

# Analysing Zakir Naik's Illocutionary Acts in His Speech about Islam's View on Terrorism & Jihad

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## ABSTRACT

Zakir Naik is an infamous Indian preacher who conveys the meaning of Qur'anic verses on today's social media, primarily using English to reach the widest international audience. The study aims to find out the dominant types of illocutionary acts and functions of speech acts in his speech on terrorism and jihad in Islam's perspective. This mixed method study uses quantitative and qualitative data from his lecture on "Islam and Jihad", analysing the data with Searle's (1986) speech act theory. This study contributes to the pool of linguistics knowledge on the delivery of sensitive topics by detailing how an English as a second language (ESL) speaker conveys religious beliefs to the world.

## 1. Introduction

Language is used by humans in real life situation. This has some communicative goals associated with each other's speech. Speakers express their emotions, ask questions, submit requests, and, commit to the actions they take in words. Language can also be a measure of the breadth of one's insight or the high and low level of civilization of a people, or the poor prosperity of a country.

The nature of language as a communication tool covers various aspects. Firstly, language works according to the situation. Then, understanding the meaning in a communication depends on how and when or to whom the message in the communication is conveyed. Finally, the meaning of an expression/ utterance must be seen from what is meant by the speaker, and what form of language is used and how the function of that language can represent meaning.

The types of language delivered are divided into two. They are direct and indirect speech. Direct speech here is the result of the speaker's quote on what he said, for example "who cleans this room?". While, indirect here is telling and reporting on other people's words, for example, Desy said that I must help her clean this room.

One of the most interesting uses of speech acts is when they are used to give a speech in front of an audience and they interact between speeches and audiences during a question and answer session forum. Of course, giving speeches and public messages meant committing specific and purposeful speech acts, more than when people communicate in ordinary day context (Anwar et al., 2020; Derin et al., 2020). It is including a speaker or preacher to lure his jama'ah or his audience to be interested in what he says and understands what the purpose of his lecture is.

When lecturing, a preacher must understand the concept and material to be conveyed. He must be able to adjust the situation, time and methods as he will impart. From here, the preacher is known by his ability and knowledge to lure the jama'ah or his listeners.

Today, there are many preachers, with their own uniqueness to attract the attention of their jama'ah. For example: a famous preacher with his voice that pitched when he delivered *tausyah* was late Ustadz Zainudin MZ or Ustadz Abdul Shomad who is famous for his humor, and his recitation is easily understood by his jama'ah or his audience. There are still many preachers who have their own character.

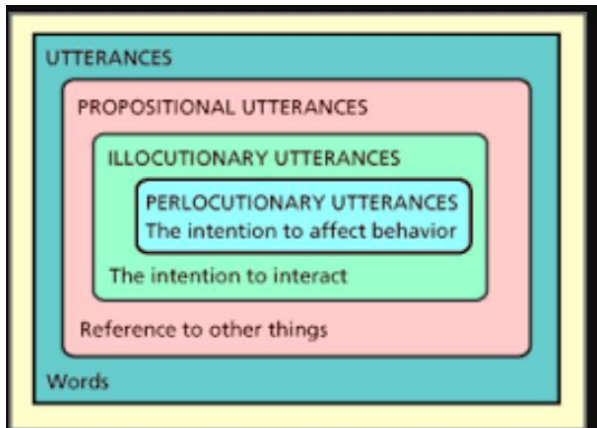
Zakir Naik is an international Muslim preacher from India. He is a Muslim author, comparative expert and a certified medical doctor. He aims to educate the world, specifically Muslim youths, who are doubting their beliefs. He believes that it is the duty of every Muslim to eliminate misconceptions about Islam to defeat the anti-Islamic bias perpetuated by Western media. This study is interested to analyse his speech because he is a non-native English speaker who delivers his preaching using English as a second language. Specifically, this study is interested to determine the dominant types of illocutionary acts and the functions of the speech acts that he uses in his video on the highly sensitive topic of terrorism.

### 1.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between context outside language and speech. According to Leech (1983:105-107), illocutionary acts consist of Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declaratives. Based on the research, it was found that in Zakir Naik there are some elements types of

illocutionary acts performed in the lecture, they are: Representatives, Directives and Expressives. The Commissives acts and Declaratives acts are not found in the lecture.

**1.2. Speech Acts**



**Figure 1.** Speech Act

Speech act is the action or intent that a speaker accomplishes when using language in context the meaning which is inferred by hearers (Searle, 1986; Saragi et al., 2019). It is stated that speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as, making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and so on (Searle, 2012). In the study of language, as in any other systematic study, there is no neutral terminology. Kasper (2006) identifies that speech act theory is the interest of conversation analysis (CA) in studying language as action, according to speech acts as a functional unit in communication (Gowasa et al., 2019).

The distinction between constative and performative utterances put forward by Austin is then replaced by triple classification in several actions. In more detail Austin in Levinson(1983) describes the three conceptions of direct action shown as follows:.

**1.2.1 Locutionary Acts**

The locutionary act is the basic act of utterance or producing a meaningful linguistic expression. Locutionary act is the literal meaning. For example: I have many assignments.

**1.2.2 Illocutionary Acts**

The illocutionary act is the real actions by the utterances, where saying equals doing, as in betting, plighting one’s troth, welcoming and warning.

In the previous example: when a speaker says "I have many tasks", the illocutionary power of the speaker's purpose in producing that speech is to tell the listener about the intention that he has many tasks.

**1.2.3 Perlocutionary Acts**

The perlocutionary act is the effects of the utterance on the listener. It is used to influence the listener. Perlocutionary act appears because of perlocutionary force in the utterance. In other words, perlocutionary is the effect created by illocutionary act to hearer.

From example: after hearing this remark the listener might offer some help. Illocutionary actions and perlocutionary actions are related to intentions and effects.

**1.3 Classifications of Illocutionary Speech Act**

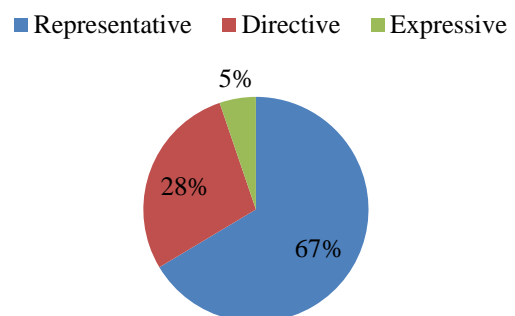
Some linguists have attempted to classify illocutionary acts into a number of categories or types. David Crystal, quoting J.R Searle, provides five such categories as follow. Classification to distinguish speech acts in general consists of several categories, namely classification based on the context of the situation (Brinton, 2010). There are, Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declaratives.

**2. Method**

The research design of this study is a mixed method. This study obtained linguistic data from Naik’s video script of “Islam and Jihad”. This study analysed the illocutionary speech acts found within the video to obtain the qualitative data. Simultaneously, this study categorises the types of speech acts to yield the quantitative data.

**3. Results**

Leech (1993) determined that there are five types of illocutionary acts, namely representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. In Zakir Naik’s video of his speech regarding Islam’s view on terrorism and jihad, this study found he only employed the first three types and found no evidence of the last two types.



**Figure 1.** Percentages of Identified Illocutionary Acts

This study found that the video contains 66.4% representative illocutionary acts . These representative illocutionary acts were found to carry six functions of speech acts, i.e., stating, asserting, predicting, retelling, calling and answering. This study also identified 28.4% evidence of directive types taken of illocutionary acts

which delivers eight speech act functions, i.e., ordering, commanding, warning, suggesting, requesting, forbidding, inviting and asking. Finally, this study found 5.2% occurrences of expressive type of illocutionary acts which delivers two speech act functions, i.e., thanking and appreciating. Table 1 shows the frequencies of the illocutionary act functions this study identified from Naik’s video on “Islam and Jihad”.

**Table 1.** Frequencies of Zakir Naik’s Illocutionary Act Functions

Illocutionary functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Stating	55	2,43 %
Asserting	6	22,3%
Predicting	3	44,6%
Retelling	16	8,37%
Calling	3	22,3%
Answering	5	26,8%
Concluding	-	-
Ordering	4	33,5%
Commanding	8	16,75%
Warning	5	26,8%
Suggesting	3	44,6%
Request	1	1,34%
Forbidding	2	67%
Inviting	1	1,34%
Asking	13	10,30%
Promising	-	-
Refusing	-	-
Offering	-	-
Threatening	-	-
Apologising	-	-
Thanking	5	26,8%
Greeting	-	-
Compliment	-	-
Appreciate	2	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>132</b>

**3.1 Representative Illocutionary Types**

This type of illocutionary act is the most dominantly used by Naik (66.4%). There are six functions carried out by Naik when he used representative illocutionary acts. They are stating, asserting, predicting, retelling, calling, and answering.

**3.1.1 Stating**

“Islam’s view on terrorism and jihad”. [0:04:16] “Islam comes from Arabic "Salam" which means peace.” [0:04:45] “Jihad is the most misunderstood word in Islam.” [0:15:42] “Jihad means to fight/ strive to make society better” [0:16:43] “Jihad means to fight/ try to fight oppression” [0:16:47]

In this situation Zakir Naik explained in his lecture, that Islam was peace. He just straightened out statements in the media about Islam terrorist. Today, the media becomes the most powerful tool to reverse reality and truth.

**3.1.2 Retelling**

“Media is bombarding us with misconceptions about Islam” [0:05:34] “Jihad does not mean any war carried out by any Muslim“ [0:16:14] “Allah raised him alive because he is the only prophet whose followers think he is a god“ [01:06:33] “in his second coming, he will not bring any new rules.“ [01:06:35] “he will come as a people of the prophet Muhammad PBUH“ [01:06:37]

In this situation Zakir Naik told that the danger of a media for us, if judging that what was conveyed was true without seeing and listening the news from its source directly. Here he also shared his knowledge.

**3.1.3 Calling**

“The English people called Bhagat Singh (Indian freedom fighters) as terrorist,“ [0:12:28]“I also disagree that Bhagat Singh is a terrorist, he’s a hero“ [0:13:08]“And at that time the British government called George Washington “terrorist number 1” “[0:13:51]

In this situation Zakir Naik compared or exemplified someone (Bhagat Singh) whom the British called him a terrorist, he was a hero. However, George Washington also called him terrorist number 1.

**3.1.4 Asserting**

“You disagree with that“ [0:13:17]“And if both of them force you to associate with me something that you don’t know about, then don’t follow them, and associate them both in the world well“ [0:18:30]“And unfortunately many people claim to be “Muslim Ulama”“ [0:19:19]“What is mentioned in the Qur’an and the authentic Hadist of Rasulullah SAW“ [0:20:47]“Today, in India, more than 80% of Indians are non-Muslims“ [0:58:20]

In this situation Zakir Naik delivered the contents of his lecture with valid hadist evidence, words in the Qur’an and the holy Bible.

**3.1.5 Predicting**

“A Mujahid is someone who fights and tries to fight his own desires for Allah.“ [0:24:23]“When a syekh wears a turban and beard, he is called religious“ [0:56:00]“Today, the fastest growth in the world is Islam“ [1:01:05]

In this situation Zakir Naik said what had happened in reality.

### 3.1.6 Answering

“Because we know that Bhagat Singh is not terrorist, he is a hero of independence.” [0:12:58] “Yes, he has a divine nature” [01:06:12] “We believe that he raised the dead with God’s permission. That he healed the blind and lepers with the permission of Allah.” [1:08:04] “I believe there is only one and the messenger of Allah is the last prophet” [1:19:13] “Not” [1:19:21]

In this situation, Zakir Naik answered questions from pilgrims in the question and session. He also gave statements or related evidence that he wanted to explain.

### 3.2 Directive Illocutionary Types

The second most dominant type of illocutionary act Naik uses is directives (28.4%). There are 8 types of speech act functions delivered with this type, namely ordering, commanding, warning, suggesting, requesting, forbidding, inviting, and asking.

#### 3.2.1 Ordering

“When we read the Qur’an, we know” [0:20:52] “People who believe and emigrate and fight in the way of God with their property, objects and self, are more at the side of God.” [0:21:30] “For several years, an Englishman came, reservations” [0:57:27]

In this situation, Zakir Naik delivered his remarks to listeners that media statements were not always true, so that it affected those who saw and heard them.

#### 3.1.2 Commanding

“When the US won its independence “number 1 terrorist” George Washington became president in the US. [0:14:00] “Today, the most misunderstood word in Islam is Jihad.” [0:15:36] “And we command humans to do good to their parents.” [0:18:26]

Based on the data above, Zakir Naik provided any knowledge that was in the teachings of religion.

#### 3.2.3 Warning

“So the media is very strong” [0:15:07] “Jihad means to strive or to struggle “ [0:16:29] “In the context of Islam, jihad means struggling/ trying to resist evil tendencies from oneself.” [0:16:34]

From the statements, warning was delivered by Zakir Naik. People often see and even feel in our daily lives, so it seemed true and clear.

#### 3.2.4 Suggesting

“If someone becomes the best scientist, he must know, follow and run the fundamentals of science.” [0:06:48] “And that is the people who get victory.” [0:21:43] “That means they will enter heaven, they will get

salvation.” [0:21:49]

It is clearly found that Zakir Naik suggested to the listener by giving evidence in the form of authentic hadist, the word of God in the Qur’an and the holy bible.

### 3.2.5 Asking

“What is the meaning of fundamentals?” [0:06:15] “What is the meaning of the word terrorist?” [0:11:15] “Why do Muslims become terrorist?” [0:12:15] “do you believe me?” [0:12:36] “why do you agree with them?” [0:13:21]

Based on the data, Zakir Naik had many questions because there was indeed a question and answer session, and Zakir Naik himself gave his Tausyiah about comparisons.

### 3.3 Expressive types

The least type of illocutionary act Naik used is the expressive type (5.2%). He only uses this type at the tail end of his sentences to deliver two speech act functions, which are thanking and appreciating.

#### 3.3.1 Thanking

“Thank you so much” [1:11:58] “Thank you” [1:19:15]

#### 3.3.2 Appreciating

“I appreciate your answer, brother” [2:49:04]

In both situations, this type of illocutionary act is said by the end or as a closing sentence of the question and answer sessions.

## 4. Conclusion

This study on an internationally infamous preacher contributes significantly on the types of illocutionary acts and speech act functions that a non-native speaker uses when they talk about a topic as sensitive as terrorism and religion. The results showed that Zakir Naik, in his speech on Islam and Jihad, primarily uses the representative type of illocutionary act, followed with the directive type, and barely uses the expressive type. Zakir Naik does not seem to employ any commissive or declarative illocutionary acts. Based on the results of the analysis, Zakir Naik uses the illocutionary acts to explain and make the congregation understand better and not be mistaken in interpreting his lecture.

Based on the conclusions and implications explained above, some suggestions will be directed to lecturers and others the researcher. The researchers suggest to the future researcher to learning about speech acts especially in illocutionary acts. In addition, if you want to analyse the types of speech act you can use direct and indirect to found the structure of the utterance. Then, The future researches can use same object of this research in different theory to analyse.

There are many aspects that can be discussed or analysis in Zakir Naik's illocutionary acts in his speech act about View on Terrorism and Jihad. Hopefully this research will be useful to the future researchers who analyse the same theory.

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