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Speech Acts in the Short Story Berli and the Sea: A Pragmatic Analysis

Vaneza Dwi Al Mufidah
Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Indonesia
vanesaalmufidah@gmail.com

Nasywa Safira Rizkiana
Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Indonesia
nasywasafira572@gmail.com

Eka Susylowati*
Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Indonesia
eka.susylowati@trunojoyo.ac.id

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**Corresponding Author*

Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the types of speech acts found in the short story Berli and The Sea by Nabila Adani. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The data consist of the characters' utterances, which were collected by reading the story and identifying utterances containing speech acts. The data were then classified based on Searle's theory and analyzed according to their functions and contexts. The results show that 73 utterances are classified into representative (29), directive (26), expressive (13), commissive (5), and no declarative speech acts. Representative speech acts are the most frequently used, while no declarative speech acts are found. The characters use these speech acts to give information, make requests, express feelings, and show their intentions. This study focuses on speech acts in Berli and The Sea, a short story that has received limited attention in the previous studies reviewed. The findings can help readers understand how speech acts are used for different purposes and how characters communicate through their utterances in a short story.

Keywords: Speech Act, Searle Theory, Pragmatics

Abstrak

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis jenis-jenis tindak tutur yang terdapat dalam cerita pendek Berli and The Sea karya Nabila Adani. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data yang digunakan berupa tuturan para tokoh, yang dikumpulkan dengan cara membaca cerita tersebut dan mengidentifikasi tuturan yang mengandung tindak tutur. Data kemudian diklasifikasikan berdasarkan teori Searle serta dianalisis sesuai dengan fungsi dan konteksnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 73 tuturan yang diklasifikasikan ke dalam kategori tindak tutur representatif (29), direktif (26), ekspresif (13), dan komisif (5), sementara tindak tutur deklaratif tidak ditemukan. Tindak tutur representatif merupakan jenis yang paling sering digunakan. Para tokoh menggunakan tindak tutur tersebut untuk menyampaikan informasi, mengajukan permintaan, mengungkapkan perasaan, serta menunjukkan niat mereka. Penelitian ini berfokus pada tindak tutur dalam Berli and The Sea, sebuah cerita pendek yang belum banyak dibahas dalam penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya. Temuan ini dapat membantu pembaca memahami bagaimana tindak tutur digunakan untuk berbagai tujuan dan bagaimana para tokoh berkomunikasi melalui tuturan mereka dalam sebuah cerita pendek.

Kata kunci: Tindak Tutur, Teori Searle, Pragmatik

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in literary works as a means of communication. It convey information, express their thoughts and feelings, and build relationships with others. Related to this function, pragmatics focuses on language use in communication. Pragmatics examines contextual factors within a literary text contributes to interpreting meaning (Sinha, 2021). Pragmatics cannot be used or analyzed separately from context; rather, it should be examined within a specific context and discussed comprehensively (Ghafri et al., 2021). Pragmatics focuses on how meaning is interpreted within a particular context by considering factors such as the speaker's intentions, the listener's expectations, and the social and cultural norms surrounding the communication (Dey, 2023). Studying pragmatics enables researchers to examination of speakers' intended meanings, assumptions, and actions expressed through language.

A short story is a form of literary prose that is generally brief enough to be read in a single sitting (Kiosses, 2021). A short story can be structured into three main parts such as orientation, which introduces the setting and characters; complication, which presents the

conflict; and resolution, which shows how the conflict is resolved or affects the characters (Režonja, 2022). The conversations within short stories convey the characters' emotions, intentions, and the situations they experience throughout the narrative. It provides a meaningful context for examining the use of speech acts through the interactions among its characters.

An analysis of speech acts is important for understanding how characters use language to communicate their intentions and perform different actions throughout a story. Based on Searle's five classifications of speech acts, this focuses on assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations as a framework for analyzing the characters' utterances (Levinson, 1983). The division of speech acts have a different function assertives, which express the truth of a proposition; directives, which encourage the hearer to perform an action; commissives, which concern future actions; expressives, which express the speaker's feelings or attitudes; and declarations, which bring about a change in reality through an utterance (Pratama & Asroriyah, 2025). These speech acts allow characters to convey information, make requests, express feelings, make commitments, and bring about changes through their utterances, thereby contributing to the development of interactions and relationships within the story.

Based on this explanation, the researcher is interested in identifying and analyzing the types of illocutionary speech acts found in *Berli and the Sea* in depth. This study uses the characters' utterances as the main data and applies Searle's theory to classify them into assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Analyzing these speech acts is important because the characters' utterances not only convey information but also reflect their intentions, feelings, and actions toward environmental issues.

In order to complete this study, the researchers must examine several prior literature on a certain issue of illocutionary deeds. Related studies have been done regarding speech acts. The first previous research Dewi, Maharani, and Winartha (2022) conducted a study entitled "The Types of Illocutionary Acts Found in Incredible 2 Movie: A Speech Act Analysis." (Mariani et al., 2022). This study used Searle's theory to identify five types of illocutionary acts. The findings showed that expressive acts were the most dominant, followed by commissive, directive, representative, and declarative acts. The second previous investigation analyzed illocutionary acts in the short story Mr. Know All using Searle's theory and a descriptive qualitative method (Yaqin, 2024). The study found five types of illocutionary acts, with expressive acts being the most frequently used. The study examined the general functions of the illocutionary acts in the dialogues, such as telling something, asking, expressing feelings,

ordering, refusing, and suggesting, to show how the characters perform different actions through their utterances. The third research focused conducted a study entitled "Illocutionary Acts in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Short Stories" (Zulkiana et al., 2023). The study aimed to identify the types of illocutionary acts used by the characters and analyze how those illocutionary acts were produced in two short stories, The Bridal Party and Bernice Bobs Her Hair. Using Searle's theory and a descriptive qualitative method, the researchers found that The Bridal Party contained five types of illocutionary acts, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, while Bernice Bobs Her Hair contained four types, namely assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. The analysis focused on the characters' utterances and classified each utterance according to its communicative function in the stories, showing how characters used language to state information, give commands or requests, express feelings, make commitments, and perform other actions through speech. The fourth researcher Romala analyzed the translation ideology and strategies used in the English version of the story. The study focused on how cultural words related to Belitung Island were translated and how the translation strategies affected the cultural and environmental messages in the story (Romala, 2025). Meanwhile, Mutiarani examined how verbal and visual elements in the picturebook Berli and the Sea present environmental knowledge and encourage ecological awareness. Their study focused on the relationship between the text and illustrations in building ecological literacy (Mutiarani et al., 2026). However, previous studies have mainly examined illocutionary acts in short stories with different literary and social contexts, while limited attention has been given to Berli and The Sea, particularly regarding character interactions and the environmental context presented in the story. Therefore, the present study focuses on identifying and analyzing the illocutionary acts produced by the characters in Berli and The Sea. Based on Searle's classification, this study aims to identify and analyze the types of illocutionary acts found in the characters' utterances.

This study contributes to the discussion of pragmatics, especially the study of speech acts in literary works. Through an analysis of the characters' utterances in Berli and the Sea, this study shows that speech acts are used for several communicative purposes, including giving information, making requests, expressing feelings, and committing to future actions. This study can also be used as a reference for future research on speech acts, especially in short stories. It may help other researchers who want to study speech acts using different perspectives or other literary works.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the speech acts in the short story Berli and The Sea. In qualitative descriptive research, the researcher focuses on describing the phenomenon clearly based on the data and the context in which it happens (Sandelowski, 2000). The researcher analyzed the utterance related to the John Searle speech act theory.

Data Source

The researcher used primary and the secondary source. The primary source was the short story that title Berli and The Sea by Nabila Adani and translated into English by Mahmud L. Hutasuhut. The primary source accesed on https://buku.kemendikdasmen.go.id/katalog/berli-and-the-sea. The data used in this research are utterances spoken by the characters in the short story Berli and The Sea. The data are consisted of utterances produced by the characters in the short story. The researcher analyzed the utterance related to the John Searle Speech act theory. The secondary source was John Searle theory on categories of speech acts. There are five categories of speech acts that became the analyzing source, such as declaration, representative, directive, expressive, and commissive.

Unit Of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the characters' utterances in Berli and The Sea. The utterances are analyzed based on John Searle's Speech Act Theory. Linguistic utterances generally serve to convey particular messages and reveal information about the speaker, which influences how others understand and receive the message (Drożdżowicz, 2023). In the story, the characters' utterances appear as direct speech and has quotation marks.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained the short story Berli and The Sea from the Kemendikbud website. The data collection involved several steps. First, the researcher accessed and read the short story to understand its content, plot, and the interactions among the characters. Second, the researcher identified the utterances produced by the characters, particularly those presented in direct speech. Then, the researcher systematically organized the data by assigning a unique identification number to each utterance. Through this process, the researcher identified 58 utterances as the initial data before classification.

Analyze Data

The research procedure is based on Creswell's qualitative research methodology. The Data analysis involves organizing and examining text, conducting deeper analyses, presenting the findings, and interpreting their overall meaning (Creswell, 2009). After completing the data collection, the researcher carefully reread the short story to examine the contexts in which the characters' utterances occurred, including the situations, speakers, and communicative purposes of the interactions. The researcher examined the function of each utterance by considering the speaker's intention and the meaning conveyed in the interaction. Then, The researcher classified each utterance based on the surrounding narration and John Searle speech act theory into the five categories of speech acts proposed by Searle such as representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. When an utterance contained more than one speech act function, it was divided into separate data units for classification. The researcher kept the original data number and added letters to distinguish different speech act functions, such as 2a and 2b. Each sub data unit was then classified according to its speech act function. Then, the findings were interpreted to describe the types of speech acts used by the characters and their communicative functions in the short story.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher had done the analysis on the short story "Berli and The Sea" by Nabila Adani and Salma Intifada. The researcher then found the four categories of speech act based on the Searle theory, except except Declarations. This is because none of the utterances were produced by a stakeholder or an individual with the authority to change a particular state of affairs. The findings are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Number of Speech Act Categories
Found in the short story "Berli and The Sea".

Declaration	0
Representative	29
Directive	26
Expressive	13
Commisive	5
Total of Category	73

FINDING

Determining Speech Acts Found In "Berli and The Sea"

The researcher classified the utterances and described how the utterances were being classified. To facilitate the analysis, each utterance was assigned a code, e.g. U1, where "U"

represents “Utterance” and “1” indicates the sequential order of the utterance in the data. The detailed classification and analysis in the following table:

No	Code	Utterance	Classification
1.	U4	*"Aw, thanks! You are truly my best friend, my absolute best friend in the word”*	Expressive Speech Act
2.	U6	*“What I thought you were being sincere. So there's a string attached? "*	
3.	U19a	*“Ha-ha-ha I wish... “*	
4.	U21a	*“Thank you dik”*	
5.	U25	*"Hi, Dik. We meet again!"*	
6.	U28	*"Nice to meet you, Kak Alin"*	
7.	U33	*"Oh l see,."*	
8.	U46	*"Hello, Dik! We meet again!"*	
9.	U47	*"Hi kak"*	
10.	U49	*"Rasi!"*	
11.	U50b	*"I am so disappointed!"*	
12.	U52	*"HI"*	
13.	U57	*"Ok!"*	
14.	U1	*"Berli! Hurry up. Let's go to the courtyard…"*	Directive Speech Act
15.	U2a	*“Wait a minute”*	
16.	U3a	*"Let me see...”*	
17.	U5	*"Pay me back with a pack seaweed pilus, okay?"*	
18.	U9	*"Berli!, Come on!"*	
19.	U13a	*"Oh can l?...Is that ok?*	
20.	U14	*"Do you need a cardboard box to put everything in, miss?"*	
21.	U15	*"Oh, yes, Ma'am, please,"*	
22.	U17	“Where are you from, kak?”	
23.	U16	*"Berli, please help load all the groceries into the box,"*	
24.	U22b	*“Can l play with Rasi, please?"*	
25.	U23	*"Come on, Ber, it's late already late and it's a very hot day. Let's go for a healthy morning walk. Come on!"*	
26.	U30	*"Sweater temperature?"*	
27.	U32	*"Huh, can the sea really get sick?"*	
28.	U33	*"What's the temperature of the sea now, kak?"*	
29.	U37	*“Well, then what should we do, kak?”*	
30.	U38	*"Mak Ute, about yesterday's photos, what are they for?"*	

31.	U42	*"Let's Love Them"*	
32.	U43	*"Berli, what are you doing?"*	
33.	U44	*"Hi rasi, come here quickly."*	
34.	U45	*"Follow my account, please?"*	
35.	U50a	*"...Why did you upload content like that?..."*	
36.	U51	*"Everyone listen, that Jaga Laut account belongs to Berli!"*	
37.	U55	*"How about if my dad posts messages of hope about taking care of the environment on the Jaga Laut account? Along with his hopes for the future?"*	
38.	U56	*"Okay, are you ready?"*	
39.	U58	*"3,2,1...Action!"*	
40.	U1	*"...The ceremony is about to start!"*	Representative Speech Act
41.	U2b	*"...I want to put my bag away first. And I forgot to bring my hat again!""*	
42.	U3b	*"...I think I have a spare one in the drawer Here it is! Wear it. "*	
43.	U6	*"...I thought you were being sincere."*	
44.	U10	*"Forty!"*	
45.	U11	*"The total is one hundred thousand rupiah,"*	
46.	U12	*"Apart from cash, you can also pay with electronic money or transfers,"*	
47.	U18	*" I'm from Bandung,"*	
48.	U19b	*"I'm doing an internship here, Dik,"*	
49.	U20	*"Here are your groceries, Kak,"*	
50.	U22a	*"Mom, I've finished my homework..."*	
51.	U26	*"I shopped at Toko Andalan yesterday!"*	
52.	U27	*"My name is Alin,"*	
53.	U29	*"I am measuring seawater temperature at the moment."*	
54.	U31	*"Yup, because I'd like to find out whether the sea is healthy or not."*	
55.	U34	*"Right now it's a n average of 31.5 degrees Celsius."*	
56.	U35	*"That's only a 0.5 difference from the ideal one..."*	
57.	U36	*"Marine biota, such as coral reefs and seaweed, is very sensitive to changes in temperature, even if it's only half a degree."*	
58.	U39	*"You know, when we took photos of the snacks that we had arranged and decorated."*	
59.	U40	*"Oh, those are product photos for promoting our shop."*	

60.	U41	*"That way, people will find it easy to remember both your account and the content you make!"*	
61.	U44	*"...I have just created a social media account..."*	
62.	U48	*"Kak, I'm going home now."*	
63.	U50c	*"...I followed your account just like you asked me to..."*	
64.	U50d	*"...But, you're even against my father's work!"*	
65.	U53	*"Rasi liked your upload."*	
66.	U54	*"We need people who care about the environment, not only in Belitung and Indonesia but also in the whole world!"*	
67.	U7	*"But, for you I'd do anything! "*	Commisive Speech Act
68.	U8	*"See you at four, okay? "*	
69.	U13b	*"....I'll use QRIS..."*	
70.	U21b	*"...See you soon!"*	
71.	U24	*"Ok ok ..."*	

DISCUSSION

Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive speech acts convey the speaker feeling's. The researcher took on example on **U4:** ***"Aw, thanks! You are truly my best friend, my absolute best friend in the word"***. The situation happens when Rasi lends Berli her spare hat because Berli forgot to bring hers. In this utterance, Berli expresses her gratitude to Rasi for lending her a spare hat and shows her appreciation by describing Rasi as her best friend. ***U19a" Ha-ha-ha I wish…"***. The situation narrated the speaker asks Kak whether she is on holiday in the area. Kak responds with "Ha-ha-ha, I wish" before explaining that she is doing an internship there. Her laughter and response indicate an amused reaction to the speaker's. This utterance is categorized as an expressive speech act because it reflects her emotional response to the question through an expression of amusement. **U28** ***"Nice to meet you, Kak Alin"***. This utterance happens when the main character meets Alin again at the beach after seeing at the Toko Andalan the previous day. Alin introduces herself, the main character responds by saying, "Nice to meet you, Kak Alin.". In this utterance, the main character shows the speaker's positive feelings meeting Alin. It also helps establish a friendly relationship between the two characters. **U49** ***"Rasi!"***. The situation occurs when the main character arrives at school and eagerly wants to share her brilliant ideas with Rasi. In this utterance, the main character calls Rasi with enthusiasm because she is excited to share her ideas with her friend. This utterance categorized as an expressive speech

act because the surrounding context indicates the main character's excitement and eagerness to interact with Rasi. ***U50b "I am so disappointed!"***. The utterance happen when Berli's friend confronts her about the content she uploaded on social media, which criticizes activities that affect the marine environment and her father's work. In this utterance, Berli's friend expresses her disappointment toward Berli's actions and the content she has shared. This utterance is categorized as an expressive speech act because the expression "I am so disappointed" directly conveys the speaker's negative feelings toward Berli's actions.

Directive Speech Acts

A directive speech act is when a speaker tries to get someone to do something, such as giving an order or making a request. An example on **U1** ***"Berli! Hurry up. Let's go to the courtyard…",*** showed directive speech act in the form of command. In the utterance, Rasi encourages Berli to move quickly and go to the courtyard with her before the ceremony starts. The phrase *"Hurry up"* functions as a command, while *"Let's go to the courtyard"* serves as an invitation to do something together. the utterance categorized as a directive speech act because Rasi uses language to influence Berli's actions and encourage her to leave the classroom before the ceremony begins. Request for permission type can be seen on, **U13 a*"Oh can I?...Is that ok?.*** The utterance happen when The young lady asks for confirmation that QRIS is an acceptable payment method after Berli's mother explains the available payment options. The expressions "Oh, can I?" and "Is that OK?" show that the young lady seeks the mother's approval before using QRIS as a payment method. The question "Is that OK?", ndicates that the speaker wants to ensure her choice is acceptable. **U42** ***"Let's Love Them"*** . The phrase "Let's Love Them" appears in Berli's social media post, which contains pictures of the beach and baby turtles. In this context, Berli shares a message to encourage people to care for and protect sea turtles. The word "let's" indicates on invitation, as Berli encourages readers to participate in the suggested action together. This Directive speech act form. The utterance classified as a directive speech act in the form of an invitation. ***U51 "Everyone listen, that Jaga Laut account belongs to Berli!"*** . The situation occurs when Rasi criticizes tin mining, which affects Rasi's family because her father works in the mining industry. She runs to the front of the classroom and shouts to get the students' attention before revealing Berli's identity as the account owner. The words "Everyone listen," which functions as a direct command addressed to the students. The imperative verb "listen" indicates that Rasi wants the students

to perform a specific action by directing their attention to her announcement. In this situation, Rasi addresses the students directly because she wants them to listen to her announcement.

Representative Speech Acts

Representative is a type of speech act that expresses speaker's belief and presents what they say as true (Yu et al., 2023). The researcher took an example ***U11 "The total is one hundred thousand rupiah."*** This utterance happens when Berli's mother tells a customer the total price of her groceries at Toko Andalan. In this utterance, Berli's mother informs the customer that she has to pay one hundred thousand rupiah. This utterance is categorized as a representative speech act, because the speaker states information about the total price of the groceries. ***U12 "Apart from cash, you can also pay with electronic money or transfers."*** This situation happens when Berli's mother explains the other payment methods to a customer who is buying groceries at Toko Andalan. In this utterance, she informs the customer that they can also pay using electronic money or transfers. The utterance shows a representative speech act, because the speaker provides information about the different ways to make a payment. ***U19b "I'm doing an internship here, Dik."*** This utterance happens when Berli asks a young lady, who is buying groceries at Toko Andalan, whether she is on holiday in Belitung. The customer explains that she is actually doing an internship there, not taking a holiday. Her utterance is a representative speech act, because she gives information or a fact about what she is doing in Belitung. ***U34 "Right now it's an average of 31.5 degrees Celsius."*** This utterance happens when Berli asks Kak Alin about the current temperature of the seawater. Kak Alin answers by telling her the average temperature at that time. Through this utterance, Kak Alin provides information about the seawater temperature based on her measurement. Therefore, the utterance can be classified as a representative speech act. ***U50d "...But, you're even against my father's work!"*** This utterance happens when Rasi confronts Berli about her social media post against tin mining. Rasi feels upset because the post also criticizes her father's job as a tin miner. Through this utterance, Rasi expresses her belief that Berli's post is against her father's work. This utterance can be considered a representative speech act, because Rasi states her belief that Berli's post is against her father's work.

Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive is a type of illocutionary act in which the speaker expresses an intention to do something in the future, such as promising, threatening, pledging, refusing, or offering

(Sianipar et al., 2025). The researcher took example ***U7 "But, for you I'd do anything!"*** This utterance happens after Rasi lends Berli a spare hat, because Berli forgets to bring her own hat for the flag hoisting ceremony. After Berli thanks her, Rasi asks Berli to pay her back with a pack of seaweed pilus. Berli then jokes that she thought Rasi was being sincere before saying, "But, for you I'd do anything!" Through this utterance, Berli shows that she is willing to do anything for Rasi. It is categorized as a commissive speech act, because she shows that she is willing to do anything for her friend. ***U8 "See you at four, okay?"*** This utterance happens when Rasi asks her father if she can visit Berli's house that afternoon. After her father agrees, Berli happily says, "See you at four, okay?" Berli says this because she plans to meet Rasi at four o'clock. It is categorized as a commissive speech act, because Berli shows her intention to meet Rasi at that time. ***U13b "...I'll use QRIS..."*** This utterance happens when a customer buys groceries at Toko Andalan. After Berli's mother explains that customers can pay using cash, electronic money, or transfers, the customer says that she will use QRIS to pay for her groceries. This utterance is categorized as a commissive speech act, because the customer states her intention to use QRIS as her payment method. ***U21b "...See you soon!"*** This utterance happens after Berli helps a customer put her groceries into a cardboard box. After Berli gives the groceries to the customer, the customer thanks her and says, "See you soon!" Through this utterance, the customer expresses her expectation of seeing Berli again. This utterance is categorized as a commissive speech act, because the customer expresses her intention to meet Berli again in the future. ***U24 "Ok ok ...."*** This utterance happens when Berli's father asks her to get up and join him for a morning walk on the beach. Berli is still sleepy and reluctant to leave her bed, but she finally agrees by saying, "Ok ok ...." This utterance is categorized as a commissive speech act, because Berli shows that she is willing to follow her father's request and join him for the morning walk.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the speech acts found in Nabila Adani's Berli and The Sea using Searle's theory. The results show that 73 utterances are classified into four types of speech acts: 29 representative speech acts, 26 directive speech acts, 13 expressive speech acts, and 5 commissive speech acts. Representative speech acts are the most frequently used, followed by directive, expressive, and commissive speech acts. No declarative speech acts were found in the story. The characters use these speech acts for different communication purposes.

Representative speech acts are used to give information and say what they believe is true. Directive speech acts are used to ask questions or tell others to do something, such as give orders or make requests. Expressive speech acts show the characters' feelings, such as gratitude, excitement, and disappointment. Meanwhile, commissive speech acts show the characters' intentions to do something in the future.

Through these utterances, the characters can express their thoughts and feelings and communicate with each other throughout the story. Based on these findings, speech acts play an important role in the conversations in Berli and The Sea because they help readers understand the characters' meanings and intentions through their utterances. This study can help readers understand how characters use language for different purposes in a short story. Future researchers can analyze speech acts in other literary works or focus on one specific type of speech act to explore its use in different contexts.

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