second, Andi Athirah (2021) in her thesis “An Analysis of Directive Speech Act in The Twilight Saga: Breaking Down Part 1 Movie” discusses the type of directive speech acts used by the main character in The Twilight Saga: Breaking Down Part 1 movie script and reveal the reasons why directives speech acts are used by the main characters in the movie. She uses descriptive qualitative method. The result of this research shows that there are 12 types of directive speech acts used by the main character. They are; asking, requesting, ordering, commanding, instructing, suggesting, advising, warning, dismissing, prohibiting, begging and challenging.

Lastly, Eko Prasetyo Nugroho Saputro (2015) writes “The Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in Jokowi’s Speeches”. The research utilized Speech Act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (2005) in analyzing the data. He uses descriptive

qualitative research and collected the data from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). The main research instrument was the researcher himself supported by the data analysis sheet. The data analysis was performed by categorizing the data based on Searle's categorization of speech acts. The types of illocutionary acts found in Jokowi's speech are assertive, directive, commissive and expressive. The dominant type of illocutionary acts is assertive.

Based on the previous research above, the difference between those previous studies and this research is the object of research. In this research, the writer only focused on Illocutionary Acts spoken by Malcolm X.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1 Pragmatics**

Pragmatics can be interpreted as a branch of linguistics that studies meaning desired by the speaker or what is more often called studying the language under review from language speakers.

According to Searle (1969) it is a subfield of pragmatics which is concerned with the ways in which words can be used not only to present information but also to carry out actions.

According to Yule (1996:3), he mentioned several pragmatic definitions. First, "Pragmatics is the study about the relation between linguistic form and the user of it". Through pragmatics, we will be able to know the meaning, idea, purpose and the types of action from the speaker when they speak.

Second, "Pragmatic is the study of contextual meaning". He explained that this type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said.

Then, Yule (1996:3) stated, “pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)”.

According to Gazdar (in Levinson 1983:12), “Pragmatic is the aspect of the meaning of utterance that is spoken indirectly.” Morris (in Levinson 1983:1) stated that “Pragmatic is the study of relation of signs to interpreters.”. Yule (1996) also stated that “Pragmatics is a discipline that connects language and the users of the language that are speakers and listeners”.

Pragmatists focus on what is not explicitly stated and on how we interpret utterances in situational contexts. “They are concerned not so much with the sense of what is said as with its force, that is, with what is communicated by the manner and the style of an utterance.” (Geoffrey Finch, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

According to Mey (in Rahardy, 2003:12) “Pragmatics is a study of the conditions of language use which are determined based on the context of society”.

Levinson (1983:5) states that “Pragmatics is the study of language use and the relationship between language and context uses the basic for explaining language understanding”.

Based on some definitions about pragmatics above, the writer can conclude that pragmatics is a study of language related to context, meaning and purpose from the utterance of the speaker.

## **2.2.2 Aspect of Pragmatics**

### **2.2.2.1 Utterance**

According to Harford and Halsey (2007:16) they stated that “an utterance is any stretch of talk, by one person, before and after which there is silence on the part of that person. An utterance is the use by a particular speaker, on a particular occasion,

of a piece of language, such as a sequence of sentences, or a single phrase, or even a single word”. So, utterance is produced by language in any kind of talk even if it presents as a single word.

Finnegan (1997) stated “Utterance is the use of a sentence on in a particular context. It includes the (descriptive) meaning of the sentence, along with (social and effective) meaning contributed by contextual factors.”

Another opinion is from Schmidt and Richards (2002) who say that “Utterance is a unit of analysis of speech which has been defined into various ways but most commonly as a sequence of words within a single person’s turn at talk that falls under a single intonation.” They add that utterances may sometimes consist of stretches of speech shorter than sentences.

In conclusion, an utterance is a stretch of spoken language that is preceded by silence and followed by silence or a change of speaker. Thus, it necessarily doesn’t convey a complete meaning.

#### **2.2.2.2 Context**

In Pragmatics, context is paramount as the audience is constrained to understand the speaker’s intention taking cognizance of the context in which utterances are uttered. Context gives people the knowledge and idea on how they use the language. Pragmatics considers context to complement semantic and grammatical contributions to meaning.

According to Finnegan (1997), he stated that the essential element in the interpretation of an utterance is the context in which it is uttered.

Yule (1996), context simply means the physical environment in which a word is used. The importance of taking of context into account is also well expressed by Hymes (1983) who views the role of the context in interpretation as, on the one

hand, limiting the range of possible interpretation and, on the other hand, as supporting the intended interpretation:

“The use of linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of the meanings. When a form is used in a context, it eliminates the meaning possible to that context other than those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support.”

Besides, Cook (1997) stated that context is the social and physical world which interacts with text to create discourse. He says that people are also influenced by the situation in which they receive messages, by their cultural and social convention-bound their use, as language users one always operates in context.

Allott (2010) also states that the context of an utterance signifies a source of information that assists the hearer in finding out what the speaker wishes to express. Without considering the context of words and phrases, it is unlikely that it will interpret the implicatures of a speech. On top of that, it is not possible to calculate the proposition presented or the desired illocutionary style. Since pragmatics is interested in the meaning of the speaker and how the listener interprets it, context is very important to pragmatics.

Pragmatics is known from semantics meaning in relation to the speaking situation (Leech, 1983). This phenomenon can be seen from the talk situation criteria. They are addressers the context of speech, the purpose of speech, and speech as a form facts or activities or what is called speech and utterance acts as a product a verbal action. In other words, pragmatics is mostly focused on processes producing languages and producers, not just in the language itself.

## 2.2.3 Speech Act

### 2.2.3.1 Theory of Speech Act

The notion of speech act is first introduced by Austin (1962), and then developed by Austin's student, Searle (1969). In his book, "How to Do Things with Words", Austin (1962) proposes that when articulating certain utterances speakers perform certain actions. According to Austin, there are three types of acts that an utterance performs: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. However, Levinson (1983) confines his use of the term speech act to refer exclusively to the second type of act which is illocutionary act.

A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. People use speech acts when they offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal. A speech act might contain just one word to perform an apology as to say "Sorry", or several words or sentences: "I'm sorry I couldn't make it on time." Speech acts consist of real-life interactions and requires not only knowledge of the language but also an appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

In Levinson (1983), Austin divides into three basic sentences in speech acts, they are:

1. Locutionary act is the utterance of the sentence with determinate sense of reference.
2. Illocutionary act is the making of statement, offer, promise, etc.
3. Perlocutionary act is the bringing about of effect on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstance of utterance.

Austin (1962) defines that speech acts as "the action performed in saying something."

1. Locutionary act: utterances performed by someone.
2. Illocutionary act: the purpose or intention of a speaker in saying an utterance.
3. Perlocutionary act: the effect on the hearers of speaker's intention.

#### **2.2.3.2 Types of speech acts**

According to Austin (1962), the action performed when an utterance is produced can be analyzed on three different levels namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts is uttering certain utterances with particular sense or references which is roughly equivalent to meaning in the traditional sense (Austin,1962). In other words, locutionary acts refer to the literal meaning of an utterance. Another definition is presented by Yule (1996) stating that this type of act is the basic act of utterances to produce meaningful linguistic expression.

Locutionary act is something that is said or the form of the words spoken (Cutting, 2002). Locutionary act can be classified into three types. They are declarative, imperative and interrogative. Based on Austin (1996), each has the idea of telling something, giving an order and asking for question respectively. The second type is illocutionary act where one can be said to do something such as stating, denying or asking. Statements which appear on the face of it to be present with cognitive meaning then turn out to be used in fact to perform expressive or directive illocutionary acts. To put it in another way, it is the performance of the utterance which has a meaning.

Lastly, perlocutionary act is a speech act that produces an effect, intended or not, achieved in an addressee by a speaker's utterance. It tells what speakers want to achieve in saying something such as to get hearers to know, to do something, to expect something, to show speakers feeling and praise (Austin, 1996).



Austin (1962) distinguishes five more general classes of utterance according to the illocutionary force.

**1. Verdictives.**

Verdictives are typified by the giving of verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. However, the need not be final; they may be, for example, an estimation, reckoning, or appraisal. It is essential to give a finding to something - fact or value - which is for different reasons hard to be certain about.

**2. Exercitives**

Exercitives are exercise of power, right, or influence. The examples are appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, and warning.

**3. Commisives**

Commisives are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they commit the hearer to do something, but include also declaration or announcements of intention, which are not promise, and also rather vague things which can be called espousal, as for example siding with.

**4. Behabitives**

Behabitives are very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and social behavior. The examples are apologizing, congratulating, condoling, cursing, and challenging.

**5. Expositive**

Expositive are difficult to define. They make plain how utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how words are use, or in general are expository. The examples are 'I reply', 'I concede', 'I illustrate', 'I assume', and 'I postulate'.

**2.2.3.3 Classifications of Illocutionary Act**

According to Searle's view (1969), there are only five illocutionary points that speakers can achieve on propositions in an utterance: representative, commissive, directive, declaratory and expressive illocutionary points. Speech act is the use of speech focusing on the speakers' intention of affecting and eliciting an action or effect on the listener. Illocutionary acts can be classified into five categories as Searle in Levinson (1983) states that the classifications are representatives, directives, commissive, expressive, and declarations.

### **1. Representatives**

Representatives are speech acts that the utterances commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. This type explains that state what the speaker believes to be case or not. Representative speech act can be noted by some speech acts verb, such as: remind, tell, assert, deny, correct, state, guess, predict, report, describe, inform, insist, assure, agree, claim, beliefs, conclude. The example of expressives are presented as follows:

- a. The Earth is flat.
- b. It was a warm sunny day.
- c. America is so terrific.

### **2. Directives**

Directive speech acts meaning that speaker uses to get someone else to do something. These speech acts include requesting, questioning, command, orders, and suggesting. The example of expressives are presented as follows:

- a. Let's go!
- b. Can you help me?
- c. Stop making that noise!

### **3. Commissive**

Commissive are speech acts that the utterances commit the speaker to some future course of action, these include promising, threatening, offering, refusal, pledges. Commissive has world-to-word direction of fit which is similar to directive, but they differ in sense of who takes the action that will alter the world. The example of commissives are presented as follows:

- a. I will come to your home tomorrow.
- b. This example shows that the speaker intends to come to the hearer's home the next day after the utterance is said. Therefore, the speaker commits that he/she will come to the speaker's home the next day.
- c. I will help you solve that math test at the library.
- d. This example shows that the speaker intends to help the hearer to solve a certain math test at the library. The speaker commits himself to come to the library and help the hearer solve the test.
- e. We will not come to that party.
- f. This example shows that the speaker commits himself and his partner to not attending the party.

#### **4. Expressive**

Expressive are speech acts that the utterances express a psychological state or explains the states feeling of the speaker. This illocutionary function is to express or express the psychological attitude of the speaker to the situation implied in illocutionary, for example, to say thank you, congratulate, apologize, criticize, praise, express condolences, and so on. The example of expressives are presented as follows:

- a. I'm really sorry.
- b. Congratulation!

- c. Great!

## **5. Declaratives**

Declarations are speech acts which can change the world by the utterance that is produced. The word “change” here refers to any situation. It can be the change of the status of a person. The utterances effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions. The example of expressives are presented as follows:

- a. Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.
- b. Referee: You're out!
- c. Judge: I sentence you to nine years in prison!