

Dynamic of Public Communication: Illocutionary Speech Acts Analysis in Ariana Grande's Interview

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the illocutionary acts that exist in Ariana Grande's interview. This is a qualitative study with the data collected from the speech by both the interviewer and the interviewee on the YouTube channel entitled "Eternal Sunshine", Wicked & Tour (Apple Music)". The data from the interview was observed, transcribed and analyzed using Searle's theory. The results of this study found a total of 60 data, which contains four types of illocutionary acts used, namely 19 assertive and directive respectively, 18 expressive, and 4 commissive. From the 60 illocutionary acts data, it shows that the most dominant speech act, assertive, shows the emphasis on her strong beliefs and commitment toward the film. The second most dominant speech act, directive, showcases her intention to promote the film and create engagement with the audience. Furthermore, Grande's use of expressive speech acts show the intimate and emotional interaction and ambiance. In contrast, declarative types of illocutionary acts did not appear in this study indicating a lesser focus on commitments to future actions within the context of this interview. This study on Illocutionary Speech Acts enriches our understanding of public figures' discourse, revealing their intentions, emotional states, and values.

Keywords: *Ariana Grande; Illocutionary acts; Interview; Speech Acts; Youtube*

Introduction

Language as a means of communication between people will run smoothly if the speaker and listener have the same understanding of the language used. In relation to that, pragmatics is a study of linguistics on the connection of language in use with context in real communication. As Yule (2010) explains, pragmatics highlights the importance of context in determining the meaning of an utterance. It suggests that the meaning of a sentence change according to the situations, the intention of the speaker, and the shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener, not merely on the words used. The absent of understanding would mostly lead to misunderstanding in communication. Pragmatics takes into account non-verbal elements in communication, such as body language and intonation, which can affect the way messages are interpreted. By understanding these concepts of pragmatics, individuals can reduce the risk of misunderstanding in everyday communication and develop a better comprehension of how language is used to achieve specific communicative purposes (Yule, 2010).

According to Yule (2010), pragmatics is the study of meanings and interpretation of utterance in communication. In other words, pragmatics studies how individuals express and perceive meaning through language in certain situations. This involves

being aware of the meanings behind words and writing, as well as how context affects how a message is interpreted. Studies of pragmatics can focus on how language is used in contexts to transmit and understand meaning. In contrast to semantics, which focuses on a word or sentence's literal meaning, pragmatics takes into consideration the broader contextual factors that affect communication. One major key-concepts of pragmatics is speech act, which refers to actions carried out through speaking.

Speech acts, which were developed by Searle (1979) & Austin (1963). Speech Acts highlight that when someone speaks, they not only speak words but also perform actions. According to Novitasari et al., (2023, p.2), "language serves as the medium through which speech acts are performed, and speech acts represent the intended actions performed through language". Austin (1963) laid the groundwork for understanding how utterances can constitute actions. He categorized speech acts into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Leech (1983) as cited in Setiani & Utami (2018) further elaborates on these concepts, explaining the action of saying something is termed as locutionary speech act, with a specific meaning involving the literal meaning of the sentence, focusing on the actual words and their semantic content. Secondly, illocutionary act is the function the utterance perform. Illocutionary acts refer to the speaker's intentions in communication, leading to the intention that the speaker intends to achieve through their words, such as making a request, giving a command, or asking a question. While the second type of speech act, Illocutionary speech act, is what a speaker says that is intended specifically for a purpose. The purpose is an action that the speaker would performatively do after pronouncing the words or sentences. Searle (1979) classified illocutionary acts into various kinds, such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, each of which served a different communicative role. This category aids in comprehending the numerous ways in which language can be utilized to do various acts, such as making assertions, providing commands, making promises, expressing emotions, or making formal declarations. Lastly, perlocutionary speech acts pertain to what the after effect on the listeners due to the utterance, including the listener's response or reaction to what has been said and perlocutionary act is the outcome or impact of the utterance on the listener.

The following provides further explanation about the classification of illocutionary speech act. According to Searle (1979), there are five classifications of illocutionary speech acts. The first is assertive that is described as the utterances of the speaker's beliefs of something. It represents something the speaker believes, whether it is true or not. Some performative verbs can signify assertive illocutionary acts, such as stating, describing, claiming, telling, insisting, reminding, suggesting, and asserting. For example, "The cat is on the mat" (This sentence is classified as the assertive illocutionary as it states a fact about the cat. Moreover, describing, complaining, informing, stating, claiming, criticizing, telling, assuring and reminding includes as assertive speech act (Chairani et al., 2020). The second directive illocutionary speech acts as utterance used by the speaker to convince the listener to take action. It usually appears with performative verbs like ordering, questioning, commanding, requesting, daring, defying, challenging, asking, and suggesting. For example, "I order you to report to the commanding officer" (When someone says this, they fulfil the directive illocutionary by giving an order to someone to do specific things, in this case, to report. Third is commissive illocutionary speech acts to commit the speaker to some future course of action. It means an act that is performed by the speaker. When this type is performed, it commonly uses performative verbs, such as promising, threatening, intending, vowing

to do, or refraining from doing something. For example, "I promise that I will leave the room". It is classified as the commissive illocutionary, requiring the speaker to do a specific action. In the example sentence, the speaker is promising to leave the room (Husain et al., 2020).

Fourth is expressive that conveys the speaker's feelings and employ the speaker's emotions based on their experiences. It is commonly used with several performative verbs, such as thanking, congratulating, apologizing, condoling, deploring, and welcoming. For example, "I apologize for stepping on your toe" (Apologizing is classified as expressive illocutionary as it involves the speaker's feelings when saying something, which is to apologize. Fifth is declarative a type of illocutionary speech act is to cause a change in the world in a way that the world corresponds with what is stated. Declaration speech acts is an utterances by people that change the world or the current condition. Some English declaratives are: "declare," "approve," "endorse," "excommunicate," "name," "christen," "resign," "abbreviate," and "bless." For example, "I christen this ship the battleship Missouri". The example shows that the speaker declares a name to the ship, which brings a change of facts in the world.

There has been a lot of research conducted related to illocutionary acts. While acknowledging the contributions of previous research, this research seeks to provide additional insight and serve as a reference point for further exploration of discourse analysis. For this reason, the author provides a review of other research to prove the differences in each study. As said before, there is a lot of research that has been done related to illocutionary acts. Below are five studies from journal articles related to this research. The author collects previous studies as a reference not only to show similarities but also differences between these studies. Speech act is acknowledged as a method for conceptualizing argumentative actions in humans (Haucsa et al., 2020). It signifies that the speaker is not only concerned with describing the word, but also with communicating the meaning and sharing information, thoughts, and ideas with the listener. As a result, research on speech acts is important.

While research on speech acts were analysed within pragmatics point of view, one recent research conducted by Al-Shboul et al. (2024) focuses on combination of the aspects of speech acts with discourse analysis in politics. Their study connects Searle, Austin and Van Dijk's theories into one framework to generate micro and macro levels of speech acts. Micro speech acts are the functions of illocutionary speech acts such as wishing, thanking, and praising, and the illocutionary speech acts serve as the middle stage of speech acts (directives, expressives, assertives, and commissive), while the macro speech acts are the intention from the speaker in the discourse. One of their main findings is that expressive speech acts dominate the speech. Some other recent studies focuses on speech acts in movies (Rahmawati, 2021; Sofyan et al., 2022), while some others analyze social media communication and online advertisement (Fletcher-Brown et al., 2024; Prastio et al., 2021) focusing on a single type of illocutionary speech acts such as directive speech act in Prastio et al., (2021). Furthermore, one study of speech acts on a talk-show was conducted by Izar et al., (2020) with its topic on social problem the covid-19 pandemic. According to the bibliometric analysis of speech acts studies published in international journals (Afzaal et al., 2024), research on speech acts in the last decade are dominated by political themes (32 publications) and though 23 publications of speech acts on illocutionary speech acts, many of them focus on a single type of illocutionary speech act and 17 publications on social media focus on Political topics. This evidence shows that in the last decade, there is a few studies on all types of illocutionary speech acts on the topic of entertainment on social media.

Illocutionary speech acts within pragmatics are chosen because the effect of an utterance by the speaker on the listener is a key aspect of this study, highlighting the performative power inherent in spoken words. Interviews, as a medium of direct interaction, offer a rich context for examining illocutionary acts. They provide a natural setting where the speaker's intentions and the listener's interpretations converge, making it possible to observe the practical implications of illocutionary acts in real-time communication. During interviews, questions and responses are not only informative but also serve to build rapport, establish authority, or elicit specific actions. Thus, studying illocutionary acts in interviews helps us understand the subtle yet powerful ways language shapes human interactions. In addition, technology is increasingly sophisticated, and various kinds of social media have become a means of communication. On YouTube, each account has its own characteristics. Especially, on the content that is created. Everyone does various ways to get a lot of viewers. Starting from the language used, and the topic discussed, to the person who is used as a source in the video, it becomes a special attraction for everyone. One of the most popular contents today is the interview in which there are two people. According to (Novitasari et al., 2023) that being able to articulate our ideas, opinions, and emotions effectively enables us to engage in meaningful conversations, connect with others on a deeper level, and foster understanding and empathy. The content becomes a place to clarify, or tell something according to a predetermined topic. Such as Ariana Grande who is a famous singer among teenagers. Her appearance on social media was also invited to several events. Starting from events that air on television to air on YouTube. This phenomenon is the reason why researchers chose to examine Ariana's speech on one of the social media, namely the YouTube channel.

This study aims to determine the various forms of Ariana speech as a speaker with her interlocutors, illocutionary functions, and the relationship between the forms and functions that exist in Ariana speech on the YouTube channel entitled *Eternal, Wicked & Tour* (Apple Music).

Method

Qualitative approach is used by providing a detailed description or in-depth analysis of a case (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative approach is used because the aim of the study is to analyse the different forms of illocutionary acts found in the podcast, within the collected data, identify and present findings about these acts as they appear in the research material.

The primary data for this research comprised dialogues in the form of words, phrases, and sentences exchanged between the host and the narrator, specifically Ariana Grande, during an interview titled "Ariana Grande *Eternal Sunshine, Wicked & Tour*." This data is sourced from a transcript of the interview, which was retrieved from a video uploaded on YouTube by the Apple Music channel. To gather the necessary data, the researchers will utilize an observational method.

The data collection process requires several steps to observe and collect data for this research. First, the researchers list the utterances shown in the interview as transcript. Next, the researchers categorize the utterances according to the categories of illocutionary acts: assertive, commissive, directive, expressive, and declarative. The data will be organized in a tabular format for clarity and then elaborated upon to explain the significance and occurrence of each type of illocutionary act within the context of the interview. Subsequently, the researchers presented the analyzed data, thoroughly grounded in Searle (1979) theoretical framework. This Step involved not only the

reduction and presentation of the data but also a comprehensive synthesis where the researchers drew conclusions based on the overall findings. These conclusions will be discussed in relation to the research questions, providing a detailed interpretation of the illocutionary acts observed in the interview with Ariana Grande. This structured approach will ensure a thorough analysis and a coherent presentation of the qualitative data, underscoring the intricate dynamics of communication as captured in the interview. Lastly, the researchers explain the data of illocutionary acts that have been found.

Results

Sub Findings

This section discusses the result of data that have been found from the object. The data taken from an interview titled “Ariana Grande Eternal Sunshine, Wicked & Tour” which was uploaded by Apple Music, will be explained in this section. The result data are presented in the table and the chart as follows

Table 1: Table of Frequency

| Illocutionary Acts | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Assertive | 19 | 31.67% |
| Directive | 19 | 31,57% |
| Expressive | 18 | 30% |
| Commissive | 4 | 6,67% |
| Declarative | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

Sub Findings

After knowing the frequency of data results, some of the data that has been found will be explained as follows.

The Types of Illocutionary Acts

The study identifies four categories of illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. The following sections will provide a detailed explanation of these types of illocutionary acts as they appear in the interview with Ariana Grande, presented in the order of their usage.

Assertive

Datum I

Ariana (0.00-0.17): “In art, in human connection, in the people I love, in laughter, and creating something you’re proud of. There’s so much. Today I’ll say definitely I’ll focus it on the art. **There’s so much magic in art.**”

Ariana’s statement can be analyzed as an assertive speech act according to John Searle’s theory because she expresses her personal belief about the source of magic in her life and shows commitment to the truth of her statement. In her statement, Ariana cited art, human connection, the people she loves, laughter, and creating something she is proud of as sources of magic. This statement reflects his deep belief and belief in these things, which is in accordance with the concept of assertive speech acts. Additionally, by saying “Today I will definitely focus on art,” Ariana demonstrated a strong commitment to prioritizing art that day, reinforcing the assertive aspect of her speech act. When Ariana says “There is so much magic in art” it shows that Ariana is making a firm and direct claim about the reality in which she believes, a characteristic of an assertive

speech act. Thus, Ariana's statement not only expresses her beliefs but also confirms her commitment to truth and the importance of art in her life.

Datum II

Ariana (21.08-21.31): *"I think the movie is so beloved because so many people can relate to knowing that something isn't right, but loving so much and wanting to stay and wanting to figure it out and that cycle that can happen in the film. I think that's why the film is so beloved. It's because so many people can relate to it, and I think it kind of fell into place that these songs had little tidbits of that theme."*

Ariana's statement can be analyzed as an assertive speech act according to John Searle's theory. Ariana expressed her belief that the film is loved because many people can relate to the experience depicted in the film, namely knowing that something is not right, but still loving it and wanting to survive and find a solution. By using the phrase "I think," Ariana states her opinion or belief, which is a characteristic of an assertive speech act. He also makes claims about reality by stating that such complex emotional experiences are the main reason why the film is so popular. The words "the movie is so beloved" and "so many people can relate to it," show that Ariana is making a firm and clear statement about her views. Additionally, by connecting the themes of the film to the songs, Ariana shows that she sees consistency in the themes expressed through various art forms. All of this shows that Ariana's statement is an assertive speech act, where she tries to convey something that she believes to be true and tries to convince the listener of the validity of her view.

Directive

Datum I

Host (0.00-0.17): *"Where is the magic in life for you?"*

Question from the host, "Where is the magic in life for you?" expressly asked Ariana to express her opinion about where she finds magic in her life. In the context of speech act theory according to John Searle, this question can be classified as a directive speech act, because its aim is to direct Ariana to provide specific information related to her own experiences and views. Using interrogative language, with the word 'where' the host invites Ariana to reflect on subjective aspects of her life, allowing Ariana to convey deep personal views about the sources of her inspiration and happiness. Through this speech act, the host not only aims to obtain information but also to establish an emotional connection with Ariana and produce a more personal and meaningful dialogue for the listening audience. Thus, this question reflects how speech acts can be used to direct and develop conversations that reveal the values and personal perspectives of the subject being discussed.

Datum II

Host (27.22-27.25): *"What do you value in friendship? What do you love about your friends the most?"*

The host's question to Ariana, "What do you value in friendship? What do you love about your friends the most?" is a speech act that invites Ariana to reflect on the important values in friendship and the things she loves most about her friends. In speech act theory according to John Searle, this question can be categorized as a directive speech act, because the host directly directs Ariana to provide a response that explores her thoughts and feelings about the subject. By using interrogative language, with the word 'what', the host facilitates Ariana to express her own views in depth, allowing for a deeper understanding of how Ariana views friendship relationships. This question aims not only to obtain information but also to understand the emotional and social values that shape the relationships between Ariana and her friends. Overall, this

speech not only enriches insight into the values of friendship from Ariana's perspective but also opens a window for listeners to reflect on and appreciate the importance of interpersonal relationships in everyday life.

Commissive

Datum I

Ariana (1.42-2.20): "I hope you love it. I'm excited for you to see it."

Ariana's statement, "I hope you love it. I'm excited for you to see it," reflects a clear commissive speech act in the context of interaction with her audience. By saying that she hopes listeners will like what she must show, Ariana is expressing her commitment to providing them with something meaningful and enjoyable. This phrase not only reflects his hope but also shows his excitement and enthusiasm for what is to come. This shows that Ariana is not only emotionally involved in her engagement with her audience but is also committed to creating a positive experience for them. Thus, this speech act not only builds an emotional connection between Ariana and her audience but also emphasizes her goal of providing high quality in their communicative interactions.

Datum II

Ariana (29.14-30.01): "I miss doing shows. I really do. If there's a chance to be in between the Wicked or right after the Wicked, I will of course do my best to do it. ... I'm excited to redefine my relationship with touring and doing shows when time allows. But it is something that I'm like, yes! I would love to. I just don't know when."

This data shows commissive speech acts according to John Searle's speech act theory. In her statement between minutes 29.14 to 30.01, Ariana Grande expressed her longing to perform and her commitment to taking the opportunity if the opportunity arose between or after the scheduled performances for the musical "Wicked". He clearly expressed his excitement to redefine his relationship with touring and performing as time permits, showing great enthusiasm and commitment towards his return to the stage. However, Ariana also acknowledged the uncertainty about when it will happen, saying that she doesn't know when it will happen. This statement not only reflects his emotional drive and personal enjoyment of returning to performing in front of an audience but also illustrates the balance between professional ambition and openness to the uncertainty inherent in the entertainment industry. In doing so, Ariana Grande expresses her hopes and intentions unequivocally, while acknowledging the practical realities of her busy schedule and career dynamics.

Expressive

Datum I

Ariana (2.21-2.43): "Thank you."

In minutes 2.21 to 2.43, Ariana Grande said "Thank you" as an expression of gratitude for the praise given by the host. This statement reflects an expressive speech act, where Ariana directly expresses her appreciation and appreciation for the praise she received. In the context of an interview or public interaction, this expression not only shows politeness and politeness but also creates a positive and respectful atmosphere between Ariana and the host. Although short, Ariana's "Thank you" was effective in conveying her feelings of gratitude sincerely, demonstrating her ability to respond simply yet impactfully within the context of their communication.

Datum II

Ariana (14.18-16.18): "...I'm excited, I'm proud and grateful, and I feel like, oh my goodness, what a gift to be able to make this art... it was really making me resentful, I think, for a little bit of time. And I don't feel that way anymore..."

Ariana Grande's statement between minutes 14.18 to 16.18 can be seen as an example of an expressive speech act according to John Searle's theory. Ariana clearly expresses her feelings of joy, gratitude, and emotional evolution towards her music and career. Through expressions such as "I'm excited, I'm proud and grateful...." Ariana sincerely expressed her appreciation for the ability to create art and her appreciation for her creative journey. Thus, Ariana's speech act reflects the way in which she directly conveys her feelings and personal evaluation of her experience and artistic process, in accordance with the concept of expressive speech acts in Searle's theory.

Discussion

Based on the analysis, there were four types of illocutionary acts that appeared in the interview. Those are assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. Data is selected by identifying the dialogue between the host and Ariana. Following the theory of John Searle (1979), the writers found 60 data in total, consisting of 19 assertive and directive, 18 expressive, and 4 commissive. Based on the table provided, the dominant speech acts in the interview are assertive and directive. This predominance is closely linked to the nature of interviews, where question-and-answer dialogues between the host and the interviewee are central. Assertive speech acts are prevalent as both the host and Ariana often share information, express opinions, and clarify understanding. For instance, when Ariana discusses her thoughts on the freedom within art or her feelings about her project, she engages in assertive speech acts. Directive speech acts, on the other hand, are frequently used by the host to elicit specific responses or information from Ariana. These include questions and prompts that guide the conversation, such as when the host asks about the significance of Ariana's laughter or her conceptual understanding of "Eternal Sunshine." The interactive nature of interviews necessitates a balanced use of assertive and directive speech acts to facilitate a meaningful and informative dialogue.

Based on the table provided, expressive speech acts, with a total of 18 instances, are the second most dominant type after assertive and directive acts. This prominence is largely due to the personal and introspective nature of the interview with Ariana Grande. In this setting, Ariana frequently uses expressive speech acts to convey her emotions, thoughts, and personal experiences, which are central to the discussion. She expresses gratitude, appreciation, and personal reflections, which are key elements of her responses. For example, Ariana thanks the host for compliments, acknowledges the support from her mother and shares her feelings about her creative process and personal growth. These expressive acts provide a deeper understanding of Ariana's emotional state and personal journey, making them a significant aspect of the interview.

Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the illocutionary acts used in an interview with Ariana Grande, specifically focusing on the types and frequencies of these acts. The analysis, grounded in John Searle's theory of speech acts, identified four out of five possible types of illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. The study found that assertive and directive acts were the most prevalent, each constituting 31.67% of the total speech acts, reflecting the interactive and informative nature of the interview setting. Expressive acts followed closely at 30%, highlighting the personal and emotional content of Ariana Grande's responses. Commissive acts were the least frequent at 6.67%, indicating a lesser focus on commitments to future actions within the context of this interview.

One significant limitation of this study is its reliance on John Searle's framework, which categorizes illocutionary acts into five types. The analysis did not identify any declarative acts, suggesting that this category might be underrepresented or less relevant in the context of this particular interview. This limitation points to the need for a broader or more flexible analytical framework that could capture a wider variety of speech acts or nuanced conversational elements not covered by Searle's typology. Additionally, the study is limited by its focus on a single interview with Ariana Grande. While this provides a detailed case study, it may not be representative of other interviews or communication contexts. The specific dynamics and content of this interview, influenced by the personalities involved and the topics discussed, may not generalize to other settings.

The analysis of illocutionary acts in interviews offers significant insights into the intricate dynamics of communication and the multifaceted ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed. As in a study of Tom Cruise's interviews conducted by Haucsa et al. (2020), Tom Cruise tended to convey his utterance to give statements of fact or to describe things that he believed to be true. By identifying and categorizing these speech acts, this study enhances our comprehension of how celebrities like Ariana Grande engage with their audience, articulate their personal views, and respond to questions. This deeper understanding is crucial across several academic and practical domains, including media studies, communication research, and the analysis of public figures' discourse. Understanding the use of illocutionary acts helps to dissect the mechanics of celebrity interviews, revealing how public figures manage their personas and navigate media interactions. This analysis of illocutionary acts, crucial in communication research, indicates that language is a means to engage people in doing some activities to communicate (Haucsa et al., 2020). In communication research, analyzing speech acts provides a framework for examining the effectiveness of different communicative strategies, informing the development of communication training programs. Furthermore, the study of illocutionary acts enriches our understanding of public figures' discourse, revealing their intentions, emotional states, and values. This analysis has practical implications for media practitioners and educators, enhancing their ability to craft meaningful interactions. Additionally, it underscores the importance of context in communication and highlights the evolving nature of digital communication. Overall, analyzing illocutionary acts in interviews provides a rich understanding of the dynamics of public communication, offering a structured approach to dissecting conversational elements that shape public perception and interaction.

Future research could address these limitations by exploring additional frameworks for analyzing speech acts, incorporating theories from other scholars that might capture a broader range of communicative behaviors. Moreover, expanding the scope of analysis to include a variety of interviews with different public figures or across different media platforms could provide comparative insights and a more comprehensive understanding of speech acts in various contexts. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in speech act usage over time in response to evolving media practices and public expectations could also offer valuable perspectives. Lastly, integrating quantitative methods with qualitative analysis could enhance the robustness of findings and provide a more detailed picture of communicative strategies in interviews.

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