# Illocutionary Speech Acts in the Lyrics of "*Mathasibnish*" Based on Searle's Theory

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**ABSTRACT**

*Song lyrics as a form of poetic text not only serve an aesthetic function but also contain a communicative dimension that reflects the speaker's attitudes, intentions, and emotional states within interpersonal relationships. In the context of modern popular Arabic music, themes of betrayal and disappointment are frequently represented through language rich in pragmatic meaning. This study aims to examine the realization of illocutionary speech acts in the lyrics of "Mathasibnish" written by Amir Teima and popularized by Sherine Abdel Wahab. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, drawing on speech act theory proposed by J. L. Austin and further developed by John Searle, which classifies illocutionary acts into representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative categories. The data consist of utterances in the song lyrics, collected through documentation techniques and analyzed through processes of identification, classification, and interpretation of their pragmatic functions. The findings reveal that four types of illocutionary speech acts are present in the lyrics, namely representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives, while declaratives are not identified. The dominance of expressive acts emphasizes that the song discourse is oriented toward the expression of emotion, particularly feelings of disappointment and inner pain resulting from betrayal. Meanwhile, representative, directive, and commissive acts function to reinforce the speaker's position and decisions within the relationship.*

## 1. Introduction

Language occupies an essential position in human life as a medium for conveying ideas, thoughts, and emotions. From a pragmatic perspective, language does not merely function as an informative communication tool, but also as a means of performing certain actions through utterances (Mailani et al., 2022; Anggriyani et al., 2025; Karubaba et al., 2024). Every utterance contains an illocutionary dimension that reflects the speaker's attitude, intention, and stance toward a particular event or situation (Suryawin et al., 2022; Ananda et al., 2025; Kaharuddin et al., 2025). Therefore, speech act analysis becomes significant in examining how meaning is constructed through linguistic practices within specific social contexts (Panggabean et al. 2025; Rahman & Amir, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2026).

In the context of artistic works, particularly song lyrics, language functions as an intensive form of communicative action. Lyrics not only present an aesthetic dimension but also actualize complex and layered emotional expressions (Gunawan, 2024). Contemporary popular Arabic music frequently raises themes of interpersonal relationships, such as love, betrayal, inner conflict, and rejection. One work that reflects such dynamics is "*Mathasibnish*," written by Amir Teima and popularized by Sherine Abdel Wahab. The lyrics of this song represent expressions of disappointment, anger, prohibition, commitment to refusal, and the articulation of intense inner states, making it relevant to be examined through the perspective of speech act theory, particularly within the domain of illocutionary acts.

Conceptually, this study is grounded in speech act theory introduced by Austin (1975) and later developed by John Searle (1979), who classified illocutionary acts into five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. The method applied is a qualitative descriptive approach with analytical stages consisting of identification, classification, and interpretation of the types of illocutionary speech acts found in the song lyrics. The analysis focuses on the forms of illocutionary acts that emerge and their pragmatic functions in constructing the meanings of disappointment and rejection within the context of interpersonal relationships.

Several previous studies have examined speech acts in various objects, such as literary texts, film dialogues, and religious songs. (Gazali & Alwani, 2024) identified praise and religious longing in Arabic songs, while (Susilawati & Saraswati, 2023) found expressions of congratulations, praise, and apologies in films. (Ayu & Prameswari, 2024) demonstrated the influence of politeness norms on rejection strategies in Sasak society, and (Sholiha & Nihayati, 2024) identified praise, complaints, regret, and happiness in films. (Siagian et al., 2025) emphasized affection and sadness in Batak song lyrics, (AlRamadneh, 2023) analyzed emotional expressions in films, and (Cahyarani & Kusuma, 2024) highlighted pragmatic equivalence in song lyric translation. These studies indicate that speech act theory holds both theoretical and methodological relevance for analyzing literary works and popular cultural products.

Nevertheless, previous studies generally focus on categorizing speech act types in a broad sense or employ research objects from different cultural backgrounds and genres. Studies that specifically examine the realization of illocutionary speech acts in contemporary popular Arabic songs addressing relational conflict and betrayal remain limited. Furthermore, there is still a lack of research integrating illocutionary classification with a systematic analysis of its pragmatic functions in constructing representations of disappointment and rejection.

The problem of this study lies in the absence of systematic research that identifies and classifies the forms of illocutionary speech acts in contemporary popular Arabic song lyrics, particularly *Mathasibnish*. The lyrics contain various utterances that pragmatically represent expressions of disappointment, rejection, and emotional dynamics of the speaker; however, their illocutionary dimensions and pragmatic functions have not been comprehensively analyzed. This limitation results in the communicative intentions embedded within the linguistic structures not being fully revealed. Therefore, an analysis based on the classification of illocutionary speech acts as formulated by John Searle is necessary to systematically and structurally explain the types and pragmatic functions of the utterances.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study is aimed at identifying and classifying the forms of illocutionary speech acts found in the lyrics of *Mathasibnish*. The analysis is conducted by referring to the classification of illocutionary acts proposed by John Searle as the primary theoretical framework. Furthermore, this research seeks to examine the pragmatic functions of each illocutionary form in representing meanings of disappointment and rejection. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide a more systematic understanding of the construction of emotional meaning within the context of interpersonal relationships.

The novelty of this research lies in the selection of a contemporary popular Arabic song as the object of pragmatic analysis, examined comprehensively through John Searle's illocutionary classification while still considering the foundational speech act framework proposed by J. L. Austin. This study does not merely inventory the types of illocutionary acts that appear but also explores their relationship with the construction of emotional meaning in interpersonal contexts. Thus, this research contributes to strengthening and expanding pragmatic studies within the domain of Arabic popular culture, which has thus far received relatively limited academic attention.

## 2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology with a descriptive design aimed at examining the forms and functions of illocutionary speech acts in song lyrics as manifestations of language use in communicative contexts (Sugiyono, 2020). The approach applied is a pragmatic approach, referring to the classification of illocutionary speech acts proposed by Searle (1979), which categorizes illocutionary acts into five types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The focus of this research lies in identifying the types of illocutionary acts realized in the song lyrics and explaining their pragmatic functions in representing meanings of disappointment and rejection within interpersonal relationships.

The object of this study is the text of the popular Arabic song *Mathasibnish*, written by Amir Teima and popularized by Sherine Abdel Wahab. The song is available and accessible on YouTube via the following link: https://youtu.be/F6clfw5ZUmw?si=y5g5aVb-HpA5fsWM. The research data consist of units of utterances in the lyrics that contain illocutionary force and are relevant to the focus of the study. The primary data source was obtained from the official lyric text transcribed based on the version published online. Secondary data sources include relevant pragmatic literature, particularly works discussing Searle's speech act theory, which serve as the conceptual framework in the analysis process.

The data were collected using the observation and note-taking method, involving repeated listening to the song, transcribing the lyrics, and marking parts containing elements of illocutionary speech acts from official streaming platforms and verified sources. The data analysis process followed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main

components: data reduction to select relevant information, data display in the form of structured descriptive explanations, and conclusion drawing to discover meanings and address the research focus (Asipi et al., 2022).

The selection of a qualitative descriptive approach is based on the characteristics of the research object, namely song lyrics as textual data, which require processes of understanding and interpreting meaning based on their contextual use. The speech act analysis in this study is not oriented toward quantitative measurement but toward interpreting the illocutionary force and communicative function of each utterance. This approach is considered relevant because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the illocutionary strategies used to represent the speaker's psychological condition.

Data validity is ensured through theoretical validity, by confirming that the processes of identification and classification are conducted consistently based on the conceptual indicators of each illocutionary category according to Searle (Pratiwi et al., 2025). Each utterance is analysed with strict reference to theoretical parameters to minimize misclassification. Meanwhile, research reliability is maintained through the implementation of systematic and iterative analytical procedures, from identification and classification to interpretation, thereby producing consistent and academically accountable categorizations.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the identification of illocutionary speech act types based on Searle's classification, accompanied by an analysis of the pragmatic functions of each category realized in the lyrics of *Mathasibnish*.

### 3.1 Results

The findings of the analysis indicate that four categories of illocutionary speech acts are realized in the lyrics, namely representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. The declarative category, however, is not found in the research data.

The distribution of each type of illocutionary speech act is subsequently presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Distribution of Illocutionary Speech Acts in the Lyrics of *Mathasibnish***

| Song Lyrics | Translation | Type of Illocution | Explanation |
|---|---|---|---|
| عَمَلْتُه ذَنْبَ عَلَى تْحَسِبْنِيش مَا انْتَ | Do not hold me accountable for the mistake you made | Directive | A prohibition directed at the hearer not to blame the speaker. |
| وَمَتْلُومْنِيشْ | And do not blame me | Directive | An emphatic prohibition delivered with emotional intensity. |
| انَا إِنَّى بَخَافْ عُمْرِى طُولْ أَحْسَاسَكْ يُومْ اجْرَحْ | All my life I was afraid of hurting your feelings | Representative | An expression of the speaker's inner emotional state. |
| أَعْيشْ مَاتْسِبْنِى | Do not let me live like this | Directive | A request for the painful situation to be ended. |
| بَعَدِ ارْجَعْلَكْ رَافْضَه هَـانَا مَافِيشْ لِيَا خِيانْتَكْ | I refuse to return to you after your betrayal | Commissive | A declaration of the speaker's determination not to return. |
| حَتَّى لُوْ مَاشْكِيتْ عُمْرِى اخْلاصَلَكْ فِى ثَوَانِيه | I never doubted your loyalty | Representative | A statement about a belief the speaker once held in the past. |
| عَلَيْكْ قُولْتَ يَامَـا | I have said so many things about you | Representative | An expression describing repeated past experiences. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| لَا بِتْفُكَرْش مَا أَنَانِى إِنْتَ رُوحك فِى | You are selfish you only think of yourself | Expressive | An evaluative expression delivered with emotional intensity. |
| وَانْتَ لِلْكَ عَايِشْ بِتُقُولَى لِرُوحك بَسّ عَايِشْ | You say you live for me, but you live only for yourself | Expressive | A critical utterance expressing disappointment. |
| عَينِيكْ شُوفْتَ أَنَا | I saw your eyes | Representative | A statement reporting direct observation by the speaker. |
| جَايّ وْ عَينِى بِتْكَدَّبْ وكَمَانْ حِكَايَاتْ تُقُولْ | Your eyes lie while you tell stories | Expressive | An utterance expressing disappointment toward the hearer's dishonesty. |
| عَنَّكْ تِبَعِدْنِى اقُرْبْلَكْ مَا كُلِّ مَسَافَاتْ | Whenever I get close to you, you push me away | Representative | A depiction of the recurring relational dynamic within the relationship. |
| لله مِنَّكْ | I leave your matter to God | Expressive | An expression of disappointment conveyed in a religious tone. |
| جُوَّا مِنْ بِيتْأَلَّمْ هاقَلْبِى | My heart hurts from within | Expressive | An expression of deep inner sadness and emotional pain. |
| قُدَّامِى شَايْفَه مُشْ وْ مَاشْيَه حَوَالَيَّا وَلَا | I walk without seeing anything ahead or around me | Representative | A depiction of the speaker's mental and emotional state. |
| عَلِيكْ سَهْلَ بَقَى | It has become easy for you | Expressive | A reproachful expression delivered with emotional intensity. |
| تِظْلِمْنِى وْ تِجْرَحْنِى إِنَّكْ | To hurt and wrong me | Expressive | A complaint reflecting the speaker's wounded feelings. |
| أَحْسَاسِى تْجَرَّبْ نِفْسِى كَانْ عَلَيَّا صَعَبَ | I wish you could experience how I feel | Directive | An implied request for the hearer to experience the same emotional pain. |

Referring to Table 1, the findings indicate that four categories of illocutionary speech acts are realized in the lyrics of *Mathasibnish*, namely representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. The declarative category, however, was not identified in the analyzed data. Among these categories, expressive acts appear with the highest frequency of occurrence. This predominance suggests that the construction of meaning in the song lyrics primarily centers on the articulation of the speaker's affective states and emotional responses.

Furthermore, representative acts function to convey the speaker's experiences, beliefs, and subjective observations regarding the dynamics of the interpersonal relationship. Directive acts reflect the speaker's attempts to influence or restrict the addressee's actions, particularly through prohibitions and requests. Meanwhile, commissive acts embody the speaker's commitment to a particular stance or decision concerning the continuation of the relationship. Overall, these findings are

consistent with the classification of illocutionary speech acts proposed by John Searle in explaining the pragmatic functions of each category in a systematic manner.

### 3.2 Discussion

This section analytically elaborates on each type of illocutionary speech act identified in the lyrics of *Mathasibnish* by referring to Searle's classification. The discussion does not merely focus on categorizing the utterances but also examines the illocutionary force embedded within them, the emotional context underlying their occurrence, and the pragmatic functions constructed in the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Accordingly, this analysis aims to explain how these speech acts contribute to building the dynamics of conflict, reinforcing the speaker's stance, and constructing emotional meaning within the overall discourse structure of the song.

### 3.2.1 Representative Speech Acts

Representative speech acts are utterances that function to state a proposition believed to be true by the speaker and commit the speaker to the truth of that proposition (Anjora et al., 2025). In the lyrics of *Mathasibnish*, representative speech acts are realized through expressions of experience, belief, and personal observation regarding the relationship experienced by the speaker.

a. إِحْسَاسَكْ يَوْمْ أَجْرَحْ أَنَا إِنِّي بِخَافْ عُمْرِي طُولَ

*All my life I was afraid that one day I might hurt your feelings.*

This utterance is classified as representative because the speaker expresses an inner condition that she believes to be personally true. Propositionally, the sentence conveys a subjective fact about the careful attitude the speaker has consistently maintained. Its illocutionary force lies in the speaker's commitment to the claim that she has always tried to protect the hearer's feelings. Pragmatically, this utterance functions as an implicit self-defense, constructing the image that the speaker never intended to cause harm (Fauziah, 2024). Thus, this representative act serves as an argumentative foundation that strengthens the speaker's moral position.

b. إِخْلَاصَكْ فِي ثَوَانِي حَتَّىٰ لَهُ شَكِّيتْ مَا عُمْرِي

*I never doubted your sincerity, not even for a second.*

This utterance also belongs to the representative category because it states a past belief considered true by the speaker. The temporal marker "عمري" (all my life) and the negation "شكيت ما" reinforce the claim of sincerity and absoluteness of that experience. Illocutionarily, the speaker commits herself to the proposition that she fully trusted the hearer. Its pragmatic function is to demonstrate the sincerity and trust that were once given, thereby creating a contrast with the betrayal that later occurred. This utterance builds emotional legitimacy for the disappointment that now emerges.

c. عَيْنِيكْ شُفْتْ أَنَا

*I saw your eyes.*

Structurally, this is a simple statement of direct observation. As a representative act, it commits the speaker to a claim based on sensory perception. However, pragmatically, the utterance goes beyond its literal meaning. It becomes the basis for an inference that the speaker perceived signs of dishonesty or a change in attitude. Therefore, this representative act functions as epistemic legitimation, affirming that the speaker knows the truth based on direct experience rather than mere assumption.

d. مَسَافَاتْ عَنْكْ تُبَعِّدْنِي أَقَرَّبْلَكْ مَا كُلَّ

*Whenever I try to get close to you, you push me away with distances between us.*

This utterance is categorized as representative because it describes a relational pattern perceived as real by the speaker. The repeated structure "ما كل" (whenever) indicates a generalization of recurring experiences. Illocutionarily, the speaker asserts a claim regarding an imbalanced relational dynamic, committing herself to the proposition that every attempt at closeness is met with distancing. Pragmatically, this utterance reinforces the depiction of an unequal relationship and serves as a rational justification for the rejection later expressed through commissive speech acts.

### 3.2.2 Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts are utterances intended to influence the hearer to perform or refrain from performing a particular action (Kamilia, 2025). In the lyrics of *Mathasibnish*, the directive category is realized through prohibitive constructions that are impositive in nature, although they are framed within emotional expressions.

**a. تِحْسِبْنِيشْ مَا**

*Do not consider me / Do not accuse me*

This utterance takes the form of a direct prohibition marked by the negation particle "ما" which in the Egyptian dialect functions as a prohibitive marker. Illocutionarily, the speaker attempts to prevent the hearer from performing a cognitive act, namely attributing blame to her. The illocutionary force of this utterance is regulative, as it seeks to restrict the hearer's mental action in judging or condemning the speaker. Pragmatically, it represents a rejection of negative labeling and serves as an initial indicator of a shift in position within the interpersonal relationship.

**b. تِلُومْنِيشْ وَمَا**

*And do not blame me*

This utterance reinforces the previous prohibition through the conjunction "و" (and), which indicates discourse continuity as well as emotional intensification. Illocutionarily, the speaker explicitly requests that the hearer cease the act of blaming her. Compared to the previous utterance, its illocutionary force is more direct because it targets the hearer's verbal and moral actions. Its pragmatic function is to maintain the speaker's self-integrity and to limit the hearer's legitimacy in passing judgment.

**c. أَعِيشْ تِسِيبْنِي مَا**

*Do not let me live like this*

This utterance represents a directive containing a nuance of appeal. Although structurally framed as a prohibition, pragmatically it implies a request for the painful condition experienced by the speaker to be brought to an end. Its illocutionary force is not merely impositive but also appellative, as it conveys hope for a change in the hearer's attitude. This utterance reflects the intensity of emotional conflict while simultaneously revealing the speaker's vulnerability within the interpersonal relationship.

### 3.2.3 Commissive Speech Acts

Commissive speech acts are utterances that contain the speaker's commitment to a future course of action (Jzuly et al., 2025). In this song, the commissive category is clearly represented through a statement of final decision.

**a. مَفِيشْ لِيَّا خِيَانْتَكْ بَعْدْ أَرْجَعْلَكْ رَافِضَة هَانَا**

*I refuse to return to you after your betrayal; never again.*

This utterance demonstrates the speaker's explicit commitment not to resume a relationship with the hearer. The lexeme "رافضة" (refuse) functions as a marker of a definitive and non-negotiable stance. Illocutionarily, the speaker binds herself to a future action, namely the rejection of reconciliation. This commissive force reflects strong resolution and serves as the argumentative climax following the series of representative and expressive speech acts that precede it. Pragmatically, this commissive utterance also functions as a strategy of self-protection and a symbol of the restoration of the speaker's dignity after betrayal.

### 3.2.4 Expressive Speech Acts

Expressive speech acts are utterances that function to express the speaker's psychological state or attitude toward a particular situation (Ilham, 2026). In this song, the expressive category appears dominantly and forms the emotional core of the text.

**a. رُوحَك فِي إِلَّا بِتْفَكَّرْش مَا أَنَانِي إِنْتَ**

*You are selfish; you only think about yourself.*

This utterance contains an evaluative judgment through the adjective أَنَانِي (selfish). Illocutionarily, the speaker does not merely convey information but expresses a negative attitude toward the hearer's character. Its illocutionary force is

evaluative, carrying nuances of anger and moral judgment. Pragmatically, it functions to delegitimize the hearer's behavior within the context of relational conflict.

**b.** لله مِنَّك

*I leave your matter to Allah.*

Literally, this expression carries a religious nuance however, pragmatically it functions as an expression of disappointment and helplessness. This utterance is classified as expressive because it reflects the speaker's psychological condition rather than performing an institutional declarative act. Its illocutionary force releases emotional pain while symbolically transferring moral judgment to a transcendental authority, thereby intensifying the emotional dimension of the interpersonal conflict.

**c.** جُوَّه مِنْ بِيِتْأَلِمْ قَلْبِي

*My heart hurts from within.*

This utterance explicitly states the speaker's emotional condition. Illocutionarily, the speaker expresses inner suffering. Its illocutionary force is purely emotive, as it is not directed toward influencing the hearer's action but rather toward representing the speaker's internal state. This utterance highlights vulnerability and the depth of emotional pain.

**d.** وَتِظْلِمْنِي تِجْرَحْنِي إِنَّك عَلَيْك سَهْل بَقَى

*Now it has become easy for you to hurt and wrong me.*

This utterance contains elements of reproach and moral evaluation. Illocutionarily, the speaker expresses both hurt and a sense of injustice.

The verbs تِجْرَحْنِي (hurt me) and تِظْلِمْنِي (wrong me) intensify the negative experience being conveyed. Its expressive force not only represents suffering but also implies accusation toward the hearer. Pragmatically, this utterance strengthens the legitimacy of the rejection articulated through the commissive speech act. In general, the most dominant category of speech act in the lyrics of *Mathasibnish* is expressive, followed by representative, directive, and commissive. This dominance indicates that the construction of meaning in the lyrics is primarily built through the articulation of intense emotion. The illocutionary strategies employed represent the speaker's position as a party experiencing emotional pain while simultaneously affirming her rejection of a relationship tainted by betrayal. Thus, the diversity of speech acts that appear not only constructs meaning at the semantic level but also reflects the dynamics of interpersonal relationships through a pragmatic dimension.

## 4. Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of examining and classifying the types of illocutionary speech acts found in the lyrics of Mathasibnish, as well as analyzing their pragmatic functions in representing disappointment and rejection within the context of interpersonal relationships. By referring to a pragmatic approach and Searle's classification of speech acts, the analysis focused on identifying the categories of illocution and explaining their contribution to the construction of emotional meaning throughout the overall discourse of the lyrics.

The results indicate that the lyrics of *Mathasibnish* realize four categories of illocutionary speech acts: representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives, while the declarative category is not identified. The dominance of expressive speech acts demonstrates that the structure of meaning in the lyrics is primarily oriented toward articulating the speaker's affective condition, particularly feelings of disappointment, anger, and emotional suffering as consequences of betrayal. Representative speech acts function to build legitimacy for the speaker's subjective experiences and beliefs; directives serve to direct or restrict the hearer's actions; and commissives reflect the speaker's commitment to rejecting the continuation of the relationship. These findings confirm that song lyrics, as a form of poetic discourse, possess a significant pragmatic dimension in constructing the speaker's stance, position, and emotional identity through diverse illocutionary strategies.

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