Are TED Talks Promising to the Audiences? Application of Speech Acts

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Abstract
Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics which involves the study of the contextual meanings of words and phrases as well as sentences in terms of spoken and written communication. As technologically-enabled means of communication, social media and YouTube are prominent and play important roles as marketing tools. In this context, TED Talks are useful for creating awareness among the young generation about significant issues, inspiring, motivating and cultivating their confidence so as to encourage them in the pursuit of their career goals. The ideas promulgated by TED speakers are often impressive, producing powerful influences on audiences. However, it could be rather difficult to comprehend the intended meanings of the language used by these speakers from the pragmatic perspective, where it has its own functions in relation to the choice of words in the speech. Therefore, the present study investigates the way speech acts are utilised by TED Talk speakers and how audiences are attracted to and convinced by their presentation skills. The data was collected from the TED Talks webpage and the talks were based on millennial workplace. The data was analysed qualitatively (Creswell, 2014) by applying speech act theory (Searle, 1979) in the analysis of assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative illocutionary acts. The findings show that assertive types were the most predominantly used by these three speakers in conveying their intended ideas. The findings further reveal that directive types were the second most used by the speakers, the purpose of which was to incite the listeners to deliberate on the ideas expressed in the talks based on the topics. It is hoped that the present study provides ideas to speakers for choosing the appropriate speech acts in conveying their intended messages in their talks.
Keywords: Ted Talks, Speech Acts, Millennial

Introduction

In the context of the information technology (IT) world, where multimedia implementations are essential marketing tools, the very popular TED Talks series are very useful. TED Talks help inspire and give us the confidence to also want to engage in powerful "ideas worth spreading." Content explained through skilled storytelling is infectious. There is a special feeling from seeing it emerge before you rather than having to read it.

Nevertheless, despite the many competent and articulate TED speakers, there are still some who are unable to convey their ideas with expressive words and strong assertions, therefore, eliciting a poor response from listeners (Review Column of TED Talks, 2019)

Cooper observed that audiences attended the Lyceum talks to partake in a "culture of ideas," (Haselow, 2019, p.3) just like TED audiences. Similarly, this is also what is required in constructing a good business presentation as it will help captivate a business audience. There are two essential questions speakers should ask themselves when preparing their presentations: "What's my key insight?" and "What's my big idea?" (Rafieyan, 2016, p.43). Clear ideas and skilled articulation based on intuition and underpinned by pertinent data, information, and unambiguous aims can captivate and transfix an audience.

Science, technology, and development are the primary areas of interest for Lyceum and TED audiences as well as contemporary business audiences. Usually business presentations start by highlighting difficult issues and are followed-up by emphasising technology-based solutions to these problems.

In addition to TED Talks, there are also TEDx Events. There are differences between the talks presented for TED and TEDx. TED Talks cover almost all topics from business to science as well as global issues in different languages presented by prolific speakers. However, TEDx Events especially cater to communities, organisations, and individuals to spark conversation and to connect locally through TED.

TED and TEDx presentations are useful for creating awareness of current trends and for moulding human beings. They are vindication that smart ideas, packaged and delivered effectively by skilled presenters using convincing speech styles, can convince the target audience, thereby helping to revitalise the business prospects of managers, organisations, brands or business models, and even large-scale industries. The usage of pragmatic illocutionary acts in the presentation of an idea should focus on how it can lead to positive change in an individual or organisation.

Background of the Study

Since the foundation of speech or linguistic communication is basically about comprehension of the spoken language, an examination of the meaning of word expressions is important language research. Yule (2006, p. 122) contends that research of the spoken language and its meaning or intent is referred to as pragmatics. Additionally, Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, and Harnish (2010, p. 399) asserted that:

"Pragmatics are being a part of linguistics is the study of word expressions, phrases and sentences in the actual. We not only understand the definition of all the words that we study, but also their usage in regular conversations and speech. To convey a meaning, a message, an idea, or to call for an action etc. Speaker needs to formulate his or her utterances in such a way as to focus the attention of the audience on the speaker and further the speech appears genuine and conveys the intended message clearly".

Ultimately, a talk or speech will produce an impact on the listener. For instance, the listener might be convinced, sceptical, or may want more information, but whatever the consequences of a speech, the speech giver is essentially effectuating an act. The performance or actions of the speaker in this situation can be considered as being comprised of illocutionary acts. Illocutionary acts are closely related to the speaker's primary objectives, such as getting the support of the listener (as in politics), delivering messages, advising, educating, warning, sharing news, or blaming the hearer. The concept that how language is used is central to the creation of meaning forms the principal theoretical basis of this research. Constructing linguistic clarity or enabling comprehensible communication between interlocutors is a robust exercise which involves various elements, such as the structure, setting, and role of the utterance. Dell Hymes (1967, 1972b) coined with the phrase 'communicative competence' in reference to the skill of interlocutors to transmit and define communications, and to negotiate meaning mutually within a given framework.

Utterance study can be carried out for diverse reasons, at different levels of 'delicacy' (Berry, 1975, pp. 177–196; Morley, 1985, p. 24) and employing various techniques. For example, sociolinguists normally employ conversational analysis within an ethnographical approach to identify how linguistic structures of language applications may differ based on gender, age, or the roles of speakers and listeners. In accordance with Fillmore (1981), this research uses speech act theory as an utterance analysis tool to identify links between TED Talk structures and language roles in certain settings.

Pragmatics examines the situational application of language in communication. Leech (1983) states, "It is difficult to fathom the complexities of language except by understanding pragmatics" (p. 1). From the pragmatic viewpoint, language is applied to execute certain functions. For instance, utterances used for giving instructions have certain characteristics. Yule (1996) says that actions carried out as a consequence of the utterance of a sentence is referred to as a "speech-act" or a "language task." Speech acts, as highlighted by Nunan (1999), are "mundane matters people get done using language, such as the act of expressing regret, complaining, informing, complying and warning" (p. 131).

This conception regarding the functions of language led to the postulation of speech act theory, which is regarded as central to discussions about pragmatics. Bates (1996) states that speech act theory was instituted into current language philosophy by Austin in 1962 and thereafter expanded by other researchers. This theory principally reasons that when we speak a language, we are conducting certain acts. As explained by Yule (1996), Austin, in his speech act theory, recognised three distinct types of act associated with or precipitated by the utterance of a sentence: (1) locutionary acts (the speaker's presentation and listener's impression of relevant utterances), (2) illocutionary acts (the speaker's objective of linguistic expression), and (3) perlocutionary acts (the consequence or outcome of the speaker's utterance on the listener).

Speech acts occur beyond the confines of the language dimension of communication. It is essential for people to not only learn the language but also have the skills or ability to apply the language they learned to enable effective communication. The proper application of speech acts learned through experience within the society is vital in the establishment of cultural relations. How speech acts are normally handled in foreign language teaching research emphasizes issues of application encountered by societies of different cultures. For example, in a few instances, establishing the form in which speech acts are applied in Turkish contributes some benefits in teaching Turkish as a native language and foreign language (Deveci, 2010). Thus, description of the speech act approaches applied in the teaching of

various languages should be considered as important. The data from such investigations can provide some perspectives on cultural differences in communication.

Therefore, examination of the speech act strategies used by TED and TEDx speakers is important for informing educators in developing approaches to the teaching of speech act usage in similar public speaking contexts. Hence, the current research examines the types of speech acts were used by the selected TED and TEDx speakers.

Literature Review

In Austin's (1963) view, people, when making utterances, are not only issuing a series of sentences and phrases but also performing acts. For instance, by speaking they are doing something or causing someone to perform an action. Actions such as thanking, requesting, and promising are some examples (Marquez, 2002). Searle (1969) points out that speech acts are authentic occurrences that happen when utterances are made. Hence, Searle observes that the fundamental inference drawn from speech act theory ought to be that the slightest component in human communication results in the occurrence of certain actions.

In Bachman's (1990) view, these acts in communication contexts are connected with the practical aspects of speech. Contrary to morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical features vis-a-vis arrangement of the language forms, the pragmatic dimension of language is connected with generating and comprehending speech acts. These two features play complementary roles in communication.

Searle's View on Speech Acts

The American philosopher, Austin's student, John R. Searle adopted and developed Austin's speech act theory. Since the passing of his professor, Searle has taken on the vital responsibility of further developing speech act theory. Searle holds the view that all linguistic communication encompasses linguistic acts (Searle, 1969, p. 16). Furthermore, he maintains that all the associated verbs within the categories of Austin's classifications of speech acts correspond with the descriptions of the categories (Searle, 1969, p. 10). Searle (1969, p. 24) suggests that performing an illocutionary act infers executing, simultaneously, the propositional and utterance acts. Conducting a speech act entails following specific established rules corresponding with the classification of the act (Huang, 2007, p. 104). Searle has proposed twelve important elements for categorising speech acts but mainly relies on only three of them.

Searle (1979, p. 2) shows that the focus of an instruction can be established by understanding that it is an effort to get the hearer to carry out its function. For example, the focus of a characterisation is to present something as genuine, untrue, correct, or wrong, while the goal of a commitment is that the speaker is impelled to perform a task. Thus, the focus relies on getting the words and the world to relate with each other. For example, in postulations the words must complement something genuine in the world at large, while a pledge entails that the speaker will fulfil his or her promise. This means the world is altered as a result of the speaker's utterances (Searle, 1979, p. 3).

Therefore, in the production of such utterances, the speaker indicates a condition or a viewpoint regarding the propositional subject matter. Searle (1979, p.4) states that "in the presentation of any illocutionary act with a propositional subject matter, the speaker conveys some character to the propositional content" meaning that the speaker articulates his psychological condition when he talks. In line with Searle's view on the speaker's articulation, at time speakers starts the speech with WH-question as an opeming remark whilst it created

alertness to audiences which Searle appends that the psychological condition conveyed in the presentation of the illocutionary act is the candour quality of the act by the speaker. The definitions of speech acts (Searle, 1979) are provided in Table 1. The types of illocutionary speech act consist of assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations. Searle has also provided sample words and sentences, which are used in the current study for the categorisation of speech acts from the TED Talks.

Past Studies on Speech Acts

There were several studies done on speech acts. To delve more, substantial study was undertaken by Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) to determine the speech act aspects of President of Nigeria, Umaru Yar' Adua's speeches. The research pivoted on the pragmatic uses of locution, illocution, and perlocution postulated by Austin (1962) and Searle (1976). The results revealed that the overall relative frequency percentages of illocutionary speech acts for some chosen speeches of Umaru Musa Yar' Adua were assertive = 60%, directive = 35%, expressive = 15%, verdictive = 40%, commissive = 30%, and declarative = 20%. The high assertive frequency may indicate the greater need of it for emphasis in persuasive speech compared to other speech acts. Searle notes that performing assertive speech acts in political or stage talks could be done by the speakers to project a respectable image.

Hashim's (2015) study on the practical tasks of locution, illocution, and perlocution in speech acts utilized some propositions associated with political communication from Dijk (1997, p. 13), political expressions from Beard (2000, p. 18) and speech act theory by Austin (1962). Hashim (2015) was able to ascertain the speech act categorisations for John Kerry's addresses during his presidential campaign in 2004 and George Bush's inaugural speech in 2001. Hashmi's conclusions revealed that the complete comparative frequency ratios for the speech acts in the chosen presentations were commissives = 40%, assertives = 35%, directives = 20%, and expressives = 5%. Hashim's study is similar to Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere's (2012) in that assertives were predominantly used in the political speeches.

Altikriti's (2016) thesis research examined speech acts in Barrack Obama's inaugural speeches (in 2009 and 2013) and his last State of the Union Address (in 2016). Altikriti (2016) focused more on clarifying and determining how speech acts contributed to political speeches. Altikriti applied the speech act classifications from Perloff (2003, p. 34) and revised those on speech taxonomy from Bach and Harnish (1979). Altikriti's findings showed that President Obama utilised more sentences that effected constative speech acts than any other speech acts, while affirmative illocutionary acts were applied to persuade. These findings demonstrate the vital aspect that persuasive speech acts play in political speeches and their influence on their audiences.

The studies of Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012); Hashim (2015); Altikriti (2016) have shown which speech acts are needed for political speech and or any stage talks to create a strong image and impression by speakers. More recently, several other investigations have been done on other speech acts used in various contexts.

Okan Onalan's (2018) research in relation to the current study was to examine the pragmatic language behaviour of Turkish learners of English in conventional complaint settings through the contrast between their speech acts productions compared to indigenous speakers. The information was gathered from 276 participants: 132 native speakers and 144 Turkish learners of English. Acquiring the data involved three different processes: (a) a discourse evaluation task (DET), (b) video-recorded role plays, and (c) open-ended oral interviews. The results reveal that indigenous English speakers' and Turkish learners'

complaints indicate important differences in relation to the linguistic elements and the pragmatic options made in forwarding complaints. A major advancement of the research is the DET, which is a means used for data acquisition applied for the first time in that study.

In line with that, Mahdalena and Anni (2018), in their research, dealt with the illocutionary acts occurring in Acehnese women's casual conversations. The main aim of the study was to examine the different forms of illocutionary acts and study the causes of illocutionary acts occurring in Acehnese women's conversations. This research was carried out using a single case study research design. The information collated was obtained from the sentences and clauses uttered by the Acehnese women in their interactions. A tape-recorder was used to record their conversations. The findings of this research revealed that four kinds of illocutionary acts were recognized in gossip by the Acehnese women: assertives, directives, expressives and declaratives, with assertives being dominant. There were two methods by which illocutionary acts were performed in the Acehnese women's interactions. These were straightforward and circuitous illocutionary acts with the straightforward form being more common. There were four main causes for the illocutionary acts in Acehnese women's conversations: the participants' education, affinity, authority, and amusement, with knowledge being dominant.

Furthermore, Barzani's (2018) investigations expand on the use of speech acts in computer-centred communications, especially in interactions using messaging applications such as WhatsApp, where a large amount of communication occurs. The research was a qualitative content analysis, which used a trial population with 86 sampled status messages posted by 23 participants over four successive days. The sample comprised 13 males (56.52%) and 10 females (43.48%) from different social and educational situations with ages ranged between 14 and 50 years. The study results revealed the distinctness of WhatsApp status updates showed contrasting outcomes from earlier investigations regarding the frequency of speech act events among participants from multiple social and educational settings. Furthermore, this provided an essential insight regarding the comprehension of human attitudes to show the projected meaning of status messages verified and categorised as illocutionary acts.

Communication indicates many things, and it is revealed through many forms such as through expressions, symbols, and even body language. Meanwhile, pragmatic competence is the capacity to use language patterns in various settings, indicating the connection between the speakers concerned and the societal and cultural framework of the situation. Speakers considered as being "fluent" in a second language because of their mastery of grammar and vocabulary of the language in question could still be deficient in pragmatic competence. In this respect, they might not have the ability speak in a language as is acknowledged in social and cultural settings.

Li Yang's (2018) cross-cultural investigations researched the semantic formulae of grievances used by ethnic Thai speakers talking Thai (TTs) and ethnic Chinese speakers talking Chinese (CCs). A sampling of 60 TTs and 60 CCs replied to a twelve-scenario discourse completion task survey and classified the seriousness of linguistic mistakes in each setting. The grievance feedback was catalogued into 12 semantic formulae adapted from Murphy and Neu's (1996), Tanck's (2002), and Gallaher's (2011) templates. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to establish uniformities and variations between TTs and CCs according to the semantic formulae, and a recurrent means test was used to evaluate the effects of societal gap and group standing. The findings revealed that CCs grumbled much more vehemently than TTs because CCs considered the infarctions more seriously than TTs. Even though both TTs and

CCs protested bluntly to socially lower-ranked persons, TTs vented their complaints indirectly to a colleague of lesser social rank more than CCs did. Furthermore, TTs grumbled more forcefully to a colleague than to a close friend, while CCs forwarded their grouses in a more straightforward manner to a close acquaintance than to a casual friend. These results could advance diverse Thai-Chinese interaction as well as inform Thai and Chinese English as lingua franca (ELF) language instruction.

Misyi's (2018) research was focused on analysing the articulations delivered by Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the US presidential candidates' debates. The data were obtained from a transcript made from the video of the final presidential debate between Trump and Clinton made in September 2016. The technique used to analyse the information was arranged into three parts: (1) context description, (2) analysis of the illocutionary acts, and (3) analysis of the capacity aspect. The findings of this study revealed that the speakers employed the speech act for power projection using illustrative, commissive, and eloquence categorizations. It was established by the researchers that each of the speakers were demonstrating their utmost efforts to persuade the people to have faith in them as their choice for president. The findings also revealed that speech delivery in debates when used as a tool to project power can shape voter preference in elections. The importance and use of speech acts in political discourse is well understood in the political arena. Many politicians as a matter of course employ expert speech writers to write speeches that effectively reach out to the people.

Peter's (2019) investigated spoken maritime interactions, classifying impromptu professional conversations from mutual full-operational replication training drills into the illocutionary areas of commands and instructions based upon Searle's earliest categorization. The study embraces a corpus pragmatics perspective by integrating vertical corpus linguistics techniques with horizontal pragmatics interpretations. Investigations of speech acts between groups of native speakers and between-group analyses of speech acts by native and foreign speakers of English were performed and likely prospects for miscommunication tabulated and contrasted. Using the circular Osgood-Schramm communication designs, the back and forth communication was examined in both speaker groups. The results included examining locutionary, illocutionary, and qualitative variations between groups in locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts. These variations were examined as normal determinants in productive interactive acts and as additional components of linguistic mistakes occurring in the maritime field.

Based on the studies discussed above, it is apparent that viewing speech acts from various perspectives shows that speech act analysis is important for comprehending communication as speech acts reveal the speaker's objectives expressed by speech. Lazaraton (2001, p. 105) reveals that oratory skills lessons in all categories are frequently constructed based on the objectives of language use. Lazaraton (2001, p. 112) also proposes that with compilation of research materials on speech acts and distinct versions of English, we will be better placed to provide instruction in performance abilities established on genuine language and discourse designs. The aspect of teaching in improving students' pragmatic ability has been proven to be advantageous. Therefore, the significance of presentation abilities as an important part of the syllabus, especially in EFL settings, should be highlighted. Teachers and instructors must be evaluative users of instruction literature on presentation abilities. Nevertheless, although some research was undertaken on speech acts, as mentioned earlier, no studies have been attempted on TED and TEDx talks to examine if speech acts can be

beneficial to speakers where it is essential for them to be skilled in some speech acts so as to provide a presentable speech that audiences will find attractive to hear.

Methodology

The data for the present study was taken from the TED (Talk 1) and TEDx (Talks 2 & 3) webpages. As the talks are open source (see Appendix A), there was no consent required in obtaining the data; however, an email was sent via a media request form and it was permitted to use in the present study. The talks were given by three speakers on millennial in the workplace with durations of 8-13 minutes. The details of the talks and speakers are provided in Appendix B. Transcriptions of the talks were available on the webpages; therefore, the researcher did not transcribe the videos. The data was analysed qualitatively (Cresswell, 2018) based on Searle's (1979) theory of speech acts based on the five types of illocutionary acts, which are assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations (Table 1). In order to ensure the reliability of the transcribed data, three experts from three different universities with backgrounds in languages and linguistics verified the transcriptions and coding as well as the categorisations, and the agreement was more than 90% (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In delivering TED and TEDx talk, each speaker has to deliver the speech not more than ten mins. Therefore, the speech must be delivered in very concise and accurate manner. For the present study, only selected excerpts were used for the analysis as Li (2002) and Wodak (2013) have noted that due to some rigorous circumstances, to attain the data with such limitations even one excerpt could be considered to have significant value to contribute for the entire study.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis is present based on the occurrences in frequency and percentages of illocutionary acts in the three TED and TEDx talks in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

[Insert Table 2]

Table 2 shows the number of occurrences used by the speaker in the first talk. The most dominant act was the assertive type. The speaker used this type 67 times, comprising 73.3% of the total illocutionary speech acts in the talk. The directive type was used 13 times, comprising 14.2% of the total acts in the first talk. The expressive act was used only once by the speaker, comprising 1% of the total acts in the first talk. The first talk showed the absence of the commissive and declarative acts. Searle (1979) proposed that the declarative type can be used in institutional contexts by a person such as a judge or clergyman who possesses the authority to make decisions.

Extracts

The assertive illocutionary speech act type was used mainly by the speaker to report facts and information as well as to express the speaker's beliefs regarding the employment of multiple generations of people in work places. The directive type was used by the speaker in the first talk to convey certain questions to his audience through the use of WH-question words (what, why, how, who) and the auxiliary verb *do* to ask questions about the age policy in companies. The speaker used the directive illocutionary speech act type to invite the audience to examine how to share wisdom between old and young people in the work place through the utterance "And it's time for us." The expressive type was used once by the

speaker in this talk to express his thanks to the audience at the end of his talk through the next extract: "Thank you."

[Insert Table 3]

Table 3 shows the number of occurrences used by the speaker in the second talk. It was found that the assertive type comprised the first rank among the acts used by the speaker as the speaker used this type 35 times (83%) out of the total 42 acts occurring in the talk. The directive type comprised the second rank, with five acts, comprising 11.9% of the total acts occurring in the talk. Meanwhile, the expressive type was used only two times, comprising 4.7% of the total acts of the speaker. Furthermore, the results of the second talk depicted the absence of the commissive and declarative acts.

Extracts

The speaker used the assertive illocutionary speech act type to introduce facts related to his life and the millennial generation, as in the next extract: "I read a study that states by 2020 roughly 50% of the workforce will be made up of Millennials." Moreover, the speaker used the assertive type to express the speaker's opinion regarding the work force in business, as in the next extract: "what I can guarantee though is in just two years of running their business they will learn more than some will in 20 working behind a cubicle." The speaker used the directive type in his talk to ask audience to let him provide some examples related to his job, as in the following extracts:

 "let me give you an example"
 "let me try to paint you a different picture"

The speaker used the expressive illocutionary speech act type to greet and thank the audience, as in the following extracts:

 "hello"
 "thank you"

[Insert Table 4]

Table 4 shows the number of occurrences of speech acts used by the speaker in the third talk. It was found that the third talk reflected the domination of assertive acts over the other illocutionary types. The assertive type comprised the first rank of the used acts, as the speaker used it 69 times (81.1%) out of the total 85 speech acts occurring in the talk. The second rank was comprised by the directive type as the speaker used it 13 times (15.2%) out of the total 85 acts. The third rank reflected the occurrence of the expressive type used two times (2.3%) out of the 85 total acts. Furthermore, the results of the third talk showed that the commissive type was used only once (1.1%). The results depicted the absence of the declarative type. Searle (1979) proposed that the declarative type can be used in institutional contexts by a person such as a judge or clergyman who possesses the authority to make decisions.

The speaker used the assertive illocutionary speech act type to report information and facts to the audience, as in the next extract:

Furthermore, the speaker used the assertive type to make a conclusion about how people judge him as a millennial, as shown in the next extract:

The speaker used the directive type through the use of wh-words to ask questions about leadership and being millennial.

"why when I remind people of my millennialism do they counter my argument with antidotes about maturity and leadership as if being a leader and being a millennial are mutually exclusive".

Moreover, the speaker used the auxiliary verb *do* to ask questions through the directive illocutionary speech act type, as shown in the next extract:

"do they see you as a forward thinker"

The speaker used the commissive to promise that his generation will change leadership strategy, as shown in the next extract:

"we're gonna change leadership culture across the World".

The speaker used the expressive illocutionary speech act type to thank his parents and audience, as shown in the next extracts:

"Thanks mom and dad"
"thank you"

Discussion

From the analyses of the three TED Talks, it can be seen that the assertive type of illocutionary speech act was the most used type by the three speakers in the three talks as the speakers tended mainly to convey facts and beliefs in their talks to their audiences. These results are similar to Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012); Hashim (2015); Altikriti (2016), but the objectives of their studies were different compared to the present study in which assertive illocutionary speech acts were predominantly used. (Kasper & Rose, 2001; Searle, 1976). Searle (1979) also proposed that a speaker can use the assertive illocutionary speech act type for reporting, asserting, and concluding.

The speakers in the three talks used the assertive illocutionary speech act type mainly to report facts and secondly to express their opinions or make conclusions. The first speaker, Chip Conley, used the assertive type to report facts related to changing his career from the hotel sector to Silicon Valley, as well as using this type to express his own point of view regarding his new work with young staff in Silicon Valley. The second speaker, Keevin O'Rourke used the assertive type to describe himself as a millennial director in the workplace and also to express his opinions regarding how people unfairly judge his generation. The third speaker, Danielle Shoots, used the assertive type to report her mother's opinion towards the millennial generation, as well as using this type to report facts related to millennial leaders. Their predominantly used utterances were assertive compared to what was found in the previous research by Peter (2019) on professional conversations, which indicates that speech act usage may differ based on the speaker and context, such as in TED and TEDx talks.

Furthermore, the results depict that the directive type was the second most used type of illocutionary act by the three speakers in the three talks as the speakers used this type to provoke their audiences to think about certain issues related to the talks' topics. Searle (1979) proposed that a speaker can use the directive illocutionary speech act type variously for asking, ordering, and requesting. The first speaker, Chip Conley, used the directive speech act type through employing several linguistic units such as wh-questions and the auxiliary verb *do* to ask about hiring policy in companies and whether that is based on any particular age strategy. Moreover, he used this speech act type to advise companies about experience exchange between young and old staff members. The second speaker, Keevin O'Rourke, used the directive illocutionary speech act type to make requests through *let + me* verb phrases to express his opinion to the audience. The third speaker, Danielle Shoots, used the directive speech act type through various linguistic expressions such as the phrase *Let me*, wh-questions, and the auxiliary verb *do* to pose many questions about the millennial generation. Moreover, the expressive illocutionary type comprised the third rank of the speech act types used by the three speakers in the three talks mainly to convey greetings and thanks to the audience. The first speaker, Chip Conley, used the expressive illocutionary speech act type once only to thank the audience at the end of his talk. On the other hand, the second speaker, Keevin O'Rourke, used the expressive type only twice in his talk to greet and thank his audience. Additionally, the third speaker, Danielle Shoots, used the expressive type twice to thank her parents and audience in her talk. The commissive type comprised the fourth rank of the used types of illocutionary acts in the three talks of the three speakers as the talks are mainly used to convey facts and not to make promises to the audience. The first and second speakers did not use the commissive illocutionary speech act type in their talks as the TED programme is used mainly by speakers to express thoughts and facts. The third speaker, Danielle Shoots, used the commissive speech act type only once to promise that the millennial generation will change the concept of leadership all over the world.

In general, it is clear that the three speakers aimed mainly to convey thoughts, facts and opinions to audiences through the assertive illocutionary speech act type. Furthermore, the directive type was the second most used type of illocutionary act by the three speakers. They used it to convey several requests and questions to audiences through their talks. It can be concluded that these two types illocutionary speech act may be ascribing the meaning of content of the speech. In other words, these illocutionary speech acts could bring to the fore meaning. It may also portray the personality of the speaker by giving accurate and fact information. This is followed by the speaker delivers a speech in a very direct manner which creates promising by filling the hearts and minds of the audiences with great expectations and hopes.

Implication
This study may help to shed light on the type of illocutionary acts that form the structure of TED and TEDx talks as the previous studies in the literature reflected a dearth of such research. The results of this study showed that the assertive illocutionary speech act is the most influential type in the three talks, followed by the directive type. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study will be of help to speakers in choosing the suitable formulae of illocutionary acts in order to convey influential messages through their talks, especially to millennial people and Generation Y. In line with the viewers' feedback after watching the TED and TEDX talks on YouTube that use the appropriate words to convey the message to the

audiences. The audiences may wrongly interpret if the speaker does not use the appropriate words.

The identification of favourable assertive words and incorporating them in stage talks would be fruitful and interesting. It is also important to examine how other speech acts, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative, are incorporated into other speeches to show their patterns of usage in the talks. Apart from that, those speech act elements could be included in teaching modules for effective presentation skills to facilitate learners in making more effective speeches. At times, the knowledge of how to use such speech acts may be needed by speakers to emphasise and add value to the content of their speeches. As most stage talks are meant to be informative, relying on facts and conveying information from reading and research, the combination of speech acts the speakers know from those sources may contribute to the linguistic repertoire deployed in their speeches.

Conclusion

This research examined the various types of illocutionary acts used by three speakers in three Ted talks on the topic of millennial. In the three talks, the speakers conveyed their thoughts and facts through the use of the assertive type of illocutionary speech act more than they used any other type. Moreover, the speakers asked their audiences several direct and indirect questions through the use of the directive type of illocutionary speech act as a means of provoking, stimulating, and encouraging them to think about the issues of the talks. Furthermore, the speakers used the expressive illocutionary speech act type to express thanks and greetings to their audience, whereas the commissive type was used by one speaker only in the third talk. Finally, the results showed the lack of any occurrence of the declarative type of illocutionary speech act in the three talks, which is because it is normally only used in institutional contexts (Searle, 1979). Further research can be done by looking at more scientific topics. It may also be possible to obtain more in-depth findings on using speech acts by expanding the scope of research to other contexts and larger sample sizes.

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