

IS COUNSELLING ADVICE-GIVING? EXAMINING THE SPEECH ACTS OF TRAINEE COUNSELLORS IN COUNSELLING SESSIONS



This research project focused on language use among trainee counsellors in counselling sessions in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). More specifically, this study was conducted to identify the speech acts which are usually used by trainee counsellors to influence clients (students), and to examine whether there is empirical support for societal views of counselling as advice-giving service. The theoretical framework for this study is the Speech Act Theory, and Bach and Harnish (1979) categorisation was used for the analysis of speech acts into constatives, directives, commissives and acknowledgements. For this preliminary study, 30 trainee counsellors in the Counselling degree programme were selected and their counselling sessions were taped. The analysis of speech acts in the counselling transcripts showed that the most dominant speech act is questioning, and this is in line with the purpose of counselling service which is to help clients explore their problems and come to a solution themselves. This study has shown that the societal view of counselling as advice-giving is a misconception. The use of a linguistic methodology in the field of counselling has opened up possibilities for inter-disciplinary research to attain a better understanding of counselling.

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