

**تمثيل أفعال الكلام في تعليمات منظمة الصحة العالمية
حول كوفيد-١٩ في عيد الاضحى**

**The Representation of Speech Acts in WHO
COVID-19**

Instructions of Eid al Adha

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الكلمات المفتاحية: كوفيد-١٩، أفعال الخطاب، التعليمات، أفعال الكلام، منظمة الصحة العالمية، عيد الاضحى.

Keywords: COVID-19, illocutionary acts, instructions, speech act, WHO, and Eid al Adha.



المخلص

تتناول الدراسة الحالية أفعال الكلام المستخدمة في التعليمات التي قدمتها منظمة الصحة العالمية (WHO) في عيد الأضحى المبارك فيما يتعلق بكوفيد-19. تحاول الدراسة تحديد الوظيفة الأبرز للأفعال الخطابية المستخدمة في البيانات المختارة، وكذلك تحديد كيفية إيصال التعليمات، بشكل مباشر أو غير مباشر، وكيف تمثل هذه الاستخدامات المتكررة دور منظمة الصحة العالمية في الاستجابة لوباء كوفيد-19. يتم استخدام تصنيف باخ وهارنيش (1979) للأفعال الخطابية كنموذج لتحليل التعليمات. تشير النتائج إلى أن الأمر هي الوظيفة الأكثر استخدامًا لأفعال الخطاب في البيانات المختارة وأن غالبية التعليمات يتم تقديمها بصورة مباشرة. تخدم هذه الاستخدامات دور منظمة الصحة العالمية كأمر للأشخاص في عيد الأضحى فيما يتعلق بكوفيد-19 وتعكس أيضًا أهمية اتباع تعليمات منظمة الصحة العالمية المتعلقة بكوفيد-19 في عيد الأضحى على وجه التحديد لأنها إحدى المناسبات الاجتماعية والدينية التي يمارس فيها المسلمون العديد من التقاليد التي تشمل التجمعات الاجتماعية.

Abstract

The current study examines the speech acts utilized in the instructions given by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Eid al Adha regarding COVID19. The study attempts to determine the most prominent function of illocutionary acts used in the selected data, as well as identifying how the instructions are conveyed, directly or indirectly, and how these frequent uses represent the role of WHO in the COVID-19 pandemic response. Bach and Harnish's (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary acts is used as a model to analyze the instructions. The results indicate that *ordering* is the most commonly employed function of illocutionary acts in the selected data and that the majority of the instructions are given directly. These uses serve the role of WHO as a commander for people in Eid al Adha regarding COVID-19 and also reflects the importance of following WHO COVID-19 instructions in Eid al Adha specifically as it is one of social and religious occasions at which Muslims practice many traditions that include social gathering.



Introduction

COVID-19 is considered to be one of the most common events that disseminated across the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) regards it as a pandemic in 2020. WHO has a crucial role in informing and educating the public about the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic through targeted messaging that affect how the public perceives this pandemic.

People use language to express propositional claims, entities, objects, states of affairs, and other things, as well as to perform tasks like presenting themselves, making requests and denying them, etc. The action taken when saying something is referred to as a speech act which is a component of pragmatics.

The theory of speech acts was developed in response to numerous earlier linguistic theories that did not consider language to be an activity (Mey, 1993:109-10). Despite the fact that the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's account of language use as a social activity served as the foundation for speech act theory, which holds that "the meaning of a word is its use in language," the Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin has attributed this idea first when he presented the basic concepts in his lectures at Oxford in 1952 (Huang, 2009:1000).

According to Austin's theory (1962:12), speakers frequently employ language for more than just self-expression, therefore an utterance can be regarded of as a speech act. He also claims that words have a greater purpose than merely expressing the truth; "to speak" something is the same as "to do." In turn, Searle (1976:10) greatly develops the same theory with additional refinement and insights into categorizing speech acts according to the perspective of intentionality.

On the other hand, Bach and Harnish (1979:397) proposed a linguistic communication theory that emphasizes speech act and is represented through a model of communicative performance known as the Speech Act Schema (SAS). According to their theory, the hearer must infer information about the speech act based on the utterance itself, the communicative context, and their assumptions regarding how communication functions.

In Bach and Harnish's (1979:xi) view, one distinguishing feature of a communicative intention is that it depends on being acknowledged in order to be achieved. When a speaker communicates, he/she wants the listener to be able to not only understand the meaning of the message based on its (1) content and (2) context, but also (3) be able to consciously identify the communication's intended point.

Bach and Harnish divide illocutionary acts into six major types. Two of these types, *effectives* and *verdictives*, are conventional not communicative. The four main kinds of communicative illocutionary acts



are *constatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, and *acknowledgments*. These four types are what the current study concerns with (Bach and Harnish, 1979: 40-41).

In their taxonomy, Bach and Harnish employ the concepts "constative" and "commissive" from Austin as well as the term "directive" from Searle. Nevertheless, they tend to favour the term "acknowledgment" over Austin's "behabitive" or Searle's "expressive" when referring to apologizes, greetings, thanks, and other comparable expressions that acknowledge the hearer. These types of expressions often satisfy social expectations by conveying a positive attitude towards the hearer. Bach and Harnish's classification of illocutionary acts is as follows:

1.Constatives: the expression of a belief along with the desire that the hearer develop (or maintain) a similar belief. Constatives include these kinds: *assertives*, *predictives*, *retrodictives*, *descriptives*, *ascriptives*, *informatives*, *confirmatives*, *concessives*, *retractives*, *assentives*, *dissentives*, *disputatives*, *responsives*, *suggestives*, and *suppositives*.

2.Directives: they express the speaker's attitude toward some prospective action by the hearer. They include these kinds: *requestives*, *questions*, *requirements*, *prohibitives*, *permissives*, and *advisories*.

3.Commissives: They are acts of committing oneself or proposing to commit oneself to doing something stated in the propositional content, which may also indicate the conditions in which the deed must be performed or not. They include *promises* and *offers*.

4.Acknowledgments: these kinds convey specific feelings to the listener. These feelings and how they are expressed fit certain occasions. They include: *apologize*, *condole*, *congratulate*, *greet*, *thank*, *bid*, *accept*, and *reject*.

Methodology

The current study is carried out using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. The instructions of WHO Covid-19 regarding Eid al Adha are specifically chosen as it is considered to be one of the most popular religious occasions for Muslims. These instructions are divided into many categories. These categories are considered to be the measures that WHO depends on when giving its instructions. In the qualitative analysis, the researcher identifies the type of sentences of the instructions; declarative, imperative, interrogative, or exclamative sentences. The major type, the subtype and the function of illocutionary acts are also specified. Finally, the level of directness, whether direct; when the speaker means exactly what he\she says, or indirect; when the speaker means more than what he\she says, are determined.



Results and Discussion

For the sake of being systematic, the analysis is done depending on the measures according to which WHO gives its instructions. These measures are:

Table (1): Instructions on General infection prevention and control measures

No	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Practicing physical distancing by strictly maintaining a distance of at least 1 metre (3.3 feet) between people at all times using culturally and religiously sanctioned greetings that avoid physical contact, such as waving, nodding or placing the hand over the heart.	Imperatives	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
2	Covering mouth and nose with the bent elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing; avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
3	Regularly and thoroughly washing hands with soap and water, or cleaning them with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 80% ethanol or 75% isopropyl alcohol)	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
4	Holding events in outdoor rather than indoor venues; if indoors, adequate ventilation by natural or mechanical means	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Advising	Direct



	should be ensured, e.g. by keeping windows open or regularly opening them, or by improving air supply and removal by powered air movement components.					
5	Following advice on the appropriate use of masks issued by relevant health authorities.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct

Table (2): Instructions on Individual and Group at High-risk

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	People who are feeling unwell or have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should not attend events and should follow the national guidance on follow-up and management of suspected cases.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Warning	Direct
2	Advise older people (aged ≥ 60 years) and anyone with underlying noncommunicable diseases (diabetes, hypertension, cardiac disease, chronic lung disease, cerebrovascular disease, dementia, mental disorders, chronic kidney disease, immunosuppression, obesity and cancer) to refrain from attending any gatherings, as these population groups are considered vulnerable to severe disease and	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct



	death from COVID-19					
3	In case of attendance, people belonging to these groups should be encouraged to strictly follow precautionary measures.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Indirect
4	Special arrangements can be considered for them, e.g. dedicated areas in venues and preferential treatment in queues, or virtual alternative	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
	means (digital/streaming) to view or participate in the live event.					

Table(3): Instructions on Vaccination and Vaccinated Individuals

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary Act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Get vaccinated, when it is your turn and you are offered	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
2	Although preliminary evidence suggests that vaccinated individuals likely pose little risk of transmission to unvaccinated people, it is recommended that they should continue to exercise precautionary measures, including physical distancing of at least one metre (3.3. feet), respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
3	Guidance on appropriate use of masks (as per advice provided below) should continue to be followed, irrespective of vaccination status.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Indirect



Table (4): Instructions on Using Masks

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Guidance issued by relevant national/local authorities should be followed	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Indirect
2	In its absence, WHO recommendations should be used as reference, as follows:	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
3	In outdoor settings, masks should be worn where physical distancing can not be maintained.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Indirect
4	In indoor settings where ventilation has been assessed to be adequate (3), masks should be worn if physical distancing cannot be maintained.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Indirect
5	In indoor settings where ventilation cannot be assessed or is known to be poor, or if the ventilation system is not properly maintained (3), masks should be worn by all, regardless of whether physical distancing can be maintained.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Indirect
6	The decision if the general public should wear masks should be taken according to a riskbased approach.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
	This requires assessment of the risk of exposure to					



7	SARS- CoV-2, individual vulnerabilities, population density, feasibility of implementation of other precautionary measures (including access to clean water to wash fabric masks), and the need to prioritize medical masks for health workers and vulnerable individuals. .	Declarative	Directives	Requestives	Requesting	Indirect
8	In addition, national guidelines should consider the local context, culture, availability of masks and resources required.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
9	Valunerable Individuals at higher risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19 (those aged ≥ 60 years and those with underlying medical conditions) should wear a medical mask.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Advising	Indirect
10	Other individuals can wear non-medical/fabric masks, noting that they should be manufactured according to the recommended essential parameters (three-layer structure for homemade masks; compliance with filtration efficacy, breathability and snug fit thresholds for factorymade masks).	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect



Table (5): Precautionary measures related to venues

No	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Sub category	Function	
1	The following measures should be applied to any gatherings occurring during Ramadan, such as prayers, pilgrimages, communal meals or banquets	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Indirect
2	Consider holding the event outdoors if possible; otherwise, ensure that the indoor venue has enough space to accommodate participants with appropriate physical distancing, as well as adequate ventilation and air flow.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Direct
3	Shorten the duration of the event as much as possible to limit frequency and duration of interactions and consequently risk of potential exposure to SARS-CoV-2	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct



4	Give preference to holding smaller services with fewer attendees more often, rather than hosting large gatherings.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
5	Implement effective measures to prevent large numbers of people gathering in places associated with Eid al Adha activities, such as entertainment venues, markets and shops.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
6	Enforce adherence to physical distancing of at least one metre (3.3. feet) among attendees, both when seated and standing, through establishing and assigning fixed places, including when praying, performing <i>wudu</i> (ritual ablutions) in communal washing facilities, as well as in areas dedicated to shoe storage.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct



7	Regulate the number and flow of people approaching, entering, attending and departing from worship spaces, pilgrimage sites or other social or religious venues, by increasing the frequency of public transport, staggering arrivals, registering attendees, numbering entries, designating seating or standing places, marking the floor, employing crowd barriers, separating entries and exits, and adopting oneway pathways and corridors to ensure unidirectional flow.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
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Table (6):Instructions on Ventilation

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	The risk of getting COVID-19 is higher in crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity	Declarative	Constatives	Assertives	Stating	Direct



2	These environments are where the virus appears to be spread by respiratory droplets or aerosols more efficiently, so taking precautions is even more important	Declarative	Constatives	Assertive	Stating	Direct
3	Understanding and controlling building ventilation can improve the quality of the air we breathe and reduce the risk of indoor health concerns including prevention of SARS-CoV2 from spreading indoors.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
4	Event organizers and building managers should be encouraged to ensure that key considerations on	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Advising	Indirect
	ventilation recommended by WHO are adequately addressed.					

Table(7): Instructions on Healthy Hygiene

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Muslims perform <i>wudu</i> (ablution) before prayers, which helps maintain healthy hygiene.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Suggesting	Indirect
2	The following additional measures should be considered:	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
3	Encourage performing <i>wudu</i> at home, where feasible.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Advising	Direct



4	Ensure that hand-washing facilities are adequately equipped with soap and water, and provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer at key entry and exit points.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Direct
5	Ensure the availability of disposable tissues and bins with disposable liners and lids, and guarantee the safe disposal of waste.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Direct
6	Encourage the use of personal prayer rugs to place over communal carpets.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Suggesting	Direct
7	Provide visual displays of advice on physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, mask wearing and general messages on COVID-19 prevention.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct

Table (8): Instructions on Frequently Clean Worship Spaces, Sites and Buildings

No	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Enforce thorough routine cleaning of venues where people gather and all commonly used facilities before and after each event, using detergents and disinfectants.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
2	In mosques, keep the premises and <i>wudu</i> facilities clean, and maintain general hygiene and sanitation.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct



3	Frequently clean oftentouched objects such as doorknobs, light switches and stair railings with detergents and disinfectant.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
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Table (9): Instructions on Charity

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	When distributing meat, the faithful should always consider the physical distancing and other precautionary measures in place.	Declarative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Indirect
2	Families should encourage nominating only one household member to perform the sacrifice, although preferably the sacrifice should be booked through centralized agencies or services.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Suggesting	Indirect
3	Centralized entities or institutions can also be used to distribute meat, in order to avoid the usual crowded gatherings.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Suggesting	Indirect
4	In this case, it is important to ensure that workers follow physical distancing and other precautionary measures throughout the cycle (collecting, packaging, storing and distribution).	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect



Table (10): Instructions on Animal –human interface and sacrificial slaughter

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	According to common safe practices when handling meat, countries should adopt strict measures around the selling and slaughtering of animals and the distribution of meat while ensuring that national food safety and hygiene regulations are enforced	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect

Table (11):Instructions on Animal management

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
1	Encourage and enforce proper procurement of animals to abide by safety standards, especially for importation of livestock; veterinary controls along the trade chain should be encouraged.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct



2	Allocate enough space in dedicated enclosures to safely house an increased influx of animals and avoid unsanitary overcrowding in anticipation of the slaughter; practices ensuring animal welfare during transportation and preslaughter should also be promoted.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
3	Do not slaughter animals that appear sick, and plan for dedicated space for quarantine and isolation of suspected ill animals.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Warning	Direct
4	Perform adequate veterinary checks for livestock to detect other zoonoses and mitigate any risk of transmission.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
5	Always procure animals through a trusted official procedure.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct



Table(12): Instructions on Slaughter Facilities and Practices

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act			Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype	Function	
	Discourage home slaughtering; increase the number or capacity of					
1	slaughter facilities to encourage best practices and ensure safety and physical distancing standards, for both public and staff.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
2	Properly equip slaughter facilities (e.g. with drains to carry away waste liquids); both facilities and equipment should be properly maintained and kept hygienic.	Imperative	Directives	Advisories	Advising	Direct
3	Facilities should be inspected periodically to uphold standards.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
4	Ensure that people responsible for slaughtering animals are practicing infection prevention and control measures for COVID-19 (e.g. physical distancing, and hygiene, respiratory etiquette, wearing masks), and are using adequate personal protective equipment while processing animals (e.g. gloves, apron, shoes/boots).	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
5	Staff should be familiar with standard operating procedures related to safety practices, and be aware of COVID-19 signs and symptoms.	Declarative	Directives	Advisories	Recommending	Indirect
6	Ensure that waste management for unused animal by- products is in place and that facilities have a contingency plan in the event of contamination or an outbreak	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct



Table(13): Instructions on Marketplaces

No.	Texts	Type of sentence	Illocutionary act		Function	Level of directness
			Major type	Subtype		
1	Provide basic infrastructure to promote sanitation, such as toilet and hand-washing facilities, safe water supplies, cleanable walls and floors, and drainage.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
2	Ensure regular and thorough sanitation of stalls and equipment.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct
3	Ensure that all waste materials, including solid and liquid waste, are collected and disposed of regularly from the market, ideally at least once daily.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Instructing	Direct
4	Protect market areas and food from environmental hazards, including rain, sun, dust, insects, rodents and other animals.	Imperative	Directives	Requirements	Ordering	Direct

Findings

Table (17) is a percentage representation of the most frequent functions of illocutionary acts performed in the instructions given on Eid al Adha in the context of COVID-19 depending on the number of times of occurrence of each function that has been identified. It shows that *ordering* occupies the first rank on the frequency scale with (20) cases and a percentage of (31.74%) of the total number. *Recommending* comes second and recurs (15) times with a percentage of (23.80%). *Requesting* comes in the last rank on the frequency scale as it recurs only once with a percentage of (1.58%)



Table (17): Frequencies of the Functions of Illocutionary Acts

No.	Functions of Illocutionary Acts Used in the Instructions	Frequency	The Percentage
1	Ordering	20	31.74 %
2	Recommending	15	23.80 %
3	Instructing	14	22.22 %
5	Advising	5	7.93 %
6	Suggesting	4	6.34 %
7	Warning	2	3.17 %
8	Stating	2	3.17 %
9	Requesting	1	1.58 %
	Total	63	99.95 %

Regarding the level of directness, *direct* and *indirect* speech acts are identified depending on the relationship between sentences types and the functions of illocutionary acts. The functions of illocutionary acts are used directly (37) times with a percentage of (58.73%), hence, *direct speech acts* represent the majority of the total number. Whereas *indirect speech acts* come second with a frequency rate amounting to (26, 41.26%). This is shown in Table (18):

Table (18): Frequencies of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

No.	The Level of Directness	Frequency	Percentage
1	Direct Speech Acts	37	58.73 %
2	Indirect Speech Acts	26	41.26 %
	Total	63	99.99 %



Conclusions

From the results shown above it is clear that *ordering* occupies the first rank of the functions of illocutionary acts used in the selected data. This reflects WHO tendency to fulfil the role of commander when giving it's COVID-19 instructions because WHO tries to show the strength and severity of its instructions to be implemented and taking into consideration by employing them as *orders*. This also refers to the importance of following WHO COVID19 instructions in Eid al Adha specifically as it is one of social and religious occasions at which Muslims practice many traditions that include social gathering. At the same time and with the occurrence of *recommending* in the second rank, WHO eases the severity of its instructions allowing more people to be encouraged to follow them. It is also noteworthy to mention that most of the WHO Covid-19 instructions are given in a direct way which represents the WHO desire to provide clear and concise Instructions that people can easily comprehend and follow.

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