

Illocutionary speech acts in motivational TEDx Talks by young Indonesian speakers on YouTube

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Abstract. This research analyzes illocutionary speech acts in selected TEDx Talks delivered by Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza on YouTube. It focuses on two main objectives: identifying the types of illocutionary acts and examining their communicative functions. Using Searle's 1976 classification—representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative—this qualitative study applies documentation and note-taking techniques for data collection. Findings show that a total of 158 utterances were identified: 78 from Zhafira's talk and 80 from Fathia's. Representative acts were the most dominant (115 occurrences), followed by directive (30), commissive (8), and expressive (5) acts; declarative acts were not found. The most frequently observed functions include stating (42), describing (29), informing (18), advising (11), and reporting (18). These functions reflect how each speaker conveyed intentions such as informing, persuading, encouraging, or engaging the audience. The results show the significance of illocutionary functions in shaping speaker intention and audience impact, particularly on digital public speaking platforms like TEDx Talks.

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INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, meaning is central to understanding communication because it represents how individuals interpret and convey ideas. Fromkin (Fromkin, 2017) explains that linguistic knowledge involves a system of rules that links sound and meaning, enabling speakers to express and interpret ideas through language. Pragmatics, as an essential branch of linguistics, differs from semantics by examining meaning in context—how speakers use language to achieve communicative intentions and how listeners interpret those intentions beyond literal expressions. Thus, pragmatics highlights language as a social action that depends on context, speaker intention, and shared understanding between participants (Kroeger, 2018; Yule, 1996).

A fundamental framework within pragmatics is Speech Act Theory, introduced by Austin (1962) and later refined by Searle (1976). This theory proposes that language does not merely describe the world but also performs actions. When someone says, "Can you close the door?", the utterance functions less as a question about ability and more as a polite request. Austin (1962) categorized speech acts into three interrelated dimensions: *locutionary acts* (the act of saying something), *illocutionary acts* (the speaker's intended meaning), and *perlocutionary acts* (the effect produced on the listener). Among these, the illocutionary act is central because it conveys the speaker's communicative purpose. Searle (1976) later classified illocutionary acts into five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Each type

serves a different communicative function—asserting facts, requesting actions, committing to future behavior, expressing emotions, or enacting social change (Austin, 1962; Lisna, 2022).

In recent years, Speech Act Theory has been applied widely to analyze various forms of communication across social, political, and digital contexts. Research on public and online discourse has demonstrated that illocutionary acts shape how meaning and persuasion are constructed (Leech, 1983). For example, Caroline et al. (2021) analyzed Mark Zuckerberg's leadership speeches and found that representative and directive acts dominated, reflecting authority and persuasion in leadership language. Similarly, Yunanda et al. (2021) examined Fiersa Besari's online storytelling and identified expressive acts as a key strategy for emotional engagement with audiences. In a religious context, Alawiyah and Santoso (2020) analyzed Dr. Zakir Naik's lectures, showing how directive acts strengthen persuasive intent in religious discourse. Other studies, such as Lisna (2022) on COVID-19 communication and Sapphira (2022) on dramatic dialogues, reveal that speech acts are context-sensitive, reflecting situational and interpersonal dynamics. Mohamed and Shoufan (2022) further emphasized the importance of YouTube as a platform that enhances pragmatic analysis by providing multimodal features that influence interpretation.

These studies contribute to the development of pragmatic theory and demonstrate that Speech Act Theory remains relevant in analyzing contemporary communication. However, most existing research primarily focuses on identifying the dominant types of illocutionary acts rather than exploring their functional roles within specific thematic contexts such as motivation or inspiration. Moreover, there has been limited attention to how illocutionary acts operate in motivational TEDx Talks by young Indonesian speakers. While TEDx is globally recognized as a platform for sharing inspiring ideas, few studies have explored how speakers employ illocutionary forces to motivate, persuade, and emotionally connect with audiences in digital spaces. This absence of research creates a significant gap in understanding the pragmatic mechanisms of motivational discourse, especially within the Indonesian digital communication landscape.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining illocutionary speech acts in TEDx Talks delivered by Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, two young Indonesian speakers whose speeches are accessible through YouTube. These talks represent a unique form of motivational discourse aimed at inspiring young audiences through personal stories, advice, and encouragement. The study adopts Searle's (1976) taxonomy of illocutionary acts as the main theoretical framework to identify and interpret the types and functions of speech acts found in the speakers' utterances.

Specifically, this research aims to (1) identify the types of illocutionary acts employed by the speakers in their TEDx Talks and (2) analyze the functions of these acts in delivering motivational and inspirational messages. The study also investigates how contextual factors such as speaker-audience relationships, social purpose, and situational setting influence the interpretation of illocutionary force in digital communication. By focusing on both type and function, the analysis goes beyond surface-level classification to explore the deeper pragmatic strategies used to achieve persuasion and emotional resonance.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of pragmatic analysis with digital motivational discourse, offering a new perspective on how illocutionary acts function in online inspirational communication. While prior studies have examined speech acts in religious, political, and narrative contexts, few have addressed their role in motivational TEDx Talks by young Indonesian speakers. By situating the research within a digital platform such as YouTube, this study also expands the application of Speech Act Theory to multimodal, globalized

communication settings. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader understanding of how language functions as a performative and motivational tool in public speaking, particularly in the era of digital media.

In sum, this study argues that Speech Act Theory continues to provide valuable insights into modern communication. By analyzing how illocutionary acts operate in TEDx Talks, this research not only contributes to pragmatic theory but also highlights how linguistic action can inspire, empower, and influence audiences in contemporary digital contexts.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design, which focuses on providing detailed and systematic descriptions of linguistic phenomena as they occur naturally. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), qualitative research aims to explore, interpret, and understand meaning through textual or verbal data rather than numerical measurement. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to analyze the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts as they are used in real-life communication within the selected TEDx Talks. The descriptive nature of the study provides empirical insight into how speech acts function to convey speakers' intentions in motivational discourse (Saputra, 2020)

The research was conducted during the period from January to March 2025. During this time, the researcher identified, collected, and analyzed data taken from two TEDx Talks videos available on YouTube. The chosen videos feature Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, both Indonesian speakers who delivered motivational speeches in English. These speakers were purposively selected because their talks share similar thematic and linguistic characteristics: both discuss motivation, self-development, and empowerment from the perspective of young Indonesian women with international educational backgrounds. Their use of English as a second language also provides rich linguistic data for examining how illocutionary acts are performed in intercultural contexts.

The population of this study consists of all TEDx Talks videos delivered by Indonesian speakers in English on YouTube. From this population, two videos were selected as the research sample using purposive sampling techniques, based on specific criteria such as thematic relevance, accessibility, and the clarity of speech delivery. The research data consist of the utterances produced by Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza that contain identifiable illocutionary speech acts. Each utterance was treated as a unit of analysis, allowing for a fine-grained classification of illocutionary act types and their communicative functions.

The main instrument of this research was a data analysis table developed by the researcher, supported by a data inventory format and a classification system. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, supported by tools that facilitate systematic data organization. The data analysis table contained several columns to categorize each utterance according to its speaker, the illocutionary act type—representative, directive, commissive, expressive, or declarative—and its corresponding function, such as stating, advising, promising, or expressing emotion. The data were coded using transcript codes (Transcript I for Zhafira Aqyla and Transcript II for Fathia Fairuza) and abbreviation codes for the types of illocutionary acts: Dec (Declaration), Rep (Representative), Exp (Expressive), Dir (Directive), and Com (Commissive). This structured instrument ensured consistency and accuracy in data recording and analysis.

The data collection procedure was carried out through several systematic steps. First, the researcher searched for and selected the appropriate TEDx Talks videos that met the research criteria. Second, using the listening and scripting techniques as described by Mahsun (2005), the

researcher listened attentively to the entire speech while observing the verbal expressions and linguistic features used by the speakers. The listening method refers to the process of observing and identifying the use of language both orally and textually. Third, the utterances that contained illocutionary acts were transcribed manually based on the YouTube subtitle feature. Each utterance was then marked, segmented, and categorized according to the type of speech act it represented. Finally, the researcher compiled all marked utterances into the data analysis table for further classification and interpretation.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, the researcher rechecked all transcriptions against the original video recordings to prevent omission or misinterpretation. The identification and classification of illocutionary acts were validated through peer review by a lecturer specializing in pragmatics. Intrarater reliability was also maintained by reanalyzing a random 10% of the data two weeks after the initial coding, which produced consistent classifications.

The data analysis procedure followed several analytical stages. First, each utterance was identified and classified based on the types of illocutionary acts according to Searle's (1976) framework. Second, the utterances were further analyzed to determine their communicative functions, such as asserting, requesting, promising, or expressing emotion, which reflect the speaker's illocutionary force. Third, the classified data were interpreted descriptively to explain how the illocutionary acts were used to achieve persuasive and motivational purposes within the talks. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the interpretation results to address the research questions, providing a clear understanding of the dominant types and functions of illocutionary speech acts in both TEDx Talks. This analytical process ensured that the findings were valid, systematic, and relevant to the objectives of the study (Searle, 1976).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the analysis, four types of illocutionary acts were identified in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's TEDx Talks: representative, directive, commissive, and expressive. The most frequently used were representatives, followed by directives, commissives, and expressives. One type not found was declaration, since there were no suitable indicators for this act.

The dominance of representative acts reflects the speakers' main intention to share experiences, state beliefs, present facts, and describe events to engage the audience. Directive acts show their aim to motivate and advise, while commissives express commitment or promises, and expressives convey gratitude or emotions. This distribution shows how the speakers used illocutionary functions strategically to build persuasive and relatable messages in TEDx contexts.

Table 1. Illocutionary Act Found in Zhafira Aqyla's and Fathia Fairuza's Speech

Type of Illocutionary Acts	Function of Illocutionary Acts	Subtotal			Total
		Zhafira Aqyla	Fathia Fairuza	Frequency	
Representative	Stating	16	26	42	115
	Describing	16	13	29	
	Informing	11	7	18	
	Reminding	1	0	1	
	Concluding	4	3	7	
	Reporting	4	14	18	
Expressive	Thanking	2	1	3	5
	Praising	1	0	1	

	Greeting/Welcoming	1	0	1	
Directive	Advising	6	5	11	30
	Suggesting	4	1	5	
	Commanding	1	0	1	
	Inviting	3	2	5	
	Requesting	0	1	1	
	Questioning	3	4	7	
Commissive	Promising	2	3	5	8
	Guaranteeing	3	0	3	
TOTAL		78	80	158	158

The table above shows that representatives held the highest frequency of occurrence, the most frequently used, in the speech acts. It was used 115 times in utterances. The second highest was directives, which were used 30 times in utterances. The next was commissive. It was employed 8 times in utterances. Lastly, expressive was used 5 times in the total data. Declarative acts were not identified because the contextual conditions required to perform such acts were absent.

1. Representatives

Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza mostly used representative acts, appearing 115 times in total. Since this act relates to the speaker's belief, Zhafira emphasized empathy as the foundation for empowerment, while Fathia stressed that access to education should not be determined by privilege. Both reflected these beliefs through personal experiences and social awareness to highlight meaningful change and inequality.

The functions of representatives included stating, describing, informing, reminding, concluding, and reporting. Stating was the most frequent (42 utterances), followed by describing (29), informing (18), and reporting (18). Concluding appeared 7 times, and reminding only once. These findings show that the speakers mainly used representatives to share experiences, convey facts, and reflect on their journey, aligning with the informative and reflective style of TEDx Talks.

The following utterances were some examples identified as representative types of illocutionary acts:

I/8: "So last month, a video of me went viral on TikTok and received 1 million views."

The utterance above is from the first speech. Uttering a representative, the speaker conveyed her belief that some proposition was true. Based on the utterance, it can be identified as representative as it contained a fact delivered by Zhafira Aqyla that the video went viral, as an opening hook for the speaker's speech. Zhafira Aqyla was one of the inspirational Indonesian figures who had profiles of graduates from the best-ranked universities, which reinforced the utterances before and after this.

II/16: "I explained to my teacher that the hijab is my identity..."

This utterance is also recognized as a representative act. The illocutionary point of a representative is to express the speaker's belief about something. In this utterance, Fathia Fairuza was stating that wearing a hijab is an identity as a Muslim, where the teacher told her that it has

to take off the hijab. This statement is strengthened by the previous statement, where Fathia Fairuza was returned to the 17-year-old moment.

2. Directives

The second most used speech act by Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza was directives, appearing 30 times. These included commanding, inviting, requesting, advising, suggesting, and questioning. Directives were applied to encourage reflection, guide the audience, and motivate positive action, particularly in the areas of personal growth and societal challenges.

The most frequent function was advising, with 11 utterances—6 of them from Zhafira—used to promote moral choices, compromise, and supportive actions. In contrast, commanding and requesting were the least frequent, appearing only once each (commanding in Zhafira's speech, requesting in Fathia's). These findings suggest that both speakers relied more on persuasive strategies like advising and inviting rather than direct imperatives, aligning with the motivational nature of TEDx Talks.

The following utterances were some examples identified as directive types of illocutionary acts:

I/13: "But here's a little bit of context to help you understand..."

From the utterance above, Zhafira Aqyla used directive acts. The function of the directive in this utterance was commanding. In this speech, Zhafira Aqyla was inviting the audience to pay attention to the explanation about the reason the speaker is so privileged to have a mother like he.

II/18: "Raise your hand if you think I took off my hijab..."

The utterance above is also identified as a directive act. It was from the second speech that the teacher told the speaker to take off her hijab. In this statement, Fathia Fairuza was inviting the audience to raise their hand if they think the speaker took off the hijab.

3. Commissive

Commissive acts appeared 8 times in the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, reflecting their commitment to future actions and conveying strong intentions to inspire the audience in overcoming challenges. The most frequent function was promising, with 5 utterances that declared intentions and plans, while guaranteeing occurred 3 times, expressing personal resolve and building trust with the audience. The following utterances were some examples identified as commissive types of illocutionary acts:

I/19: "I told him I wanted to study abroad in Japan."

I/20: "I told him I also wanted to earn my master's. I told him I wanted to do my PhD. I wanted it all."

This utterance is identified as a commissive act. Commissive commits the speaker to some future action. Here, Zhafira Aqyla made a promising commitment about the plans for the future that she would study in Japan and a PhD.

II/36: "I decided to apply to universities in Japan..."

This utterance was from the second speech that was recognized as a commissive act. Here, Fathia Fairuza was promising herself that she would study in Japan because the previous statement strengthened that the speaker had found information about a scholarship with a tuition reduction offering. Moreover, the speaker was also pursuing an education, which is not born with privilege, and was rejected from all universities in Indonesia.

4. Expressive

The least frequent type of illocutionary act in both Zhafira Aqyla's and Fathia Fairuza's speeches was the expressive act, with a total of five utterances by both speakers. The expressive functions used included thanking, praising, and welcoming. In Zhafira Aqyla's and Fathia Fairuza's speeches as the most frequent expressive function was thanking, which appeared in 3 utterances and reflected their appreciation, as well as expressing personal gratitude. In contrast, the expressive functions found in Zhafira Aqyla's speech—praising and welcoming—were used less frequently and primarily served to admire her mother and greet the audience.

The following utterances were some examples identified as expressive types of illocutionary acts:

I/1: "Hi TEDx People."

The utterance above indicated expressive acts with expressing as the function. Expressive speech act states the feeling of the speaker. Zhafira Aqyla was using that expression to greet the audience.

II/32: "I was insecure about my future..."

This utterance was identified as an expressive act. In this part, Fathia Fairuza expressed her emotion because she got rejected from all universities in Indonesia, and was not born with privilege, according to the previous and next statements. The expressive act used by Fathia Fairuza to express her feelings to the audience secures her future under the past condition.

The Functions of Illocutionary Acts

This part presents the findings of the functions of illocutionary acts found in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. Regarding the second objective of this research, the researcher described each function of every type of illocutionary act found in the speeches. The following functions are:

a. Functions of Representatives

From the data that the researcher has analyzed, there were 115 utterances of representatives found in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. The functions of representative acts consist of 5 functions. They were informing, stating, describing, reminding, concluding, and reporting.

1) Stating

Stating was the function of representatives who mostly appeared in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza. In the speeches, there were 42 utterances illocutionary function of stating identified. Stating is defined as something that someone says or writes officially, or an action done to express an opinion. In this case, the speakers have strong personal experiences that shape their views. As youth speakers, Zhafira and Fathia express opinions and beliefs that they assuredly believe to be

true based on their understanding—Zhafira in the power of empathy to drive change, and Fathia in resilience and equal access to education.

I/53: "Empathy is the key to empowerment."

From the utterances above, Zhafira Aqyla was stating that empathy is the foundation for people to become empowered. In this speech, Zhafira was talking about how understanding others' emotions can lead to meaningful action and social change. Therefore, she used the stating function to claim that empathy plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and communities.

2) Informing

In delivering his speech, Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza used 18 utterances that could be identified as representatives of the informing functions. Informing functions to telling and giving knowledge, information, or facts. Here is an example of information contained in the speech.

II/45: "I earned a master's degree in human rights studies."

In this utterance, Fathia Fairuza was informing the audience that she had completed her master's degree in human rights studies. She shared this personal achievement to build her credibility as someone who has experienced the struggles and successes within the education system. By stating this, Fathia also wanted to highlight her journey and determination in pursuing higher education despite various challenges. Therefore, she used the representative act with the function of sharing an achievement to strengthen the message of her speech and inspire the audience.

3) Describing

Describing is to tell or report details about aspects, characteristics, events, or features of a subject matter. In the speeches, there were 29 utterances of representatives that were identified as describing function in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. In delivering a speech, it would be easier for a speaker to provide a sample description of the material so that the listener could better understand it.

I/4: "...posted by an account that showcases the profile of inspirational Indonesian figures..."

In the utterance, Zhafira Aqyla was describing the factual background related to the viral video she mentioned in her speech. She explained that the video was uploaded by a social media account known for featuring the profiles of inspirational Indonesian figures. Through this description, Zhafira aimed to provide context for how the video gained attention and why it was relevant to her topic. By describing the nature of the account, she helped the audience understand the credibility and purpose behind the video. Therefore, she used the representative act with the functions of description to offer a clearer picture of the situation being discussed.

4) Reminding

There was 1 utterance of reminding that Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza used in their speeches. The function of reminding was to make someone think about things that they forgot or might forget. In their speeches, both of them were using a reminder to remind the listener about a subject that they had talked about before.

I/47: "Like I mentioned earlier, the barriers aren't just yourself."

From the utterance above, Zhafira was reminding the audience about the barriers that had been discussed earlier in her speech. The previous explanation was about how family-related and organizational-related constraints—such as lack of support, discrimination, and masculine culture—often hinder women from achieving their goals. She reminded the audience that these external barriers exist beyond personal or internal struggles.

5) Concluding

Concluding appeared in 7 utterances in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. The functions of concluding were to bring a final agreement or settlement. These utterances typically appeared near the end of their speeches, although some were also placed strategically in the middle to reinforce key takeaways. The purpose of concluding was to leave a lasting impression, summarize core ideas, and bring emotional or intellectual closure to the speech.

II/24: "Education is a catalyst for change."

The utterance was delivered by Fathia Fairuza as a reflective conclusion to her journey. Positioned near the end of her speech, it served as a generalizing statement that highlighted the transformative power of education. By summarizing her experience—from a high school graduate in Sidoarjo to a professional working in New York—Fathia emphasized how education shaped her growth, resilience, and opportunities. The statement served as a powerful concluding remark, reinforcing the central message and inspiring the audience to value education as a driving force for change.

6) Reporting

Reporting appeared in 18 utterances across the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza. The function of reporting was to convey information, experiences, or statements based on others' actions or achievements, usually to support the speaker's point or provide credible background. The reporting utterances were commonly found when the speakers highlighted role models, referenced past events, or relayed facts about their surroundings or people close to them. Most of these utterances were used to reinforce the message through real-life examples or credible sources.

I/12: "...seeing this amazing woman who has an engineering degree..."

From the utterance above, Zhafira Aqyla was reporting about her mother's academic background as a way to highlight her as a role model. This utterance provided factual information about her mother's achievement in engineering, which became a source of inspiration for the speaker. The purpose of this reporting was to offer context and credibility in shaping the speaker's beliefs and goals.

b. Functions of Directives

Based on the data, it was found 30 utterances of directive acts were found in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. The five functions of directives were used by both speakers in their speeches. They were commanding, inviting, requesting, advising, suggesting, and questioning.

1) Commanding

Based on the data, commanding was found in 1 utterance across the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and was not found in Fathia Fairuza. The function of this illocutionary act was to deliver a direct prompt or motivational instruction to the audience. It was used by the speaker to engage the listeners in a directive manner—encouraging, challenging, or prompting them to reflect or take action.

I/38: “...so I can help all my sisters... to break down that mental barrier...”

This utterance functions as a form of commanding because it directly empowers the audience with a rhetorical prompt that challenges their assumptions. Zhafira Aqyla used this utterance to shift the audience’s mindset and invite them to reconsider their judgment toward others. By using this rhetorical command, she aimed to gain the audience’s attention and guide them toward a more empathetic and open perspective in the following parts of her speech.

2) *Inviting*

In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, it was found that there were 5 utterances identified as inviting. These utterances were used to engage the audience and lead them into the speaker’s line of thinking. From the data, the researcher found that both speakers used inviting expressions to prepare the audience for an explanation or to imagine a scenario, especially before elaborating on a key idea.

I/13: “But here's a little bit of context to help you understand...”

In this utterance, Zhafira Aqyla invited the audience to pay closer attention as she prepared to introduce a key explanation in her speech. The phrase function is an inviting illocutionary act, specifically aimed at inviting attention. By signaling a transition into a deeper discussion—particularly about empathy—Zhafira encouraged the audience to engage more thoughtfully with the message. This type of utterance creates a sense of inclusion and primes listeners to be more receptive, effectively guiding them toward the central theme of empowerment through empathy.

3) *Requesting*

In the speeches of both speakers, one utterance was identified as performing a requesting function in Fathia Fairuza’s speech. Requesting refers to asking someone to do something politely or indirectly. In these speeches, the function of requesting was generally used to engage the audience and prompt them toward self-reflection or positive action. These types of utterances often appeared in motivational or persuasive segments, where the speakers aimed to empower their listeners without using overt commands.

II/18: “Raise your hand if you think I took off my hijab...”

In this utterance, Fathia Fairuza used a polite and interactive form of requesting to engage the audience. Although phrased as a question, it served as a directive speech act, specifically forcing a request for participation. The purpose was not merely to collect responses, but to encourage the audience to reflect on assumptions and stay mentally involved. Through this request, Fathia fostered a sense of connection and subtly prompted the audience to confront potential biases or limiting beliefs, contributing to the overall motivational tone of her speech.

4) *Advising*

In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, there were 11 utterances identified as advising. Advising is to offer suggestions about the best course of action to someone. In their speeches, both speakers used an advising function to guide the audience in responding to challenges with thoughtful and empathetic approaches. These utterances typically appeared when the speakers were giving practical advice based on personal experiences or addressing common struggles faced by youth, especially about education and family.

I/57: "...my answer is always the same: understand where your parents are coming from..."

In this utterance, Zhafira Aqyla was advising the audience, particularly students, to approach their parents with empathy when facing disagreements or concerns about studying abroad. By suggesting that they try to understand their parents' perspective, Zhafira offered a practical way to build better communication. This utterance served as an advising function because it provided a recommended course of action grounded in emotional intelligence and respect.

5) Suggesting

The data showed that suggesting as the function of directive appeared in 5 utterances across the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza. The function of suggestion was to give an idea, plan, or action to be considered by the audience. Both speakers used suggestions to motivate and empower listeners to take positive steps in pursuing their goals, especially in the context of overcoming social or personal challenges. These utterances often appeared as motivational advice based on personal experience or belief.

II/79: "Never let anyone tell you otherwise."

This utterance came from Fathia Fairuza's speech, in which she encouraged the audience to stay confident in their dreams and abilities. The function of this directive was to suggest a function. Through this statement, Fathia was giving a strong suggestion that the audience should not allow others' opinions to diminish their self-worth or ambitions. It served as an empowering closure and reflected her intention to inspire the audience to believe in themselves despite societal doubts or stereotypes.

6) Questioning

In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, there was 7 utterances identified as questioning. The function of questioning is to ask something to get a reply, answer, or information from the listener. However, in these speeches, the speakers did not always expect direct answers from the audience. Instead, questioning was often used as a rhetorical device to provoke reflection and guide the listeners toward deeper understanding or self-awareness.

I/70: "...ask ourselves the following question: how can I use my role and privilege to empower others?"

This utterance was from Zhafira Aqyla's speech, where she encouraged the audience to reflect on their position and responsibility. The function of this questioning was not to seek an actual answer, but to make the audience think critically about how their advantages could be used

to benefit others. By posing this reflective question, Zhafira motivated her listeners to engage in internal questioning and self-evaluation related to social contribution and empowerment.

c. Functions of Commissive

Commissive was found in 8 utterances in the data that the researcher has analyzed. Commissive was used by the Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches to commit the audience to take some future action. Commissive acts consisted of two functions in the data: promising, offering, and warning.

1) *Promising*

Promising is the function of commissive speech acts used to assure someone that something is going to happen or that the speaker is committed to a future action. In the commissive acts, 5 utterances of promising were found across the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza. Both speakers used promises to express their personal commitments, intentions, or plans as part of their motivational messages. These utterances reflected a strong sense of determination and self-drive that aimed to inspire the audience.

II/59: "So I told myself that I needed to relearn those skills..."

This utterance was from Fathia Fairuza's speech. In the utterance, she was making a personal promise to herself that she would go back and improve skills she felt she had lost or needed to rebuild. The promising function was used to show her commitment to personal growth and self-development. Although stated internally, the expression also served as a motivational statement for the audience to reflect on their own journey of improvement and persistence.

2) *Guaranteeing*

Guaranteeing is the function of commissive speech acts used to assure the audience that a certain outcome is going to occur or that the speaker's statement can be trusted. In the commissive acts, 3 utterances of guaranteeing were found in Zhafira Aqyla's speech, while none were identified in Fathia Fairuza's speech. This function was used by the speaker to express certainty, build trust, and offer reassurance, particularly when addressing challenges or uncertainties. These utterances reflected Zhafira's strong sense of confidence and support, aiming to encourage the audience to stay motivated despite potential obstacles.

I/66: "It may not result in what you want, but I guarantee you..."

This utterance was delivered by Zhafira Aqyla as a form of reassurance. Here, she offered a realistic perspective while simultaneously affirming her belief in the value of the audience's effort. The function of this utterance is to guarantee, as she assured, that even if outcomes are uncertain, the process and intention hold a meaningful impact. Through this statement, Zhafira encouraged persistence and positioned herself as a reliable source of motivation, aiming to empower the audience to remain committed to their goals despite obstacles.

d. Functions of Expressive

From the data, it was found that 5 utterances of expressive acts were found in Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza's speeches. The expressive act had two functions, as determined by the researcher's analysis. The functions were thanking, praising, and welcoming.

1) *Thanking*

Thanking is a function of expressive speech acts used to express gratitude or appreciation for someone's help, kindness, or support. In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, there were 3 utterances identified as thanking. These utterances were used to acknowledge the contribution and emotional support of others in the speakers' journeys. Through thanking, the speakers connected with the audience by showing humility and appreciation toward those who helped shape their success.

I/78: "...they will forever be grateful to you the same way that I will forever be grateful to my parents..."

This utterance was from Zhafira Aqyla's speech, in which she expressed her gratitude for the consistent support she received from her parents. The function of this expressive act was thanking, as it acknowledged the emotional and motivational role they played in her achievements. By including this statement, Zhafira emphasized the importance of family while also modeling gratitude as a core value for the audience.

2) *Praising*

The function of expressive speech acts is to show admiration or approval for someone's qualities, actions, or influence. In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, there was 1 utterance identified as praising, which appeared in Zhafira Aqyla's speech, with none found in Fathia Fairuza's. This function was used to express heartfelt appreciation and highlight the inspirational role of others in the speaker's life. Through praising, the speaker aimed to uplift role models and communicate values such as respect and admiration.

I/11: "...I have a mother who looks just like me, who's dressed like me..."

This utterance was from Zhafira Aqyla's speech, in which she expressed admiration and emotional appreciation for her mother. The function of this expressive act was praising, as it acknowledged her mother's influence and presence warmly and respectfully. By including this statement, Zhafira honored her mother as a source of inspiration and subtly encouraged the audience to value the people who shape their identities.

3) *Greeting/Welcoming*

Greeting/Welcoming is a type of expressive illocutionary act used to acknowledge the presence of the audience in a warm, polite, and inclusive manner. In the speeches of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza, there was 1 utterance identified as greeting/welcoming, which appeared in Zhafira Aqyla's speech, with none found in Fathia Fairuza's. This function was typically used at the beginning of the speech to establish rapport, set a positive tone, and invite audience engagement. Through greeting/welcoming, the speaker aimed to create an open atmosphere and foster a personal connection with listeners.

I/1: "Hi TEDx People."

This utterance was from Zhafira Aqyla's speech, in which she greeted the audience at the opening of her talk. The function of this expressive act was greeting/welcoming, as it acknowledged the audience's presence in a friendly and approachable way. By starting with a

casual and inclusive salutation, Zhafira set a positive tone for her message and helped establish a sense of connection and receptiveness among her listeners

DISCUSSION

Based on Searle's (1976) and Austin's (1962) framework, four types of illocutionary acts were identified in the TEDx Talks of Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza: representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. Representative acts were the most dominant (115 utterances: 52 in Zhafira's speech and 63 in Fathia's), followed by directives (30 utterances), while commissives (8 utterances) and expressives (5 utterances) occurred least frequently. This distribution reflects the communicative purpose of motivational discourse, which prioritizes sharing personal truths, factual experiences, and beliefs to establish credibility and authenticity.

According to Searle (1976), representative (assertive) acts commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition, making them particularly effective in motivational contexts where ethos and trust are central. The predominance of representative acts in both talks aligns with previous studies on motivational speeches, including Saputra (2020) and Warsidi et al. (2023), which similarly found assertives to be the most frequent due to their role in conveying relatable personal narratives and factual reflections. Such acts function as tools of knowledge-sharing and authenticity-building, especially for Gen Z audiences who value transparency and lived experience.

Directive acts ranked second in frequency and primarily functioned as encouragements, suggestions, or calls to action. This finding supports Husnan et al. (2025), who noted that directives commonly accompany representatives in female-led motivational TED Talks, guiding audiences from reflection toward behavioral or attitudinal change. In contrast, commissive and expressive acts appeared minimally, suggesting that persuasion in motivational discourse relies less on promises or emotional expression and more on factual narration and encouragement. This pattern is consistent with Kasni and Damayanthi's (2021) findings in Oprah Winfrey's Lifeclass speeches.

Therefore, the dominance of representative acts underscores the central role of authenticity and credibility in TED-style motivational discourse, while directives reinforce its persuasive aim. The limited use of commissive and expressive acts further indicates that contemporary motivational speaking, particularly among young speakers addressing Gen Z audiences, favors reflective truth-sharing over emotional dramatization or future commitments.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the most dominant type of illocutionary act used by Zhafira Aqyla and Fathia Fairuza in their TEDx Talks was the representative act with 115 utterances. This dominance shows the importance of sharing facts, personal beliefs, and experiences to build credibility, create authenticity, and emotionally connect with the audience, especially Gen Z, who value transparency. The second most frequent type was the directive act with 30 utterances, commonly used to give suggestions, invitations, or encouragements. In contrast, commissive acts (8 utterances) and expressive acts (5 utterances) appeared the least, reflecting the persuasive and motivational focus of TEDx speeches rather than promises or emotional expressions.

In terms of research implications, future studies are suggested to involve more speakers from various backgrounds and speech genres to compare how speech acts function across contexts. Expanding to non-verbal elements such as gestures, tone, and audience interaction

would also enrich the analysis. Exploring the perlocutionary effect—audience responses through comments, likes, or surveys—may reveal how speech acts influence engagement. Comparative studies between male and female, or native and non-native speakers, could also provide new insights, while multimodal discourse analysis would capture the role of visual, auditory, and textual elements in digital communication.

This research contributes to Speech Act Theory within the digital media context, particularly YouTube as a platform for education, communication, and entertainment. The findings are relevant not only for linguists but also for educators and content creators who aim to understand how language builds meaning online. For language teaching, applying speech act concepts can enhance learners' pragmatic competence, especially in persuasive and public speaking. By showing how representative and directive acts dominate motivational discourse, this study provides a foundation for preparing students to become effective communicators in both real-world and digital contexts.

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