

THE USE OF SPEECH ACTS IN A CHILD WITH A SPEECH DELAY IN THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL AUTISM FAMILY

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Abstract: The process of developing language in children is simultaneous with the development of linguistics aspects. It does the same to children with a speech delay that is difficult to use words form to communicate with others at the expected age. These children can also communicate with another person to express their intentions. This research is aimed at analyzing the speech act elements and the functions of speech act uttered by Alistair, a family member, in the YouTube channel Autism Family. The descriptive-qualitative method was used to analyze the data. Based on Yule's classification of speech acts, the results of the analysis reveal that there are four types of speech acts expressed by Alistair, namely representative (49%), expressive (25%), directive (22%), and commissive (4%). This finding suggests that a child with a speech delay as demonstrated by Alistair has the capacity to express various pragmatic meanings, particularly in speech acts. He can perform actions through his utterances and does not think that language is an obstacle to communicate with others despite several difficulties.

Keywords: Autism Family; pragmatics; speech acts; speech delay; YouTube.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language has a very important role in child development. Language is used by children to exchange their minds. Students acquire language since their childhood (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). They begin to comprehend vocabulary choices and structural rules as they learn the language. Noam Chomsky (2002) asserts that children are born with the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in mind. He asserts that children begin to speak their first word at the age of eight months. By listening to and analyzing the language in their surroundings, they can improve their language skills. These skills are divided into receptive abilities (listening and understanding) and expressive abilities (speaking). According to Halliday (1975), children's language development involves the interaction of mental processes and language. Normal children will acquire their first language in a short period. Not only will the environment influence language development but the neurological and biological will also influence the language development of children.

It is extremely challenging for a child with a language-related neurological disability to acquire language skills (Chair: 2009). A child cannot be forced to be able to say something if their biological abilities are not possible yet. Both internal (the child's condition) and external (the

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environment) factors influence a child's ability to speak and communicate. In the meantime, the problem of speech delay in children is a common cause of developmental disorders in children. Speech delay is influenced speech skills in word use which is marked by unclear pronunciation, or ungrammatical speech. Even though the child's parents or others nearby are unable to comprehend what they are saying, they can comprehend what they are saying. According to Handojo (2002:17), children with language disorders have difficulty communicating verbally and signally, resulting in speech and language delays.

Despite this, they are unable to develop language and cannot effectively produce speech. Children with speech delays still can pronounce a word or sentence to communicate with another person for expressing their intentions. Those utterances can be analyzed in the field of pragmatics, especially speech acts. According to Leech (1983:6), pragmatics focuses on the meaning concerning the special circumstance. The listener must comprehend the speaker's utterances, the word or expressions, and the speaker's inferences behind the expression in order to comprehend the speaker's interpretation. Additionally, Yule (1996:3) states that pragmatics is the study of how speakers and listeners interpret and apply meaning to communication. It identifies the implied meaning, the intended meaning, the purpose of the communication assumption, and the goal of individuals in various actions through pragmatics.

For this reason, the researchers try to analyze the speech acts used by a child with a speech delay. Austin proposed the concept of speech acts for the first time in 1962. He stated that speech acts are when someone says something, and s/he also does an act. He added that speech acts are distinguished into three kinds, there are illocutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. In addition, studies of speech acts are crucial for conveying the speaker's meaning to an interpreter. Even Yule (1996) defines speech act as the utterances performed via action. Later, Yule classified speech acts into five categories, which are representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the field of the relationship between linguistics forms and the users (Yule, 1996: 4). Furthermore, Yule (1996: 3) states that pragmatics is the study concerned with the meaning of communication used by the speakers and interpreted by the listener. Besides, Leech (1983:6) states that pragmatics is focused on the meaning concerning the special situation. To comprehend the speaker's interpretation, the listener has to understand the utterances spoken by the speaker, the word or expressions as well as what the speaker infers behind the expression. Moreover, the context also influences what speakers intend. The context is including what the circumstance is, the point at which the circumstance occurs, where the circumstance occurs, who they are conversing with, and in what conditions what is going on. This context exists to help the listener interpret what the speaker's utterance means. Through pragmatics, it discovers the implied meaning, intended meaning, purpose of the communication assumption, and goal of people in various types of action.

Speech Acts

The utterance spoken by the speaker was performing an action, according to Yule (1996:47), a speech act is an utterance that performs an action. It intends that in delivering an expression the speaker has a context to influence the listener of what the speaker said in those expressions. In a conversation, people not only perform the grammatical structure of words but also perform action through their utterances. The capability of speech acts itself is to make sense of the speaker's goal through their expressions for the listener. While Austin (1962) states that a speech act is the performed action in saying something. It implies while the speaker delivers the expression isn't just saying a word yet additionally doing an action. Thus, action is exit not only just to describe the word but also to communicate what the speakers want or feel about any information that will carry a mutual interaction between the speaker and the listener. Austin (1962: 103) delivered that the speech act was divided into three different acts, those are:

a) Locutionary Acts

As indicated by Paltridge (2012:40), locutionary act produces literal meaning. It means the speaker's utterance is equivalent to the word's meaning in the dictionary and doesn't have another intended meaning. For example, in the sentence "*I have a coffee*", this utterance is the same as the meaning in the dictionary and doesn't have any intent behind it. It implies that the speaker simply gives a piece of information that the speaker has some coffee.

b) Illocutionary Acts

According to Sadock (1974:9), the illocutionary act is one more goal of the speaker's expressions. It implies that the speakers have an expected significance behind their expressions, for example, stating, requesting, promising, proposing, shouting, promising, etc. This utterance which has some kind of function in mind is performed via the communicative force. To make a statement, an offer, an explanation, or other communicative purposes. For example, the sentence "*I have a coffee*", can have another meaning like the speaker wants the listener to taste the coffee (an indirect ordering someone to do something). Yule (1996) divided it into five categories of illocutionary acts such as:

- 1) Representative is the illocutionary act of committing to the speaker's truth and stating what the speaker believes. It shows the true condition of the meaning of the utterance. The following is an example:

The earth is flat

That utterance shows the fact that the speakers believe that the earth is flat not circle or square. This is a common fact that everyone knows.

- 2) Directive is a kind of illocutionary act that is used by the speaker to get someone else to do something. An illocutionary act of this kind can obligate the listener. Here is the example of a directive illocutionary act:

Give me a coffee, please

That utterance contains an order. It makes the listener bring the speaker a coffee. It may

happen in the coffee shop when the customer orders coffee to the seller.

- 3) Commissive is an act that makes the speaker commit what speakers said. Additionally, it is the speaker's future action, for example:

I promise to give you some money

An illustration of a commissive illocutionary utterance can be found above. It demonstrates the speaker's potential. Additionally, it demonstrates the speaker's upcoming obligations.

- 4) Expressive is a kind of illocutionary act that conveys the speaker's emotions. It expresses the psychological states. The example is shown by the following utterance:

Congratulations!

The utterance above shows the gratitude expression of the speaker for the hearer's condition. The speaker tries to express their feeling by speaking this utterance to show the speaker's gratitude of what has been done by the speaker.

- 5) Declaration is a type of speech act in which a speaker changes the world with their words. This kind of illocutionary act has the power to alter the world through the utterance it produces. In this context, "change" refers to any circumstance. It could be a person's elevation to a higher status. It could also be someone's owning something. An example of a declaration is as follows:

I declare you husband and wife

The utterance above changes both the two persons' statuses. The status of the man changes from a bachelor to a married man. That also happens to the woman, her status changes.

c) Perlocutionary Acts

According to Alston (2008:18), the perlocutionary act is the effect on the listener after understanding the speakers' utterances. The utterance with a capability without expecting it to make an effect. On assumption, it gives an effect on what one is intended. It means that the act is to get someone to do something, to persuade someone, to convince someone to think about something, to scare someone to be afraid of something, to insult someone to offend about something, and so on. For example, the utterance "I have a coffee" will affect the listener to taste the coffee.

Some researchers have conducted a study on speech acts. There are some similarities and differences between the previous studies and the current study. Wahyunianto, Djatmika, and Purnanto (2020) examined the speech act of autistic students. Their study was entitled *The Use of Speech Act as Communication Strategy of Children with Autism*. They discovered that directive speech acts were used by five elementary school students and two junior high school students the most. This directive speech acts as commonly used to ask or request something. The students with autism used this speech act as a strategy that was helpful for them to ask for

reassurance from the speaking partner, or teacher, to get clear comprehension.

Another study that has a similar point has been conducted by Khairunas (2014), entitled *The Speech Act in Kid of 5 Years Old*. The study reveals that at the age of 5 years old kids are already able to produce utterances containing speech acts, they are directive, assertive, and expressive. The most dominant speech act used is the directive speech act. The five-year-old child can use indirect speech to convey meaning and intention, contributing to their cognitive development.

The type of speech acts is the focus of this research, which uses Yule's (1996) framework. In this instance, the researchers looked at what Alistair said in his daily conversations with his family. Alistair is the youngest member of the autism family to be given a speech delay diagnosis and is unable to speak in a word order. While the Autism Family is one of the channels on YouTube that has three sons with autism. This YouTube channel spread many contains that teach people to handle children with autism. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyze at how a child with a speech delay speaks.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researchers analyzed speech acts from the YouTube channels Autism Family by employing a descriptive qualitative method and purposive sampling. According to Dornyei (2007), the primary objective of qualitative research is to describe natural social phenomena. Nassaji (2015) defines qualitative research as the investigation of data for patterns, themes, or concepts, followed by a verbal description of those data. After that, the data were described to learn more about the information on the speech act in children with speech delay. The data used in this research were utterances from a child with a speech delay. The data were taken from several videos on the Autism channel on YouTube. Alistair is the name of the child understudy. The videos range in length from 5 to 20 minutes. They include the words that Alistair used during his conversation with his family in daily communication.

Table 1 Source of Data

No.	Title of YouTube Video	Length
1.	Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPCReY1EzRU&t=74s , downloaded on January, 7 th 2022	12.17 minutes
2.	Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-XgK_LaFKI , downloaded on January, 7 th 2022	10.37 minutes
3.	Autism Survival at the Mall Challenge, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asray6ZI1NY , downloaded on January, 8 th 2022	16.55 minutes
4.	Autism Boys Steal the Show, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeEvd5zRy48&t=325s , downloaded on January, 8 th 2022	9.00 minutes

After the data were collected, the following steps were taken to analyze the data:

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- 1) Watching the video on YouTube;
- 2) Transcribing the video into written text;
- 3) Examining the utterances that Alistair spoke;
- 4) Classifying the data based on the types of speech acts on the framework of Yule (1996);
- 5) Interpreting the data;
- 6) Finishing the analysis of the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the data that have been analyzed using the framework of Yule about the speech acts classification, there are four categories found in Alistair’s utterances, namely Expressive, Directive, Commissive, and Representative. Alistair used those kinds of speech acts to communicate with people around him. The findings can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 The Speech Acts Classification

No.	Type of Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Expressive	13	25%
2.	Directive	11	22%
3.	Commissive	2	4%
4.	Representative	25	49%
Total		51	100%

Discussion

Based on the data presented in Table 2, there are a total of 51 speech acts that occurred in the interaction between a child with a speech delay and his family. These 51 utterances were spoken by Alistair to the limit of his vocabulary skills in language due to the autism disorder he has. The 51 speech acts were classified into 4 categories, which are Expressive with 13 utterances (25%), Directive with 11 utterances (22%), Commissive with 2 utterances (4%), and Representative with 25 utterances (49%). The most frequently used type of speech acts is representative that he used to express something that he believed in. It is followed by expressive speech act to express his emotion. In the third position is the directive speech act, and the last one is commissive. Meanwhile, declaration was not found in the of data. The explanation of the data is shown below.

Expressive Speech Act

Expressive speech act is a type of speech act that is used to express the speaker's emotions. The use of expressive speech act in Alistair can be seen in the examples below:

Excerpt 1 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

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A: Thanks for this,

Dad: You're welcome, so Alister loves this one quick job. Hey Connor this is your favorite right Skee-Ball,

In Excerpt 1, it can be seen that Alistair can perform expressive speech acts. In this context, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he took the family to the arcade game. The expression 'thank you' indicates gratitude expression toward someone. It is indicated from the utterance that Alistair is trying to show gratitude by saying thanks to his father to take him to the arcade game. The utterance can be categorized as Expressive Speech Acts as its function is to express the emotions of the speaker about the conditions around him. It indicates that a child with a speech delay can feel the emotion of gratitude too.

Excerpt 2 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

Dad: Oh, Connor wins,

A: No!!

Dad: It's okay, you did good,

A: I wanna to win!

Excerpt 2 indicates that a child with a speech delay also can perform expressive speech act. In the context, the utterance was spoken by Alistair when his father states that he was losing the game. As a child with autism disorder, he was very sensitive about any conditions around him. Like in this situation, Alistair was very angry to lose the game and did not believe that his brother wins. Therefore, in the utterance he said is expressing the expressive of disapproval about the condition he got. The expression 'no' was indicating disapproval toward someone or something. In this case, Alistair refuses to lose the game by saying the disagreement utterance to his father. The utterance can be categorized as Expressive Speech Act as its function is to express the emotions of the speaker about the conditions around him. It indicates that a child with a speech delay can feel a dislike emotion toward someone or something.

Excerpt 3 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

Dad: hey buddy are you excited?

A: Cheese!

In Excerpt 3, the utterance was spoken by Alistair when his father asked him about the activity today. Her father asked Alister whether he enjoyed the show today and he answered Cheese. The word cheese is used to express his happiness feeling. As we know, the word cheese is usually used by people while taking a picture to make them smile. In this case, Alistair is using the word cheese to express that he enjoyed the show. He does not say any other word, possibly due to the lack of vocabulary he had because of the autism disorder. Therefore, the utterance he said is expressing the expressive of liking. The expression 'cheese' was indicating that he likes or enjoys someone or something. It indicates that a child with a speech delay can feel the liking emotion toward someone or something by their utterance.

Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts are the type of speech acts that are used to get someone to do something. The use of Directive speech acts in a child with a speech delay can be seen in the examples below:

Excerpt 4 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

A: He's going right there, He's Taking-He's taking it off!

Dad: This is an awesome pinball machine right here. It's got the light rails and everything I got to try this out. Is that exciting Alistair?

In the context of Excerpt 4, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his brother Connor who is playing a game. Alistair was watching his brother while he indirectly ordered his brother to do his interaction. His utterance expresses order to his brother, he states that the game character was running into the other side, so Alistair asked Connor to follow the character by what he said. The expression 'right there' was indicating the place where Connor's character game should go. It is indicated from the utterance that Alistair is trying to order his brother to do what he says. The utterance can be categorized as Directive Speech Act as its function is to get someone to do what the speaker said.

Excerpt 5 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

Dad: okay but talk to us, okay, how old are you

A: um I have hands,

In Excerpt 5, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he asked about his age. Since Alistair has a limited vocabulary, he used his body movement to convey his intention. Like in this conversation, when his father asked his age, Alistair spoke that he has hands. It means that he was commanding his father to count his hand. This sign conveys the meaning that he wants his father to do something which counts his hand. The expression 'I have hand' was indicating the number of Alistair's age that figure it out by the sign language. It indicated from the utterance that Alistair is trying to command his father to do what he says. The utterance can be categorized as Directive Speech Act as its function is to get someone to do what the speaker said.

Excerpt 6 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

D: hey, can I see this switch please because I know you're distracted you can have a switch on the video. How old are you?

A: can you take the charger in a switch. I'll take the charger in the switch,

In Excerpt 6, the utterance was spoken by Alistair when his dad wants him to focus on him. An autism disorder makes it hard for children to focus only on one thing. They can be distracted by anything around them. In this case, Alistair's dad is trying to get his son to focus on him, so he asked to get the switch. After that, Alistair was requesting his father to charge the switch so

he can play it again after this. The expression 'can you' was indicating the request for someone to do something. In this situation, Alistair requests his father to do what he wants. The utterance can be categorized as Directive Speech Act as its function is to get someone to do what the speaker said.

Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive speech acts are type of speech acts that used to commit the speaker action in the future. The use of Commissive speech acts in the child with speech delay can be seen in the examples below:

Excerpt 7 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

Dad: Do you need a break? Alister, do you need a break?

A: I'll get so fast!

In Excerpt 7, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his brother and his father who were accompanying him in playing a game. He lost the game and was angry with others, so Alistair said that he would go so fast. This utterance happens to express his action in the future. After losing the game, Alistair states that in the next matches, he will go so fast that he could win the game. The expression 'I'll get' was indicating a committed action in the future that expresses the child's commits to winning the game in the future by playing the game so fast. It is indicated from the utterance that Alistair is trying to commit to himself for future action. The utterance can be categorized as Commissive speech act due to the future action that will be taken.

Excerpt 8 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

D: hey, can I see this switch please because I know you're distracted you can have a switch on the video. How old are you?

A: can you take the charger in a switch. I'll take the charger in the switch,

In Excerpt 8, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father who was in a small discussion. Her father asked him to take the switch because it makes Alistair didn't focus on his question. When Alistair gives the switch, he orders her father to charge the switch and he offers to do it by himself. He states he would take the charger in the switch is a future action that he would do if his father lets him, he will do it. The expression 'I'll take' was indicating a committed action in the future that expresses the child's commits to take the switch being charged. The utterance can be categorized as Commissive speech act due to the future action that will happen.

Representative Speech Acts

Representative speech acts are the type of speech acts that are used to state what speakers believe about someone or something. The use of Representative speech acts in Alistair can be seen in the examples below:

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Excerpt 9 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

Dad: Alistair likes this one because it has a dragon or something, yeah?

A: Right though, I like to called impossible skill

Dad: Yeah, Elvira huh whoa you're actually pretty good at this

Excerpt 9 shows that a child with a speech delay also can perform representative speech acts. In the context, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he asked about the character in the game he was playing. His father asked the reason why he liked this character and Alistair stated that the character is called impossible skill because the superpower did not exist in this world. As the result, his utterance contains a speaker who believes something like Alistair does the character. He believes that the character was great with his superpower. The expression 'I like to call' was indicating what the speaker believes about something, in this case, Alistair believes the character on the game about power. It indicates that Alistair is trying to show what he believes.

Excerpt 10 (Autism Survival at the Arcade Challenge)

Dad: Hey easy, easy, hey we're gonna, we're gonna try this again another day and you're gonna get better and better. Oh, Connor thank you that's so nice. See, see Connor has no hard feelings

A: It's too slow-slow, but it's too soft

C: Do you want to play different game?

Excerpt 10 shows that a child with a speech delay also can perform representative speech acts. In this context, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he loses the game to his brother. He states that his brother played too slow and he played fast but why he lost the game. He believes that he played fast so he could win the game. In this situation, Alistair believes that his brother played too slowly. The expression 'it's too slow' was indicating what the speaker believes about something running more slowly than him. It indicates that Alistair is trying to show what he believes about how his brother played the game.

Excerpt 11 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

D: how old are you

A: I might be old

In Excerpt 11, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he asked about how old is he. When His father asked the question Alistair did not know the answer about how old he is. He tried to answer his father with his belief about his age. As the result, his utterance states that he might be old. The expression 'I might' was indicating what the speaker believes about himself, in this case, Alistair believes that he was old because he doesn't know his actual age of himself so he just states what he believes about his age. It indicates that Alistair is trying to show what he believes through his utterance about his age.

Excerpt 12 (Autism Speech Delay in 5-Year-Old)

D: so, do you like school

A: I like school of kindergarten

In Excerpt 12, the utterance was spoken by Alistair to his father when he asked about whether he likes school. Alistair tried to respond when his father asked the question. Alistair kept using the same word repeatedly. Alistair wishes to describe his kindergarten experience in this utterance, but his limited vocabulary prevents him from doing so. As a result, all he said was that kindergarten was a place to have fun. He only describes he can play in kindergarten. The expression 'I like' was used to indicate what the speaker believed about something. In this instance, Alistair believes that he liked his kindergarten school, which is why this utterance occurs.

As shown in Table 2, the child with speech delay utters the representative speech act more frequently than any other speech act. The representative speech acts become the speech acts that occur more often to describe what the speaker believes about someone or something. As Alistair has low sensory, he tries to state based on what he believes. There are expressive speech acts in the second position that conveys the speaker's feelings toward something or someone. As Alistair is a child with autism which causes him to be extremely sensitive to everything, everyone needs to be aware of his condition. As a result, it might be hard for him to understand them so it is challenging to comprehend them. In expressive speech acts, the utterances showed the ability in expressing what he feels. In the data, it was found that the function of expressive speech acts were used to show unpleasant emotions. As a child with a speech delay, it may be difficult for Alistair to express their emotion, so by saying the word repeatedly and body language he could express the emotion.

Alistair used directive speech acts to command, request, and force others to do what he wanted. The data indicate that the child has only focused on himself, so the utterances he spoke often make someone understand him. It can be inferred that actually, a child with autism that has a difficulty in communication, but is still able to initiate a conversation, especially when he needs something or wants to express his feeling. Meanwhile, according to the data, commissive speech acts deal with the child's commitment to actions in the future.

This study did not find the use of declaration speech act because it is not commonly used in casual conversation. Declaration speech act can change the world by doing things like naming, declaring war, firing employees, and so on. To put it another way, only the authority can perform this speech act. However, despite the fact that a child with a speech delay can make utterances, their ability to communicate due to a limited vocabulary are still lacking. Their ability to say utterances still has problems as a result of this impairment in language development. Additionally, they are merely repeating a few words rather than saying entire sentences.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that a child with a speech delay has demonstrated the capacity to have pragmatic competence, particularly in speech acts. They can perform the action through their utterances and not think that language is an obstacle for them to communicate with other. Moreover, a child with a speech delay can successfully perform a variety of speech actions effectively. The types of speech acts found in the utterances of Alistair, the child with the speech delay, are representative, expressive, directive, and directive. As can be seen from the descriptions above, a child with a speech delay is already capable of performing speech acts. The most dominant speech act found in the research is representative because it describes what the speaker believes about someone or something. The child focuses his attention to his needs. However, due to their condition, children with speech delay still have difficulty in communicating meaning and intention.

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