



# A Confessional Discourse of Female Senator Responding Slut-Shaming: An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts

Shania S. P. Mulyono<sup>(✉)</sup> and Lina P. Hartanti

English Department, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia  
shania.18067@mhs.unesa.ac.id

**Abstract.** This study analyses the use of illocutionary types of BBC Youtube channel ‘You’re not fit to call yourself men,’ Sarah Hanson-Young tells senators, where Senator Sarah Hanson-Young was being slut shamed by other members of the parliament. This study uses the descriptive qualitative method. The objectives of this study are to find the illocutionary acts used in the speech and also to figure out how the contribution of the confessional discourse. Documentation technique was used to collect the data, and the data were then analysed by using Searle’s theory, and Mills and Mandziukk. The results of this study showed that 2 illocutionary acts were equally dominant in the speech which was assertive and expressive. In addition, Declaratives were less dominant, and the two other types, directives and commissives, were not found in the speech. This study also found that the speaker’s use of illocutionary acts to perform her confessional was a successful technique to engage other members of parliament.

**Keywords:** Illocutionary acts · Confessional discourse · Calling out

## 1 Introduction

The illocutionary act expresses the speaker’s intention to the listener. Illocutionary activities are concerned with the speaker’s aim while communicating with the listener. An illocutionary act is a speech made for a specified aim. Somebody might use it to make a declaration, an offer, an explanation in many type of communication. The illocutionary act is categorized as doing something from the hidden meaning of utterances according to Ratri and Bram [1]. According to theories of speech acts, humans employ words to execute a variety of activities, and when utterances are uttered, a certain action is done. The “How to Do Things with Words Hypothesis” is another name for the Speech Acts theory [2]. They can change the empirical verifiability of signs from a constative to a performative concept; that is, the truthfulness of signs to what an expression does when it is said. Austine [3] divides speech actions into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Illocutionary activities are central to any account of speech acts. By differentiating between direct and indirect speech actions, Searle [4] builds on Austine [3] theory. Illocutionary activities are central to any account of speech acts. According to

Searle [4], there are five categories of illocutionary acts. Assertive, Expressive, Declarative, Directives, and Commissive. The application of the Illocutionary Act theory to the analysis will allow for in-depth investigation of the linguistic aspects explored by the speaker in order to implant meaning into the formal linguistic attributes of the chosen speech. According to Ariyanti [5], not only persuading or conveying information, but the speech is also entertaining.

In the Senator Sarah Hanson-Young speech context, typical confessional language has been used in her speech. Women apply the confessional (language) discourse during their speech. They tend to confess their weaknesses by figuring out what she has passed. In addition, Mills [6] stated that it is the way women do their confession to influence others to change their point of view in certain situations and it fundamentally operates a discourse ritual that unfolds within a power relationship [7]. In fact, the confession is someone's feelings, intentions, problems, desires, and offenses that are hard to say [8]. It is also supported by Mandziukk [9] that the way women want to deliver their opinion, view, and suggestion uses the implied meaning based on specific history in their life. Therefore, confessional discourse is used to know how the way women confess something and what the meaning in their confessional meaning is. Furthermore, analysing Senator Hanson-Young's confession in this study practically needs a supported analysis of illocutionary acts that contains of each confessional discourse function.

Automatically, a thorough analysis of the research's data using feminist discourse is worthwhile. In the feminist discourse, a feminist theory is proposed to analyse the power relationship and how women, whether as individuals, members of groups, or as a whole population, are affected by male dominance. A complicated dynamic between power, ideology, language (symbolic and semiotics), and its application within a setting of its socio-cultural milieu is said to exist in the discourse of feminists, and this dynamic may present itself as "doing gender" or "performing gender" (identity trouble or confusion). It is proposed that gender is a quality of behaviours to which members of a community attribute a gendering meaning, rather than of people themselves. [10]. Based on this sub-domination, Mills [6] has displayed how Confessional speech can help women obtain power. The confessional discourse functions of Senator Sarah Hanson-speech Young's were examined in this study. The purpose of this study is to characterize the forms of illocutionary acts and confessional discourse functions used in Senator Sarah Hanson-speech Young's when she called out slut-shamers, as well as to clarify the relationship between illocutionary acts and confessional discourse functions.

Several studies have been undertaken to evaluate speech acts. Studies concentrating on the illocutionary act speech act are highly prevalent, demonstrating that the illocutionary act is particularly fascinating to be examined. According to Dylgjeri, [2] study titled "Analysis of Speech Act in Political Speeches," a politician's speech is primarily concerned with persuading or convincing others to believe what they are saying. Commissive actions account for the greatest proportion of illocutionary acts committed, followed by assertive and expressive acts. The focus of this research is Edi Rama's victory speech after winning the Albanian election in 2013, where the speech act produces the most important meaning in the speech, revealing the speaker's personality.

The following study is by Larasati [11] and is titled "An Analysis of the illocutionary Acts On Donald Trump's Presidential Candidacy Speech." Assertive, commissive,

expressive, and directive illocutionary behaviours were detected in Donald Trump's talks. Although the sorts of illocutionary actions detected in Donald Trump's remarks were the same, their frequency of presence varied. In both addresses, Donald Trump performed largely assertive illocutionary actions and also assertive illocutionary acts. Furthermore, some utterances are included in the assertive type of illocutionary actions because they fit the explanation of the assertive type of illocutionary acts offered by Searle.

Moreover, Ariyanti [5] analysed confessional discourse in the text of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's speech and defined the relation between presupposition types and confessional discourse functions. The data focused on confessional sentences that were maintained with presupposition expression. The finding shows that Chimamanda Ngozi used the three confessional discourse functions, include therapeutic, didactic, and interrogatory. The author focused on her confession towards women since the main topic of the speech is feminism and talking about careless women concerned in a society. Moreover, presupposition form in the confessional discourse established the connection between the speaker and audience to have the similar point of view.

What makes this study different from the previous studies is the subject of this study is a politician senator Sarah Hanson-Young, but it does not focus on political agenda, but in her Trans-Pacific Partnership debate in the Australian Senate on the 18 September 2018 specifically in the part when she called out the slut shamers during the debate. Here the illocutionary acts performed by the subject are linked to the Confessional Discourse theory. This study has several similarities with the previous studies that mainly talked about illocutionary acts performed by political leaders just like Donald Trump and Ade Rama that focused only on their political agenda and show how the use of confessional discourse to confess the feeling towards the insults.

## 2 Methods

This study examines Sarah Hanson's illocutionary acts against male senators during the TPP discussion in the Australian parliament. Therefore, the study provided a rich description and extensive explanation of the topic discussed. Based on those characteristics, this study used the descriptive qualitative method [12]. The subject of this research was Sarah Hanson-Young. The data for this study was collected from Sarah Hanson-Young's speech, titled 'You're not fit to call yourselves men,' which was posted on the YouTube channel "Guardian News" in 2018. The researcher collects data from Sarah Hanson-Young's speech in the part of the video when she responded to senator O'Sullivan the "Calling Out the Slut-Shamers." The data was obtained using the internet, primarily an online video streaming platform. The data source is a YouTube video. The only form of data gathered in this study is from taking notes while viewing the YouTube movie to verify the findings by tying the data to the analysis. In conducting data analysis in his research study the researcher uses some procedures and techniques. There are three steps of analysing data: data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification [13].

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Senator Sarah Hanson-Young Calling Out the Slut Shamers

At the age of 25, Sarah Hanson-Young became the Senate's youngest member in 2007. Sarah Coral Hanson-Young (born December 23, 1981) is an Australian politician who has been a Senator for South Australia for the Australian Greens since July 2008. She is the youngest woman in federal parliament history, having been elected at the age of 25 and assumed office at the age of 26. In recent years, there have been several charges of sexist bullying and sexism, and the country has slowly slipped down the worldwide rankings for female political representation.

According to Ms. Hanson-Young, if males did not rape women, they would not need further protection. "You should quit shagging males, Sarah," said an older male senator. Senator David Leyonhjelm is well-known for making contentious statements public. Sarah Hanson-Young accused him of "slut-shaming," or using sexual insults to demean or silence a woman.

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young of the Australian Greens speaks during the Trans-Pacific Partnership debate in the Australian Senate on September 18, 2018. "I will identify you because you are not suited to be in this house, to represent your constituents, and to call yourselves men," she continued, referring to Fraser Anning, Barry O'Sullivan, Cory Bernardi, and David Leyonhjelm. Mr. O'Sullivan of the LNP made a vulgar remark about Green Senator Sarah Hanson-Young on Wednesday. "She did not appear. There's a bit Nick Xenophon in her, and I don't mean that in two ways." He said he was referring to the former Senator. Mr. O'Sullivan was described to as a "pig" by Green Party leader Richard Di Natale, who remarked that the chamber had "survived on this side, days of misogynistic trash from that man." Ms. Hanson-Young accused the four men of "slurs and attacks" for "months," declaring that she was "tired of it" and that Mr. O'Sullivan had "slut-shamed" her. Words have an impact on political entities. Senator Hanson-Young raised the issue of accused slut-shamers in the Senate. Lexical items may be selected for a variety of reasons, including their potential to successfully stress political attitudes and ideas, influence public opinion, fabricate political consent, or legitimate political authority.

#### 3.2 Illocutionary Acts Performance in the Speech

The identification of illocutionary acts classifications of Senator Hanson-Young aids in attributing meaning to the content presented. In other words, illocutionary acts stress meaning in speeches. As seen, further illocutionary acts are committed during the process or act of speaking things (Table 1).

The classifications of illocutionary acts are found as follows, Assertive illocutionary acts in her speech are found to happen in data 2, 3, 4, 10, and 11, which show that Senator Hanson-Young was trying to describe the behaviour of other men senators been very far from being men by mentioning the morality of every man that slut shamed her. The illocutionary acts in this case are "Assertive" because the speech represents a condition of events that commits the speaker to the truth of the conveyed proposition [4].

**Table 1.** Expressive illocutionary acts

Datum Number.	Statement	Type of Illocutionary Act				
		Assertive	Directives	Commissive	Expressive	Declarative
1.	<i>"I want to make it very clear that I am thankful for Senator Di Natale for standing up and calling them out"</i>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2.	<i>"That is what real men do."</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
3.	<i>"Real men don't insult and threaten women,"</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
4.	<i>"they don't slut shame them and they don't attack them and make them feel bullied in their workplace."</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
5.	<i>"I have sat in this chamber for weeks and weeks, months and heard the disgusting slurs and attacks coming from a particular group in this place."</i>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.	<i>"And I, for one, am sick of it."</i>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7.	<i>"And I know many of my female colleagues, on all sides of politics, are sick of it too."</i>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8.	<i>"And I will name you because you are not fit to be in this chamber, you're not fit to represent your constituents and you're not fit to call yourselves men."</i>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9.	<i>"you day after day come into this place and hurl insults across this chamber, play the gender card and the moment anyone stands up to you, you have the most fragile glass jaws of all."</i>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10.	<i>"You are cowards."</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
11.	<i>"Every time you get called out, you refuse to stand by it."</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

Expressive illocutionary acts are also found in the speech, data 1, 5, 6, 7, and 9. Here the expressive come to the classification because in datum 1 Senator Hanson-Young Thanking senator Di Natale for defending her against other senators who slut shamed her before, here it can be seen as she was thankful that another senator helped her with the problem during the debate [4]. In data 5, 6, 7, and 9 tries to communicate and express her feeling of anger and the grievances of her days in the chamber. She could not take any sexual insult anymore and was trying to communicate other women's feelings too. Here we see the mental state of the speaker was full of anger and disappointment during the debate that is included in Expressive illocutionary acts.

The Declarative illocutionary act is only found in datum 8 when she started to call out the names of the slut shamers. Here it is seen that she was passing sentence as the identity of the slut shamers revealed, they will get social punishment or even a lawsuit from senator Hanson-Young. Even when it was not a court. This statement is used to express something and make it true, such as convicting someone. [2]. There are no directives and commissives illocutionary acts used in the speech.

As we can see in the data that the less dominant type of illocutionary acts is declaratives, while directives and commissives type of illocutionary acts are not found in the speech. Directives Type of illocutionary act is not found since the speech does not contain any words to make the addressee do something such as ordering, commanding, daring, defying, or even challenging [4]. Commissive is not stated in the discourse since there is no promising, threatening, aiming, or swearing to do or refrain from doing something [4]. Declarative type is only found in datum 8 act of passing sentence to the slut shamers.

The reason why those 3 types are not dominant in the speech as many as the two others are according to the purpose of the speech itself which is calling out the slut-shamers which only to highlight the names of the slut-shamers. The study of the winning Edi Rama speech in Dylgjeri [2] reveals that his utterance is classified via the employment of commissive speech actions, particularly after a protracted political campaign that filled people’s hearts and minds with high expectations, dreams, and promises for a brighter tomorrow. Here we see that Senator Hanson-Young’s speech is not a political speech for the people who have chosen her, but it is about self-disclosing herself and revealing the true identity of the aggressor in the chamber. Her main audience was other parliament members. There those three types do not appear.

**Table 2.** Confession in Expressive Illocutionary Acts

Expressives Illocutionary Acts	Confessional Discourse	The Function
1.	<i>"I want to make it very clear that I am thankful for Senator Di Natale for standing up and calling them out"</i>	Therapeutic  To Show Gratitude
2.	<i>"I have sat in this chamber for weeks and weeks, months and heard the disgusting shurs and attacks coming from a particular group in this place."</i>	Therapeutic  To show her self awareness
3.	<i>"And I, for one, am sick of it."</i>	Therapeutic  To show her self awareness
4.	<i>"And I know many of my female colleagues, on all sides of politics, are sick of it too."</i>	Therapeutic  To show her self awareness
5.	<i>"you day after day come into this place and hurl insults across this chamber, play the gender card and the moment anyone stands up to you, you have the most fragile glass jaws of all."</i>	Therapeutic  To show her self realization

### 3.3 The Confession in Expressive Illocutionary Acts

The analysis of illocutionary shows the dominant type of illocutionary acts is expressive within 5 data. The researcher find the component of confessional discourse of Senator Sarah Hanson-Young speech contains confessional language. As Mandziuk [9] stated, that the confessional language of a woman is through her expressive language. Here the researcher put the illocutionary acts into 3 groups of Confessional Discourse function, they are therapeutic, didactic, and interrogatory (Table 2).

In the expressive illocutionary acts, the confessional discourse appears to be therapeutic as the speaker firstly giving gratitude for giving the right example of men's behaviour in front of the audience, second she tend to show how she felt during the days of insult in the work place that here she tried to be the initiator of the protest so they can learn something (Table 3).

In the assertive illocutionary acts, the confessional discourse appears to be didactic as the expression of experience is to teach other people This function can be determined if the confessors confess their feeling or experience in which can change people through self-awareness by telling their circumstances and options. The confessors also can impart warning to other people about the society condition so that they can make a change within the society (Table 4).

Here in directives illocutionary acts the didactic also appears. The warning here is getting stronger as the Senator Hanson-Young tried to called out the names of the Slut-Shamers.

**Table 3.** Confession in Assertive Illocutionary Acts

Assertives Illocutionary Acts		Confessional Discourse	The Function
1.	<i>"That is what real men do."</i>	Didactic	To embed the value
2.	<i>"Real men don't insult and threaten women,"</i>	Didactic	To teach lesson
3.	<i>"they don't slut shame them and they don't attack</i>	Didactic	To teach lesson
4.	<i>"You are cowards."</i>	Didactic	To embed the value
5.	<i>"Every time you get called out, you refuse to stand by</i>	Didactic	To give warning

**Table 4.** Confession in Declarative Illocutionary Acts

Declaratives Illocutionary Acts		Confessional Discourse	The Function
1.	<i>"And I will name you because you are not fit to be in this chamber, you're not fit to represent your constituents and you're not fit to call yourselves men"</i>	Didactic	To give warning

## 4 Conclusion

This research has concluded both of the types of illocutionary Acts and the confessional discourse functions can be involved each other to analyse the speech of Senator Sarah Hanson-Young of the Australian Greens speaks during the Trans-Pacific Partnership debate in the Australian Senate on September 18, 2018. The result brings the main idea of power-sharing agreement which means the main purpose of Senator Hanson-Young's illocutionary acts through confessional discourse functions in her speech is to get agreement and high trusted from her audiences about her victim. By recognizing of personal identity and the suggestive statements, she focused on expressing her feeling about female politician in the parliament. Mostly, her confession is about the aggressor because the main topic of the speech is about calling out the slut-shamers. She brought some kind of hurtful comment toward her which she should speak up since it is horrible situation. That is a way she confessed everything in her speech cantered about women in her expectation. Moreover, using illocutionary acts expressions in the confessional discourse in Senator Hanson-Young's speech is very significant, because they are the bridge to make connection between the speaker and audience to have one point of view.

**Authors' Contributions.** Shania S. P. Mulyono and Lina P. Hartanti conceived and planned the analyses. Lina P. Hartanti contributed to the interpretation of the results. Shania took the lead in writing the manuscript. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript.

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