



## A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE PODCAST FEATURING GURU GEMBUL

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji tindakan ilokusi dalam episode Devil's Advocate Podcast (dalam Bahasa Indonesia) bersama Guru Gembul, khususnya dalam penggunaan bahasa untuk melakukan tindakan sosial dalam diskursus pendidikan dan ideologis. Berakar pada pragmatik, penelitian ini mengadopsi Teori Tindakan Ucapan Searle dalam menganalisis bagaimana suatu ucapan berfungsi melampaui makna literalnya dalam menyatakan pendapat, mengajak bertindak, mengekspresikan komitmen, atau sikap psikologis. Dalam penelitian ini, para peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data meliputi ucapan-ucapan terpilih yang diambil dari transkrip. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa tindakan representatif merupakan jenis tindakan ilokusi yang paling dominan dalam data. Dominasi ini menunjukkan bahwa pembicara primarily menggunakan bahasa untuk membangun argumen dan menyajikan evaluasi sistem pendidikan Indonesia sebagai pernyataan kenyataan. Tindakan direktif digunakan untuk mendorong refleksi dan tindakan kolektif, sementara tindakan komisi menunjukkan komitmen pribadi dan tanggung jawab terhadap perubahan di masa depan. Tindakan ekspresif berfungsi untuk mengungkapkan sikap emosional dan memperkuat keaslian diskursus. Secara mencolok, tidak ada tindakan deklaratif yang teridentifikasi, menunjukkan bahwa pembicara tidak memiliki otoritas institusional untuk melaksanakan perubahan melalui bahasa saja, melainkan bergantung pada strategi persuasif dan argumentatif. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa tindakan ucapan memainkan peran krusial dalam membentuk diskursus podcast: kritik, ideologi, dan keterlibatan sosial. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada studi pragmatik dengan menyoroti fungsi tindakan ilokusi dalam media digital saat ini, khususnya podcast sebagai platform untuk diskursus publik.

**Kata Kunci:** Pragmatics, Speech Act, Illocutionary Act, Searle, Podcast Discourse.

**Abstract:** *This study investigates the illocutionary acts in Devil's Advocate Podcast (In Bahasa Indonesia) episode with Guru Gembul, particularly in using language to conduct social acts within educational and ideological discourse. Rooted in pragmatics, this present research adopts Searle's Speech Act Theory in analyzing how an utterance functions beyond its literal meaning in asserting opinion, inviting action, expressing commitment, or psychological attitude. In this study, the researchers adopt a descriptive qualitative approach. Data include selected utterances taken from the transcript. The analysis reveals that representative acts are the most dominant type of illocutionary acts found in the data. This dominance indicates that the speaker primarily uses language to construct arguments and present evaluations of the Indonesian education system as statements of reality. Directive acts are used to encourage collective reflection and action, while commissive acts demonstrate personal commitment and responsibility toward future change. Expressive acts*

*function to reveal emotional stance and strengthen the authenticity of the discourse. Notably, no declarative acts are identified, suggesting that the speaker does not possess institutional authority to enact change through language alone, but instead relies on persuasive and argumentative strategies. This overall study shows that speech acts play a crucial role in framing podcast discourse: criticism, ideology, and social engagement. The findings contribute to pragmatic studies by signaling the function of illocutionary acts in current digital media, particularly podcasts as platforms for public discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Pragmatics, Speech Act, Illocutionary Act, Searle, Podcast Discourse*

## INTRODUCTION

From a pragmatic point of view, language is not just considered as only used as signs for the purpose of conveying meaning but also as an act within certain social and contextual parameters. Such a point of view reflects the fact that utterances can perform actions: they may be announcing a belief, calling for an action to be performed, expressing emotions, or intention on the part of the speaker. One of the most successful approaches to account for this phenomenon was so far from speech act theory, according to which meaning comes about both through speaker intending and hearer inferring it in context.

Simply put by Austin and then expanded later by Searle, the speech act theory offers a systematic typology of illocutionary acts as representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations (Searle 2021). This framework has widely been used within the pragmatic study of discourse, ranging from spoken to written texts under different circumstances like political speeches, classroom discourses, media discourses, digital communications, etc. Indeed, this model has helped scholars' study how people strategically use language in placing themselves and influencing their audiences.

In the last few years, podcast talk has become a main mode of public communication (Dyner, 2021; KhosraviNik & Unger, 2023). Podcasts are an almost casual yet very powerful medium where speakers have the liberty to express their views, analyze societal problems, and build ideological stories. Educational talk in podcasts is a treasure trove for pragmatic researchers since it typically contains elements of disapproval, convincing, expressing emotions, and taking a moral stand (Taguchi, 2022; Zhang & Ren, 2022).

The Devil's Advocate podcast episode featuring Guru Gembul presents a compelling case for such analysis. Unlike other episodes that may focus on light entertainment or general lifestyle, this specific episode featuring Guru Gembul serves as a critical junction of educational reform and ideological debate in the Indonesian digital landscape. Guru Gembul is a personality who is well known as one who very often launches sharp and intellectually sound criticisms against the national education system. It is worth examining this particular conversation as it represents a very small minority of instances in which tertiary academic problems such as the unchanged curricula and the feudalistic style of teaching are communicated through the public narratives which are the most accessible to a vast digital audience potentially shaping their social consciousness (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2023). During the podcast, the guest speaker shared the issues of education, ideology, media framing, and social responsibility. On the show, the speaker talks about education, ideology, media framing, and social responsibility issues.

His words serve the double function of both informing and of doing certain acts, e. g. denouncing the educational system, calling for a collective resistance, revealing ones emotional strength, and promising future contributions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of illocutionary acts used in the podcast and to identify the dominant speech acts and their pragmatic functions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of illocutionary acts used in the podcast and to identify the dominant speech acts and their pragmatic functions (Searle, 2021). Specifically, this research seeks to identify the various categories of illocutionary acts employed by Guru Gembul in the Devil’s Advocate podcast and determine which type emerges as dominant. Furthermore, the study explores how these dominant acts function within the educational and ideological discourse to shape the overall message of the conversation.

### **METODE PENELITIAN**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method to analyze illocutionary acts in podcast discourse (Searle, 2021; Ilie, 2021). This approach is appropriate because the study emphasizes the interpretation of meaning, speaker intention, and contextual function rather than numerical measurement or statistical analysis (Searle, 2021; Taguchi, 2022). The analysis emphasizes depth of interpretation in understanding how language is used as social action.

The data source of this research is an episode of the Devil’s Advocate podcast featuring Guru Gembul, aired on 3 November 2025 on Ferry Irwandi’s YouTube channel. The data consist of spoken utterances taken from the podcast transcript that contain clear illocutionary force (Searle, 2021). Data were collected using a documentation technique by transcribing the podcast and selecting utterances relevant to the research objectives.

In analyzing the data, Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts was used as the analytical framework (Searle, 2021). The procedure of data analysis involved several steps. First, the utterances were identified and segmented as units of analysis. Second, each utterance was classified into one of Searle’s categories based on the speaker’s intention and contextual meaning rather than grammatical form alone. Third, the pragmatic function of each illocutionary act was interpreted to explain how the speaker constructs criticism, expresses stance, invites action, and demonstrates commitment within the discourse. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively and supported by a table of illocutionary acts to provide a clear overview of the findings.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

<b>No</b>	<b>Type of Illocutionary Act</b>	<b>Number of Data</b>	<b>Dominant Functions</b>	<b>Pragmatic Interpretation</b>
1	<b>Assertive</b>	13	stating facts, giving opinions, criticism, explanation, ideological positioning	Used to construct social reality, criticize the education system, and present the speaker’s beliefs as factual and rational claims

2	<b>Directive</b>	4	requesting, inviting, encouraging collective action	Functions to engage listeners, reduce power distance, and invite participation rather than impose authority
3	<b>Commissive</b>	7	commitment, promise, self-obligation, moral responsibility	Shows the speaker's readiness to take responsibility and commit to future actions, strengthening moral credibility
4	<b>Expressive</b>	6	expressing feelings, fearlessness, frustration, personal values	Reveals emotional stance and personal motivation, humanizing the discourse and increasing authenticity
5	<b>Declarative</b>	0	None identified	Not found due to the absence of institutional authority to change social reality through language

### Conclusion from the Table

The table shows that assertive illocutionary acts are the most dominant type, indicating that the speaker mainly focuses on presenting evaluations, arguments, and ideological views as social realities. Commissive acts appear frequently, highlighting strong personal commitment and moral responsibility. Directive acts function as inclusive calls for reflection and action, while expressive acts reveal emotional depth and personal motivation. The absence of declarative acts confirms that the discourse operates in a non-institutional context, where change is pursued through persuasion rather than formal authority.

Based on the data analysis presented in the table, four types of illocutionary acts are identified in the podcast discourse, namely representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. No declarative acts are found in the data. This distribution indicates that the speaker primarily uses language to describe reality, express evaluations, invite action, and demonstrate personal commitment rather than to perform institutional acts that directly change social status.

### Dominance of Representative Acts

The findings show that representative acts are the most dominant type in the data. Utterances such as "Pendidikan di Indonesia itu ketinggalan", "Buku-buku yang ada tuh ketinggalan zaman", and "Pendidikan di Indonesia itu jalan di tempat atau cenderung mundur" function as assertions that present the speaker's evaluation of educational reality. Through these representatives, the speaker positions himself as an observer and evaluator who claims authority based on experience and perceived facts.

The frequent use of representative acts suggests that the main communicative goal of the speaker is to construct a critical narrative about the condition of education in Indonesia. Rather than merely expressing emotion or issuing commands, the speaker builds arguments by stating opinions as factual truths. Pragmatically, this strategy strengthens the persuasive force of the discourse, as listeners are guided to accept the speaker's viewpoint as a reflection of reality rather than as a personal complaint.

### Directive Acts as Calls for Action

Directive acts also appear in the data, though less frequently than representatives. Utterances such as "Masalah-masalah di dunia pendidikan itu harus

kita lawan” and “Saya mohon izinkan siswa untuk buka HP di kelas saya” function as invitations and requests aimed at encouraging action. These directives are not expressed in an authoritarian manner; instead, they are framed as collective appeals and polite requests.

This indicates that the speaker does not position himself as a figure who commands others, but rather as someone who invites participation and collaboration. In pragmatic terms, the directives function to mobilize listeners morally and intellectually, reinforcing the speaker’s role as an agent of change within educational discourse.

### **Commissive Acts and the Construction of Commitment**

Commissive acts found in the data include utterances such as “Saya tuh bakal dikenal orang”, “Kalau saya salah, saya akan minta maaf”, and “Saya akan menebus kehidupan saya ini dengan kontribusi.” These utterances bind the speaker to future actions and commitments, projecting a strong sense of responsibility and moral accountability.

The presence of commissive acts serves an important rhetorical function. By committing himself to future consequences, the speaker strengthens his credibility and portrays himself as consistent and principled. Pragmatically, these acts reduce the social distance between speaker and audience, as the speaker positions himself as equally subject to evaluation and correction.

### **Expressive Acts and Emotional Stance**

Expressive acts, such as “Mereka tuh ngerusak kredibilitas saya” and “Saya enggak takut sama sekali dengan ini semuanya”, reveal the speaker’s psychological state and emotional responses to social pressure and criticism. These utterances function to express frustration, resilience, and courage.

The use of expressive acts humanizes the speaker and adds an affective dimension to the discourse. Rather than weakening the argument, these expressions reinforce authenticity and sincerity, allowing the audience to perceive the speaker as emotionally invested in the issues discussed. Pragmatically, expressives function to legitimize the speaker’s struggle and reinforce solidarity with listeners.

### **Absence of Declarative Acts**

Notably, no declarative acts are found in the data. This absence indicates that the speaker does not possess or claim institutional authority to enact immediate social change through language alone. Instead, change is pursued discursively through argumentation, persuasion, and moral appeal. This finding aligns with the nature of podcast discourse, where influence is achieved symbolically rather than institutionally.

### **Interpretative Summary**

Overall, the dominance of representative acts demonstrates that the podcast discourse is primarily argumentative and critical, while the presence of directives, commissives, and expressives complements this function by inviting action, projecting commitment, and expressing stance. The combination of these speech acts reflects a pragmatic strategy in which criticism, persuasion, and self-positioning work together to shape educational discourse.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the use of illocutionary acts in the Devil's Advocate podcast featuring Guru Gembul by using Searle's Speech Act Theory. The results show that representative acts are the most dominant type of illocutionary acts in the discourse. This indicates that the speaker mainly uses language to state opinions, give evaluations, and present criticism about education and social issues as facts or reality (Searle, 2021).

Directive acts are used to invite listeners to reflect and take action. These directives are not expressed as strict commands, but as polite and inclusive calls. It is evident that in podcast talks, commands are mainly used to persuade and engage the audience rather than to dominate them (Dyner, 2021; Zhang & Ren, 2022). Meanwhile, the speaker through the use of commissive acts communicates their willingness and accountability for future actions which, in turn, enhances their credibility and trustworthiness among the audience (Taguchi, 2022). When a speaker uses expressive acts, he or she reveals personal feelings like frustration, courage, and core values such that the whole speech becomes more genuine and human (Ilie, 2021). The study also finds no declarative acts in the data. This indicates that the speaker is not in a position of power to initiate social change directly through language. Hence, the speaker is dependent on argument, persuasion, and moral appeal, which is typical in digital media like podcasts (KhosraviNik & Unger, 2023).

In general, expressions of speech act are central to the development of podcast discourse, particularly in the use of language for criticism, ideology, and social engagement as has been evidenced by the results. social change, but instead relies on discursive strategies to influence public opinion. Overall, this study confirms that speech acts play a crucial role in shaping podcast discourse, particularly in framing criticism, ideology, and social engagement through language.

### Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data are limited to a single podcast episode, which may not fully represent the overall speech patterns of the speaker across different contexts or platforms. Second, the analysis focuses solely on illocutionary acts based on

Searle's classification, without examining perlocutionary effects or audience responses. Third, the study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which emphasizes depth of interpretation rather than quantitative measurement or generalization.

Future research may expand the data set by analyzing multiple podcast episodes or comparing different speakers. Further studies may also integrate speech act analysis with critical discourse analysis or sociolinguistic perspectives to explore power relations, ideology, and audience interpretation more comprehensively.

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