

Exploring Al-Ghazali's concept of education: A study of speech acts through English language lens

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the types, functions, and manner of speech acts utilised in al-Ghazali's notion on educational concept. The study employed a content analysis methodology, which entailed gathering data from a variety of sources, including Al-Ghazali's writings and scholarly articles related to his works. The findings of this study reveal that al-Ghazali's idea of education is dominated by directive speech acts, followed by assertive acts and constative acts. The category of recommending acts makes up the vast majority of directive acts, whereas order acts are somewhat less common. Further, Al-Ghazali's use of speech acts tends to emphasize a competitive function, followed by a collaborative one. Interestingly, neither convivial nor conflicting functions are presented in this study. The dominance of directive speech acts, highlight Al-Ghazali's preference for providing guidance and advice to his readers in a harmonious and respectful communication style. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's use of speech acts can be classified primarily as literal and direct speech acts, with subsequent employment of indirect and non-literal forms. These findings contribute to the teaching learning process including English language in applying speech act. Finally, this study highlights the significance of considering the types, functions, and manner of performing speech acts propose to teachers and students in English language teaching learning process.

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1. Introduction

Education aims to transform knowledge, attitudes, and values, and its importance is universally recognized (Agbedahin, 2019). While educational institutions have a formal responsibility for character development, societal factors also play a crucial role. Education is necessary for just social change and for freeing individuals from poverty, inequality (Adams, 2002; Kromydas, 2017), and violence (Muluk et al., 2021; Zainal et al., 2022). The topic of education is frequently discussed in society and has led to the emergence of various experts who provide solutions to problems related to the educational process (Ottaway, 2013; Boyson, 2023; Withrington, 2016). Al-Ghazali, one of the renowned scholars in Islamic tradition, has made significant contributions to the field of education (Hamzah, 2017).

Education employs various languages and methods to facilitate effective knowledge transfer (Musling et al., 2022; Nurman et al., 2022; Zakaria et al., 2022). One of the keys aims of education is to encourage learners to apply what they have learned in their actions, which is known as a "speech act" in linguistic terms (Azhari et al., 2018). Understanding the intent behind a statement or utterance is frequently essential for effective communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2014). Yet, the relationship between the surface form of an utterance and its underlying meaning is not always clear. Critical questions might come up to these issues, what does it truly mean for one action to be performed by another? Are there actually two acts? One act under numerous descriptions? Or a single act with multiple unique objectives?

Insofar as the semantic type of a speech impacts its language behaviour, the semantic kinds of some utterances are also perplexing (Ward, 2016; Petrey, 2016; Silk, 2016). On the one hand, there is evidence that certain speech acts, such as the preceding example, function linguistically like requests: for instance, they can be modified with please, whereas simple questions cannot. Therefore, by exploring Al-Ghazali's speech act it is hoped that this study will provide a framework for understanding the different levels of meaning conveyed through language. Equally important, Al-Ghazali's speech acts can be applied to various aspects of teaching and learn in since language teaching materials should benefit more from the concept of speech act sets and apply them more frequently in order to raise students' understanding of the nature of speech act methods used in the target language (Cohen, 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to address three important research questions through a qualitative content analysis of Al-Ghazali's concept of education. First, what kinds of speech act are found in al-Ghazali's concept of education? Second, what are the functions of speech acts included in al-Ghazali's concept of education? And thirdly, how is the manner in which speech acts are performed in Al-Ghazali's concept of education? This study seeks to deepen our understanding of Al-Ghazali's concept of education and shed

light on the role of speech acts in Islamic education by examining these questions. Ultimately, this research may have broader implications for education, as it reveals how speech acts can be used to influence attitudes and behaviour in a variety of contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1. Speech act

Yule (2022) defines speech acts as the three categories of acts performed by a speaker when uttering a sentence, implying that the interpretation of a sentence's meaning depends on the speaker's intended communication. Further, from Austin's seminal work, he expands on the concept of speech acts, distinguishing between constatives and performatives. He posits that speaking about the world is also an act, involving three acts: (a) the act of communicating with appropriate grammar and words, which may or may not be real; (b) the illocutionary act, which is the act of uttering a phrase in a specific context, such as a promise, caution, or threat; and (c) the perlocutionary act, which is the act (s) the speaker performs by uttering those words, and the audience's future consequences of the comment (Caponetto, 2020). Further, Austin notes that the three acts are identical and understanding what was said requires comprehending the full speech act in the complete speech environment.

In the realm of communication, speech acts are regarded as acts that express a particular attitude, with the type of speech act being performed corresponding to the type of attitude being conveyed (Ward, 2016). For instance, a statement conveys a belief, a request conveys a desire, and an apology conveys regret. The success of a speech act as an act of communication is determined by the audience's ability to correctly identify the attitude being expressed in accordance with the speaker's intention (Richards & Schmidt, 2014).

The initial portion of Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* is characterized by ambiguity as he first creates a tripartite distinction, immediately retracts it, and then implies it again while focusing on the illocutionary act for the remainder of the lectures. According to Austin, a performative adds meaning to a word by satisfying the speaker's goals when uttering the sentence, the speaker's authority, and the context-dependent conventions. For example, in the case of saying "I do," one would only be considered married if they were the groom or bride.

Speech act theory posits that it covers all human communication, yet its application appears more suitable for specific situations, such as education (Cohen, 2022). The three primary components of a successful speech act, namely goals, conventions, and authority, are typically evident in formal education. In this context, the teacher's aim is to teach while the student's intention is to learn, and while there may be other goals in the classroom, these two are the most important (Biggs, 2012). Schools and universities have established rules, processes, deadlines, and tests, and there is a significant amount of role-playing within chains of command (Levin & Riffel, 2019). Within this chain of command, certain individuals are authorized to speak at particular times, such as teachers,

instructors, and pupils. Hence, with established conventions, goals, and authorities, schooling already fits the basic conditions of speech act theory (Pakula, 2019).

Secondly, schooling provides a context for all three aspects of the speech act. Firstly, there is a plethora of information to convey in education, including subjects such as art, physics, philosophy, math, and literature. It also introduces students to other activities, such as making pledges or warnings, using illocutions. Furthermore, education aims to make young people better, more autonomous, moral, and happy, thereby making society better for all. Thus, education provides a rich context for the application of speech act theory's three components (Cohen, 2022).

In some situations, the three-dimensional nature of speech acts may not be applicable. For example, when encountering someone while out in public, passing on information is often conveyed through illocutionary cues such as tone and gesture, rather than through the actual words spoken, as posited by Austin. Thus, in everyday conversations, distinguishing between locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions can be challenging, particularly when attempting to distinguish between perlocutions and the illocutions that generated them (Sbisa, 2019). However, such differentiation remains relevant and valuable in educational settings, where the speaker's utterances encompass all three dimensions of the speech act. When a student enters a classroom, they encounter new locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions, which can provide valuable insights into educational practices (Putra et al., 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022). Additionally, the heightened significance of all three dimensions of the speech act in educational settings can serve as effective tools for examining and analyzing educational practices (Armin & Salmiah, 2021). While illocutions refer to the various ways that information is conveyed, perlocutions relate to the outcomes that are achieved in the future, such as in the students' lives, communities, and societies.

By emphasizing the speaker's intention, Hornsby's account of illocution allows us to better understand how emotions and attitudes can influence the success of a speech act. For example, if a teacher delivers a lesson with the intention of boring their students, then the illocutionary force of their speech act will likely fail to achieve the goal of educating the students. On the other hand, if the same teacher delivers the same lesson with the intention of engaging and inspiring their students, then the illocutionary force of their speech act is more likely to succeed in achieving the goal of education (Cohen, 2022). Therefore, by considering the emotional component of speech acts and focusing on the speaker's intention in performing illocutions, speech act theory can provide a valuable tool for analyzing and improving educational practices.

In examining the distinction between illocution and perlocution, Hornsby, a prominent scholar, proposes a solution that emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in speech acts (Longworth, 2019). He further argues that relying solely on language tests, consequences, or convention is insufficient in isolating and understanding illocutionary speech acts. Rather, the key to illocution lies in the audience's ability to receive and understand the speaker's words, demonstrating a reciprocal relationship. By taking into

account the correct conditions, Hornsby proposes a working definition of illocution, stating that speech acts are illocutionary only if the criteria allow the audience to accept them. As an example, Hornsby considers a math teacher stating "2 + 2 equals 4" and argues that it is illocutionary only if the class accepts it based on the correct conditions.

In certain cases, speech acts are not solely acting of communication but also serve to affect institutional states of affairs in one of two ways (Richards & Schmidt, 2014). Some speech acts officially judge something to be the case, such as judges' rulings, referees' calls, and assessors' appraisals. Other speech acts, such as sentencing, bequeathing, and appointing, have the function of affecting institutional states of affairs in a different way. These acts can only be performed in specific ways and demonstrate the importance of understanding the various dimensions of speech acts in education and other settings (Smith, 2017).

Moreover, Schubert and Rankema (2018) highlight the goal of speech act theory, which is to acknowledge that words, phrases, and sentences serve a purpose beyond conveying information. While information is encoded in language, people use language to accomplish various tasks. Therefore, conveying information often involves more than what words themselves communicate. The term "speech act" should be regarded as a generic term for any type of language use, regardless of whether it is spoken or written.

The illocutionary meaning of an utterance pertains to its social function (Kim, 2019). Thus, in the previous example, the social function of the utterance may be a request to close the window in the room. The perlocutionary meaning of an utterance relates to the intended effect or outcome produced by the speech act. For example, if the previous utterance results in the closing of the window, the speech act has had its perlocutionary effect. Overall, understanding the different types of meaning in speech acts is critical in grasping their function in communication and in developing sociolinguistic competence (Hymes, 2020).

Therefore, by considering the emotional component of speech acts and focusing on the speaker's intention in performing illocutions, speech act theory can provide a valuable tool for analyzing and improving educational practices.

2.2. Al-Ghazali's concept of education

According to Wartini (2016), Al-Ghazali's philosophy of education represents the pinnacle of Islamic thought on education, which emphasizes the integration and reconciliation of different intellectual schools. The main objective of education, according to Al-Ghazali, is to make human beings perfect and to bring them closer to God in order to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter. The ultimate goal of education is utility, which encompasses both material and spiritual aspects and includes both individual and social phenomena. Al-Ghazali believed that the purpose of education is the formation, construction, and completion of manners, so that individuals can differentiate between good and bad and abstain from evil (Ebrahimi et al., 2021).

To achieve this aim, the educational system must be derived from the Quran, which is the primary source of beneficial knowledge (Sheikh & Ali, 2019). The Quran is a divinely revealed guidebook that encourages individuals to study and reflect upon everything around them. The traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) serve as a practical explanation and application of this divine knowledge, demonstrating the Prophet's practice in reinforcing certain behaviours and deterring undesirable conduct (Aidulsyah, 2020).

Imam Al-Ghazali believed that it is the prime duty of Muslims to search for reality through knowledge in accordance with the Quran, which is essential for establishing a person's relationship with Allah. He also asserted that revelation is necessary to gain this knowledge, which is only attained when the heart or soul is pure and untarnished (Samaeng, 2008).

Al-Ghazali's concept of knowledge encompasses religious, secular, and scientific knowledge, and its sum total is a cultured person (Khasawneh et al., 2022). To achieve this aim, an appropriate education system, including a suitable curriculum, effective teaching methods, and knowledge of teaching, is necessary.

According to Sugiana (2019), Al-Ghazali believed that the education of a child should begin with the Qur'an, which he considered as the primary source of Islamic teachings and the word of Allah. Therefore, he took significant steps to improve the curriculum of his time (Muhammad et al., 2022). Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the Qur'an in education was a ground-breaking concept in Muslim education. In addition, Al-Ghazali's teaching procedures align with modern Western educational practices (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). He emphasized the importance of teachers preparing their lessons in advance and actively involving students in the learning process. This aligns with the principles and procedures taught in modern colleges of education. Al-Ghazali also recognized the significance of considering students' previous knowledge to enhance their learning experience. He believed that such an approach would greatly benefit students.

Throughout his teachings, Al-Ghazali emphasized the paramount importance of knowledge acquisition and committing oneself to the process (Hillenbrand, 2020). One of Al-Ghazali's most comprehensive works was *Ihya 'Ulum Al-din*, a multi-volume encyclopaedia covering various topics of interest, including education (Siregar, 2022). In *Ihya*, Al-Ghazali asserted that knowledge is not readily attainable unless one fully devotes oneself to the pursuit of information. He argues that a shallow familiarity with the subject matter yields no benefit. This assertion is corroborated by an Al-Hadist text emphasizing the need for honesty in all actions. Al-Ghazali also proclaimed that sincere dedication is imperative to achieving salvation and coming closer to God (Wartini, 2016).

Al-Ghazali recognized the significance of the family unit as a fundamental and influential factor in an individual's life. He further contended that the pursuit of knowledge should commence at birth and not wait until formal schooling. Al-Ghazali suggested that family members should teach each other, with parents and other adults

serving as primary instructors for children, but also encouraging children to teach their parents (Khasawneh et al., 2022).

Further, Al-Ghazali advised students to complete their spiritual growth before venturing into the corporate sector, recommending immersion in religious studies (Sugiana, 2019). According to Al-Ghazali, "wisdom is the goal of every believer." Furthermore, he advised students to show respect for their teachers and encouraged teachers to be kind to their pupils. Al-Ghazali remarked that small class sizes are preferable to a single student, indicating that interaction among students can yield valuable learning experiences.

Regarding respect, Al-Ghazali posited that a person has three fathers: the biological father, the caretaker, and the educator, with the latter being the most significant. Al-Ghazali stressed the importance of respecting one's educators in this context. Al-Ghazali recommended that teachers should treat their pupils with kindness, similar to how they would treat their own children (Siregar, 2022; Khasawneh et al., 2022). He advocated for the empathetic encouragement of good behaviour while also utilizing appropriate punishment where necessary. Al-Ghazali emphasized the need for teachers to be honest with their students about their progress and to teach only what students are capable of understanding, thus avoiding imparting knowledge beyond their comprehension. Both teachers and students should remember that the ultimate aim of education is to draw closer to God (Wartini, 2016).

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali advised teachers to practice what they teach to avoid confusing their students and to reinforce knowledge retention. He also suggested that teachers' reputations could be more impactful than their words in facilitating effective teaching. He, furthermore, urged educators and parents to consider individual variations in children's learning potential when allocating curricula. Parents should assess each child's learning capacity and potential before planning their education. Al-Ghazali proposed that teachers should "speak to men according to their cognitive level, using pictures and examples," to facilitate effective instruction (Sasmita, 2022).

3. Method

This study utilized content analysis to systematically and objectively analyse the speech act used by Al-Ghazali in delivering his notion on educational concept (Krippendorff, 2019). Through this study, the use of content analysis has allowed for a systematic analysis of Al Ghazali's speech act, providing valuable insights into the different levels of meaning conveyed through language, with potential applications in various aspects of teaching and learning.

The analysis involved a systematic coding of each utterance based on the appropriate speech act category (directive, assertive, and commissive). The data was then subjected to further analysis to identify patterns and themes that emerged from the different types of speech acts using a three-step process. The initial phase of the research process involves data reduction, a methodical approach that prioritises pertinent

information for the purpose of addressing the three research questions. This process entails the collection of data from diverse sources, such as the writings of Al-Ghazali and scholarly articles related to his oeuvre. The ultimate goal of this undertaking is to sift through copious amounts of information and to endeavour in on the most relevant data points that will enable the researchers to arrive at a comprehensive and accurate analysis. By giving the code of each sentences utilized by Al-Ghazali then the kinds of speech act, functions and manner in which speech act are performed in Al-Ghazali's concept of education would be found.

Further, the data reduction process that prioritises important data points will yield clearer and more refined descriptions, thus facilitating the researcher's ability to locate and access the necessary information with greater ease and efficiency. Furthermore, data display is the next step after data reduction in the qualitative approach, the data of this process would be displayed in a chart (the different types of speech acts utilized by Al-Ghazali) with a short description. The research could be verified in sense to be confirmed, revised and repeated by the same or different way.

4. Findings and discussion

Specifically, the data was categorized into percentages to determine the qualifications, functions, and modes of performing each type of speech act. This approach was chosen to provide a more objective and measurable analysis of the data. The results of the speech act analysis are presented in the form of a chart that outlines the various moves and their corresponding percentages.

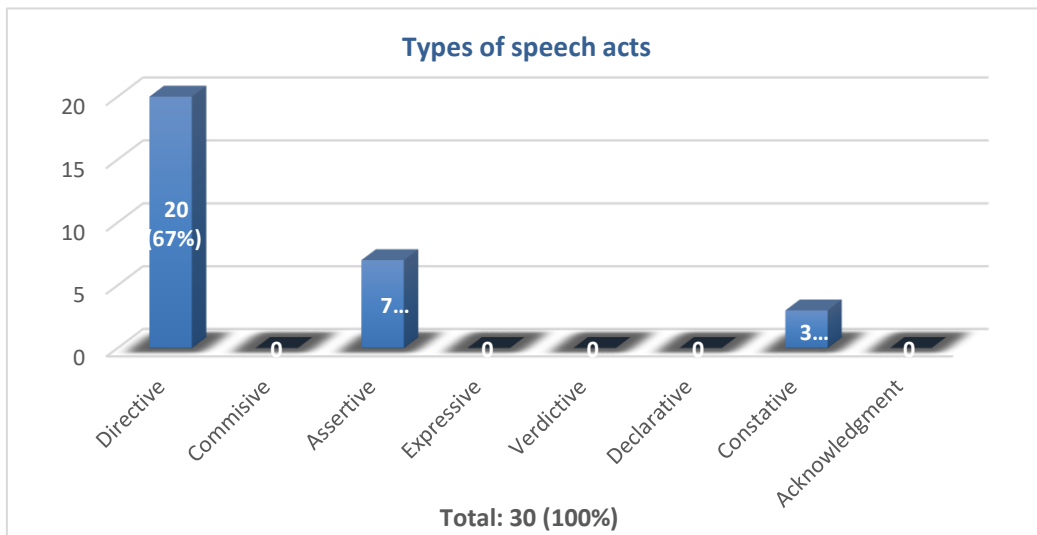


Chart 1. Moves of types of speech acts

As illustrated in the chart, Al-Ghazali predominantly employed directive speech acts in his discourse on education, accounting for more than 50% of his speech acts, with a total of 67%. The second most commonly used type of speech act was assertive, comprising 23% of his speech acts, while constative speech acts accounted for 10%, and

other types were not included. This implies that Al-Ghazali frequently employed suggestions, commands, and requests to instruct his audience in comprehending his ideas on education. Moreover, he employed assertive speech acts to state, explain, and describe matters related to his concepts on education generally.

It is noteworthy that the type of speech act employed by Al-Ghazali is dependent on the topic being discussed. Thus, his discourse on education encompasses various types of speech acts. The moves and the types of speech acts employed by Al-Ghazali are displayed in the table below.

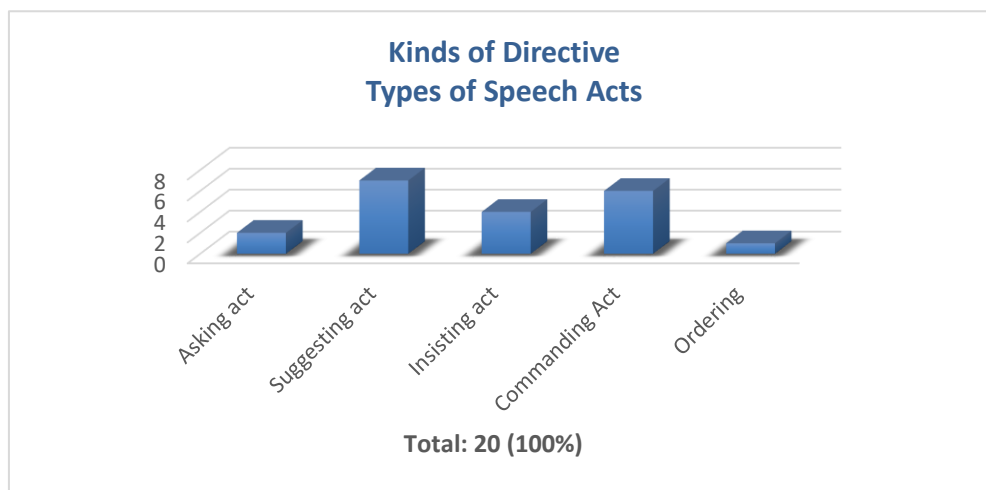


Chart 2. The moves of directive types of speech acts

The chart above displays that the predominant directive speech act utilized by Al-Ghazali in his concept of education is the suggesting act, constituting 35% of the total speech acts. This finding implies that Al-Ghazali employed effective language by giving suggestions to influence individuals to comply with his instructions. Following the suggesting act is the commanding act, accounting for 30% of the total speech acts, while the insisting act comprises 20%. Additionally, the asking act constitutes 10%, and the ordering act is the least used, accounting for only 5%.

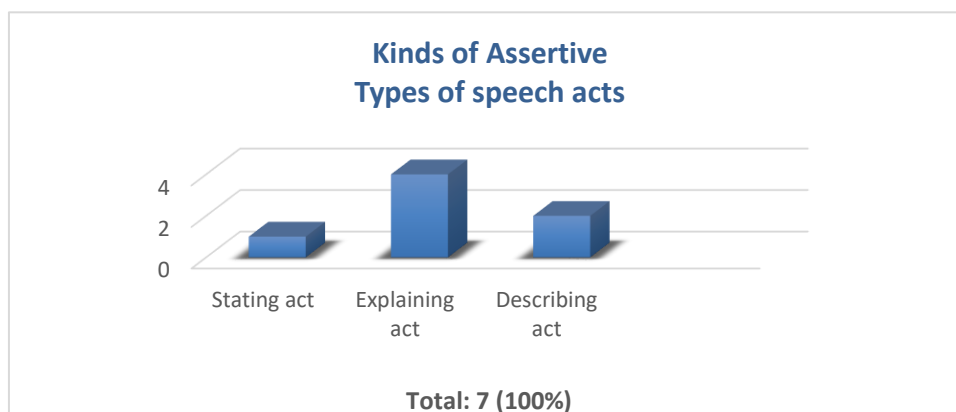


Chart 3. The moves of assertive types of speech acts

Based on the presented chart, it can be inferred that there are only three categories of assertive speech acts utilized by Al-Ghazali, namely explaining, describing, and stating. Specifically, the explaining act was the most prevalent form of assertive speech act, accounting for 57% of the total units. Meanwhile, the describing act constituted 29% of the total units, and the stating act had the lowest frequency, comprising only 14% of the total units. Such findings suggest that Al-Ghazali primarily utilized the explaining act in his discourse regarding the concept of education.

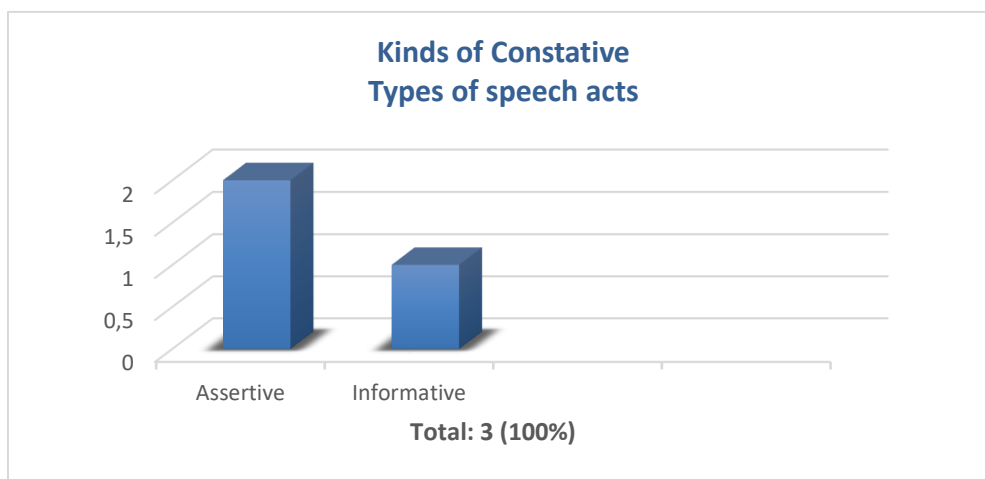


Chart 4. The moves of constative type of speech acts

According to the chart above, the research findings indicate that the constative type of speech act is predominantly classified into two categories: assertive act and informative act, which comprise 67% and 33%, respectively.

Furthermore, the moves of the analysis of function of speech act can be seen as in the following chart:

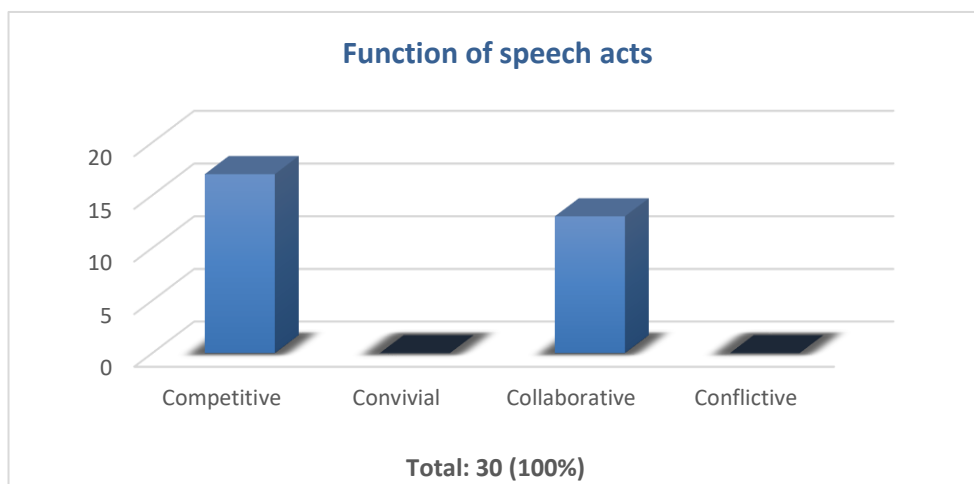


Chart 5. Moves of function of speech acts

As demonstrated in the preceding chart, the competitive function has been found to prevail in Al-Ghazali's employment of speech acts, constituting 57% of the instances identified in this study. Furthermore, the present investigation has revealed that the utilization of various functions of speech acts by Al-Ghazali is contingent upon both the subject matter and the intended audience. Hence, the functions of speech acts employed by Al-Ghazali can be categorized into a multitude of types.

The schema of the various functions of speech acts can be discerned in the ensuing chart:

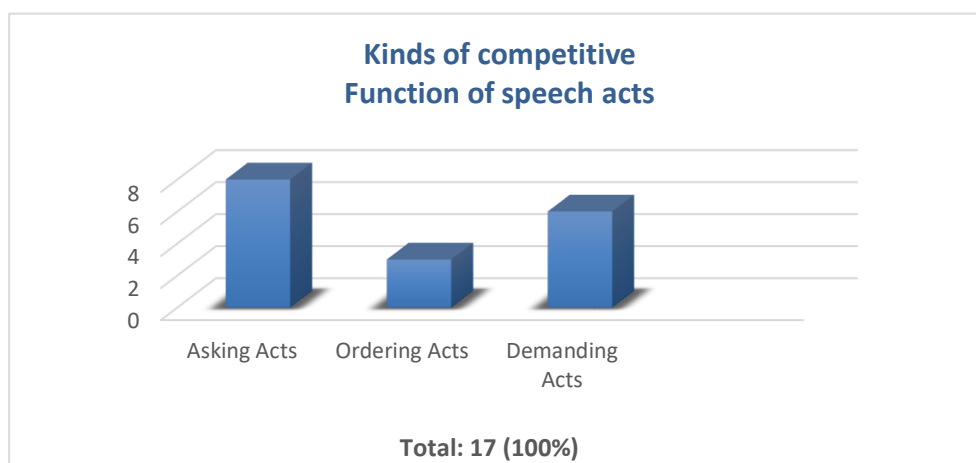


Chart 6. Moves of the competitive function

The aforementioned chart also reveals that the asking act accounted for the majority of competitive functions of speech act used by Al-Ghazali, comprising 47% of the total instances. The demanding act, on the other hand, constituted 35% of the competitive functions of speech act, while the ordering act was the least utilized, accounting for only 18% of the instances. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that Al-Ghazali tended to place particular emphasis on employing the asking act in conveying his ideas pertaining to education.

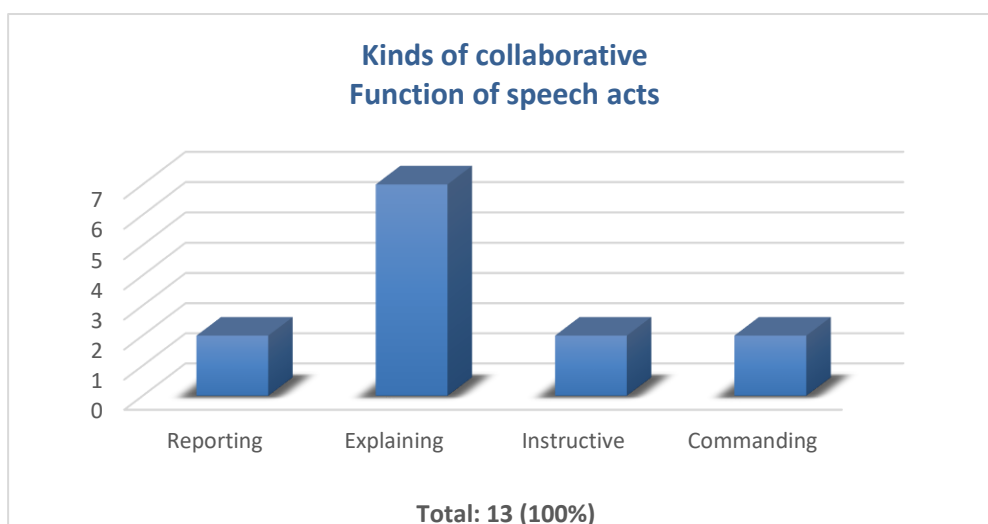


Chart 6. Moves of the collaborative function

Finally, the moves of the way of performing acts can be seen as in the following chart:

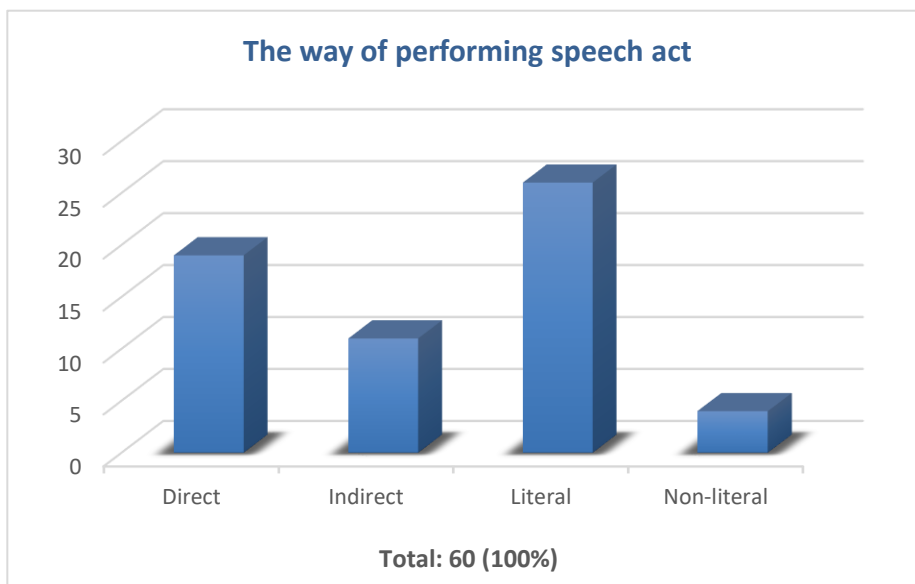


Chart 7. Moves of way of performing act

According to the chart presented above, it is evident that al-Ghazali employs four ways of performing acts in expressing his ideas pertaining to the concept of education in Islamic teaching to the reader. The literal way of performing acts, which occurs when al-Ghazali gives statements and explanations that prompt the reader to take action, is the most frequently used with a percentage of 43%. The direct way of performing acts ranks second with a percentage of 32%, as Al-Ghazali clearly articulates his intentions. In contrast, the indirect way of performing acts, which involves Al-Ghazali asking and ordering the reader indirectly, constitutes 18% of the data. Lastly, the non-literal way of performing acts, which presents the reasoning behind the statements, accounts for only 7% of the data.

Based on the research findings, this study confirms that Al-Ghazali uses of speech acts in his concept of education is dominated by directive, assertive, and constative acts. The predominant category of the directive act is the suggesting act, whereas the ordering act has a relatively lower occurrence. In addition, Al-Ghazali's statements/utterances related to the concept of education and identifies them as locutionary acts.

Al-Ghazali is widely known for his prolific writing in Arabic, a language that is central to the Islamic tradition. However, with the translation of his works into English, a new avenue of inquiry has been opened, one that holds great promise for gaining a deeper and more nuanced understanding of his ideas. By analysing his concepts of education through the lens of speech act theory, it is possible to uncover new insights into the subtleties of his ideas, and their relevance to contemporary educational discourse. In particular, this study highlights the prevalence of recommending acts in Al-Ghazali's works, suggesting a collaborative approach to education, but also emphasizes a

competitive function, which speaks to the importance of self-motivation and self-improvement. Interestingly, the study finds that neither convivial nor conflicting functions are present in his works, underscoring the importance of maintaining a respectful and constructive dialogue. By using speech act theory to uncover the nuances of Al-Ghazali's ideas, this research illuminates the ways in which he used language to convey his notions about education. Overall, this study offers a fresh perspective on Al-Ghazali's ideas, revealing a more comprehensive understanding of his philosophy, and demonstrating the power of language to convey complex ideas with precision and clarity.

5. Conclusion

This study's findings add significantly to our understanding of al-communication Ghazali's style in conveying his concept of education. The study reveals that directive speech acts, particularly the suggesting act, dominate Al-Ghazali's notion of education. The prevalence of suggestive acts reflects Al-Ghazali's desire to provide readers with guidance and advice. This is consistent with Islamic tradition, which places a high value on education and the transmission of knowledge from scholars to students.

However, the investigation is limited to the identification of thirty illocutionary acts, comprising 67% directive acts, 23% assertive acts, and 10% constative acts. Notably, the most frequent category of directive acts is suggesting acts, representing 35% of the findings, while the least frequent is ordering acts, accounting for only 5%. Nonetheless, the study did not detect commissive acts, expressive acts, verdictive acts, declarative acts, and acknowledgment acts. The absence of these types of illocutionary acts might be attributed to the methodological approach employed.

The study also demonstrates that the scarcity of orders, as well as the absence of convivial and conflictive functions, indicate Al-Ghazali's attempt to maintain a harmonious and respectful communication. This is consistent with Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the value of cooperation and respect. Further, the current study sheds light on Al-Ghazali's communication style when it comes to conveying his concept of education. The study reveals that directive speech acts, particularly the suggesting act, dominate Al-Ghazali's communication style. The scarcity of orders, as well as the absence of convivial and conflictive functions, imply Al-Ghazali's attempt to maintain a harmonious and respectful communication with the readers. Therefore, the study's findings can be used to develop effective communication strategies in a variety of fields.

In sum, this study highlight the Ghazali's concept of education is relevant to speech act to apply in English language teaching learning process. It is an important thing to use in linguistics field because Ghazali's concept reveals how speakers use language to perform various actions. Accordingly, applying speech acts based on Ghazali's concept contributes to teachers and students to have better understanding the communication styles of influential figures in education fields, particularly in English language teaching.

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