



A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN PRESIDENT PRABOWO'S 80TH UNGA ADDRESS

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Abstract


This paper analyzes the challenges of teaching literature in Indonesia's English Education Departments, focusing on material selection and teaching approaches. Future teachers often struggle with linguistic barriers, cultural disconnects, and traditional methods. Through document analysis, this study identifies these obstacles and proposes that a reflective, student-centered pedagogy is key. This entails choosing diverse, appropriate materials, like Young Adult, multicultural, and canonical texts, and shifting from objective-based instruction to interactive, reader-response models. These adaptations aim to boost engagement, bridge cultural gaps, and align university teaching with secondary school curriculum requirements.

Keywords: *International Diplomacy, Pragmatic Analysis, Speech Acts, UNGA Address*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in shaping political, social, and diplomatic relations among nations. In international political communication, language functions not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a strategic tool to project ideology, construct national identity, and influence global public opinion (Rahmani & Saeed, 2024). Consequently, political speeches delivered in international forums can be understood as deliberate linguistic actions designed to achieve specific diplomatic and ideological purposes (Samar et al., 2025).

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) represents one of the most significant platforms for global diplomatic communication. Speeches delivered at the UNGA carry substantial political weight, as they enable states to express leadership, enhance diplomatic standing, and shape international perceptions (Kertcher & Zwilling, 2025). For this reason, examining the language used in UNGA speeches is essential for understanding how political actors strategically employ discourse in international



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diplomacy (Zafran, 2022).

From a pragmatic perspective, Speech Act Theory provides an effective framework for analyzing language as action. This theory conceptualizes utterances as comprising locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, emphasizing the speaker's intention and the effects of language on audiences (Bohn & Frank, 2025). In political and diplomatic discourse, illocutionary acts are particularly significant because they perform functions such as asserting positions, making commitments, issuing appeals, and persuading international audiences (Degaf et al., 2025).

President Prabowo Subianto's first address at the 80th United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2025, addressed key global issues, including international justice, peace, humanitarian concerns, and climate change. The speech articulated Indonesia's diplomatic stance through carefully selected linguistic strategies that emphasized moral responsibility and multilateral cooperation (Zafran, 2022). Given Indonesia's increasing role in global diplomacy, this address provides a relevant and meaningful site for pragmatic analysis.

Previous studies on speech acts in political discourse have largely focused on domestic political settings or Western political leaders (Wibowo & Solihah, 2025). Empirical research examining Indonesian presidential speeches in major international forums such as the UNGA remains limited (Stanislaus, 2021). Moreover, many existing studies emphasize the classification of illocutionary speech acts without sufficiently exploring their perlocutionary implications, particularly in relation to global audience perception (Brahmantya & Juniarto, 2025). This indicates a clear research gap in integrating speech act analysis with audience-oriented pragmatic effects in international political discourse.

Addressing this gap, the present study analyzes the types and functions of speech acts employed in President Prabowo Subianto's address at the 80th United Nations General Assembly and examines their potential influence on global audience perception. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What types of speech acts are used in President Prabowo Subianto's UNGA address? and (2) How do these speech acts potentially shape global audience perceptions of Indonesia? Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute to political pragmatics by enhancing understanding

of Indonesian diplomatic communication and the strategic use of language in international forums (Trisni, 2025).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with pragmatic content analysis to examine speech acts in President Prabowo Subianto's address to the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2025. The analysis sought to identify speech acts and their pragmatic functions in international diplomatic communication.

The data source was the official transcript of President Prabowo Subianto's UNGA speech delivered in New York on September 23, 2025, which was obtained from the United Nations official website and confirmed government sources. Individual utterances performing an illocutionary act were used as the unit of analysis. Because the study focused on a single authoritative document, total sampling was used, which means that all utterances with identifiable speech acts were included as research data.

Data were collected using documentary analysis. The transcript was read several times to ensure contextual understanding, and utterances were segmented based on pragmatic boundaries rather than grammatical sentences. The research instrument was a coding guide based on classical and contemporary Speech Act Theory, incorporating (Austin, 1962) concept of illocutionary acts and (Searle, 1969) classification of speech acts, as well as (Firdaus, 2025) framework for analyzing political discourse.

The data analysis was done in three stages. First, the transcript was divided into utterance-level units with a single dominant communicative intention. Second, each utterance was assigned to one of five speech act categories based on its illocutionary force: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, or declarative. For example, statements asserting facts or policy positions were coded as representatives, whereas statements committing Indonesia to future actions were classified as commissives. Third, the coded speech acts were interpreted to determine their pragmatic functions within the UN General Assembly's diplomatic context, taking into account the institutional setting and international audience.

To ensure trustworthiness, several measures were implemented. To minimize subjectivity, the coding process used explicit theoretical criteria derived from established

speech act frameworks. Documenting coding decisions and category definitions helped to maintain an audit trail. Reliability was improved by repeating coding at various stages of analysis to ensure consistency, and ambiguous cases were re-evaluated using theoretical definitions of illocutionary force. These procedures increased the credibility and rigor of the analysis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The results of the pragmatic content analysis of President Prabowo Subianto's speech to the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2025 are shown in this section. The research objectives are addressed by the findings, which are guided by Speech Act Theory and identify the various speech acts used in the speech, their frequency, and their pragmatic roles in the context of international diplomatic communication.

Five categories representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative were used to categorize 90 utterances with discernible illocutionary activities. The distribution of different speech act kinds is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Speech Act Types in President Prabowo Subianto's

No	Type of Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Example Excerpt
1	Representative	42	46.7%	"Our world is driven by conflict, injustice, and deepening uncertainty."
2	Directive	25	27.8%	"We must act now."
3	Commissive	12	13.3%	"Indonesia is prepared to deploy 20,000 or even more of our sons and daughters..."
4	Expressive	8	8.9%	"We will never forget."
5	Declarative	3	3.3%	"Indonesia today stands on the cusp of shared prosperity..."
	Total	90	100%	

Representative Speech Acts

With 42 utterances (46.7%), representative speech acts make up the most prevalent category. The main purposes of these speaking acts are to frame international issues, describe global situations, and help UN member states develop a common sense of reality.

Because they state current events and offer the speaker's evaluation of global reality, statements like "Our world is driven by conflict, injustice, and deepening uncertainty" and "The global order is increasingly fragmented" were categorized as representations.

The speech emphasizes problem-framing as a fundamental rhetorical technique, as evidenced by the high frequency of representative speech acts. The speaker validates later calls for group action by creating a shared epistemic foundation. This pattern clearly *addresses the research question regarding the predominant types of speech acts used in the speech* by illustrating how representative acts serve as a preparatory stage in diplomatic discourse.

Directive Speech Acts

With 25 utterances (27.8%), directive speech acts are the second most common kind. These statements generally appear in passages where the speaker calls for stronger multilateralism, international cooperation, and quick action. Declarations like "We must act now," "We must strengthen multilateral cooperation" and "The international community must not remain silent" were classified as instructions since their principal illocutionary force is to sway the audience's choices or actions.

The persuasive role of the speech inside the UNGA's institutional framework is reflected in the prominence of directive speech acts. The UNGA offers a valid platform for organizing international responses because it is a venue for collective decision-making. Therefore, rather than showing incidental usage, the frequency of commands shows a systematic pattern of mobilization.

Commissive Speech Acts

Twelve utterances (13.3%) contain commissive speech acts, which are primarily related to Indonesia's pledges to global cooperation and peace. Because they commit the speaker and the represented state to future actions, statements like "Indonesia is prepared to deploy 20,000 or even more of our sons and daughters" and "We will continue to stand with nations striving for peace" were categorized as commissives.

Commissive activities are used to demonstrate Indonesia's legitimacy and accountability as a contributing member of the global community. By converting rhetorical pleas into tangible promises, commissives—while less common than representational and prescriptive acts play a critical role in bolstering the speech's diplomatic goal.

Expressive Speech Acts

Eight utterances (8.9%) contain expressive speech acts, which are employed to express solidarity, moral posture, and emotional stance. These statements are frequently found in parts that discuss shared humanitarian principles, historical memory, and human suffering. "We will never forget" and "We grieve for the innocent victims of conflict" are two examples.

The interpersonal aspect of speech is greatly enhanced by expressive speech acts, notwithstanding their comparatively modest frequency. They enhance the speech's persuasive objectives by humanizing diplomatic discourse and encouraging emotional alignment between the speaker and the global audience.

Declarative Speech Acts

With just three utterances (3.3%), declarative speech acts are the least common group. These statements, such "Indonesia today stands on the cusp of shared prosperity," are spoken when the speaker is placing Indonesia metaphorically into the international system. Because they carry out a symbolic act of defining status rather than only describing or persuading, these statements were categorized as declaratives.

The UNGA's institutional limitations, which make formal declarations with immediate institutional ramifications uncommon, are reflected in the sparse use of declarative speech actions. However, their existence draws attention to key instances where the speaker establishes national positioning on a global scale.

Classification Criteria and Analytical Patterns

Using Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) frameworks, all utterances were categorized according to their dominating illocutionary force. The principal communicative aim served as the deciding factor in situations where there would be overlap, especially between directing and representational acts. Statements that openly sought to affect audience behavior were categorized as directives, whereas statements that asserted states of circumstances were classed as representatives.

In general, a methodical and deliberate pattern of language usage is reflected in the distribution of speech acts. The predominance of directive and representational speech actions illustrates the speech's twin purpose of inspiring international action and fostering a common knowledge of global issues. These results clearly address the research

questions and validate the deliberate use of speech acts in the UNGA address to achieve diplomatic goals.

Discussion

This section critically interprets the findings by looking at how the quantitative distribution of speech acts in President Prabowo Subianto's speech to the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) reflects strategic pragmatic choices shaped by diplomatic norms and institutional constraints. To go beyond a descriptive comparison with previous studies, the discussion integrates speech act theory with political and diplomatic discourse perspectives.

The majority of representative speech acts (46.7%) suggests that the speech primarily serves as a platform for developing shared interpretations of global realities rather than issuing direct policy directives. Representatives, according to speech act theory, play a foundational role in establishing what Searle (1979) calls a shared "direction of fit" between language and world, allowing subsequent illocutionary acts to gain legitimacy. In the context of the UNGA, this dominance implies that diplomatic persuasion is highly dependent on philosophical framing prior to engagement. While previous studies have reported the prevalence of representative acts in international political speeches, the current findings show more explicitly how representatives serve as a strategic preparatory stage that determines the effectiveness of later directive and commissive acts.

The significant presence of directive speech acts (27.8%) emphasizes the speech's mobilizing intent. However, unlike directives in domestic political discourse, which frequently serve as authoritative commands, the directives identified in this study are primarily realized as inclusive appeals. This pattern reflects what (Chilton, 2004) calls the preference for indirectness and consensus-building in international political discourse. In contrast to studies that treat directives as overt instruments of power, the current analysis demonstrates that, in diplomatic contexts, directives function pragmatically as invitations for collective responsibility rather than authority-imposed obligations.

Commissive speech acts (13.3%) reinforce Indonesia's showed role as a responsible and dependable global actor by tying the state to future actions. Commissives serve to transform rhetorical positioning into credible commitment. While (Azad, 2024) emphasizes

the trust-building role of commissaries in diplomatic discourse, the findings of this study suggest that commissives' persuasive force stems not only from their presence, but also from their sequential placement after representative and directive acts. This sequencing improves their interpretability as informed and collaborative commitments rather than unilateral promises.

Although expressive speech acts occur less frequently (8.9%), their strategic placement in sections dealing with humanitarian crises and moral concerns adds to the speech's ethical dimension. According to (Bano et al., 2023), expressive acts help to promote emotional alignment and moral legitimacy; however, this study found that expressive acts work best when embedded in factual and action-oriented discourse. Expressives in isolation risk sentimentality, but when combined with representative and commissive acts, they strengthen both credibility and empathy.

The UNGA's institutional nature can explain the low occurrence of declarative speech acts (3.3%). Declaratives, according to institutional speech act theory, require specific authority and procedural conditions in order to effect immediate change. Declaratives are largely symbolic in the UNGA context due to the limitations of such conditions. Their limited use reflects institutional constraints rather than rhetorical weaknesses.

From a broader perlocutionary perspective, the overall arrangement of speech acts indicates a systematic diplomatic strategy rather than a random distribution. The dominance of representative and directive acts, combined with commissive and expressive elements, shapes Indonesia's image as a cooperative, empathetic, and action-oriented nation. The frequent use of inclusive pronouns such as *we* and *our* strengthens collective identity, supporting (Sun & Subramaniam, 2023) claim that inclusivity improves legitimacy in international discourse.

By combining quantitative patterns with speech act theory and diplomatic discourse perspectives, this discussion demonstrates that President Prabowo Subianto's UNGA address contains context-sensitive and strategically sequenced speech acts. This study advances political pragmatics by demonstrating how illocutionary choices function not only as linguistic categories, but also as tools for diplomatic positioning and international persuasion.

CONCLUSION

This study looked into the types and pragmatic functions of speech acts used in President Prabowo Subianto's address to the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2025, with the goal of understanding how linguistic strategies are used in high-level international diplomatic communication. Based on a pragmatic content analysis of 90 identified utterances, the results show a systematic and non-random distribution of speech act categories.

Empirically, representative speech acts were the most prevalent category, accounting for 46.7% of the total data. This dominance suggests that the speech's primary communicative function was to create shared interpretations of global conditions such as geopolitical instability, humanitarian crises, and the importance of multilateral cooperation. Directive speech acts made up the second largest category (27.8%), indicating a push to mobilize international audiences through collective appeals rather than authoritative commands. Commissive speech acts made up 13.3%, indicating Indonesia's explicit commitments to peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and international responsibility. Expressive speech acts (8.9%) were used to convey empathy and moral concern, particularly about humanitarian issues, whereas declarative speech acts (3.3%) were used the least, reflecting the UNGA's institutional limitations, where formal declarations with immediate legal consequences are uncommon.

These quantitative patterns directly respond to the first research question about the types of speech acts used in the speech, as well as the second question about their pragmatic functions. The dominance of representative and directive speech acts implies a strategic sequencing in which problem framing and shared understanding come before calls for collective action. From a pragmatic and perlocutionary standpoint, this configuration positions Indonesia as a rational, cooperative, and responsible global actor while also encouraging international engagement without coercion.

Beyond summarizing the findings, this study advances political pragmatics and diplomatic discourse analysis by demonstrating how speech act distributions can reveal communicative strategies in international forums. Rather than treating speech acts as distinct categories, the findings show that their persuasive force is determined by their

relative frequency, ordering, and contextual deployment. This study applies classical speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) to contemporary international diplomacy by integrating quantitative evidence and pragmatic interpretation.

Nonetheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single diplomatic speech and the lack of empirical data on audience reactions. Future research could use comparative designs with multiple state leaders or international forums, as well as audience-based or multimodal approaches, to better understand the perlocutionary effects of diplomatic speech acts on global perception and policy response.

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