


Terbit online pada laman web jurnal : <http://e-journal.sastra-unes.com/index.php/JILP>

 Fakultas Sastra Universitas Ekasakti	JURNAL JILP (Jurnal Ilmiah Langu and Parole) Volume 9 Nomor 1	
	ISSN : 2581-0804 (Media Cetak)	E-ISSN : 2581-1819 (Media Online)
Received: 17-11-2025	Revised: 22-11-2025	Available online: 01-12-2025

Forensic Linguistic Examination of Illocutionary Acts in the Police BAP of the “EN” Murder Case in Muara Bungo

*¹Rini Afrilesa Jasmir, ¹Vera Magria

^{*1}English Literature, Language Faculty, Muara Bungo University, afrilesarini@gmail.com

²English Literature, Language Faculty, Muara Bungo University, veramagria14@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author:

Rini Afrilesa

English Literature, Language Faculty, Muara Bungo University, afrilesarini@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the illocutionary acts embedded in the police interrogation transcript (Berita Acara Pemeriksaan/BAP) of WD, the suspect in the murder of EN in Muara Bungo. Using Searle’s taxonomy of speech acts, the research identifies assertives, directives, expressives, and commissives as the dominant forms shaping the interaction between the interrogator and the suspect. The analysis reveals that the interrogator consistently relies on high-pressure directives that control narrative flow, restrict the suspect’s discursive freedom, and guide the production of legally relevant information. In contrast, the suspect’s responses exhibit a pattern of assertive confessions, mitigation strategies through reported speech, emotional expressions, and moral positioning. These linguistic choices not only construct his version of events but also function as strategic attempts to negotiate responsibility and reshape the legal interpretation of his actions. The findings indicate that BAP statements are not neutral reflections of spoken interaction but structured linguistic events influenced by institutional power, psychological dynamics, and communicative strategies. This study highlights the importance of forensic linguistic analysis in evaluating the credibility, voluntariness, and evidentiary value of interrogation transcripts in Indonesian legal settings. It also contributes to understanding how language functions as both evidence and a tool for shaping legal realities.

Keywords: *Linguistics Forensic, Pragmatics, Illocutionary Act*

© 2025Jurnal JILP

I INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in criminal investigations, particularly in Indonesia where the *Berita Acara Pemeriksaan* (BAP) becomes an official record of a suspect's statements. Forensic linguistics provides tools to analyze how meaning, intention, and power manifest in such documents. The high-profile murder case of lecturer EN, allegedly committed by WD, offers a critical context for examining how interrogations shape legal narratives through illocutionary acts.

This study aims to identify the illocutionary forces present in the suspect's statements and analyze how these linguistic choices function as communicative actions within a legal setting. Previous studies in Indonesia have examined speech acts in court proceedings or witness testimonies, but research focusing on illocutionary acts within a murder-case BAP remains scarce. This gap highlights the relevance of examining how interrogation language structures power, truth claims, and legal responsibility.

This study aims to analyze the types and functions of illocutionary acts produced in the interrogation, contributing to both forensic linguistics and pragmatic studies in Indonesian legal contexts. The illocutionary data in the BAP transcript were coded using a qualitative linguistic approach grounded in Searle's (1979) taxonomy of speech acts. First, all interrogator–suspect turns in the BAP were scanned to identify utterances that carried high illocutionary force particularly confessions, justifications,

emotional expressions, directives, and commitment statements.

Utterances containing explicit performative verbs, reported speech, imperative constructions, mental-state predicates, or evaluative expressions were marked as potential data points. Each candidate segment was then categorized into Searle's five types of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Because the BAP included sensitive and explicit content, only legally and ethically relevant sections were retained, and sexual content was paraphrased to protect victims and maintain academic integrity.

Coding reliability was strengthened through repeated passes across the transcript, with cross-checking of categorization criteria to avoid misclassification of hybrid forms (e.g., assertive expressive blends). The selection of the four final data examples was based on (1) clarity of illocutionary force, (2) relevance to forensic analysis, and (3) representativeness of interactional patterns between the interrogator and the suspect.

The purpose of this research is (1) to identify the categories of illocutionary acts used by the interrogator and the suspect, and (2) to interpret how these acts construct meanings related to confession, justification, denial, or mitigation. The results are expected to provide insights into how language reflects cognitive and emotional states in criminal confessions.

II RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative descriptive analysis. All interrogator–suspect turns were reviewed and coded based on linguistic markers such as performative verbs, imperative phrases, evaluative expressions, and reported speech. Only ethically non-explicit sections of the BAP were used, with sensitive content paraphrased. Coding followed Searle's framework, with repeated passes ensuring consistency across categories.

The data consist of the full BAP transcript of the suspect, containing question–

answer sequences between the police interrogator and suspect WD. Sensitive sexual content is excluded from quotation for ethical reasons.

Relevant sections containing illocutionary actions especially those involving confession, justification, denial, response to accusations, and emotional expressions—were selected.

The analysis applies Searle's illocutionary-act framework by identifying; linguistic markers (e.g., modal verbs, lexical indicators, performative verbs), pragmatic force

(what action the utterance performs), power relations (who controls the speech event), and

narrative strategy (how the suspect constructs his version of events).

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the four core illocutionary data points:

Data 1 – Confession (Assertive)

Original Indonesian:

“Sebab saya diambil keterangan saat ini karena saya telah melakukan pembunuhan terhadap sdr. EN.”

English Translation:

“The reason I am being questioned now is because I have committed the murder of Ms. EN.”

Illocutionary Classification + Forensic Linguistics

This sentence is a strong assertive (performative assertive) the speaker is not merely describing a suspicion but directly attributing a criminal act to themselves. Linguistic features that reinforce the illocutionary force include a clear action verb predicate (“have committed murder”), the use of the perfective aspect (“have”) which emphasizes the completeness of the action, and the first-person singular form “I,” which explicitly positions the agent. There is no hedging, mitigation, or epistemic operator (e.g., “might,” “seem”) that could weaken the claim; the statement is categorical. In Searle’s framework, this is a factual claim (representative/assertive) that simultaneously functions as a confession — it shifts the proposition from possibility to a pragmatically binding statement.

Forensic and Pragmatic Implications

From a forensic perspective, an unrestricted confession of this kind holds high value because it shifts the status of the evidence: from a mere narrative to the defendant’s position regarding the facts. However, the evidential quality is not determined solely by the content of the claim the interactional context shapes voluntariness and credibility. Conversation analysis must note whether the confession emerged after repeated questioning (irreversible density), before or after the reading of rights, and whether there are contradictions elsewhere. In forensic practice, a strong confession may also serve as a pragmatic strategy (e.g., appearing

cooperative to receive leniency) or as a response under pressure; therefore, analysts must corroborate the confession with external evidence (time, location, physical evidence) and with turn-taking patterns that indicate whether the confession was spontaneous or produced due to the interrogative context.

Data 2 – Directive by Investigator

Original Indonesian:

“Jelaskan kronologis hingga sampai sdr melakukan pembunuhan terhadap korban, jelaskan?”

English Translation:

“Explain the chronology that led you to commit the murder of the victim, explain?”

Illocutionary Classification & Interactional Cues

These questions are directives according to Searle: speech acts aimed at causing the listener to perform an action (in this case, providing an explanation/verbal report). The short imperative/interrogative forms (“Explain?”) carry a coercive performative force; their brevity limits the suspect’s narrative space and reinforces the investigator’s agenda. In addition, the repetition of the word “explain” and repeated focused questions increase the time pressure on responses and guide the organization of information (slot-filling): the investigator controls sequencing — what should be mentioned, in which order, and which details are required.

Forensic Implications & Investigative Practice

In forensic analysis, the density of directives functions as an indicator of power asymmetry and influences the quality of statements produced. Repeated and narrow directives tend to elicit brief answers or responses that meet the investigator’s desired format (information usable as evidence), rather than free narratives that might contain mitigation or contextualizing details. Therefore, when analyzing the credibility of a defendant’s statement, forensic linguists note the positioning of directives, if a confession or material details appear immediately after a series of imperatives,

there is a risk that the statement has been shaped by interrogative prompts and warrants further scrutiny (e.g., the presence of leading questions or information elicited by the investigator).

Data 3 – Mitigation through Reported Insult

Original Indonesian:

“Permasalahannya yaitu saat saya sedang bersama dengan korban dan korban mengatakan dengan perkataan ‘KAU NI DAK, AKU SUKO DENGAN KAU TAPI KAU KAYAK GINI DENGAN AKU SEDANGKAN CEWEK KAU NI BEDA NIAN, JAUH BANGET, DAK BISO BEGAYA, HARUSNYA KAU AJARI SUPAYA BISA BERGAYA, TAPI COCOKLAH DENGAN KAU SAMA-SAMA JAUH BANGET, PANTEEK’ secara berulang kali dan sering di ucapkannya sehingga saya merasa sakit hati dan berniat untuk membunuh korban.”

English Translation:

“The problem was that when I was with the victim she said things like ‘YOU THERE, I LIKE YOU BUT YOU ARE LIKE THIS WITH ME WHILE YOUR GIRLFRIEND IS VERY DIFFERENT, VERY FAR, CAN’T DRESS UP, YOU SHOULD TEACH HER TO DRESS UP, BUT WE’RE A VERY BAD MATCH, PANTEEK’ repeatedly and often, so I felt hurt and intended to kill the victim.”

Illocutionary Classification & Linguistic Mechanics

This is a combination of assertive (reporting the victim’s speech quoted speech) and expressive (stating a psychological condition: “I felt hurt”), which together function as a mitigating narrative. Illocutionarily, the victim’s direct quote serves as triggering evidence (reportative assertive) the suspect not only reports the event but also cites another party’s utterance to give an impression of objectivity regarding their emotional trigger. Mental and evaluative verbs (“I felt hurt,” “so I intended...”) link external facts (insults) with internal states (emotions) and subsequent actions (intent/behavior), forming a pragmatic causal chain that serves to justify the action.

Forensic Implications & Pragmatic Risks

From a forensic perspective, narratives

using reported speech as provocation should be verified whether the quotation is corroborated by external evidence (chat logs, witnesses) or merely a retrospective reconstruction that reinforces a defense narrative. This strategy is common in mitigation discourse: it shifts focus from prior intent to an emotional reaction to an external stimulus. Linguistic analysts should pay attention to the selection of quotations (what is chosen to be quoted, what is omitted), frequency of repetition (reinforcing the impression that the insult was chronic), and temporal coherence between the insult and the action. If the victim’s quotes appear consistently and are corroborated, they support a provocation claim; if not, they are more likely a rhetorical strategy to reduce the perception of premeditation.

Data 4 – Remorse (Expressive + Commissive)

Original Indonesian:

“Saat ini saya menyesali atas perbuatan saya dan saya akan mempertanggungjawabkan segala perbuatan saya.”

English Translation:

“At this time I regret my actions and I will be accountable for all I have done.”

Illocutionary Classification & Verbal Markers

This utterance is primarily expressive conveying moral emotion (regret). However, the sentence structure contains a commissive element because it includes a future-oriented promise/commitment (“I will be held accountable” / “saya akan mempertanggungjawabkan”), thus serving a dual function: expressing current feelings while indicating readiness/intent to act or accept consequences. Illocutionarily, the expression of regret alters the interpersonal relationship with the listener (investigator, public): it reduces moral distance and presents the subject as cooperative and introspective. Linguistically, the combination of the mental verb “regret” and the future tense modality “will” creates a present/future pairing characteristic of linguistic rehabilitative action.

Forensic Implications & Credibility Interpretation

In an investigative context, expressed regret can have important rhetorical effects humanizing the defendant and opening the possibility for sentence mitigation. However, forensic linguistics must examine sincerity

signals (emotional consistency across turns, nonverbal indicators if available, and alignment between statements and subsequent actions). The position of the statement (often occurring after a confession and a series of questions) is also crucial: if it appears as a narrative closure, it may serve as a pragmatic strategy to frame the overall record favorably. Therefore, analysts need to assess whether the expression is spontaneous and sustained (e.g., repeated outside formal contexts), or whether it appears as a formulaic clause inserted to influence legal judgment.

Summary Table of Illocutionary Data (with Forensic Risk Notes)

No	Original Indonesian	Illocutionary Type (Searle)	English Translation	Forensic Risk/Interpretive Notes
1	"Sebab saya diambil keterangan saat ini karena saya telah melakukan pembunuhan terhadap sdr. EN	Assertive (Convenssion)	"The Reason I am being questioned now is because I have committed the murder of Ms. EN	Strong confession; must evaluate voluntariness & context of questioning; check for directive pressure before admission
2	"Jelaskan kronologis	Directive (Interrogator)	"Explain the chronology	High directive

	hingga sampai sdr melakukan pembunuhan terhadap korban, jelaskan?"		that led you to commit the murder of the victim"	density: risk of shaping the suspect's narrative; may compress or format responses
3	"Korban mengatakan.. 'K AU NI DAK...PANTE EK' sehingga saya merasa sakit hati dan berniat membunuh korban	Assertive + Expressive (Mitigation/Justification)	"The victim said 'YOU THERE...PANTEEK; repeatedly, so I felt hurt and intended to kill the victim"	Reported insult may be framed strategically; requires external corroboration; possible mitigation rhetoric
4	"Saat ini saya menyesali atas perbuatan saya dan saya akan mempertanggungjawabkan segala perbuatan saya"	Expressive + Commissive	"I regret my actions and I will be accountable for all I have done	Remorse may be sincere or formulaic; emerging at the end suggests strategic moral positioning

IV CONCLUSION

The analysis of the four selected data instances demonstrates how illocutionary acts in the interrogation operate as both linguistic actions and forensic indicators. The suspect's confession (Data 1) functions as a high-strength assertive whose linguistic form suggests direct acceptance of responsibility, yet its forensic reliability depends on the directive environment in which it emerged.

The investigator's questioning style (Data 2) reveals a dominance of directives, producing a tightly controlled interactional structure that shapes not only the pace of the narrative but also the content that becomes legally recordable. In contrast, the suspect's reported citation of the victim's insulting speech (Data 3) serves as a

hybrid assertive–expressive act that frames emotional provocation as a causal justification for the killing; from a forensic standpoint, this introduces a mitigation narrative that must be validated independently.

Finally, the suspect's expression of regret and willingness to accept consequences (Data 4) merges expressive and commissive force, functioning both as a moral stance and a potential strategic device to influence evaluators' perceptions of remorsefulness. Taken together, the findings illustrate that illocutionary acts in BAP documents are not neutral linguistic entities but strategic, power-infused actions that actively shape legal interpretation and procedural outcomes.

Bibliography

- [1] Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford University Press.
- [2] Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- [3] Coulthard, M., & Johnson, A. (2010). *An introduction to forensic linguistics: Language in evidence*. Routledge.
- [4] Coulthard, M., Johnson, A., & Wright, D. (2017). *An introduction to forensic linguistics* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- [5] Gibbons, J. (2003). *Forensic linguistics: Language in the justice system*. Blackwell.
- [6] Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- [7] Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Olsson, J., & Luchjenbroers, J. (2013). *Forensic linguistics* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Shuy, R. W. (1998). *The language of confession, interrogation, and deception*. Sage.
- [11] Tiersma, P. M., & Solan, L. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of language and law*. Oxford University Press.
- [12] Shuy, R. W. (1993). *Language crimes: The use and abuse of language evidence in the courtroom*. Blackwell.
- [13] Shuy, R. W. (2005). *Creating language crimes*. Oxford University Press.
- [14] Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.