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AN ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY SPEECH ACTS IN PRABOWO SUBIANTO'S SPEECH AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

Agustina Rotua Purba[1], Dr.Sahlan Tampubolon[2], Harpen H.P Silitonga [3]
[1.2.3] Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Medan,
Agustina.purba22@student.uhn.ac.id [1] sahlantampubolon@uhn.ac.id [2] , Harpensilitonga@uhn.ac.id [3]

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Corresponding Author :
Agustina Rotua Purba[1], Dr.Sahlan Tampubolon[2], Harpen H.P Silitonga [3]
E-mail :
Agustina.purba22@student.uhn.ac.id [1]
sahlantampubolon@uhn.ac.id [2] ,
Harpensilitonga@uhn.ac.id [3]

Abstract

This research investigates the use of illocutionary speech acts in Prabowo Subianto's speech at the United Nations, aiming to identify the types of illocutionary acts and their functions in political discourse. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in pragmatic theory, focusing on the classification of speech acts based on Searle's framework: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The data were collected from the speech transcript and analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that representative acts dominate the speech 50%, indicating the speaker's emphasis on conveying facts, beliefs, and social or humanitarian realities. Directive acts account for approximately 23,08%, reflecting efforts to persuade and motivate the audience to take collective action. Commissive acts represent 19,23% of the utterances, demonstrating commitments and promises, particularly concerning Indonesia's contributions to global peacekeeping and international development. Expressive acts make up around 7,69%, showing emotional engagement and moral concern, while declarative acts are absent, suggesting a focus on persuasion and ethical appeal rather than formal institutional action. The study concludes that Prabowo Subianto's speech effectively combines informative, persuasive, and ethical strategies, with a strong emphasis on representative and directive illocutionary acts to inform, inspire, and mobilize the international audience. This research contributes to the understanding of pragmatic functions in political discourse and provides insights for speakers, educators, and researchers in applying illocutionary theory to real-world communication. In conclusion, the dominance of representative acts, supported by directive and commissive acts, demonstrates that Prabowo Subianto's speech functions mainly as a diplomatic and persuasive political discourse aimed at informing, influencing, and fostering international cooperation. This study contributes to the field of pragmatics by providing insight into the use of illocutionary speech acts in political speeches delivered at international forums.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan tindakan ucapan ilokusi dalam pidato Prabowo Subianto di PBB, dengan tujuan mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis tindakan ilokusi dan fungsinya dalam diskursus politik. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang didasarkan pada teori pragmatik, dengan fokus pada klasifikasi tindakan ucapan berdasarkan kerangka kerja Searle: representatif, direktif, komisi, eksp
resif, dan deklaratif. Data dikumpulkan dari transkrip pidato dan dianalisis melalui kondensasi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa tindakan representatif mendominasi pidato sebesar 50%, menunjukkan penekanan pembicara dalam menyampaikan fakta, keyakinan, dan realitas sosial atau kemanusiaan. Tindakan direktif mencapai sekitar 23,08%, mencerminkan upaya untuk meyakinkan dan memotivasi audiens untuk mengambil tindakan kolektif. Tindakan komisi mewakili 19,23% dari ucapan, menunjukkan komitmen dan janji, terutama terkait kontribusi Indonesia dalam pemeliharaan perdamaian global dan pengembangan internasional. Tindakan ekspresif menyumbang sekitar 7,69%, menunjukkan keterlibatan emosional dan kepedulian moral, sementara tindakan deklaratif tidak ada, menunjukkan fokus pada persuasi dan daya tarik etis daripada tindakan institusional formal. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pidato Prabowo

Subianto secara efektif menggabungkan strategi informatif, persuasif, dan etis, dengan penekanan kuat pada tindakan ilokusi representatif dan direktif untuk menginformasikan, menginspirasi, dan menggerakkan audiens internasional. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman fungsi pragmatik dalam diskursus politik dan memberikan wawasan bagi pembicara, pendidik, dan peneliti dalam menerapkan teori ilokusi pada komunikasi dunia nyata. Secara kesimpulan, dominasi tindakan representatif, didukung oleh tindakan direktif dan komissif, menunjukkan bahwa pidato Prabowo Subianto berfungsi utama sebagai diskursus politik diplomatik dan persuasif yang bertujuan untuk menginformasikan, mempengaruhi, dan memfasilitasi kerja sama internasional. Studi ini berkontribusi pada bidang pragmatik dengan memberikan wawasan tentang penggunaan tindakan ilokusi dalam pidato politik yang disampaikan di forum internasional.

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication plays a crucial role in the process of meaning construction between speakers and listeners in both formal and informal contexts. Communication, however, does not merely involve the exchange of words; it requires the listener's ability to interpret the speaker's intended meaning beyond literal expressions. Miscommunication frequently occurs when utterances are interpreted only semantically rather than pragmatically, particularly when speakers convey meaning implicitly. This phenomenon was also observed by the researcher through interactions on YouTube, particularly in the comment sections of public speeches and instructional videos. It was found that many viewers tended to misunderstand the pragmatic meaning of speakers' utterances, interpreting them only at the literal level rather than considering the intended communicative force. As a result, comments frequently reflected misinterpretations of the speaker's actual intentions. For example, when a speaker stated, *"We must seriously reflect on our mistakes,"* which pragmatically functioned as an indirect criticism and a call for improvement, many viewers responded as if it were merely a general statement without any evaluative intent. In another instance, when a speaker said, *"Perhaps it would be better if we focused on solutions rather than complaints,"* some commenters interpreted it simply as a suggestion, whereas pragmatically it functioned as a subtle directive aimed at discouraging negative behavior. Similarly, rhetorical questions such as *"Do we really want to continue repeating the same problems?"* were often treated by viewers as literal questions instead of persuasive strategies intended to influence attitudes. These patterns indicate that many language users in digital communication contexts still lack sufficient awareness of illocutionary force, namely the speaker's intended meaning beyond the literal words expressed, which can lead to misunderstanding and ineffective communication.

This phenomenon reflects broader communication problems occurring in everyday social interaction. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Communication Society (ICS, 2024) revealed that approximately 67% of young Indonesian listeners fail to interpret indirect utterances correctly, leading to frequent interpersonal misunderstandings Rahmah and Kholiq,(2018). Similarly, a global communication study reported that more than 60% of communication failures are caused by the inability to recognize pragmatic intention rather than a lack of grammatical or lexical knowledge. These findings emphasize that effective communication fundamentally depends on the listener's ability to understand speaker intention through context. When illocutionary meaning is not recognized, communication quality decreases significantly, resulting in confusion, conflict, and ineffective interaction in educational, social, and professional settings Reiland,(2024). A study conducted by (Manalu, 2023), entitled *"An Analysis of the Illocutionary Speech Act in the Hua Mulan Movie by Disney,"* analyzed the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts used by the characters in the movie. The findings revealed that assertive and directive acts were the most dominant, indicating the characters' tendency to express opinions and issue instructions within the narrative. The study highlighted the role of speech acts in shaping narrative progression and emotional expression in cinematic discourse. Although both Manalu's study and the present research apply Searle's speech act framework, they differ in focus and context. Manalu's research examines fictional dialogue in

a film, whereas the present study analyzes a real political speech delivered in an international forum, aiming to uncover pragmatic strategies employed in diplomatic communication rather than narrative construction.
The importance of pragmatic understanding becomes even more critical in political communication, particularly in international diplomatic contexts where the stakes of communication are considerably high Zubaidi,(2021). Political speeches function not only as informational texts but also as strategic communicative acts intended to persuade, command, promise, negotiate, and construct ideological positions. According to Rahmayani and Dwiyuliana,(2018) that language in political discourse is performative rather than merely descriptive; meaning is achieved through action embedded in speech. Therefore, analyzing the pragmatic dimension of political speeches, especially illocutionary speech acts, is essential to uncover how leaders influence public opinion and shape diplomatic relationships.

One significant example of international political communication occurred on September 23, 2025, when Prabowo Subianto, President of Indonesia, delivered his speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The speech addressed major global issues such as peace, humanitarian crises, food security, energy stability, and international cooperation. The speech attracted wide public and media attention, generating mixed responses. While many observers praised the moral stance and global vision articulated in the speech, others criticized the lack of concrete implementation strategies. This divergence in interpretation demonstrates that the meaning of political discourse is shaped not only by explicit content but also by the illocutionary intentions embedded within the language. In diplomatic communication, success depends heavily on how speaker intention is perceived and interpreted by international audiences.

The analysis of illocutionary speech acts in this study is grounded in Speech Act Theory, initially proposed by Austin,(1975) who argued that utterances function as actions, and later developed by Casser,(2023) about Searle Theory, who classified illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Assertive acts convey beliefs or statements of fact, directive acts aim to influence the listener's behavior, commissive acts express commitments to future actions, expressive acts reveal psychological states, and declarative acts bring about changes in institutional or social reality Jr Mahinay Mabaquiao,(2018). Understanding these categories allows researchers to examine how language operates as a strategic tool for social, political, and diplomatic influence.

Several previous studies have investigated illocutionary speech acts in political discourse. Rahmayani and Dwiyul found that commissive acts dominated Donald Trump's campaign speeches as a reflection of political promises used to gain public trust. Ismail,(2013) reported that assertive acts were the most frequently used in President Joko Widodo's speech at the APEC Forum to strengthen political credibility and national positioning. However, most existing studies focused primarily on categorizing speech acts without providing in-depth interpretation of pragmatic intention within international diplomatic contexts. Furthermore, research examining speeches delivered at global forums such as the United Nations remains limited, particularly studies involving Indonesian political leaders. This gap indicates the need for qualitative research that offers deeper contextual and pragmatic interpretation of illocutionary speech acts in international political discourse.
Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the illocutionary speech acts used in Prabowo Subianto's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2025. The study seeks to identify the types of illocutionary speech acts employed and to determine the most dominant type used in the speech. By focusing on illocutionary intention and communicative function, this research addresses the need for a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatic strategy in high-level diplomatic communication.

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the findings are expected to contribute to pragmatic studies by expanding research on illocutionary speech acts within international political discourse. Practically, the results may benefit students, educators, political analysts, speechwriters, and communication practitioners by providing insights into how language choices reflect intention and diplomatic strategy. Additionally, this study may support pragmatic competence development in educational contexts, enabling learners to better interpret implied meaning in both academic and real-life communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze illocutionary speech acts used in Prabowo Subianto's speech delivered at the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2025. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the data consisted of spoken utterances rather than numerical data, and the purpose of the study was to describe, interpret, and explain pragmatic meanings embedded in political discourse. Qualitative research focuses on understanding meaning and intention within social phenomena Arikunto,(2013).

The data of this study were utterances containing illocutionary speech acts taken from Prabowo Subianto's official speech at the United Nations General Assembly. This speech was selected as the primary data source because it represents Indonesia's diplomatic stance and addresses global political issues such as peace, humanitarian concerns, and international cooperation. The data were obtained from the official video recording published by the TVOne News YouTube channel and supported by the official transcript of the speech.

The researcher acted as the main research instrument, supported by an analytical checklist based on Searle's (1969) classification of illocutionary speech acts, which includes assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. This framework was used to systematically identify and classify utterances according to their communicative functions and pragmatic intentions.

Data were collected using documentation techniques. The procedures included downloading the speech video, transcribing the speech accurately, repeatedly reviewing the transcript and video to understand contextual meaning, identifying utterances containing illocutionary acts, and classifying each utterance based on Searle's theoretical framework. The identified data were then organized into analytical tables Abubakar,(2021).

The data analysis followed the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Utterances containing illocutionary acts were selected and analyzed to interpret their pragmatic meanings and to determine the dominant types of illocutionary speech acts used in the speech.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing the official transcript, video recording, and supporting documents related to the speech. This triangulation strengthened the validity of the analysis and allowed the researcher to capture additional pragmatic meanings derived from intonation and emphasis. The findings were also compared with previous studies on political speech acts to ensure analytical consistency.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Prabowo Subianto's speech delivered at the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2025, reveals the use of four types of illocutionary speech acts based on Searle's (1969) classification, namely assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive acts. Declarative acts were not identified in the speech. The findings demonstrate that illocutionary speech acts were strategically employed to fulfill informative, persuasive, and diplomatic functions within an international political context.

According to Ummah (2019), assertive illocutionary acts were the most frequently used type, functioning to describe global conditions, state beliefs, and present Indonesia's perspectives on international issues. These acts enabled the speaker to construct legitimacy and authority by presenting shared global realities, such as humanitarian crises and security challenges. The dominance of assertive acts indicates that the speech primarily functioned as a representational and informative discourse, which is characteristic of diplomatic communication at international forums.

Directive illocutionary acts appeared as the second most dominant category. These acts were realized through indirect and inclusive forms intended to encourage cooperation and collective responsibility among member states. Rather than issuing explicit commands, the speaker used softened directives to persuade the international audience to take joint action. This strategy aligns with diplomatic norms that emphasize politeness and mutual respect while maintaining persuasive force Kurniawan,(2018).

Commissive illocutionary acts were used to express commitments and future intentions regarding Indonesia's role in international peace, humanitarian assistance, and global cooperation Corvi et al.,(2025). Through these acts, the speaker positioned Indonesia as an accountable and proactive actor on the global stage. Although commissive acts were not dominant, their presence strengthened the credibility of the speech by signaling responsibility and political commitment.

Through Tampubolon et al.,(2020) Expressive illocutionary acts occurred least frequently, yet they played an important role in conveying empathy, concern, and moral stance. These acts humanized the speech and enhanced its emotional appeal, particularly when addressing humanitarian suffering and global solidarity. Even with limited frequency, expressive acts contributed to building rapport with the international audience.

Declarative illocutionary acts were absent from the data. This absence reflects the institutional constraints of the United Nations General Assembly, where individual speakers lack the authority to enact immediate institutional changes through speech alone. Therefore, the non-occurrence of declarative acts is contextually appropriate rather than indicative of limited communicative competence.

One of the weaknesses of this study lies in the limited data sources, which focus only on one speech text, that is Prabowo Subianto's speech at an international forum, so that the findings of the study cannot be generalized to describe patterns of speech act usage more broadly in other political communication contexts. In addition, the use of the document analysis method, which relies on written transcripts, means that nonverbal elements such as intonation, voice stress, gestures, and situational context cannot be analyzed in depth, even though these aspects can influence the interpretation of the pragmatic meaning of a utterance. Another weakness is related to the subjectivity of the researcher as the main instrument in the process of coding and classifying illocutionary acts, even though an analytical checklist was used to minimize bias. Therefore, the results of this

study should be understood as contextual findings that still open up opportunities for further development through the use of more diverse data, triangulation methods, and multimodal analysis in subsequent studies.

The representative examples of each illocutionary speech act type are presented in Table 1, while the frequency and percentage of illocutionary acts are summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Representative Examples of Illocutionary Speech Acts in Prabowo Subianto's UNGA Speech

No	Illocutionary Act Type	Example of Utterance (Excerpt)	Analysis
1	Assertive	The words of the United Nations Declaration of Independence have inspired democratic movements across continents, including the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Mexican Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, and Indonesia's own struggle and journey to freedom.	to establish historical continuity and moral authority
2	Assertive	We Indonesians know what it means to be denied justice and what it means to live in apartheid, to live in poverty, and to be denied equal opportunity. We also knew what solidarity can do.	to contrast experiences of injustice with the transformative power of solidarity
3	Directive	We must stand for all, the strong and the weak, might cannot be right. Right must be right.	To affirm universal justice and moral equality.
4	Directive	Can we remain silent? Will there be no answer to their screams? Will we teach them that the human family can rise to the challenge?	to challenge the audience ethically and emotionally
5	Commissive	We aim to reforest more than 12 million hectares of degraded forest to reduce forest degradation to empower local communities with quality green jobs for the future	to demonstrate Indonesia's proactive strategy in environmental restoration and sustainable development.
6	Commissive	Our goal is clear to lift all of our citizens out of poverty and make Indonesia a hub for solutions to food, energy, and water security.	to demonstrate Indonesia's dedication to social and economic development.
7	Expressive	We believe in the United Nations.	to affirm confidence and emotional alignment with the institution.
8	Expressive	Our children are watching. They are learning leadership not from textbook but from our choices.	To emphasize the moral and social responsibility of current leaders.
–	Declarative	–	Not found in the speech

By organizing and classifying the data and functions of each utterance, the researchers can analyze them for subsequent analyses.

Utterance 1: "The words of the United Nations Declaration of Independence have inspired democratic movements across continents, including the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Mexican Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, and Indonesia's own struggle and journey to freedom."

This utterance is categorized as a representative (assertive) illocutionary act because it presents a claim regarding the historical influence of the United Nations Declaration of Independence on various democratic movements worldwide. Pragmatically, the utterance functions to establish historical continuity and moral legitimacy by positioning Indonesia's struggle for independence within a shared global narrative of democratic ideals, thereby reinforcing the universality of freedom and democracy in the international discourse.

Utterance 2: We Indonesians know what it means to be denied justice and what it means to live in apartheid, to live in poverty, and to be denied equal opportunity. We also knew what solidarity could do.

These utterances are classified as representative (assertive) illocutionary acts as they present shared historical experiences as factual realities. Pragmatically, they function to contrast experiences of injustice with the unifying power of solidarity, thereby reinforcing the speaker's moral legitimacy and promoting cooperation and collective action as effective responses to oppression within the international community.

Utterance 3: We must stand for all, the strong and the weak; might cannot be right. Right must be right.

This utterance is classified as a directive illocutionary act as it urges the audience to act based on ethical principles rather than power, as indicated by the modal verb *must*. Pragmatically, the directive functions to affirm universal justice and moral equality, shaping the audience's moral judgment and reinforcing a collective commitment to fairness, legality, and human dignity in line with the United Nations' core values.

Utterance 4: Can we remain silent? Will there be no answer to their screams? Will we teach them that the human family can rise to the challenge?

These utterances are classified as directive illocutionary acts in the form of rhetorical questions, which function to urge moral reflection rather than solicit literal responses. Pragmatically, they emphasize the urgency of action, promote collective accountability, and encourage the audience to assume moral responsibility in responding to humanitarian crises.

Utterance 5 We aim to reforest more than 12 million hectares of degraded forest to reduce forest degradation and empower local communities with quality green jobs for the future.

This utterance is classified as a commissive illocutionary act because it conveys a clear commitment to future environmental and socio-economic actions, as indicated by the verb *aim*. Pragmatically, it highlights Indonesia's proactive approach to sustainable development by linking environmental restoration with social empowerment, thereby reinforcing the country's credibility and moral authority in global environmental governance.

Utterance 6: "Our goal is clear to lift all of our citizens out of poverty and make Indonesia a hub for solutions to food, energy, and water security."

This utterance is classified as a commissive illocutionary act as it expresses a firm commitment to achieving specific national objectives. Pragmatically, it signals Indonesia's dedication to social and economic development, reinforcing accountability and strengthening audience confidence in the country's leadership and capacity to implement sustainable solutions.

Utterance 7: We believe in the United Nations. ekresif

The utterance *"We believe in the United Nations"* is classified as an expressive illocutionary act because the speaker is conveying an internal psychological state, namely trust, confidence, and conviction toward the United Nations. Rather than asserting an objective fact or directing action, the sentence expresses an attitude held by the speaker and the represented nation.
Functionally, this expressive act serves to affirm confidence and emotional alignment with the institution. Pragmatically, the utterance strengthens diplomatic solidarity by signaling support, loyalty, and moral endorsement of the United Nations. Within the broader discourse, it complements earlier representative and commissive acts by adding an affective dimension, reinforcing the sincerity of Indonesia's engagement and commitment to the values upheld by the United Nations.

Utterance 8: "Our children are watching. They are learning leadership not from textbook but from our choices."
These utterances are classified as representative (assertive) illocutionary acts as they present observations about the influence of adult behavior on future generations. Pragmatically, they emphasize the moral responsibility of current leaders by underscoring that ethical conduct and accountability shape long-term societal values and leadership development.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of Illocutionary Speech Acts

No	Illocutionary Act Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Assertive	26	50.00
2	Directive	12	23.08
3	Commissive	10	19.23
4	Expressive	4	7.69
5	Declarative	0	0
Total		52	100

Based on the analysis, the dominance of assertive illocutionary acts confirms that political speeches at international forums primarily function to inform, represent national positions, and establish credibility. The presence of directive and commissive acts reflects persuasive and commitment-oriented strategies aimed at mobilizing international cooperation, while expressive acts reinforce moral and emotional dimensions of diplomatic communication. Overall, these findings demonstrate that illocutionary speech acts function as essential pragmatic tools through which political leaders convey intention, influence audiences, and construct national identity in global diplomatic discourse.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Prabowo Subianto's speech at the United Nations, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the use of illocutionary speech acts.

1. Types of Illocutionary Speech Acts Used

Based on the analysis of Prabowo Subianto's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2025, four types of illocutionary speech acts were identified, namely representative (assertive), directive, commissive, and expressive acts. Representative acts constituted approximately 50% of the total utterances and were used to convey factual statements, opinions, and descriptions of global conditions. Directive acts accounted for about 23.08%, functioning to encourage and persuade the international audience to take collective action. Commissive acts comprised around 19.23%, reflecting commitments and promises related to Indonesia's role in

global cooperation. Meanwhile, expressive acts made up approximately 7.69%, indicating emotional attitudes and moral concern. Declarative acts were not found in the speech.

2. The Most Dominant Type of Illocutionary Speech Act

The findings indicate that representative (assertive) illocutionary acts were the most dominant type, constituting approximately half of the total utterances. This dominance demonstrates that the primary communicative strategy of the speaker was to present information, assert viewpoints, and emphasize social, political, and humanitarian realities as a foundation for subsequent persuasive and motivational messages.

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