

EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS IN YOUTUBE COMMENTS: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF PRINCE EA'S VIDEOS

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Abstract: The growing volume of comments from online users expressing their opinions about Prince EA's video's content—which brought up issues with the educational system—was the driving force for this study. The expressions used by netizens in the comments section have a certain meaning, and it's critical to grasp this meaning to avoid miscommunication and guarantee clear communication. Pragmatics' expressive speech act theory sheds light on this occurrence. The purposes of this study were to identify the various forms of expressive speech actions that may be found in Prince EA's YouTube channel's comment section and to explain the significance of these acts. The comments from Prince EA's videos were used in this study's descriptive qualitative analysis, “*I just sued the school system*” and “*Students Vs. Teacher*”. Condensing, displaying, and drawing conclusions from the data were all part of the analysis. This research mentioned that seven out of eight expressive speech act kinds in the comment, such as volition, agreement, gratitude, exclamation, greetings, and sorrows. Among these, thanking (gratitude) was the most frequently expressed of them, appearing 36 times in total. Additionally, to explain the meaning of expressive speech acts in the comment section, the researchers first examined the context (the content of two Prince EA's video). In essence, this research recommends that lecturers can be more careful and wiser in expressing feelings to students through utterances. Thus, a more positive, inclusive environment will be created and can reduce the potential for unwanted misunderstandings between students and lecturers.

Keywords: *expressive speech act comments; prince EA; Youtube channel.*

INTRODUCTION

As social beings who cannot live alone, people need other people to live their lives. Therefore, interaction and communication are needed to stay connected with one another. It is essential to employ language as a communication tool to satisfy this demand. It is essential in assisting individuals in constructing a bridge of relationships. Rabiah states that language is a tool for interaction and communication, which entails the transmission of ideas, feelings, and thoughts (Rabiah, 2012). Similarly, Language can be used both orally and in writing as a communication tool (Dewi, 2022). Oral or verbal language is

human interaction with the use of speech or spoken messages (*Oral Communication*, n.d.). On the other hand, in written language we use written words to interact with another. People can communicate their feelings through utterances that other people can read and hear through any of the two communication formats.

These days, in the globalization era communication does not only occur directly but can also be done indirectly through social media. Furthermore, social media is a type of electronic communication wherein individuals establish virtual communities to exchange ideas, information, private messages, and other content

like movies. (Webster, 2022). Communication occurs a lot on social media, such as in uploads, captions, and comment columns. One of the social media that play a role in this communication is YouTube.

On the website YouTube, people who have registered can upload and distribute videos to everyone with internet access. YouTube has become the most popular site across all age groups. It made YouTube the second most visited website in the world (Semrush, 2022). On YouTube, someone who is watching videos is known as a *viewer*. Meanwhile, people who create a video on YouTube and share it with viewers are referred to as *YouTubers* or *Content Creators*. One of the popular YouTubers with motivational video content is Prince Ea.

Prince Ea was born Richard Williams on September 16, 1988, in St. Louis, Missouri, his entire childhood. Prince Ea is well-known as an American filmmaker, poet, motivational speaker, and activist. Prince Ea first began his career as a hip-hop singer. Prince Ea is also the founder of the Make S.M.A.R.T Cool (*Sophisticated Millions and Revolutionizing Thought*) organization. His organization focused on promoting positive social change in several numbers of tangible ways, including giving speeches at schools, organizing shows that help the community, collaborating with these organizations, and establishing educational mentorship programs for young people. Prince Ea has also collaborated with several organizations, including "*Stand For Trees*" and "*Neste*," to directly battle climate change and influence the educational system. In 2014, Prince Ea began producing spoken word films and other content for his YouTube channel instead of focusing on music. On his YouTube channel, Prince Ea uploads many motivational videos with unique settings and has various discussion themes. One that went viral and attracted the attention of many people was a video with an educational theme entitled, "*I Just Sued the School System*" and "*Student Vs. Teacher*".

Uploaded on September 26, 2016, Prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued The School System*", with a duration of 6 minutes and 1 second, contains Prince Ea acting as a plaintiff in the education system, taking a critical stance towards various problems that exist in the current education system. Through the video, he metaphorically 'sues' the education system by highlighting problems such as a lack of creativity, an irrelevant curriculum, and the pressure placed on students. The purpose of this lawsuit is to

voice the need for change and innovation in education to provide a more effective and beneficial learning experience for all students. Meanwhile, the video entitled "*Student Vs. Teacher*", which was uploaded to his YouTube channel on March 21, 2019, with a duration of 6 minutes and 7 seconds, highlights the difference between students' learning experiences and teachers' teaching experiences. The video emphasizes that traditional education, which focuses on memorization and exams, is increasingly unsuitable for the needs of the times that demand creativity, innovation, and high adaptability. Prince Ea is advocating for a change to a more inclusive and innovative approach to education, which encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving skills to prepare students for a challenging future.

These two videos succeeded in generating various comments in response to the sentiments expressed by netizens after watching them. The following is an example of a comment from a netizen:

"Thank you for making this video." [Strom Petrel]

The speaker or netizen who posted the preceding comment goes by the username @Strompetrel on Prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*". The comment written by the speaker is more than just an ordinary comment. Behind the words written, the speaker is trying to get across a certain point. Understanding the meaning in these comments is very important and necessary. In connection with this, in pragmatic studies, speech act theory, especially to investigate the phenomena mentioned in the speaker's comment above, expressive speech acts are employed.

Pragmatics is the study of the meaning that a speaker conveys to an addressee or other person through communication (Yule, 1996). Moreover, because pragmatic studies enable people to understand what speakers mean in a given context and how the context effects what is said, they are crucial for understanding better human verbal interactions (Wijana, 2021). It means that understanding the context is a key element in the process of interpreting and comprehending a speaker's utterance. A speech act is any action that a speaker might use to convey an utterance. Acts can be classified into three categories: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary (Wijana, 2021). Furthermore, Austin (1989), who

was the pioneer of speech act theory, divided speech acts into three categories including locution, illocution, and perlocution. Informing or stating anything is known as an illocution, asking the speech partner to do something is known as an illocutionary act, and acting in a way that impacts the speech partner or demands specific responses, effects, or outcomes from them is known as a perlocutionary act. Searle, an Austin student, created a theory of speech actions that was based on the illocutionary during its development. Furthermore, Searle classified illocutionary acts in five categories, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Then, the researchers in this research only looked at expressive speech acts out of the five categories of illocutionary speech acts that were previously discussed..

Tarigan (2009:45) provided the definition of expressive speech acts, stating that they serve the purpose of expressing, disclosing, or enlightening the speaker's psychological attitude toward a declaration of circumstances that the illocutionary has predicted. The term "psychological state" refers to the speaker's range of emotions, including joy, sorrow, hatred, pleasure, and pain. Everyone may have used this form of speech act every day. Because everyone has a feeling they want to express to others.

The purpose of this study was to examine the expressive speech act utterances that were found in the comment area of two Prince Ea videos titled "*I Just Sued the School System*" and "*Student Vs. Teacher*". This interest is motivated by the importance of understanding the meaning behind the comments written by netizens on the two videos. With good and precise understanding, misunderstandings that may arise in online communication can be minimized, so that interactions between users can run more smoothly and effectively. Additionally, there are benefits to adopting expressive speech acts in online communication. For example, having a solid understanding of these acts helps educators and students communicate their thoughts, feelings, and questions in a clear and correct manner. This improves the efficacy of communication in virtual spaces.

In the field of education, having a thorough understanding of expressive speech acts might be beneficial. Expressive speech acts are not limited to online communication via comment sections; they can also be observed in regular conversations, such those that take place during lectures for teaching and learning. During the

learning session progresses, students may express deep interest or confusion through their questions, indicating a desire to understand the material in depth. In contrast, when students respond cheerfully and enthusiastically to a new concept being learned, their facial expressions and cheerful voice intonation reflect strong understanding and interest. Likewise, for lecturers, they may express satisfaction when students show active participation or disappointment when students have difficulty understanding the material. By understanding the meaning of expressive acts contained in the speech of students and lecturers, it can prevent both from misunderstandings and help to strengthen mutual interaction and understanding in the lecture room. So, through a good understanding of expressive speech acts, the learning objectives to be achieved can be realized.

The research focused on two objectives: (1) to identify the kinds of expressive speech acts that can be found on Prince Ea's YouTube channel in the comments section, and (2) to explain the significance of the expressive speech acts that are used in Prince Ea's YouTube channel's comment area. In this research, the researchers wanted to discuss the types and meanings of expressive utterances of expressive speech act on Prince Ea's YouTube channel's comment area. In conducting this research, the researchers used the theory from Searle and classification of expressive speech acts proposed by Patricia Ronan (2015), which consists of eight types: agreement, disagreement, volition, thanking, apologizing, exclamation, sorrow, and greeting. Therefore, the researchers conducted the research under the title *Expressive speech acts in youtube comments: a pragmatics analysis of prince Ea's videos*.

METHOD

Methods are one of the crucial components in this research. This encompasses research design, sample, data collection, and data analysis. Here is a brief explanation of the elements covered in the methods.

This research applied descriptive qualitative as a research design because it is considered appropriate for used in this study. According to Kaufman, qualitative research involves studies that do not attempt to measure results through statistical summaries or analysis (Kaufman & kaufman, 2005). Meanwhile, descriptive research is a form of research aimed at describing existing phenomena, either natural phenomena or human engineering (Moleong, 2005). Therefore, it can be

said that descriptive qualitative research is a way to collect data by describing a phenomenon using language and words that highlight the significance of the methods used naturally.

The sample for this research consists of netizen comments on two videos, namely, *"I Just Sued the School System"* and *"Student Vs. Teacher"*. Purposive sampling was the method used for sampling in this research. Purposive sampling is a method for selecting a sample while taking specific factors into account. (Sugiyono, 2015). In relation to that, a sample consisting of expressive speech acts from netizen comments was taken. The words, phrases, and sentences from the comments on Prince Ea's video, which addresses the educational system, served as the research's data in this instance. Furthermore, the data source in this research was Prince Ea's YouTube: <https://youtube.com/c/PrinceEa>.

Data collection indicates ways that can be used to obtain the required data. There are numerous locations, resources, and methods for gathering data. When conducting qualitative research, primary data sources and procedures are used, and data gathering is conducted in natural situations, such as Observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation or a combination of all four (Abdussamad, 2021). In addition, the data for this research was gathered by the researchers through documentation and observation.

The researchers employed direct observation in their observation. Direct observation is a method of collecting data directly where the researchers directly observe the symptoms being studied from a research object. The researchers carried out direct observations by going directly to Prince Ea's YouTube channel and then watching the two videos entitled *"I Just Sued the School System"* and *"Student Vs. Teacher."* After watching these videos, the researchers read the comments of netizens in the comment section by scrolling from the top to the bottom. While the documentation technique was carried out by taking a screenshot of each comment that contained expressive speech acts.

The interactive analytic data model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana was used in this research. Data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification are the three parallel flows of activity that comprise the qualitative data analysis described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (Miles et al., 2014).

The first step that the researchers took in data analysis is data condensation or reduction. The process of choosing, concentrating, streamlining,

abstracting, seeking for themes and patterns, and eliminating superfluous ones is referred to as data condensation (Miles et al., 2014). In this step the researchers shifted through and categorized the data that were collected from the comment section. Searle's theory is used in this study to help the researchers understand the meaning of expressive speech acts. Meanwhile, the expressive speech acts that can be found in the comment sections of Prince Ea's two videos discussing the educational system are categorized using Ronan's theory.

The data was then shown by the researchers following data reduction. Data visualization in qualitative research might be represented using tables, flowcharts, charts, and brief explanations, among other formats. Consequently, tables would be used to display the data in this research.

Drawing conclusions is the last step in the data analysis process that the researchers completed. In qualitative research, conclusions might provide an answer to the initial phrasing of the topic. The outcomes of the data analysis were applied in this step.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The kinds of expressive speech acts that can be found on Prince Ea's YouTube channel in the comments section

Table 1. *Types of expressive speech act found*

No	Types	V1	V2	Total
1	Agreement	16	9	25
2	Disagreement	7	5	12
3	Volition	12	4	16
4	Thanking	12	24	36
5	Apologizing	0	0	0
6	Exclamation	3	1	4
7	Sorrow	13	16	29
8	Greetings	2	3	5
Total:				127

Only seven of the eight categories of expressive speaking behaviors identified by Ronan's theory were discovered by the researchers in the comments section of two films featuring Prince Ea, namely 25 comments of agreement, 12 comments of disagreement, 16 comments of volition, 36 comments of thanking, 4 comments of exclamation, 29 comments of sorrow, and 5 comment types of greetings. Here are some examples of expressive speaking acts from Prince Ea's two videos in the comment section.

Agreement

@Freedom Sapphire: "I am a teacher and I approve this message!"

The comment was extracted from the comment section of Prince Ea's content entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*." The comment indicates that the speaker, who also works as a teacher, agrees with Prince Ea's ideas about moving away from standardized testing, outdated curricula, lack of student engagement, and other issues discussed in the video.

Disagreement

@Rivers360: "We got 'Google and Siri' for facts? Sorry honey. Think again."

The comment from the speaker above was extracted from the comment section of Prince Ea's content entitled "*Student Vs. Teacher*" and indicated disagreement with Prince Ea's statement. This is evident from the use of phrases such as "*We have 'Google and Siri' for facts*" and "*Sorry, honey. Think again.*" By employing these expressions, the speaker rejects Prince Ea's idea that AI technologies like Google and Siri can replace factual information acquired through traditional teaching in school.

Volition

@Isabella Maring: "My teacher showed this to my class during school, and most of the class was brought to tears. The amount of work and the ways we are being taught are extremely stressful and crude. I wish it could change."

The comment from the speaker above was taken from Prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*". In that comment, Isabella shares her experience about the amount of work assigned and the teaching methods employed in her school, which are both sources of stress and discomfort for her and her classmate. By saying "*I wish it could change,*" it indicates her hope for a different approach to the education system, one that is less stressful and more effective in supporting students' learning and well-being. Thus, this is expressive speech act of volition.

Thanking

@Happi Soul: "You know I am depressed because of studies and this video gave me warmth and support love you and keep spreading love tysm for existing. You are really a wonderful and blessed human"

The comment written by @Happi Soul in the comment section of Prince Ea's video titled "*Student Vs. Teacher*" indicates speech act of thanking. The speaker specifically expresses

appreciation by saying, "*tysm*" (an abbreviation for *thank you so much*) and "*You are really a wonderful and blessed human*". The speaker also mentioned that the video gave warmth and support, indicating that it positively impacted the speaker's emotional well-being. Therefore, the aforementioned remark is a part of the expressive speech acts of gratitude.

Non-directed complaints in exclamation

@MotivationMindsetMM: "Ok this guy is speaking facts! Flip school and the creator of tests literally said it was bad!!! What the heck! By the way, did you win the court case because I don't want to stay in school after knowing this! You are an Angel 🙏🙏🙏"

The speaker's sentiments regarding the content of Prince Ea's video are expressed in the aforementioned comment "*I Just Sued the School System*". The speaker's emotional expression is indicated as a kind of expressive speech act in the form of an exclamation. The speaker uses the phrase "*What the heck!*" which is the euphemism from the phrase "*What the hell!*". In this case, the speaker used this phrase to express shock and anger at the revelation that the creator of standardized testing (Frederick J. Kelly) himself recognized its limitations and suggested abandoning it.

Sorrow

@Pedro Neves Urias: "I've showed this video to my mom, and she didn't even care, she said 'don't be lazy, you must study, because that's how it works'. Life is really cruel and unfair"

The comment above came from the speaker @Pedro Neves Urias which was taken from Prince Ea's video entitled "*Student Vs. Teacher*" which illustrates the feeling of sorrow. In the beginning of the comment the speaker shares his experience of showing the video to his mother to convey their perspective on education, but his mother's response suggests a lack of understanding or concern. This reaction likely evoked feelings of sorrow, as it can be disheartening when one's efforts to communicate and seek understanding are met with dismissiveness or a lack of empathy. Then the speaker's statement "*Life is really cruel and unfair*" at the end of the comment further reflects a sorrowful sentiment, highlighting the perceived hardships and injustices that exist in life. Therefore, this is the expressive speech acts of sorrow.

Greetings

@ Fatima Palmer: "Hello, I loved your video a lot"

From the data above it can be seen that the speaker with the username @Fatima Palmer expressed her acknowledgment towards Prince Ea. The speaker started the commentary with a brief greeting, "Hello," and then expressed admiration for Prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*". It is clear from this that the speaker's reply is a greeting to Prince Ea, the creator of the video. Therefore, this speech act is included in the category of expressive speech acts in greeting.

Explaining the significance of the expressive speech acts that are used in Prince Ea's YouTube channel's comment area.

Agreement

An agreement represents a form of expressive speech acts in which one confirms or expresses their concurrence with a request or statement presented by the person they are conversing with.

@Freedom Sapphire "I am a teacher and I approve this message!"

The comment from netizen above came from a comment section on The video by Prince Ea titled "*I Just Sued the School System*". The comment indicates that the speaker who wrote it, who happens to be a teacher, agrees with the points and arguments made by Prince Ea in his video. By expressing approval of the message, the speaker aligns himself with Prince Ea's perspective and supports the idea of moving away from standardized testing, outdated curricula, lack of student engagement, and other issues discussed in the video.

Disagreement

When a speaker disagrees with another person's ideas or refuses to follow another person's direction, disagreement occurs.

@ Rivers360 "We got "Google and Siri" for facts? Sorry honey. Think again.

The comment from netizen above was taken from the comment section of Prince Ea's video entitled "*Student Vs. Teacher*". In the comment, netizen expresses disagreement by quoting Prince Ea's statement about "We got "Google and Siri" for facts" and saying, "sorry honey. Think again".

It means that the speaker challenges the idea presented that Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as Google and Siri can rely upon for all factual information. The speaker also suggests that the perspective shared in the video needs to be considered because the speaker believes that there is still value in knowledge beyond what technology can provide. Consequently, the speaker's remark falls under the category of expressive verbal actions of disagreement.

Volition

Volition is a type of Expressive speech acts that indicates wishing or hoping for something to happen. Praying and sending well wishes for someone is also included to this type.

@Isabella Maring "My teacher showed this to my class during school, and most of the class was brought to tears. The amount of work and the ways we are being taught are extremely stressful and crude. I wish it could change."

The comment from netizen above was taken from prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*". In that comment, Isabella shares her experience about the amount of work assigned and the teaching methods employed in her school, which are both sources of stress and discomfort for her and her classmate. By saying "*I wish it could change*," It indicates her hope for a different approach to the education system, one that is less stressful and more effective in supporting students' learning and well-being. Thus, this is expressive speech act of volition.

Thanking

Thanking is a type of expressive speech act when the speaker thanks the addressee for their assistance.

@Happi Soul "You know i am depressed because of studies and this video gave me warmth and support love you and keep spreading love tysm for existing. You are really a wonderful and blessed human."

The comment written by @Happi Soul in the comment section of Prince Ea's video titled "*Student Vs. Teacher*" indicates expressing gratitude. The speaker specifically expresses appreciation by saying, "tysm" (an abbreviation for *thank you so much*) and "*You are really a wonderful and blessed human*". The speaker also mentioned that the video gave warmth and support, indicating that it positively impacted the

speaker's emotional well-being. Therefore, the aforementioned remark is a part of the expressive speech acts of gratitude.

Non-directed complaints in exclamation

Non-directed complaints in exclamations are the form of expressive speech act employed when someone is shocked, surprised, or upset about something by using religious or profane terms.

@MotivationMindsetMM "Ok this guy is speaking facts! Flip school and the creator of tests literally said it was bad!!! What the heck! By the way, did you win the court case because I don't want to stay in school after knowing this! You are an Angel 🙏🙏🙏"

The above comment is an act of the speaker's feelings to the content of Prince Ea's video "*I Just Sued the School System*". The speaker's emotional expression is indicated as a kind of Expressive speech act in the form of an exclamation. The speaker uses the phrase "*What the heck!*" which is the euphemism from the phrase "*What the hell!*". In this case, the speaker used this phrase to express shock and anger at the revelation that the creator of standardized testing (Frederick J. Kelly) himself recognized its limitations and suggested abandoning it.

Sorrow

Sorrow is a kind of expressive speech action that is used by the speaker to express his or her sadness because something very bad has happened.

@Pedro Neves Urias "i've showed this video to my mom, and she didn't even care, she said 'don't be lazy, you must study, because that's how it works'. Life is really cruel and unfair."

The comment above came from the speaker @Pedro Neves Urias which was taken from Prince Ea's video entitled "*Student Vs. Teacher*" which illustrates the feeling of sorrow. In the beginning of the comment the speaker shares his experience of showing the video to his mother to convey their perspective on education, but his mother's response suggests a lack of understanding or concern. This reaction likely evoked feelings of sorrow, as it can be disheartening when one's efforts to communicate and seek understanding are met with dismissiveness or a lack of empathy. Then the speaker's statement "*Life is really cruel and unfair*" at the end of the comment further reflects

a sorrowful sentiment, highlighting the perceived hardships and injustices that exist in life. Therefore, this is the expressive speech acts of sorrow.

Greetings

One of the categories of expressive speaking acts that Ronan suggests is a greeting. The speaker uses greetings as a means of welcoming or recognizing the addressee. It encompasses various actions such as salutations, saying hello, etc.

@ Fatima Palmer "Hello, I loved your video a lot."

From the data above it can be seen that the speaker with the username @Fatima Palmer expressed her acknowledgment towards Prince Ea. The speaker started the commentary with a brief greeting, "*Hello,*" and then expressed admiration for Prince Ea's video entitled "*I Just Sued the School System*". It is clear from this that the speaker's reply is a greeting to Prince Ea, the creator of the video. As a result, this speech act is included as expressive speech acts in greeting.

CONCLUSION

Only seven of Ronan's theory's Eight categories of expressive speech acts were identified in the comments section of the two Prince Ea films on his YouTube channel, "*I Just Sued the School System*" and "*Student Vs. Teacher*". Based on the information that was gathered: expressive speech acts of agreement appeared 25 times, disagreement appeared 12 times, volition appeared 16 times, thanking appeared 36 times, exclamation appeared 4 times, sorrow appeared 29 times, and greetings appeared 5 times. Furthermore, thanking is the most frequent type that appeared on the comment section of the two Prince Ea videos. The reason for this is that the inspirational themes presented in the two Prince Ea films reflect issues and experiences that are frequently encountered in educational settings. This makes the netizens feel represented and valued by the content of the video, so the netizens express their gratitude towards Prince Ea.

In addition, understanding expressive speech acts can help us in communication. With a good understanding of expressive speech acts, we can be wiser in conveying our feelings when communicating with others. Additionally, we can better comprehend the intentions behind messages conveyed by others or our communication partners. This can create a more inclusive

communication environment and reduce the risk of misunderstandings. In the context of online learning, a good understanding of expressive speech acts enables learners and educators to express opinions, feelings, or questions more clearly and accurately. This enhances communication effectiveness in the online environment.

In this research, the researchers only discuss expressive speech acts. The researchers suggests that future researchers should examine speech acts from various other aspects, such as directive speech acts, assertive speech acts, commissive speech acts, or declarative speech acts. In addition, the researchers also recommends that future researchers conduct research using data sources from other media, such as novels, films, podcasts, student English textbooks, and everyday conversations.

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