Fetri Novita Indah Lestari[1]
Ivan Achmad Nurcholis[2]

AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN THE CHILDREN'S BOOK TITLED THE LORAX BY DR. SEUSS

Abstrak

Tindak tutur sangat penting dalam bahasa karena memungkinkan seseorang untuk melakukan tindakan melalui ucapan atau ujaran. Hal ini sangat penting dalam menganalisis buku cerita anak-anak, seperti yang ditulis dalam bahasa Inggris internasional, di mana pemahaman tentang tindak tutur dapat memberikan tantangan bagi pembaca dan penulis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi komunikasi dalam berbagai konteks dengan menganalisis tindakan yang dilakukan melalui bahasa. Dengan mengacu pada kerangka kerja tindak tutur seperti yang didefinisikan oleh (J.L Austin, 1962), penelitian ini menyelidiki komponen dan jenis tindak tutur. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan menggunakan tabel observasi. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa: 1) komponen utama tindak tutur adalah Lokusi, Ilokusi, dan Perlokusi; 2) tindak tutur yang paling sering digunakan adalah tindak ilokusi, termasuk jenis Asertif, Direktif, Komisif, Ekspresif, dan Deklaratif; dan 3) struktur tindak tutur pada umumnya sederhana. Komponen, jenis, dan struktur ini memberikan wawasan yang berharga untuk memahami dan menganalisis komunikasi dalam bahasa, terutama dalam sastra anak. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya penguasaan elemen-elemen tindak tutur ini untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Tindak Tutur, Buku Cerita Anak, Komunikasi, Bahasa

Abstract

Speech acts are crucial in language as they enable individuals to perform actions through speech or utterances. This is particularly significant in analyzing children's storybooks, such as those written in international English, where the comprehension of speech acts can present challenges for both readers and writers. The purpose of this study is to explore communication in various contexts by analyzing the actions performed through language. Drawing on the framework of speech acts as defined by (J.L Austin, 1962), the study investigates the components and types of speech acts. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method using an observation table. The findings reveal that: 1) the main components of speech acts are Locution, Illocution, and Perlocution; 2) the most frequently used speech acts are Illocutionary acts, including Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, and Declarative types; and 3) the structure of speech acts is generally simple. These components, types, and structures provide valuable insights for understanding and analyzing communication in language, especially in children's literature. The study emphasizes the importance of mastering these speech act elements to enhance English communication skills.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Children's Storybooks, Communication, Language

INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social beings who cannot exist in isolation but instead rely on interaction and cooperation with others. Communication, facilitated by language, is a fundamental aspect of this interaction. Language serves as a tool to express thoughts, convey emotions, and build relationships. According to (Divjak et al., 2022), language is a critical medium through which humans connect and navigate their social environments. Similarly, (Widodo & Retma Sari, 2023), language, whether spoken or written, plays a critical role in conveying meaning during communication. Moreover, (Erlita, 2020) highlights that language

[1,2]English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu
email: fentryindah6@gmail.com. ivanachmadn@umb.ac.id.

functions as a means of communication to express feelings, share meanings, and foster collaboration among individuals as social beings. (Rabiah et al., 2018) emphasize that while language is not the sole medium of communication, it remains the most effective and efficient tool to achieve specific goals in interactions.

Language is used in two primary forms: spoken and written. Spoken language typically involves direct verbal interaction, while written language manifests in texts such as children's storybooks, where speech acts and conversations between characters are often depicted. (Kalisa, 2019) further notes that communication activities require participants to analyze the meaning of the speaker's words, underscoring the interplay between language, meaning, and context.

In the field of pragmatics, language is examined not just as a system of words but as a tool for performing actions commonly referred to as speech acts. According to (Austin & Searle, n.d.) speech acts are vital elements of communication, encompassing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. (Zoulaikha, 2022) elaborates that understanding speech acts involves analyzing not only the linguistic structure but also the intention behind the utterances. Moore's perspective as cited in (Feruza, 2024) aligns with this, stating that pragmatics helps explain language use in specific contexts of speech. This understanding is particularly relevant for those pursuing advanced studies in pragmatics and linguistics, as it enables them to analyze the dynamics of language use, especially in narrative contexts.

Analyzing speech acts in children's storybooks poses unique challenges. Children's storybooks, such as The Lorax by Dr. Seuss, provide rich material for examining speech acts. These books often blend simple language with complex contextual elements, making them ideal for analyzing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. According (Archey, 2022) children's literature often incorporates layered meanings, requiring readers to engage critically with both explicit and implicit messages. (Widiasri et al., 2019) argue that one of the key functions of language is to influence the behavior of others through speech acts. Austin as cited in (Mel'nikov, 2022) supports this by explaining that speech activities not only convey information but also perform actions based on the speaker's intent. However, misunderstandings often arise when listeners fail to grasp the context or underlying meaning of an utterance. (Feruza, 2024) emphasizes that context plays a crucial role in interpreting speech acts, as it provides the necessary background for understanding the speaker's intent. Such misunderstandings can lead to ineffective communication and hinder comprehension.

Children's storybooks, such as The Lorax by Dr. Seuss, provide rich material for examining speech acts. These books often blend simple language with complex contextual elements, making them ideal for analyzing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. According to (J.L Austin, 1962), illocutionary acts can be further categorized into five types: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, as illustrated in Figure 1.

No	Speech Act Theory J.L Austin
1	Locution
2	Illocution
3	Perlocution

No	Types Of Illocution Act
1	Assertive
2	Directive
3	Commissive
4	Expressive
5	Declarative

Figure 1 . Types Of Speech Act J.L Austin (1962)

From the analysis of The Lorax, illocutionary acts supported by these five components provide insight into how language conveys meaning and intention within a narrative. However, analyzing speech acts in children's storybooks requires a nuanced understanding of context, character dynamics, and language patterns. According to (Ghazi & Jubran, 2024), narrative analysis enriches our understanding of linguistic structures and their role in literary works. Studies comparing direct and indirect speech acts reveal critical distinctions. (Heim &

Wiltschko, 2020) direct speech acts align with the grammatical structure of the sentence, while indirect speech acts often involve functions that deviate from their sentence type. Despite these differences, both forms serve the overarching purpose of effective communication.

This research aims to analyze the speech acts in The Lorax, focusing on how they strengthen reasoning, enhance comprehension, and foster critical thinking. Speech acts play an essential role in helping readers and writers understand language use within a narrative context. However, challenges such as interpreting context-specific language and overcoming communication barriers remain significant. By exploring these challenges, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of speech acts in children's literature and their implications for language education.

The research addresses the following questions:
1. What are the main components of speech acts in children's storybooks?
2. What types of speech acts are present in The Lorax?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze speech acts in children's storybooks. The methodology consists of two main stages:
1. First Stage

   The researcher collects data in the form of observation tables, which contain the results of the calculation of speech acts from the children's storybook. This data is used to identify relevant utterances according to the speech act theories by Austin and Searle.
2. Second Stage

   The researcher analyzes the collected data in the form of information containing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts. The main focus of this research is on illocution speech acts, as this is key to understanding the interactions that occur within the context of communication. This study integrates an approach based on the speech act theories of Austin and Searle, specifically to analyze dialogues in children's storybooks. The research focuses solely on the second stage to provide a deeper understanding of how speech acts occur in conversations based on their context.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study is a checklist observation table. This table is designed to record and analyze the types of speech acts found in the children's storybook. The use of this checklist is instrumental in systematically and effectively gathering data.

Research Object

The research object used is the children's storybook titled "The Lorax". This book was selected because it contains various conversations that can be analyzed based on the types of speech acts, particularly illocution acts.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process is carried out by the researcher through the following steps:
1. Reading "The Lorax" thoroughly to understand the context of the conversations.
2. Identifying the utterances that contain illocution speech acts.
3. Recording the identified data in the checklist table.
4. Analyzing the utterances using J.L. Austin's speech act theory.
5. Concluding the dominant types of speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts, and how the components of speech acts (locution, illocution, perlocution) are fulfilled.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. The Main Components of Speech Acts in Children's Storybooks

The analysis of speech acts in children's storybooks reveals that these acts can be broken down into three main components: locution, illocution, and perlocution. These components are crucial for understanding the conversations and interactions in the text, and each has its own role in shaping the narrative. The following table summarizes the distribution of these components within the storybook "The Lorax":

Table 1 . Main parts of a children's storybook

No	Types Of Speech Act	Code	Total	Percentage

1	Locution Act	LC	26	16%
2	Illocution Act	ILC	100	64%
3	Perlocution Act	PR	28	18%
	Total		154	98%

From the table, it is evident that illocution acts dominate the conversations in the storybook, making up 64% of the speech acts, followed by perlocutionary acts at 18%, and locution acts at 16%. This distribution highlights the central role of illocution in driving the action and meaning in The Lorax. Below are examples of each type of speech act:

Example 1

"The far end of town where the Grickle-grass grows and the wind smells slow-and-sour when it blows and no birds ever sing excepting old crows" (page.7)

From the example above, it can be seen that the sentence includes a locutionary speech act which is shown in the sentence At the end of town where Grickle-grass grows. In this speech act, the sentence conveys a literal description of a place, namely at the end of town where Grickle-grass grows and the atmosphere is gloomy. An act of locution is a communicative act that gives meaning through speech, which is often seen in statements, descriptions, or narratives. In this case, the descriptive language invites the reader to imagine a desolate and eerie atmosphere, which helps set the tone for the scene. Word choices, such as "slow and sour" and "no birds sang except the old crow", enhance imagery and cue the reader to focus on the mood and setting created by the narrative. These actions serve as the foundation for establishing the context of the story.

Example 1

"Ask him. He'll know."(page.9)

The sentence 'Ask him. He'll know.' contains illocution because it functions as an order or instruction given by the speaker to the listener to perform an action, namely asking someone else. In this case, the speaker directs the listener to seek information from someone who is considered to know the answer. The illocution in this sentence lies in the communicative function which is more than just conveying information. This sentence is not just a statement or description, but an invitation to take concrete action. By using the word 'Ask', the speaker directly gives directions or commands to the listener. Meanwhile, the 'He'll know' part reinforces the reason to follow the instruction, which is because the person in question has the required knowledge.

Example 3

"You have to toss in fifteen cents and a nail and the shell of a great-great-great-grandfather snail."(page.12)

From the example above, we can see that the sentence includes a perlocution speech act. This is evident in the intended effect of motivating the listener or reader to meet the Once-ler's demands in order to hear his story. Perlocutionary acts refer to the effects or responses elicited in the listener or reader as a result of the utterance. In this case, the act of perlocution is achieved by creating curiosity and interest through the unusual and specific requirements "fifteen cents", "a nail", and "the shell of a great-great-great-grandfather snail". These demands are designed to intrigue the reader and provoke a sense of anticipation about the Once-ler's story. The choice of such peculiar items also enhances the whimsical and mysterious tone, compelling the audience to imagine the significance of these objects and how they relate to the unfolding narrative.

2. Types of Speech Acts in The Lorax

The illocution speech acts in The Lorax can be further categorized into different types. The table below recaps the distribution of these types:

Table. 2 Recapitulation of data types of illocution speech produced by children's storybooks

No	Types Of Illocution Act	Code	Number Of Data	Percentage
1	Assertive	AS	30	30%
2	Directives	DR	14	14%
3	Commissives	CM	12	12%
4	Expressives	EX	20	20%

5	Declaration	DC	24	24%
	Total		100	100%

Table 2 above states that the percentage of the strongest and highest type of speech acts contained in the recapitulation of this research is Assertive speech acts with the number of data as much as 30 or 30% which shows that the percentage of the degree of this speech act is higher than the other speech acts. It also shows that there are elements as in the previous table there are three namely locution, illocution and perlocution. This part is the most important thing in the storybook.

Example 4

"And deep in the Grickle-grass, some people say, if you look deep enough you can still see, today, where the Lorax once stood just as long as it could before somebody lifted the Lorax away" (page.8)

From the example above, we can see that the sentence includes an illocutionary speech act of the assertive type, shown in the words "some people say." In this act, the speaker conveys a belief or statement of fact, indicating their conviction that the Lorax once existed in that place. Assertive illocutionary acts aim to inform or convince the listener of the truth of a proposition. The phrase "some people say" serves to express the narrator's belief while adding a layer of perspective, as the statement is attributed to others. This approach invites the reader to trust the validity of the claim while maintaining a sense of mystery. The act of illocution here strengthens the narrative context, encouraging the reader to reflect on the events and their significance, and fostering curiosity about what happened to the Lorax.

Example 5

"Don't knock at his door"(page.10)

This sentence includes a directive speech act, as seen in the phrase "Don't knock at his door," which serves as a direct prohibition. Directive speech acts aim to influence the behavior of the listener or reader by instructing, commanding, or requesting them to take or avoid specific actions. In this case, the speech act is intended to guide the reader's actions by explicitly forbidding them from knocking on the Once-ler's door. The use of a negative imperative strengthens the directive nature of the statement, emphasizing the importance of following the instruction. This act seeks to establish authority and ensure compliance, reflecting the narrator's control over how the story unfolds and how the reader interacts with the narrative's elements.

Example 6

"He'll tell you, perhaps, if you're willing to pay" (page.10)

From the example above, we can see that the sentence includes a commissive speech act, which is indicated by the phrase "He'll tell you, perhaps". In this act, the speaker, implicitly or explicitly, commits to a future action in this case, the act of telling a story. However, this commitment is conditional, as the speaker attaches a specific requirement: "if you're willing to pay". Commissive speech acts are characterized by the speaker's intention to bind themselves to a future course of action, such as promising, offering, or guaranteeing something. In this context, the act of making a conditional promise engages the reader and highlights the significance of the speaker's commitment, as it sets the terms of interaction and emphasizes the speaker's power to decide. This sentence is also crafted to draw the reader's attention to the transactional nature of the exchange being proposed.

Example 7

"And tells how the Lorax was lifted away."(page.10)

From the example above, we can see that the sentence includes a declarative speech act shown in the words "tells how the Lorax was lifted away". In this act, the speaker provides information that conveys a significant event in the storyline. Declarative acts are used to make announcements or state a change in the state of affairs, often impacting the narrative's direction or the audience's understanding. In this sentence, the declarative act serves to reveal the pivotal moment of the Lorax's disappearance, symbolizing a transformation in the story's world. This part of the text emphasizes the importance of the event, encouraging readers to reflect on its consequences within the narrative.

Example 8

"He makes his own clothes out of miff-muffered moof."(page.10)

From the example above, we can see that the phrase includes an illocutionary speech act of the expressive type, as shown in the words "makes his own clothes out of miff-muffered moof." This act expresses admiration or humor regarding the Once-ler's unique action of crafting clothes from an unusual material. Expressive acts are used to convey the speaker's feelings, emotions, or attitudes about a specific situation f action. In this context, the expressive act reflects the narrator's amazement or amusement at the creativity and eccentricity of the Once-ler's behavior. This element adds a layer of characterization to the story, making the Once-ler's persona more

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CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the children's book 'The Lorax' by Dr Seuss, it can be concluded that speech act elements play a very important role in building effective communication in the story. This study found that the main components of speech acts consist of locution, illocution, and perlocution, with illocution acts being the most dominant. The types of illocutionary speech acts contained in the book include assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, with assertive acts being the most frequently used.

In addition, the structure of the speech acts in the story is relatively simple, but effective in communicating the meaning and intention of the characters in the story. The findings provide valuable insights into understanding language use in the context of children's stories and the importance of understanding the elements of speech acts to improve communication skills in English. The study also highlights the challenges involved in interpreting contextualised language in children's stories and the importance of a deep understanding of context and character dynamics in analysing speech acts in narrative texts. The research is expected to contribute to the development of understanding of the role of speech acts in children's literature and its implications for language education.

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