

HÀNH ĐỘNG NGÔN TỪ TRONG DIỄN TỪ NHẬN GIẢI NOBEL CỦA MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Kiều Thị Thu Hương*, Nguyễn Ngọc Khánh An†

Bài viết này chủ yếu tập trung phân tích các hành động ngôn từ trong diễn từ nhận giải Nobel ngày 10/12/2014 của Malala Yousafzai, một nhà hoạt động xã hội người Pakistan vì giáo dục của trẻ em và phụ nữ. Bốn loại hành động ngôn từ, hay cụ thể hơn, bốn loại hành động ngôn trung: biểu hiện, chỉ dẫn, biểu cảm và cam kết, được xác định và xem xét về mức độ phổ biến cũng như chức năng cụ thể trong lời nói. Nghiên cứu đã làm rõ sự vượt trội của hành động biểu hiện, và vai trò của các hành động chỉ dẫn, biểu cảm và cam kết. Các phát hiện cho thấy thông qua những hành động ngôn từ này, Yousafzai truyền tải hiệu quả các trải nghiệm cá nhân và sự ủng hộ đối với các hành động tập thể và tức thì, cũng như bày tỏ lòng biết ơn và niềm tin vào tầm quan trọng của một môi trường hỗ trợ sự phát triển của mỗi cá nhân, đồng thời đưa ra các cam kết bảo vệ lâu dài quyền được giáo dục của phụ nữ và trẻ em.

Từ khóa: hành động ngôn từ, hành động ngôn trung, Malala Yousafzai, giáo dục, phụ nữ và trẻ em.

This study analyzes the speech acts employed by Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for children's and women's education, in her Nobel lecture on December 10, 2014. Four types of speech acts, more specifically, illocutionary acts - representatives, directives, expressives, and commissives - are identified and examined for their prevalence and specific functions. While revealing the predominance of representatives, this study also delves into the roles of directives, expressives, and commissives. The findings show that through these speech acts, Yousafzai effectively conveys her personal experiences, advocates for immediate collective action, underscores the importance of a supportive environment for individual growth, and makes lasting commitments to safeguarding the right to education for women and children.

Keywords: speech acts, illocutionary acts, Malala Yousafzai, education, women and children.

SPEECH ACTS IN MALALA YOUSAFZAI'S NOBEL LECTURE

1. Introduction

Speech acts play an undeniably fundamental role in pragmatics, with Mey

asserting their capability to “bring about changes in the existing state of affairs” (2001, p. 111). This study is underpinned

* PGS.TS., Khoa tiếng Anh, Học viện Ngoại giao

† Sinh viên, Khoa tiếng Anh, Học viện Ngoại giao

Email: thuhuongkiu@yahoo.com

by the goal to examine the crucial role of speech acts in persuasive discourse and their potential to influence attitudes, shape beliefs, and ultimately contribute to societal change.

Malala Yousafzai, born on July 12, 1997, in the Swat region of Pakistan, is an esteemed activist for women and children's education. Despite the Taliban's harsh restrictions discouraging women from pursuing education, Yousafzai and her father, who ran private schools for girls, covertly continued to promote education. At the age of 12, young Yousafzai began blogging for the BBC under the pen name "Gul Makai," documenting her life under the Taliban regime. Her activism made her a target, and in 2012, she survived a gunshot attack by a Taliban gunman. Undeterred, Yousafzai continued her mission, and in 2013, she established the Malala Fund to help girls around the world access education. A year later, at the age of 17, she became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. In her Nobel acceptance speech, presented on December 10, 2014, Yousafzai delivered a powerful critique of world leaders for neglecting the imperative of fostering education for women and children. She questioned, "Why is it that countries which we call 'strong' are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace?" (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 485). She also passionately advocated for collaborative efforts to safeguard the rights of women

and children, and emphasized the urgent need for quality education: "Let us become the first generation that decides to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods, and wasted potentials" (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 485).

The speech has been chosen for the study due to the exceptional nature of Yousafzai's case and the profound impact of her words. Her story, recounting the transformation of her homeland into a place of terrorism, the suppression of educational rights, and the resistance of many women and children against these challenges, is a testament to Yousafzai's advocacy. In terms of the speech's relevance to the current challenges, it is evident that the quest for gender equality and quality education remains critical yet challenging in many parts of the world even ten years after the speech was delivered. Ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises exacerbate barriers to education, with over 129 million children out of school globally (UNICEF, 2022). Recent conflicts, such as those in Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza (Palestine), have resulted in alarming civilian casualties, predominantly among women and children, which further disrupts their education and safety (United Nations, 2024). Despite global efforts to improve enrollment rates, completion rates for girls lag behind those of boys in low-income countries, particularly in conflict-affected regions where only 36% of girls complete lower secondary school compared to 44% of

boys (UNICEF, 2022). These issues trigger the urgent need for protective measures and sustained international action to ensure education and equality for women and children.

It is also recognized that Yousafzai's speech is rich in its linguistic values. Several authors have worked on discovering the linguistic patterns that represent Yousafzai's ideologies through the lens of critical discourse analysis (see section 2.3). However, there has been no published research that investigates Yousafzai's speech from the perspective of speech acts that "embody ideological representations of subjects and their social relationships" (Fairclough 2001, p. 131). Consequently, this paper aims to fill this gap by identifying the types of speech acts, employed by Malala Yousafzai in her Nobel lecture, and clarifying her intentions expressed through the use of these speech acts. Hopefully, the analysis will allow for a deeper exploration of how language can be utilized to represent a unique intersection of personal narrative, factual advocacy, and a call to action.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Pragmatics*

The term "pragmatics", as it is commonly used today, can be traced back to the philosopher Charles Morris (1938). Morris was primarily concerned with delineating the contours of the science of signs, building upon the substantial

contributions of Locke and Peirce in the realm of semiotics (Levinson, 1983).

Within the broader framework of semiotics, Morris (1938, p. 6) identifies three distinct branches of inquiry: syntactics (or syntax), which focuses on "the formal relation of signs to one another"; semantics, which examines "the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable"; and pragmatics, which is devoted to "the relation of signs to interpreters".

Yule (1996, p. 4) describes pragmatics as "the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms," and "the study of speaker meaning as distinct from word or sentence meaning" (Yule, 1996, p. 133). Specifically, unlike syntax and semantics, pragmatics is the only branch of semiotics that allows researchers into the analysis of the speaker's actions (i.e. speech acts) that he/she is performing when speaking to gain insights into his/her intended meanings, purposes or goals (Yule, 1996).

2.2. *Speech acts*

Speech acts refer to actions performed via utterances in authentic situations of language use, and can be given labels of *compliment*, *apology*, *complaint*, *invitation*, etc. (Yule, 1996). Paltridge (2000) expands on this by defining speech act as the examination of how speakers use language to perform actions for the listener,

encompassing acts such as requesting, giving orders, and issuing warnings. According to Searle (1969, p. 16), speech acts “are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication.” And linguistic communication is further considered the process involving the participation of “being or beings” and “certain kinds of intentions”.

2.2.1. Direct and indirect speech acts

In distinguishing types of speech acts, the relationship between the structure of the sentence (whether it is a declarative, interrogative, or imperative) and its communicative function (whether it is used to state, question, command or request) is taken into account (Yule, 1996, pp. 54-56). If the relationship is direct, for example, in saying a declarative sentence “You are standing on my foot” (Searle *et al.*, 1980, p. 10), the speaker intends to declare or state the fact to the hearer that the hearer is standing on the speaker’s foot, we can call it a **direct speech act**. However, there might be a case where the speaker says to a hearer “You are standing on my foot” intending to request the hearer to get off the speaker’s foot (Searle *et al.*, 1980, p. 10). This is where the **indirect speech act** comes into play. In essence, the direct speech act expressed by the literal meaning of the sentence lies in the domain of semantics. The indirect speech act, expressed in the speaker’s utterance meaning insofar as it differs from the literal meaning of the sentence, lies within the domain of pragmatics.

2.2.2. Three dimensions of speech acts

Austin (1962) has made pioneering steps in identifying different aspects or dimensions of speech acts. Specifically, when an utterance is produced, the simultaneous occurrence of three related acts (or sub-acts) is needed to compose a speech act. There is first an act of creating a meaningful utterance known as a **locutionary act** (Yule, 1996, pp. 48-49). Normally, a well-formed utterance is produced with a certain communicative “force”, called an “illocutionary force”. According to Mey (1993, p. 112), the utterance “It’s cold in here” has a force or declarative aspect as by performing it the speaker makes a declaration to the hearer.

In Levinson’s words, the second act – **illocutionary act** – has to do with “the naming of a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it” (Levinson, 1983, p. 236). The third act involves the effect of the utterance. The above declaration is considered a **perlocutionary act** (Mey, 1993, p. 112) if it manages to bring about further effects (e.g. having the people in the room close the windows or leave the room). The perlocutionary act here deals with “the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance” (Levinson, 1983, p. 236).

It is worth noting that the illocutionary act stands out as the most extensively and

thoroughly discussed among the three sub-acts. Consequently, the term “illocutionary act” is frequently used interchangeably with “speech act” as suggested by Thomas (1995, p. 51) and Yule (1996, p. 49).

2.2.3. Searle's speech act theory

In 1962, Austin introduced his taxonomy of speech acts, categorizing them based on their illocutionary force into five distinct classes: (1) Verdictives, (2) Exercitives, (3) Commissives, (4) Behabitives, and (5) Expositives (p. 150). However, in the article “A classification of illocutionary acts” published in 1976, Searle (1976) attempts to create an alternative to Austin's original taxonomy. He lists out 12 criteria that distinguish different types of speech acts from each other before opting for four main criteria to classify speech acts, namely the (i) illocutionary point, (ii) direction of “fit”, (iii) psychological state, and (iv) content. Within the examination of these four conditions, Searle offers five categories of speech acts as follows.

(1) Representatives: These are types of speech acts in which speakers express their belief about the truth or falsity of a proposition. They provide factual statements, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions, as in the example: “The earth is flat” (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

(2) Expressives: These speech acts express the speaker's emotions and cover a wide range of psychological states, from pleasure to pain, likes to dislikes, joy to sorrow, or in a real situation can be an act

of *apologizing, blaming, praising, thanking, regretting*, and other expressions of feeling. Although they might be triggered by actions of the speaker or listener, they convey the speaker's personal experience, e.g. “I'm really sorry” or “Congratulations!” (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

(3) Directives: Speech acts belonging to directives are those used by the speaker to prompt someone else to take action. They convey the speaker's wants, whether positive or negative, e.g. “Could you lend me a pen, please?” (Yule, 1996, p. 54).

(4) Commissives: These are kinds of speech acts that the speaker uses to commit himself/herself to some future action. They express what the speaker intends and can be performed by the speaker alone or by the speaker as a member of a group, e.g. “I'm going to get it right next time” (Yule, 1996, p. 54).

(5) Declarations: These speech acts have the power to alter the world (including the surrounding environment and the listener) via utterances. To perform a declaration appropriately, the speaker must hold a specific institutional role within a particular context, e.g. a priest saying, “I pronounce you husband and wife” or a referee declaring, “You're out!” (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

To make it easier to grasp the basic differences between these speech act types, Yule (1996, p. 55) attempts to highlight the 5 distinct general functions of speech acts following the descriptions suggested by Searle (1976) in *Table 1*.

Speech act types	Direction of fit	S = Speaker X = Situation
Declarations	words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	makes words fit the world (of belief)	S believes X
Expressives	makes words fit the world (of feeling)	S feels X
Directives	makes the world fit words (via the hearer)	S wants X
Commissives	makes the world fit words (via the speaker)	S intends X

Table 1. The 5 general functions of speech acts

2.3. Review of previous studies

Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize Lecture has sparked extensive discussions on women and children's education, the impact of wars and conflicts on their right to education, and the utilization of linguistic devices.

Nayar's (2015) study, for instance, examines the influence of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speeches by Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi, which highlight the contemporary challenges in implementing children's right to education in South Asian countries and the importance of protecting this right through calls to action made in these speeches. Similarly, Khan and Seltzer's (2023) research on the impact of terrorism on school enrollment in Northwestern Pakistan during 2004-2016 cites Yousafzai's speech as evidence of the Taliban's attacks on young people opposing them. While these studies address the broader impact of Yousafzai's speech, they do not take into account the specific linguistic patterns Yousafzai uses to convey her message.

When it comes to the domain of linguistics and English Language Teaching, most of the existing studies see Yousafzai's speech through the lens of critical discourse analysis. One noteworthy study is "Rhetorical & Persuasive Language: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Lecture" conducted by Saleh Altam (2021). Altam claims that Yousafzai's speech is chosen for his analysis due to three main reasons: (i) the speech is recognized as one of the most renowned and impactful speeches globally, (ii) it is rich with rhetorical devices, and (iii) it exemplifies a type of discourse that significantly advocates for girls' education and women's empowerment. Using Fairclough's theoretical framework at the micro level, the study reveals that Yousafzai uses figurative and persuasive language to champion girls' education and women's rights. The study also notes that the ideology embedded in Malala Yousafzai's speech promotes women's empowerment, girls' education, and the provision of quality education for all marginalized and oppressed children in the oriental world.

Another study that employs the perspective of critical discourse analysis is “Teaching Persuasive Language through Critical Discourse Analysis of Malala Yousafzai’s Speech” by Fauzi and Ilahi (2021). Using van Dijk’s top-down approach, the authors explore the practical use of Yousafzai’s speech as an educational tool. Their findings show that the speech can enhance English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, through a focus on persuasive language.

Despite the rich contributions the above-mentioned studies have made on discovering the discursive strategies employed in Yousafzai’s speech, none of them have included speech act analysis in their studies. Thus, gaps still remain in the specific analysis of speech acts within this context. Speech act analysis, particularly based on Searle’s taxonomy, has been widely applied in other contexts. For example, Haucsa et al. (2020) analyze illocutionary acts in a promotional interview with Tom Cruise using the descriptive qualitative method and Searle’s classification. The finding reveals that representative, commissive, directive, and expressive types have been used by both interviewer and interviewee with representatives being the most prevalent type of speech act. Using the same framework, Kartika et al. (2023) provide a comprehensive analysis of illocutionary acts in speeches by the late Japanese Prime

Minister Shinzō Abe to show how power is exerted through strategic use of illocutionary acts. As these studies have successfully demonstrated the role of speech act analysis in uncovering intended meanings within utterances, the current study is planned to build on the same foundation to explore a different issue – women’s and children’s rights to education – by examining the speech acts in Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel lecture.

3. Research questions and methodology

3.1. Research questions

Given the gaps identified in the literature, this study aims to address them by examining the specific speech acts used in Yousafzai’s Nobel Peace Prize lecture. With a focus on these speech acts, a deeper understanding of how Yousafzai’s linguistic choices convey her ideologies and advocacy will be disclosed. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed:

1. What types of speech acts are employed in Malala Yousafzai’s speech?
2. How are Malala Yousafzai’s intentions expressed through her use of these speech acts?

3.2. Methodology

The study is intended to analyze the full transcript of Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel lecture, which was delivered on December 10, 2014, in Oslo, Norway¹. After the

¹ Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel Peace Prize lecture has been retrieved from the official website of the Nobel Prize at <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2014/yousafzai/lecture/>.

official transcript of Yousafzai's Nobel Lecture had been obtained, it was carefully read to ensure a comprehensive grasp of the content.

To identify and classify the illocutionary acts in the speech, Searle's taxonomy of speech acts was employed. This taxonomy includes five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Each instance of these illocutionary acts was meticulously marked and categorized based on the criteria outlined in Searle's framework. For the frequency analysis of the identified illocutionary acts, data was recorded and analyzed manually using an Excel table. The Excel table, which is included in Appendix 2 of the study, was used to note down each type of speech acts identified. To further ensure reliability, inter-rater reliability checks were conducted. The second author independently reviewed a sample of the data to verify the consistency and accuracy of the initial coding. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved to maintain consistency.

Once identified, the frequency of each illocutionary act was analyzed. This step endeavored to reveal the most prevalent type of speech acts in Yousafzai's lecture. Then, the contextual factors, including the

overarching themes and purpose of the lecture, along with the variations in the use of illocutionary acts across different sections of the lecture were taken into account to uncover the communicative goals and the impact Yousafzai sought to achieve through her lecture. Thematic analysis techniques were employed to identify and analyze these contextual factors. Initially, the lecture was reviewed to identify recurring themes and key messages. The identified themes were linked to the speech acts to uncover how Yousafzai's linguistic choices served her communicative goals. For instance, the themes of education, empowerment, and peace were mapped against the frequency and types of illocutionary acts to determine how these themes were conveyed through specific speech acts.

4. Findings

Based on Searle's 1976 taxonomy, four out of five types of speech acts are found in Malala Yousafzai's Nobel lecture. They are Representatives, Directives, Expressives, and Commissives. The frequency of their appearances is presented in **Table 2** and the following chart. (For a comprehensive view of the data collected on the four types of speech acts used in Yousafzai's speech, please refer to **APPENDIX 2**.)

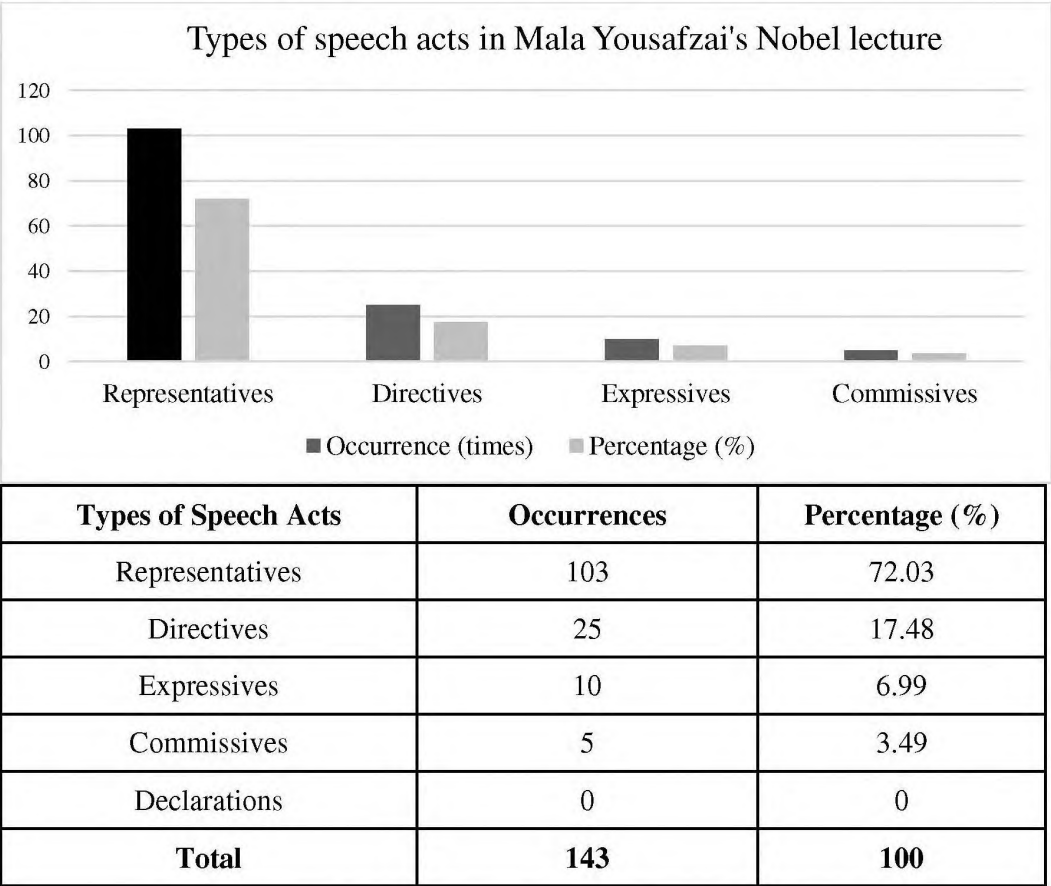


Table 2. Types of speech acts in Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel lecture

As can be seen above, representatives take precedence, encompassing a substantial 72.03% of all identified illocutionary acts. Directives closely trail behind, comprising 17.48%, while expressives and commissives constitute 6.99% and 3.49%, respectively. Declarations do not feature in any part of Yousafzai’s lecture.

5. Discussion

It is essential to note that the absence of the declaration illocutionary act in Yousafzai’s lecture could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, declarations

typically involve the speaker bringing about a change in the external world solely by making the statement (Yule, 1996, p. 53). Yousafzai’s lecture predominantly focuses on raising awareness, urging action, expressing gratitude, and making commitments. The nature of her discourse revolves around influencing the audience’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors rather than explicitly changing the external reality through the sheer force of her words. Moreover, declarations often involve a certain authority or capability on the part of the speaker to effect the change declared

(Yule, 1996, p. 53). Yousafzai, despite her global recognition and influence, may not perceive herself as having the unilateral power to declare significant changes on a global scale. Her emphasis on collective action and the involvement of world leaders suggests a collaborative approach rather than a declarative one.

5.1. *Representatives*

The representative illocutionary acts (or assertives), as delineated by Searle (1976, p. 10), fundamentally involve the speaker committing to varying degrees the truth of a proposition. These acts are assessed on a dimension that includes the binary states of true and false. In her speech, Yousafzai predominantly uses representative illocutionary acts to tell her own stories, share her experiences, and convey her beliefs and advocacy. In the early part of the lecture, Yousafzai playfully mentions the relationship with her younger brothers. The mentioning of these sibling squabbles can be seen as an effort of Yousafzai to break down the assumed image of a Nobel laureate as an untouchable figure.

Despite being the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize at the time, Yousafzai remains humbled and grounded. Through this narrative, it can be seen that the speaker wants people from diverse backgrounds who are listening to the lecture can feel more relatable. This interpretation can also be consolidated by Yousafzai's choice of light words like "pretty certain," which proves her attempt

to get rid of all the barriers and connect at a closer level with her audience:

Extract 1:

"I am pretty certain that I am also the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize who still fights with her younger brothers. I want there to be peace everywhere, but my brothers and I are still working on that."

(Yousafzai, 2014, p. 481)

Yousafzai expresses her belief in the significance of her namesake, which derives from Malalai of Maiwand – an Afghanistnian national heroine and icon of women's courage, and the inspiration she draws from this historical figure. This also reveals her belief in the positive and joyful interpretation her grandfather bestowed upon her name. It reflects her personal belief in the power of positivity and the influence of familial connections on one's identity:

Extract 2:

"I was named after the inspirational Malalai of Maiwand, who is the Pashtun Joan of Arc. The word Malala means 'grief-stricken,' 'sad,' but in order to lend some happiness to it, my grandfather would always call me 'Malala – the happiest girl in the world'..."

(Ibid, p. 482)

Furthermore, Yousafzai employs several representatives to vividly describe the harsh realities inflicted by terrorism and conflict. The illocutionary point of these statements is to convey the factual

and distressing events Yousafzai witnessed: the destruction of schools, the flogging of women, and the loss of lives. Similarly, in addressing global issues, Yousafzai uses a series of descriptions to highlight the seriousness of the issue, mentioning the plight of refugees in Syria, Gaza, and Iraq, the impact of suicide attacks in Afghanistan, the educational barriers faced by children in Africa due to poverty, and the restricted freedom for girls in the north of Nigeria. These serve to provide a factual foundation for her advocacy, emphasizing the urgent need for action to address the problems:

Extract 3:

“When I was in Swat, which was a place of tourism and beauty suddenly changed into a place of terrorism. I was just 10 that more than 400 schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams turned into nightmares.”

(Ibid, p. 482)

Extract 4:

“We see many people becoming refugees in Syria, Gaza and Iraq. In Afghanistan, we see families being killed in suicide attacks and bomb blasts.

Many children in Africa do not have access to education because of poverty. And as I said, we still see girls who have no freedom to go to school in the north of Nigeria.”

(Ibid, p. 484)

Below is a sequence of assertive statements from Yousafzai when delivering her acceptance of the prize, where she repeatedly uses the phrase “It is for (...)” to state the people whom Yousafzai believes are the true beneficiaries of the award. With the complement of a set of adjectives that convey the marginalization of many children around the world like “forgotten,” “frightened,” and “voiceless”. The assertive tone here accentuates the seriousness of the issue, which leads to Yousafzai’s call for action which will be discussed later in the directives section.

Extract 5:

“This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change. (...) It is not time to pity them.”

(Ibid, p. 482)

Especially, when mentioning education, assertive illocutionary acts effectively assist Yousafzai in highlighting its importance:

Extract 6:

“Education is one of the blessings of life – and one of its necessities.”

Extract 7:

“We had a thirst for education, because our future was right there in that classroom.”

(Ibid, p. 482)

And when fair access to quality education is robbed due to wars, conflicts, and discrimination, Yousafzai strongly calls out the politicians and world leaders for their neglect through the use of assertives in the form of interrogative sentences:

Extract 8:

“Why is it that countries which we call “strong” are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard? Why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?”

(Ibid, p. 485)

Having critically and bravely pointed out all the staggering issues faced by children and women around the world, Yousafzai now has the groundwork for creating a compelling call to action, which is done through the use of directive illocutionary acts.

5.2. Directives

Searle (1976) describes directives as attempts of the speaker to influence the hearer to undertake particular actions. In Yousafzai’s lecture, directives serve as the second most prevalent speech act and play an important role in influencing and motivating the lecture’s audience to stand up for women’s and children’s right to quality education. The directives used in Yousafzai’s lecture vary in functions, as they indicate commands, requests, suggestions, and calls to action.

Recalling the time when Yousafzai and her friends confronted the terrorists in Swat, Yousafzai decides to reenact the directives she made to them in her lecture:

Extract 9:

“Have you not learnt, have you not learnt that in the Holy Quran Allah says: if you kill one person it is as if you kill the whole humanity?

Do you not know that Mohammad, peace be upon him, the prophet of mercy, he says, ‘do not harm yourself or others.’

And do you not know that the very first word of the Holy Quran is the word ‘Iqra’, which means ‘read’?”

(Ibid, p. 483)

Though appearing as rhetorical questions, these directives represent Yousafzai’s efforts to instruct the terrorists who have been denying the right to education, killing innocent people, and misusing the name of Islam. Yousafzai commands them to reflect on their actions in the light of the cited religious principles.

Yousafzai’s use of directives is especially strategic in conveying a sense of urgency and responsibility to the politicians and world leaders. Yousafzai starts with a reminder to the leaders that even when they have acknowledged the importance of education, not enough efforts are made to make quality education accessible to all children:

Extract 10:

“It is not time to tell the world leaders to realize how important education is—they

already know it. Their own children are in good schools.”

(Ibid, p. 485)

The core directive, where Yousafzai explicitly directs the leaders to initiate concrete measures for the betterment of global education, comes right after that:

Extract 11:

“Now it is time to call them to take action for the rest of the world’s children. **We ask** the world leaders to unite and make education their top priority.”

(Ibid, p. 485)

To conclude the lecture, Yousafzai employs a series of strong and emotive directives that follow the structure “Let (...)”. This sequence serves as the most powerful final call for collective and immediate actions to ensure a better future for every child and woman, as Yousafzai utilizes several words conveying finality (“the last,” “end,” and “ending”):

Extract 12:

“Let us become the first generation that decides to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods, and wasted potentials.

Let this be the last time that a girl or a boy spends their childhood in a factory.

Let this be the last time that a girl is forced into early child marriage.

Let this be the last time that a child loses life in war.

Let this be the last time that we see a child out of school.

Let this end with us.

Let’s begin this ending ... together ... today ... right here, right now. Let’s begin this ending now.”

(Ibid, p. 486)

5.3. Expressives

The point of expressives, according to Searle, is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. The paradigms of expressive verbs are “thank,” “congratulate,” “apologize,” “condole,” “deplore,” and “welcome” (Searle, 1976, p. 12).

Expressives rank third among the most used types of speech acts in Yousafzai’s lecture, though with a small percentage, and are mostly employed when the speaker expresses her gratitude:

Extract 13:

“Thank you to everyone for your continued support and love. Thank you for the letters and cards that I still receive from all around the world. (...)

Thank you to my father for not clipping my wings and for letting me fly. Thank you to my mother for inspiring me to be patient and to always speak the truth—which we strongly believe is the true message of Islam. And also thank you to all my wonderful teachers, who inspired me to believe in myself and be brave.”

(Ibid, p. 481)

Through these expressives, Yousafzai manages to deliver her appreciation, touch

the hearts of the audience, and most importantly emphasize the role of her family in being a support system for their children's education, as well as the collective effort needed for a girl like Yousafzai to be able to reap all these wonderful achievements and stand in front of the world today to raise the voice for her advocacy.

5.4. Commissives

Commissives, as Searle (1976) puts it, are speech acts with the purpose of obligating the speaker to undertake a future course of action in varying degrees while directives commit the hearer to a certain act, commissives obligate the speaker to one.

Though not appearing with high frequency in Yousafzai's lecture, commissives also serve to illustrate Yousafzai's active role and strong commitment to her advocacy:

Extract 14:

"I am here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice ..."

(Ibid, p. 482)

Yousafzai begins the sentence with the commitment "I am here" to demonstrate her availability and readiness to advocate for women's and children's rights. The phrases "stand up for" and "raise their voices" immediately follow, implying her dedication to providing a platform for the voiceless and defending their rights.

Extract 15:

"(...) I dedicate the Nobel Peace Prize money to the Yousafzai Fund, to help give girls quality education everywhere, anywhere in the world, and to raise their voices. The first place this funding will go to is where my heart is, to build schools in Pakistan, especially in my home of Swat and Shangla."

(Ibid, p. 484)

Here, the verb "dedicate" indicates a committed allocation of resources towards the fight for girl's education. Yousafzai outlines the plan to realize this commitment by using commissive speech acts to specify her funding initiatives for her homeland, Pakistan.

Another example is where Yousafzai utilizes the repetition of the modal auxiliary "will" to commit herself to a life-long journey to ensuring education for all children:

Extract 16:

"*This is where I will begin, but it is not where I will stop.* I will continue this fight until I see every child in school."

(Ibid, p. 484)

With the role of "making the world fit the words via the speaker" (Yule, 1996, p. 54), these commissives have committed Yousafzai to continue her active support and advocacy for the rights of children, particularly girls, and ensuring access to education. Until now, in its 10th year of

operating, Yousafzai and her dad's Malala Fund is still actively working to address all the barriers that keep girls out of school in their communities, aiming to reach their mission of "delivering free, safe, quality education for every girl" (Malala Fund, 2023).

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of major findings

In pursuit of the first research question aiming at identifying the spectrum of speech acts present in Yousafzai's Nobel lecture, this study reveals the use of four types: *representatives*, *directives*, *expressives*, and *commissives*. Declarations remain absent throughout the entirety of the lecture. As for the prevalence of each speech act type, it is discerned that *representatives*, or *assertives*, dominate Yousafzai's lecture. They are followed in frequency by *directives*, *expressives*, and *commissives*.

The second research question requires a closer examination of every type of illocutionary act in the lecture to unravel Yousafzai's intentions. Firstly, through *representatives*, Yousafzai strategically employs her personal stories, observations, and beliefs to awaken global consciousness regarding the imperative struggle for women's and children's education. Secondly, *directives* articulate the roadmap towards this goal by assigning accountability and urging collective, immediate actions from not only political entities but also the public. *Expressives*, in turn, serve as a platform for Yousafzai to

express gratitude to her supporters, concurrently emphasizing the pivotal role of a good support system from the family and society in the positive and holistic development of every child. Lastly, *commissives* commit Yousafzai to her lifelong endeavor, which is to ensure education for all children, with a particular emphasis on empowering girls.

All in all, these findings underscore the potency of speech acts in creating persuasive speeches for the transformative betterment of the world.

6.2. Recommendations for future research

Future studies can significantly benefit from comparative analyses involving Malala Yousafzai's Nobel lecture and speeches from other influential figures advocating for similar causes. Collecting and dissecting more speeches from Yousafzai from the same campaign can also provide a richer understanding of her persuasive linguistic strategies. Additionally, researchers may extend the scope beyond the focus on illocutionary acts to explore in-depth the other two dimensions of speech acts including locutionary and perlocutionary acts to offer a more comprehensive perspective on the role of speech acts in shaping communication. Hopefully, further investigations into other dimensions of speech acts in Yousafzai's speech will be able to provide new insights into how these linguistic devices resonate in diverse sociopolitical contexts.

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APPENDIX 1

THE ENTIRETY OF MALALA YOUSAFZAI'S NOBEL LECTURE

(addressed on 10th December 2014)

A QR code has been generated to access APPENDIX 1 of this study.

Please scan to download the entire PDF version of the speech.



APPENDIX 2

LIST OF SPEECH ACTS FOUND IN MALALA YOUSAFZAI'S NOBEL LECTURE

A QR code has been generated to access APPENDIX 2 of this study.

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(Ngày nhận bài: 12/4/2024; ngày duyệt đăng: 29/11/2024)