

## An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in TED Talks 2024 on English Language Learning

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### Abstract

In language learning, illocutionary acts is essential in shaping communicative competence. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the illocutionary acts in two 2024 TED Talks on English language learning using Searle's (1976) classification as its analytical framework. The research aims to identify 5 illocutionary act types with the most dominant ones in selected videos and investigate the correct usage of illocutionary acts to better understand how language is used in educational discourse. The data were systematically classified into five distinct categories of speech acts: representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives. The research identified that there were 159 illocutionary acts, consisting of 106 representatives (66.7%), 23 directives (14.5%), 19 expressives (11.9%), 11 commissives (6.9%), with no declarative acts identified in either video. The analysis reveals that the dominance of representative acts reflects the informative and persuasive goals of TED Talks, while directives, expressive, and commissive acts serve to enhance engagement, emotional resonance, and speaker credibility. These patterns show that effective educational discourse not only relies on vocabulary and grammar but also on strategically chosen illocutionary acts. This research suggests that to achieve communication goals, language users should not only concentrate on linguistic accuracy but also on employing illocutionary acts effectively to enhance their communication. Future research might extend this study by investigating larger and more diverse genres, different methodologies, or additional communicative dimensions. In conclusion, illocutionary acts are used strategically and contextually, shaped by the speaker's purpose, background, and communication setting.

**Keywords:** illocutionary acts, TED Talks, English language learning, speech acts, public speaking

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### INTRODUCTION

Speaking is essential in both conversation and language acquisition as it enables an individual to articulate views, share ideas, and meaningfully interact in various situations. According to Nga & Huong (2023), speaking is considered more important than listening, reading, or writing for communicating effectively. Linear to that study, speaking is one of the parameters used to recognize someone's proficiency in a language (Sharma, 2018). A teacher in any subject must consider the ways and strategies in teaching communication to have efficient learning experiences with students. Research by Alawiyah (2018) claims that a teacher's mastery of English greatly affects his or her students' comprehension of the lessons taught.

In this digital age, the teaching process goes beyond traditional classroom settings by incorporating multimedia resources. One of the examples is TED Talks, which is a learning resource as they integrate images and the spoken word in a way that teaches in a compelling manner. As one of the multimedia resources used in the teaching process, public speaking videos are a valuable tool for teachers as they give students diverse insight and techniques that can improve their communicative skills. According to Rahayu & Eripuddin (2023), effective public speaking usually combines directives and persuasive utterances that actively involve listeners and enhance the overall impact of the speech. Their analysis also shows a speaker's wording shapes the way the audience interpretation and reaction. The aforementioned communicative elements can be seen in TED Talks, which represent the significance of digital media in English language learning. As a modern platform, TED Talks provides authentic public speaking resources to learners around the world. Thus, TED Talks is an important part of media learning because public speaking is now an important 21<sup>st</sup>-century skill. For this reason, TED Talks give learners the opportunity to improve their English and communication skills.

In TED Talks, speakers often use effective communication where they articulate complex concepts,

share personal narratives, and persuade audiences through carefully constructed presentations. TED Talk also has an impact on English learning, as Tran & Nguyen (2024) found in their research, TED Talks provide learners with valuable input for their speaking proficiency. Moreover, they consider these talks have become significant to learn English and significantly improving public speaking performance. As such, TED Talks can improve students' confidence in speaking, especially for EFL students who have limited opportunities to interact with native speakers. Furthermore, the role of TED Talks in speaking has been researched by Salem, (2019), which resulted in improving verbal presentation skills and word recall, along with reducing speaking anxiety, especially among Business English students. With their concise introductions, coherent content, and compelling conclusions, TED Talks' organized structure presents a model for effective public speaking. Additionally, the availability of transcripts and subtitles in various languages allows TED Talks to be an accessible learning tool for individuals with different proficiency levels. Thus, the aforementioned reasons make TED Talks a valuable resource for language teachers and learners.

In addition, effective communication is not merely a matter of words. It also requires understanding the intentions and meaning behind the words. Therefore, speakers need to express their intentions appropriately within the context. As such, it is important for the audience to interpret the speaker's message accurately. At this point, the concept of speech acts takes on an important role. Speech act theory facilitates understanding the actions that are carried out through language. It also refers to the production of an utterance in which the speaker's intended purpose is recognized by the interlocutor (Kuraesin & Prasetya, 2022). In essence, speech acts emphasize the functions of language in communication, focusing on the actions performed by speakers rather than merely the words they use. Furthermore, Austin's (1962) research explained that when individuals speak, they perform three speech act categories at once. First, locutionary acts, which is the act of producing meaningful language. Second, illocutionary acts which conveys the speaker's communicative purpose. Lastly, perlocutionary acts that concerns the impact the statement has on the audience.

Drawing on the aforementioned study background, speech acts in TED Talks are essential to investigate as they influence how the audience interprets and reacts to a message delivered by the speaker. In particular, this research specifically focuses on illocutionary acts as the critical bridge between literal utterances and their intended communicative purposes. As such, illocutionary acts constitute the intentional force carried out through the speech (AlAfnan, 2022). Additionally, the illocutionary acts convey the purpose of the speaker in communication, encompassing acts like asserting, asking, commanding, as well as expressing emotions (Olii et al., 2023). Thus, a clear understanding of these acts is crucial for both speakers and listeners, as it facilitates the accurate delivery and interpretation of the intended meaning. Otherwise, it may lead to misunderstandings, as the research by Pietikäinen (2016) stated that an inability to interpret the intended meaning of an utterance accurately may lead to misunderstandings regarding the speaker's intended message. Similarly, the inadequacy of the speech acts, particularly in illocutionary acts, may result in misinterpretation or confusion among listeners in public speaking and other forms of oral discourse (Gayoso et al., 2024). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of speech acts is important to ensure effective communication, reduce misinterpretation, and enhance audience comprehension in public speaking. Hence, with their persuasive nature and diverse communication strategies, TED Talks provide a valuable field to explore speech acts.

Research on speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts, has been extensively conducted across various contexts, including political speeches, TED Talks, movies, and educational settings. For example, studies by Aflah & Setyawan (2024) have analyzed speech acts using a qualitative approach in TED Talks that focused on how the speaker, Elon Musk, used illocutionary acts such as assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives to persuade and inform his audiences. They further identified assertives as the most dominant type to express personal convictions and guide audience understanding. Another qualitative research conducted by Sabtiana & Siregar (2024) examined speech acts in political contexts that highlighted the prevalent illocutionary acts used in Putin's speech, revealing that representative acts appeared more frequently than other types. Similarly, research by Sesanti et al. (2021) that investigated Anies Baswedan's speech showed a clear predominance of representative acts used to describe the urgency of solving COVID-19. Another research was also conducted by Astiandani et al. (2022) that examined Joe Biden's speech, focusing on illocutionary acts combined with language style that showed the commissive acts were dominant, with language style reinforcing peace values. In addition, research by Darong & Neldis (2023) investigated the address delivered by the head of the United Nations. They employed a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) that investigated the speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts as well as perlocutionary acts, along with their social function and effects on the audience. They found that directive and assertive were the most commonly used in the speech, while declarative acts were avoided to remain neutral. On the other hand, Darong & Neldis (2023) also explored illocutionary acts using a qualitative content analysis in video podcasts and their implications for language teaching. The analysis indicated a higher occurrence of directive acts used

by a single host, Najwa Shihab.

Furthermore, another research used a qualitative design, particularly discourse analysis, conducted by Gayoso et al. (2024) investigating the illocutionary acts in the 20 most viewed language teaching speeches on TED Talks. They identified all five types of illocutionary acts in those TED Talks. Their study provided an extensive categorization as it employed corpus analysis and numerous examples of how speakers used language to share ideas, express feelings, and motivate action. However, the contextual intentions of the speakers and how illocutionary acts function in educational settings still need to be studied further.

Despite previous studies that have explored illocutionary acts across diverse contexts, such as political speeches, podcasts, and TED Talks, the researcher found some gaps unaddressed. First, some studies focused on prominent politicians or public figures like Elon Musk, Vladimir Putin, and Joe Biden, leaving a gap in research on lesser-known speakers, which potentially contributes to a deeper understanding of speech acts application across diverse contexts. Additionally, many research analysis focus on the older or highly popular TED Talks speeches, which leave the recent TED Talks underexplored. To address these gaps, this research focuses on two 2024 TED Talks videos delivered by educators in the field of English language education, both of which present content about English language learning. Thus, speakers' professional background makes them relevant for examining how illocutionary acts are used for English learners in a more meaningful way.

Based on this context, this study focuses on investigating different kinds of illocutionary acts and the one that occurs most often in the selected 2024 TED Talks videos that focus on English language learning. This study also investigates the correct usage of illocutionary acts within these talks to better understand how language is used in educational discourse.

## METHOD

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach for data analysis. The data were obtained through the video transcripts and were analyzed using Searle's (1976) theory, which was classified into directive, commissive, expressive, declarative, and representative. The technique used to collect the data was conducted with the following steps: First, the researcher watched the selected TED Talks videos on YouTube. Afterward, the researcher transcribed the videos into written text and reviewed each video's transcript thoroughly to ensure its accuracy. After transcription, the utterances were identified according to Searle's (1976) illocutionary acts classification.

The research materials in this study were the transcripts of the selected TED Talks video, particularly entitled "It's Never Too Early or Too Late to Learn a Language" by Iroda Saydazimova and "Zipf's Law: Core Words for English Language Learning Success by Dr. Charles Browne, which was uploaded in 2024 about language learning. These videos were purposefully selected for two main reasons. First, both TED Talks focus on English language learning, so they are thematically aligned with this study. Secondly, both speakers have professional credibility as language educators in the field of English education. Dr. Charles Browne, for instance, is affiliated with a Japanese university where he lectures in Applied Linguistics and TESOL, and is internationally recognized for his expertise in second language vocabulary acquisition and educational technology. Meanwhile, Iroda Saydazimova is a lecturer at a university in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and holds an advanced degree in TESOL. Each video duration is approximately 17–18 minutes, which provides sufficient yet manageable data for this analysis. For these reasons, those videos are particularly suitable for examining the appropriate use of illocutionary acts within the context of English language learning, especially in understanding how illocutionary acts are used to inform, persuade and guide language learners. The gathered materials were then subjected to further analysis by the researcher.

The data analysis process adopted the framework from Miles et al. (2014), which involves three key stages. First, data condensation, the researcher reviewed the video transcripts repeatedly to identify and categorize utterances that corresponded to the five types of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle. These utterances were analyzed regarding their linguistic structure and communicative function. Second, the data display, the selected utterances were organized in a table to make thematic comparison and identification easier. Lastly, in drawing and verifying conclusions, the researcher interpreted the frequency, pattern, and function of each illocutionary act in both TED Talks.

To strengthen the credibility of the findings, investigator triangulation was employed (Creswell, 2018). In this research, the researcher involved an investigator triangulation who had lived and studied in the UK for four years to review the illocutionary acts analysis and interpretations, as well as provide feedback on the contextual appropriateness. Her extensive exposure to academic English enables her to provide appropriate feedback on the clarity and contextual appropriateness of the utterances that were analyzed. The researcher took the feedback into consideration to improve the reliability of the analysis. During the process, discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached, and all adjustments were applied to improve the analytic reliability (Patton, 2015, pp. 674–678).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research analyzes two TED Talk videos that present different approaches to discuss English language learning. Those are “It's Never Too Early or Too Late to Learn a Language” by Iroda Saydazimova and “Zipf's Law: Key Words for Successful English Language Learning” by Charles Browne. The first video, which was presented by Saydazimova, uses a narrative approach. She shares her experiences of her multilingual family and daily language practices, including code switching and code mixing as natural linguistic phenomena in her family interactions. She also presents some findings from a small experiment that was conducted in her own family, which revealed language patterns that vary depending on the situation and the relationship between speakers.

Moving on to the second video, Charles Browne discusses the importance of acquiring high-frequency vocabulary for English learners in improving their reading comprehension. He further explains from his professional experience and supported by research on English vocabulary needed by second language learners, based on Zipf's Law. By focusing on the most frequently used words, Browne shows how learners can achieve faster progress with more meaningful results. Browne introduced the New General Service List (NGSL), a concise corpus-based word list that covers 90–99% of vocabulary in a variety of English genres, which is the highest coverage rate in the world. In addition, he also shows a variety of free and open-source learning tools to make vocabulary mastery more efficient and accessible. Hence, Saydazimova and Browne's speeches do not simply convey a message. They have additional purposes, such as encouraging, expressing beliefs, and persuading the audience, particularly with regard to English language learning. The underlying purpose illustrates the application of illocutionary acts, where speech is not merely uttered to say something, but acts to do something (Searle, 1976).

Thus, all sentences from both transcripts were sorted into five distinct illocutionary types. The classification was based on the speaker's intention and the linguistic form of each utterance. Table 1 below displays the distribution of illocutionary acts across the two talks.

Illocutionary Act	Frequency	Percentage
Representative	106	66.7%
Directive	23	14.5%
Expressive	19	11.9%
Commissive	11	6.9%

Based on Table 1, this study identified 159 illocutionary acts found in TED Talks videos on English language learning in 2024. Representative acts occurred most frequently with 106 occurrences (66.7%), followed by directive acts with 23 occurrences (14.5%), expressive acts with 19 occurrences (11.9%), and commissive acts with 11 occurrences (6.9%). No declarative acts were found in the videos. Further details about each illocutionary act type will be explained in the following sections.

### Representatives

According to Searle (1976), representatives occurs when the speaker conveys belief in the factuality of a particular proposition or statement. In line with this, Fakhriyah et al. (2022) concluded that when speakers use representative acts, they present information or explanations as factual reflections of their own beliefs. The representative acts can be in the form of asserting, reporting, informing, affirming, claiming, describing, reasoning, telling, denying, stating, and claiming.

The following excerpts are presented to provide examples of identified representative acts.

#### Excerpt 1

*“I truly believe in the many advantages of learning and speaking multiple languages. I see these benefits every single day.”*

The excerpt above is a type of representatives, specifically asserting. It asserts Saydazimova's own conviction that multilingualism brings real advantages. Saydazimova believes it because she comes from a multilingual environment that speaks Uzbek as her native language, Russian as her second language, also English and French as foreign languages. Furthermore, by saying “*I see these benefits every single day*,” it reinforces that it is an observed fact. These utterances indicate that she tells her audience what she holds to



be true.

### **Excerpt 2**

*“Recent research actually indicates that languages can be learned at any stage of life, and adults are believed to have many advantages over children. For example, adults can always relate to their previously learned experience. Secondly, they are usually highly motivated, and thirdly, adults have an experience in learning how to learn.”*

This excerpt is a type of representatives, particularly reporting. Saydazimova mentions that recent research shows that in learning languages, age does not matter. This is due to the findings when learning languages, adults also have their own advantages that are broken down into three pieces of evidence that further explain. Adults have discerned how to weave previous knowledge into new frameworks and thus have an easier time making new connections. Furthermore, adults’ intrinsic motivation to engage with the content keeps them focused. Lastly, adults have already gone through the learning process, so they have the skills to learn better. In conclusion, the speaker wants to inform the audience that the information about adults having many advantages in learning languages is a fact. This excerpt is an example of representative action that serves to provide information. By presenting this excerpt, the speaker conveys new information. First, about the origins of Wordle, and second, about its global adoption as a free vocabulary tool. In Excerpt 2, Saydazimova only conveys facts that may not be known to the audience.

### **Excerpt 3**

*“Wordle is a game that was invented about five years ago, and it's a free game that's been going around the world, very, very popular for practicing vocabulary.”*

This excerpt is an example of representative, specifically informing. By using Excerpt 3, Browne conveys new information. First, about the origins of Wordle, and second, about its global adoption as a free vocabulary tool. In Excerpt 3, the speaker intends to convey information that may not be known by the audience.

### **Excerpt 4**

*“I began my intentional language learning journey at 16, when I took up learning English seriously. And now I can distinctly remember that it took me about two years to achieve just a lower intermediate level in English. However, later another two years to achieve a strong intermediate level in German, and even later only one year to achieve a strong intermediate level in French.”*

Excerpt 4 is an example of representatives, specifically describing. This excerpt describes Saydazimova’s language learning journey in detail. This can be seen from how she mentions that he started learning English at the age of 16 and explains in detail how long it took to achieve consecutive levels of proficiency in English, German, and French. The speaker not only tells the audience about the sequence of events, but also describes her journey through a brief timeline. This indicates that when she learns languages seriously, she can achieve optimal results. The point of this is to illustrate that sustained and focused effort leads to increasingly rapid progress in learning languages. In Excerpt 4, the speaker intends to describe information to make the audience understand that when she learned languages seriously, she could achieve it.

From the representatives found, both Saydazimova and Browne chose each illocutionary act with a clear purpose that aligned them with their overall goals while keeping their audiences engaged. It indicates that they both relied heavily on representatives when laying out ideas and data. For example, Browne uses representative to convey clear information statements, as in Excerpt 3. Likewise, Saydazimova used representative to weave her experiences together with scientific findings, like in Excerpts 1, 2, and 4. This kind of usage reflects good academic discourse, in which personal narratives are combined with reliable sources.

## **Directives**

Directives is the type of illocutionary acts when the person initiating the utterance aims to get the listener to do something specific (Searle, 1976). This indicates that directives aim to influence the listeners’ behavior. Commanding, inviting, requesting, advising, suggesting, and asking are examples of directive forms. The following excerpts are presented to provide examples of identified directive acts.

**Excerpt 5**

*"Let's go back to that first text that I showed you."*

This excerpt is a type of directive act, particularly an inviting form. In the context above, Browne is guiding the audience's attention back to the initial example he presented, which was about the Japanese high-school English textbook passage, where students had filled in definitions beneath every unfamiliar word. He politely invites listeners to mentally revisit that previous display. The utterance here is gently directive, not commanding or merely reminding, but collaboratively steering the listeners to refocus on the first display material.

**Excerpt 6**

*"We should challenge the misconceptions that learning a language as an adult can be a burden."*

This excerpt is an advising form of directive acts. Saydazimova is encouraging the audience, including the speaker herself, to actively push back against the false belief that adult language learners are somehow burdened or disadvantaged by studying language late in life. By advising "*We should challenge*" those misconceptions, she persuades the audience to become agents of change to reframe language learning as feasible and even advantageous in adulthood.

**Excerpt 7**

*"What you are seeing here is chapter one of book one, the first three paragraphs of Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived. You can see 80% of the words. All the rest of them are red blanks. **Please guess from context.**"*

The utterance in the bold text is a request form of directives in which Browne politely requests the listeners to perform a specific action, particularly to use the surrounding text in the screen display to infer the missing words. He has displayed the first three paragraphs of Harry Potter with 80% of the visible words and the rest blanked out. This request functions to engage the audience in active meaning-making. By asking them to guess from the context, Browne shifts them from passive viewing to an inferential task in order to make them draw on their own vocabulary knowledge and the textual context around each blank. In short, he requests the audience politely to infer the meanings from the context.

In these directives, both Saydazimova and Browne use careful pedagogical intent, such as using inviting prompts, advising, and requesting to guide their audiences' focus and encourage active participation. Saydazimova challenges false beliefs in Excerpt 6, positioning listeners as collaborators in reframing language learning. Meanwhile, Browne gives prompts in Excerpt 7 that mirror instructional scaffolding, helping the audience to construct meaning step by step. Thus, these directive acts are in line with good practice in educational discourse, where guiding and encouraging independent learning is preferred over one-way instruction.

**Expressives**

Expressive acts reflect how the speaker conveys emotions, personal attitudes, or internal psychological conditions toward something (Searle, 1976). Additionally, in this form of speech act, the individual performing the utterance does not seek to alter reality to fit their words. Instead, they presume the proposition to be true (Ramadhani & Mustikawati, 2023). Expressive acts typically take the form of expressions like thanking, congratulating, apologizing, welcoming, and so forth.

Based on the analysis, several excerpts are presented below to show examples of identified expressive acts.

**Excerpt 8**

*"This is a second-year high school English textbook book, and you can see lots of writing underneath the difficult words. Um, I saw this kind of thing everywhere I went, uh, Japanese students would struggle with the difficult texts and they would write down the definitions underneath all of the words. **And, as I looked closer at these texts, I thought "Wow! I'm a native speaker of English. This text is hard for me. So, how the heck are they understanding these texts?!"***

The excerpt in the bold text is a type of expressive act. In this expressive moment, Browne reveals his

strong emotion, especially surprise and puzzlement, after examining the heavily annotated English textbook, where students wrote down definitions beneath every unfamiliar word. He realized that even as a native English speaker, the passage was challenging. His exclamation, "Wow!" shows strong surprise towards the students. Although this utterance doesn't aim to change the external world, it powerfully communicates the speaker's internal reaction.

#### **Excerpt 9**

*"Thank you very much."*

Excerpt 9 represents an expressive act, specifically a thanking expression, in which the individual delivering the utterance shows sincere gratitude to the audience. Surprisingly, both speakers, Saydazimova and Browne, use the exact thanking utterance in their speeches, *"Thank you very much,"* to close their speeches. It means both speakers show a positive attitude and appreciation to the audience's time and participation in their speech. In this case, this utterance serves as a form of appreciation that fosters positive perspective closure to the interaction.

In Excerpt 8 and 9, they indicate that both speakers use expressive actions effectively to show their emotions and create a connection with their audience. When Browne said, *"Wow!"* during his speech, his face showed true shock as he was really astonished by the students as the hard times they had. Then, at the end, they both say a thanking utterance, *"Thank you very much"* to close their presentation with sincere appreciation to the audience. These expressions fit perfectly in academic settings, where maintaining attentiveness to connect with their students is essential for effective learning.

#### **Commissive**

Commissive acts refer to an illocutionary type in which the individual expresses a commitment to undertake an act in the future (Searle, 1976). It means that the speaker intends to make reality match their spoken commitment. Promising, committing, and offering are the forms of commissive utterances. In this study, the following excerpts are presented to show examples of the identified commissive.

#### **Excerpt 10**

*"We'll talk more about the new general Services project and Zipf's law in a few minutes, but to begin with, I want to go back to 1985 when I first arrived in Japan."*

This excerpt is a commissive act, specifically committing to future action as Browne will provide further explanation and detail about the new general services project and Zipf's law. The utterance communicates clearly Browne's organizational structure for their talk by assuring the audience that they will revisit and discuss further these important concepts about the New General Service Project and Zipf's law in a few minutes after he told his personal story about his first arrival in Japan.

#### **Excerpt 11**

*"And today, I want to share some compelling facts and also some of my personal stories, all supported with scientific evidence, and all this in order to challenge one of the misconceptions in our society that language learning can place undue pressure on our children, or that it can become a burden in later life."*

This excerpt is another example of commissive acts, particularly committing to future action. In this utterance, Saydazimova explicitly commits herself to share her factual information and personal stories during the presentation. The context here is to clearly convey her commitment to confront a common societal misconception that perceives language learning as burdensome. Moreover, her commitment indicates her genuine intention to portray language learning as advantageous and empowering rather than stressful. Therefore, by saying this utterance, Saydazimova commits herself explicitly to her future actions during the presentation.

From these examples, Browne and Saydazimova strategically use a commitment action on purpose to boost their credibility. When Browne says in Excerpt 10 about Zipf's law and the NGSL project, he structures his speech and reassures learners that extra guidance is coming. In the same way, in Excerpt 11, Saydazimova promises to give facts and evidence from research along with her own stories to show she is serious about fighting myths around language learning. In a classroom or conference room, these clear and future commitments of actions not only make the speakers sound more credible but also humanize technical content and maintain audience interest.

## Declarative

Declarative illocutionary acts are utterances that directly change a state of affairs in the world through their expression, such as formal declarations, announcements, or policy decisions (Searle, 1976). These acts usually require a speaker with certain authority in a given institutional or social context. In this research analysis of the selected TED Talks, no declarative acts were identified. Both Saydazimova and Browne recorded zero occurrences of declarative acts in their presentations, as neither speaker made any declarations in their presentations.

These findings showed that although Saydazimova and Browne addressed different topics within the context of English language learning, their use of illocutionary acts followed a similar pattern. By analyzing TED Talks about language learning in 2024, particularly delivered by educators, it can be seen that good communicators adapted their speech to educate and inspire the audience. The findings indicate that most statements primarily serve to share information, with over half of all illocutionary acts in those videos consisting of factual claims or explanations. Furthermore, as TED Talk speakers, they are expected to present ideas based on knowledge or experience. For these reasons, it is understandable that representative speech acts dominated both videos with 106 representative utterances, which is 66.7% of the whole illocutionary acts. Interestingly, similar predominance of representative acts has been observed in a variety of public speech genres, such as Taylor Swift's commencement speech (Olii et al., 2023), Sherly Annavita in Indonesia Lawyers Club (Maulidiyah et al., 2021), the United Nations speech (Damayanti, 2024), and even in the main character of "The Vow" movie (Ramadhani & Mustikawati, 2023). It suggests that there is a general tendency for speakers, regardless of their speech genre, to ground their message in factual assertions. Another research by Gayoso et al. (2024) also analyzed top-viewed language-teaching TED Talks and noted a similar heavy reliance on representative acts, although in their study, the difference is that they did not mention the frequency of each illocutionary act in their analysis. However, that research has similar findings to this study because their representative acts also contain as many facts as possible to reinforce the clarity of the message.

The second dominant illocutionary act in this study is directive acts, with 23 directive utterances or 14.5% from both speeches. The directives appear in a more subtle form, such as suggestions, invitations, and even questions, in this research. Neither Saydazimova nor Browne issues direct commands to the audience, but rather offers implicit encouragement to learn languages, use online tools, or consider the benefits of multilingualism from an early age. In the persuasive context of TED Talks, non-coercive directives are more effective in raising awareness and promoting attitudinal change among the audience (Sakkampang, 2024).

In addition to representative and directive acts, the expressives is in the third position with 19 utterances or 11.9% percentage. These expressives reflect the speakers' personality and emotions. For example, Browne's expressive utterances surfaced as moments of candid surprise and appreciation. His "Wow!" reveals real astonishment at students' struggles. In addition, Saydazimova and Browne closed their speech with a thanking expression, which demonstrates a sincere gratitude. Thus, expressive acts play a key role in building an emotional connection between the speaker and the audience.

This research further indicates that commissive acts are in the fourth position with 11 utterances or 6.9% frequency. Such acts enable both speakers to reinforce their credibility by stating their future actions. For instance, Browne patterns his presentation by assuring the audience that he will soon return to elaborate the Zipf's law and the NGSL further. Similarly, Saydazimova uses scientific evidence and personal anecdotes to challenge the false stereotype about language learning. These future commitments build trust with the audience and strengthen the persuasive impact of their messages.

Interestingly, declarative acts were absent in both videos. This can be explained by the speakers' positions and authority. Although they are experts in their respective fields, TED Talks are not official decision-making forums that grant legitimacy to declarative statements (Salahuddin, 2023). This affirms that the use of declaratives is strongly influenced by the communication context, power relations, and the speaker's social role. The zero occurrence also indicates that their power stems from expertise and practical communication skills, rather than formal positions.

Subsequently, these variations of illocutionary acts found in English language learning TED Talks indicate that English mastery is not only seen from the vocabulary and grammar aspect, but also from the communicative competence. The reason lies in the fact that competent language users must understand how to use different types of illocutionary acts appropriately according to the contexts and purposes (MacKrill et al., 2021). Therefore, this research is very important for developing pragmatic competence in language learners. In general, this research reveals that employing speech acts in academic or educational presentations is strategic and contextual.

The success of communication is not only determined by the content of the message, but also by how the message is conveyed through the choice of speech acts (Parvina et al., 2024). Thus, TED Talks as an educational medium serve as an ideal example of how language performance can effectively convey ideas in an emotional and persuasive manner without dominating the audience authoritatively.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the researcher's thorough analysis, there were found 159 illocutionary acts in TED Talks 2024 on English language learning. The research identified 4 categories of illocutionary acts contained within the videos. The distribution consists of 106 representatives (66.7%), 23 directives (14.5%), 19 expressives (11.9%), and 11 commissives (6.9%). Thus, the most dominant type was representatives and the least dominant type was commissives. This dominance reflects the speakers' primary goal of sharing facts, experiences, and knowledge. On the other hand, the declarative acts was not found as the speakers did not make any declarations in their speech. Furthermore, other speech acts, such as expressives, directives, and commissives are incorporated into speeches to increase their persuasive and emotive components.

This study also highlights the importance of illocutionary acts in achieving effective communication, especially in educational or public speaking contexts. So, this study suggests that in addressing communication goals, language users like English learners, teachers, or facilitators should not only concentrate on linguistic accuracy but also on employing illocutionary acts effectively to enhance their communication. Future research might extend this study by investigating larger and more diverse genres, applying different methodologies, or exploring additional communicative dimensions.

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