

**LANGUAGE OF CONCERN ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN CHILDREN IN
FOSTER CARE**

CHERISH HOW

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN CHILDREN IN
FOSTER CARE**

CHERISH HOW

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LANGUAGE OF CONCERN ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, school teachers and foster caregivers attend to the needs of children in foster home. As the children reach the age of eighteen, they have to leave foster care system and take charge of their own needs. In most cases, due to the lack of academic credential, securing a job and getting a place to live are some of the challenges they encounter. As such, teachers and caregivers play an important role in foster children's lives to ensure the educational needs of these children are addressed. It is essential to explore the degree of concern that teachers, caregivers, and foster children have towards academic achievements. This study examines the realisation patterns of speech act of concern from teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's responses in relation to the poor academic performance of children in foster care. Based on the language use, it also evaluates their stages of concern and investigates the types of academic needs and issues of children in foster care. Searle's (1976) Speech Act Categories and Hall and Hord's (1987) Stages of Concern are employed as frameworks for analysis. Content analysis is used to qualitatively analyse the narratives elicited from the semi-structured interviews of teachers, caregivers and foster children from selected secondary school and foster homes in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Various categories of speech act and stages of concern are coded and identified. Findings reveal that concern is voiced through the categories of speech acts and representative act is highly utilised by teachers and caregivers to describe, explain, and complain about problems in managing foster children; while intention to help foster children excel in school is highly prominent at the stage of refocusing. The findings also illustrate the frequent use of expressive act amongst foster children to express concern on their low level of comprehension in the

subjects they could not excel. Both teachers and caregivers are concern about the need for improving foster children's poor academic performance and lack of attention. The older foster children are more concern about their weak subjects than the younger ones. This study allows Social Welfare Agency to recognise the constraints and issues teachers and caregivers are hampered with in order to provide support to improve the educational services for foster children. Moreover, foster children too could reach out for assistance in the achievements of their academic needs. With helping to improve foster children's academic performance, they would have better careers in the future.

Keywords: concern, speech act, academic performance, foster children

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BAHASA KEBIMBANGAN PADA PRESTASI AKADEMIK KANAK-KANAK MALAYSIA DI RUMAH PENJAGAAN

ABSTRAK

Para guru sekolah dan penjaga anak angkat di Malaysia perlu memenuhi keperluan kanak-kanak yang berada di rumah penjagaan. Apabila kanak-kanak yang tinggal di rumah penjagaan ini mencapai umur 18 tahun, mereka perlu meninggalkan rumah penjagaan untuk meneruskan kehidupan. Walau bagaimanapun, ada kalangan mereka mempunyai prestasi yang lemah sehingga menyebabkan kesukaran mendapatkan kerja dan tempat tinggal. Para guru dan penjaga memainkan peranan penting dalam membina kehidupan kanak-kanak ini bagi memastikan keperluan mereka dipenuhi. Tahap kebimbangan para guru, penjaga, dan penjaga anak angkat terhadap pencapaian akademik kanak-kanak tersebut perlu diambil kira. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bentuk tindak tutur yang menunjukkan kebimbangan para guru, pengasuh, dan anak angkat dan kaitannya dengan prestasi akademik yang lemah di rumah penjagaan. Kajian ini juga menilai tahap-tahap kebimbangan, keperluan akademik, dan isu yang terdapat di rumah penjagaan berdasarkan pendekatan penggunaan bahasa. Kajian ini turut mengaplikasikan Teori Tindakan Ucapan Searle's (1976) dan Teori Tahap Kebimbangan Hall & Hord (1987) sebagai rangka analisis. Analisis kandungan dilakukan terhadap data-data kualitatif berbentuk naratif yang diperolehi melalui temu bual separa berstruktur dengan para guru, pengasuh, dan anak angkat dari sekolah menengah dan rumah penjagaan di Lembah Klang Malaysia. Pelbagai kategori tindak tutur dan tahap kebimbangan dikodkan dan dikenal pasti. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa tahap kebimbangan responden diekspresikan melalui kategori tindak tutur representatif yang digunakan untuk menerangkan, menjelaskan, dan mengadu berkaitan masalah yang dihadapi dalam pengurusan anak angkat. Pada masa

yang sama, mereka juga mempunyai niat untuk membantu kanak-kanak tersebut mencapai kecemerlangan di sekolah, iaitu dapatan ini dikenal pasti dalam tahap penstrukturan semula. Dapatan kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa kekerapan penggunaan tindak tutur ekspresif dalam kalangan anak-anak angkat digunakan untuk mengekspresikan tahap kefahaman yang rendah terhadap mata pelajaran yang tidak difahami. Para guru dan penjaga turut memberi perhatian terhadap keperluan anak-anak angkat tersebut untuk meningkatkan pencapaian akademik dengan memberi perhatian yang sewajarnya. Anak-anak angkat yang berumur lebih matang didapati mempunyai tahap kebimbangan yang lebih tinggi terhadap mata pelajaran yang lemah berbanding mereka yang kurang matang. Akhir sekali, dapatan kajian ini boleh diguna pakai oleh Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat untuk mengenal pasti kekangan yang dihadapi oleh para guru dan penjaga dalam memberi sokongan serta meningkatkan perkhidmatan pendidikan untuk anak angkat mereka. Pada masa yang sama, anak angkat juga boleh meningkatkan prestasi akademik mereka supaya memperolehi kerjaya yang lebih baik pada masa akan datang.

Kata kunci: kebimbangan, tindakan ucapan, prestasi akademik, anak-anak angkat

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	: Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
CBAM	: Concerns-based Adoption Model
ICT	: Information and Communication Technologies
IFID	: Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
JKMM	: <i>Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia</i> (Social Welfare Department Malaysia)
JPN	: <i>Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri</i> (Department of Education)
K	: Kappa
KPM	: <i>Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia</i> (Ministry of Education Malaysia)
KPWKM	: <i>Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat</i> (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development)
MCRI	: Malaysian Child Resource Institute
NEB	: National Education Blueprint
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
Pr(a)	: Simple percent agreement among raters
Pr(e)	: Expected percent agreement by chance
PT3	: <i>Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga</i> (Form 3 Assessment)
SPM	: <i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Certificate of Education)
UPSR	: <i>Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah</i> (Primary School Assessment Test)
UNICEF	: United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Language is vital in the socialisation of empathy or concern. Studies have shown that language skill allows one to identify others' physical, emotional and mental states especially children where they can develop vocabulary for concepts to explain their feelings, ideas and behaviour (Dyck et al., 2004; Milligan et al., 2007). Language skill, therefore, is significant as it allows one to express emotions such as concern.

The notion of concern is considered as “the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979, p. 5). This includes “the mental activity composed of questioning, analysing, re-analysing, considering alternative actions and reactions, and anticipating consequences” (Hall & Hord, 2006, p. 61). In 1987, Hall and Hord developed Concerns-based Adoption Model (CBAM) to measure teachers' degree of concern toward new curriculum implementation in schools. However, the way concern is voiced from a linguistic perspective has not been given much attention in research, especially in the academic performance of children from foster home.

Teachers and foster caregivers have grave concern about the academic performance of foster children as the number of these children is on the rise (Scherr, 2007). In the year 2012, a total of 3831 children were in need of care and protection from the Social Welfare Department. The number of foster children has increased by 7.5% with a total of 4119 in 2013. In 2014, the number increased once again by another 4.3%, revealing a total number of 4295 children in foster care in Malaysia (*Laporan Statistik Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat*, 2014, p. 248). In 2016, a total of 209 children were placed in

family foster cares which are under the de-institutionalisation pilot project of Malaysian government (Nuradzimmah Daim, 2016). The increase in the number of foster children in recent years has led to more establishments of foster homes throughout the country.

Foster homes in Malaysia are managed by government and non-governmental organisations. For the government administered foster homes, foster children's welfare is under the prevalence of Social Welfare Department, which is an agency under the management of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Not only do these underprivileged children need protection and care from the Social Welfare Department, they also need to fulfill the requirements of the Malaysian education system by attending public secondary school for a minimal duration of five years to prepare for better career options in the future (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). In the case of non-governmental foster homes, they are administered by social organisations aided through charitable sponsorships and support.

Moreover, foster children also have access to the school facilities and education system. These children need to undergo national examination at different school education levels nationwide namely:

- i. UPSR (*Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah* – Primary School Assessment Test), an assessment at the sixth year of primary education
- ii. PT3 (*Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga* - Form 3 Assessment), an assessment at the third year of lower secondary education
- iii. SPM (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* - Malaysian Certificate of Education), an assessment at the fifth year of upper secondary education

These national examinations are designed to measure Malaysian students' knowledge, values and skills (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). Children who succeed

academically in these national examinations would have more opportunities to further their studies to tertiary level by enrolling in colleges or universities. However, those who lack academic credentials would have fewer chances to enter colleges or to qualify for better job opportunities (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025). If unchecked, foster children with poor academic performance might be at risk of being homeless or jobless once they leave foster care system since they are left on their own to survive, to obtain a job and forced to start living independently. In Malaysia, jobs with good salary require high academic qualifications, for instance, a diploma or degree to gain a skilled or professional job (Yuen, 2017). Such jobs ought to commensurate with a good salary which could help foster children to be self-reliable financially. Moreover, teachers guide and provide education services while caregivers provide financial and emotional support to foster children. Therefore, the role of teachers and caregivers are vital in ensuring that children in foster homes perform well in their studies.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that foster children encounter challenges in achieving good academic performance as majority achieve low grades in tests (Berger et al., 2015; Forsman et al., 2016; O'Higgins et al., 2017) and have high dropout rates during school years (Lips, 2007). Foster children tend to avoid socialising with others due to poor academic performance which leads to low self-esteem (Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2003; Watson & Kabler, 2012). These children may also face societal discrimination especially among their peers in school as they are underachievers academically (McClung & Gayle, 2010).

Apart from that, majority of teachers and school personnel are familiar when dealing with children from normal family backgrounds. Only a handful of teachers specialise in

dealing with children who have special needs such as dyslexia, human communication problems and physical disability; while others are trained to deal with gifted children (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). Nevertheless, very few teachers are trained to deal with foster children and the problems they face while they attend school. In public schools, these children are often treated just like the rest of the students from normal family backgrounds (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003).

In Malaysia, Malaysian National Education Blueprint (NEB) 2006-2010 established the cluster school programme which not only aims to enhance the quality of education, but also aims to produce more academically-inclined students (Ministry of Education, 2006). In other words, this programme only selects schools which have students who perform well academically to be included under 'clusters of excellence' (Suseela Malaklolunthu & Faizah Shamsudin, 2011, p. 1488). It appears that Malaysian society tend to give a lot of prominence to students who excel academically (Mariam Adawiah Dzulkifli & Intan Aidura Alias, 2012). However, foster children who are under performing academically should not be segregated or discriminated. These children should be given proper attention and guidance by relevant agents who are responsible for their academic performance. This is necessary as foster children with poor academic performance may face many challenges as they leave the foster home (Bruskas, 2008). They may encounter social and financial issues such as being homeless and jobless due to high cost of living (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). Additionally, these children might not be able to afford health insurance which could leave them unprotected to any form of life mishaps. Lately, there has been a report on the rise in the number of poor and homeless in Malaysia where a total of 1,207 people check into the homeless transit centre as they are jobless and not being able to afford paying rent ("Rise in urban poor and homeless not due to subsidy removals", 2017). Foster children without academic

credentials could also face problems in securing a job, which consequently be challenging for them to rent a place to stay after leaving the care system. Such a situation, in turn, may leave them expose to various life challenges (Lam, 2014).

The poor academic performance of children in foster homes is an issue of concern as it is a challenge for them to meet up with one of the objectives of the national aspirations that is to eradicate illiteracy. Also, the notion of how 'concern' is conveyed for foster children with respect to their academic performance from a sociolinguistics perspective appears to be lacking in Malaysian foster home context. When linguistic aspect of concern has yet to be explored, the extent of one's concern might not be fully comprehended. Hence, there is a need to explore the 'concern' of the academic performance of foster children in Malaysia.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To examine the realisation patterns of the speech act of concern from the school teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's responses in relation to the poor academic performance of children in foster care.
- ii. To determine the school teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's stages of concern based on their use of speech act categories.
- iii. To investigate the types of needs and issues raised by the school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children about the academic performance of children in foster care based on their categories of speech act and stages of concern.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions would be answered to guide the analysis in this study:

- i. What are the categories of speech acts that school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children use to voice their concern?
- ii. How concerned are the school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children towards the academic performance of children in foster care based on their use of speech act categories?
- iii. What are the types of needs and issues raised by the school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children about the academic performance of children in foster care based on their categories of speech act and stages of concern?

To address the first research question, Searle's (1976) Speech Act Categories are adopted in order to examine the speech act categories from teachers, foster caregivers, and foster children's interview responses. The second research question is answered based on Hall and Hord's (1987) Stages of Concern to examine the participants' concerns about the academic performance of foster children.

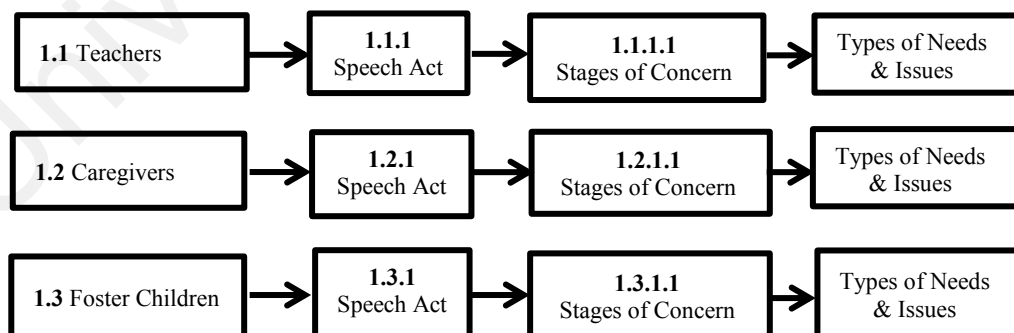


Figure 1.1: The Organisation and Development of Research Questions

In Figure 1.1, the stages of concern in each category of speech act are examined (see Section 3.1 for further discussion on theoretical framework). Subsequently, under each

category of speech act and each stage of concern, the types of needs and issues raised are also discussed based on the interview responses of the participants, which answers the third research question.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Investigating the language of concern from the perspective of school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children would add on a new dimension to the field of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, especially in the area of speech acts because studies in this area are scarce. Furthermore, the issues and needs which require immediate attention can be identified through teachers', caregivers', and foster children's language use. The results of the analysis could further disclose how concerned teachers and caregivers are as well as their intentions to help foster children. Additionally, the results can assist social welfare agencies to recognise constraints as well as issues teachers and caregivers may face in addressing the academic needs of foster children. Such recognition of constraints may allow the agency to provide full support towards improving the educational services for these children.

Besides, this study is significant in raising awareness on the importance of improving the academic performance of foster children through language of concern from teachers, caregivers and foster children. In doing so, awareness could be raised among social welfare agencies to provide more attention to foster children's academic needs in school. Furthermore, apart from teachers and caregivers, the voices of concern of foster children could also be heard. Such voices may serve as a starting point for addressing their needs, especially in terms of their academic performance from the point of 'concern'.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the language of concern on the academic performance of foster children. The non-verbal input is not taken into account in the analysis. There are only four research sites, namely three selected foster homes and a secondary school in the Klang Valley area. This multiple case study is limited solely to interviewing teachers and foster children from one secondary school as well as caregivers from three foster homes. However, a case study could provide a holistic and in-depth investigation towards a phenomenon as well as capture the emergent and intrinsic features (Hartley, 1994) of interaction from an interview.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The definitions of terms used throughout this study can be seen in the following:

Concern refers to “composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 61). This includes “the mental activity composed of questioning, analysing, re-analysing, considering alternative actions and reactions and anticipating consequences” (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979, p. 5).

Speech acts refer to “actions performed when an utterance is produced” which can be divided into locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act (Austin, 1962, p. 5).

Speech act of concern entails speech act and stages of concern. It refers to the action of concern performed through words, phrases or utterances (Austin, 1962) that represents the speaker’s feelings preoccupation, thought and consideration given to a

particular issue or task” (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 61) as well as “the mental activity composed of questioning, analysing, re-analysing, considering alternative actions and reactions and anticipating consequences” (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979, p. 5).

Academic performance refers to performance in all academic disciplines which comprises “both curricular and co-curricular activities such as classroom tasks, assignments, communication skills, and behaviour” (Ganai & Mir, 2013, p. 5).

Foster children refer to children “who may live with unrelated foster parents (regular foster care), with relatives (kinship care), in group homes, or in residential treatment centres” (Baker & Charvat, 2008, p. 412).

Foster caregiver is defined as an individual who takes care of a child, but not a parent of the child (Child Act, 2001).

Foster care is “a planned service for children who cannot live with their birth families for a period of time” (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003, p. 199).

Social welfare refers to system of services designed to support a community in terms of their social, educational, health, and economic needs (Zastrow, 2013).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents a review of literature and discussions from previous studies on foster children. Specifically, a brief overview of foster care as well as foster children in Malaysia is provided. Furthermore, studies on academic performance and academic needs of children in foster care, educational and caregiving services for these children as well as issues they encounter such as behavioural, discrimination and health problems are reviewed. In order to identify suitable research designs and methods as well as to underpin the theoretical frameworks adopted for this study, the notion of concern highlighting speech act theory and stages of concern are introduced. Following this, limitations of the previous studies are discussed to identify the research gaps.

2.1 Overview of Foster Care and Foster Children in Malaysia

Issues regarding foster children have been widely researched in the western countries. However, the director of children division from the social welfare department of Malaysia, Hajah Nor Amni Yusof, states that studies on foster children in Malaysia are limited (Chan, 2013). To illustrate from Chan's (2013) qualitative research on 27 children from a residential home and 25 children from a foster home in Malaysia, narrative approach is used to analyse their experiences and views on behaviour, education, health, placement and future aspiration through interviews. Using Bronfenbrenner's *Ecological System Theory* and *Symbolic Interactionism* in his analysis, Chan (2013) discovered that children in foster home have better experiences and views than children from residential home. Foster children do have high and positive aspirations to be successful in the future despite their background (ibid.). Nevertheless, Chan (2013) emphasises on exploring the foster children's issues from the

children's perspective instead of examining voices of concern from a linguistic perspective (i.e. speech act). Correspondingly, a research project entitled "*Addressing the educational needs of Malay children in foster care: An exploratory study*" has been recently conducted by Jariah Mohd Jan et al. (2014). Although the project investigates the educational needs of foster children by examining concern from teachers and foster children through interviews, it did not involve analysing the aspect of speech acts. Unlike this study, the project also did not include the views from foster caregivers. Studies to date have not examined the language of concern of the academic performance of foster children in Malaysia. Since studies on Malaysia based literature on foster children and from a language perspective are scarce, such gaps prompt the need to explore the notion of concern on the academic performance of children from foster care in Malaysia in order to identify their academic needs and issues.

Foster care, as defined by Emerson and Lovitt (2003, p. 199), is "a planned service for children who cannot live with their birth families for a period of time". Similarly, legislation in Malaysia indicates that foster care is for children who are unable "to live with or who have to be separated from the parents due to certain reasons such as death of the parents, abandonment, neglect or abuse" as they have the rights to receive protection and assistance from the government (Azizah Mohd. & Nadhilah Abdul Kadir, 2012). In other words, foster care is the alternative form of care that the government provides for underprivileged children (ibid.).

Based on Child Act 2001, all foster homes are considered as places of protection. The court is responsible for deciding the duration a child remains under the care of a foster home. The child will stay in the foster home until his or her biological parents are ready, able to provide him or her with care, or until a suitable foster family is willing to

accept him or her into their respective home. Nonetheless, if there is no sign of possible reunification with the biological family, the child will be placed in foster care until he or she turns eighteen (Child Act, 2001). The Child Act 2001 is not the latest act in the Malaysian law because it was replaced by Child Act 2015. The new act has stiffer penalties, offers more comprehensive protection and provides better care for all children's well-being (Aliza Shah, 2015, p. 4). Due to the high profile case of child abuse in Sweden in 2014 which involved Malaysian parents, the government modified more than 70% of content found in the Child Act 2001 (ibid.). Hence, it can be understood that this act is established for children to receive better protection in terms of well-being.

The Social Welfare Department Malaysia (JKMM) is responsible for providing care and protection to underprivileged children. This department was established in 1946 under the administration of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. According to the Social Welfare Department, foster care in Malaysia is divided into three types, namely family foster care, kinship care and foster home. Family foster care is where underprivileged children are put into a family which is non-biological (Chan, 2013). There are a total of 148 foster parents in Malaysia who are in this category (UNICEF, 2006). Each foster parent is given a total of RM 250 to RM 500 allowance per month for taking care of a foster child. After two years of fostering the child, they are allowed to officially adopt the child (Chan, 2013). Besides, kinship care is another type of foster care in Malaysia where underprivileged children are placed under the care of adults who have a kinship bond with them (UNICEF, 2006). Most kinship care families in Malaysia can apply for financial support from the Social Welfare Department (Chan, 2013). Although kinship care allows children to grow up with their family members and avoid undergoing frequent transition from one foster

home to another, some kinship caregivers like grandparents are illiterates and not professionally trained, thus can be construed as disadvantages of kinship care (Palacios & Jimenez, 2009). Apart from family foster care and kinship care, foster home is the third type of foster care in Malaysia. It was established by the Social Welfare Department of Malaysia in 1988 in Kuala Selangor (Chong, 1992). A married couple can take the responsibility of caring for a group of 8 to 10 children. Unlike family foster care, a total allowance of RM1,000 is given to foster parents in a foster home provided that the wife is a full time housewife although the husband is working full time (Chan, 2013).

From the three types of foster care, only children from foster homes are required to leave the care system once they reach the age of eighteen. When they lack academic credentials, foster children might encounter certain challenges once they leave the care system as they are left on their own without any foster or family members to support them. Such a situation has prompted this study to examine concern in relation to the academic performance of children in foster homes in Malaysia.

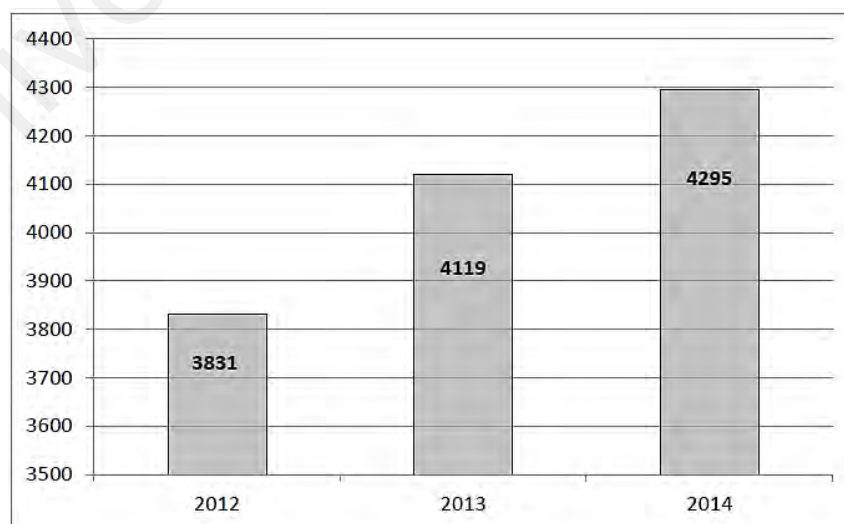


Figure 2.1: Cases of Foster Children in Malaysia 2012-2014

Figure 2.1 illustrates the statistics of cases of foster children who are placed in registered governmental foster homes only, from the year 2012 to 2014 (*Laporan Statistik Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat*, 2014, p. 248). Malaysian social welfare report shows that there is an increase in the number of foster children in Malaysia (see Section 1.0). The total number of foster children in Malaysia is unclear as there are various private foster homes which are not registered with the non-governmental organisation (Sharmila Nair, 2014). Based on data provided by OrphanCARE, a non-governmental organisation specialising in finding homes for abandoned children, there are 35 governmental foster homes and 90 registered private foster homes in Malaysia. In 2014, there were approximately 13,000 of foster children who were living in registered government and private foster homes in this country (Sharmila Nair, 2014). In 2016, however, report from Malaysian government statistics shows an increased number with an estimated total of 13,700 children in Malaysia living in foster homes (Suzanna Pillay, 2016). Such an increment in the number of foster children ought to lead to the establishment of more foster homes in the future. Since foster children have to leave the homes when they turn 18, it is important to be aware of the academic issues and needs as their future lies upon their academic performance.

2.2 Academic Performance of Children in Foster Care

Academic performance refers to performance in all academic disciplines which comprises “both curricular and co-curricular activities such as classroom tasks, assignments, communication skills, and behaviour” (Ganai & Mir, 2013, p. 5). In Malaysia, obtaining good academic performance is extremely crucial as students need to achieve the target benchmark from primary to secondary national based assessments. The assessments are to measure Malaysian students’ knowledge, values and skills (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025) at primary level, UPSR, lower secondary

level, PT3 and upper secondary level, SPM (see Section 1.0). With good academic credentials, they have higher opportunities to enrol in colleges or universities in order to secure a better job and salary in the future. On the other hand, those who lack academic credentials would have slimmer opportunities for tertiary level education or to qualify for better job opportunities (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013-2025).

Like any children from ordinary family background, children from foster care are also required to undergo the three levels of assessments in school. However, in most cases, foster children have poorer academic performance than children from ordinary background in the general school population (McClung & Gayle, 2010). Studies show that most foster children have low grades on tests (Evans et al., 2004; Merdinger et al., 2005; Sawyer & Dubowitz, 1994). Foster children perform poorly in standardised tests as they are unable to achieve the target of the national benchmarks (Australia Institute Health and Welfare, 2010). In Chan's (2013) study on foster children in Malaysia, many of them performed poorly in English, Science, and Mathematics subjects as they mostly scored a D or an E. Moreover, studies also show that foster children tend to have lower achievement in national reading and numeracy (Harvey & Testro, 2006; Queensland Government, 2003). Smithgall et al. (2004) discovered that a total of 48% of foster children in their study were low achievers and 30% were extremely low achievers based on their scores on national reading tests. Similarly, Segermark (2017) reported that 90% of foster children in her study obtained below the national norms for their reading tests grade.

Besides, foster children often require special education assistance (Roy & Rutter, 2006; Scherr, 2007; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2004) due to autistic disorder, language and communication difficulties, physical disabilities, or multiple learning difficulties

(Sebba et al., 2015). Foster children with learning disabilities tend to have academic delays (Zima et al., 2000). Apart from that, Del Quest et al. (2012), in their studies, also reported that approximately 40% to 47% of foster children with emotional and behavioural disorder received special education support. Foster children who are in need of special education support also have the tendency to dropout from school as learning is a challenge to them (Segermark, 2017).

Studies indicate one third of current foster children and two third of former foster children dropped out from high school; plus, only 10% of those who turn nineteen years of age earn a high school diploma (Blome, 1997; Courtney & Dworsky, 2005; Joiner, 2001). The Casey Family Programme (2007) states that 15-year-old foster children in the United States public schools are approximately half the population compared to other students who complete high school as they could not cope with their academic challenges. Additionally, Roy and Rutter (2006) also reported that 33% of them retain in a same grade due to poor academic performance. Nevertheless, these studies did not emphasise on the voices of concern from teachers, caregivers and foster children. Since research in this area is scarce (Raj & Raval, 2013), the way concern is voiced from a linguistic perspective in this study could add on to the study of Malaysian children in foster care.

Poor academic performance of foster children is an issue of concern which should not be taken lightly. Without good academic credentials, they might be more vulnerable once they leave foster care system in their pursuit to secure a better life (Bruskas, 2008). As such, it is deemed important to look at the concern from foster caregivers' and school teachers' perspectives regarding the academic performance of foster children.

2.2.1 Issues that Influence Academic Performance of Foster Children

Foster children encounter various issues in life that might affect or lead to their poor academic performance. The issues that are attributing to their low levels of academic performance are tied to various academic disruptions such as lack of attention and motivation, discrimination and stigmatism, behavioural problems (Kirk et al., 2013) as well as health issues (Leone & Weinberg, 2010).

2.2.1.1 Lack of Attention and Motivation

Poor academic performance of foster children could be the consequence of a lack of attention from foster caregivers or biological parents (McClung & Gayle, 2010). A former foster child from *Shelter Home for Children* in Malaysia, Josephine Lee, highlights that most foster children have educational gaps when they arrive at the foster home. She said “it happens basically because their parents do not pay attention to their education, or are so poor they cannot afford it; it has a lot to do with neglect” (Lam, 2014, p. 2).

Motivation also plays a vital role in the academic performance of foster children. Based on an interview, a total of 74% of foster children in Martin and Jackson’s (2002) study highlight the importance of interest and motivation from foster caregivers or parents in order for them to do well in their studies. There are cases where despite the fact that their parents have died or have lost contact with them, there is still a strong sense of motivation for them to succeed in education in order to make their parents proud (Martin & Jackson, 2002). Therefore, parental involvement and mentorship can enhance foster children’s self-esteem and motivate them to succeed academically (Southwick et al., 2006; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Brueck et al., 2012; Mallett, 2012; Segermark, 2017).

2.2.1.2 Discrimination and Stigmatism

Foster children often face discrimination and stigmatism in schools (Hines et al., 2005; Batsche et al., 2014). These are issues of concern as they could leave negative impact on the academic performance and behaviour of foster children.

Studies reveal that there is discrimination of foster children because of their backgrounds (Kools, 1997; Martin & Jackson, 2002). According to Brodie (2001), caregivers often believe that foster children have been discriminated in school by being excluded from many school activities and opportunities, but social workers are unable to find evidence to support this perspective.

Many foster children are socially stigmatised as they remain in the same grade at least once in school (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). Consequently, those who have to repeat a grade are constantly being stigmatised as underachievers (Gerard, 2014). Stigmatism occurs when teachers have a preconceived notion that foster children are not worth their effort because these children are not intelligent enough (Powers & Stotland, 2002). Stigmatism may affect the foster children's self-esteem, which makes it even more challenging for them to engage with the other students. Foster children with low self-esteem could also be the consequence of teachers' failure to realise the challenges these children undergo due to their lack of awareness of the contextual factors which place these children in the foster care (Christian, 2008). One way teachers can overcome negative stereotypes encountered by foster children is to understand or get to know the background of these children (Chan, 2013). Teachers' rapport with foster children plays a significant aspect in their academic performance. Moreover, teachers' ability to acknowledge and comprehend the behaviour or attitude of children who have been

mistreated or abandoned would be an advantage when it comes to enhancing these children's performance in school (Gerard, 2014).

2.2.1.3 Behavioural Issues

Foster children have more tendency to display behavioural issues compared to children who have parental care (Lawrence, Carlson, & Egeland, 2006; McWey et al., 2010). One of the most common behavioural issues displayed by foster children during class is trying their level best to seek attention (Zetlin & Weinberg, 2004). Martin and Jackson (2002) found that 76% of foster children in their study prefer school teachers to pay extra attention to them in order to safeguard them from being bullied or pressured.

Furthermore, children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) are also likely to be disruptive in classroom (Honkasilta, 2016) and such a disorder is commonly experienced by children from foster care (Lehmann et al., 2013) (see Section 2.2.1.4 for discussion on health issues). Consequently, children with such a behavioural problem may later face school difficulties, rejection among peers (Odgers et al., 2007; Rutter et al., 2006; Waschbusch, 2002) as well as discrimination and be stigmatised (Chan, 2013) (see Section 2.2.1.2 for discussion on discrimination and stigmatism).

In Malaysia, foster children with disciplinary problems in school are often found to lie, argue, use derogatory words, smoke and indulge in theft (Chan, 2013). Such disciplinary problems could be derived from peer pressure. For instance, in a recent case in Malaysia, a foster child was involved with setting fire on *Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah Tahfiz*, a religious school, which resulted in the death of 23 students and two wardens. According to the foster father, it was reported that the child was negatively influenced by his friend ("Malaysia religious school fire", 2017). This foster child was also

expelled from school due to truancy and involvement with drugs (ibid.). The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (*KPWKM*) asserts that there is a need for educators to address the issues on students' social problems such as truancy, drug abuse or broken families ("Malaysia religious school fire", 2017). If such social problems and behavioural issues are not explored, the academic performance of foster children might be negatively influenced.

2.2.1.4 Health Issues

Foster children undergo various health issues such as poor developmental and mental health disorder. These health issues may somehow affect a child's academic performance.

Poor developmental outcomes in physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, relational and psychological aspects are due to maltreatment (Wiggins, Fenichel, & Mann, 2007). Studies show that foster children are four to five times more likely to have developmental delays compared to children in an overall population (Chinitz et al., 2017; Rosenberg, Smith, & Levinson, 2007; Silver et al., 1999). The types of developmental delays include speech and language delays (Leone & Weinberg, 2010), especially in terms of syntax and receptive vocabulary (Bernard, Lee, & Dozier, 2017; Eigsti & Cicchetti, 2004). Such delays may slower their pace of learning which at the same time affect their academic performance. Hence, caregivers need to address the developmental concerns of foster children. It sometimes requires collaboration with academicians in terms of their learning skills (Chinitz et al., 2017).

Mental health disorders are also frequently displayed by foster children, which include Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), anxiety and depression

(Lehmann et al., 2013). Children with ADHD are likely to cause behavioural problems in school (see Section 2.2.1.3). Several aspects that cause mental health disorder in foster children are due to the lack of care or attention, frequent transition from one place to another, being abused physically or psychologically by biological parents (Lehmann et al., 2013). Such a disorder may affect foster children's attention-span to focus in class which as a consequence, affects their academic performance. Hence, they require more individualised support across multiple environments to enhance their participation in the learning process (Klein & de Camargo, 2018).

The health issues of foster children mainly lie in the hands of their caregivers and are highly influenced by caregivers with low income and less-educated (Barth et al., 2008). Furthermore, Kaltner and Rissel's (2011) study on 63 foster children in Australia reveals that some foster parents take the health needs of their children for granted. Given what is known about the challenges experienced by foster children about their health issues, there is a need for more attention towards them as their health issues are mostly due to the consequences of lack of attention and child abuse (Lehmann et al., 2013). Although their health issues could be one of the main reasons for their poor academic performance, studies on how concern is voiced about this matter has yet to be explored, especially in relation to language of concern and the needs of foster children in Malaysia.

2.3 Educational Services for Foster Children

Educational services are vital in addressing the academic needs of foster children. These services involve providing the children with sufficient school resources, programmes and trained teachers. It is important to develop effective educational services for these children by identifying their academic difficulties (Liu et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, most schools attended by foster children have insufficient resources (Smithgall et al., 2004; Palladino, 2006), large number of students in a class, less funding for teaching materials (Jimenez-Castellanos, 2010), inexperienced teachers, inconsistent tutoring and unattended students' learning problems (Leone & Weinberg, 2010).

Moreover, academic programmes for foster children such as motivational programmes or programmes for future needs are inadequate. Unlike students from ordinary background, many foster children do not have equitable opportunities for achievement such as access to special programmes, advance placement courses, involvement in extracurricular clubs and sports, as well as other accomplishments that are important to earn a comprehensive education (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). In addition, some foster children attend special education schools which lack qualified teachers (Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2004). There is also concern for the inappropriate assessment of academic performance for foster children upon entry into school as they are mostly behind their peers and require a slower pace of learning (Smithgall et al., 2004). Hence, early interventions and intensive academic support are necessary to decrease the general academic achievement discrepancies for foster children (Seegermark, 2017). Besides, teachers play a significant role on the academic performance of foster children in school (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). For instance, their unawareness and insensitivity towards the needs of foster children and their preconceived notion that most foster children will be in the classroom community for only a short-term basis (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003) may affect these children's academic performance negatively.

In Malaysia, the education system has put more emphasis on children who are high achievers, especially those in the cluster school, with the aim of making Malaysia a fully industrialised nation by the year 2020. Launched on 16 January 2006, a “cluster school is a brand given to schools identified as being excellent in its cluster in terms of school management and student achievement” (Ministry of Education, 2006). These high achievers are provided with the best possible educational curriculum in order to enhance their potential to the fullest. However, similar attention has yet to be channelled towards students who do not excel, particularly foster children who are not academically-inclined. Foster children should not be taken for granted as they are not merely statistics, victims or objects of pity to be cared for by welfare institutions and organisations (George et al., 2003). If schools organise their academic programs wisely, receive support from the district administration and teachers provide more emotional support, foster children should definitely improve their academic performance (Pechman & Fiester, 1996).

2.4 Caregiving Services for Foster Children

The academic performance of foster children could be affected by the way caregivers render their support and caregiving services. Most foster caregivers do not seem to possess the ability to mentor or provide educational encouragement to foster children or any knowledge about their academic strengths and weaknesses (Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2004). As such, foster children often lack knowledgeable and reliable academic support from their caregivers at foster homes (Watson & Kabler, 2012).

Furthermore, the difficulty in interaction and cooperation between child welfare and other agencies can negatively affect foster children while providing them with educational services (Weinberg, Zetlin, & Shea, 2009). Zetlin, Weinberg and Shea

(2006), in their analysis of four focus group sessions, identified that children welfare agencies often neglect matters regarding school because it is difficult for the agencies to understand the education system; while teachers also seem to be at a loss when dealing with the children welfare system. Moreover, teachers highlight that the academic progress of foster children have often been neglected by the social workers due to their excuses of having large caseloads and extremely high yearly turnover rate (Zetlin, Weinberg & Shea, 2006). Additionally, concerns were also raised by child welfare agency on their lack of communication and collaboration with education liaisons when it comes to addressing the academic needs of foster children (Segermark, 2017). Education liaisons reported that social workers lack knowledge about the types of services schools can provide and often requested services which are unavailable from schools such as mental health counselling and assessments (ibid.).

Environment in a foster home also plays a vital part in the academic performance of foster children. More than a quarter of foster children in McClung and Gayle's (2010) study state that the environment in a foster home is not conducive for them to study. In addition, a total of 58% of the participants from Martin and Jackson's (2002) study complain about the lack of practical resources in their residential homes, such as a study desk, books or a quiet room, which makes it difficult for them to do homework or revision (ibid.). As such, foster care system should improve on areas that might affect the educational attainment of foster children, such as providing them with books or adequate environment to study (Maxwell et al., 2006). Foster children also point out that if agencies step forward and keep track of them, it would have helped to ease their lives (Connolly, 2014). Therefore, it is also vital for social welfare agency to give more attention to the deficiencies of foster children.

2.4.1 Training for Caregivers

Training for caregivers is vital towards identifying the needs of foster children. However, foster caregivers mostly do not receive adequate training to deal with problems encountered by foster children, especially in terms of academic aspects (Hillman, 2014). According to Pasztor et al. (2006), it is crucial to provide competency-based training for caregivers with the aim to equip them with knowledge and skills when it comes to decision-making process. Training intervention that help caregivers to engage in more authoritative parenting could improve the lifestyle and experience for both caregivers and foster children (King et al., 2007). Although there is a need to provide foster caregivers with focused training to divide work shifts, as well as to take care of the needs of caregivers and foster children (Malaysian Child Resource Institute, 2013), the employment of qualified caregivers remains a challenge in Malaysia.

In a seminar organised by the Malaysian Child Resource Institute (MCRI) in 2013, a total of 85% of the foster care managers claim that they face difficulties to recruit caregivers even without any training skills (Malaysian Child Resource Institute, 2013). They complain about the management system in foster homes, which included lack of interaction between management and caregiving staff, lack of knowledge and training, the income rate, and lack of qualified staff (Malaysian Child Resource Institute, 2013). The managers also state that several caregivers do not have the necessary knowledge to carry out certain duties such as to care for children or to balance between work and rest time (Malaysian Child Resource Institute, 2013). Such a statement has been consistently supported in several studies (Watson & Kabler, 2012; Weinberg, Zetlin & Shea, 2009; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Kimm, 2004; Zetlin, Weinberg, & Shea, 2006).

2.5 Work Values of Malaysian Employees

Sections 2.3 and 2.4 discuss the educational and caregiving services for foster children. For a better understanding of behaviour portrayed by Malaysians in workplaces such as school and foster home, a brief overview of work values among Malaysian employees is provided in this section.

In Malaysia, employees are brought up with unique work values that give an impact to their behaviour in workplace (Asma Abdullah, 2001). The several underlying work values which have been generally found among Malaysian employees include collectivism, abiding for hierarchy, loyalty and harmony as well as preserving face (ibid.). Malaysian employees often practise the value of collectivism such as 'we' orientation as opposed to 'I' orientation (Asma Abdullah & Koh, 2009). This can usually be observed when it comes to decision making process (Gom et al., 2015) where employees tend to decide based on consensus of others instead of on an individual basis.

Moreover, abiding for hierarchy is also one of the norms in Malaysian work values (Asma Abdullah, 1992). Malaysian employees are likely to avoid confrontation with managers and colleagues with the aim of respecting authority (Gom et al., 2015). Due to workplace hierarchy, confrontation towards the superiors is considered as an act of disrespect regardless of the circumstance (ibid.). Although in situation where superiors are in the wrong, it is still vital for employees to conceal any blunders in order to preserve the face value of their authority in workplace (ibid.). The concealment is due to conformity and compliance as well as to maintain their identity as loyal and trustworthy employees (Asma Abdullah & Koh, 2009; Gom et al., 2015). Nevertheless, if any unavoidable disagreement arises, employees may not argue openly; instead, they may approach their superiors individually (Gom et al., 2015). Additionally, employees may

indirectly express or communicate any form of dissatisfaction which arises in workplace (Asma Abdullah & Koh, 2009) as Malaysian culture deters any form of confrontational manner to sustain social harmony among co-workers (Gom et al., 2015).

Though Malaysian employees have gained more confidence in expressing thoughts and opinions, such expressions are conveyed indirectly or through a third party (Asma Abdullah & Koh, 2009) in order to maintain positive face value and non-confrontational value. These work values might prevent employees from expressing their concerns or views liberally as they lack autonomy (Lait & Wallace, 2002) due to workplace hierarchy. Consequently, certain matters of concern which need to be dealt with, such as addressing the academic needs of foster children, might be difficult to reach out for support as employees need to preserve a 'harmonious' workplace environment (Gom et al, 2015). Therefore, there is a need to explore the way employees from school and foster care voice their concern without affecting their workplace positions as well as the needs of foster children.

2.6 Speech Act Theory and Classifications

The term 'speech act' was originated by Austin (1962) and it refers to "actions performed when an utterance is produced" (ibid., p. 5). Speakers mostly opt to perform speech acts rather than merely producing true or false statements (ibid.). Performative verbs are often employed with the aim of making the illocutionary force explicit (ibid.).

According to Austin (1962), speech acts can be analysed at three levels, namely locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the actual words or utterances conveyed by speakers which are linguistically correct and comprehensible to the listener. Illocutionary act refers to utterances communicated with

intention. For instance, the utterance “It’s hot in here” is not only a statement of the temperature of a room. It is also a request intending for the listener to fulfill the speaker’s request to decrease the room temperature. As for perlocutionary act, it refers to the understanding or effect of utterances on hearer in response to the illocutionary act. In this situation, the hearer might fulfill the speaker’s request by opening the window or turning on the fan (Austin, 1962).

Drawing from Austin’s (1962) illocutionary act, Searle (1976) further developed five categories of speech acts namely *representative act*, *directive act*, *commissive act*, *expressive act* and *declarative act*. These categories of speech act are not arranged in any particular order and are discussed in the following sub-sections.

2.6.1 Representative Act

Representative act occurs where a speaker says how things are to express his or her beliefs (Searle, 1976). In other words, this act occurs where words present speaker’s thoughts, such as stating, reporting, claiming, predicting, insisting, describing or hypothesising (Cutting, 2002).

Representative act can often be found in direct, indirect or negative statements. To illustrate, Kaasila (2007) conducted a narrative analysis on how pre-service teachers’ views of mathematics are developed during elementary teacher education by analysing students’ narrative content. In his study, he found a few types of statements in his analysis of linguistic features: indirect discourse, strong evaluative language and negative statements. Many salient linguistic features such as contrastive markers, negative evaluative markers or adverbials in these statements represent the core events and also emotional contents of students’ narrative accounts (Kaasila, 2007). This

suggests that the use of linguistic features may also represent speaker's emotional content.

Moreover, lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or personal pronouns are linguistic features which serve as pragmatic markers in statements to represent speaker's thoughts or beliefs (Babanoglu, 2014). Pragmatic markers are prominent during conversations. In addition, discourse markers such as subordinates, contrastives, conditionals and coordinates conjunctions also function as linguistic features to explain or clarify a statement (Fraser, 1988, 1999) and are socially disseminated within a speech community (Schiffrin, 1988). Discourse markers aim to signal the "relations of an utterance to the immediate context" (Redeker, 1990, p. 372). Hence, both pragmatic and discourse markers could mark speakers' potential communicative intentions in speech acts (Fraser, 1999).

2.6.2 Directive Act

Directive act serves to direct hearer to perform an action (Searle, 1976), such as a command, request, invitation or suggestion (Cutting, 2002). However, directive act can also be performed through a third party (Mauri & Sanso, 2011). The third party may be intended as an intermediary or transmitter of a request where the target might be physically absent when complaints, suggestions or requests are made (ibid.).

To illustrate, a speaker can lodge a complaint to a third party; a person who is not the hearer or addressee, to express his or her feeling of displeasure regarding the addressee (Hermann, 2009). For instance, in the utterance "I am fed up with the manager", the speaker expresses his or her disappointment with the manager (complainable matter). Such a performance in a way also aims to get the hearer to agree with the speaker.

When a speaker puts forth a complaint, the offender (i.e. manager) may not necessarily be physically present (Heinemann, 2008). According to Heinemann (2008), who analysed complaints from Danish home care visits, two caregivers constructed ‘third party’ complaints to him about the care recipient during the interaction. In doing so, the care recipient who was the target of complaints was excluded from the interaction although he was physically present. This shows that directive act is not only directed for the hearer but it could also involve the third party (ibid.).

Apart from complaint, a suggestion or request could also take place through a third party as well as in the context of an interview.

(a) You should sacrifice yourself for the sake of your child.

For instance, utterance (a) carries out the directive act of suggestion where it is possible that the utterance is intended for the person under discussion or the addressee. In other words, the speaker may utter (a) to suggest through the third party what the addressee should do for his or her child (Mauri & Sanso, 2011).

Besides, there are also cultural specificities that influence the way one uses directive act to make request. In Navajo culture, for instance, strangers and adult siblings or men related through marriages have to make requests through the third party, who are usually their mothers and sisters (Field, 2001).

Beyond the cultural specificities, modal verbs could also play a role in directive act. When speakers make request or give suggestion, modal verbs are likely to be used (Searle, 1976). There are several types of modal verbs, namely possibility, permission, obligation, necessity, ability, and desire (Leech, 1983). According to Leech (1983), modal auxiliary verbs such as ‘can’ (possibility), ‘may’ (permission), ‘must’

(obligation) and 'have to' (necessity) are associated with their meanings. A modal verb can also take on different notions. For instance, speaker asserts obligation or necessity by using the modal verb 'need to'. Additionally, the modal verb 'need to' is partially associated with the modal verb 'must' and 'ought to' or 'should' (ibid.).

Additionally, modal verbs in Malay also have similar functions with English modal verbs. Abdul Aziz Idris' (1980) study on the modal expressions in Malay emphasises the main syntactic features of modality in connection with various types of speech acts, negation and tense/aspect. He categorised the modal expressions such as *mungkin* (may), *boleh jadi* (maybe), *barangkali* (perhaps), *mesti* (must), *boleh* (can), *terpaksa* (have to), and *patut* (should) into three categories: epistemic, root, and epistemic/root (Abdul Aziz Idris, 1980). The epistemic modal can be used to express possibility similar to the English modal 'may', which encompass *mungkin* (may), *boleh jadi* (maybe) and *barangkali* (perhaps). *Mungkin* can be used to express possibility like the English modal 'may'. *Barangkali* is parallel to the English modal 'probably'.

Apart from epistemic, root modal involves the expressions such as permission or obligation *mesti* (must) which is the same as the modal 'can'; they are *boleh* (can), *patut* (should), *terpaksa* (have to). *Boleh* can be referred to for ability or permission. *Patut* is equivalent to English modal 'should' which is used to express a weak obligation or suggestion. If prefix 'se-' and suffix '-nya' is added to the modal *patut* (should), it refers to an obligation which is not carried out by the subject.

Nevertheless, the expression *mesti* (must) is ambiguous as it can be placed under the category of epistemic and root modals because it expresses possibility as well as obligation. The following is an example given by Abdul Aziz Idris (1980):

- (b) *Dia mesti tidur.*
'He must sleep'.

The use of the modal verb *mesti* (must) in this sentence (b) is ambiguous as it could convey two different meanings. The first meaning is "he must be tired, that is why I am certain that he is asleep". The second meaning is "he is obligated to sleep because he has to wake up early tomorrow". In sum, these are some of the modal expressions from the study conducted by Abdul Aziz Idris (1980). Nevertheless, the use of modals in Malay language is not limited to those that have been mentioned here.

Modal verbs could also be used as hedges. Hedges are the most common mitigators and are "words that convey the sense that the speaker cannot assure the accuracy of the statement" (Lakoff, 1975). Hedge is often used to modify speech acts such as suggestions or requests (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). For instance, the English modal 'should' is used to mitigate a directive illocutionary force and act as an advice or moral obligation; thus, it is less direct than the modal 'must' (Boicu, 2007).

- (c) I *should* apologise for calling you at this hour.

In the utterance (c), although the utterance is a statement of apology, the modal 'should' functions as a hedge (Fraser, 2010).

Besides modal verbs, hedges such as 'I think', 'perhaps', 'well', and 'you know' may also reduce the force of an assertion in a suggestion or request (Lakoff, 2004). Aimi Syazana Hasnudin (2012, p. 92) has an example on how Kelantanese Malays give suggestions:

- (d) *Aku raso sedap campur la wei / mu pun boleh jugok cari cari calon*
I think it'd be fun if we mix / you can also check out any
survey survey dulu mu nok /
potential partners that you want /

Based on the example, it can be seen that the hedge *aku raso* (I think) is employed by the Kelantanese Malay speaker to mitigate the force of her suggestion.

Furthermore, mitigators such as pause fillers /er/ (Lakoff, 1975), tag questions (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), disclaimer (Fraser, 1980) and particles (Goddard, 1994) are also common to soften an illocutionary force of a suggestion or request. For instance, particles are a type of hedge that softens the strength of an utterance (Wilamova, 2005). To illustrate, the Malay illocutionary *lah* can strengthen a declarative but softens an imperative (Goddard, 1994). Yet, it is difficult to match the particle *lah* with an English word that provides equivalent translation to the particle (ibid.). *lah* generates imperative marker (Alfred et al., 2013). Additionally, this particle also serves as mitigator (Asmah Haji Omar, 1986) and intensifier (Goddard, 1994).

Apart from particle *lah*, particle *nya* serve as possessive adjectives (Alfred et al., 2013) and can be considered as “being emphatic in meaning” (Goddard, 1994, p. 151). Other particles such as *kah* and *kan* are commonly found in Malay speech which generate question markers (Alfred et al., 2013). In addition, *kut* is also a particle which commonly found in Malay speech. Although *kut* is the short form of *takut* (Yap, Chor, & Wang, 2012, p. 339), it still belongs to the “particle family” (Lee, 2010, p. 31) and has the same function as *mungkin*, which in English is the hedge ‘maybe’ or ‘perhaps’. *Kut* is somewhat similar to *lah* and they are not found in English mitigating devices (Fraser, 1980).

2.6.3 Commissive Act

Commissive act involves words or expressions which commit the speaker's forthcoming actions such as promises, threats, offers, refusal, vows, or volunteering (Cutting, 2002). In other words, the speaker is obligated to fulfill the act.

2.6.4 Expressive Act

Expressive act is the expression of mental states (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). In other words, this act reflects or expresses the speaker's feeling, attitude or psychological states, such as apologies, regrets, congratulations, compliments or condolences (Cutting, 2002).

Expressive act such as speech act of thanking, apology or condolences often involve the use of intensifiers as they are "modifiers that reinforce a word" (Ghanbaran et al., 2014, p. 543). In the speech act of thanking, for instance, speakers commonly use intensifiers as a strategy to express gratitude (Cheng, 2010). Speech act of apology can also be observed from the use of an explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID). Speakers often strengthen the illocutionary force of speech act through an intensifier (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

(e) I'm very very sorry.

In the utterance (e), the adverb 'very' serves as intensification within the IFID. Intensifier (or double intensifiers) can also act as upgraders to increase the impact of the apology on the hearer (Rojo, 2005). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) claim that speakers use intensifier to express explicit concern for the hearer when apologising, as in utterance (f).

(f) Have you been waiting long?

Moghaddam (2012) conducted a comparative study on the use of intensifiers in condolences among Persian and English speakers. He found that these speakers express their condolences based on the following categories of intensifiers:

- i. double intensifiers (e.g. I am **very very** sorry)
- ii. multiple intensifiers (e.g. I am **so very** sorry)
- iii. implicit intensifiers (e.g. It **broke** my heart)
- iv. explicit intensifiers (e.g. I am **so** sorry)
- v. adjectival intensifiers (e.g. I extend my **sincere sympathy**)

Code-switching is also one of the strategies of intensification (Saville-Troike, 1982) which serves to strengthen an illocutionary force of an expression. To illustrate from Paugh's (2018) study, children in Dominica code-switch from English to Patwa language, an Afro-French creole.

(g) I don't have *pasyans* (patience).

In utterance (g), it can be observed that the child in Paugh's (2018) study code-switches in order to intensify an expression of discontentment or loss of patience towards an issue.

Besides, comparative studies have also been conducted on the use of intensifiers in languages such as Mandarin and German (Zhuo, 2007), Thai and Japanese (Aoki, 2010) where they found that intensifiers are used to boost the illocutionary force of an utterance or to show intimate atmosphere with interlocutors. However, to date, the study on the manner in which intensifiers are used to express concern seems to be scarce.

2.6.5 Declarative Act

Declarative act is often used by speakers who have special institutional role in a specific context (Cutting, 2002). Speakers who use this act do not express any psychological state. Declarative act is usually performed by certain authorities in a specific context, for instance, a priest giving a declaration of consent to the bride and groom at a wedding (e.g. I now pronounce you man and wife) or a king declaring a war. Declarations require additional lexical elements, such as ‘hereby’, ‘pronounce’ or ‘declare’, in statements (ibid.).

Searle’s (1976) categories of speech act have been employed in various studies, particularly to analyse speech act in medical interviews as well as power and influence in conversation through interviews (Williams, 2002; Cerny, 2007). This suggests that Searle’s (1976) categories of speech act could be applied to analyse interview data. Besides, there are studies on various types of speech acts. Studies such as speech act of refusals (e.g. Li, 2007; Abarghoui, 2012; Shishavan, & Sharifian, 2016), condolences (e.g. Samavarchi & Allami, 2012), congratulations (e.g. Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2013), requests (e.g. Rezvani et al., 2014) and apologies (e.g. Parsa & Jariah Mohd. Jan, 2016) have been widely pursued in the field of pragmatics. In the Malaysian context, the study on speech act of complaint by Malaysian ESL learners (Farnia, Buchheit & Salim, 2010), speech act of refusal by Malay university students (Sattar et al., 2012), speech acts of request and apology among students at Malaysian universities (Youssef, 2012; Muthusamy & Farashaiyan, 2016) have been conducted. Nevertheless, speech act of concern has not been given much attention in research and it is still rather fuzzy on how ‘concern’ falls in the speech act categories. Hence, this study is timely particularly in the field of speech act as it examines the speech act of concern from school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children’s point of view.

2.7 The Notion of Concern and Related Studies

‘Concern’ pertains to speaker’s feeling (Carretero et al., 2014) and is defined as the “composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 61), which includes “the mental activity composed of questioning, analysing, re-analysing, considering alternative actions and reactions and anticipating consequences” (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979, p. 5) (see Section 1.6). Concern could be conveyed through verbal behaviours or linguistic such as empathic statements, which elicit and validate speaker’s concerns, as well as non-verbal behaviours such as tone of voice and facial expression (Saha & Beach, 2011). The notion of concern has appeared in several fields of studies namely linguistics, psychology and education.

In the field of linguistics, concern can be found in the study of pragmatics, particularly on speech acts. For instance, Carretero et al. (2015) have examined online-interaction among university students by focusing on two general types of expressive, which include self-centred and other centred. Based on their findings, the students’ feelings of concern (which express worries) are considered as a ‘self-centred’ type of expressive (Carretero et al., 2015, p. 187). The expression of concern is also highly found in their sub-corpus pragmatics (ibid.). Moreover, age could also be one of the factors that influence students’ expression when older students frequently express concern and younger ones prefer wishful thinking instead (ibid.). Although there is expression of concern in their findings, the way concern is expressed linguistically was not thoroughly analysed.

Furthermore, the notion of concern has been examined in the speech act of solidarity in political discourse by Kampf (2016) where he focuses on the way politicians share

feelings of concern and their involvement in establishing good rapport with the communities. From his findings, he noted that the speech acts of blessing and wishing also promote solidarity by displaying politician's emotion and concern (Kampf, 2016). Similar to Carretero et al.'s (2015) study, the feature of concern as seen in Kampf's (2016) work on speech act of solidarity, but the linguistics aspect of concern was not thoroughly examined. Although Carretero et al. (2015) and Kampf's (2016) studies show that concern is mainly classified under expressive speech act, concern could also be accompanied by directives in some cases (Carretero et al., 2014), such as in utterance (h) taken from Carretero et al. (2014).

(h) I hope you can give me an idea and do it together.

Additionally, Kuang's (2015) study on Malaysian text messages further reveals that concern is also expressed through directives and wishful thinking as one of the semantic functions in expressing condolences. Kuang (2015) identified directives such as 'be strong' or 'take care' in condolences messages, which aim to direct receivers to be strong and take good care of themselves. Yet, at the same time, these directives also act as ways to show concern and care for the receiver of the condolences messages.

(i) Be strong, my dear.

Furthermore, Kuang's (2015) analysis also revealed that some condolences were expressed via writer's wish where the modal verbs such as 'may' or 'wish' were used.

(j) May you stay strong.

These wishful thinking messages are expressives which at the same time could also denote concern from the writers to the recipient. Therefore, there is a need to further explore the speech act of concern as there appears to be more than one speech act classification for 'concern'.

In the field of psychology, Rhee et al. (2013) conducted a study on concern and disregard for others among children with the ages of 14 to 36 months. The term “Concern for Others” used in their study serves to describe a combination of behavioural, affective, and cognitive factors in relation to the empathic and prosocial responses (Rhee et al., 2013, p. 2). Through interviewing mothers and observing reactions of children, their findings revealed that language skills play a significant role in developing children’s concern and disregard for others when children with higher language skills displayed more concern to others than those with fewer language skills (Rhee et al., 2013). Nevertheless, there are no specific criteria to analyse the linguistics aspect on how concern is voiced in the field of psychology.

Apart from the fields of linguistics and psychology, the notion of concern can also be seen in the field of education. Unlike previous studies where concern is analysed without any specific framework or patterns, educators’ concerns towards change in the implementation process of innovation in school have been examined by Hall and Hord (1987) where they developed Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) by looking into the various stages of concerns, levels of use, and innovation configurations (see Section 2.7.1 for further explanation on CBAM). However, the focus of concern is largely on teachers’ needs rather than students’ needs (Straub, 2009). Hence, focus should also be given to students as they are the receivers of the aspect of education in school.

Although the notion of concern has been studied in the fields of linguistics (e.g. Carretero et al., 2015; Kampf, 2016), psychology (e.g. Rhee et al., 2013) and education (e.g. Hall & Hord, 1987), studies on language of concern on academic performance of foster children to date are scarce, particularly in Malaysia. Drawing on the issue of poor

academic performance of foster children (McClung & Gayle, 2010; Segermark, 2017; Barnow et al., 2015), there is a need to examine concern from teachers, caregivers and foster children, from a linguistic perspective using CBAM.

2.7.1 Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was developed by Hall and Hord (1987) to address educators' concerns towards change in the implementation process of innovation. CBAM is mainly used to describe, measure, and explain the process of change experienced by teachers when new curriculum materials and instructional practices have been implemented (Anderson, 1997). Although CBAM contains three key diagnostic tools which involve stages of concern, levels of use and innovation configurations, the tools may be used individually or in various combinations (Hall & Hord, 2006). From the three key diagnostic tools, seven stages of concern allow researchers to analyse one's degree of concern.

Before Hall and Hord (1987), stages of concern were initially developed by Fuller (1969) where she classifies concerns into three developmental levels: self, task and impact concern.

Table 2.1: Developmental Levels of Concern (Fuller, 1969)

Fuller's (1969) Developmental Levels of Concern	
Impact	➤ Refers to teachers' concern regarding students' outcomes
Task	➤ Refers to the regular problems of a teaching task, such as time constraints, lack of resources or teaching large number of students
Self	➤ Refers to the teachers' concern about their ability to handle the new implementation programme in school

Based on Fuller’s (1969) three developmental levels of concern (i.e. self, task and impact), Hall and Hord (1987) further identified seven stages of concern in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (see Table 2.2 for stages of concern and examples of expression of concern provided by Hall and Hord).

Table 2.2: Stages of Concern (Hall & Hord, 1987)

Stage of Concern	Expression of Concern
6. Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
5. Collaboration	How can I relate what I am doing to what others are doing?
4. Consequence	How is my use affecting learners? How can I refine it to have more impact?
3. Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
2. Personal	How will using it affect me?
1. Informational	I would like to know more about it.
0. Awareness	I am not concerned about it.

Hall and Hord (1987) have categorised stages of awareness, informational and personal under Fuller’s (1969) level of ‘self’ concern as this level focuses on the teachers’ well-being. The stage of management has been categorised under Fuller’s (1969) level of ‘task’ concern (Hall & Hord, 1987) as this level focuses on improving “the teachers’ teaching skills and mastering the content being taught” (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 574). Lastly, stages of consequences, collaboration and refocusing are categorised under Fuller’s (1969) level of ‘impact’ concern as it focuses on the needs of learners.

Once computers were implemented in schools, researchers applied CBAM to examine concern of school teachers (e.g. Hord et al., 1987; Newhouse, 2001; Wang, 2014). For instance, Hall and Hord (1987) have tested CBAM by questioning teachers

and college professors and subsequently correlating their answers with respect to educational innovation. They identified some mutual concerns that most teachers were confronted with as they experienced the transformation. Based on their findings on the stages of concern, some of the respondents either go through every stage or skip through one or two and proceed to the next stage when raising their concerns (Hall & Hord, 1987).

In addition, Newhouse's (2001) findings revealed that out of 73 teachers, half of them were still at the awareness stage, which indicated a relatively low level of skill or knowledge in using computers. Furthermore, Wang (2014) also applied this model to examine the stages of concern and levels of use on the new curriculum implementation towards the teachers in a selected secondary school in Guangdong province through interviews and questionnaires. These previous studies show that CBAM allows researchers to discover the degree of concern and explore the actions taken by school teachers towards any new implementation programme in school, such as the use of computer in teaching (e.g. Hord & Hord, 1987; Newhouse, 2001; Wang, 2014). Although CBAM was specifically developed to examine concern in the teaching profession, this model could also be used outside of the academic context (Straub, 2009). Additionally, an individual's concern can be examined through surveys, interviews (Straub, 2009) or focus group discussions (Rhodes et al., 2010).

2.7.1.1 Criticisms of CBAM

There are several criticisms regarding CBAM. Turns et al.'s (2007) findings suggest that although CBAM is reliable to identify the types of concerns based on Fuller's (1969) three developmental levels of concern, namely self, task, and impact, the developmental progression of CBAM is vague as self-concern might not completely

disappear although it may lessen over time; task concerns are usually limited in number; and impact concern often falls in the largest category including novice teachers. Hence, Turns et al. (2007) suggest focusing on detailing the relative levels of concerns in each category rather than assuming a developmental progression in concern.

In addition, stages of concern are organised from the lowest (i.e. stage of awareness) to the highest stage (i.e. stage of refocusing) (Hall & Hord, 1987). Charambous et al. (2004) make an assumption that the stages of concern can form a hierarchical model as the teachers in his study show that their concerns in the succeeding stage were influenced by their concerns in the preceding stage. However, Charambous et al.'s (2004) assumption contradicts with Straub (2009) when it was revealed that the stages of concern are not hierarchical because the teachers may skip a stage, but they still have concerns consistent with previous stages. At the initial stages, Straub (2009) found that teachers showed concern on matters involving personal issues; subsequently their concern was reworked to the students and the new curriculum implementation. Based on his findings, many teachers' responses did not reach the highest stage of concern (Straub, 2009). Similarly, Anderson (1997) discovered that concerns which appear in one stage do not automatically lead to the later stage; thus, it might require different interventions. Hence, Anderson (1997) claims that this move represents a possible but not a necessary developmental progression in concern. Clearly, additional research on the hierarchical stages of concern is needed to enhance our understanding of the evaluation of concern.

Besides, studies on teachers' affective concerns on changes are scarce (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Van Veen and Slegers (2006) and Straub (2009) criticise that CBAM focuses more on teachers' concerns rather than students' concerns and assert that it is

vital to explore students' needs. Similarly, in Malaysia, there are studies on teachers' concern about the effect of adopting ICT (e.g. Thang et al., 2014; Norazila Abd Aziz, 2017). Yet, little attention has been given in exploring one's affective concern on the change, particularly through linguistics aspect. It is essential to address one's emotional response since emotions may influence belief, context, and culture (Bandura, 1986). Affective concern has been addressed in CBAM, but individual's choice of words (i.e. linguistics aspect) has been neglected (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Hence, without analysing the linguistic aspect of concern, the affective concern would not be fully comprehended.

Although CBAM has been criticised, it does not mean that this model cannot be applied. Instead of Fuller's (1969) three developmental levels of concern, Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern from CBAM could assist the researcher in measuring one's degree of concern (Wang, 2013) with the help of speech act categories in order to reveal one's language of concern and affective concern.

2.8 Summary

The review of literature has shown us that children in foster care encounter various challenges in life, especially in their pursuit to be successful in education. Previous studies about foster children mostly focus on their issues and needs rather than how concern is voiced, which has opened up the gap for this study to fill. This chapter has also explained the basis of the theoretical frameworks which can assist the analysis for this study. Speech act categories by Searle (1976) and concerns-based adoption model by Hall and Hord (1987) are deemed relevant in the analysis of this study. Henceforth, the procedure of data collection and analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter provides a description of theoretical framework, research sites, profiles of the teachers, caregivers and foster children, research instruments and ethical consideration. The methodology employed for the data collection and data analysis procedures as well as coding practices are also presented.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

To analyse the language of concern among participants who are teachers, caregivers and foster children in interviews, the theoretical frameworks used in this study were:

- i. Searle's (1976) Speech Act Categories
- ii. Hall and Hord's (1987) Stages of Concern

Searle's (1976) speech act categories were used to analyse participants' use of language in voicing concern. In the process of analysing concern, it was also necessary to look into linguistic features in order to obtain an in-depth analysis. Apart from that, Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern contributed to the analysis of participants' degree of concern towards academic performance and needs of foster children.

3.1.1 Searle's (1976) Speech Act Categories

Searle (1976) has classified speech acts into five macro-classes, namely representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative acts. The following sections discussed the use of speech act categories in the analysis.

(a) Representative Act

Representative act occurred through speaker's choice of words, of thoughts or beliefs, such as claiming, predicting, insisting, describing, or hypothesising (Cutting, 2002, p. 17). Representative act frequently occurred in statements such as direct, indirect or negative statements where linguistic features were salient.

Table 3.1: Linguistic Features in Representative Act (Searle, 1976)

Speech Act Category	Linguistic Features		
	Types	Sub-types	Examples
Representative Act	Pragmatic Markers (Babanoglu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• noun• noun phrase• verb• verb phrase• adverb• personal pronoun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• factor• time constraints• triggered• meet up• so, only• I, we, they
	Discourse Markers (Fraser, 1988, 1990, 1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• subordinate conjunction• contrastive conjunction• conditional conjunction• coordinate conjunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• because, while• however, but• if, unless• and, too

The linguistic features contributed in identifying emotional contents of speakers through interviews. Additionally, lexical items such as nouns, noun phrases, verbs, verb phrases, adjectives, adverbs and personal pronouns (e.g. I, we, they) which serve as linguistic features were also significant in analysing interview data. These linguistic features served as 'pragmatic markers' to analyse concern (Babanoglu, 2014). Besides pragmatic markers, discourse markers were often treated as linguistic features to explain or clarify statements (Fraser, 1988). Discourse markers include several conjunctions such as subordinates (e.g. so, since, because, while), contrastives (e.g. however, but), conditionals (e.g. if, unless) and coordinates (e.g. and, too) (Fraser, 1999). In order to analyse language of concern and speakers' potential communicative intentions for the

academic needs of foster children, this study adopted Fraser's (1990) notion of pragmatic markers and discourse markers as they were prominent in the categories of speech acts (ibid.).

(b) Directive Act

Directive act was analysed based on the occurrence of speakers directing hearers to perform an action through their language of concern (Searle, 1976). The choices of words in the directive act were modal verbs, intensifiers and mitigators. These choices of words were adopted to analyse 'request', 'suggestion' (Cutting, 2002) or 'complaint'. Furthermore, although 'complaint' was categorised as an expressive act (Searle, 1976), there is a need to analyse complaint as a directive function. For instance, in the utterance "they're not helping much", the caregiver expresses her dismay with the social welfare agency (complainable matter). The offender (i.e. social welfare agency) may not necessarily be physically present when the caregiver performs the act of complain (Heinemann, 2008). Such a move shows that directive act in this study can be conveyed in a subtle way through a third party namely, the interviewer.

Besides, concern involves individual's directive act of making suggestions or requests, which can be seen in Hall and Hord's (1987) stage of refocusing. According to Searle (1976), when speaker gives suggestion or request, modal verbs were used. Hence, Leech's (1983) categories of modal verbs were adopted to analyse English modal verbs; whereas Abdul Aziz Idris (1980) modal verbs were employed to analyse Malay modal verbs (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Categories of Modal Verbs (Leech, 1983; Abdul Aziz Idris, 1980)

Categories of Modal Verbs	Examples	
	English	Malay
Possibility	can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i> mungkin</i> (may) • <i> boleh jadi</i> (maybe) • <i> barangkali</i> (perhaps)
Permission	may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i> boleh</i> (can)
Obligation & Necessity	must, have to, need to, should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i> mesti</i> (must) • <i> patut</i> or <i> patutnya</i> (should)

Modal verbs were used to either intensify or mitigate the illocutionary force of participants' utterances. Thus, this contributed to the notion of intensification and mitigation.

To analyse intensification, Moghaddam's (2012) categories of intensifiers were adopted, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Categories of Intensifiers (Moghaddam, 2012)

Categories	Examples
Double Intensifiers	I am very very sorry.
Multiple Intensifiers	I am so very sorry.
Implicit Intensifiers	It broke my heart.
Explicit Intensifiers	I am so sorry.
Adjectival Intensifiers	I extend my sincere sympathy .

Though Moghaddam's (2012) categories of intensifiers have been applied in speech act of apology, which is under expressive act, this study adopted his categories of intensifiers to analyse directive act. Intensifiers served as boosters when participants voiced concern through requests or suggestions regarding the academic issues or needs of foster children.

The analysis of mitigation is necessary because speech acts were modified to soften the hostile effects by speakers (Fraser, 1980). Mitigators such as hedges (Fraser, 1980) (e.g. I think, maybe), pause fillers (Lakoff, 1975) (/er/), tag questions (Labov & Fanshel, 1977) and disclaimers (Fraser, 1980) contribute to the analysis of mitigation in the language of concern. These mitigators need to be investigated when participants give suggestions and make requests toward the academic performance of foster children.

Furthermore, particles such as *lah*, *nya*, *kah* and *kan* were also analysed as these particles were commonly used among Malaysian speakers when suggesting or requesting. The use of these particles by the participants was therefore analysed based on the different functions which contributed to the notion of concern. The functions of these particles are as the following:

- *lah* is defined as an imperative marker (Alfred et al., 2013). It also serves as a mitigator (Asmah Haji Omar, 1986) and an intensifier (Goddard, 1994).
- *nya* serves as a possessive adjective (Alfred et al., 2013) and can be considered as “being emphatic in meaning” (Goddard, 1994, p. 151).
- *kah* and *kan* serve as question markers (Alfred et al., 2013). *kan* is a short form originated from the word *bukan* (not), typically employed as a tag question in Malay language (Gut & Pillai, 2015).

Table 3.4 provides an overview of linguistic features in directive act.

Table 3.4: Linguistic Features in Directive Act (Searle, 1976)

Speech Act Categories	Linguistic Features		
	Types	Sub-types / Functions	Examples
Directive Act	Modal Verbs (Leech, 1983; Abdul Aziz Idris, 1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibility • permission • obligation • necessity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can • may • must, have to, need to, should
	Intensifiers (Moghaddam, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double • multiple • implicit • explicit • adjectival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very very • so very • broke • so • sincere sympathy
	Mitigators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hedges (Fraser, 1980) • pause fillers (Lakoff, 1975) • tag questions (Labov & Fanshel, 1977) • disclaimer (Fraser, 1980) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think, maybe • /er/ • <i>Ini kan?</i> (This one right?) • If I'm not wrong, ...
	Particles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intensifier (Goddard, 1994) • mitigators (Asmah Haji Omar, 1986) • possessive adjectives (Alfred et al., 2013) • being emphatics in meaning (Goddard, 1994) • question markers (Alfred et al., 2013; Gut & Pillai, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>lah</i> • <i>nya</i> • <i>kah</i> • <i>kan</i>

(c) Commissive Act

Commissive act involved the analysis of the use of modal verb ‘will’ and personal pronoun ‘I’ and ‘we’ whenever participants showed commitment to forthcoming actions. The actions were in the form of promises, offers, refusal, or volunteering. Table 3.5 provides an overview of linguistic features in commissive act.

Table 3.5: Linguistic Features in Commissive Act (Searle, 1976)

Speech Act Category	Linguistic Features		
	<i>Types</i>	<i>Sub-types</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Commissive Act	Modal Verbs (Leech, 1983)	obligation / necessity	• will
	Pragmatic Marker (Babanoglu, 2014)	personal pronouns	• I, we

(d) Expressive Act

Expressive act was analysed through the choices of words such as adjectives, adverbs, intensifiers and personal pronouns (e.g. I or we). By analysing expressive act, the intensity of participants' feeling or psychological state of their concern towards the academic performance of foster children was identified. Table 3.6 provides an overview of linguistic features in expressive act.

Table 3.6: Linguistic Features in Expressive Act (Searle, 1976)

Speech Act Category	Linguistic Features		
	<i>Types</i>	<i>Sub-types</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Expressive Act	Pragmatic Markers (Babanoglu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjectives • personal pronouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sad, weak • I, we, they
	Intensifiers (Moghaddam, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double • multiple • implicit • explicit • adjectival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very very • so very • broke • so • sincere sympathy

(e) Declarative Act

Declarative act could be recognised through lexical elements such as 'hereby' or 'declare' as in authoritative statements (Cutting, 2002) and in a specific context that triggers for "immediate action" (Stapleton, 2004, p. 15).

Searle's (1976) five categories of speech acts answered the first research question, which examine the realisation patterns of speech act of concern from school teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's responses in relation to the poor academic performance of children in foster care. The overall analysis of speech act categories together with linguistic features and examples of choice of words are shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Linguistic Features in Speech Act Categories (Searle, 1976)

Speech Act Category	Linguistic features		
	Types	Sub-types	Examples
Representative Act	Pragmatic Markers (Babanoglu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noun • noun phrase • verb • verb phrase • adverb • personal pronoun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factor • time constraints • triggered • meet up • so, only • I, we, they
	Discourse Markers (Fraser, 1988)	Conjunctions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subordinate • contrastive • conditional • coordinate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because, while • however, but • if, unless • and, too
Directive Act	Modal Verbs (Leech, 1983; Abdul Aziz Idris, 1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possibility • permission • obligation • necessity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can • may • must, have to, need to, should
	Intensifiers (Moghaddam, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double • multiple • implicit • explicit • adjectival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very very • so very • broke • so • sincere sympathy
	Mitigators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hedges (Fraser, 1980) • pause fillers (Lakoff, 1975) • tag questions (Labov & Fanshel, 1977) • disclaimer (Fraser, 1980) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think, maybe • /er/ • <i>Ini kan?</i> (This one right?) • If I'm not wrong, ...

Table 3.7 continued

Speech Act Category	Linguistic Features		
	Types	Sub-types	Examples
Directive Act	Particles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intensifier (Goddard, 1994) • mitigators (Asmah Haji Omar, 1986) • possessive adjectives (Alfred et al., 2013) • being emphatics in meaning (Goddard, 1994) • question markers (Alfred et al., 2013; Gut & Pillai, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>lah</i> • <i>nya</i> • <i>kah</i> • <i>kan</i>
Commissive Act	Modal Verbs (Leech, 1983)	obligation / necessity	• will
	Pragmatic Marker (Babanoglu, 2014)	personal pronouns	• I, we
Expressive Act	Pragmatic Markers (Babanoglu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjectives • personal pronouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sad, weak • I, we, they
	Intensifiers (Moghaddam, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double • multiple • implicit • explicit • adjectival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very very • so very • broke • so • sincere sympathy

3.1.2 Hall and Hord's (1987) Stages of Concern

Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern were adapted for the purpose of analysis.

Table 3.8 provides the descriptions of the seven stages of concern.

Table 3.8: Stages of Concern (Hall & Hord, 1987)

Stages of Concern (SoC)	Descriptions
6 Stage of Refocusing	➤ to identify the suggestions given or actions taken by teachers, caregivers and foster children to improve the situation, especially in terms of the academic performance of foster children
5 Stage of Collaboration	➤ to investigate whether teachers, caregivers and foster children collaborate with others to overcome the issues they encounter
4 Stage of Consequence	➤ to analyse the consequences of the barriers faced
3 Stage of Management	➤ to explore the issues faced by participants while managing or attempting to improve the academic performance of foster children as well as the problems that may delay assistance from being rendered to these children
2 Stage of Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ to identify the teachers', caregivers' personal feelings when dealing with foster children ➤ to identify foster children's feelings with their academic problems
1 Stage of Informational	➤ to identify the teachers', caregivers' and foster children's willingness to learn more about the academic problems
0 Stage of Awareness	➤ to distinguish how aware teachers, caregivers and foster children are towards the academic problems

At the analysis phase, Hall and Hord's (1987) seven stages of concern allow this study to examine the degree of concern among the participants (i.e. teachers, caregivers and foster children). The degree of concern was analysed based on the emergence and salient patterns of concern through lexical choice of individual's concern and thereof in groups. For instance, in the stage of refocusing, the suggestions given or actions taken by the participants to improve the situation, especially in terms of the foster children's academic performance, were identified. The vertical arrow in these stages indicates the arrangement of the stages of concern, starting from the lowest stage (i.e. awareness) leading to the highest stage (i.e. refocusing). The stages of concern were not hierarchical as respondents may skip the stages (Anderson, 1997; Straub, 2009). The lowest stage

was represented with a zero indicating a little or no concern about an issue addressed (see Section 2.7.1 for further explanation on Hall and Hord’s Stages of Concern). These stages were adapted from Hall and Hord (1987) to answer the second research question, which focuses on how concerned the teachers, foster caregivers and foster children are towards various issues and needs, particularly with regards to the academic performance of foster children.

3.1.3 Combination of Speech Act Theory and Stages of Concern

Figure 3.1 shows the combination of speech act theory and stages of concern as a theoretical framework in this study to analyse the language of concern among teachers, caregivers and foster children.

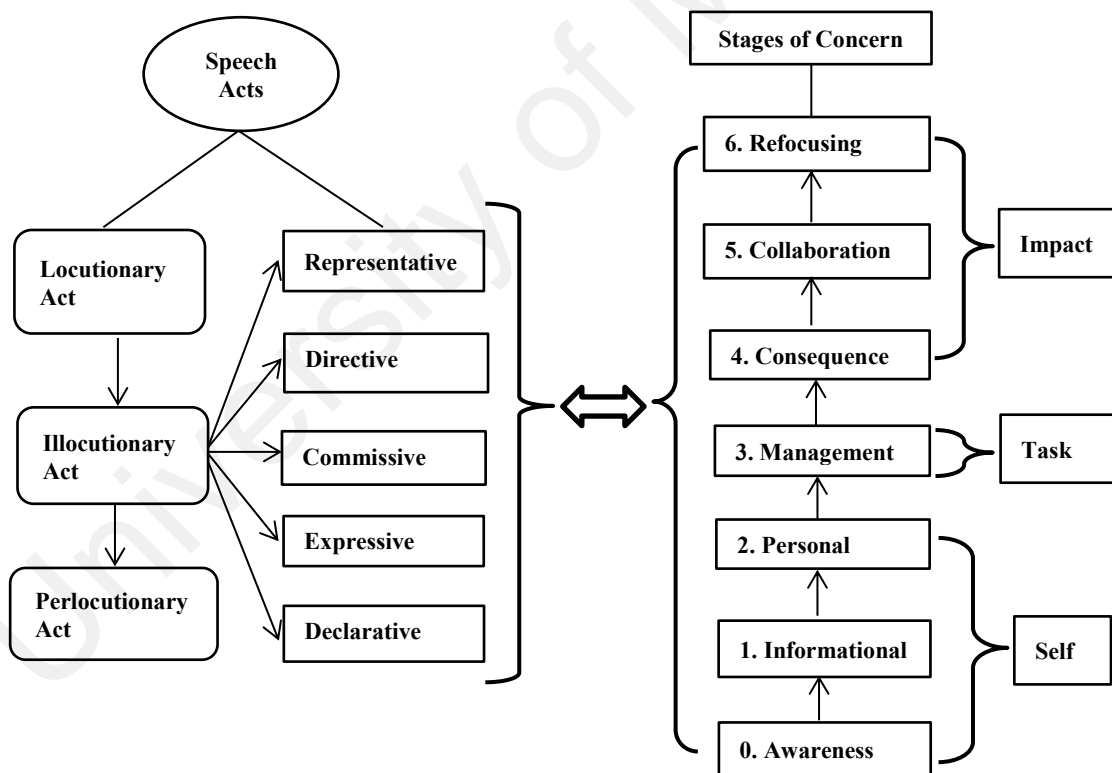


Figure 3.1: Representation of Framework of Analysis for Speech Acts (Searle, 1976) and Stages of Concern (Hall & Hord, 1987)

The combination of both frameworks (i.e. Speech Acts and Stages of Concern) linked various categories of speech acts into the respective stages of concern. By doing so,

- i. realisation patterns of speech act of concern were revealed.
- ii. the extent to how concerned the participants were towards the academic performance of foster children was determined.
- iii. issues that need immediate attention were identified through the language of concern.

At the same time, these frameworks assisted this study to achieve the research objectives in Section 1.2.

3.2 Research Sites

The research sites are one secondary school and three foster homes. The semi-urban secondary school in Klang Valley which was constructed in the year 2002 was selected. It has a total of 1302 students and 67 teachers. Out of the 67 teachers, 26 of them are involved in teaching the foster children.

The three selected foster homes are also located in Klang Valley area. The first foster home in this study was established in year 1983. Children from the age of four to twelve as well as teenage boys and teenage girls from the age of thirteen to seventeen reside in this home. There are 46 children and 26 staff members in total. This home is managed by an executive director and a manager respectively for children, teenage boys and teenage girls. Since consent was only obtained from the executive manager and the manager of the home to be interviewed, snowball sampling method was used when they recommended their acquaintance who is the manager of the second foster home.

In year 2004, the second foster home was set up. A total of twelve foster children from the age of three to seventeen were referred to this home by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Only five staff members (including the manager) are managing

this foster home. The manager in this home is the only person who agreed to participate in this study. Thus, he further recommended the third foster home.

The third foster home managed by an executive director and an administrator has been in operation since 1998. A total of 96 foster children which include babies from six months old to teenagers up to the age of eighteen, live in this home. The foster children live together with 21 single mothers who play the role of taking care of these children.

3.3 Samples of the Study

There were a total of twenty-six school teachers, six foster caregivers and twelve foster children participated in this study and their profiles are shown in the following sub-sections.

3.3.1 Profile of School Teachers

Twenty-six school teachers had been selected to participate in the interview sessions with purposive sampling method because they either were currently teaching or had been involved in teaching foster children. Profile of the teachers in this study can be seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Profile of School Teachers

Teacher	Role in School	Years taught in this School	Ethnic	Age	Gender
T1	Subject Teacher, Club Teacher	10 Years	Malay	42	Female
T2	Form Teacher	1 Year	Punjabi	43	Female
T3	Subject Teacher, Club Teacher	1 ½ Years	Malay	28	Male
T4	Form Teacher, Subject Teacher	3 Years	Malay	30	Female
T5	Subject Teacher	6 Years	Malay	30	Female

Table 3.9 continued

Teacher	Role in School	Years taught in this School	Ethnic	Age	Gender
T6	Subject Teacher, Disciplinary Teacher	12 Years	Malay	38	Female
T7	Subject Teacher, Islamic Religion Teacher	3 Years	Malay	28	Female
T8	Subject Teacher, Islamic Religion Teacher	Less than 1 Year	Malay	26	Male
T9	Form Teacher, Subject Teacher	Less than 1 Year	Malay	31	Female
T10	Subject Teacher	1 month	Malay	32	Female
T11	Subject Teacher, Physical Education Teacher	4 Years	Malay	28	Female
T12	Subject Teacher	2 Years	Malay	29	Female
T13	Islamic Religion Teacher	2 Years	Malay	37	Female
T14	Islamic Religion Teacher	4 Years	Malay	27	Male
T15	Form Teacher, Subject Teacher	8 Years	Indian	46	Female
T16	Principal	2 Years	Malay	56	Male
T17	Counsellor	12 Years	Malay	48	Male
T18	Disciplinary Teacher, Physical Education Teacher	4 Years	Malay	48	Male
T19	Islamic Religion Teacher	5 Years	Malay	42	Female
T20	Assistant Principal	12 Years	Punjabi	51	Female
T21	Assistant Principal	12 Years	Malay	54	Female
T22	Assistant Principal	12 Years	Malay	47	Female
T23	Form Teacher	11 Years	Malay	34	Female
T24	Form Teacher	Less than 1 Year	Malay	32	Female
T25	Subject Teacher, Physical Education Teacher	3 Years	Malay	36	Male
T26	Form Teacher	4 Years	Malay	30	Female

With reference to Table 3.9, there were twenty-three Malay teachers, two Punjabi teachers, and one Indian teacher, where nineteen of them were female teachers and the other seven were male teachers. Out of the twenty-six teachers, nineteen teachers had a minimum of six years of experience while seven teachers had less than six years of experience teaching in this school. The twenty-six school teachers in this study consist

of principal, assistant principals, form teachers, subject teachers, club teachers, physical education teachers, a counsellor, disciplinary teachers and Islamic religion teachers.

3.3.2 Profile of Foster Caregivers

Table 3.10 illustrates the profile of foster caregivers in this study. Snowball sampling method was employed when caregivers from the first and second homes recommended other participants among their acquaintances to participate in this study.

Table 3.10: Profile of Foster Caregivers

Caregiver	Roles	Years of Experience	Ethnic	Age	Gender
G1	Executive Director	6 Years	Chinese	66	Male
G2	Manager	2 Year	Indian	31	Female
G3	Manager	12 Years	Indian	66	Male
G4	Administrator	5 Years	Malay	63	Male
G5	Executive Director	18 Years	Malay	58	Female
G6	Administrator	12 Years	Malay	41	Female

As reflected in Table 3.10, there were six foster caregivers in this study. Out of the six, there were three Malay caregivers, two Indian caregivers and one Chinese caregiver, where three of them were males and the other three were females. Three of the caregivers had a minimum of ten years of work experience in the foster home, while the other three caregivers had less than ten years of experience working in their respective foster homes. Their roles were restricted to administrative or management of their relevant homes.

3.3.3 Profile of Foster Children

A total of twelve foster children were identified and introduced by the school counsellor. These foster children were selected with purposive sampling method because all of them attend the semi-urban secondary school in the Klang Valley area,

which was one of the research sites for this study. Their profile is displayed in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: Profile of Foster Children

Child	Form / Class	Age	Gender
C1	Form 5J	17	Female
C2	Form 4S	16	Female
C3	Form 4S	16	Male
C4	Form 1T	13	Male
C5	Form 1T	13	Female
C6	Form 2S	14	Male
C7	Form 2V	14	Male
C8	Form 2V	14	Male
C9	Form 2T	14	Male
C10	Form 2T	14	Female
C11	Form 3K	15	Male
C12	Form 4B	16	Female

As stated in Table 3.11, twelve foster children in this study were in the age range from thirteen to seventeen years. Out of the twelve children, seven of them were males and five were females. Although the foster children were from various age groups and gender, all of them were from the Malay ethnic group.

3.4 Research Instruments

To gather data from the teachers, caregivers and foster children, open-ended interview questions, questionnaires and foster children's mid-term examination results were employed.

The researcher follows Patton's (2006) types of interview questions, which are experience questions, opinion or value questions, feelings questions, knowledge questions and background questions, in order to construct the questionnaire and interview questions in this study. Sensory questions were not employed because this study does not involve inquiring what is seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled.

The questionnaire serves the purpose of exploring the teachers', caregivers' and fosters children's background details before proceeding to the main focus of the interview sessions. The types of questions asked in the questionnaire were:

- i. Background questions
- ii. Experience questions

Background questions elicit the information about participants such as age, gender, academic qualification, family background and ethnicity. Additionally, experience questions focused on drawing information about teachers and caregivers' number of years of experiences or services dealing with foster children. Background and experience questions can be found in Sections 1 and 2 of Appendices C, D and E.

The open-ended interview questions were the main instrument for this study (see Appendices C, D and E). This instrument allows more information to be elicited from the teachers, caregivers and foster children in order to examine speech act of concern (**RQ1**) and how concerned the participants were (**RQ2**) as well as to investigate the types of needs and issues (**RQ3**). The open-ended interview questions in this study also allow participants' perceptions to be documented, understood, and interpreted (Leedy, 1997, p. 159). The interview questions were formulated in English and Malay languages as some participants were more comfortable to be interviewed in Malay language.

Three types of questions were asked during the interview sessions:

- i. Knowledge questions
- ii. Opinion or value questions
- iii. Feelings questions

The knowledge questions focused on identifying the participants' awareness on foster children's academic issues and needs. Opinion or value questions were utilised to retrieve participants' opinions on what they think about the academic needs and issues of foster children in Malaysia and how to address these needs and issues. Feelings questions elicit the personal emotional responses of teachers and caregivers about the academic performance of foster children, as well as foster children's emotional responses about their own academic performance. The interview questions were not asked in any specific order as the researcher also probed follow-up questions during interviews.

Furthermore, the following types of interview questions for teachers were adapted from the interview questions of Center for Social Services Research project (CSSR) by Choice et al.'s (2001, p. 41).

- i. the identification of foster children that need assistance in school
- ii. the possible barriers that delay educational services provided in school to address the academic needs of foster children
- iii. suggestions or recommendation for improving the educational services for foster children to address the academic issues

Since the interview questions from CSSR focused on foster children from California, this study adapted those questions to focus on Malaysian children in foster care. These types of interview questions can be found in Section 3 of Appendices C, D and E.

Additionally, pilot study with a subject from this study was also used to test the validity and reliability of the content of the questionnaires and interview questions. After the pilot study was conducted, the researcher refined the interview questions that required them to give suggestions on how to improve the educational services for foster children and the types of problems they face while trying to address the academic needs of foster children as the questions were previously unclear and ambiguous. Questions which do not focus on foster children's academic needs and issues have been omitted.

In addition, official documents, which entail the mid-term examination results of foster children, were referred to in order to identify their weakest subjects and to correlate with their interview responses.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Prior to collecting the data, permissions from the Ministry of Education (*Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia* [KPM]) and Education Department of Selangor (*Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Selangor* [JPN]) for the school were applied online. The consent to interview the school teachers and foster children was obtained verbally from the school principal. Prior appointments were sought with the school before conducting the interviews (see Appendices A and B). Additionally, permission to obtain the foster children's mid-term examination results had been verbally requested from the school principal. Such a move aimed to gain more in-depth analysis of their academic performance in school and to use them as a basis for comparison with their interview responses for validation.

As for the foster caregivers, permission to get access to the foster home where the twelve foster children were from was not available. However, there was a need to

explore foster caregivers' concern because the school teachers asserted that caregivers do play an important role in foster children's academic performance, especially in monitoring the children's academic progress. To overcome this issue, caregivers from three non-governmental foster homes in Klang Valley were selected using snowball sampling method. Permission was given verbally from the manager of each respective foster home and prior appointments for the interviews were sought with each foster caregiver. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were used for the participants.

3.6 Methods

This is a multiple case study that qualitatively explores the concern on the academic issues and needs of foster children (Creswell, 2007). To investigate the issues, multiple sources of data are required such as interviews, questionnaire, or documents (e.g. foster children's examination results) to be collected (ibid.). In this multiple case study, the data was collected mainly through face-to-face semi-structured interview in natural settings, which are in school and foster homes in order to examine the language of concern of teachers, caregivers and foster children towards academic performance. Subsequently, the data collected were qualitatively analysed using content analysis. By doing so, the researcher can explore language in a more in-depth way by grouping large amounts of interview data into a number of categories that display similar patterns (Weber, 1990). In this way, the researcher could provide a 'complex description and interpretation of the problems' or issues to extend the literature and raise awareness of any issues discovered in this study (Creswell, 2007, p. 39).

3.7 Role of the Researcher

In this study, the researcher's role is etic as this role allows her to be an objective viewer from an outside view. The researcher is an observer as participant where she collects

data from interviews and questionnaire to examine the participants' concern via the emerging patterns from the interview responses. At the same time, the subjects in this study are aware of the purpose of the research. Furthermore, the researcher also safeguards the participants' background details (e.g. name, age, origin). She has informed the participants for such safeguarding of details and received their consent before the interview begins.

The researcher tried to access the thoughts and feelings of concern of the teachers, caregivers and foster children by interviewing them about their experiences, challenges and suggestions. She probes the participants during interview, think and probe more follow up questions to develop a deeper conversation with the participants (i.e. teachers, caregivers and foster children) in order to explore the academic needs and issues of foster children.

The researcher is also not tied with any foster care organisation. She remains neutral and makes no pretense by supporting every claim with evidence from teachers, caregivers and foster children's responses during analysis. To control any biasness, the researcher examines from word level, phrases level and utterances level and the overall content of each interview where the findings derived from the lexical choices of participants. She has also cross-checked the coding and categorisations of the findings with three coders and calculated the inter-rater reliability among the coders with Cohen's (1960) kappa coefficient formula.

3.8 Procedures for Data Collection

The data collection procedure consists of several phases (see Figure 3.2). The data gathered for this multiple case study were obtained from three selected foster homes and

a selected secondary school in Klang Valley. The collection of data began once the permission to interview the participants was granted by KPM, JPN and managers of foster homes (see Section 3.5) in order to conduct the study with principal of the school and managers of each foster home. Before the interview begins, each participant was given a peer debriefing about the study and they were assured that their personal details would be kept private and confidential. Then, they were requested to share about their background (for teachers and caregivers) or daily routine (for foster children) before proceeding to the main focus of the interview sessions in order to make the interviewees comfortable in the interview process (see Section 2 “Developing a rapport” of Appendices C, D, and E). The interview data were collected at the second semester of the academic year in 2014.

(a) Interview with Teachers

Questionnaires were distributed to the teachers to gather their background details. Subsequently, open-ended interview questions were employed to interview the teachers. The interviews were conducted between the researcher and school teacher in a meeting room in the school. Each interview session took approximately 15 minutes. The interview concerns the teachers’ awareness of foster children in their class and their perceptions on how to improve these children’s academic performance.

(b) Interview with Foster Children

Appointments were pre-arranged by the school counsellor to interview the twelve foster children. Similar to the teachers, each foster child was requested to complete a questionnaire about their background detail before the interview commenced. Next, one-to-one interview with the foster children were conducted in the school meeting room during break time with the aim of avoiding any interruption to their lessons. Each

foster child was interviewed for approximately 15 to 20 minutes on needs and issues they encountered in school and foster home.

(c) Interview with Foster Caregivers

The interviews with the six foster caregivers were held individually and each lasted approximately 20 minutes. The interviews took place in their respective foster home's administrative office. Each foster caregiver was requested to complete the questionnaire about their background information. The interview aimed to explore the foster caregivers' concern about their foster children's academic performance and needs.

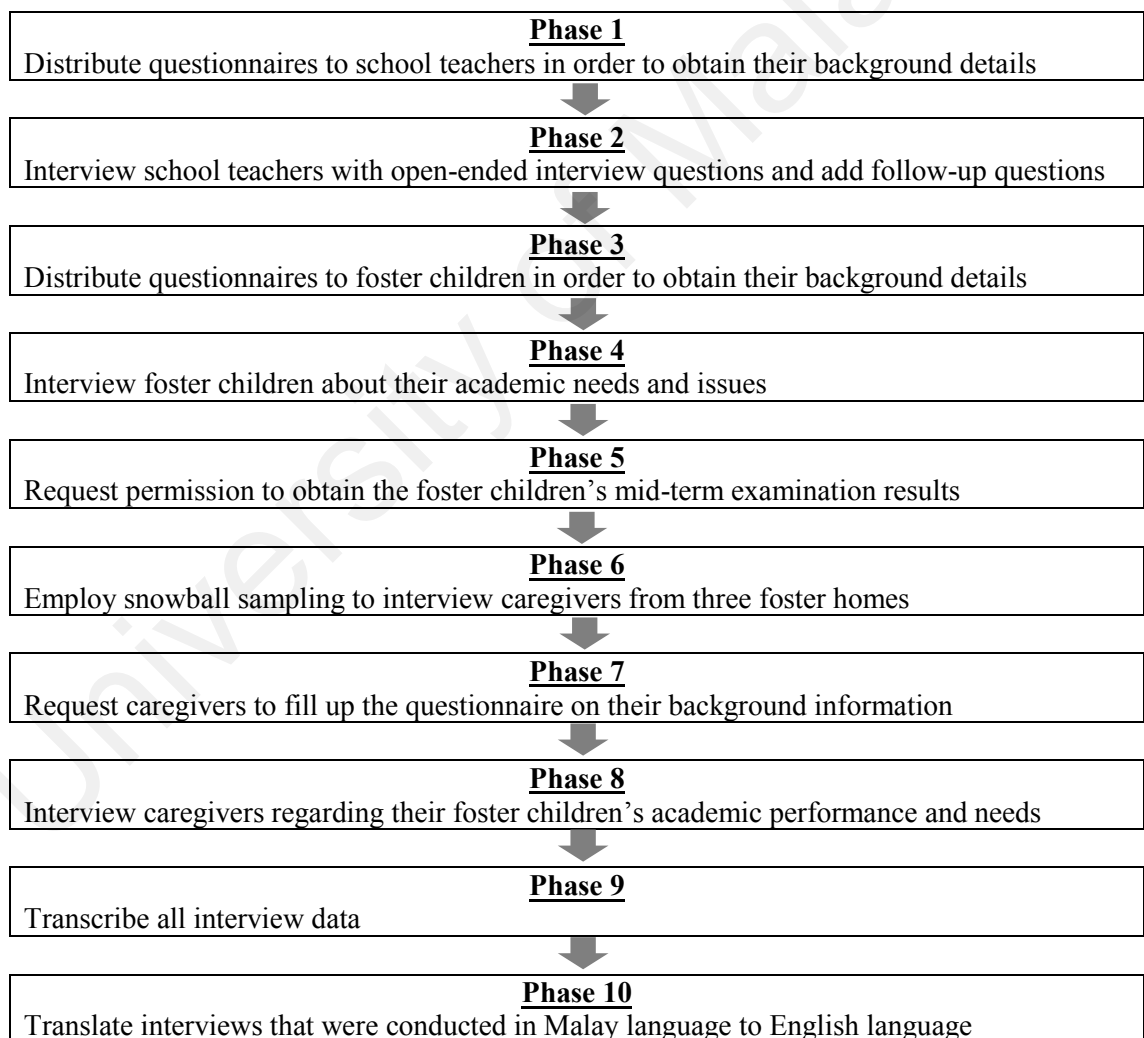


Figure 3.2: Data Collection Procedure

3.8.1 Transcription Conventions

The total duration of the interview sessions in this multiple case study was approximately 15 hours and 25 minutes. The breakdown for the duration of interviews with teachers, caregivers and foster children are:

Teachers : 8 hours 19 minutes

Caregivers : 3 hours 22 minutes

Foster Children : 3 hours 44 minutes

The interviews were audio recorded and were transcribed based on Jefferson transcription convention (1984, 2004) with adaptations where appropriate (see Table 3.12). The transcription convention allowed the progress of interview and the occurrence of simultaneous speech to be seen in written form for purpose of analysis.

Table 3.12: Adaptation of Jefferson Transcription Conventions (1984, 2004)

Symbol	Name	Function
/	Slash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks between utterances
[text]	Brackets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech or interruptions during the interviews
=	Equal sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance • The next speaker begins instantly at the end of the current speaker's utterance. • Usually occurs during turn taking or when one is defending his/her points.
?	Question mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates rising pitch or intonation • Demonstrates the way one poses questions
<u>underline</u>	Underlined text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates the emphasising or stressing of speech
:::	Colon(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates prolongation of a sound
(XXX)	Single parenthesis with triple X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript
((<i>italic text</i>))	Double parentheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotation of non-verbal activity

Since some of the interviews were conducted in Malay language, excerpts of the data were then translated to English language following a multi-linear transcription by Hepburn and Bolden (2013) in order to make it easier for non-native speakers of Malay language to understand the texts. The translated excerpts were organised into three-line transcription where the first line represents the original text in Malay language. The second line is the literal translation of the text or morpheme by morpheme English gloss of the original text (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013). The third line is the intended meaning of the original in English language. An example of a multi-linear transcription can be seen in the following:

<i>Maths saya selalu gagal dan saya dah cuba</i>	←	Original text
Mathematics my always fail and I already try	←	Literal translation
I always fail in Mathematics and I have tried	←	Intended meaning

Although the original interview data were translated into English language, the data were still analysed in Malay language and the intended meanings (in English) were placed in brackets. The translations were verified by two Malaysian academicians who were bilingual speakers of Malay and English. They counterchecked the literal and intended meaning of the translation and came to an agreement on the translated words to be employed.

3.9 Procedures for Data Analysis

This qualitative study used content analysis to systematically analyse the content of interview data as this approach allows the researcher to identify reliable categories (Haggarty, 2009). Additionally, a spiral approach in content analysis assists the researcher in exploring the content by narrowing down the interview data into sentences or words in order to obtain the overall content. The overall content allows the interpretations and classification of the data to further formulate into categories, as well as integrate and summarise the data through tabulation.

Besides, content analysis is suitable to analyse sensitive phenomena (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2011) such as issues regarding children from foster homes (e.g. Ellermann, 2007). Moreover, content analysis also assists the researcher in identifying ‘common issues’ (Green & Thorogood, 2004) highlighted in teachers, caregivers’ and foster children’s interview data. The common issues in this study are the concern on the academic performance of foster children. The procedure of analysis of this study involves several phases (see Figure 3.3).

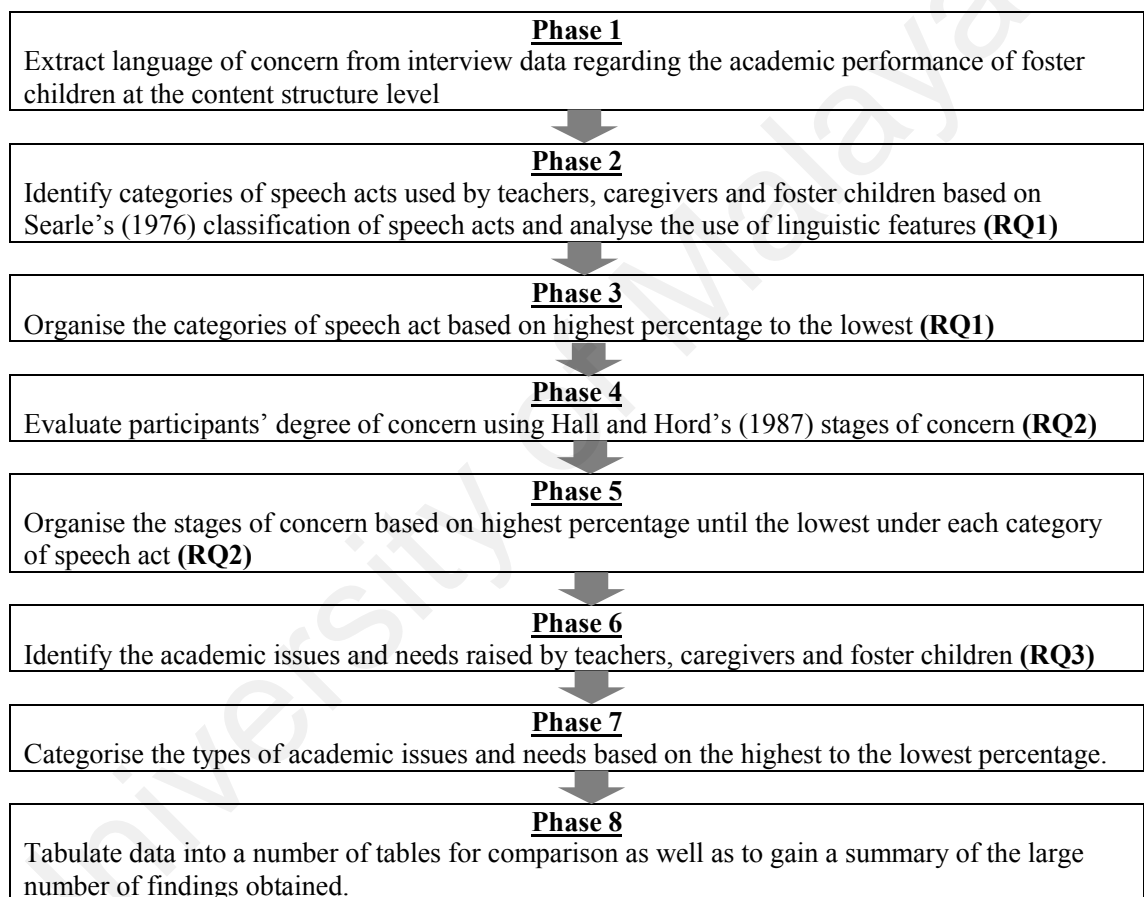


Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analysed using Searle’s (1976) classification of speech acts and Hall and Hord’s (1987) stages of concern. The analysis began by extracting the language of concern from interview data regarding the academic performance of foster children at the content structure level. To answer the first research question, the categories of speech act used by teachers, caregivers and foster children during

interviews were identified based on Searle's (1976) classification of speech acts. While examining the categories of speech act, the use of linguistic features in voicing concern was also analysed in order to obtain a more in-depth analysis and reliable results. The categories of speech act were then organised based on percentages.

Once the responses were categorised into the respective category of speech acts and linguistic features were analysed, the teachers, caregivers, and foster children's concern were evaluated based on Hall and Hord's (1987) seven stages of concern, which include the stages of awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and lastly, refocusing. This step is to answer the second research question. Additionally, analysis at this juncture allows this study to identify the common stage of concern in each category of speech act. Next, the stages of concern were organised based on highest percentage until the lowest under each category of speech act instead of following the hierarchical order of the stages as this step aims to identify the degree of concern of the participants.

While analysing the stage of concern in each category of speech act, issues and needs raised by the participants (i.e. teachers, caregivers and foster children) regarding the academic performance of foster children were also identified in order to answer the third research question. Within each category of speech act and each stage of concern, the types of issues and needs were categorised based on the highest to the lowest percentage. The percentages of the participants' use of speech act category are summed up with a total of 100% each as there is overlapping in the use of each act. In other words, the same participant's response can have more than one category of speech act. Therefore, the percentage in each speech act category is calculated separately. The same calculation method goes to the stages of concern and academic needs and issues.

Subsequently, the data were tabulated into a number of tables for comparison as well as to gain a summary of the large number of findings obtained. However, the percentages serve only to review the trend of categories of speech act used, stages of concern and types of needs and issues raised, hence, to support the qualitative data.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

To verify the validity and reliability of the analyses, the coding patterns of categories of speech acts, stages of concerns and types of issues and needs were verified by three coders in order to deter any form of biasness during the coding process. The three selected coders have the same cultural background as the teachers, caregivers, and foster children as they were all Malaysians. The coders also share similar professional backgrounds, which are academicians. The coders are from the same cultural or professional background for high reliability of coding (Peter & Lauf, 2002). However, note that the researcher is not one of the coders. The next section provides the procedure of coding process.

3.10.1 Coding Procedure

Each coder was provided with two transcripts and the coding schemes to code. The background of the study and coding scheme were briefly explained to the coders. The three coders went through the transcripts individually and provided their feedbacks on the coding scheme. The coding was initiated by firstly identifying the different categories of speech acts teachers, caregivers and foster children used during interviews (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: Coding Scheme for Speech Acts

Categories of Speech Acts	Indicators	Examples	Code
Representative Act	words, phrases or utterances present the speaker's thoughts or beliefs	claiming, predicting, insisting, describing, or hypothesising	<rep>
Directive Act	words, phrases or utterances that direct a hearer / third party to perform something	command, request, invite, or suggestion	<dir>
Commissive Act	words, phrases or utterances that commit the speaker's forthcoming action	promises, threats, offers, refusal, vows, or volunteering	<com>
Expressive Act	words, phrases or utterances that expresses the speaker's feeling or psychological states	concern, sympathy, worry	<exp>
Declarative Act	words, phrases or utterances to declare	declaration	<dec>

Once the responses were categorised into the respective category of speech acts, the teachers, caregivers, and foster children's concern were evaluated based on Hall and Hord's (1987) seven stages of concern. The seven stages include stages of awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and refocusing (see Table 3.14). Additionally, analysis at this juncture is to identify the common stage of concern in each category of speech act.

Table 3.14: Coding Scheme for Stages of Concern

Stages of Concern	Indicators	Code
Refocusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions given or actions taken 	<ref>
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act of collaboration with others e.g. the word <i>bekerjasama</i> (co-operate), <i>berbincang</i> (discuss) or the phrase 'work together' show the act of collaboration 	<col>

Table 3.14 continued

Stages of Concern	Indicators	Code
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consequences of the barriers faced e.g. word <i>disebabkan</i> (because, due to) shows the impact or the consequences	<con>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Issues faced by the teachers, caregivers and foster children while managing	<man>
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal feelings e.g. emotive adjectives <i>kesian</i> and the verb <i>rasa</i> (feel) that describe their feelings	<per>
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Willingness or initiative to learn more about the problems	<inf>
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aware or not aware about the academic problems	<awa>

The language of concern (i.e. speech act categories and stages of concern) explicitly revealed the teachers, caregivers, and foster children's voices of concern on the academic issues and needs of foster children. The issues and needs were also coded into categories based on the common themes identified in the interview data after a reiterative process. For instance, the codes 'the need for fund to hire tutors' and 'the need for pocket money to buy food' were categorised into the category of 'the need for financial support'.

Next, the three coders' comments and feedbacks were compared to identify the 'frequency', 'similarities', and 'differences' of the coding patterns (Hatch, 2002, p. 155). While coding with pre-set codes, there were also emergent codes derived from the three coders. Emergent codes were ideas or concepts that appear from the data and were different from the prior codes (Stuckey, 2015). These emergent codes were some of the overlapping categories of speech acts and stages of concern (see Sections 4.1.5 and 4.2.4). Hence, the emergent codes were taken into account after being highlighted by the coders. This step assisted the researcher in identifying the reliability of the coding as

it was verified by three coders. The frequency of similarities and differences of the coding patterns were then calculated with Cohen's (1960) kappa coefficient formula in order to identify the inter-rater reliability among the coders.

Cohen's kappa has been most extensively discussed compared to Krippendorff's alpha and Scott's pi (Hughes & Garrett, 1990). Moreover, it also addressed the chance correction and systematic coding error problem, which estimated more accurate reliability than percent agreement calculation. The following is the formula for Cohen's kappa:

$$\frac{K = \text{Pr}(a) - \text{Pr}(e)}{N - \text{Pr}(e)}$$

K = Kappa

Pr(a) = simple agreement among raters

Pr(e) = expected agreement by chance

N = number of rated items

Based on the calculation, the kappa coefficient was 0.86. This means that the coders showed near perfect agreement between coders (Landis & Koch, 1977) as the coded value was between 0.80 and 1.00.

3.11 Pilot Study

The pilot study, which served as a pre-requisite for conducting this study, presented a small scale of findings obtained from the analysis of the 12 minutes and 14 seconds of transcribed interview of a subject teacher, who had three years of teaching experience in the particular school attended by the foster children. This pilot study applied the theoretical frameworks, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures to examine their feasibility for the current study. Firstly, the categories of speech act employed by the subject teacher were identified. Within each category of speech act, the stages of concern in reference to how concerned she was towards the foster children's

needs were analysed. Then, the needs were examined within each stage of concern and were organised into categories and sub-categories. While the responses were organised into three levels, namely, the original text in Malay language, the literal translation, and the intended meaning in English language, the data were analysed in the Malay language where the intended meanings were placed in brackets.

Table 3.15 shows the findings of the pilot study which consist of categories of speech act, stages of concern, and types of needs as seen in the interview responses of the subject teacher.

Table 3.15: Findings of Pilot Study

Categories of Speech Acts	Stages of Concern	Types of Issues
Representative act	Consequence	Lack of Attention
	Management	Behavioural Problems

Based on the findings, it is observed that there is only representative act in T27's responses. Her response falls in the stages of consequence and management. The types of needs that have been raised by the subject teacher include the need for attention and behavioural problems. The following sections present the analysis of the pilot study.

3.11.1 Representative Act

Representative act can be seen in T27's response when she describes, admits, asserts, affirms and states the consequences of the foster children's lack of attention and the challenges she encounters while teaching them. This act can be largely found in the stages of consequences and management and they are discussed in the following sections.

3.11.1.1 Stage of Consequences

In the stage of consequences, T27 reveals the deficiency that affects the foster children's academic performance.

(i) Lack of Attention

In Excerpt 1, T27 states that the foster children lack attention from their biological parents, which ultimately affects their behaviour and attitude (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 4).

Excerpt 1

- [1] T27: **hmm** *khusus tu* / **saya kurang pastilah** / *tapi kalau macam saya* /
specific that / I less sure PARTICLE -lah / but if like me /
that specific / I'm not so sure / but if it were to be me /
- [2] **mungkin** *kebanyakan pelajar ini dia kekurangan er perhatian* /
maybe most student this he/she lack attention /
maybe most of the students have not been given enough attention /
- [3] **er** okay / *terutama daripada ibubapa dia orang sendiri* / so
/ especially from parents their own /
/ especially from their own parents /
- [4] *secara tak langsung benda tu akan memberi kesan sama ada*
indirectly thing that will give impact either
indirectly it will give an impact either
- [5] *pada tingkah laku lah* / ah dan juga sikap dia orang /
to behaviour PARTICLE -lah / and also attitude their /
to their behaviour / and also their attitude /

It can be seen from lines 1 and 2 that T27 uses the pause fillers /hmm/ and /er/ to indicate her uncertainty as she hesitates about the foster children's special need. The notion of uncertainty is further strengthened by the use of the hedge *mungkin* (maybe) in line 2. She also admits of not being sure about the children's special need, as evident in the utterance *saya kurang pastilah* (I'm not so sure) in line 1. Nevertheless, the noun *kesan* (impact) in line 4 serves to signal the consequences of the lack of attention from the biological parents towards the foster children's behaviour and attitude.

3.11.1.2 Stage of Management

In the stage of management, the teacher states that behavioural problem is a challenge she encounters while teaching the foster children.

(i) Behavioural Problems

As depicted in Excerpt 2, T27 asserts that foster children who are often absent from school would be deprived of knowledge in the learning process, which is a barrier encountered by the teacher when teaching the foster children (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 2

- [1] T27: *hmm kalau halangan dia contohnya kalau pelajar ini bermasalah lah* /
if barrier it for instance if student this problematic PARTICLE *lah* /
if the barriers for instance if the student is problematic /
- [2] *dia akan tahan dia ke sekolah* / *er bila dia tak hadir* /
he/she will be arrested him/her to school / when he/she not present /
he/she will be brought to school / when he/she is absent /
- [3] *so benda-benda yang sepatutnya kita dah belajar / dia akan*
things that supposed we have learned / he/she will be
the things that they supposed to learn / he/she will be
- [4] *tertinggal / tu secara tak langsung / dia akan melambatkan lagi*
left behind / that indirectly / it will slower still
lost out / that somehow / it will delay
- [5] *proses tu lah* / *proses dia nak belajar* /
process that PARTICLE *lah* / process he/she wants to learn /
the process / the process in learning /
- [6] *PNP tersebutlah* / *ah halangan tu* /
PNP mentioned PARTICLE *lah* / barrier that /
the PNP / that's the barrier /

In line 4, the verb *tertinggal* (lost out) serves to highlight the consequence of truancy, which is a concern because it will affect the academic performance of these children. The use of the verb *melambatkan* (delay) in line 4 signifies T27's complaint whereby the foster children's truancy delays the teaching and learning process, which subsequently points to the challenge in managing these children. In line 6, she further affirms the barrier in teaching the foster children with the utterance *ah halangan tu* (ah that's the barrier).

Since T27 is seen to highlight her concern by making statements and descriptions about the foster children's problems in their academic pursuits, it shows that she has employed representative act. Her responses are classified under the stages of consequences and management, which denotes her awareness on the challenges the foster children encounter. Further, the types of needs raised by this teacher, which include the need for attention and behavioural problem, might be the reasons that affect their academic performance.

This pilot study reveals that Searle's (1976) Speech Act Theory is in tandem with Hall and Hord's (1987) Stages of Concern. Thus, their frameworks in a way appear suitable for the purpose of this study. Conceptually, this pilot study has shown to be feasible as it was conducted based on a qualitative procedure in line with content analysis. However, few questions were restructured to make clear so that more input can be retrieved from participants. Some questions were omitted due to the lack of clarity.

3.12 Summary

This chapter had presented the methodology used in this study in order to obtain more valid and reliable data for the analysis to answer the research questions posed in Chapter One. The data collection and data analysis procedures were discussed based on the research objectives. The appropriateness of using content analysis for this qualitative study has also been put forth. The review of previous studies in Chapter Two has helped determine the suitable theoretical frameworks for the study. This chapter has discussed the method to analyse language of concerns in terms of speech acts and stages of concern. The participants were introduced as well. In addition, the research instruments have been specified in order to obtain the data in a suitable manner. The validity and reliability of the analysis have been described as well. Henceforth, the following

chapters discuss and present the analysis and findings of the data based on the frameworks mentioned in this chapter.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of language of concern about the academic performance of foster children and is divided into three phases, namely school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children respectively. Language of concern entails the use of Searle's (1976) categories of speech act and Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern. In this chapter, the categories of speech act from interview data are analysed. Within each speech act category, the stages of concern are presented. Subsequently, types of issues and needs regarding the academic performance of foster children are discussed in each stage of concern within each category of speech act.

4.1 Language of Concern from School Teachers

Analysis of the interview data reveal that majority of the teachers employ representative act, directive act, expressive act and commissive act when voicing concern about the academic performance of foster children.

Table 4.1: Speech Act Categories in Teachers' Responses

No.	Speech Act Categories	Percentage / 100%
1.	Representative Act	81%
2.	Directive Act	46%
3.	Expressive Act	27%
4.	Commissive Act	8%

Based on the use of speech act categories, teachers' responses are prominent in the stage of refocusing as well as the stages of management, awareness, personal, informational, consequences and collaboration. Within these stages of concern, the school teachers highlight various issues regarding the needs and poor academic

performance of foster children. Section 4.1.1 begins with the analysis of representative act in teachers' responses as this category is highly used by teachers during interviews.

4.1.1 Analysis of Representative Act in Teachers' Responses

Representative act appears to be most common where teachers in this study indicate, report, state, assert, affirm, exemplify, compare, explain, admit and at times describe the academic standing of their students who are from foster home. Further analysis shows that representative act is mainly used by teachers at stages of management and awareness, followed by stages of informational, refocusing, consequences and collaboration (see Table 4.2). Such a finding denotes that the teachers encounter challenges while attempting to address the academic needs of foster children although they are aware about the children's academic issues.

Table 4.2: Stages of Concern with Representative Act in Teachers' Responses

No.	Stages of Concern	Percentage
1.	Stage of Management	42%
2.	Stage of Awareness	42%
3.	Stage of Informational	19%
4.	Stage of Refocusing	15%
5.	Stage of Consequences	12%
6.	Stage of Collaboration	8%

The next section begins with the analysis of teachers' responses in the stage of management using representative act.

4.1.1.1 Stage of Management in Teachers' Responses

In addressing the academic needs of foster children, teachers in this study use representative act to describe, admit, indicate, report, state, assert, compare, explain and exemplify the types of issues in managing foster children in school. The following table shows types of issues highlighted by teachers.

Table 4.3: Types of Issues in the Stage of Management with Teacher's Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Issues	Percentage
1.	Lack of Time in Managing Foster Children	31%
2.	Poor Academic Performance	8%
3.	Lack of Monitoring	4%
4.	Lack of Support from Foster Caregivers	4%
5.	Financial Issues	4%

In the stage of management, the issues raised by teachers are lack of time in managing foster children, foster children's poor academic performance, lack of monitoring, lack of support from foster caregivers and financial issues (see Table 4.3). The following sections present each type of issues as well as the examples of representative act found in the interview data.

(i) Lack of Time in Managing Foster Children

Insufficient time in managing foster children is the most common problem encountered by the teachers in school while addressing the academic needs of foster children. The findings show that teachers use representative act to report, admit, assert, justify, state and describe problems they encounter such as lack of time during lessons,

large number of students in the classroom and with heavy workload. Such problems are illustrated in Excerpts 1 to 9.

Excerpt 1

- [1] T2: I was told that I have one er::: student from the *rumah kebajikan* /
foster home
[2] because the thing is I::: even though I'm a class teacher /
[3] **I don't have a lot of time in the class** /

In Excerpt 1 (see Appendix C, Section 3A, Question 1), T2 indicates being aware of one student from foster home being placed in her class. However, she admits that “even though I’m a class teacher” (line 2), she does not have the time to attend to each and every one of her students (line 3). Thus, there seems no extra time for T2 to focus on each student. Additionally, T2 reports that she has been informed about the foster child in her class instead of discovering the child’s background on her own (line 1). She continuously prolongs her response with the pause filler /er:::/ (line 1) and personal pronoun ‘I’ (line 2). These prolongations could show her uncertainty about the background of the foster child which may be due to the limited time she has with the child.

Similarly, T7, in Excerpt 2, also asserts that the class time spent with foster children is inadequate (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 2

- [1] T7: *Bila dia orang waktu sekolah tu yang kurang / masing-masing*
When they hour school that which less / respectively
When they are in school the time is limited / everyone
[2] *bila cikgu balik tengah hari tu / nak apa /*
when teacher back afternoon that / want what /
when the teachers go home in the afternoon / what they want /
[3] *nak dia spend masa untuk pelajar tu bukan senang / kita*
want him/her time for student that not easy / we
to want them to time for the students is not easy / we have
[4] *macam-macam setiap hari / Isnin kadang-kadang ada meeting /*
all kinds every day / Monday sometimes have /
various (activities) every day / on Monday sometimes we have /
[5] *hari Rabu ada ko-ku / dan Selasa tu kita nak rasa*
Wednesday have co-curriculum / and Tuesday that we want feel

- [6] on Wednesday we have co-curriculum / and on Tuesday we want to have
rehat sikit /
 rest little /
 some rest /

Unlike T2 in Excerpt 1, T7 speaks on behalf of the teachers with the use of personal pronoun *kita* (we) (line 5) and the general term *cikgu* (teacher) (line 2). From lines 4 to 6, she indicates that teachers have occasional meetings *Isnin kadang-kadang ada meeting* (on Monday sometimes we have meetings), co-curriculum activities *Rabu ada ko-ku* (on Wednesday we have co-curriculum) and she requests for a time to rest *Selasa tu kita nak rasa rehat sikit* (on Tuesday we want to have some rest). These are descriptions made by T7 with regards to her hectic work schedule as a teacher (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8). The descriptions on her hectic work schedule could be to justify her lack of time to focus on the foster children (line 3). In other words, T7 emphasises that it is not easy (line 3) for teachers to spend time with their students, which indicates that her workload should be reduced.

Excerpt 3

- [1] T7: *Kadang-kadang tu banyak cikgu ni tak ada masa / packed /*
 Sometimes that many teacher this do not have time /
 Sometimes many teachers do not have time /
- [2] *okay terus saya nak dengar bacaan ni / itu je lah*
 immediately I want listen reading this / that only PARTICLE *lah*
 immediately I want to listen to your reading / that's all
- [3] *yang kita boleh buat / okay baca ayat ni / okay saya nak dengar*
 that we can do / read sentence this / I want listen
 all that we can do / read this sentence / I want to listen to
- [4] *bacaan Qunut awak / itu je yang kita sempat buat /*
 reading Qunut yours / that only which we have time do /
 your Qunut reading / that's all we manage to do /

Similarly, the issue about time constraint is further emphasised by T7 in Excerpt 3 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8). This is illustrated in the statements *itu je lah yang kita boleh buat* (that's all that we can do) (lines 2 and 3) and *itu je yang kita sempat buat* (that's all we manage to do) (line 4) denote T7's constraint in trying to

listen to the students' recitation in prayer. The adverb *je* as in *sahaja* (only) in lines 2 and 4 explicitly intensifies the limited tasks that T7 can accomplish due to time constraints. Based on her statements in lines 2 to 4, although T7 does not have adequate time to listen to the reading of the Quranic verses by the foster children, she still does her very best to help these students. Additionally, the stage of management can be identified from T7's use of the word 'packed' in line 1 when she describes her full schedule and the statements from lines 2 to 4 for voicing her concern about the challenges in addressing foster children's academic needs.

Another example of concern on the lack of time in focusing on foster children in the classroom is illustrated in Excerpt 4 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 4

- [1] T10: *er::: walaubagaimanapun / er::: atas kekangan waktu /*
 however / above constraint time /
 however / due to time constraint /
- [2] *kerana saya pun mengajar BM kan / BM untuk*
 because I also teach Malay language right? / Malay language for
 because I also teach Malay language right? / Malay language for
- [3] *empat kelas / dan satu kelas diallocatekan sebanyak enam waktu / jadi*
 four class / and one class being allocated as much as six time / so
 four classes / and one class is allocated with six periods / so
- [4] *saya tidak mempunyai masa untuk menyediakan bahan yang*
 I do not have time to prepare materials that
 I do not have the time to prepare materials that
- [5] *sepatutnya diajar kepada mereka berdua ini / er jadi er*
 is supposed to be taught to them both this / so
 are meant for just these two students / so
- [6] *bahan untuk budak adalah selaras untuk satu kelas walaupun*
 materials for children are in line for one class although
 materials for students are the same for one class although
- [7] *saya melihat keadaan mereka tu sepatutnya disediakan dalam*
 I look situation theirs that is supposed to be prepared in
 looking at their situation they should be provided
- [8] *orang kata er bahan yang berbeza /*
 people say material that different /
 as what people say with different materials /

Similar to T7, T10 also encounters problem with time constraint while teaching the students from foster home. In line 3, T10 states the time constraint by indicating the

number of classes allocated for her to teach Malay language in a week *satu kelas diallocatekan sebanyak enam waktu* (one class is allocated with six periods). Ultimately, T10's statement in line 3 could in a way indicate that she wants to teach the foster children with appropriate teaching materials, yet she could not prepare the materials due to lack of time (lines 4 and 5).

Correspondingly, T23 is also concerned about the inadequate time given to deal with foster children in her class (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 5

- [1] T23: *Seminggu saya ada tiga masa je* / so saya *ada satu jam*
 A week I have three time only / I have one hour
 I only have three periods a week with them / I only have one
- [2] *setengah je untuk bersama mereka* / so *kalau nak mengenali tu*
 half only to be with them / if want know that
 and a half hours with them / if I want to know them
- [3] *saya memanglah setakat kenal er*
 I indeed PARTICLE *lah* to the extent know
 of course I know them
- [4] *tak adalah secara detail* /
 do not have PARTICLE *lah* in detail /
 but not in detail /

In Excerpt 5, T23 admits to not knowing every aspect about the foster children in her class (line 4). She states that she has only three classes, which is equivalent to only an hour and a half per week with her students (lines 1 and 2). Similar to T7 in Excerpt 3, the adverb *je* (only) is employed by T23 to emphasise the limited class time due to her hectic schedule (lines 1 and 2).

A similar instance of concern on the time constraint can also be observed in T26's response as illustrated in Excerpt 6 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 6

- [1] T26: **((giggles))** *Luangkan masa tu rasanya macam kalau seminggu*
 Spend time that feels PARTICLE *nya* like if a week
 To spend some time maybe if like one week

- [2] *sekali / boleh dapat / tapi untuk masa yang lama tu*
 once / can get / but for time which long that
 once / can (make it) / but for a longer duration of time
- [3] *tak dapatlah / sebab kita jarak pun jarak masa antara*
 cannot get PARTICLE *lah* / because our length also length time between
 we can't / because the duration between
- [4] *kelas pun sikit sangat / macam tak sempatlah /*
 class also little very / like not enough time PARTICLE *lah* /
 classes is also very little / like cannot make it /

T26 does not specify the time schedule she has with the students from foster home unlike T10, T7 and T23. Instead, T26 giggles at the idea of spending a longer time with the foster children (line 1), which indicates a form of admission that it is incredibly difficult and impossible to manage because the duration between classes is very short (*sebab kita jarak pun jarak masa antara kelas pun sikit sangat*) (lines 3 and 4). She asserts the inadequate amount of time spent with the foster children using the adverb *pun* (also) in line 3 and explicit intensifier *sangat* (very) in line 4 to increase the strength of the illocutionary force of adjective *sikit* (little). Such an assertion indicates that time constraint is indeed a challenge for teachers in their attempt to help foster children in their studies.

Excerpt 7

- [1] T1: *Lambat ni satu / erm:: kekangan masa / okay / kekangan masa /*
 Late this one / constraint time / / constraint time /
 Late is one thing / time constraint / / time constraint /
- [2] *kerja sebagai seorang guru pun banyak / er:: dalam satu kelas*
 work as a teacher also a lot / in one class
 a teacher's workload is a lot / in a classroom
- [3] *pelajar pun bilangan pelajar yang banyak / jadi tumpuan kita tu*
 student also number student which a lot / so focus our that
 the number of students is also large / so our focus
- [4] *kalau kita terlalu fokus pada satu pihak sedangkan tanggungjawab kita*
 if we too focus on one party whereas responsible our
 if we are too focus on one party and our responsible
- [5] *kepada semua pelajar dalam kelas / ah kekangan masa lah /*
 to every student in class / constraint time PARTICLE *lah* /
 is to every student in the class / time constraint /

Furthermore, in Excerpt 7 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8), T1 states that the challenges in teaching foster children are not only due to time constraint, but also the large number of students in a class and workload (lines 1 to 3). A noteworthy point is that T1 is also speaking on behalf of the school teachers when she employs the personal pronoun *kita* (our and we) (lines 3 and 4) to show that the challenges are also felt by other teachers in school.

Similar to T1, T12 also states that time constraints (line 1), the large number of students in a class (line 2) and heavy workload (lines 3 and 4) are the challenges she faces when trying to address the foster children's needs (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 8

- [1] T12: hmm:: er:: **kekangan masa** / erm:: **dengan::** er:: **kuantiti**
 constraints time / with quantity
 time constraints / with quantity
- [2] er **nisbah guru dan pelajar** / sebab **guru seorang / pelajar**
 ratio teacher and student / because teacher one / student
 teacher-student ratio / because one teacher / students
- [3] **ramai** / so **kita pun banyak yang nak control dengan yang**
 many / we also many that want control with the
 are many / we also have many to control with
- [4] **kerja-kerja yang sedia ada yang lain kan / payah juga nak catch up tu /**
 work which available that others right? / difficult also want that /
 the existing work right? / also quite difficult to with /

In Excerpt 8, T12 uses the personal pronoun *kita* (we) (line 3) to represent teachers on the whole who encounter the same difficulties in school. Besides, the adjective *payah* (difficult) (line 4) serves to describe the tremendous effort needed to complete the lessons on time. Such a response may indicate T12 does not have time to manage the foster children in her class. Hence, lack of time could be one of the factors for poor academic performance among foster children.

Excerpt 9

- [1] T9: *Sebenarnya dia orang ni erm memerlukan perhatian dan*
Actually they this need attention and
Actually they need more attention and
- [2] *kasih sayang yang lebih / sebenarnya / tetapi er::: pandangan*
love which more / actually / but view
lots of love / actually / but my personal
- [3] *peribadi saya lah / itu sukar / sangat sukar*
personal my PARTICLE *lah* / that difficult / very difficult
view / it is difficult / very difficult
- [4] *sebabnya dalam kelas kita nak jaga tiga puluh lapan orang /*
because in class we want take care thirty-eight people /
because in a class we have to manage thirty-eight students /

Likewise, in Excerpt 9 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8), T9 asserts that although the foster children need more attention in school, she is unable to address their needs due to large number of students in a class *dalam kelas kita nak jaga tiga puluh lapan orang* (in a class we have to manage thirty-eight students) (line 4). Hence, she lacks the time to focus on foster children. In contrast with T1 and T12, T9 states the number of students in her class to justify the challenge she faces while attempting to provide attention to the foster children. Subsequently, T9 describes the challenge in managing foster children when she repetitively uses an adjective *sukar* (difficult) and explicitly intensifies with an adverb *sangat* (very) (line 3) to boost the illocutionary force of her assertion on the difficulty in providing more attention to the foster children in class.

(ii) Poor Academic Performance

Besides the lack of time in managing foster children, the poor academic performance of foster children has been raised by teachers using representative act. The teachers assert, describe and exemplify that poor academic performance of foster children is attributed to slow pace of learning and the ineffectiveness perceived of extra classes provided for children in the foster home. One example can be seen in Excerpt 10 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7) where T9 asserts that the foster children have a

slow pace of learning and as such, teachers need to slower their teaching pace and focus more on their students in class.

Excerpt 10

- [1] T9: *Cumanya kalau kita nak suruh dia belajar dalam kelas tu /*
 Only PARTICLE *nya* if we want ask him/her study in class that /
 Only if we want them to study in class /
- [2] *mesti kena personal / walaupun kita dah bagi arahan secara umum*
 must have to / although we have given instructions in general
 we have to be / although we have given general instructions
- [3] *dekat pelajar yang lain / walaupun yang lain tu agak lemah /*
 at students the others / although the others that quite weak /
 to the other students / although the others are quite weak /
- [4] *tapi sebab dia tak ada masalah sangat dari segi*
 but because he/she does not have problems much in terms of
 but they do not have much problems in terms of
- [5] *disiplin / anak-anak rumah bakti ni / kita memang kena*
 discipline / children home foster this / we really have to
 discipline / these foster children / we really have to
- [6] *duduk sebelah dia / kena tengok apa yang dia buat /*
 sit next him/her / have to look what that he/she does /
 sit next to him/her / we have to look at what they are doing /
- [7] *baru dia boleh nak belajar / itu pun kena tunjuk satu-satu /*
 just he/she can want study / that also have to show one by one /
 only then he/she can study / (we) have to show them one by one /
- [8] *sebab kebanyakan yang kelas saya ni memang sangat lemahlah*
 because most the class my this indeed very weak PARTICLE *lah*
 because most of them in my class (they) are really very weak
- [9] *dari segi akademik dia /*
 in terms of academics his/hers /
 in terms of academics /

T9 asserts that the foster children need individual attention in class (*kena personal*) in line 2. The modal verb *kena* (have to) (lines 2, 5, 6 and 7) are frequently used to emphasise or strengthen the force of the assertion in order to exemplify the need to decrease the pace of teaching. Subsequently, T9 compares the foster children with other students to show the differences between children who are from mainstream background and foster children (line 3) in terms of learning. Additionally, the multiple intensifiers *memang sangat* (really very) and the particle *lah* in line 8 emphasise the adjective *lemah* (weak) to denote that slow pace in learning may delay the completion of school syllabus. The use of intensifiers, particle *lah* and adjective therefore denotes

T9's concern on whether the school syllabus could be completed on par with other students in class in comparison with foster children's learning pace.

Unlike T9 who exemplifies ways to deal with foster children with slow pace of learning in school, T1 states her uncertainty about the effectiveness of extra classes in foster home in the following excerpt (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 11

- [1] T1: **er:::** *kalau saya lihat pengalaman daripada* **er:::** *bercakap*
 If I look experience from talking
 If I look from my experience talking
- [2] *dengan dia orang / sebenarnya dia orang ni* **erm:::** *mereka*
 with them / actually they this they
 to them / actually they are they are
- [3] *juga diberi apa /* **erm:::** *pendidikan macam ada kelas apabila*
 also given what / education like got class when
 also given what / education like there are classes when
- [4] *mereka nak menghadapi peperiksaan awam / mereka memang*
 they want face exam public / they indeed
 they are going to sit for a public exam / they do
- [5] *ada kelas tambahan / tetapi dari segi* **er:::** *bagaimana* **er:::**
 got class extra / but in terms of how
 have extra classes / but in terms of how
- [6] *kelas itu bermanfaat atau dimanfaatkan / saya pun tidak pastilah*
 class that beneficial or utilised / I also not sure PARTICLE *lah*
 the class is beneficial or gives benefit / I am not sure
- [7] *sebab dijalankan di sana / tapi kalau mengikut apa*
 because run at there / but if according to what
 because it is conducted over there / but according to what
- [8] *yang* **er:::** *diceritakan oleh para pelajar ni / mereka memang*
 that told by students this / they indeed
 that what the students said / they are
- [9] **er:::** *adalah* *maksudnya* **er:::** *setiap aspek itu* **er:::** *ada* /
 is PARTICLE *lah* mean every aspect that available /
 I mean each aspect is available /
- [10] *cuma kita tak tahu sejauh sejauh mana keberkesanan /*
 only we do not know so far so far where effectiveness /
 only we do not know how effective it is /

Apart from stating her uncertainty *saya pun tidak pastilah* (I am not sure), T1 verbalises her doubt about the effectiveness of extra classes in foster home by prolonging the pause fillers /er:::/ (lines 1, 5, 8 and 9) and /erm:::/ (lines 2 and 3). T1 also expresses concern whether the extra classes in the foster home would really benefit the foster children, as shown in the statement *kita tak tahu sejauh sejauh mana keberkesanan* (we

do not know how effective it is) in line 10. Such a concern suggests her lack of knowledge about the extra classes the foster children attend in the home.

(iii) Lack of Monitoring

Lack of monitoring is also found in the stage of management. In Excerpt 12, T6 states that foster children do not complete their school work at their foster home (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 12

- [1] T6: **I don't think they receive all the support at home / you know /**
[2] **we** are giving them everything in school / but they don't /
[3] **you know / really nobody** / nobody is **there** to / **you know** /
[4] to push them **right?** / to see their homework / **that's what I feel**

T6 states her believes that foster children might not get the academic support at the foster home in line 1 “I don't think” and in line 4 “that's what I feel”. She employs with the pragmatic marker ‘you know’ (lines 1 and 3) and the tag question marker ‘right?’ (line 4) during interview to gain the interviewer's approval to understand her stance. Moreover, T6 also switches the use of personal pronoun from ‘I’ to ‘we’ (line 2) when she asserts that the teachers in school (inclusive of T6) are the only ones providing the academic support for foster children. T6 further emphasises the lack of monitoring among the foster children at their home when she intensifies with ‘really nobody’ and explicitly stresses the word ‘there’ (line 3) to signal the foster home in order to indicate her frustration.

(iv) Lack of Support from Foster Caregivers

Another issue that relates to the stage of management is lack of support from foster caregivers. Excerpt 13 shows T16 uses representative act to state and describe such a lack (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 13

- [1] T16: *Pentadbir sekolah tak boleh pohon dia / sebab*
 Administrator school cannot apply her / because
 The school administrator cannot apply on her behalf / because
- [2] *saya bukan parent / saya bukan parent / they got no right /*
 I not / I not /
 I am not the / I am not the /
- [3] *they got no right / dan parent dia memohon jugalah saya*
 / and her requested also PARTICLE lah I
 / and her also requested that I
- [4] *akan cakap er nama dia N / N / pegawai tu / N /*
 will tell name his N / N / officer that / N /
 will tell his name is N / N / the officer is / N /
- [5] *budak ni kau memohon dan masukkan / ah macam tu / sebab*
 child this you apply and enrol / like that / because
 you apply for this child and enrol her / like that / because
- [6] *pegawai kebajikan yang letak dia / dia buat tak buat*
 officer welfare that put her / he does not does
 the welfare officer put her there / whether he does it or not
- [7] *saya tak tahu / ah / dia buat tak buat saya tak tahu /*
 I do not know / he does not does I do not know /
 I do not know / whether he does or not I do not know /

In line 1, T16 states that the school administrators have no right to interfere with the foster child's enrolment application to boarding school. He describes his experience of discussing this issue with the child's foster caregiver (lines 4 and 5) where he expresses doubts about getting any form of support from the foster caregivers *dia buat tak buat saya tak tahu* (whether he has done it or not I don't know) (lines 6 and 7). T16's inability to help the foster child adds further to the challenges teachers need to deal with in addressing the needs of foster children.

(v) **Financial Issues**

Apart from lack of support from foster caregivers, T8 reports on the complaints made by foster children about the misuse of funds allocated to them in foster home, as shown in Excerpt 14 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 9).

Excerpt 14

- [1] T8: *Di peringkat mereka sendiri / er mereka sudah dapat dana /*
 At level their own / they already received fund /
 At their level / they have received funds /

- [2] *saya rasa dah dapat danalah daripada government kan /*
 I think already received funds PARTICLE *lah* from right? /
 I think they have already received funds from the right? /
- [3] *jadi why not kalau gunakan sepenuhnya dana itu untuk anak-anak bakti /*
 so if utilise fully fund that for children foster /
 so fully utilise the fund for the foster children /
- [4] *sebab ini penting / sebab er::: dana tu adalah untuk*
 because this important / because fund that is for
 because this is important / because that fund is for
- [5] *keperluan pelajar / bukan untuk keperluan mereka /*
 needs student / not for needs their /
 the students' needs / not for the caregivers' needs /
- [6] *sebab saya adalah dengar juga pelajar-pelajar yang cakap /*
 because I have heard also students that sai /
 because I've also heard that from the students /

T8 reports that the foster children have received financial assistance from the government. He asserts that the funds should be channelled towards fulfilling the needs of foster children, as shown in the utterance *gunakan sepenuhnya dana itu untuk anak-anak bakti* (fully utilise the fund for the foster children) in line 3. Furthermore, T8's assertions *sebab ini penting* (because this is important) in line 4 and *bukan untuk keperluan mereka* (not for the caregivers' needs) in line 5 indicate his dismay with the foster caregivers for their misuse of funds as the funds are significant for foster children.

In the stage of management, teachers have employed representative act to report, assert, exemplify, compare, justify, state and describe the challenges they encounter in addressing the academic needs of foster children in school. For instance, while describing the challenges in teaching the foster children, teachers compare the learning pace of foster children with other students in class. Additionally, the teachers admit to not being able to address the academic needs of foster children due to time constraint. Other linguistic features such as contrastive markers, adverbs and noun phrases are also adopted by teachers to indicate their predicaments in addressing the foster children's academic needs. Besides, teachers employ explicit and multiple intensifiers to strengthen the illocutionary force of their challenges in teaching foster children. The

challenges that teachers face should not be taken lightly as these might be the barriers which delay assistance for improving the academic performance of foster children.

4.1.1.2 Stage of Awareness in Teachers' Responses

The stage of awareness in this section discusses how aware the teachers are towards foster children's academic issues and needs based on their use of representative act.

Table 4.4: Types of Issues in the Stage of Awareness with Teacher's Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Issues	Percentage
1.	Behavioural Problems	12%
2.	Financial Issues	8%
3.	Peer Influence	4%
4.	Lack of Books and Resources	4%

Table 4.4 shows the teachers voice their concern by describing, reporting, stating, asserting, demonstrating, comparing, explaining, justifying, illustrating and indicating awareness about foster children's behavioural problems, financial issues, peer influence as well as lack of books and resources. Apart from the issues raised, the need for attention and need for improving poor academic performance among foster children are also pointed out by the teachers (see Table 4.5). Such a finding could depict that foster children's behavioural problems could be addressed if more attention are provided to them in school.

Table 4.5: Types of Needs in the Stage of Awareness with Teachers' Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Attention	19%
2.	The Need for Improving Poor Academic Performance	12%

The following sections present the types of issues and needs as well as the examples of representative acts found in the stage of awareness from teachers' responses.

(i) Behavioural Problems

When the teachers describe, report and state the types of behavioural problems portrayed by foster children such as rebellious behaviour in class and truancy, their awareness on the behavioural problems among foster children are realised through the use of representative act. Such behavioural problems are illustrated from Excerpts 15 to 17 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 1).

Excerpt 15

- [1] T3: *Pelajar ni dia tak berapa minat / dia memang selalulah*
 Student this he not so interest / he indeed always PARTICLE *lah*
 This student is not so interested / indeed he is always
- [2] *tunjuk protest / macam tu lah / protest tu dia akan er::: protest*
 shows / like that PARTICLE *lah* / that he will
 protesting / something like that / when he protests he will show on
- [3] *muka dia / expression muka dia / dan kadang-kadang dia bising /*
 face his / face his / and sometimes he noisy /
 his face / his facial expression / and sometimes he is noisy /
- [4] *tu lah yang saya nampak dari segi kelakuan pelajar-pelajar di situ /*
 that PARTICLE *lah* which I saw in terms of behaviour students at there /
 that's what I saw from the students' behaviour there /

In Excerpt 15, T3 provides descriptions of the foster child's behaviour in the classroom in order to elaborate the way the child rebels via his facial expression *muka dia* and his action *kadang-kadang dia bising* (sometimes he is noisy) (line 3) when he dislikes the subject. The foster child's rebellious behaviour in the classroom is also marked by the

verb ‘protest’ (line 2). Subsequently, T3 employs the multiple intensifiers *memang selalulah* (indeed always) (line 1) and the explicit intensifier particle *lah* to further reinforce the verb ‘protest’ while describing the child’s behaviour. These descriptions show that T3 is aware of the foster child’s behavioural problem in class.

Similar to T3, T26 also describes, reports and states the rebellious characteristic of the foster child in her class after receiving punishment.

Excerpt 16

- [1] T26: hmm *macam kalau ada cikgu tu bagi tahu saya* / kerja tak
 like if got teacher that informed me / work not
 like if there is a teacher who informed me / the work is not
- [2] *siap* / kalau cikgu tu *macam bagi denda dia sikit* /
 complete / if teacher that like gives punishment him little /
 completed / if the teacher gives him some punishment /
- [3] *macam dia memberontaklah dia* / *tangan dia dia hempap atas meja* /
 like he rebel PARTICLE *lah* he / hand his he bangs on table /
 like he would rebel / he bangs his hand on the table /
- [4] ah *macam tu* / *nampaklah tingkah laku dia* /
 like that / seen PARTICLE *lah* attitudes his /
 like that / that’s where his attitude is seen /

In Excerpt 16, T26 repetitively utters the adverb *macam* (like) (lines 1 to 4) to describe the types of rebellious behaviour she heard displayed by the foster child such as *tangan dia hempap atas meja* (he bangs his hand on the table) in lines 3 and 4. Such a description serves to provide the interviewer with a clearer picture of the child’s disciplinary problem. However, compared to T3’s description on foster children’s behavioural problem through his observable experience, T26 describes her awareness from a second person point of view when she states *ada cikgu tu bagi tahu saya* (there is a teacher who informed me) in line 1. Although the issue was told by another teacher, she does not ignore it. This may indicate T26’s awareness of the behavioural problem of foster children at school.

Another type of behavioural problem among the foster children conveyed by teachers apart from rebellious characteristics is truancy.

Excerpt 17

- [1] T18: Okay / *pihak disiplin kebanyakan menerima er pelajar-pelajar*
 / party discipline mostly received students
 / the discipline authority received students
- [2] *daripada rumah anak-anak yatim ini / mempunyai masalah*
 from home orphans this / having problems
 from this foster home / having disciplinary problems
- [3] *disiplin ponteng / ponteng kelas / mereka kebanyakannya*
 discipline skip / skip class / they mostly PARTICLE nya
 of truancy / skipping classes / they mostly
- [4] *tidak suka berada dalam satu tempat yang sama / mereka akan*
 do not like to be in one place the same / they will
 do not like to be in the same place / they will be
- [5] *bergerak ke mana-mana / ah itu kebanyakan /*
 move to wherever / that mostly /
 around everywhere / that is mostly it /

In Excerpt 17, T18 describes the types of truancy foster children display by stating that they mostly do not like to be in the same place *mereka kebanyakannya tidak suka berada dalam satu tempat yang sama* (lines 3 and 4). Such truancy could also be due to their short attention span. He generalises the types of disciplinary problem portrayed by foster children with the adverb *kebanyakan* (mostly) (lines 1, 3 and 5), which in other words indicates that it is common for foster children to miss classes. T18's awareness of foster children's behavioural problem in school could be identified through his description on truancy with the use of verb phrase *ponteng kelas* (skipping classes) in line 3.

Based on the three excerpts in this section, T26 and T18 respond from a second person point of view as they do not use the pronoun *saya* (I), unlike T3. Though the behavioural problems are perceived in different ways, these three teachers seem to be concern and attentive without ignoring this issue.

(ii) Financial Issues

Teachers are also aware of the financial issue foster children encounter. One of the examples can be seen in Excerpt 18 where T12 asserts that financial support is crucial for foster children (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 18

- [1] T12: *Bantuan dari segi kewangan / kewangan perlu sebab pada saya*
Aid in terms of financial / financial necessary because to me
Aid in terms of financial / financial is necessary because for me
- [2] *dari segi kewangan tu lah yang dia boleh menyumbang*
in terms of financial that PARTICLE lah which it can contribute
in terms of financial it can contribute
- [3] *kepada apa / perkembangan yang lain /*
to what / developments the others /
to what / other developments /

T12 repetitively utilises the word *kewangan* (financial) (lines 1 and 2), modal verb *perlu* (necessary) (line 1) and particle *lah* (line 2) in his statement to explicitly emphasise the importance of financial aid for the foster children to indicate his awareness.

Excerpt 19

- [1] T26: *Duit pun tak dapat kan / duit poket / kadang-kadang*
Money also not get PARTICLE kan / money pocket / sometimes
Don't even get money / pocket money / sometimes
- [2] *dapat / kadang-kadang tak dia orang cakap /*
get / sometimes no they said /
they do get / sometimes they said they don't get /

T26, in Excerpt 19 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8), explicitly reports on the insufficient amount of daily allowances received by foster children in line 2 *kadang-kadang dapat, kadang-kadang tak dia orang cakap* (sometimes they do get, sometimes they said don't get). T26's statement on *duit pun tak dapat* (don't even get money) in line 1 depicts her awareness by providing reasons as to why foster children fail to attend extra classes. By doing so, T26 is as equally concern as T12 (Excerpt 18) in their explicit descriptions of foster children's financial issue.

(iii) Peer Influence

Apart from behavioural problem and financial issues, foster children could also undergo negative influence in their academic performance through their peers. By using representative act, T24 shows her awareness regarding peer influence by stating her view in Excerpt 20 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 20

- [1] T24: **Halangan::: bagi saya pengaruh daripada kawanlah** /
Obstacles:::: for me influence from friend PARTICLE lah /
Obstacles:::: for me influences from friends /

The use of representative act is evident when T24 states her view with the phrase *bagi saya* (for me) to provide her insights on peer influence, which is evident in the statement *pengaruh daripada kawanlah* (influences from friends). In this statement, the particle *lah* (line 1) explicitly reinforces the notion of peer as a negative influence towards the foster children.

(iv) Lack of Books and Resources

The lack of books and resources which are required in classroom lesson is another issue faced by foster children. This is evident in Excerpt 21 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 21

- [1] T8: **er::: sebagai contoh mungkinlah** / **mungkin** dari segi
as example perhaps PARTICLE lah / perhaps in terms of
for example perhaps / perhaps in terms of
- [2] **kewangan er::: buku / dari segi buku tulis** / **er::: er:::**
financial book / in terms of book note /
financial books / in terms of exercise books /
- [3] **dari segi jap** / **buku teks rasa dia orang ada** / **buku tulis**
in terms of wait / book texts think they have / book note
in terms of a moment / texts books I think they have / exercise books
- [4] **buku tulis** / **er::: buku rujukan mungkin** / **buku rujukan** /
book note / book reference perhaps / book reference /
exercise books / perhaps reference books / reference books /
- [5] **dia orang tak ada buku rujukan** / **tu je lah** /
they do not have book reference / that only PARTICLE lah /
they do not have reference books / that's all /

T8's statements from lines 1 to 4 are marked by disfluencies, particularly in the form of hesitation, hedge and self-repair. T8 seems indecisive as he hesitates to state the needs of foster children with the repetitive use of pause filler /er/ (lines 1, 2 and 4) and the hedge *ungkinlah* (maybe) (lines 1 and 4). Self-repair can be seen from the statement *dari segi jap, buku teks rasa dia orang ada* (in terms of wait, texts books I think they have) in line 3 when the word *jap* (a moment) takes place. At the same time, the hedge *rasa* (I think) is used to mitigate his statement. Although the initial part of T8's statement (from lines 1 to 4) is marked by disfluencies, the statement *dia orang tak ada buku rujukan* (they don't have reference books) can be taken as T8's awareness of foster children's deficiencies.

(v) The Need for Attention

Representative act can be observed when teachers assert, describe and state foster children's need for attention from others. Such a need is illustrated from Excerpts 22 to 26 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 22

- [1] T4: *Saya rasa kalau macam daripada rumah bakti ni / yang saya perhatikan*
 I think if like from home foster this / which I observe
 I think if (those students) from the foster home / based on my observation
- [2] *dia memang memerlukan perhatianlah / selalunya /*
 he/she indeed needs PARTICLE *kan* attention PARTICLE *lah* / always /
 he/she really needs attention / always /
- [3] *kadang dia memang nak menarik minat kita tu untuk bagi perhatian*
 sometimes he/she indeed wants pull interest our that to give attention
 sometimes they really want to draw our interest in order to give
- [4] *kepada dia /*
 to him/her /
 him/her the attention /

In Excerpt 22, T4 asserts that foster children need attention *memerlukan perhatian* (line 2). Within her assertion, T4 uses the explicit intensifier *memang* (really) (lines 2 and 3) and particle *lah* in line 2 as reinforcement that increases the force of the verbs *memerlukan* (need) (line 2) as well as *nak* (want) (line 3). Such occurrences of

intensifier and verbs in T4's response linguistically represent her awareness of the foster children's academic needs.

A similar instance can be observed in T11's response as illustrated in Excerpt 23.

Excerpt 23

- [1] T11: *Pertama / saya rasa mereka **sangat perlukan** perhatian / **sangat** /*
 First / I think they very need PARTICLE *kan* attention / very /
 Firstly / I think they really need attention / really /
- [2] ***sangat perlukan** perhatian / er::: yang kedua / hmm::: saya rasa*
 very need PARTICLE *kan* attention / the second / I think
 really need attention / secondly / I think
- [3] *IQ dia sama je / cuma perhatian tu lah saya rasa yang*
 his/her same only / only attention that PARTICLE *lah* I think the
 their IQ is the same / only the attention that I think is the
- [4] ***paling penting** / sebab mereka kat sana dan kita tak tahu*
 most important / because they at there and we do not know
 most important / because they are there and we do not know
- [5] *keadaannya macam mana / keluarga mereka macam mana kan /*
 condition PARTICLE *nya* how / family their how right? /
 how their conditions are / how their family is right? /

T11's awareness on foster children's academic needs is depicted by the use of explicit intensifiers and modal verb in order to assert the importance in providing attention to them. In lines 1 and 2, T11 repetitively employs the explicit intensifier *sangat* (really) and the modal verb *perlukan* (need) as a means of reinforcing that foster children are in need of attention in school. Moreover, T11 once again asserts the importance of attention for these children with the explicit intensifier *paling* (most) which strengthens the illocutionary force of adjective *penting* (important) (line 4).

Excerpt 24

- [1] T6: They **need** love actually / they **need** someone to fall back /
 [2] they **need** someone to talk to / because if **you** are / **if you** don't
 [3] talk to them / **you** will / **you** won't know what is inside them /

Representative act can also be seen in T6's response in Excerpt 24 when she asserts with the modal verb 'need' (lines 1 and 2) that there is a need to provide foster children

with more attention. T6 further justifies her assertion in lines 2 and 3 with the pragmatic connector ‘if’ to state that foster children would not reveal their problems easily. This could also show her awareness towards the foster children’s need. However, instead of using ‘we’ or ‘I’ like T4 and T11 in the previous excerpts, T6 opts for the personal pronoun ‘you’ (lines 2 and 3) to indicate common knowledge shared by her and the interviewer regarding foster children’s need for attention.

Similarly, T19 also asserts the need to provide foster children with attention as illustrated in Excerpt 25.

Excerpt 25

- [1] T19: oh ya / mereka **amat perlu sangat** (nasihat dan sokongan berbentuk
yes / they extremely need very (advice and support shaped
yes / they absolutely need (advice and support in the form of
[2] rohaniah) sebab er saya rasa dia orang **kurang sangat**
spiritual) because I think they lack very
spiritual guidance) because I think they extremely lack of
[3] **kasih sayang** / kurang perhatian daripada parent dia oranglah /
love / lack attention from parents their PARTICLE lah /
love / lack of attention from their parents /
[4] keluarga dia oranglah /
family their PARTICLE lah /
from their family /

T19 asserts his view with intensifiers when she employs the multiple intensifiers *amat perlu sangat* (absolutely need) in line 1 to emphasise the importance of support and guidance foster children need. Additionally, T19 also adopts the explicit intensifier *sangat* (extremely) in the statement *kurang sangat kasih sayang* (extremely lack of love) in lines 2 and 3 as a means to emphasise that the foster children are deprived of love and attention. It should also be noted in line 2 that the explicit intensifier *sangat* (extremely) comes after the adjective *kurang* (lack), which aims to highlight the inadequate amount of attention foster children receive. T19’s assertion shows that she is aware of the foster children’s need for attention.

Apart from indicating awareness on foster children's need for attention, T1 in Excerpt 26 describes the way these children want to be treated in the classroom.

Excerpt 26

- [1] T1: oh / er::: *dari segi mengajar tu / dia lebih kepada /*
in terms of teaching that / he/she more to /
from the teaching perspective / they are more towards /
- [2] *kita kena pergi personal / maksudnya / er::: kalau*
we have to go / means / if
we have to go (to them) personally / which means / if
- [3] *kita er::: mengajar satu-satu perkara tu / dia lebih kepada*
we teach one by one thing that / he/she more to
we teach a particular thing / they are more towards
- [4] *macam / cikgu datanglah duduk saya sebelah ni /*
like / teacher come PARTICLE lah sit me beside this /
something like / teacher come and sit beside me /
- [5] *er::: macam mana / dia lebih sentuhan peribadi tu lebih / macam tu /*
how / he/she more touch personal that more / like that /
how / they are more of a personal touch / like that /

T1 asserts with the modal verb *kena* (have to) in line 2 that foster children need to be approached individually during class period. Unlike T4, T11, T6 and T19 in the previous excerpts who mostly assert and state, T1 describes the need by quoting a foster child's request for attention *datanglah duduk saya sebelah ni* (come and sit beside me) in line 4. The instance highlights the underlying need of the foster child in seeking T1's attention and maintains the true condition of the utterance's content. Furthermore, the adverb *lebih* (more) in lines 3 and 5 indicates the foster children's degree of preference regarding the learning method in school, in which they prefer guidance from the teachers by being beside them (line 4). Such a request in line 4 from foster children indicates the need for more attention in the learning process from teachers at school. Moreover, T1's assertion on foster children's need for attention represents her concern.

(vi) The Need for Improving Poor Academic Performance

In this section, the teachers use representative act to describe, explain and state their awareness about the foster children's poor academic performance such as poor

comprehension, language barrier and the need to draw their interest towards learning.

This is evident from Excerpts 27 to 30 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 27

- [1] T6: It's like **you** are from *kampong area you know* / they don't
village
[2] understand **you** / so **it's like I have to go to the very basic** /

In Excerpt 27, T6 is aware of the foster children's weak performance in English language when she describes with the term *kampong area* (village area) in line 1. In this instance, she compares the foster children's poor performance in English language with people from the rural area who are not armed with much academic knowledge and have limited exposure to English language. Then, she employs the pragmatic marker 'you know' (line 1) perhaps to seek recognition of the shared understanding from the interviewer about these children's performance in school. It should also be noted that there are two different usages of the personal pronoun 'you' in this excerpt. In line 1, T6 utilises the 'you' instead of 'they' probably to generalise the foster children's low proficiency in English; whereas, the use of personal pronoun 'you' in line 2 indicates that T6 situates herself as a member of a group of teachers who is teaching the foster children, which excludes the interviewer. Moreover, the explicit intensifier 'very' (line 2) further strengthens the adjective 'basic' (line 2) to emphasise the foster children's weakness in English. Hence, T6 uses the modal verb 'have to' (line 2) to state that she is compelled to lower the standards in teaching English to the foster children to meet up with their low proficiency in the subject.

T6 once again describes the foster children's poor academic performance in Excerpt 28.

Excerpt 28

- [1] T6: Yes / because **they don't understand a thing** that I / **you know**
[2] the first day I entered Form 2V / I had / **I have three of them** /

- [3] and they::: **they don't even understand a simple / you know /**
[4] **it's like you're teaching a primary school /**

Unlike the earlier excerpt, T6 expresses her concern that the foster children in her class do not seem to understand English language with the negative statement “they don't understand a thing” (line 1). The term ‘a thing’ (line 1) in this context serves to highlight her concern because of the foster children’s poor performance in English. In addition, the use of the pragmatic marker ‘you know’ in line 1 serves to initiate T6’s narration of her teaching experience of the foster children, that subsequently points to the problems which she regards as something commonly faced by these children such as understanding simple words and constructing simple sentences in English.

T6’s expression of disbelief is illustrated with the use of adverb ‘even’ (line 3) which explicitly intensifies the notion of concern about the foster children’s poor performance in English language. Although the statement “they don't even understand a simple” is incomplete, T6 once again uses the pragmatic marker ‘you know’ (line 3) to invite the interviewer to understand the reasoning behind her statement on the foster children not performing well in English. However, she pursues to explain her incomplete statement by stating that their low proficiency in English language is specifically with reference to the primary school students (line 4). It should also be noted that although the frequent use of the personal pronoun ‘they’ (lines 1 and 3) in this excerpt may not necessarily refer to the foster children individually, T6 focuses on addressing the needs of the three foster children in her class, as shown in her statement “I have three of them” (line 2), instead of all the twelve of them. Hence, such a statement may indicate T6’s awareness on the foster children’s academic problem despite being general.

Excerpt 29

- [1] T24: *Setakat mana saya tengok sekarang ni / untuk khususnya*
As far as where I see now this / for especially
- [2] *Based on what I observed right now / especially for*
pelajar Tingkatan Tiga / er mereka sangat lemah dari segi
students Form Three / they very weak in terms of
- [3] *the Form Three students / they are very weak in terms of*
asas Matematik / memang sangat lemah / jadi
basic Mathematics / indeed very weak / so
- [4] *basic Mathematics / memang sangat lemah / jadi*
basic Mathematics / really very weak / so
- [5] *kadang-kadang tu saya memang terpaksa er mengulang kaji*
sometimes that I indeed forced to revise
- [6] *sometimes I really have to revise*
semula apa yang mereka tak dapat er catch-up pada
again what which they could not on
- [7] *again what they did not in the*
tahun yang lepas / walaupun begitu / mereka dari segi yang
year the past / although so / they in terms of the
- [8] *previous year / although / it is*
basic / contohnya **basic** yang mudah sifir **pun** / bagi kelas-kelas
- [9] */ example basic the simple multiplication even / for classes*
/ for example even simple basic multiplication / for the last
- [10] *yang hujung / kelas yang tengah pun /*
the end / class the middle even /
- [11] *few classes / even the classes in the middle /*
sifir masih lagi memerlukan bantuan /
multiplication tables still need help /
- [12] *they still need help with their multiplication tables /*

Similar to T6, T24 in Excerpt 29 also indicates her awareness of the poor academic performance of the foster children. T24 describes the foster children's poor performance in Mathematics with the use of explicit intensifier *sangat* (very) (line 2) and the multiple intensifiers *memang sangat* (really very) (line 3), which serve to increase the illocutionary force of the adjective *lemah* (weak) (lines 2 and 3) in her statement. Besides, the repetitive use of the adverb *pun* (even) in lines 7 and 8 serves to explicitly intensify her concern about these children's poor performance in Mathematics. She employs the adverb *masih lagi* (still) (line 9) to emphasise that the foster children have yet to master the skill of multiplication tables at their age, which could be the underlying reason that is affecting their Mathematics performance. Hence, T24 utilises explicit intensifier *memang terpaksa* (really have to) in line 4 to stress that she is compelled to revise the previous lessons with the foster children before she can proceed

with a higher level of input, which is a similar circumstance encountered by T6 in Excerpts 27 and 28. Although T24 is interviewed in Malay language, she frequently code-switches with several English language lexical items (i.e. ‘catch-up’ and ‘basic’) (lines 5 and 7) in the midst of her utterances. The code-switching signals her intention to emphasise her relevant arguments.

In Excerpt 30, T3 also discusses the need for improving poor academic performance among foster children.

Excerpt 30

- [1] T3: *Kalau misalnya er::: pelajar-pelajar saya ni /*
 If for example students my this /
 If for example my students /
- [2] *contoh-contohnya macam pelajar-pelajar daripada tu lah /*
 examples like students from there PARTICLE lah /
 for example like the students from there /
- [3] *rumah bakti ni / saya rasa dia lebih suka kepada er:::*
 home foster this / I think they more like to
 the foster home / I think they prefer
- [4] *hands-on / kepada er::: sentuhan tangan /*
 / to touch hands /
 / to using their hands-on (method) /

Similar to T1 in Excerpt 26, T3 states that foster children prefer hands-on method in learning *saya rasa dia lebih suka kepada er::: hands-on* (I think they prefer hands-on) (lines 3 and 4). Despite employing various lexical choices (i.e. *misalnya*, *contoh-contohnya* and *macam*) in lines 1 and 2, T3’s purpose remains the same that is to state his view on ways to enhance foster children’s interest towards learning. T3’s response signals his awareness on the foster children’s method of preference in learning.

In the stage of awareness, teachers have mainly used representative act to describe, report, state, assert, explain, justify and indicate their awareness on the foster children’s academic issues and needs. Teachers’ awareness of foster children’s poor academic performance can be observed through the use of negative statements, adjectives,

adverbs and modal verbs. To further assert their awareness of these children's behavioural problems, financial issues, peer influence or lack of books and resources, the teachers employ explicit and multiple intensifiers. Though the teachers are aware that the problems encountered by the foster children might affect their academic performance, there is no evidence of suggestions or descriptions of actions, consequences or collaboration in this section. Interestingly, in Section 4.1.1.2, the teachers' responses can be categorised in the stage of awareness, which is the first stage of concern.

4.1.1.3 Stage of Informational in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of informational, teachers use representative act to state, report, assert, compare, affirm and describe their willingness to explore the foster children's academic issues at hand. A total of 8% of teachers voice their concern about financial issues and 4% on behavioural problems among foster children. Apart from the issues raised, 8% of the teachers also pointed out the need for attention among foster children. Hence, there is a need for teachers to provide more attention to foster children in order to probe into their financial issues and behavioural problem. The following sections present the types of academic issues and needs of foster children as well as the examples of representative acts found in the stage of informational from teachers' responses.

(i) Financial Issues

The teachers show concern when they state, report, assert and describe the way they probe into the foster children's financial problem. Such a concern is illustrated in Excerpts 31 and 32 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 31

[1] T8: er::: *bantuan / contohnya dari segi sokongan* er::: *wang*
aid / example in terms of support money

- aid / for example in terms of support pocket
- [2] *sakulah kan / kalau wang saku mungkin kalau*
pocket PARTICLE *lah* right? / if money pocket maybe if
money right? / if pocket money maybe if other children
- [3] *kanak-kanak yang lain er pelajar yang lain / mungkin dua ringgit /*
children the other student the other / maybe two ringgit /
other students receive / maybe two ringgit /
- [4] *dua ringgit setengah / tiga ringgit / ada yang lima ringgit /*
two ringgit half / three ringgit / there are which five ringgit /
two ringgit and fifty / three ringgit / even five ringgit /
- [5] *tapi kalau dia orang / saya tanya / ada yang seringgit*
but if they / I asked / there are which one ringgit
but for them / I asked / some received one ringgit
- [6] *setengah je / dia bezalah / mungkin ada*
half only / it different PARTICLE *lah* / maybe there are
and fifty cents only / not the same for all / maybe
- [7] *beza ada yang dapat dua ringgit / ada yang dapat*
different there are which received two ringgit / there are which received
different as some received two ringgit / others received
- [8] *seringgit setengah / macam tu /*
a ringgit half / like that /
one ringgit and fifty / it's like that /

T8, in Excerpt 31, compares the amount of pocket money received by children from normal family background and children from foster home in order to state the differences. Subsequently, T8 probes into the daily allowance foster children receive through the statement *saya tanya* (I asked) (line 5) and reports that they are given one ringgit and fifty cents only *seringgit setengah je* (lines 5 and 6) per day. This action signifies T8's interest and concern about the pocket money foster children receive daily.

Excerpt 32

- [1] T6: They **need** someone to talk to / because if you are / **if you don't**
[2] **talk to them** / you will / **you won't know what is inside them** /
[3] **I always ask them** / *dah makan?* / ah / *tak makan cikgu* /
have you eaten? / no teacher /
[4] *tak ada duit* / er::: it's like something like that *lah* /
no money /

Likewise, T6, in Excerpt 32, asserts with the modal verb 'need' that it is necessary for teachers to probe into foster children's problem in order to understand their situation. Within her assertion, T6 employs the pragmatic connector 'if' (line 1) to express the

conditional illocutionary act in which the teachers will not figure out the problems foster children encounter unless they have been asked to reveal. To further support her assertion in line 1, T6 describes the way she identifies the foster children's predicament in line 3 "I always ask them, *dah makan?* (have you eaten?)". This statement also reflects her effort and willingness to consider the financial issues encountered by foster children in school.

(ii) Behavioural Problems

Another issue highlighted during interviews is the behavioural problems of foster children, which is illustrated in Excerpt 33 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 1).

Excerpt 33

- [1] T10: er::: *saya memang tahu ada kanak-kanak jagaan dalam*
 I indeed know there are children foster in
 I really know there are foster children in
- [2] *kelas saya dan saya baru mengenal pasti sebenarnya kerana*
 class my and I just identified actually because
 my class and I have actually just identified them because
- [3] *apabila saya melihat dia punya markah peperiksaan /*
 when I saw their marks examination /
 when I saw their examination marks /
- [4] *terutamanya mereka tak boleh buat dan mereka juga*
 especially they could not do and they also
 especially when they could not do and when they also
- [5] *mempunyai masalah attitude di dalam kelas / bukan kata*
 have problem in class / not say
 have attitude problem in the class / not to say that
- [6] *terlalu nakal tapi macam ada er gangguan macam*
 very naughty but like there is disturbance like
 they are very naughty but there are some disturbance like they
- [7] *tak boleh fokus /*
 cannot focus /
 are unable to focus /

T10's statement *saya baru mengenal pasti sebenarnya* (I have actually just identified them) in line 2 could indicate her effort in identifying the foster children in her class through their behavioural problem. She further describes the foster children's lack of focus in class *tak boleh fokus* (unable to focus) (line 7) to portray her awareness of their

behavioural problem in the learning process, which could signify her care and concern for them.

(iii) The Need for Attention

With reference to the need for attention, teachers in Excerpts 34 and 35 employ representative act to assert, affirm, describe and state the way they provide attention to foster children in school.

Excerpt 34

- [1] T17: *Ya sudah tentu di sekolah ini pun sebenarnya / untuk*
Yes of course in school this also actually / for
Yes of course in this school as well actually / for
- [2] *pengetahuan kamu / er ramai tak ramai er:: guru-guru*
information your / many not many teachers
your information / many not many teachers
- [3] *sebenarnya tak tahu bahawa anak-anak mereka anak-anak*
actually do not know that children their children
actually do not know that their children
- [4] *kebajikan ni berada di dalam kelas mereka sehinggalah*
foster these are in class their until PARTICLE *lah*
foster children are in their class until they are
- [5] *diberitahu ya / tapi oleh kerana kami di unit bimbingan dan*
have been informed yes / but because we in unit guidance and
informed yes / but because we are in the guidance and
- [6] *kaunseling / unit hal ehwal murid / kita mempunyai data dan*
counselling / unit affairs student / we have data and
counselling unit / student affairs unit / we have the data and
- [7] *kita mengambil perhatianlah bahawa mereka*
we pay attention PARTICLE *lah* that they
we pay attention to them because
- [8] *ni adalah bagi saya anak-anak yang istimewa /*
these are to me children that special /
to me they are special kids /
- [9] *yang perlu dilayan / sebab mereka ni maklumlah*
that need to be taken care of / because they this note PARTICLE *lah*
that need to be taken care of / because they have
- [10] *ada pelbagai kes / pelbagai masalah / pelbagai latar belakang /*
have various cases / various problems / various backgrounds /
have various cases / various problems / various backgrounds /

In Excerpt 34 (see Appendix C, Section 3E, Question 2), T17 affirms with *ya sudah tentu* (yes of course) that foster children are treated the same (line 1). However, many teachers are not aware of the foster children's background in their class until they are informed (lines 2 to 5). Additionally, T17 states that he, unlike the rest of the school

teachers, has the foster children's background details *kita mempunyai data* (we have the data) in lines 6 and 7. Such a statement aims at highlighting his knowledge of the foster children's background and willingness to focus more on their academic problems and needs. In line 8, T17 utters the phrase *bagi saya* (to me) to state his view that special attention should be given to the foster children. He further asserts the necessity in providing the foster children with the attention they deserve by stressing the modal verb *perlu* (need) in line 9.

Likewise, T24, in Excerpt 35 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10), states that she has attempted to build a good rapport with the foster child in her class as she views it as a way of helping the child academically.

Excerpt 35

- [1] T24: *Saya cuba rapatkan diri saya dengan dia dalam kelas / saya bagi*
 I try closer myself with him in class / I give
 I will try to be close to him in the class / I give him the
- [2] *tumpuan / apabila saya bagi kerja / saya pergi tempat dia /*
 attention / when I give tasks / I go place his /
 attention / when I give them tasks / I go to his place /
- [3] *saya tanya macam mana / boleh buatlah tak boleh buat /*
 I ask how / can do PARTICLE kah cannot do /
 I ask him whether / he can do it or not /
- [4] *ah daripada situ dia akan er mula minat untuk belajarliah /*
 from there he will start interest to learn PARTICLE lah /
 from there he will be interested to learn /

Unlike T17 (Excerpt 34) who merely states and asserts the need to provide attention to foster children, T24 describes the ways she provides attention to the foster child in her class such as *saya bagi tumpuan* (I give him the attention), *saya pergi tempat dia* (I go to his place), and *saya tanya macam mana boleh buatlah tak boleh buat* (I ask whether he can do it or not) from lines 1 to 3. Subsequently, such actions described by T24 aim to enhance the interest of the child towards learning. Additionally, the use of personal pronoun *saya* (I) in each active sentence (lines 1 to 3) further reinforces T24's effort to learn more about the academic problems a foster child encounters, which also represents

her care and concern about the child. Moreover, the statement *daripada situ dia akan er mula minat untuk belajarliah* (from there he will be interested to learn) in line 4 indicates that the foster child begins to show interest in learning after he received attention from T24. This statement illustrates the positive impact when attention is provided to the foster child.

Overall, representative act is the only category of speech act found in the stage of informational when teachers state, report, compare, assert, affirm and describe the ways they probe into foster children's financial issues, which can be mostly seen through the verb *tanya* (ask). The teachers also tend to use the first person pronoun *saya* (I) to describe the actions taken by them such as giving more attention to the foster children in class. Not only are the five teachers aware of the foster children's academic problems in school, they take the initiative to probe into these children's problems. Such a finding suggests that the teachers are willing to know more about the foster children's state of affairs.

4.1.1.4 Stage of Refocusing in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of refocusing, teachers use representative act to describe, state, assert, affirm and exemplify the ways in which they address the academic needs of foster children. The following table illustrates the percentage of teachers who voice their concern regarding the types of needs of foster children.

Table 4.6: Types of Needs in the Stage of Refocusing with Teachers'

Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Motivation	12%
2.	The Need for Financial Support	8%
3.	The Need for Attention	4%

As shown in Table 4.6, the need for motivation is highly addressed by the teachers as it is important to motivate foster children to improve their academic performance. This is followed by the need for financial support and attention.

(i) The Need for Motivation

The teachers believe that foster children need to be motivated to improve their academic performance. Therefore, they state, assert, affirm and describe the ways to enhance foster children's motivation. This is illustrated from Excerpts 36 to 38 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 4).

Excerpt 36

- [1] T24: *Saya cuba er::: elakkan daripada bertanya sesuatu yang*
 I try avoid from asking something that
 I try to avoid from asking something that is
- [2] *lebih::: complicated* / ah okay jadi saya hanya er akan *cuba*
 more / so I just will try
 more / so I just will try
- [3] *bantu dia tu dari segi motivasi yang pertama er dari segi*
 help him/her that in terms of motivation the first in terms of
 to help him/her in terms of motivation that's the first in terms of
- [4] *motivasilah* / *motivasi er supaya dia terus belajar* /
 motivation PARTICLE *lah* / motivation so that he/she keeps on learning /
 motivation / motivation so that he/she keeps on learning /

T24, in Excerpt 36, employs representative act to describe the way she helps the foster child in her class in the statement *saya cuba elakkan daripada bertanya sesuatu yang lebih complicated* (I try to avoid from asking something that is more complicated)

in lines 1 and 2. Avoiding any form of sensitive issues when talking to the foster children could denote her understanding of the children's emotional aspect as she is cautious in order not to upset them. Moreover, T24 uses the verb *cuba* (try) to assert her effort towards enhancing the foster children's motivation.

The notion of motivation is also perpetuated by T18 as illustrated in Excerpt 37.

Excerpt 37

- [1] T18: *Saya memang memang menggalakkan pelajar-pelajar ni* /
 I really really encourage PARTICLE *kan* students these /
 I really really encourage these students /
- [2] *dan saya menganggap mereka ni seumpama anak-anak saya* /
 and I consider them this as children my /
 and I consider them as my own children /

In line 1, T18 asserts that he *menggalakkan* (encourages) the foster children in school to perform better academically using the double intensifiers *memang memang* (really really). Moreover, T18 also states that he treats the foster children like his own in line 2 *saya menganggap mereka ni seumpama anak-anak saya* (I consider them as my own children). This reflects his care and enthusiasm to help the foster children.

A similar instance of motivation can also be found in T25's response in Excerpt 38.

Excerpt 38

- [1] T25: *Memang sentiasa beri galakkan* / *motivasi* / *penglibatan* /
 Indeed always give encouragement / motivation / involvement /
 Indeed always encourage / motivation / involvement /
- [2] *kalau tak bagus pun / penglibatan yang menggalakkan* /
 if not good also / involvement that encouraging /
 even if it's not good / encouraging involvement /
- [3] *akhirnya dia akan jadi seorang pelajar yang baguslah* /
 finally he/she will become a student that good PARTICLE *lah* /
 finally he/she will be a good student /

T25 uses the explicit intensifier *memang* (indeed) and the adverb *sentiasa* (always) in line 1 to affirm her constant encouragement and motivation towards the foster children.

Furthermore, T25 is conscious about the outcome of their encouragement towards these children in school in hope of an improvement in their academic performance (lines 2 and 3).

(ii) The Need for Financial Support

The teachers state that they render financial assistance to the foster children. The notion of financial support is highlighted in Excerpts 39 and 40 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 39

- [1] T25: *Kalau dia time rehat / kadang-kadang kita kesian kan /*
 If he/she break / sometimes we pity right /
 If during recess time / sometimes we feel sorry for them right /
- [2] *bagi dia belanja dan sebagainya / dari situ kita rapat dengan dia /*
 give him/her treat and so on / from there we close with him/her /
 (we) pay for their food and so on / from there we become close to them /

T25 describes her sympathy for the foster children with the adjective *kesian* (sorry) in line 1. Thus, he feels obliged to aid the foster children. The statement *bagi dia belanja* ([we] pay for their food) in line 2 can be taken as T25's care and concern for them which motivates him to help the foster children.

The notion of foster children's lack of pocket money in buying food is also perpetuated by T18 in Excerpt 40.

Excerpt 40

- [1] T18: *Kebanyakan dari mereka ini / er amat menyenangkan pihak kaunseling /*
 Most from them this / very enjoy party counselling /
 Most of them are / very happy with counselling /
- [2] *mereka lebih rapat dengan pihak kaunselor / sehinggakan T17 /*
 they more close with party counsellor / until T17 /
 they are closer to the counsellor / even T17 /
- [3] *kita punya kaunselor telah menyediakan er:: tempat er*
 our own counsellor has prepared place
 our counsellor has prepared a place
- [4] *minuman untuk pelajar-pelajar ini untuk minum dan makan /*
 beverage for students this to drink and eat /
 for the students to drink and eat /

- [5] kadang-kadang *biskut dan sebagainya* /
 sometimes biscuits and others /
 sometimes with biscuits and others /

While most excerpts demonstrate instances where the teachers describe their deeds in helping the foster children, Excerpt 40 is different as T18 describes the school counsellor's deeds instead of his own. T18 asserts that the foster children have a good rapport with the school counsellor in the statement *mereka lebih rapat dengan pihak kaunselor* (they are closer to the counsellor) in line 2. This could be due to the kind actions taken by the school counsellor in taking care of foster children by preparing food and beverage for them (lines 3 and 4). In line 5, T18 exemplifies the types of food prepared by the counsellor *biskut dan sebagainya* (biscuits and others) to stipulate his statement. Such a statement, in a way, aims at convincing the interviewer that the school teachers do play a significant role in giving a helping hand to the foster children.

(iii) The Need for Attention

The teachers also highlight that the foster children are in need of attention. One example can be seen in Excerpt 41 where T8 describes the ways he manages the foster children in class by stressing that he constantly provides attention to them (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 41

- [1] T8: oh er::: *perhatian / memang kalau saya masuk kelas tu / memang sentiasa*
 attention / indeed if I enter class that / indeed always
 attention / indeed if I enter that class / indeed I always
- [2] *memberi perhatian kepada dialah sebab nakal kan /*
 give attention to him PARTICLE *lah* because naughty right? /
 give attention to them because they are naughty /
- [3] *jadi memang saya selalu sebut er::: dia pun er::: yang bagus / ada yang*
 so indeed I always mention they also the good / got the
 so of course I always say they are also good / there are
- [4] *bagus / okay yang memang apa::: er::: salin nota / buat latihan*
 good / which indeed what copy notes / do exercise
 good ones / of course there are those who take notes / do exercises
- [5] *dan sebagainya / tapi ada setengah yang lain tu er::: memang sangat*
 and so on / but there are some the others that indeed really
 and so on / but there are some students who indeed really

[6]	<i>perlu</i>	<i>diberikan perhatianlah</i>	/ er kasih sayang / pujuk /
	need to be given	attention PARTICLE <i>lah</i> /	love / coax /
	need to be given attention	/	love / advice /

T8 explicitly affirms that he constantly gives attention to the foster children in class with the adverbs *memang* (indeed) and *sentiasa* (always) (lines 1 and 2), which reflects his willingness to help the foster children. Moreover, he also asserts the necessity of giving attention to foster children with the multiple intensifiers *memang sangat* (indeed really) (line 5) which modifies the intensity of the modal verb *perlu* (need) (line 6).

In conclusion, teachers have employed representative act in the stage of refocusing to assert, affirm, describe and state the actions taken to assist the foster children, such as motivating them, paying for their food and changing teaching techniques. The teachers' actions are displayed through the use of verbs. Therefore, teachers' responses fall in the stage of refocusing as their actions represent their care and concern in wanting to improve the foster children's poor academic performance. It is also observed that three types of intensifiers are found, namely multiple, double and explicit. For instance, the intensifier *memang* (really) is frequently used by the teachers to strengthen their assertions that they have also tried their level best to address the children's needs in school.

4.1.1.5 Stage of Consequences in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of consequences, teachers state, describe, affirm and exemplify the issues that affect the academic performance of foster children. The types of issues raised by the teachers can be seen in the following table.

Table 4.7: Types of Issues in the Stage of Consequences with Teachers'

Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Issues	Percentage
1.	Lack of Attention	4%
2.	Lack of Self-Confidence	4%
3.	Poor Academic Performance	4%
4.	Peer Influence	4%

Table 4.7 shows that teachers voice their concern on the consequences of foster children's lack of attention, lack of self-confidence, poor academic performance and peer influence. The next sections present each type of issues and the examples of representative act used by teachers.

(i) Lack of Attention

In Excerpt 42, T7 indicates lack of attention among foster children in her class (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 4).

Excerpt 42

- [1] T7: *Prestasi setakat ni okay / ujian satu hari tu tak ada buat ujian lagi /*
 Performance so far this / test one day that do not have do test yet /
 His performance is so far / he has not sit for test one /
- [2] *dia tak tengok lagi / tapi setakat ni mana-mana kerja yang saya*
 he not look yet / but so far this everywhere task that I
 he has yet to look at it / but so far every task that I
- [3] *suruh buat / dia buat / ni bila saya panggil ke depan pun dia akan*
 ask do / he does / this when I call to front also he will
 ask to do / he does it / when I call him to the front he will
- [4] *buat / cuma bila kita cakap tu dia macam sibuk nak cakap juga /*
 do / only when we talk that he like busy wants talk as well /
 do so / only when we are talking and he is trying to interrupt as well /
- [5] *orang lain tak bercakap kan / dia boleh / bercakap / maknanya*
 people other not talk right? / he can / talk / means
 the others do not talk right? / he can / talk / this means
- [6] *dia nak tarik perhatian sebenarnya /*
 he wants pull attention actually /
 he wants to draw attention actually /

T7 provides description of the foster child's disruptive behaviour, as evident in line 4 *bila kita cakap tu dia macam sibuk nak cakap juga* (when we are talking and he is trying to interrupt as well). Additionally, T7 uses the verb *nak* (wants) in lines 4 and 6 to indicate the child's desire to seek attention in class, drawing on the fact that such behaviour is perhaps the consequence of being deprived of attention.

(ii) Lack of Self-Confidence

Besides lack of attention, lack of self-confidence is also highlighted by a teacher, T23 in Excerpt 43 as one of the factors that affect the academic performance of foster children (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 43

- [1] T23: *Daripada rumah kebajikan ni erm selalu selama saya di sekolah ni*
 From home foster this always since I in school this
 From this foster home always since I have been in this school
- [2] *bila pelajar rumah kebajikan / selalu di er berada di kelas yang belakang /*
 when student home foster / always at in at class the back /
 when students from foster home / (they) are always in the back classes /
- [3] *dari segi tu lah education tu kan / cuma kalau*
 in terms of that PARTICLE *lah* that right? / only if
 in terms of right? / only if
- [4] *yang berada di kelas depan pun setakat ni ada seorang dua je /*
 those in at class front also so far this there is one two only /
 those who are in the front classes so far there is only one or two /
- [5] *kira macam kadang-kadang saya rasa dia orang punya self-confidence*
 seems like sometimes I think their own
 seems like sometimes I think that their (lack of)
- [6] *tu sendiri kut yang buatkan mereka di kelas belakangkah /*
 that alone maybe which triggered them in class back PARTICLE *kah* /
 maybe triggered them to be in the back classes /

Based on T23's observation as a school teacher for years, she is aware that the foster children are mostly at the lower ranked classes due to their poor academic performance (lines 1 to 3). T23 states *saya rasa dia orang punya self-confidence tu sendiri kut yang buatkan mereka di kelas belakangkah* (I think that their lack of self-confidence maybe triggered them to be in the back classes) in lines 5 and 6 to voice her personal views concerning the lack of self-confidence in foster children. She employs the hedge *saya*

rasa (I think) in line 5 and the particle *kut* (maybe) in line 6 to attenuate the illocutionary force of her statement. The use of the verb *buatkan* (triggered) (line 6) corresponds to the stage of consequence as T23 may want to give the reason that the foster children's low self-confidence is one of the factors that affect their academic performance.

(iii) Poor Academic Performance

In Excerpt 44, T13 describes foster children's poor performance in religious study (see Appendix C, Section 3F, Question 3).

Excerpt 44

- [1] T13: *Kadang kita bertanya jugalah er::: bagaimana apa /*
 Sometimes we inquire also PARTICLE *lah* how what /
 Sometimes we wonder how what /
- [2] *program keagamaan di sekolah tu / ada tak kelas mengaji /*
 programme religious in school that / got not class recital /
 religious programmes in the school / are there Quran recital /
- [3] *ada tak kuliah / dan dia cakap macam mengaji tu*
 got not tutorial / and he/she said like recital that
 are there religious classes / and they say that the recital
- [4] *tak tahulah betul atau tidak budak-budak ni kan /*
 do not know PARTICLE *lah* right or not children these right? /
 don't know whether what these children said are true or not right? /
- [5] *dia kata macam kurangnya / dia kata dulu ada /*
 he/she said like less PARTICLE *lah* / he/she said formerly got /
 they said like there is a lack of it / they said they used to have it /
- [6] *lepas sekarang banyak kuliah / jadi saya tak pastilah*
 after now many tutorial / so I not sure PARTICLE *lah*
 but now there are many religious classes / so I am not sure
- [7] *sebab dia orang memang kalau mengaji memang setakat*
 because they indeed if recite indeed to the extent
 because when they recite the Quran they are only able to handle
- [8] *Iqraq lah / huruf pun tak kenal / tak tahu /*
 Iqraq PARTICLE *lah* / letter also not recognise / do not know /
 Iqraq / they still do not recognise letters / do not know /
- [9] *membaca tu pun ada yang tak tahu lagi / tingkatan dua tu /*
 reading that also got who do not know yet / form two that /
 some still do not know how to read / they are already in form two /

T13 states that she has enquired about the religious programme in school (lines 1 to 3). Her enquiry could be considered as her concern as she takes the initiative to find out from foster children about their religious programme. However, T13 expresses her

doubt on the effectiveness of religious programme in school with the statements *tak tahulah* (don't know) (line 4) and *tak pastilah* (not sure) (line 6) because foster children are not performing well. Moreover, the repetitive use of the adverb *pun* (even) in lines 8 and 9 and the adverb *lagi* (still) in line 9 serve to reinforce her disbelief and concern that some of the foster children are not able to read and recognise letters. T13's statement *membaca tu pun ada yang tak tahu lagi* (some still do not know how to read) in line 9 corresponds to the stage of consequence as it indicates the slow advancement of foster children's ability to read and recognise letters in Quran could be due to the inefficiency of the religious programme in school.

(iv) Peer Influence

Peers can be one of the factors that negatively influence foster children. In Excerpt 45, T7 is highly concerned about the impact of peer influence on foster children (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 45

- [1] T7: *Yang boleh melambatkan* / okay / *kalau pelajar ni* /
Which could delay / if student this /
Factor that could delay / if it is these students /
- [2] *kalau kita nak bagi bantuan pendidikan* / *pertama sekali* /
if we want give aid education / first of all /
if we want to provide aid in terms of education / firstly /
- [3] *kawan-kawan / itu faktor paling besar yang saya tengok* /
friends / that factor most big that I see /
friends / that is the biggest factor that I see /
- [4] *melainkan pelajar tersebut / dia punya jati diri dia kuat* /
except student that / his/her own identity his/her strong /
except for student / who have a strong self-identity /
- [5] *dia boleh er::: menakis* / *dia boleh elakkan benda tu* /
he/she can erode / he/she can avoid thing that /
he/she can push it aside / he/she can avoid it /
- [6] *tapi kalau pelajar ni tak kuat* / *memang dia akan ikut* /
but if student this not strong / indeed he/she will follow /
but if the student's self-identity is weak / he/she will definitely follow /
- [7] *kawan-kawan / seperti mana yang sebelum ni* /
friends / like where which before this /
friends / this has happened before /
- [8] *waktu saya er::: apa ni* / *mula-mula masuk ke sekolah ni* /
time I what this / first enter to school this /
when I / first joined this school /

- [9] *macam-macam kes yang pelajar bakti ni* / *yang mana*
 all kinds case which student foster that / which where
 there were many cases involving foster students / where
- [10] *dia::: macam-macam kes / antaranya / yang saya dengar /*
 he/she::: all kinds case / among others / that I heard /
 there::: many cases / among them / what I heard were /
- [11] *kes merompak / mencuri / gangguan seksual / tu faktornya*
 case robbery / stealing / assaults sexual / that factor
 robbery cases / theft / sexual assaults / those are the factors
- [12] *dia punya kawan / yang saya dengar macam tu lah /*
 his/her own friend / that I heard like that PARTICLE *lah* /
 all because of friends / that's what I heard /

T7 emphasises the negative effect of peer pressure with the explicit intensifier *paling* (most) in line 3 to strengthen the illocutionary force of the adjective *besar* (big). She further exemplifies the cases involving peer pressure such as *kes merompak* (robbery cases), *mencuri* (stealing) and *gangguan seksual* (sexual assaults) in line 11 in order to support her statement. In lines 10 and 12, T7 advocates the truth of her exemplifications on such cases with the utterance *yang saya dengar* (that's what I heard).

From the discussed excerpts, there is a clear indication that teachers in the stage of consequence have employed representative act to exemplify, state, affirm and describe their concern over foster children's lack of attention, lack of self-confidence, poor academic performance and peer influence. For instance, teachers use the conjunction 'because' or *sebab* (due to), verb *buatkan* (triggered), noun *faktor* (factor) and negative statements to associate the reasons for foster children's behaviour in school as well as the effect of consequences of these children's deficiency. Teachers also provide examples or descriptions about the behaviour of foster children in school to give the reasons behind their deficiencies. Such a move shows that the teachers are aware and concerned about the factors that affect their academic performance.

4.1.1.6 Stage of Collaboration in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of collaboration, 8% of teachers report, assert, state and affirm their collaboration with other parties to help the foster children in terms of financial support.

(i) The Need for Financial Support

T13 and T17 are both aware of the insufficient amount of pocket money received by the foster children. Thus, they report, assert, affirm and state their views in working with the warden of foster care and school principal to address foster children's financial issue. This is illustrated in Excerpts 46 and 47 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 2).

Excerpt 46

- [1] T13: *Saya rasa perlu perlu / sebab hari tu pengetua pun ada*
I think need need / because day that principal also got
I think we need to / because that day the principal also
- [2] *sebut / dia kata nak er::: apa / nak jumpa dengan*
mention / he said want what / want meet with
mentioned / he said he wants to what / wants to meet with the
- [3] *rumah apa / dia punya apa / warden / warden rumah bakti tu /*
home what / his own what / home foster that /
home's what / its what / the warden of the foster home /
- [4] *dari pengetua sebut tu mengenai belanja sekolah / dia orang*
from principal mention that about expense school / they
from what the principal said about school pocket money / they
- [5] *dapat seringggit lima puluh sen sehari / dia kata mana*
receive one ringgit fifty cents per day / he said where
receive one ringgit and fifty cents per day / he said that is not
- [6] *cukup / nak makan apa kan? / dia kata dia belum ada masa*
enough / want eat what right? / he said he has not has time
enough / what can they buy to eat right? / he said there's still no time
- [7] *lagi nak bertemu dengan warden tu /*
yet want meet with that /
to meet the warden yet /

In line 1, T13 repeatedly uses the modal verb *perlu* (need) to assert the need to collaborate with foster caregivers in addressing the issue of foster children's inadequate amount of pocket money. The verb *nak* (wants) in the statement *nak jumpa dengan warden rumah bakti tu* (wants to meet with the warden of the foster home) in lines 2

and 3 signifies the school's intention of collaborating with the foster caregivers, but has yet to be executed.

Another instance of collaboration can be seen in Excerpt 47 when T17 reports that he and his staff members have discussed with the school principal about the financial issue of foster children.

Excerpt 47

- [1] T17: *Contohnya baru-baru ini er mereka mengatakan mereka*
 Example recently this they said they
 For example recently they said they
- [2] *tidak cukup wang saku / untuk pengetahuan kamu /*
 not enough money pocket / for information your /
 do not have enough pocket money / for your information /
- [3] *mereka ada yang diberi satu ringgit lima puluh sen sehari /*
 they there is who given one ringgit fifty cents a day /
 some of them were given only one ringgit and fifty cents a day /
- [4] *sedangkan mereka kadang-kadang berada satu hari di sekolah /*
 whereas they sometimes be one day at school /
 when they sometimes have to be at the school for the whole day /
- [5] *daripada pukul tujuh setengah hingga pukul lima petang mereka*
 from time seven half until time five evening they
 from seven thirty to until five in the evening as they
- [6] *ada kegiatan ko-kurikulum di sekolah petang / dengan satu*
 have activities co-curriculum at school evening / with one
 have co-curriculum activities in the evening / with only one
- [7] *ringgit lima puluh sen tu / itu yang membuat mereka mungkin lapar /*
 ringgit fifty cents that / that which makes them maybe hungry /
 ringgit and fifty cents / that maybe makes them hungry /
- [8] *mereka tak tak ya lah tak selesa / tak enjoykan*
 they not not yes PARTICLE lah not comfortable / not enjoy PARTICLE kan
 they are not not comfortable / not able to enjoy
- [9] *dengan duit keadaan duit tu / itu yang kita berbincang pula*
 with money situation money that / that which we discussed also
 with the little amount of money / that's what we discussed
- [10] *dengan Pengetua bagaimana keadaan ini boleh diselesaikan /*
 with Principal how situation this can be resolved /
 with the Principal to see how the situation can be resolved /

In lines 1 and 2, T17 reports that the foster children complain about not having adequate amount of allowances to spend *mereka mengatakan mereka tidak cukup wang saku* (they said they do not have enough pocket money). This tends to be challenging for the children as they cannot afford lunch in school (lines 5 to 7). Hence, T17 states that he has worked with the principal to address this issue (lines 9 and 10). In his statement, the

verb *berbincang* (discuss) (line 9) indicates that he has mooted the idea of a collaboration between the teachers and school principal to resolve the financial issue of foster children.

The findings in Excerpts 46 and 47 in a way show that the teachers report, assert, state and affirm their collaboration with school personnel through the verb *berbincang* (discuss) and verb phrase *nak jumpa dengan warden* (wants to meet with the warden) as well as personal pronoun *kita* (we). The descriptions on the plan of collaboration (Excerpt 46) and act of collaboration (Excerpt 47) represent the teachers' willingness to work with others in finding ways to address the academic needs of foster children in school.

Overall, representative act has been employed by teachers to explain, admit and report on the challenges they encounter in the stage of management while addressing the academic needs of foster children such as time constraint. They also indicate their awareness on foster children's academic performance and the consequences of lack of attention, self-confidence, poor academic standing and peer influence. Due to such deficiencies, teachers assert and justify the need to provide attention and motivation to foster children. Besides, the teachers describe the academic performance of foster children by making comparison with illiterates or students from kindergarten level. In order to improve foster children's academic performance, the teachers exemplify and describe ways in providing these children with educational service such as slower the pace of teaching to suit their learning pace, motivate foster children and provide them financial support in the stage of refocusing.

Apart from academic performance, in the stage of informational, teachers also state to have probed into these children's problems in school such as financial issues. Hence, they affirm their collaboration with other school personnel to help provide foster children with financial support. Moreover, the personal pronoun *kita* (our or we) is often employed by the teachers to show being inclusive of others in addressing the foster children's academic needs. On the other hand, to explicitly intensify their statements, the Malay particle *lah* is also highly employed by the teachers. The use of pronoun *kita* (our or we) and the Malay particle *lah* could show that the teachers voice their concern in a subtle way as they are trying to reach out for support. The next section presents the analysis on the use of directive act, expressive act and commissive act by the teachers during interview.

4.1.2 Analysis of Directive Act in Teachers' Responses

Based on the data, directive act is employed by teachers to suggest, insist, request and complain in hoping to help foster children in their academic performance. Analysis shows that teachers mostly employ directive act in the stage of refocusing rather than in stage of management (see Table 4.8) as they attempt to address the academic needs of foster children through their suggestions.

Table 4.8: Stages of Concern with Directive Act in Teachers' Responses

No.	Stages of Concern	Percentage
1.	Stage of Refocusing	46%
2.	Stage of Management	4%

The next section presents the analysis of teachers' responses with the use of directive act in stage of refocusing.

4.1.2.1 Stage of Refocusing in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of refocusing, the teachers suggest ways to help foster children address their needs. The percentage of teachers who voice their concern about the types of needs among foster children in the stage of refocusing is shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Types of Needs in the Stage of Refocusing with Teachers' Use of Directive Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Monitoring	23%
2.	The Need for Motivation	23%
3.	The Need for Improving Poor Academic Performance	19%

Table 4.9 shows that the need for monitoring and motivation are mostly raised by teachers, followed by the need for improving poor academic performance. This indicates that it is important to monitor and motivate the foster children in order for them to perform better in their academic standings. The subsequent sections illustrate each type of needs and provide examples of directive act from teachers' interview responses.

(i) The Need for Monitoring

Directive act can be seen in Excerpts 48 to 54 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 2) when the teachers give their suggestions regarding the need for monitoring among foster children.

Excerpt 48

- [1] T6: **I think** they **need to** have **er:::** **somebody** to monitor them /
[2] because **er:::** from what I've I've heard / they're staying in
[3] **er:::** one house / so there's **er:::** many of them inside /
[4] okay / **er:::** and then there're there are *orang tua* / and in
old folks

- [5] facts then sometimes they **have to er::: you know** / take care
 [6] of them / so they / **you know** / sometimes **er:::** and the
 [7] environment there is not for / **you know** / education /

T6, in Excerpt 48, suggests with the use of modal verbs ‘need to’ (line 1) and ‘have to’ (line 5) perhaps to indicate the necessity to monitor the foster children due to their lack of attention at foster home. However, T6 also seems to be in hesitance to share her opinion about the foster children’s academic needs. The hesitance is evident through the hedge ‘I think’, pragmatic marker ‘you know’ and prolongation of pause filler /er:::/.

The hedge ‘I think’ (line 1) in a way allows her to mitigate the illocutionary force of her suggestion regarding the role of foster caregivers in accordance with the foster children’s academic progress. It should also be noted that T6 does not mention explicitly to whom the suggestion is directed to, but only through the lexical item ‘somebody’ (line 1). In addition, the use of pragmatic marker ‘you know’ (lines 5 to 7) and the prolongation of pause filler /er:::/ (lines 1 to 6) also serve as a strategy to stall for time while she hesitates and at the same time attempts to seek for appropriate lexical items in explaining her suggestion. Despite her hesitancy, T6’s suggestion represents her effort in reaching out to help improve the foster children’s academic performance.

Excerpt 49

- [1] T6: **Those who have been given the authority / they should** play a
 [2] **vital important** role in taking care of these children / **because**
 [3] **it’s such as waste** / because when I’m / when they already in
 [4] Form Four / **they don’t even know / you know** / they don’t even
 [5] **they can’t even construct** a proper *Bahasa Melayu* sentence /
 Malay language
 [6] **they don’t even understand** what understand what they are supposed
 [7] to do / I’m teaching them History / **they don’t even know** about
 [8] the world / **they don’t even know** about the general issues /

T6 further stresses the importance of the role of those who are responsible in taking care of the foster children in Excerpt 49 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 11). However, unlike the previous excerpt, T6 seems to be more direct when she employs

modal verb and multiple intensifiers to make suggestions. T6 employs the modal verb 'should' (line 1) in the form of directive to mark the necessity of carrying out the suggested tasks. In addition, the multiple intensifiers (i.e. 'vital' and 'important') in line 2 allow T6 to strengthen the significant role of foster caregivers in monitoring the academic progress of the foster children as it is beyond her ability and role to take care of these children. Besides, she covertly proposes her suggestions to the foster caregivers by making no reference at all to the subject while employing the personal pronouns 'those' and 'they', which is depicted in the utterance "those who have been given the authority, they should play a vital important role" (lines 1 and 2).

Moreover, T6 justifies the importance of her suggestion in lines 2 and 3 "because it's such a waste" to indicate her empathy towards the foster children for not being taken care of, especially in terms of their academic progress. T6's concern and disbelief that the foster children in her class have poor performance in the subjects she teaches can be seen through the direct statements "they don't even know" (lines 4, 7 and 8), "they can't even construct" (line 5) and "they don't even understand" (line 6). The frequent use of the adverb 'even' (lines 4 to 8) in these direct statements allows T6 to highlight that the foster children's poor academic performance is a major issue. Additionally, she also employs the pragmatic marker 'you know' (line 4) to draw the interviewer to understand the issue at hand. Such a move denotes her attempt to reach out for support for a positive change in these children's condition.

Unlike T6 who gives suggestions to foster caregivers, in Excerpt 50 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 2), T5 suggests school teachers should show support by providing more attention to the foster children.

Excerpt 50

- [1] T5: *Saya rasa macam kebanyakan cikgu tu / bila dia tahu*
 I feel like most teachers that / when he/she knows
 I think if most teachers / when they know
- [2] *budak tu dari kompleks tu / saya rasa dia kena er::: bertanya*
 child that from complex that / I think he/she has to ask
 the student is from the foster home / I think he/she have to ask
- [3] *lebihlah / kalau dalam subjek tu / dia kena tanya*
 more PARTICLE *lah* / if in subject that / he/she has to ask
 more / if in the subject / he/she has to ask
- [4] *macam boleh buat ke tak / sebab kebanyakan mereka / dia nak*
 how can do or not / because most them / he/she wants
 whether they can do it or not / because most of them / they want
- [5] *macam perhatian / rajin / mereka memang rajin / kalau dalam*
 like attention / diligent / they indeed diligent / if in
 like attention / diligent / they are really diligent / if in the
- [6] *bidang lain / kalau budak kelas hujung tu / dia rajin / kalau*
 field other / if child class end that / he/she diligent / if
 other field / if students from the last class / they are diligent / if it
- [7] *benda lain / dia rajin / kalau macam nak belajar tu /*
 things other / he/she diligent / if like want study that /
 involves other activities / they are diligent / if it comes to academic /
- [8] *macam malas sikit / kalau dalam kelas tu / kita kena selalu*
 like lazy little / if in class that / we have to always
 they are like a little lazy / if it's in the class / we have to always
- [9] *ni lah / kalau bagi saya /*
 this PARTICLE *lah* / if for me /
 do this / if it's for me /

T5's suggestion could be directed to the teachers when she utters *saya rasa macam kebanyakan cikgu tu* (I think like most teachers) in line 1. The frequent use of the modal verb *kena* (have to) (lines 2, 3 and 8) allows T5 to highlight teachers' responsibility and obligation to monitor the foster children in the form of a directive. She further elaborates on her suggestion that foster children need to be monitored because they are a little lazy *macam malas sikit* (line 8) when it comes to their academic pursuits. T5's suggestion to school teachers in general indicates that she tries to reach out to improve the poor academic performance of foster children.

With the various barriers the teachers face in paying attention to the foster children, T9, in Excerpt 51 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 2), suggests a possible alternative to solve the problems.

Excerpt 51

- [1] T9: *Susah / susah sebab kalau saya tumpukan perhatian kepada tiga orang*
 Difficult / difficult because if I concentrate attention to three people
 Difficult / difficult because if I pay attention to these three
- [2] *pelajar saya tu / saya terpaksa tinggalkan yang selebihnya lagi /*
 student mine that / I force to neglect the rest again /
 students of mine / I have to neglect the others /
- [3] *erm::: terpaksa dia orang belajar sendiri / buat kerja sendiri / susah /*
 force to they learn themselves / do work own / difficult /
 they have to learn by themselves / do work on their own / difficult /
- [4] *kalau betul-betul nak menolong pelajar-pelajar yang daripada*
 if really want help students which from
 if really want to help students from
- [5] *sekolah bakti ni yang lemah lah kan / yang pandai ada /*
 school foster this the weak PARTICLE lah right? / the intelligent got /
 the foster home these weak foster children right? / there are intelligent ones /
- [6] *yang yang yang lemah ni maksud saya mesti asingkan / maksudnya*
 the the the weak this mean I must separate PARTICLE kan / means it
 the weak ones I mean must be separated / it means
- [7] *mesti ada guru khas yang mesti duduk dengan dia / bagi*
 must have teacher specific which must sit with him/her / give
 there must be a specific teacher that must sit beside him/her / give
- [8] *fokus dekat dia / pelajar-pelajar macam mana maksudnya daripada*
 focus at him/her / students how means from
 him/her the focus / students how it means from
- [9] *awallah mengenal huruf apa semua tu / kalau masuk dalam*
 early PARTICLE lah recognise letters what all that / if enter in
 the beginning (they) recognise the letters and all / if they enter the
- [10] *kelas biasa memang cikgu tak boleh /*
 class normal indeed teacher cannot /
 normal stream the teachers really cannot (cope with them) /

T9 uses the word *terpaksa* (have to) (lines 2 and 3) to show the obligation of neglecting the others in order to focus more on the foster children if they are placed in the same class as other students. Unlike T5 who uses the modal verb *kena* (have to) in Excerpt 50, T9 in this excerpt can be seen more direct when she uses the modal verb *mesti* (must) (line 6) to suggest the necessity on separating these children in order to provide them with more monitoring. In lines 6 and 7, it is observed that T9 implicitly insists on placing the foster children in a special class with a teacher specifically assigned for them, which can be seen from the suggestions *mesti asingkan* (must be separated), *mesti ada guru khas* (must be a specific teacher) and *mesti duduk dengan dia* (must sit beside him/her). These explicit performative statements also increase the illocutionary force of

the message which denotes that the school ought to take a crucial step to monitor foster children during class lesson.

A similar instance can be observed in Excerpt 52 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10) when T12 offers her opinion to overcome the difficulty a teacher has to undergo in teaching the foster children together with a large number of students in a class.

Excerpt 52

- [1] T12: *Kalau dari segi pembelajaran / saya rasa kalau macam dia orang*
 If in terms of learning / I think if like them
 If in terms of studying / I think if they are
- [2] *dekat sekolah ni / sebab macam cikgu satu kelas macam*
 at school this / because like teacher one class like
 in the school / because like a teacher in a class
- [3] *kena kawal ramai pelajar kan / so saya rasa*
 has to control many students right? / I think
 has to control a large number of students right? / I think
- [4] *dia orang lebih kepada er::: sesuai dalam kumpulan kecil kut /*
 they more to suitable in group small perhaps /
 they are more suitable to be in a small group perhaps /
- [5] *ah / jadi kita boleh fokus lah /*
 so we can focus PARTICLE lah /
 so then we can focus /

T12 states the problem encountered by teachers *kena kawal ramai pelajar* (has to control a large number of students) in line 3 while teaching foster children before giving any opinion to overcome the issue. The modal verb *kena* (has to) in her statement indicates the obligation of T12 to manage a large number of students. Due to the problem she encounters while teaching the foster children, she suggests *saya rasa dia orang lebih kepada er::: sesuai dalam kumpulan kecil kut* (I think they are more er::: suitable to be in a small group perhaps) in lines 3 and 4. T12's suggestion indicates that teaching foster children in a class with smaller number of students will be more effective as more attention can be given to them. Her suggestion also in a way indicates her attempt to improve and create a better learning environment. However, it is

observed that T12 seems to be hesitant to suggest when she uses the hedge *saya rasa* (I think) (line 3), the particle *kut* (perhaps) (line 4) and prolongs the pause filler /er:::/ (line 4). The hedge, particle and pause filler serve to attenuate the illocutionary force of her suggestion. Perhaps, social position plays a part in T12's response where she could be cautious to share her view with the public.

Correspondingly, T10 also gives suggestion on how foster children are to be treated in school, which is shown in the following excerpt (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 5).

Excerpt 53

- [1] T10: er::: *sebenarnya kita tak perlu bezakan* / *sebab bila kita*
 actually we do not need to differentiate / because when we
 actually we do not need to differentiate (them) / because if we
- [2] *bezakan* / er::: *memang agak sukar untuk mengawal kelas*
 differentiate / indeed quite difficult to control class
 differentiate (them) / it is quite difficult to control the class
- [3] *terutamanya kelas-kelas hujung tu bila kita fokus dalam satu*
 especially classes end that when we focus in one
 especially those back classes when we focus on one
- [4] *kumpulan saja / kumpulan lain akan bising / jadi kita perlu*
 group only / group other will be noisy / so we need to
 group only / the others will make noise / so we need to
- [5] *samakan sebenarnya / dalam pada masa yang sama orang kata*
 equal actually / in at time which same people say
 treat them equally / at the same time one says that
- [6] ***kita perlu memberi orang kata penekananlah*** *pada mereka ni* /
 we need to give people say emphasis PARTICLE lah to them this /
 we need to give more emphasis to them /
- [7] *fokus lebih sikit pada mereka* / er dari segi
 focus more little on them / in terms of
 focus more on them / in terms of
- [8] *latihannya kebiasaannya saya memang panggil dua orang ni*
 tasks usually I indeed call two people these
 tasks usually I indeed call both of them
- [9] ***untuk ke depan*** / *duduk di meja saya / jadi pada masa tu saya*
 for to front / sit at table my / so at time I
 to come to the front / sit in my place / so that's when I
- [10] ***akan monitorlah*** *di mana kesilapan dan kekurangan mereka* /
 will monitor PARTICLE lah where mistakes and weaknesses their /
 will monitor them in terms of their mistakes and weaknesses /

In contrast with T9 and T12's suggestions in the previous excerpts (i.e. Excerpts 51 and 52), T10 disagrees with the idea of separating foster children into various groups as it

might be difficult to control the other students in class (lines 1 to 5). This denotes that each teacher has his or her own way in dealing with these children. In other words, T10 is in a way trying to convey the message that by treating them equally the same as other students does not appear to be a problem as long as they are given the attention they deserve. Hence, she suggests *kita perlu memberi orang kata penekananlah pada mereka ni* (we need to give more emphasis to them) in line 6. T10's use of the modal verb *perlu* (need to) emphasises the necessity to give more focus to the foster children. With that being said, T10 supports her suggestion by exemplifying the ways she handles these children in class such as *saya memang panggil dua orang ini untuk ke depan* (I indeed call both of them to come to the front) and *saya akan monitorlah di mana kesilapan dah kekurangan mereka* (I will monitor them in terms of their mistakes and weaknesses) from lines 8 to 10. The adverb *memang* (indeed) (line 8) allows her to emphasise the effort she has made to improve the foster children's academic performance. By illustrating her effort, T10 indirectly supports her suggestion and at the same time shows her sense of concern for these children.

The notion on the need for attention among foster children is also perpetuated by T3 in Excerpt 54 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 2).

Excerpt 54

- [1] T3: *Saya rasa guru perlu memberi banyak perhatianlah pada mereka*
 I think teacher need to give more attention PARTICLE *lah* to them
 I think teachers need to pay more attention to them
- [2] *sebab saya rasa saya rasa dia orang mungkin kurang kasih sayang /*
 because I think I think they maybe lack love /
 because I think they maybe lack of love /
- [3] *saya sebagai guru memang saya dekat dengan mereka / bila saya*
 I as teacher indeed I close with them / when I
 as I am a teacher I am indeed close to them / when I
- [4] *dekat dengan mereka / dia orang akan closer dengan saya /*
 close with them / they will be with me /
 am close with them / they will be to me /
- [5] *daripada situ dia akan er::: mula suka berbuat kerja /*
 from there he/she will start like doing work /
 from there on they will start to like doing work /

T3 suggests the need to focus more on the foster children in line 1 *saya rasa guru perlu memberi banyak perhatianlah pada mereka* (I think teachers need to pay more attention to them). In his suggestion, the use of *banyak* (more) (line 1) shows the degree of quantification as it describes the amount of attention that should be given to these children. Similar to T10, T3 further supports the significant of his suggestion by exemplifying the way he handles foster children in school that is maintaining good rapport with them. In line 3, it is observed that T3 states his points in a direct manner with the use of adverb *memang* (indeed) to assert that he has a good rapport with the foster children; hence, they are motivated to learn in his class, which illustrates the positive impact of providing more attention to the children. It is evident that T3 does not merely state, but also takes action in addressing the academic needs of foster children.

(ii) The Need for Motivation

Apart from the need for monitoring, teachers use directive act to suggest the need to enhance foster children's motivation in the learning process in school. Their suggestions are illustrated from Excerpts 55 to 61 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 55

- [1] T2: Yeah alright / **in my opinion / I think it plays both roles right?** /
 [2] **er:::** at least if the parents come and have a look the child /
 [3] **you know** / once a week / **should** give some kind of motivation /
 [4] **you know / show them some things / give them some kind of**
 [5] **er:::** **things that can make them happy** / and er::: also **advise the child** /

T2 seems to be hesitant in providing her opinion, which is depicted through the frequent prolongation of pause filler /er:::/ (lines 2 and 5), hedges (line 1), tag question (line 1) and pragmatic marker (lines 3 and 4), as she could be concerned to what extent she can share her view with the public. As evident in line 1, she employs the hedge 'I think' to mitigate the force of her suggestion and reduce the commitment of her proposition. She also uses tag question "I think it plays both roles right?" (line 1) to invite the

interviewer to understand the perception underlying her suggestion. Additionally, the pragmatic marker ‘you know’ (lines 3 and 4) functions to initiate T2’s subsequent utterance, which points to similar realisation of the ways parents can enhance foster children’s motivation towards learning. Although T2 seems to be hesitant to share her opinions at the beginning, she employs the modal verb ‘should’ (line 3) to show the necessity to motivate these children as well as direct statements such as “show them”, “give them”, and “advise the child” (lines 4 and 5) to suggest ways for parents to draw foster children’s interest in learning. This shows her sense of concern in attempting to address foster children’s needs.

Excerpt 56

- [1] T26: *Kena ada sokongan kut / kena push dia orang baru ni kut /*
 Have to have support maybe / have to push them only this maybe /
 Have to have support / maybe have to push them only then /
- [2] *baru dia orang nak belajar / sebab dia orang banyak suka lagi*
 only then they want learn / because they more like
 only then they want to learn / because they prefer more on
- [3] *suka aktiviti luar lah / macam kita ada sukan hari tu /*
 like activities out PARTICLE lah / like we have sport day that /
 the outdoor activities / like we have sports that day /
- [4] *seminggu tak masuk kelas / terlibat dalam sukan /*
 a week not enter class / involve in sports /
 they did not enter class for a week / (we were) involve in sports /
- [5] *dia kata / dia lagi suka benda-benda macam tu / masuk kelas /*
 he/she said / he/she more like things like that / enter class /
 they said / they prefer those things / enter class /
- [6] *tak masuk kelas /*
 not enter class /
 does not enter class /

T26 in Excerpt 56 also put forth her suggestions about the need to motivate foster children in their study. T26 repetitively adopts the modal verb *kena* (have to) in line 1 to suggest the required action to enhance foster children’s motivation. In addition, she further elaborates to support her suggestion by stating that these children prefer to be involved in sports but not in academic lessons (lines 3 to 6). Although T26 suggests the necessity of carrying out the suggested tasks, the commitment of her suggestion is

mitigated through the use of particle *kut* (maybe) (line 1) as she seems uncertain about sharing her views overtly with everyone.

Apart from that, T7 and T8 are highly concerned about the lack of motivational programmes for the foster children in school. This is evident in Excerpts 57 and 58.

Excerpt 57

- [1] T7: *kita perlu ni lah* / *perlu selalu bagi motivasi* /
 we need to this PARTICLE *lah* / need to constantly give motivation /
 we need to / need to constantly give motivation /
- [2] *peningkatan sendiri kepada pelajar yang daripada bakti* /
 improvement self to student which from foster /
 self-enhancement to students from the foster home /
- [3] *kita kumpulkan dan kita beri motivasi* / *jati diri* /
 we gather and we give motivation / self-identity /
 we group them up and give them motivation / self-identity /
- [4] *supaya mereka semua ni er::: sama tujuannya* / *bukan ada yang*
 so that they all this same aim / not there are which
 so that they are on the same track / none will be
- [5] *tercicir* / *ah itulah* / *yang saya nampak* / *tapi sebenarnya saya*
 dropped / that PARTICLE *lah* which I see / but actually I
 left out / that's what I see / but actually I
- [6] *tak pernah dengar pulak mereka bagi motivasi kepada*
 have not heard also they give motivation to
 have not heard of them giving motivation to
- [7] *pelajar bakti ni* / *saya belum lagi* /
 student foster this / I have not still /
 these foster students / I still have not /

T7 suggests the need to create a motivational programme in order to enhance the foster children's motivation in their academic pursuits in line 1 *perlu selalu bagi motivasi* (need to constantly give motivation). She repetitively employs the modal verb *perlu* (need to) to assert the necessity to carry out her suggestion (line 1). In line 3, T7 further describes what is ought to be done to enhance their motivation in the utterance *kita kumpulkan dan kita beri motivasi* (we group them up and give them motivation). However, T7 contradicts her suggestion with the use of conjunction *tapi* (but) (line 5) in order to state that in reality, it is completely a reverse situation to what she has suggested. T7's statement *tapi sebenarnya saya tak pernah dengar pulak mereka bagi motivasi kepada pelajar bakti ni* (but actually I have not heard of them giving

motivation to these foster students) in lines 5 to 7 indicates her dismay with the school about the lack of motivational programmes dedicated for foster children. It should also be noted that T7 does not explicitly mention the agents who are responsible to set up the motivational programme. Instead, she employs the personal pronoun *mereka* (they) in line 6 to vaguely direct the message to the agents. It is possible that she does not intend to fault any parties, but only to reach out for more support through her suggestion.

Similarly in Excerpt 58, T8 also complains that the school has discriminated the foster children by not involving them in any motivational programme because most of them are from the lower classes.

Excerpt 58

- [1] T8: *Orang yang daripada bakti ni / dia tak ada jawatan /*
 People which from foster this / he/she does not have position /
 those from this foster home / they do not have any position /
- [2] *dia pun er lemah dari segi ni / jadi tak ada*
 he/she also weak in terms of this / so do not have
 they are also weak in terms of this / so there is no
- [3] *program untuk khas untuk dia orang / kalau yang sekolah ni pun /*
 programme which special for them / if that school this also /
 special programme for them / even if in school /
- [4] *untuk kelas hujung / dia orang tak ada yang program /*
 for class end / they do not have that programme /
 for the back classes / they do not have any programme /
- [5] *kalau biasa kalau motivasi tu / kelas A sampai D je ataupun*
 if normally if motivation that / class A until D only or
 if normally if for motivation / only A until D class or
- [6] *sampai J / yang kelas yang hujung-hujung tu lah tak ada / sebab tu*
 until J / class that end that PARTICLE *lah* do not have / because of that
 until J class / there is no programme for the back classes / therefore
- [7] *er::: sangat perlulah program yang membina sahsiah er*
 really need PARTICLE *lah* programme that build personality
 (we) really need to set a programme on personality enhancement
- [8] *program keagamaan / ada Qiamullail dan sebagainya /*
 programme religious / got Qiamullail and so on /
 religious programme / with Qiamullail and so on /

Directive act can be found in T8's suggestion when he urges the school to set up a programme for the foster children *sangat perlulah program yang membina sahsiah, program keagamaan, ada Qiamullail dan sebagainya* (really need to set a programme

on personality enhancement religious programme, with Qiamullail and so on) in lines 7 and 8. Through the modal verb *perlu* (need to) (line 7), T8 stresses the necessity of conducting motivational programmes. He employs the explicit intensifier *sangat* (really) (line 7) as well as particle *lah* (line 7) to increase the force of the intensification of *perlu* (need), indicating the pivotal aspect for motivational programme to enhance the foster children's interest towards learning. Thus, T8's suggestion denotes his intention to help improve these children's academic performance.

The need to enhance foster children's motivation is also perpetuated in T5's response in Excerpts 59 and 60.

Excerpt 59

- [1] T5: **Kena bagi macam motivasilah** / lepas tu
 have to give like motivation PARTICLE *lah* / after that
 have to give them motivation / after that (I)
- [2] **kena selalu suruh buat kerja** / dia orang kalau kelas depan tu /
 have to always ask do work / they if class front that /
 have to always ask them to do work / those (students) in the front classes /
- [3] **dia boleh buat kerja / tapi kita kena selalu monitorlah** /
 he/she can do work / but we have to constantly monitor PARTICLE *lah* /
 they can do work / but we have to constantly monitor (them) /

T5 suggests the need to motivate the foster children *kena bagi macam motivasilah* (line 1), the need to constantly ask them to do work *kena selalu suruh buat kerja* (line 2), and the need to constantly monitor them *kena selalu monitorlah* (line 3) in order to improve their academic performance for a brighter future. She suggests in a form of directive with the frequent use of modal verb *kena* (have to) and particle *lah*, emphasising the need for more support from teachers. Moreover, the personal pronoun *kita* (we) (line 7) allows T5 to indicate the school teachers as a whole should help monitor and motivate the foster children.

Unlike in the previous excerpt where T5 gives more general suggestions on enhancing foster children's motivation, in Excerpt 60, she further asserts that foster caregivers play an important role in monitoring foster children's academic progress because these children often do not complete their school work.

Excerpt 60

- [1] T5: *Saya tanya sebab kadang-kadang macam kerja yang kita bagi*
I asked because sometimes like task which we give
I asked because sometimes this kind of task which we give
- [2] *tu dia siap ke tak siap / yang macam homework tu /*
that he finishes or not finishes / which like that /
whether he finishes or not / like that /
- [3] *sepatutnya macam kat sana tu / erm::: dia macam*
supposedly like at over there / he/she like
should have been like that over there / it was like
- [4] *kena suruhlah budak tu buat apa semua / sebab dia*
has to ask PARTICLE *lah* child that do what all / because he/she
he/she has to ask them to do it / because he/she
- [5] *kata kadang-kadang macam tak buat tu saya tak tahulah*
said sometimes like not done that I do not know PARTICLE *lah*
said sometimes like not done I don't know
- [6] *sebabnya kenapa tak buat ke apa semua::: masa / sebab dia kan*
because why not done or what all time / because he
because why not done or all time / because isn't he the
- [7] *penjaga tempat tinggal sana tu / yang penjaga dialah kena*
warden place live over there / the warden his PARTICLE *lah* have to
caregiver of the residence there / it's the caregiver who has to
- [8] *main peranan lebih sikit saya rasa /*
play role more little I think /
play a role bigger role I think /

Initially, T5 hesitates to state her view about the caregiver's role as she mitigates with the prolongation of pause filler /erm:::/ and indirectly mentions the subject *kat sana* (over there) in line 3. Nevertheless, T5 becomes more overt when she narrates about the foster children not completing their school tasks (lines 4 to 7). T5 frequently uses modal verb *kena* (has to) (lines 4 and 7) in a form of directive to suggest that there is a need for caregivers to monitor the foster children to complete their prescribed school tasks *yang penjaga dialah kena main peranan lebih sikit saya rasa* (it's the caregivers who have to play a role bigger role I think) (lines 7 and 8). Additionally, particles *kan* and *lah* in lines 6 and 7 also play a part in T5's response. The particle *kan* in line 6 originates from

the word *bukan* (not), serves as a form of tag question which draws the interviewer to agree with her. Then, she proceeds with the particle *lah* (line 7) to reinforce her assertion that it is the caregivers' role in monitoring and motivating the foster children in their academic pursuits.

Moreover, T16, in Excerpt 61, also emphasises with directive act on the need for motivation among foster children.

Excerpt 61

- [1] T16: *Mereka ni kena bagi kesedaran / bagi motivasi* /
 They this have to give awareness / give motivation /
 We have to make them realise / give them motivation /
- [2] *pelajar lemah ni sebenarnya motivasi dia lemah / jati diri dia*
 student weak this actually motivation his/her weak / self-identity his/her
 weak students actually lack motivation / their self-identity
- [3] *lemah / self-discipline tak ada / saya nampak*
 weak / do not have / I see
 is weak / no self-discipline / I see
- [4] *pelajar yang lemah ni self-discipline / self-esteem /*
 students the weak this /
 these weak students as having no self-discipline /
- [5] *jati diri / tak ada / jadi macam mana nak buat /*
 self-identity / do not have / so how want do /
 self-identity / do not have / so how do we do /
- [6] *nak buat macam tu / jadi kena kena damping* /
 want do like that / so have to have to adjoin /
 how do we do that / so we have to get close (to them) /

T16 explicitly suggests the need to enhance foster children's motivation with the direct statements *kena bagi kesedaran, bagi motivasi* (have to make them realise, give them motivation (line 1) and *kena kena damping* (have to get close to them) (line 6). Similar to T5, T16 repetitively employs the modal verb *kena* (have to) in his suggestion. The frequent use of the modal verb *kena* (have to) (lines 1 and 6) allows T16 to emphasise the obligation and fundamental move for teachers to have good rapport with foster children in order to boost their motivation. He further justifies the essential aspect of his suggestion as foster children lack self-discipline and self-esteem (lines 2 to 5). This

signifies T16's concern as their low self-esteem might affect their learning process and academic performance.

(iii) Poor Academic Performance

As school teachers are highly concerned about the academic performance of foster children, they use directive act to make suggestions to address these children's academic needs. This is illustrated in Excerpts 62 to 67 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 62

- [1] T2: The first thing I guess er::: we should just give them some
[2] diagnostic tests / right? / to know that where are they weak
[3] at / weak in / maybe in Maths or English / but I guess is is most
[4] of the core subjects / then from there / these students **should**
[5] be given er::: tuition^{lah} / right? / maybe extra books /
[6] where::: time is allocated for them or::: they do it at home
[7] and they give it to the teacher / doesn't matter /
[8] The tuition centres are making good money / because they they
[9] see something in return / you know / and er::: **I hope** this can
[10] be applied to these students where the government has some
[11] allocation given and they can / you know / help them / they are
[12] good students / their discipline wise they are fine / just pushing
[13] up in their education level will make them a fine student /

In Excerpt 62, T2 offers her suggestions that foster children should be provided with diagnostic tests, extra books and tuition classes to help them improve their academic performance. T2 employs the modal verb 'should' (line 4) in order to emphasise the need for teachers in school to carry out the suggested tasks. Further, she expresses her aspiration with 'I hope' (line 9) in order to suggest improving the foster children's academic performance. T2's suggestions evidently indicate the support she requires from the school authority to carry out these activities as she lacks the authority to effectuate the tasks.

Excerpt 63

- [1] T10: er::: *daripada pemantauan saya* / *mereka berdua ni* /
from observation my / they both this /
from my observation / these two /
- [2] er *dua orang ya daripada Kelas 2T ni mempunyai*
two people yes from Class 2T this have
the two from Form 2T class are
- [3] er::: *dalam kategori lembam* / *lembam maksudnya*
in category inert / inert means
in the backward group / backward means
- [4] *mereka memerlukan mereka perlu diletakkan dalam*
they need they need to be placed in
they need they need to be placed in the
- [5] *kategori pendidikan khas* /
category educational special /
special educational needs category /

T10 also provides suggestions to improve the academic performance of foster children in her class. T10 begins her response with *daripada pemantauan saya* (from my observation) in line 1 to advocate the truth underlying her statement about the foster children's poor academic performance when she uses the adjective *lembam* (backward) (line 3) to describe them with preferably negative implication. The adjective *lembam* (backward) in line 3 connotes her negative evaluation of these children's academic performance, which is a concern as poor academic performance might affect their life in the future. Due to foster children's poor academic standings, T10 employs the modal verb of obligation *perlu* (need to) in line 4 to suggest the necessity of placing these children in a special educational needs category so that they can receive more attention from teachers in order to improve their performance academically. Her suggestion aims to help the foster children for a better future.

Similarly, T9, in Excerpt 64, also suggests ways to improve the academic performance of foster children during interview.

Excerpt 64

- [1] T9: er::: *sebab budak-budak ni* / *okay sebab dia dia::: nak kata*
because children this / because he/she he/she::: want say
these kids are / because they they::: can't say

- [2] *tak pandai* / *sebenarnya boleh* / *tapi kalau nak*
not intelligent / actually can / but if want
they are not intelligent / they actually can / but if
- [3] *menilai mereka ni* / *kita tak boleh nak guna*
assess them this / we cannot want use
we are to assess them / we cannot use the
- [4] *nilai yang standard lah* / *penilaian yang standard* /
value which PARTICLE *lah* / assessment which /
standard value / a standard assessment /
- [5] *jadi kena turunkan lagi arah scale tu* / *jadi* / *kalau pendapat saya sebagai*
so have to lower still direction that / so / if opinion my as
so (we) have to lower the scale / so / in my opinion as a
- [6] *guru-guru bahasa ni* / *dia masih lagi di tahap sekolah rendah* /
teachers language this / he/she still still at level school primary /
language teacher / he/she is still at the primary level /
- [7] *ah so masih lagi kita kalau nak bagi soalan tu* /
still still we if want give question that /
if we still want to give them that question /
- [8] *mesti bagi soalan aras rendah sekolah rendah* /
must give question level primary school primary /
(we) must give lower level questions primary school level /

In lines 5 and 8, T9 suggests through the use of modal verbs *kena* (have to) (line 5) and *mesti* (must) (line 8) to show obligation and necessity for teachers to lower the pace of teaching due to foster children's slow pace of learning. In addition, she further supports the significant aspect of her suggestion by providing a negative evaluation of the foster children's academic achievement *dia masih lagi di tahap sekolah rendah* (he/she is still at the primary level) in line 6, which corresponds with T10's description of *lembam* in the previous excerpt. In T9's statement, the adverb *lagi* (still) serves to explicitly intensify the poor academic performance of foster children. Although T9 does not explicitly indicate to whom the suggestion is directed at from her language use, it could be intended for the teachers as they are education service providers for these children. Hence, T9's suggestion denotes her intention to improve foster children's academic performance with a better teaching method.

Besides lowering the pace of teaching, T9 further suggests the need for assessing foster children's academic performance.

Excerpt 65

- [1] T9: *Saya rasa mesti buat satu test / guru-gurulah mesti ada*
I feel must do one / teachers PARTICLE lah must have
I think there must be a test / the teachers must have
- [2] *satu standard standard test yang kita boleh bagi pada students*
one that we could give to
a standard test that we could use on these students
- [3] *supaya kita boleh kenal pasti dia / setakat ni tidak ada lagi /*
so that we could identify him/her / as far as this do not have yet /
so that we could identify their weakness / right now there is none /
- [4] *instrument macam tu /*
like that /
an instrument like that /

In Excerpt 65, T9 suggests her ideas in assessing the academic performance of foster children *saya rasa mesti buat satu test* (I think there must be a test) in line 1. She repetitively employs the modal verb *mesti* (must) (line 1) in a form of directive to assert the absolute obligation of identifying the weaknesses of foster children before assessing them. Additionally, the reason of T9's proposal could be identified through the statement *supaya kita boleh kenal pasti dia* (so that we could identify their weakness) in line 3. T9's statement in line 3 further supports the significance of her suggestion in line 1. T9's suggestion on standard assessment test for foster children indicates her intention to provide these children with a better learning environment. However, she also points out that there is no standard test thus far. Hence, there is a need for standard assessment test in school to examine students' knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, another teacher, T8, is concerned that the foster children are still weak in reading and spelling when studying the Quran. Knowing the contents of Quran is an important requirement especially among Malay children with Islamic background apart from attaining good results in a religious subject at school.

Excerpt 66

- [1] T8: *er::: mungkinlah bantuan dari segi er::: program-program*
perhaps PARTICLE lah aid in terms of programmes
perhaps aid in terms of programmes

- [2] er::: *berkala* / *sebagai contoh* / *pengajian* Al-Quran /
periodic / for example / studying /
regularly / for example / studying /
- [3] *sebab memang rata-rata dia orang tak tahu membaca* Al-Quran /
because indeed average they do not know reading /
because in general they cannot read /
- [4] *mengeja pun tak tahu* / er::: *jadi* er::: *kalau*
spelling also do not know / so if
they cannot even spell / so if
- [5] *tak tahu membaca* Al-Quran / *macam mana dia orang nak*
do not know reading / how they want
(they) do not know how to read / how will they can
- [6] er::: *ni* / *macam mana dia orang nak belajar agama* /
this / how they want learn religion /
this / how can they learn about religion /
- [7] *sebab tu* er::: ***adakan kelas pengajian Al-Quran secara berkala*** /
cause that have class study by periodic /
that's why we must provide regular Quranic study classes /
- [8] *dan saya saya percaya dekat sana pun ada ustaz* /
and I I believe at there also got ustaz (religious teacher) /
and I believe there is an ustaz (religious teacher) there /
- [9] *mungkin adalah* *setiap mungkin setiap hari* ***adakan*** / *tetapi*
perhaps have PARTICLE *lah* each perhaps each day have it / but
perhaps there is perhaps each day / but
- [10] er::: ***perlu diberatkan lagilah*** /
need to be weighted more PARTICLE *lah* /
it need to be given more emphases /

In Excerpt 66, T9 suggests ways to improve the foster children's Quranic recitation in a form of directive *adakan kelas pengajian Al-Quran secara berkala* (provide regular Quranic study classes) in line 7 and *perlu diberatkan lagilah* (need to be given more emphases) in line 10. The use of directive verb *adakan* (provide), modal verb *perlu* (need to) as well as the use of particles *kan* and *lah* increase the force of graduation in his suggestions and to emphasise the necessity to carry out the suggested task. In T9's suggestion, the particle *kan* in *adakan* (provide) (line 7) has a function to emphasise the need to provide regular Quranic study classes so that foster children can improve their religious study; whereas the particle *lah* (line 10) further strengthens the necessity to emphasise on improving the foster children's Quranic study. Besides, although T8 does not explicitly mention the target of the suggestion, the use of the proposition *dekat sana* (there) in line 8 suggests that the message is directed to the caregivers in the foster home.

Apart from that, T3 in Excerpt 67 also suggests that teachers should consider applying varying teaching methods to captivate students' interest towards learning.

Excerpt 67

- [1] T3: hmm:: *mungkin kita boleh tarik dia lah dalam /*
perhaps we could pull him/her PARTICLE *lah* in /
perhaps we could get him/her in /
- [2] *tarik dia dalam satu bidang yang dia minat /*
pull him/her in one field that he/she interested /
bring him/her into a field that he/she is interested in /
- [3] okay / *contohnya macam yang saya cakap tadi /*
/example like which I said just now /
/ like what I said just now /
- [4] hands on *tadi kan / er::: cuba wujudkan satu er:::*
just now right? / try exist PARTICLE *kan* one
just now right? / try to create a
- [5] *di::: memang kita wujud / perlu wujudkan satu er:::*
at indeed we exist / need to exist PARTICLE *kan* one
at indeed we come up / need to come up with a
- [6] course yang *memang dia minat /*
that really he/she interest /
that he/she is really interested in /
- [7] *jadi kalau macam dia minat vokasional / so*
so if like he/she interest vocational /
so if he/she is interested in vocational /
- [8] *kita tarik dia ke bahagian vokasional /*
we pull him/her to part vocational /
we send him/her for vocational training /

T3 suggests by emphasising on the necessity to enhance students' interest towards learning with the use of modal verb *perlu* (need to) and intensifier *memang* (really) as in *perlu wujudkan satu er::: course yang memang dia minat* (need to come up with a course that he/she is really interested in) in line 5. The explicit intensifier *memang* (really) allows T3 to reinforce the adjective *minat* (interested) in line 6 to denote the vital aspect of identifying the course foster children prefer. He further describes with examples in lines 7 and 8 to clarify his suggestion. T3's suggestion to enhance the foster children's preference in their academic pursuits signals his intention to help improve their academic performance.

4.1.2.2 Stage of Management in Teachers' Responses

Only 4% of teachers use directive act in the stage of management to make complain and request for support from foster caregivers. Even with a minimal percentage, it is necessary to provide findings in order to examine the language of concern.

(i) The Need for Support from Foster Caregivers

T2's concern is categorised in the stage of management when she complains about her incapability of taking charge due to her lack of knowledge about the foster children's needs and requests for support from the foster home. Her response can be seen in the following excerpt (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 9).

Excerpt 68

- [1] T2: I don't know whether **there** / in **their office there** / er::: do
[2] **they** disseminate quickly / er::: identify which students need
[3] special assistance that you know maybe they can be given
[4] tuition or extra books and all that / **that is what we need to**
[5] **know right now** /

In lines 1 and 2, T2 vaguely directs the message to the foster caregivers when she stresses the word 'there' repetitively and uses the personal pronoun 'their' as well as 'they'. Although it is not directly stated that the message is intended for the foster home, the use of words such as 'their office' (line 1), 'there' (line 1) and 'they' (line 2) signify the caregivers' responsibility to inform the school teachers about the foster children's deficiencies. This is similar to T8's use of *dekat sana* (there) in Excerpt 66. Perhaps, there is a possibility that she mitigates due to her social position in school where she avoids delivering the message directly to the target receiver. In lines 4 and 5, T2 can be seen making request in the form of directive "that is what we need to know right now". She employs the modal verb 'need' to reinforce her request for the foster care system to affirm whether they have identified these children's needs. Additionally, T2 uses an

assertive strategy to indicate the urgency of being aware of the foster children's deficiencies "right now" (line 5).

Observation from the findings show that teachers employed directive act to provide suggestions to address the foster children's need for monitoring and motivation, as well as the need for improving their poor academic performance. At the same time, they also complain and request for support from foster caregivers. The teachers' responses fall in the stages of refocusing and management as they share their concern in wanting to improve the academic performance of foster children, at the same time encounter challenges to address these children's needs. In the interview responses, some of the typical linguistic features that teachers use to highlight the necessity to address foster children's academic needs are through the use of modal verbs of obligations such as *perlu* (need to), *kena* (have to), *mesti* (must), 'should' and direct statements which are associated with concern. They also favour using the personal pronoun *kita* (we) that has an effect of moderating the suggestions by implying that they are not intended for one teacher, but also possibly all parties who are involved in addressing the academic needs of foster children. Moreover, teachers use explicit and multiple intensifiers to further highlight the importance of their suggestions; whereas to mitigate their suggestions, hedges and pause fillers are often used. The occurrences of mitigations in teachers' responses could be due to their positions in school as they try to reach out for support through their suggestions.

4.1.3 Analysis of Expressive Act in Teachers' Responses

Based on the findings, expressive act is prominent in the stage of personal where 27% of teachers express their feelings about the foster children's academic needs.

4.1.3.1 Stage of Personal in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of personal, teachers mostly express their concern about the foster children's need for attention than secure future plans as attention is crucial especially in terms of their academic performance.

(i) The Need for Attention

The use of expressive act can be seen in the teachers' responses when they express concern about the need for attention among foster children in the stage of personal. Such concern is illustrated from Excerpts 69 to 72 (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 69

- [1] T3: er::: *perasaan saya mengenai pelajar-pelajar tersebut* / er::: *saya*
feeling my about students mentioned / I
my feelings towards those students / I
- [2] *sebenarnya er::: **kesianlah** / satu **kesian** / saya macam **sedihlah***
actually pity PARTICLE *lah* / one pity / I like sad PARTICLE *lah*
actually felt pity (for them) / first is pity / I feel sad
- [3] *sebab mereka ni er::: pelajar-pelajar yang perlu diambil berat*
because they this students that need to be taken care of
because they are students that need to be taken care of
- [4] *bagi memberi **perhatianlah** lebih **lah** / sebabkan dia dari segi aspek*
give attention more PARTICLE *lah* / because they in terms of aspect
give them more attention / because in terms of this aspect
- [5] *mungkin banyak kekurangan yang kita perlu tahu /*
maybe many deficiencies that we need know /
maybe there are many lacks that we need to know /

In Excerpt 69, T3 expresses his feelings about the foster children and asserts that there is a need to be aware of their deficiencies. His feelings for the foster children and the drawbacks which they experience are conveyed through the adjectives *kesian* (pity) and *sedih* (sad). Apart from that, particle *lah* can also be observed in lines 2 and 4. T3 uses particle *lah* in line 2 to explicitly reinforce his concern for the foster children; whereas, the *lah* in the word *perhatianlah* (attention *lah*) in line 4 serves to emphasise the need to provide more attention to those children.

A similar instance of expressive act can also be found in T8's response in Excerpt 70 when he expresses his feeling about the condition foster children are in.

Excerpt 70

- [1] T8: *Saya rasa kesianlah dengan dia orang sebab sebenarnya dia orang*
 I feel pity PARTICLE *lah* with them because actually they
 I felt pity for them because actually they are not
- [2] *tak bersalah pun / dia orang er::: mangsa keadaan / kurang kurang*
 not wrong also / they victim situation / lack lack
 to be blame / they are the victim of the situation / lack
- [3] *dari segi apa perhatian /*
 in terms of what attention /
 in terms of attention /

Unlike T3, T8 employs only one adjective to express his feeling. Line 1 contains emotion from T8 not only through the adjective *kesian* (pity), but also through the verb *rasa* (feel) as well as the particle *lah* (line 1) that intensifies his sympathy for them. T8's sympathy towards the foster children further reflects in the labelling of these children as *mangsa keadaan* (victims of the situation) in line 2 to emphasise that they require more attention.

The adjective *kesian* (pity) is once again used by another teacher, as evident in Excerpt 71.

Excerpt 71

- [1] T11: *Macam saya sendirilah / saya banyak lebihkan mereka /*
 Like me self PARTICLE *lah* / I a lot more PARTICLE *kan* them /
 Like me myself / I care more about them /
- [2] *saya sendirilah / saya tak tahu kenapa saya::: perasaan tu macam*
 me self PARTICLE *lah* / I do not know why I feeling that like
 me myself / I do not know why I the feeling like
- [3] *bila nampak muka dia orang saya macam ya Allah kesiannya /*
 when see face their I like oh God pity PARTICLE *nya* /
 when I see their faces I am like oh my God so pity /

T11 claims that she shows more preference to the foster children compared to the other students in school, which signifies that she is highly concerned about these children.

The element of expressive act can be seen in line 3 when T11 employs the adjective

kesian (pity) to express her sympathy for the foster children's condition. Instead of using the particle *lah* after the adjective *kesian* like T3 and T8, T11 employs the particle *nya* (line 3) as in *kesiannya* (pity) to further intensify her sympathy for these children. Also in this excerpt, T11 frequently uses the personal pronoun *saya* (I or me) (lines 1 to 3) to highlight the self-reference which reinforces her personal feelings. In other words, she is merely expressing her own feelings and not speaking on anyone's behalf.

Similarly, T23 uses the same strategy as T11 when she frequently employs personal pronoun *saya* (I) to highlight her feeling *kesian* (pity) in Excerpt 72.

Excerpt 72

- [1] T23: *Ada setengah cikgu yang memang boleh apa nak melayan tu / dia*
Got some teacher who indeed can what want entertain that / he/she
Some teachers have the patience to attend to these students / they
- [2] *akan melayanlah / kadang setengah cikgu tu mungkin dia tak*
will entertain PARTICLE *lah* / sometimes some teacher that maybe he/she not
will attend to these students / some teachers might not have the
- [3] *sabarkah / dua tiga kali tanya kadang /*
patience / two three times ask sometimes /
patience / if the student asks him/her a couple of times /
- [4] *okaylah nak marahkah apa kan / tapi since saya kenal*
PARTICLE *lah* want angry or what right? / but since I know
he/she might be annoyed right? / but since I know
- [5] *dua orang ni memang saya kesianlah /*
two people this really I pity PARTICLE *lah* /
these two foster children I really felt pity for them /
- [6] *bagi saya memang kesian / jadi bila tanya banyak-banyak kali pun /*
for me really pity / so when ask many times also /
for me I really felt pity / so even when they ask lots of questions /
- [7] *okay betul / ah cantik / macam tu lah /*
correct / beautiful / like that PARTICLE *lah* /
correct / beautiful / like that /
- [8] *saya rasa dia orang memang memerlukan kita punya perhatianlah /*
I think they really need our own attention PARTICLE *lah* /
I think they really need our attention /

From lines 1 to 4, T23 regards herself differently from the other teachers because she is highly sympathetic towards foster children. Her feeling of sympathy *kesian* (pity) (lines 5 and 6) with respect to the needs of foster children in her class is further strengthened by the use of particle *lah* (lines 5 and 8). Additionally, the frequent use of explicit

intensifier *memang* (really) (lines 5 and 6) allows T23 to boost the illocutionary force of her sympathy towards foster children and emphasise the necessity of providing attention to them. T23 further justifies her sympathy by asserting the foster children are in need of attention from teachers in the statement *dia orang memang memerlukan kita punya perhatianlah* (they really need our attention) in line 8.

(ii) The Need for Secure Future Plans

Apart from the need for attention, a teacher also expresses concern about foster children's need for secure future plan as they have to leave foster home by the age of eighteen (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 73

- [1] T1: *Saya tanyalah dia orang / saya kata / er::: bila awak lepas SPM /*
 I asked PARTICLE *lah* them / I said / when you passed
 I asked them / I said / when you have passed
- [2] *ke mana? / lepas tu dia orang cakap / oh tu /*
 to where? / after that they say / that /
 what are you going to do? / then they told me / that /
- [3] *tidak tahulah cikgu / sebab bila lapan belas /*
 do not know PARTICLE *lah* teacher / because when eighteen /
 we do not know teacher / because when you are eighteen /
- [4] *dah tak boleh duduk di situ / jadi saya fikir dengan dia orang yang er:::*
 already cannot stay there / so I think with they which
 you can't stay there anymore / so I think of those who
- [5] *tak berapa tinggi IQnya / er::: keputusan yang tak begitu bagus /*
 not very high IQ PARTICLE *nya* / results which not so good /
 IQ is not so high / results are not so good /
- [6] *adakah satu program khusus yang kerajaan buat supaya selepas*
 is there one programme special that government creates so that after
 is there a special programme that the government has so that after they
- [7] *lapan belas tahun tu / kerajaan bagi satu er::: kursus yang boleh*
 eighteen years that / government gives one course that can
 turn eighteen / the government gives one course that helps
- [8] *mereka meneruskan hidup dengan berdikari / saya selalu fikir*
 they continue lives with independent / I always think
 them to continue their lives independently / I always think of
- [9] *macam tu / tapi saya tak tahu sejauh mana bila saya tanya*
 like that / but I do not know how far when I ask
 that / but I do not know how far because when I asked
- [10] *dia orang / dia orang kata er::: tak ada cikgu / kita kena hidup*
 them / they say none teacher / we have to live
 them / they said none teacher / we have to live
- [11] *sendiri / jadi saya selalu fikir / kesiannya /*
 own / so I always think / pity PARTICLE *nya* /
 on our own / so I always think / what a pity /

T1 shows concern by approaching the foster children in her class, asking them about their future plan after leaving foster home (lines 1 and 2). After receiving the uncertain feedback from the foster children about their future (lines 3 and 4), T1 becomes more concerned about them, especially those who do not perform well academically. More importantly, although the utterance from lines 6 to 8 *adakah satu program khusus lapan belas tahun tu yang kerajaan buat supaya selepas kerajaan bagi satu er::: kursus yang boleh mereka meneruskan hidup dengan berdikari* (is there a special programme that the government has so that after they turn eighteen the government gives one course that helps them to continue their lives independently) does not seem to be a direct suggestion, the thought that T1 shares during the interview could be an indirect sign that constitutes her aspiration for a support system or programme from the government where foster alumni can rely on when they are in need of assistance.

Though T1 is uncertain of the extent the government has planned for them *tapi saya tak tahu sejauh mana* (but I don't know how far) (line 9), she still tries to reach out by addressing this issue. Her constant pondering about the foster children's future *saya selalu fikir* (I always think) in lines 8 and 11 denotes her concern towards these children. Furthermore, her sympathy for them is marked by the use of adjective *kesian* (pity) and the particle *nya*. However, unlike T11's response in Excerpt 71, the particle *nya* in this excerpt has more than one function. The particle *nya* in line 11 serves as an explicit intensifier to further emphasise T1's compassion for the foster children; whereas, the particle *nya* in line 5 is a suffix which acts as a possessive pronoun to describe the foster child's IQ knowledge.

Based on the data, it is observed that expressive act is mostly found in the stage of personal. In this stage, the teachers express their feelings using various emotive

adjectives to describe their concern about the foster children's need for attention and their future. Instances that depict teachers' feelings could be observed via their use of adjectives *kesian* (pity) and *sedih* (sad). Such feelings are related to the teachers' sense of sympathy which leads to their sense of concern.

Besides, findings show that linguistic features such as personal pronoun, particles and intensifier can also be seen in the teachers' responses. The personal pronoun 'I' is favoured by the teachers as it emphasises a personal interest and their involvement with the foster children. Apart from that, particles such as *lah* or *nya* and intensifier *memang* (really) serve to explicitly reinforce teachers' concerns about the problems encountered by the foster children.

4.1.4 Analysis of Commissive Act in Teachers' Responses

Commissive act seems to be the least common in teachers' responses where they ensure, give assurance or make promises to help foster children regarding their needs and issues. Findings reveal a total of 4% of teachers use commissive acts in the stages of refocusing and collaboration.

4.1.4.1 Stage of Refocusing in Teachers' Responses

In the stage of refocusing, it is observed that only 4% of teachers use commissive act to give assurance in helping the foster children to solve their financial problem.

(i) The Need for Financial Support

The need for financial support among foster children is one of the needs raised by teachers during interview. One example can be seen in Excerpt 74 where a teacher

promises to offer assistance to these children when necessary (see Appendix C, Section 3G, Question 8).

Excerpt 74

- [1] T22: **If they have some problems / some of them do come and see me** / yes /
[2] there are one or two students who they come and see me they say
[3] teacher / I don't have this enough money to buy uniform / for as I
[4] say this uniform bodies / **the uniform itself is expensive** / so when
[5] they these people come and see me / **we will try to solve their problems** /

T22 acknowledges that the foster children do complain to her about their problems in line 1 “if they have some problems, some of them do come and see me, yes”. She reports that foster children could not afford to buy extra co-curriculum uniform (line 3) and at the same time states that “the uniform itself is expensive” (line 4) to show her awareness of these children’s financial issue. The commissive act in this excerpt took the form of a promise when T22 employs the modal verb ‘will’ (line 5) to ensure that she and the school committee will resolve this issue in near future “we will try to solve their problems”.

4.1.4.2 Stage of Collaboration in Teachers’ Responses

Based on the findings, only 4% of teachers use commissive act in the stage of collaboration to assure that they will monitor these children’s academic performance in school.

(i) The Need for Monitoring

As foster children need monitoring in terms of their academic performance, T18 in Excerpt 75 employs commissive act to assure that the school has a plan to address this need (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 75

- [1] T18: *Saya rasa pelajar-pelajar ni **perlu**kan bimbingan daripada orang*
 I think students these need guidance from people
 I think these students need guidance from someone
- [2] *selain daripada er role dia di di rumah / rumah anak yatim tersebut /*
 other from his/her in in house / home orphanage that is /
 other than their role in the house / the foster home /
- [3] *dia **perlu**kan orang lain / terutamanya guru untuk membantu mereka /*
 he/she needs people other / especially teacher for helping them /
 they need someone else / especially teachers to help them /
- [4] *dan kita memang **kita** bercadanglah pihak-pihak sekolah /*
 and we indeed we suggest PARTICLE lah parties school /
 and we actually suggested to our school community /
- [5] *pihak PIBG baru ni **bermesyuarat** / **kita** bercadang untuk*
 party just this meeting / we plan to
 parents-teachers association just had meeting recently / we are planning to
- [6] *mengadakan konsep mentor-mentee / dan Insha 'Allah pelajar-pelajar ini **kita***
 have concept / and Praise God students these we
 have the mentor-mentee concept / and Praise God these students
- [7] *akan kekalkan / **kita akan** tetapkan er ibubapa angkat di sekolah /*
 will be retained / we will set parents foster in school /
 will be retained / we will set foster parents in school /

T18 uses the modal verb *perlu*kan (need) (lines 1 and 3) to assert the necessity for foster children to be monitored. The commissive element can be seen in T18's assurance *kita akan tetapkan er ibubapa angkat di sekolah* (we will set foster parents in school). He utilises the modal verb *akan* (will) (line 7) to give assurance of establishing a mentor-mentee system where each foster child will have a mentor that plays the role of foster parent in school. While giving the assurance, T18 uses the personal pronoun *kita* (lines 4 to 7) as he represents the school committee as a whole to show that the school and parents committee work together to monitor the foster children's academic performance. The act of collaboration in assisting the foster children can be further seen from the verb *bermesyuarat* (meeting) in line 5.

Commissive act can be seen in the stages of refocusing (4.1.4.1) and collaboration (4.1.4.2) when two teachers employ the modal verb 'will' to promise, ensure or give assurance in addressing the foster children's problems regarding their financial issues

In the stage of personal, T15 expresses her view regarding foster children's academic performance through the use of negative lexical items. T15 repetitively uses the adjective 'not very good' (line 1) in the form of expressive act to put forth a negative evaluation towards the foster children's academic performance in school. Apart from expressive act, representative act can be seen in the form of description of the foster children's poor academic performance which represents T15's thought of having a basic skill is extremely significant for each student. By further elaborating on the foster children's poor academic performance with the statement "they are still there" (line 2), this shows no sign of improvement on their academic performance due to poor fundamentals. T15 reports that so far she has not noticed any student from foster home with good academic result, as evident in the statement "I have yet to see a very good student from foster home" in line 3. Instead of providing any suggestion to improve the situation, she accepts the reality, in the utterance "I can't blame them" (lines 3 and 4), where their results are as expected since they are from a foster home. T15's utterance may indicate her support for foster children's non-achievement due to lack of guidance from home.

In the stage of consequences, T15 is concerned about the impact of foster children not having a strong basic knowledge when they reach upper secondary syllabus level. T15 provides negative statements such as "not very good" (line 1) and "not strong" (line 5) instead of words like 'poor' or 'weak' while describing foster children's academic performance. Perhaps, such usage of words is to decrease the intensification of her negative evaluation about foster children's poor academic performance. T15 code-switches using the English word 'basic' (line 2) to the Malay word *asas* (line 4) to highlight that the foster children's basic foundation of the subject she teaches is still

weak. The statement “It is just because their *asas* (basic) is not strong” in line 4 indicates that having poor basic foundation could be one of the reasons for their poor academic performance. This is evident from the use of the conjunction ‘because’ (line 4) when she describes the underlying reason for their poor academic performance.

In the stage of management, T15 states that the impact of foster children’s poor basic skill is a challenge she faces in teaching them as shown in the statement “It’s quite difficult when I teach them in Form Four Form Five” (lines 5 and 6). She uses the explicit intensifier ‘quite’ to describe the level of difficulty that she faces when teaching the foster children. Besides, T15’s utterance “the damage is done already” (lines 6 and 7) suggests that it seems a little too late to improve their poor academic performance if training for their basic skills is not initiated from an early age. Hence, this issue requires attention where foster children should be trained to have strong basic knowledge in every subject in order to improve their poor academic performance.

In Excerpt 77, T9 employs representative act and directive act to voice her concern about the foster children’s need for a slower pace of learning for their poor academic performance. Unlike T15, T9’s response can only be categorised in the stages of management and refocusing (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 10).

Excerpt 77

- [1] T9: *Dia mesti ada alat bantu mengajar yang sesuai dengan tahap dia* /
He/she must have tool aid teaching which appropriate with level his/her /
There must be teaching aids appropriate to their level /
- [2] *contoh er macam flash card kan / flash card tu / tahap dia mesti*
example like right? / that / level his/her must
for example right? / the / must be
- [3] *tahap sekolah rendah lagi / contoh mesti lagi diajar membaca* /
level school primary still / example must still be taught reading /
at the primary level / for example (they) must also be taught to read /
- [4] *mengulang perkataan yang sama / macam rumah ini rumah ini rumah ini*
revising word which same / like house this house this house this
to repeat the same words / like this house this house this house
- [5] *rumah saya / rumah saya besar / mesti macam tu / mesti satu-satu*

- [6] house my / house my big / must like that / must one by one
 my house / my house is big / (it) must be like that / must (do it) one by one
lepas tu mesti berulang-ulang benda yang sama / jadi lamalah /
 after that must repeat thing which same / so long PARTICLE lah /
 and then must repeat the same thing / so it takes a long time /
- [7] *tapi sebab dia masuk sama dengan kategori budak yang lain / kita susah*
 but because he/she enters same with category child the other / we difficult
 but because they are in the same category as other students / it is difficult for
- [8] *nak tackle / jadi kita kena menghabiskan syllabus pada biasa /*
 to / so we have to complete at normal /
 us to handle / so we have to complete the at the normal rate /

Representative act can be observed when T9 asserts the need to teach the foster children at a slower pace with the use of modal verb *mesti* (must) (line 1). With a slower pace of teaching, it is *susah* (difficult) (line 7) for T9 to teach the foster children as it takes a longer time to complete the school syllabus (line 6). Nevertheless, the use of modal verb *kena* (have to) (lines 8) shows that she is obligated to complete the syllabus within the given period of time. T9's description on the barrier she encounters when teaching the foster children can be categorised in the stage of management.

Furthermore, T9 also performs directive act when she suggests using appropriate teaching aids (line 1) and taking a suitable pace (lines 3 and 4) when teaching the foster children due to their slow pace of learning. Several examples are also given to illustrate her suggestion in addressing the foster children's academic needs during their formal lesson. It is evident from lines 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 that she repetitively uses the modal verb *mesti* (must) to suggest the need for teachers to carry out the task in order for foster children to improve their academic performance. The use of modal verb *mesti* (must) to emphasise and insist on the necessity for an appropriate pace of teaching along with teaching aid denotes T9's concern and intention to help foster children to perform better academically. Therefore, her response is also categorised in the stage of refocusing.

Similar to T9, the following excerpt also falls in two categories of speech act (i.e. representative and directive acts) and two stages of concern (i.e. stages of management and refocusing) when T10 voices concern on the barriers in teaching the foster children (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 78

- [1] T10: ***Halangannya ialah masalah disiplin pelajar lah*** /
Obstacle is problem discipline student PARTICLE *lah* /
the obstacle is students' discipline problem /
- [2] *bila kita tidak boleh terlalu fokus dengan mereka ni / untuk*
when we cannot too focus with them this / for
when we cannot be too focused on them / to
- [3] *memahami peranan mereka dengan pelajar lain / semua ni*
understanding role their with student other / all these
understand their roles with other students / all these
- [4] ***kena dibalancedkan / melainkan sekolah ini ada pendidikan khas*** /
have to be balanced / unless school this has education special /
have to be balanced / unless this school has a special education /
- [5] *pengaliran pendidikan khas / jadi cikgu pendidikan khas*
conduction education special / so teacher education special
special education stream / so special education teachers
- [6] *boleh fokus kepada mereka berdua ni /*
can focus to them both this /
can focus on the two of them /

Representative act can be seen when T10 states that one of the barriers in teaching the foster children is the disciplinary problems *halangannya ialah masalah disiplin pelajar* (the obstacle is students' disciplinary problem) in line 1. Hence, she asserts that it is an obligation to fairly address the need of foster children and other students in class by employing the modal verb *kena* (have to) in *kena dibalancedkan* (have to be balanced) in line 4. In other words, it is difficult to give every student equal treatment due to the large number of students in a class. T10's response can be categorised in the stage of management for sharing the type of challenge she encounters in addressing the academic needs of foster children.

Although foster children have disciplinary problems, teachers are not able to fully focus on them because every student requires attention in school. Due to the various

barriers in giving attention to foster children, T10 performs a directive act when she suggests a way for these children to receive more attention in school. She utilises the pragmatic connector *melainkan* (unless) in line 4 to suggest an alternative way to resolve the problems in which foster children may not be neglected in school if they are placed in a special education stream. Through her suggestion, T10 can be seen trying to reach out for a change in the school system so that foster children can have a better learning environment. Therefore, her response can also be categorised in the stage of refocusing.

Unlike the previous excerpt, T10 in Excerpt 79 uses expressive act to express her feeling about the foster children's problem in completing school task as well as representative act to describe the way she resolves the foster children's problem in completing school task. Therefore, her response can be categorised in the stages of personal and refocusing (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 79

- [1] T10: *Saya pernah beri latihan yang dibawa balik ke rumah /*
 I ever given exercises which to be taken back to home /
 I have given take home exercises /
- [2] *tapi orang kata dia punya kekecewaan ni apabila dapat*
 but people say his/her own disappointment this when get
 but they say it was a disappointment when (you) get
- [3] ***buku kosong baliklah*** / *jadi saya telah menukar*
 book empty back PARTICLE *lah* / so I have changed
 an empty book back / so I have changed my
- [4] ***tekniklah*** *di mana semua latihan perlu dilaksanakan dalam*
 technique PARTICLE *lah* where all exercises need to be completed in
 technique where all the exercises have to be completed during
- [5] *waktu saya / dan jika tidak disiapkan / kita akan sambung ke*
 time my / and if not completed / we will continue to
 my period / and if it's not done / we will continue in the
- [6] *kelas yang seterusnya****lah*** /
 class which subsequently PARTICLE *lah* /
 next class /
- [7] *pada hari keesokannya ke macam tu lah /*
 on day next or like that PARTICLE *lah* /
 the next day would be the same /

T10 expresses her dismay with the foster children for not completing school tasks due to the lack of monitoring in the foster home (line 2) using the adjective *kekecewaan* (disappointment) (line 2) along with the particle *lah* (line 3). T10's feeling of sheer disappointment regarding the foster children's incomplete school tasks can be categorised in the stage of personal as it illustrates her concern towards the foster children's academic performance.

As a result, T10 has taken the initiative to address this issue when she states that she altered her teaching techniques with the verb *menukar* (change) (line 3) by ensuring that the foster children complete their school tasks. This act signifies T10's apprehension concerning the foster children's academic outcomes. T10's action in making a difference by solving the problem can also be categorised in the stage of refocusing.

Excerpt 80 consists of expressive act and directive act which respectively falls in the stages of personal and refocusing when T7 expresses concern and gives suggestions about the need for monitoring when foster children leave foster home (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 7).

Excerpt 80

- [1] T7: Okay *yang saya tahu bakti bila dah umur lapan belas tahun* /
that I know foster when already age eighteen /
from what I know at the foster home when one is eighteen /
- [2] *dia dibenarkan untuk bebas ya / bekerja / maksudnya dia dah*
he/she allows to free yes / work / means he/she already
one is free / to work / it means that one
- [3] *tak duduk kat bakti / dia duduk sendiri /*
not staying at foster / he/she stays alone /
won't be staying at the foster home / he/she stays on his/her own /
- [4] *itu yang saya takut cabaran tu / dia dibenarkan untuk hidup*
that is what I afraid challenge that / he/she allows to live
that challenge worries me / he/she is allowed to live
- [5] *sendiri / cari rumah sewa sendiri / bekerja sendiri /*
alone / look house rented alone / work alone /
alone / look for his own rented house / work by himself /
- [6] *maksudnya mereka ni / perlu dipantau lah /*
means they this / need to be monitored PARTICLE *lah* /
it means these children / need to be monitored /

- [7] *perlu dipantau* / follow up *mereka* /
 need to be monitored / them /
 need to be monitored / with them /

T7 expresses her concern about foster children's future as she is aware that they have to leave foster home once they turn eighteen. Having to look for a place to stay, job and survive by themselves worries her. T7 conveys her emotion through the adjective *takut* (worries) in line 4 *itu yang saya takut cabaran tu* (that challenge worries me). The literal meaning of the adjective *takut* refers to afraid. However, in this context of use, *takut* (line 4) connotes the meaning of being anxious and worried. T7's concern in the description of her feeling about the foster children's uncertain future plans is categorised in the stage of personal.

Subsequently, T7 performs a directive act when she suggests monitoring the foster children. In lines 6 and 7, she repetitively employs the modal verb *perlu* (need to) and the particle *lah* to intensify the necessity to do regular follow-up on the foster alumni. Here, the suggestion is performed through the third party (i.e. the interviewer) as it could be directed to the social welfare agency. T7's suggestion also signals her intention to help the foster children and can be categorised in the stage of refocusing.

In Excerpt 81, T6's response falls into the stages of management and consequence when she uses representative act to describe the barriers in teaching the foster children and the consequence of their lack of motivation (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 81

- [1] T6: If I'm teaching English / basically **language barrier** / partly
 [2] **language barrier** / that's why sometimes I had to speak in
 [3] *Bahasa Melayu* with them / er::: barrier::: sometimes **they don't**
 Malay language
 [4] **even have books in the classroom** / they::: **lack of motivation** /
 [5] **they sometimes sleep in the classroom because they say they**

[6] **are too tired** / some of it /

In the stage of management, T6 asserts by repetitively utters ‘language barrier’ (lines 1 and 2) to highlight that it is a huge challenge teaching the foster children English. The use of the modal verb ‘had to’ (line 2) indicates that T6 is compelled to code-switch while teaching the foster children due to their poor proficiency of English, which is a concern because it affects their academic performance. It is also observed that T6 employs the personal pronoun ‘I’ to narrate her personal experiences or circumstances in teaching the foster children (lines 1 and 2).

Additionally, the correction from ‘basically’ to ‘partly’ in line 1 shows that language barrier is not the only barrier T6 encounters while teaching the foster children. T6’s frustration and disbelief about the foster children’s lack of preparation in school can be seen through the statement “they don’t even have books in the classroom” (lines 3 and 4), which subsequently points to the notion that they are obviously not ready to learn the subject. T6’s concern about the impact of the lack of motivation can be seen in line 4 when she points out that they actually sleep during her lesson, which can be categorised under the stage of consequences. The conjunction ‘because’ in line 5 is used to introduce the underlying reason that triggers them to fall asleep. The foster children’s language barrier and not having their books as well as lack of motivation during their classes seem to be demotivating them from learning the particular subject.

In Excerpt 82, T3’s response can be categorised in the stages of management and refocusing when he uses representative act to describe the barriers in teaching the foster children and the action he takes to help them (see Appendix C, Section 3B, Question 8).

Excerpt 82

- [1] T3: *Dari segi mungkin halangan pertama sebab bila mengajar /*
In terms of maybe obstacle first because when teaching /
Maybe from the first obstacle because when teaching /
- [2] **er:::** *halangan dari segi kita nak menyediakan / okay*
obstacle in terms of we want prepare /
obstacle in terms of preparing /
- [3] *bila saya mengajar / mereka lambat tau / mereka lambat ada*
when I'm teaching / they slow you know / they slow there is
when I'm teaching / they are slow you know / they are slow
- [4] *untuk penyediaan buku tu / dia memang er::: dia kata*
for preparation book that / he/she indeed he/she says
in getting the books / he/she actually says
- [5] *rumah bakti er::: lambat sediakan buku / itu halangan dia lah /*
home foster slow preparing book / that obstacle his/hers /
the foster home is slow in getting the books / that is his/her obstacle /
- [6] *bila kita dah start mengajar / mereka tak ada buku / saya sebagai*
when we have started teaching / they do not have book / I as
when we have started teaching / they have no books / I as
- [7] **guru saya akan belikan buku untuk pelajar-pelajar saya /**
teacher I will buy book for students my /
a teacher I will buy books for my students /

T3 repetitively utilises the adjective *lambat* (slow) in lines 3 and 5 to describe his discontentment with the foster caregivers for not preparing books and resources for the children in time especially when their formal lessons begin. However, T3 seems to be reluctant to highlight the issue of slow preparation of books and resources from the foster care organisation when he hesitates with the frequent prolongation of the pause filler /er:::/ (lines 2, 4 and 5) and the pragmatic marker *tahu* (you know). Subsequently, he becomes more explicit when he uses the particle *lah* (line 5) in *itu halangan dia lah* (that is the obstacle) to emphasise the lack of books and resources is a challenge when teaching the foster children. His description of the barrier in teaching the foster children is categorised in the stage of management.

Since the foster children do not have their books and resources in time for the lesson, T3 describes the way he handles the problem. Perhaps, T3 feels obligated to help the foster children as he sees it as his responsibility as a teacher *saya sebagai guru* (I as a teacher) in lines 6 and 7. T3 states *saya akan belikan buku untuk pelajar-pelajar saya* (I

will buy books for my students) in line 7 to show his way in resolving the problem through buying books for his students. T3's description on his present deed in managing the current predicament can also be categorised in the stage of refocusing.

Based on the findings, representative act, directive act, expressive act and commissive act are used by the teachers. With the use of representative act and expressive act, it can be observed that the teachers are aware and concerned about foster children's academic needs and issues when they describe, report, or complain about these children's poor academic performance. At the same time, directive act is also salient in their responses when they try to reach out for support through their suggestions and requests. Through their use of speech act categories, majority of the teachers' concern fall in the stages of refocusing and management as they highlight the issues such as lack of time with foster children, poor academic performance, financial issues, behavioural problem, the lack of attention and peer influence. Apart from these issues, foster children are also in need of attention, motivation, monitoring and financial support which can be observed when the teachers assert through the use of modal verbs and explicit intensifiers; whereas, the teachers also employed hedges at times to mitigate their views. Nevertheless, they do provide assurance and help whenever possible in addressing the academic needs and issues encountered by foster children.

4.2 Language of Concern from Foster Caregivers

Analysis of the data in Table 4.10 reveals that majority of foster caregivers employ representative act, directive act and expressive act when addressing the academic needs of foster children.

Table 4.10: Speech Act Categories in Foster Caregivers' Responses

No.	Speech Act Categories	Percentage
1.	Representative Act	100%
2.	Directive Act	83%
3.	Expressive Act	33%

Through the use of speech act categories, foster caregivers' responses are prominent in the stages of management and refocusing, followed by the stages of collaboration, awareness, personal and consequences. Within these stages of concern, the foster caregivers raised various issues regarding the needs and academic performance of foster children. Section 4.2.1 begins with the analysis of representative act in caregivers' responses as this category is highly used by caregivers during interviews.

4.2.1 Analysis of Representative Act in Foster Caregivers' Responses

Representative act is frequently employed by caregivers in this study to claim, assert, state, justify, affirm, quote, exemplify, describe and report about the foster children's academic issues and needs. Table 4.11 shows the percentage of caregivers' responses.

Table 4.11: Stages of Concern with Representative Act in

Foster Caregivers' Responses

No.	Stages of Concern	Percentage
1.	Stage of Management	83%
2.	Stage of Refocusing	83%
3.	Stage of Collaboration	67%
4.	Stage of Awareness	50%
5.	Stage of Consequences	33%

Table 4.11 shows that representative act is most commonly employed by caregivers in the stages of management and refocusing compared to stages of collaboration, awareness, personal and consequence. The next section begins with the analysis of caregivers' responses in the stage of management.

4.2.1.1 Stage of Management in Foster Caregivers' Responses

In the stage of management, representative act is mainly used by caregivers to describe, state, assert, justify, illustrate, claim, report and indirectly complain about the issues faced in managing foster children. The following table contains the percentage of foster caregivers who voice their concern about the recurring types of issues regarding the academic performance of foster children.

Table 4.12: Types of Issues in the Stage of Management with Foster Caregivers'

Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Issues	Percentage
1.	Financial Issues	50%
2.	Lack of Suitable Staff Members	50%
3.	Lack of Tutors	33%
4.	Lack of Support from Social Welfare	33%
5.	Discrimination in School	17%

As shown in Table 4.12, the issues mainly highlighted by the caregivers are financial issues and lack of suitable staff members. This is followed by lack of tutors, lack of support from social welfare and discrimination among foster children in school. The following sections present the type of issues as well as examples of representative act found in caregivers' responses.

(i) Financial Issues

Caregivers assert, justify, state and describe the financial issues namely the lack of funds to hire tutors and recruiting trained staff members, which are evident from Excerpts 83 to 86 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 18).

Excerpt 83

[1] G3: **if** we can get committed in / volunteers to come committed / because
[2] normally volunteers are not committed / **you see** / they have their
[3] own work / so they just come and go / sometimes half way they drop /
[4] so if they can help us / because they can **cut our cost** / the volunteers
[5] will **reduce our financial burden** / **you see** / so we are all depending
[6] on public charities / we don't have any philanthropy supporting us /
[7] we are all depending on public charities / so no doubt **JKM** also gives
[8] us grant and all that / but that's **not enough** / so **if** we can get committed
[9] volunteers who can come here regularly and monitored our children
[10] and help us that ah / then we can do better / ah / **unfortunately** we
[11] don't have that *lah* / so besides that / we can have volunteers like teach
[12] physical like er exercise for the children / dances and things like that /
[13] or somebody can volunteer er computers / regularly they come and
[14] help teach the children / then they can improve on these types of

[15] things /so there are lots of things we can do for them / lots of things /
 [16] **but** all these things **we don't have money / we only need help /**
 [17] man power / **you see** / there are / there are lot of volunteer / voluntary
 [18] clubs and things like that / they wanted to come / but they come for a
 [19] short while / after that they disappear / so it comes back and falls on
 [20] back / around us again / then we'll have to look for somebody to pay
 [21] the money /this is **tough** /

In Excerpt 83, G3 expresses his wish for voluntary tutors to guide his foster children in their weak subjects as it would reduce the foster home's financial burden. G3 can be seen using the pragmatic connector 'if' (lines 1 and 8) to emphasise that his foster children's academic progress will be monitored and their financial burden will be reduced only under the condition of receiving assistance from committed voluntary tutors. The direct statements "cut our cost" (line 4) and "reduce our financial burden" (line 5) further support his stance on the advantages of having committed volunteers to tutor his foster children. G3 adopts the pragmatic marker 'you see' (lines 2, 5 and 17) to invite the interviewer to understand the benefits underlying his wish. Having stated that foster children can do better if there are voluntary tutors (lines 8 to 10), it shows his indirectness to reach out for more support from society.

Nevertheless, there is a contradiction where his wish for committed voluntary tutors is yet to be fulfilled, as evident in the negative statement "unfortunately we don't have that *lah*" (lines 10 and 11). The adverb 'unfortunately' (line 10) and the pragmatic connector 'but' (line 16) highlight that G3 is unable to fulfill his wish due to the lack of funds and lack of committed volunteers to help the foster children. In line 16, he states "we don't have money" and asserts "we only need help" due to the lack of funds in hiring tutors for the foster children. Such a move once again denotes that he is trying to reach out for financial support from the public. G3 asserts with the modal verb 'need' (line 16), to indicate that help is required to fulfill the foster children's academic needs. Besides, G3's concern is evident when he employs the adjective 'tough' (line 21) along

with the adverb ‘not enough’ (line 8) to describe his difficulty in seeking financial support from JKM (social welfare agency) (line 7).

Similarly, the lack of funds in hiring tutors is also perpetuated by G4, a caregiver from another foster home in Excerpt 84.

Excerpt 84

- [1] G4: No / **we don’t have the money / lack of fund** / we have volunteers
[2] **but** they’re not committed enough / they’re not understanding
[3] enough / patience enough /

G4 denies hiring any tutor to assist foster children with their academic pursuits. He explicitly states the problem “we don’t have the money” and “lack of fund” in line 1 to highlight the financial problems in hiring tutors for the foster children. Additionally, G4 employs the pragmatic connector ‘but’ (line 2) to show a non-satisfaction of illocutionary condition which illustrates that having voluntary tutors does not give much benefit. The volunteers are deemed to be inadequate as well as lacking commitment, understanding and patience to help the foster children (lines 2 and 3). Therefore, the foster children’s need for tutors is yet to be fulfilled. G4’s description of the financial issue at the home seems to be a challenge he encounters when addressing the needs of foster children.

Correspondingly, in Excerpt 85, G1 also encounters financial issue while addressing his foster children’s need for tutors.

Excerpt 85

- [1] G1: We **used to** have in-house tuition teachers / employed by us to teach the
[2] children but one to teach so many cannot lah / so **definitely** we **have to**
[3] get outside help / paid tuition teachers from outside come in / yes we
[4] have / now a lot / **we’ve got a lot of volunteers as well / we cannot**
[5] **afford to pay too many paid tuition teachers** / so we only look for a
[6] lot of volunteers / young people who are willing to come in and teach /

In line 1, G1 states that they “used to have in-house tuition teachers”. However, they cannot afford one-to-one tuition for each foster child (line 5). He further states the need for tuition teachers who were paid (line 3). However, G1 adds on by stating that the home could not afford to pay too many tuition teachers (line 5) and therefore had to look for volunteers (line 6).

G1’s statement may indicate that the financial situation in the foster home is currently not as good as it was in the past. The comparison of financial situation of the home described by G1 is evident through the use of the verb phrase ‘used to’ (line 1). Unlike G4 (Excerpt 84) who only states about the financial issue in the home, G1 indicates the necessity and obligation for him to employ more tutors for his foster children with the use of explicit intensifier ‘definitely’ (line 2) and the modal verb ‘have to’ (line 2). However, due to financial issue, he can only rely on voluntary tutors instead of paid tutors.

Apart from tutors, in Excerpt 86, G1 also states that it is difficult to get trained staff. This could be an issue as untrained caregivers might lack the skill in monitoring foster children and their school tasks.

Excerpt 86

- [1] G1: Generally if you tell me that you asked me whether they are trained
[2] right from beginning / maybe some are they come from another home /
[3] you know / but generally because of the situation of our work / **very**
[4] **difficult** to get good staff / **very difficult** to get young trained staff /
[5] **because we can’t pay** / that’s one / **because** we’re NGO / **we don’t**
[6] **have a lot of money** / whatever money that we need / we spend on the
[7] children / and so we don’t get the best of staff / so we have to make do /
[8] **train them individually** or slowly /

G1 describes the challenging circumstances to recruit staff members who are trained when he employs the explicit intensifier ‘very’ to strengthen the illocutionary force of the adjective ‘difficult’ (lines 3 and 4). Further, G1 uses the connector ‘because’ (line 5)

to justify the reasons underlying his predicament, which is the lack of funds. The negative statements “we can’t pay” (line 5) and “we don’t have a lot of money” (lines 5 and 6) can be taken as complaints about the financial issues encountered by G1’s foster home. Although G1 could not afford to hire trained staff because the fund in the home is spent on the foster children’s expenditure, he does not give up. Having stated that the staff members (i.e. caregivers) are trained “individually or slowly” (line 8) at the home, G1 could be showing his responsibility as an executive manager of the foster home to provide his best caregiving service for his foster children. Perhaps, G1’s concern of not being able to recruit ready-trained caregivers seems to be his challenge in managing the foster home.

(ii) Lack of Suitable Staff Members

Caregivers, who are in charge of the administrative tasks (i.e. managers of foster home), state, justify and describe the difficulties in recruiting suitable staff members from Excerpts 87 to 89. Lack of suitable caregivers might also affect foster children as they might be deprived of adequate monitoring which is essential for their academic progress (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 18).

Excerpt 87

- [1] G1: Staff is my **biggest challenge** / basically **because I don’t get the best** /
[2] er corporate will be able to get the best / pay only ma / get the best / if
[3] you’re not good / get somebody to handle / here I can’t / first of all /
[4] **money is one** / secondly / the kind of work / the kind of work is
[5] something that not everybody wants to do / **the children all are very**
[6] **difficult one ah** /

In Excerpt 87, G1 overtly states that recruiting staff members is his “biggest challenge” (line 1). The explicit intensifier ‘biggest’ (line 1) allows him to strengthen the illocutionary force of the noun ‘challenge’ (line 1), which denotes his concern while managing the foster home. Having stated “because I don’t get the best” as an additional reason to support his statement in line 1, G1 clearly expresses his dissatisfaction with

the quality of his staff members (i.e. caregivers). He compares the job of caregivers to corporate company staff members in order to show the differences in terms of services and difficulties. Furthermore, he gives two reasons to justify the struggle to recruit quality staff member and one of the reasons is due to low salary. Apart from low payment, it is also a challenging task to manage foster children when G1 describes the difficulty with the explicit intensifier ‘very’ (line 5) and the filler ‘ah’ (line 6) to reinforce the adjective ‘difficult’ (line 6). Perhaps, G1’s statement in a way aims to reach out for help by revealing his predicaments in the home while attempting to address the needs of his foster children.

Similar to G1, G3 in Excerpt 88 also describes the arduous task to recruit suitable staff members for the foster home.

Excerpt 88

- [1] G3: We have **tough time** getting the right staff / that’s **not easy** ah /
[2] it’s **not easy** / and furthermore / er when they come / their working
[3] hours / and their nature of work / it’s all different from the normal
[4] work / so we / **they need a lot of sacrifice** / sacrifice their time and
[5] their families to be here / so it is **not easy** /

G3 describes the difficulty in recruiting caregivers through the phrase ‘tough time’ (line 1), the repetitive use of the adjective ‘not easy’ (lines 1, 2 and 5) as well as the filler ‘ah’ (line 1) to strengthen his predicament. Instead of using the adjective ‘difficult’ like G1 does (see Excerpt 87), G3 employs the adjective ‘not easy’ (lines 1, 2 and 5) in his description about caregivers’ work, perhaps to mitigate his view on the reason that demotivates anyone from becoming a caregiver. Besides, G3 also justifies his concern about the challenges encountered by caregivers where they are required to sacrifice their time while working at the foster home (line 4). In G3’s justification, the adverb ‘a lot’ (line 4) allows him to indicate the degree of quantification which describes the amount of sacrifices required for caregivers to fulfill their daily working tasks. G3’s concern

about not getting enough caregivers for his foster children due to the challenges described earlier seems to be a challenge they encountered while managing foster children and addressing their needs.

Caregivers' difficulty in recruiting staff members leads to the insufficient number of caregivers in a foster home. This is evident in the next excerpt.

Excerpt 89

- [1] G2: Pack up with work / er **not enough staff** / that's one thing / so that it
[2] means could have someone takes an MC / then erm I'm usually **covered**
[3] for them as well / so that's why when a caretaker job / I would know /
[4] **I've stayed overnight and took care of the children / you know** / er /
[5] people from HQ / nothing to do / they come in and they've stayed with
[6] the children for four five hours / to help bathe them / feed them / they'll
[7] do it / they know / **you know** / but that's not their job / so when they do
[8] all that / their jobs are on-hold / so then they have it make out of that /
[9] no one has complaint but tiring / I think that's why a lot of work er
[10] social workers in this type of a job / they don't last very long / because
[11] they get **burnout** /

G2, in Excerpt 89, states that the inadequate number of caregivers is a pertinent issue in managing the foster home. Such an issue highlighted by G2 could relate to current staff members who have to work extra hours to fulfill the needs of foster children in the home although it is not part of their responsibilities. G2 describes the challenge with the verb 'covered' (line 2) along with the pragmatic marker 'you know' (lines 4 and 7) to emphasise the situation in which foster caregivers are required to work extra hours due to the lack of staff members in the home, which signifies hard work.

Unlike G1 and G3, G2 in this excerpt describes her experience of overcoming the inadequate number of caregivers. This is observed in line 4 where the fact that G2 states "I've stayed overnight and took care of the children". From lines 5 to 8, G2 further indicates the challenges she experiences as a manager with other social workers to take care of the children at the foster home. Consequently, their work is delayed. This

finding suggests that there is a need for more caregivers for the home. Although the work is extremely tiring, they do not complain, which may indicate their love and care for these children. G2 further justifies her view using the noun ‘burnout’ (line 11) to indicate the condition of the staff members being physically and emotionally drained after a long period of hard work. This could also be one of the reasons that demotivate anyone from becoming a social worker or caregiver. The finding indicates lack of caregivers in a foster home could somehow affect foster children’s academic performance as these children might not receive the amounts of attention and monitoring they need on their academic progress.

(iii) Lack of Tutors

Lack of tutors is also an issue when addressing the academic needs of foster children. Such an issue is illustrated by caregivers via their statements, illustration, assertion and justification in Excerpts 90 and 91 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 18).

Excerpt 90

[1] G2: **Your core subjects** / it **could be** Maths / English / because **I** got
[2] eighteen children here / imagine two tutors to one / that’s only one
[3] subject we’re talking about / **how many subjects do they have in**
[4] **school?** / so **there’s still lot of subjects I haven’t covered** / okay / er /
[5] that would be another one / er third one would be sports / and extra /
[6] extra other stuffs like dance / music / er **I** believe / **I** was brought up in
[7] a way where music is very important when you study / okay / we all
[8] had to learn an instrument / when we had to go to school / and it helps
[9] in your memory in school / **it’s a proven thing right?** / **we can’t have**
[10] that for our children because **we don’t have** anywhere to send them
[11] yet / it’s **very expensive** / so / so far **we don’t have** any yet /

When asked about the subjects foster children poorly perform, G2 employs the personal pronoun ‘your’ as in ‘your core subject’ (line 1) instead of ‘their core subject’. In this instance, ‘your’ is supposed to refer to the ministry of education which designs the core subjects. This in a way suggests that G2 views the interviewer (i.e. the researcher) as an agent of change or someone who is exposed to the policy maker. She also seems to be

hesitant to specify the core subjects foster children are weak in when she hedges with ‘could be’ (line 1). This can be viewed as avoidance to commit to her statement. From lines 2 to 4, G2 begins counting the number of foster children who are in need of tutors to show that the lack of tutors is an issue. Then, she employs the tag question “how many subjects do they have in school?” (lines 3 and 4) to invite the interviewer to understand her perceptions underlying her statement of the need for financial support to hire more tutors to help the foster children. In the statement “there’s still a lot of subjects I haven’t covered” (line 4), the adverb ‘a lot’ explicitly intensifies her notion of concern about not being able to provide tutors for the foster children on the subjects they require tutoring.

Later, G2 shifts the topic of discussion from addressing the academic needs to the non-academic needs (e.g. sports and music) (lines 5 and 6) to further add on to the number of tutors the foster children need. With the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ (lines 1, 4 and 6) as a self-reference, G2 narrates childhood experiences where she was taught under the Malaysian’s Look East Policy (KBSR) school syllabus which used music lessons to help improve students’ memory in the learning process (lines 6 to 9). She stresses on the importance of music lessons where she perceives that students with good memory have the ability to perform better academically. In employing the tag question ‘it’s a proven thing right?’ (line 9), G2 does not commit to her statement. Instead, she reaches out for a validation or confirmation from the interviewer.

G2 frequently employs the negative auxiliary verb ‘can’t’ and ‘don’t’ in her negative statements from lines 9 to 11 to signal the barriers in attempting to address her foster children’s needs. This shows that she is once again hinting the need to provide these children with the same opportunities that she had. The constant use of ‘we’ (lines 9 to

11) should not be disregarded as it represents that the caregivers from the foster home share the same predicament. Finally, G2 justifies her reason for not being able to fulfil every foster child's need with the phrase 'very expensive' (line 11). Hence, the explicit intensifier 'very' reinforces the adjective 'expensive' as music lessons or musical instruments are expensive, which serves once again to highlight the need for financial support to hire tutors for the foster children.

Excerpt 91

- [1] G6: *akademik er sebab kami tak ada cukup cikgu untuk membuat er*
 academic because we do not have enough teachers to do
 academic because we do not have enough teachers to do
- [2] *ulangkajilah / tapi er majority yang baru sampai tu /*
 revision PARTICLE *lah* / but which just arrive that /
 revision / but for the new ones that just arrived /
- [3] *yang kita perlu tekankan tiga M / sebab kalau apa pun*
 which we need to emphasise three M / because if what also
 we need to emphasise on the three M / because if they do not even
- [4] *membaca tak reti / semua tak boleh jadilah / tapi bahagian*
 reading not know / all cannot happen PARTICLE *lah* / but part
 know how to read / they cannot do the others / but in terms of
- [5] *Matematik / Bahasa Inggeris tu memang majority lemahlah /*
 Mathematics / language English that indeed weak PARTICLE *lah* /
 Mathematics / English language indeed of them are weak in /

Similarly, in Excerpt 91, G6 highlights that the foster home is unable to hire adequate number of tutors for the foster children, which is a constraint towards assisting these children in improving their academic performance (line 1). G6 states that *kami tak ada cukup cikgu untuk membuat ulangkaji* (we do not have enough teachers to do revisions) (line 1) to indicate her concern about those who are weak in their academics and need guidance such as reading skills (line 3). Unlike G2 in the previous excerpt who only narrates about the lack of tutors, G6 describes the academic performance of foster children with the adjective *lemah* (weak) in line 5 to further justify the need for tutor. In her description, she also employs the explicit intensifier *memang* (indeed) and particle *lah* (line 5) to assert that the foster children poorly perform in their respective

core subjects (i.e. Mathematics and English language). Therefore, they need to tutors to guide them in these subjects.

(iv) Lack of Support from Social Welfare

In this section, representative act can be seen when two caregivers address the lack of support from social welfare management system via their indirect complain, statement, assertion and claim. One of the examples can be seen in Excerpt 92 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 14) where G2 indirectly complains about the social welfare's lack of support in helping a foster child's application of her birth certificate and identity card. Without birth certificate and identity card, foster children might encounter problem when taking national examinations.

Excerpt 92

- [1] G2: For me **I wouldn't be able to really tell you too much** / but like I
[2] said the monitoring will be one thing / definitely / and **like** a lot of
[3] things **like er** ICs and BCs / some children come in without that / we /
[4] for three four years / **sometimes we have to go back and forth** / and we
[5] still cannot get their BCs done / still can't get their ICs done / see /
[6] **welfare can do something about it / but because they've got so many**
[7] **cases pack up as well / I'm sure** / so it hasn't happened / there's one
[8] girl we had her since she was in this home / that mean she was already
[9] a primary student when she came in / she's eighteen / still cannot get
[10] her BC / so we can't get her IC / so she's like an illegal immigrant in
[11] Malaysia / and **we've been fighting the case** / we've gone up to court
[12] even / **but it's gonna take** / see that's the thing / see / **the welfare**
[13] **you're talking about** / could step in to the things like this / **but I don't**
[14] **think they can also because they are pack up with a lot of work** /

As illustrated in line 1, G2 seems to be not at ease to disclose the social welfare's support when she indicates that she is not able to reveal much. This could be taken as a way to avoid any conflict in her profession. She attenuates her statement about the social welfare agents for not getting the foster children's identity cards and birth certificates done by repetitively using the hedge 'like' (lines 2 and 3) and the pause filler /er/ (line 3). A noteworthy point is that from lines 3 to 6, G2 becomes gradually more direct in expressing her view on the social welfare's management. It can be seen

that the utterance “welfare can do something about it” (line 6) serves as a strong hint to urge the social welfare to resolve the issue of the foster children’s birth certificates and identity cards. However, G2 later takes a step back when she defends the organisation she works for in the statement “but because they’ve got so many cases pack up as well” (lines 6 and 7). She further asserts “I’m sure” (line 7) that the social welfare agents’ heavy caseloads. Perhaps, the need to conform to the organisation by masking their condition is perceived as necessary at this juncture. From lines 9 to 15, G2 seems to be repeating and reformulating her statements by which she initially attempts to reveal the problems she encounters at dealing with the foster children’s background documentation. But unlike her earlier response from line 3 to line 6, she seems to be direct and then gradually becomes indirect. Her desperation in trying to resolve the issue revolving the foster children’s documentations can be seen from the utterance “we’ve been fighting the case” (line 11). Yet, G2 withdraws from expressing her view when she produces an incomplete utterance “but it’s gonna take” (line 12). This incomplete utterance and the short break are slots that could indicate the duration of time needed to resolve the cases of foster children’s documentations although it has yet to be materialised. She then indicates what the social welfare agency could do about this issue in line 6.

In lines 12 and 13, G2 once again claims “but I don’t think they can also because they are pack up with a lot of work” (lines 13 and 14) as a shield to soften her criticism about the social welfare management system. From the findings, it could be observed that this excerpt shows that hedge, pause fillers and shields are signs of G2’s hesitance about the social welfare giving more support to resolve the issue of foster children’s background documentations. Moreover, G2 indicates that she and her colleagues have made several visits to the court (line 4). The multiple attempts to sort out the

background documentation of the foster children are indeed a challenge as she highlights her fight for these children's rights. Such an experience shows G2's sense of concern and care for children without identity cards and birth certificates. Simultaneously, her involvement in managing this issue creates an awareness of her social positioning as a member of a foster care organisation.

Unlike in the earlier excerpt, G2 seems to be more explicit in revealing the problem she encounters in managing the foster children. Excerpt 93 is the continuation of Excerpt 92 where G2 raises the issue on the lack of support from the social welfare agency.

Excerpt 93

- [1] G2: Recent cases that we had / we went to court / **we still haven't got the**
[2] **medical report / they gave us no medical report** / they told us the
[3] child has been / something has happened to the child / an abuse was
[4] happened / no medical reports / so **we don't know how to work**
[5] because **you don't even tell us anything** we **we've no idea** / so for us
[6] we set up a therapist for the child is a little bit difficult as well / we can
[7] set up one / but **how do we deal with the child from our end** / there
[8] has been a **very little** information given to us /

G2 describes the constraints she and her staff members have encountered with the negative statement "we still haven't got the medical report" (lines 1 and 2). The adverb 'still' (line 1) signifies G2's discontent with the pending result of her request. Subsequently, she becomes more overt when she claims "they gave us no medical report" (line 2) though the subject is vaguely mentioned with the pronoun 'they' (line 2). Her claim may signal her discontentment towards the social welfare agency for not providing them with the foster children's medical report. Without knowing their medical condition, addressing foster children's academic needs will be a challenge as some of them might have health or psychological problems. Moreover, the statements "we don't know how to work" (line 4) and "we have no idea" (line 5) show that it is

beyond her capability to manage the foster children without knowing their health conditions beforehand.

Further, G2 uses the personal pronoun ‘you’ instead of ‘they’ in the utterance “you don’t even tell us anything” (line 5). This could possibly be that she is hoping to invite the interviewer to understand the conditions underlying her complaint. By doing so, she could be indirectly highlighting her complaint to the social welfare agency. Although the utterance “how do we deal with the child from our end” in line 7 is a form of question, G2 is neither receiving nor expecting any replies. Hence, it is reasonable to categorise it as a rhetorical question which serves as G2’s complaint about the inadequate information of the foster children. Furthermore, she employs the explicit intensifier ‘very little’ (line 8) to reinforce the inadequate information given to the caregivers, which suggests that they need more details about the foster children’s medical condition in order to resolve their management predicament.

Similar to G2, the lack of support from social welfare agency is also perpetuated by G6 in Excerpt 94 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 14).

Excerpt 94

- [1] G6: erm *saya tak nampak lagi sebab buat masa ni kami tak terima*
 I do not see yet because make time this we do not receive
 I have yet to see because for the time being we have not receive any
- [2] *dana daripada mereka / memang mereka bagi lesen kita mohon okay /*
 fund from them / indeed they gave licence we apply /
 fund from them / indeed they gave us the licence that we applied /
- [3] then *tapi mereka pun dah hantar staff dia apa semualah /*
 but they also have sent staff theirs what all everything PARTICLE *lah /*
 but they also send their staff members /
- [4] *untuk er tinjau apa kita punya perkembangan / betul / tapi dari segi*
 to see what our own progress / true / but in terms of
 to monitor our progress / that’s true / but in terms of
- [5] *kita nak minta donation untuk grant tahunan / bulanan / kami tak pernah*
 we want ask for annual / monthly / we never
 we want to ask for for the annual grant / monthly / we never
- [6] *dapat / dah cuba hantar surat / tapi tak tahu mana*
 get / have tried send letter / but do not know where
 get it / we’ve tried by sending letters / but we do not know where

- [7] *silap* / *masih tak dapat lagi* /
 wrong / still have not received yet /
 it has gone wrong / still have not received it yet /

When the question about the support from social welfare is raised during interview, G6 states her view through the negative statements *kami tak pernah dapat* (we never get it) (line 5), *saya tak nampak lagi* (I have yet to see) (line 1) and *masih tak dapat lagi* (still haven't received it yet) (line 7). In these statements, G6 describes the challenges in managing the foster home by frequently using the adverb *lagi* (yet). G6's frequent usage could be to emphasise the circumstance in which the residents of foster home at present have yet to receive any support from the social welfare. Though the social welfare agency has given them a license to run the home and monitor their progress, G6's statement *buat masa ni kami tak terima dana daripada mereka* (for the time being we have not received any fund from them) in lines 1 and 2 indicates her disappointment with the agency for not receiving any donation despite the requests. In other words, by merely giving a permit and monitoring the home without any funds is not adequate as funds are needed to support the welfare of the foster children, especially their academic needs (e.g. tutors or books). Therefore, G6 reaches out for financial support from the social welfare agency by expressing her predicaments through this interview.

(v) **Discrimination in School**

Apart from lack of support from social welfare, G6 in the following excerpt also raised issue regarding discrimination in school among foster children (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 16).

Excerpt 95

- [1] G6: *Dia tak mendapat sokongan di sekolah* / *disebabkan dia daripada*
 He/she does not get support in school / is caused by he/she from
 He/she does not get the support in school / because he/she is from
 [2] *rumah kami* / *sebab kawan-kawan dia pun kata erm kamu duduk*
 house our / because friends his/her also said you stay
 our home / because his/her friends said that he/she is from the

- [3] *rumah kebajikan / **selalunya** anak kebajikan ni **bodoh** / memang ada /*
 home foster / usually children foster this stupid / indeed got /
 foster home / foster children are usually stupid / there really is /
- [4] ***ini perkara benarlah** / G6 yang menghadapi /*
 this thing true PARTICLE *lah* / G6 who facing /
 this is the truth / I experience it /

G6 reports that foster children are discriminated such as not getting support in school due to being under foster care *disebabkan dia daripada rumah kami* (lines 1 and 2). The conjunction *disebabkan* (because), literally means ‘is caused by’, acts as a connective in this context of use which may connect to the idea of the child not getting support in school due to family background. This discrimination ultimately denotes the negative implication of being a foster child.

G6 further exemplifies by quoting a criticism put forth by one of the students *selalunya anak kebajikan ni bodoh* (foster children are usually stupid) in line 3. In the quotation, the adverb *selalunya* (usually) (line 3) denotes that the student is generalising the foster children’s cognitive abilities and the Malay suffix *nya* further reinforces the generalisation; while the adjective *bodoh* (stupid) (line 3) is the student’s negative judgement of foster children in general. This generalisation could be perceived as society having a negative perception on foster children. By exemplifying the quotation from the student, G6 may want to highlight the discrimination foster children face at school (lines 1 to 3).

To further convince the interviewer, G6 employs the adverb *memang* (really) to explicitly intensify the force of *ada* (is), indicating that this is in fact true. She further advocates the truth underlying her statement by uttering *ini perkara benarlah* (this is the truth) in line 4. Clearly, this excerpt shows that G6 is trying to either highlight or reach out for help from both society and teachers in school to stop any forms of discrimination towards foster children. The findings in this excerpt show that G6 opines discrimination

affects foster children's academic performance and that is beyond her ability to help these children without the support from the society and school teachers.

Overall, in the stage of management, caregivers use representative act to indirectly complain, claim, report, state, and describe the problems in managing foster children with respect to poor academic performance, financial issues, foster caregiver's issues and the efficiency of social welfare management system. The caregivers are explicit when they voice the problems they encounter in addressing foster children's needs. Such explicitness can be seen through the use of explicit intensifiers to reinforce their assertions. Caregivers' willingness to the problems they encounter indicates their intention to reach out for more support while trying to address the needs of foster children. Moreover, negative statements and adjectives are often employed by caregivers to justify their difficulties. They also employ direct statements and use pragmatic connector 'if' to show their plight can be reduced through several alternative manners. Yet, contrastive markers 'unfortunately' and 'but' are used to show the conflicting ways in attaining these alternatives. Other linguistic features such as modal verbs, pragmatic marker 'you see', noun and rhetorical question are also used to invite the interviewer to understand the challenges they encounter. Besides, they also favour the personal pronoun 'we' to signal the involvement of caregivers as a whole who experience the same predicaments. Hence, caregivers' challenges in addressing the academic needs and issues of foster children should be given more attention.

4.2.1.2 Stage of Refocusing in Foster Caregivers' Responses

In the stage of refocusing, caregivers use representative act to assert, state, identify, justify, affirm, exemplify and describe ways they help foster children in addressing their

needs. The following table illustrates the percentage of caregivers who highlighted the types of needs during interviews.

Table 4.13: Types of Needs in the Stage of Refocusing with Foster Caregivers'

Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Tutors	50%
2.	The Need for Monitoring	33%
3.	The Need for Motivation	17%
4.	The Need for Awareness	17%

As depicted in Table 4.13, the needs for tutors and monitoring have a higher percentage than the needs for motivation and awareness. Such a finding depicts the importance to provide foster children with tutors and monitor their academic progress.

(i) The Need for Tutors

The need for tutors among foster children is highly raised by the caregivers when they assert, identify, state and describe their actions in addressing this need. Such a need is illustrated from Excerpts 96 to 98 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 35).

Excerpt 96

[1] G2: If a child lets us know that there's certain thing that interested in /
 [2] okay / er I have a few kids that come up and tell me erm I'm interested
 [3] in music /we **get** someone to teach them / er I'm interested in football /
 [4] we get / we actually **got** a basketball guy to come in just to teach
 [5] them basketball every Saturday / only the ones that are interested / so
 [6] there was about six of them that were chosen because they were very
 [7] interested / and they trained with them / okay / so in school / they're
 [8] doing well in that / erm those in education / they told us / they come
 [9] up and said I want more maths tuition / they already have one / they
 [10] want more / so we **got** them another tutor to come in / we work
 [11] with them / yeah / so we do let their interest / what they want /
 [12] **of course it's not enough** because someone now suddenly they want
 [13] dance lesson and all that / still haven't found a dance teacher / but
 [14] yeah / **we're looking at that** /

G2, in Excerpt 96, asserts that the foster care tries to fulfill every foster child's request regarding learning the subjects or sports they are interested in. G2 adopts the verb 'get' (line 3) to indicate her deed to deliberately hire tutors to cater for the need of her foster children; whereas, the verb 'got' in lines 4 and 10 signals that she has hired the tutors. The alteration of tenses indicates that she has put effort in the past and even in the present to fulfill her foster children's needs. Nevertheless, not all the children's wishes are fulfilled as she states that "of course it's not enough" (line 12) to indicate the inadequate number of tutors for every subject as each foster child has different preference in learning. Thus, there is a need for additional tutors such as a dance instructor. Despite not being able to obtain a dance instructor, G2's enthusiasm in trying to fulfill the children's wish by keeping her option open can be seen in the statement "we're looking at that" (line 14).

Similarly, G5 in Excerpt 97 also asserts that although foster care does fulfill foster children's need for tutors, each child has a different preference in learning.

Excerpt 97

- [1] G5: **We hire** *cikgu datang* / **we hire** *cikgu-cikgulah* /
 teacher comes / teachers PARTICLE *lah* /
 teacher to come / teachers /
- [2] **experience** *cikgu* / **except** / as you know / the children are not the same
 teacher /
 teacher /
- [3] background / so *ada* background *yang betul-betul nak belajar* / they will
 got which really really want learn /
 there are children who really want to learn /
- [4] study and take the opportunity / but some like *budak-budak yang homeless ni* /
 children that this /
 the children who are homeless /
- [5] *dia orang selalu* you know / and then *dia rasa macam er jauh hati sikit*
 he/she people always / he/she feel like far heart little
 they always / they feel like far away

G5 stresses her staff members and her commitment in helping the foster children to improve their academic performance with the statement "we hire" (line 1) to show their

concern about the academic needs of foster children. Furthermore, she describes the quality of the teachers they hire as “experience *cikgu* (teachers)” in line 1 to provide a more detailed description of the tutors’ professionalism to enhance the quality of teaching foster children. Nevertheless, there is a contradiction despite the action taken in helping to improve foster children’s academic performance, which can be seen through the word ‘except’ (line 2). Though G5 has employed tutors for foster children, it is unavoidable that there are children who left out as she states that these children are *jauh hati* (far away). Through her linguistic usage of adverbial phrase *jauh hati* (far away), G5 could mean that foster children are far away from achieving in their academic performance (line 5).

Unlike G2 and G5 who highlight on their act in hiring tutors, G4, in Excerpt 98, describes the ways he helps tutor his foster children with their studies, especially in the skills they are weak in such as speaking or writing.

Excerpt 98

- [1] G4: I have to pick up / focus on certain numbers of children / for
 [2] example the most er **I tackle** is two / you cannot go more / more
 [3] that’s it / I really go back again / you know / like because of my
 [4] **experience as general manager** / I know the moment they talk / **I can**
 [5] **tell which are the problem areas** / so I got to **tackle** okay the primary
 [6] first year / one two three / how can I teach / year five and six / how
 [7] can I teach / the secondary school / and from that can **tackle** whether
 [8] the basic is there or not / but most of them they don’t have the basic /
 [9] even in secondary school / the basic they don’t have yet / so er I
 [10] have to **tackle** that in another way / so go through for the materials
 [11] and then the exercises / evaluation / how to **tackle** this issue / and I
 [12] also got / I also **tackle** in terms of erm not only in writing / like okay
 [13] er in speaking / talking / **I do all sorts of sessions** where / when I know
 [14] they’re quite strong / so now we converse /

G4 repetitively employs the verb ‘tackle’ (lines 2, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12) to describe his efforts in trying to improve the foster children’s weak subjects. The act of focusing only two foster children at a time denotes his passion to help them improve their weak subjects which suggests more attention (line 2). Instead of using the personal pronoun

'we' similar to G2 and G5, G4 employs the personal pronoun 'I' to state his action of tutoring the foster children. G4 further justifies his act by stating that because of his "experience as a general manager" (line 4), he can identify "the problem areas (line 5), which signifies his awareness towards the foster children's academic performance. In addition, G4 states that he does "all sorts of sessions" (line 13) to indicate his enthusiasm and determination when he experiments with various methods of teaching to assist the foster children. G4's initiation as general manager and caregiver stepping in to help improve these children's academic performance is probably undertaken to cut the cost of hiring tutors, in consideration of their current financial issue and commitment in taking care of foster children.

(ii) The Need for Monitoring

Another need highly raised by the caregivers is the need for monitoring of foster children of their academic performance. In Excerpts 99 and 100 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37), the caregivers affirm, state and describe their actions taken to monitor the academic performance of foster children.

Excerpt 99

- [1] G1: How we help them to improve is that er **we'll get volunteers /**
[2] **we'll get tuition teachers / we'll send them for extra classes**
[3] and things like that to help them improve / extra-curricular
[4] activities will always be the school and things like that / er outside of
[5] that / we also let them attend classes like boys brigade lah / scouts lah /
[6] other events / you know / things like / that's when we help them to
[7] improve individually / educationally / the only way is to actually pay
[8] more attention into their day to day studies / this is where **my caregivers**
[9] got to play a **very very big role** / we cannot just like don't care about
[10] whether their homework is done / or whether their results are good /
[11] er the manager has got to play a role and look at their results and
[12] see whether good or no good / **if no good then let's do somethings**
[13] **about it** / so yes /

G1, in Excerpt 99, describes the ways he assists the foster children through the direct statements "we'll get volunteers", "we'll get tuition teachers" and "we'll send them for

extra classes (lines 1 and 2), with the hope of improving their academic performance through extra attention in teaching and learning. As an executive manager, G1 employs the phrase ‘my caregivers’ (line 8) to show his authority due to his position as a manager of the foster home. Having stated the ways he and his caregivers help the foster caregivers in terms of their academic performance, G1 orients his topic to the role which his caregivers are obliged to play especially in terms of monitoring. In line 9, G1 stresses the point about the pivotal role of caregivers and manager with the double intensifiers ‘very very big role’ when it comes to monitoring the academic progress of the foster children. This also signifies his apprehension concerning the children’s academic outcomes with great commitment. Besides, G1 also states “if no good, then let’s do something about it” (lines 16 and 17) in order to show his willingness to make changes with other alternatives to help his foster children change for the better in the statement.

Likewise, G2 also asserts that she constantly monitors her foster children despite not being at the foster home.

Excerpt 100

- [1] G2: **Very** / because when I do go back home / erm **if you notice we have**
[2] **CCTVs here right?** / okay not inside this office / outside / external /
[3] we’ve CCTVs / so / the minute I go back home / **every fifteen twenty**
[4] **minutes I’ll be checking** / but my staff are **very good** / er misbehaviour
[5] or anything / they’ll **immediately** call me / so I’ll call the child and
[6] actually speak to the child on the phone / and I’ll let them know / if
[7] there’s any case of really misbehaviour / **I don’t mind coming back** /
[8] which **I have come back before** / **my bosses have come back** /

In Excerpt 100, G2 affirms her high involvement in the foster children’s lives with the explicit intensifier ‘very’ (line 1). She also exemplifies the monitoring of the home by pointing out the CCTVs, which stands for closed-circuit television system or also known as video surveillance, while posing a tag question “if you notice, we have CCTVs here right?” (lines 1 and 2). By doing so, she may want to convince the

interviewer that they are constantly monitoring the foster children with tight surveillance CCTVs. In lines 3 and 4, she further describes her constant monitoring of the foster children through CCTVs with the duration of time in the statement “every fifteen twenty minutes I’ll be checking”, which reveals her concern for them. Subsequently, G2 praises her staff members’ efficiency for informing her of any misbehaviour among foster children, by conveying their concern through the use of adjective ‘very good’ (line 4) and adverb ‘immediately’ (line 5). Such a compliment allows her to promote good caregiving services offered by her staff members to maintain a positive outlook of the home. G2’s concern to care for the foster children regardless of their behaviour is conveyed linguistically through her statements in lines 7 and 8.

(iii) The Need for Motivation

This section illustrates the use of the representative act in a caregiver’s descriptions of enhancing the foster children’s motivation (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 101

- [1] G3: **I always** encourage all my children to participate in all the co-
[2] curriculums / it can be uniform / non-uniform or activities / even like
[3] secondary school children / **I go ask them to join club** / Lion Club /
[4] that club / must become a member / ah just **push** them /

G3, in Excerpt 101, believes that there is a need to enhance the foster children’s motivation. By calling them ‘my children’ (line 1), G3 portrays himself as a fatherly figure to the children. By being fatherly, G3 asserts with the adverb ‘always’ (line 1) and the verb ‘push’ (line 4) that he constantly encourages the children to be active participants in co-curricular activities. He further exemplifies his actions with the direct statement “I go ask them to join club” (line 3) in order to justify his assertion. Additionally, the personal pronoun ‘I’ (lines 1 and 3) denotes G3’s willingness to

motivate these children. His encouragement on the foster children's participation in school activities reflects his enthusiasm and care, at the same time, to help them to prepare for a better future.

(iv) The Need for Awareness

Teachers' awareness of the academic problems of foster children can be seen in the following excerpt (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 102

- [1] G4: For me in my / for example like when they say oh H student here got
[2] problem / when **I meet them** / that's when **I make them aware** / and
[3] that's when they begin to realise slowly /

In Excerpt 102, G4 states that "I meet them" and "I make them aware" (line 2) as he makes the teachers aware of the foster children's background so that they are informed of these children's problems. G4 also uses the personal pronoun 'I' (line 2) to signal his self-ascription to the descriptions about his deed in creating awareness among teachers about the foster children's academic needs. Making teachers realise that foster children need patience allow them to be more sensitive towards the problems these children face in school.

From the findings, it can be concluded that representative act is used caregivers use in the stage of refocusing to assert, state, identify, justify and affirm the need to take actions to help foster children. They can be seen illustrating, exemplifying and describing their actions explicitly with intensifiers. Additionally, explicit and double intensifiers are used to reinforce their concern and the actions taken. The caregivers make their statement in a direct manner as they tend to use direct statement, verbs, adverb and the first person pronoun 'I' and 'we' to represent the committee of the foster caregivers in general who take action to address the academic needs of foster children.

This shows that they also attempt to provide foster children with the best caregiving services such as hiring tutors or sending them for extra classes as well as constantly monitoring them.

4.2.1.3 Stage of Collaboration in Foster Caregivers' Responses

The manner in which the caregivers in this study use representative act to assert, affirm, state, justify, affirm and describe their collaboration in helping foster children improve their academic performance is illustrated in this section. The percentages of caregivers who highlighted the types of needs are displayed in the following table.

Table 4.14: Types of Needs in the Stage of Collaboration with Foster Caregivers' Use of Representative Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Monitoring	33%
2.	The Need for Awareness	33%
3.	The Need for Tutors	17%
4.	The Need to Maintain Rapport between Parent and Child	17%
5.	The Need for Secure Future Plans	17%

As shown in Table 4.14, the need for attention and awareness are highly raised by caregivers as they are significance in addressing the academic performance of foster children. The next sub-section further elaborates on the findings based on Table 4.14.

(i) The Need for Monitoring

This section discusses issues revolving around foster children's need for monitoring when caregivers assert, describe and state their act of collaboration (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 34).

Excerpt 103

- [1] G2: Yes / so I get **many phone calls** because the teachers are actually
[2] **linked** onto my **WhatsApp group** / so nowadays they actually have
[3] every er year let's say they are in primary two / they were Year Two
[4] **WhatsApp group** / so the school is wonderful in that /

In Excerpt 103, G2 asserts that she collaborates with teachers in monitoring the academic progress of foster children through phone calls and the social media application 'WhatsApp' with school teachers (lines 1, 2 and 4). Furthermore, the 'WhatsApp Group' (lines 2 and 4), which she frequently mentions in this excerpt, refers to the mobile application G2 and teachers use to keep in contact, allowing them to update any information promptly. This suggests that G2 is constantly informed about the latest information on foster children. The sharing also signifies the occurrence of collaboration between her and the school teachers towards helping the foster children's academic improvement. Additionally, the degree of quantification of phone calls she receives from school teachers is described through the word 'many' (line 1), which denotes the constant updates she receives about the academic progress of foster children in school. Her collaboration with the teachers is further evident through the verb 'linked' (line 2), which in this context of use, indicates that G2 has established a connection between the teachers and caregivers to monitor the foster children's progress in school.

Excerpt 104

- [1] G3: Yeah **we have to monitor** / you see / all the teachers have our contacts /
[2] they / anything **they'll straightaway call us** / ah / so tuition also they'll
[3] call **us** and tell **us** what's happening / so the children cannot escape /
[4] before he could even reach home / **we** know what happened /

Similarly, G3 in Excerpt 104, as a manager who monitors the home also describes his cooperation with school teachers and tutors in monitoring foster children's academic performance. G3 employs the modal verb 'have to' (line 1) to assert the necessity to

monitor the academic progress of foster children. Unlike G2 in the previous excerpt who uses ‘I’ and ‘my’ as self-reference, G3 frequently employs ‘we’ (lines 1 and 4) and ‘us’ (lines 2 and 3) in his assertion to represent his colleagues and his involvement in the process of monitoring the home as a whole. Besides, he states that teachers often share with caregivers the latest updates about his foster children (line 2) to show that they constantly collaborate to monitor the children. G3 reinforces the description of immediate action taken by teachers with the explicit intensifier ‘straightaway’ (line 2) to denote their efficiency in collaborating with the caregivers.

(ii) The Need for Awareness

Foster caregivers state, justify, assert and affirm that there is a need to create awareness about foster children’s educational goals. Such awareness is observable through G1’s response in Excerpt 105 and G4 in Excerpt 106 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 34).

Excerpt 105

- [1] G1: like for example we we we always look around for people who are /
[2] to see whether there are opportunities for these children to be placed
[3] with in terms of their educational goal / so we go and look around
[4] for places where we can integrate like for example they need to
[5] learn more things / they need to learn a lot of skills and things like
[6] that / so we go around and **meet up** with all these kinds of people /
[7] I also go around **giving talks** and things like that / to colleges /
[8] companies / more so to create awareness *lah* / **together** / you know /

In Excerpt 105, G1 states that he collaborates with others to create awareness towards foster children’s educational goals. G1’s collaboration is evident through the phrases ‘meet up’ (line 6) and ‘giving talks’ (line 7), which further strengthened by the particle *lah* (line 8). Also, his frequent use of personal pronoun ‘we’ denotes the collective act of his staff members and him in raising awareness of the educational goal of foster children among people; in other words, he could also be referring to the society. G1

asserts to have collaborated ‘together’ (line 8) with not only his staff members, but also other individuals from colleges and companies.

Collaboration is also highlighted in the next excerpt where G4 asserts that he works closely with the teachers in school to help them understand the background of foster children.

Excerpt 106

- [1] G4: Oh yes / **very closely** / **because I have to** understand them or to
[2] **make them understand the children** / er but most of them er I would
[3] say ninety percent are because of what they went through in life /
[4] they're **very withdrawn** / **very passive** in class / if you don't ask I
[5] won't talk / ah *banyak begitu* / I can't blame them ya /
/ many like that /
/ many of them are like that /

G4 employs the explicit intensifier ‘very’ (line 4) to strengthen the illocutionary force of the adverb ‘closely’ (line 1) in order to affirm the collaboration between him and the school teachers. G4 further justifies the reason of his collaboration with the pragmatic connector ‘because’ (line 1). Moreover, he uses the modal verb ‘have to’ (line 1) to assert the necessity and obligation of getting teachers to be aware of the background and behaviour of foster children (line 2). However, G4 orients his focus from the act of collaboration with teachers to the behaviour of foster children in school. He provides the negative evaluation on foster children’s attitude through the adjectives ‘withdrawn’ and ‘passive’ (line 4) and further reinforces with the explicit intensifier ‘very’ (line 4), to describe them as children with minimal social skills. Perhaps, in doing so, he further advocates the significance of collaboration between caregivers and teachers.

(iii) The Need for Tutors

G2, in Excerpt 107, collaborates with private tutors in order to improve the poor academic performance of foster children (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 34).

Excerpt 107

- [1] G2: I have private tutors for them / okay / we pay them hourly / salary /
[2] the reason why we've seen they're volunteers who come and work /
[3] they're **not as stable** / but when you pay someone / they come in
[4] because you're paying them money / yeah commitment / so it's
[5] about two students to one tutor / and the core subjects basically
[6] or the ones subjects that we get / then **we work with them** / that's
[7] the tutor / on the daily basis of course the staff **work with them** /

In Excerpt 107, there is an indication that G2 makes a distinction between paid and voluntary tutors. She describes the inefficiency of volunteers as 'not as stable' (line 3) because they are not committed to the task of helping the foster children. The lack of commitment from the voluntary tutors is the main reason G2 hires tutors for the foster children. Nonetheless, G2's act of collaboration can be seen from the statement "we work with them" (lines 6 and 7), which indicates that she has joined forces with the private tutors in aspiring to improve the foster children's academic performance.

(iv) The Need to Maintain Rapport between Parent and Child

The rapport between parent and child is also significant as it is presumed to bring a positive impact towards foster children's lives and academic performance. This is evident in the following excerpt (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 22).

Excerpt 108

- [1] G3: As I've said by monthly / **we'll** try to organise a programme
[2] where they all **come together** / all the mothers and the children
[3] **come together** / and then **we'll** have a programme for them /

G3, in line 1, states that he organises a monthly programme for foster children and their parents to maintain good rapport. He asserts that the biological mothers do maintain a certain rapport with the foster children by frequently keeping in touch with them when he repetitively uses the phrase 'come together' (lines 2 and 3). Such an assertion reinforces the act of collaboration between the caregivers and parents where a parent-child programme is organised. Additionally, G3 utilises the personal pronoun

‘we’ (lines 1 and 3) to represent the committee of foster home in general in working together to create a harmonious relationship between biological parents and foster children.

(v) The Need for Secure Future Plans

The following excerpt addresses the need to ensure foster children have a secure future plan before leaving the home.

Excerpt 109

[1] G2: **Yes we do / so that’s why we are able to tell you** / erm / you see /
[2] when **we** send them out of here / when they are eighteen / **we actually**
[3] **make sure they get into college / we secure their education first** / we
[4] don’t just send them out / okay / so that means if they’re able to study /
[5] we’ll ask them what they feel like studying / what they want to / so if
[6] they want to be a chef / they wanna be something / **we get them that**
[7] **place / we get someone to sponsor them** / and then we keep tabs of /
[8] we’ve someone in HQ who keeps tab of children who have gone up
[9] for studying skills / once they are done / we’ll try to get them a place
[10] to stay / workforce / we’ll try and get / cause we had connections right /
[11] so we’ll ask people / can you employ them / and then we let them go
[12] slowly / of course they do come back and visit / okay / coz this is
[13] home for them /

In Excerpt 109, G2 is very certain that the home has a plan to secure the foster children’s future when she asserts “yes we do, so that’s why we are able to tell you” (line 1). In her assertion, the verb ‘do’ expresses emphasis on the caregivers’ act of securing their foster children with a future plan. G2 also seems to be explicit when she uses direct statements such as “we actually make sure they get into college” (lines 2 and 3), “we secure their education first” (line 3), “we get them that place” (lines 6 and 7) and “we get someone to sponsor them” (line 7) to describe the ways she and her staff members secure the foster children’s future plan. Using the phrase ‘make sure’ and the word ‘secure’ in line 3, G2 asserts that she collaborates with her staff members and societies (lines 7 and 11) to ensure her foster children have secure jobs and are able to financially support themselves once they leave the care system. By doing so, she may

indicate that her collaboration with staff members, the future of the foster children is in a way secured.

Overall, caregivers have employed representative act in the stage of collaboration to assert, affirm, justify, state and describe their collaborations with other parties. Verbs or verb phrases such as ‘linked’, ‘meet up’, ‘come together’ or ‘work with them’ are highly prominent in this stage as they describe the collaborative act. The other linguistic features such as personal pronoun, modal verb, adverb and noun are also used to state and assert their collaborations.

4.2.1.4 Stage of Awareness in Foster Caregivers’ Responses

In this section, the findings show that 50% of caregivers are aware of foster children’s poor academic performance as they describe, affirm, justify, assert and state the academic problems in the stage of awareness.

(i) Poor Academic Performance

The findings show that foster caregivers use representative act to describe, affirm, report and state their awareness on foster children’s poor academic performance and academic problem, as illustrated from Excerpts 110 to 112 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 33).

Excerpt 110

- [1] G3: Naturally they are not all very brilliant *lah* / they even / as I’ve said they
[2] **even kindergarten level** / they can be in standard five six or Form One
[3] ah / but their levels **still kindergarten level** / basic / **still there** / **still there** /

In Excerpt 110, G3 describes the foster children’s poor academic performance by comparing their levels with kindergarten students despite being in upper primary or Form One. The adverb ‘even’ (line 2) and ‘still’ (line 3) as well as the term

'kindergarten level' (lines 2 and 3) can be viewed as G3's concern as the foster children's academic standing has not progressed and it is at rather basic kindergarten level.

The foster children's poor academic performance is also perpetuated by G4 in Excerpt 111.

Excerpt 111

- [1] G4: They're good in their religious topic / **but very poor** in the Maths / Science /
[2] *BM* / *BI* / because **I think** that's too much focus
Malay language / English language /
[3] on Islam that we forgot / in Islam / we've prepared for the world and
[4] for the life after / we prepared too much for the after and we forgot about
[5] the world / from the results I can see because I deal with the results /
[6] so I can see the asymmetrical right through / where is the problem area /

G4 states that his foster children perform better in religious subject compared to the core subjects and there is a dire need to improve their weak subjects. This comparison of the subject performances can be seen in his use of pragmatic connector 'but' (line 1). By using the connector, G4 marks the contrast between the foster children's good performance in their religious subject and poor performance in their various core subjects (i.e. Mathematics, Science, Malay language and English language). G4 further describes the foster children's comprehension skills in their core subjects as 'poor' and reinforces with the explicit intensifier 'very' in line 1. This signifies his concern and awareness towards the poor academic performance of foster children.

Subsequently, G4 states his view with 'I think' (line 2) on the school teaching system's high emphasis on the religious subject while neglecting the other core subjects. It can be observed that G4 is trying to reach out for support from the school by pointing out the problems to help foster children.

Apart from poor performance in core subjects, foster children also suffer from short memory span in their learning process.

Excerpt 112

- [1] G6: *Memang mereka ada masalah dari segi pelajaran / ada masalah er*
Indeed they have problem in terms of lesson / have problem
Indeed they have problem in terms of academic / there is problem
- [2] *kalau kita tengok kita nampak dia ni ada yang short memory / then bila*
if we look we see him/her this got the / when
if we see them we know that they have a / when
- [3] *kita cakap dengan mak dia / anak kamu ada masalah short memory /*
we speak with mother his/her / child you has problem /
we told his/her mother / your child has a short term memory problem /
- [4] *dia kata tak /*
she said no /
she said no /

G6 employs explicit intensifier *memang* (indeed) (line 1) to affirm her awareness about foster children's academic problem such as short memory span. However, she reports that a foster child's mother denies the child has a short memory span by quoting their conversation *kita cakap dengan mak dia, anak kamu ada masalah short memory, dia kata tak* (we told his/her mother, your child has a short term memory problem, she said no) (lines 3 and 4). The mother's denial of the child's short term memory and not seeking for help is considered by G6 as a problem faced by the child in learning and could probably be a reason for poor performance in school.

Generally, in the stage of awareness, caregivers use representative act to describe, affirm, justify, assert and state the problems experienced by foster children in a direct manner. Their directness could be observed through the use of explicit intensifiers such as 'very' and *memang* (indeed) to highlight their awareness of these children's predicament. The caregivers' awareness towards the academic performance of foster children can also be identified through their use of adverb and adjective while describing these children's poor academic performance. Moreover, caregivers are merely describing the academic performance of foster children and there are no

instances of suggestions or descriptions of actions, consequences, or collaboration. Hence, their responses fall under the stage of awareness.

4.2.1.5 Stage of Consequences in Foster Caregivers' Responses

In the stage of consequences, 17% of caregivers use representative act to describe, assert and state the consequences of the factors that affect foster children's academic performance. The types of issues which are parental influence and lack of monitoring are explained in the following sub-sections.

(i) Parental Influence

One caregiver expresses concern on the impact of a parent's advice towards a foster child as it could be one of the factors that influence his or her academic performance. This is illustrated in the following excerpt (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 19).

Excerpt 113

- [1] G2: It's the **mindset** of the child / erm there are certain children who just
[2] feel that / I have one boy okay / he'll openly tell you / my dad never
[3] study and he is doing well / and he told me / **I don't have to study**
[4] **because it's okay / you'll still do well in life** / the father gives him
[5] advice every time the father calls / so that kind of a thing / even though
[6] we are here in their life on a daily basis / erm a father's word / a parent's
[7] word is still the **most powerful** / so yeah / not much we can do /

In line 1, G2 asserts it is the 'mindset' of the foster child that influences their academic performance. She further describes the consequence by quoting the foster child's response "I don't have to study because it is okay, you'll still do well in life" (lines 3 and 4). Such a description emphasises the parent's negative influence on the child that could negatively influence him or her to be demotivated to study. Additionally, G2 uses the explicit intensifier 'most' (line 7) that reinforces the adjective 'powerful' to describe the strong effects of a parent's advice on a child's thought as there is not much she could do to change the mindset of the child.

(ii) Lack of Monitoring

Due to the inadequate number of caregivers in the home, G1 is concerned about the lack of supervision on foster children's academic performance in Excerpt 114 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 19).

Excerpt 114

[1] G1: er **lack of supervision** / by currently by our people / caregivers not just
[2] ours / maybe others also / **lack of supervision** in one thing to really
[3] help the children / the children already bad in their home / **really**
[4] **neglected** / in terms of education / **nobody cares for them** / they come
[5] in very bad / their standard / out of say hundred percent / **seventy**
[6] **percent of them are bad** / and so they are already bad and **nobody cares**
[7] **for them** they'll continue to be bad / okay / so my **concern** is always
[8] on the children's education that really needs to be improved on /

G1 asserts foster children's "lack of supervision" (lines 1 and 2) and they are "really neglected" (lines 3 and 4) in terms of academic progress. Negligence of foster children is further strengthened by the repeated statement "nobody cares for them" (lines 4, 6 and 7). Additionally, G1 states that 'seventy percent' (lines 5 and 6) of his foster children are not performing well in school. G1's statement could indicate that foster children's poor performance at school could be a consequence due to lack of monitoring at foster home. G1's concern regarding this issue is explicitly shown from the word 'concern' (line 7).

In the stage of consequences, both caregivers (i.e. G1 and G2) explicitly describe, assert and state their views on the consequences of parent's negative influence and lack of monitoring as these issues might be the reason for foster children's poor academic performance. Through the use of adverb, adjective and explicit intensifiers, caregivers' degree of concern can be observed as they are aware of the factors that affect the academic performance of their foster children. At the same time, they are trying to reach out for more support to address these issues.

From the analysis, there is a clear indication that representative act has been employed by caregivers in the stages of management, refocusing, collaboration, awareness and consequences. The caregivers exemplify the poor academic performance of foster children in order to indicate their awareness on the children's academic standing. They also justify the factors that could bring consequences towards foster children's academic performance which are parental influence and lack of monitoring. While addressing the academic needs of foster children, several challenges are highlighted by caregivers when they report, quote and describe the financial issues as well as the lack of suitable staff members and tutors to guide foster children in their studies. Due to such deficiencies, the caregivers state and assert with intensifiers, particle *lah* and modal verbs to show the necessity to provide foster children with tutors to monitor their academic progress. Caregivers also use the personal pronoun 'I' to claim and affirm that they collaborate with school teachers and tutors to monitor the foster children. The next section presents the analysis on the use of directive act and expressive act by the caregivers during interview.

4.2.2 Analysis of Directive Act in Foster Caregivers' Responses

In this study, directive act can be seen through foster caregivers' requests, complaints, proposals and suggestions of ways to help foster children in their academic performance. Further analysis show that directive act is mainly employed by caregivers at the stage of refocusing than the stage of management because they attempt to address the foster children's academic needs.

Table 4.15: Stages of Concern with Directive Act in Foster Caregivers' Responses

No.	Stages of Concern	Percentage
1.	Stage of Refocusing	83%
2.	Stage of Management	17%

The next section begins with the analysis of caregivers' responses in the stage of refocusing with the use of directive act.

4.2.2.1 Stage of Refocusing in Foster Caregivers' Responses

In the stage of refocusing, the caregivers suggest and make requests in order to help foster children address their needs. The following table shows the percentage of caregivers who raised the types of needs among foster children.

Table 4.16: Types of Needs in the Stage of Refocusing with Foster Caregivers' Use of Directive Act

No.	Types of Needs	Percentage
1.	The Need for Improving Poor Academic Performance	33%
2.	The Need for Tutors	33%
3.	The Need for Monitoring	33%
4.	The Need for Financial Support	33%
5.	The Need of Caregiver's Rights	17%
6.	The Need for Awareness	17%

The types of needs mostly raised by caregivers in the stage of refocusing include the need for improving foster children's poor academic performance, tutors, monitoring and financial support. This is followed by the need for caregiver's rights and awareness. The

next sections present each type of needs as well as examples of directive act found in the interview data.

(i) The Need for Improving Poor Academic Performance

The need for improving poor academic performance among foster children is one of the most common needs highlighted by foster caregivers. The data show that the foster caregivers adopt directive act to suggest and request on the need for focusing on core subjects, home school and tutors. Such needs are illustrated in Excerpts 115 and 116 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 115

- [1] G4: **Right now** is more of Waqafat / **another** Islam religious subject /
[2] co-cu / **that's all** / and I notice they / to be honest they *sembahyang*
pray
[3] *solat sembahyang solat* / **here got so much teaching of Islam already**
have prayer
[4] isn't it? / **focus on the Maths and Science lah for heaven's sake you**
[5] **know** / they don't /

In Excerpt 115, G4 suggests the need to focus on core subjects because there is too much focus on religious subject. In line 1, he talks about the current situation in school 'right now' to show that he wants immediate change on the school's teaching methods. He emphasises that the school currently focuses more on religious subject "here got so much teaching of Islam already" (line 3) and the adverb 'another' (line 1) also denotes that there is more than one religious subject being taught in the school. G4 points out that the school does not focus on subjects other than the religious subject and extra co-curriculum activities when he uses the expression "that's all" (line 2) to signal the meaning of nothing more to it. Therefore, he directly requests the school to "focus on the Maths and Science *lah* for heaven's sake" (line 4). It can be seen in line 4 that G4 uses the particle *lah* as a kind of appeal and the idiom "for heaven's sake" to express his frustration about the school's teaching system. Such an expression indicates G4's

concern about the imbalance in the teaching system in school. Hence, through G4's request, there is indication for changes in improving the foster children's academic performance.

While G4 suggests changes on the school teaching system, G5 in Excerpt 116 describes the way she helps the foster children improve their weak subjects.

Excerpt 116

- [1] G5: er usually for *yang ini* / subject *yang dia itu* / Maths ***kut*** / Maths /
 this / which he that / maybe /
 this issue / that he (is weak in) / maybe /
- [2] that's why I ***tekan*** *dengan* Maths / BM /
 emphasise with / Malay language /
 emphasise on / Malay language /
- [3] *dia ada ni sekarang* ah *yang rasa ada masalah sikit* in terms of *apa tu*
 he has this now who feels has problem little what that
 he has now the one with the little problems what's that
- [4] *ni lah apa tu macam kalau BI BM* /
 this PARTICLE *lah* what that like if English Language Malay Language /
 like if the English and Malay Languages /
- [5] it's because they are from er *dia bukan* from standard one good excellent /
 they not /
 they are not /
- [6] *bila dia masuk darjah lima darjah enam* / you know / they have to start
 when he/she enter standard five standard six /
 when they enrol standard five or standard six /
- [7] *dengan karangan* / so *itu yang kita* er actually we **need** some er focus in
 with essays / that is what we
 with writing essays / that is what we
- [8] *studylah* / they are weak in English Maths BM /
 PARTICLE *lah* Malay language /
 Malay language /

Unlike G4, G5 seems to be indecisive when she uses the particle *kut* (maybe) (line 1) and the pause filler /er/ (lines 1, 5 and 8). However, she asserts that the foster children are weak in English language, Mathematics and Malay language. This is a concern because foster children's weak core subjects will affect their grades. G5's effort in helping the foster children to gain better academic outcomes can be seen from the verb *tekan* (line 2). Literally, the verb *tekan* (line 2) means applying physical force onto something. However, in this context of use, it refers to the act of emphasis.

Furthermore, G5 uses the modal verb ‘need’ (line 7) to insist the necessity to focus on improving the foster children’s core subjects (i.e. Mathematics, English language and Malay language).

(ii) The Need for Tutors

Two foster caregivers request and suggest on the need for tutors to guide foster children in their academic performance, which is evident in Excerpts 117 and 118 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 117

- [1] G5: I **really want** a **committed** people / **genuine** and **sincere** to come /
[2] **that is the only way** / educate them / focus in their study /

G5, in Excerpt 117, performs directive act when she employs adverb and multiple adjectives to request for committed volunteers to tutor the foster children in line 1 “I really want a committed people, genuine and sincere to come”. Despite employing multiple adjectives such as ‘committed’, ‘genuine’ and ‘sincere’ (line 1), her purpose remains the same, that is to state her wish to get volunteers who are wholeheartedly dedicated to teach the foster children. Besides, the use of adverb ‘really’ in the phrase ‘really want’ and the multiple adjectives in line 1 describe G5’s desperation to get voluntary tutors for her foster children. Thus, such choices of adverb and adjectives not only serve as a request, but could also be an appeal for help. Additionally, G5 asserts “that is the only way” (line 2) as she has no alternatives to help improve the foster children’s academic performance. Therefore, she is very much in need of committed volunteers to tutor the foster children.

Instead of requesting for voluntary tutors like G5, G6 suggests for foster children to attend tuition class in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 118

- [1] G6: erm / saya **kalau** ni / **kalau** kita ada kemampuanlah / **kalau** boleh /
/ me if this / if we have ability PARTICLE lah / if can /
/ if it is me / if we have the ability / if possible /
- [2] *ada kelas* tuition / **kalau** kita ada kelas tuition yang khas untuk mereka /
have class / if we have class which special for them /
have tuition class / if we have a tuition class specifically for them /
- [3] *macam satu guru* tuition tu / *sepuluh* / *satu kelas tu sepuluh orang sahaja* /
like one teacher that / ten / one class that ten people only /
like a tutor / ten / ten students only in a class /
- [4] **supaya mereka lebih fokus dalam subjek akademik** /
so that they more focus in subjects academic /
so that they are more focus on the academic subjects /

G6 puts forward her suggestions in hoping for foster children to have positive academic outcomes when more attention is given to their academic subjects. The utterances *kalau boleh ada kelas* tuition (if possible have tuition class) and *kalau kita ada kelas* tuition yang khas untuk mereka (if we have a tuition class specifically for them) in lines 1 and 2 are instances of suggestions from G6. However, G6 is less direct than G5 when she repetitively uses *kalau* (if) as a way to mitigate her suggestion. Furthermore, to explain the purpose of her suggestion, G6 employs the subordinate clause *supaya* (so that) and explicit intensifier *lebih* (more) in line 4 to further reinforce the significance of the suggested tasks.

(iii) The Need for Monitoring

G5 and G1 suggest that foster children need to be monitored in order to improve academically. Such suggestions can be found from Excerpts 119 to 121 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 119

- [1] G5: I've told you the background is different / so the *persepsi dia nak*
perception he wants
perception that he wants to
- [2] accept this one is also different / **unless we focus in one or two**
- [3] **children** / we focus in their education / we focus in their *kasih sayang* /
affection
love
- [4] **but** as I've told you / I got thirty illiterate for the past two years / you

- [5] cannot overcome everybody / *tak boleh* / as long as they know how to
cannot
cannot
- [6] read and write / for me / *dah pandai baca*
/ already smart read
/ even if he is good in reading but
- [7] *tak buat karangan* / *tak pandai yang ni* /
not do essay / not smart which this /
he does not know how to write an essay / he is not good enough /

G5 highlights that foster children require different types of attention because they are from various backgrounds (lines 1 and 2). Hence, she adopts the pragmatic connector ‘unless’ (line 2) to suggest that more attention can be given to the foster children if they are placed in a smaller group while learning (lines 2 and 3). Nevertheless, the transition in G5’s focus is marked by ‘but’ in her utterance in line 4. The pragmatic connective ‘but’ (line 4) marks the non-satisfaction of the illocutionary condition, which is to emphasise that her previous suggestion could not be effectuated as it is beyond her ability to carry out the mission due to the large number of children in her foster home. When G5 gives suggestion and addresses the challenge to effectuate the task, it seems clearly that she is concerned with the foster children’s current state and wants to improve their academic performance.

Subsequently, G5 in Excerpt 120 further requests for a voluntary tutor due to the issue discussed in the previous excerpt.

Excerpt 120

- [1] G5: We have to read to them / that’s why I said **I need somebody to come** /
- [2] you cannot take all / oh *ramai sangat ni* / *bila* you *tengok ada ramai*
many very this / when you see got many
there’s a lot / when you see there’s a lot
- [3] *yang* er tuition *kita pun* I hire / I paid them four of them *sini* / *jangan anggap*
which we even / here / do not assume
I even hire tutors (for them) / here / do not assume
- [4] the four can *semua* / *tak boleh* / as I’ve told you earlier ***budak-budak***
all / cannot / children
teach all of them / cannot / these children
- [5] **need attention** / one-to-one / three *yang paling banyaklah* /
the most many PARTICLE *lah* /
the most /

Unlike in the previous excerpt, G5 is more direct when she explicitly requests for volunteers “I need somebody to come” (line 1) to help tutor the foster children so that more attention can be given to them. Following her direct request, G5 describes her contribution in hiring four tutors for the foster children instead of waiting for volunteers (line 3). This could indicate that such a contribution is her way of caring for these children. G5’s concern for the foster children’s lack of attention is further strengthened by the assertion “*budak-budak* (these children) need attention” (line 5), which denotes the crucial move to provide attention to the foster children.

G1 is also highly concerned about the foster children and asserts that there is a need to monitor their academic performance.

Excerpt 121

- [1] G1: **Maybe** have staff that will **specifically really really look** into their
[2] education / not just doing the housework / **maybe** a staff that is
[3] **solely** looking / right now I’ve actually got a staff that’s starting to
[4] do that / looking into of the educational aspect children / yeah / get
[5] somebody to be **very involve** / yeah / **maybe** also to get the children
[6] to know more educational / and things like that lah / get them to er have
[7] more educational / we’ve tried online education programme **but** again it
[8] falls back to **not enough people to supervise them** / because some of
[9] them / they go online / they can’t even read / you know / can’t even
[10] understand / so **I still need the monitoring** / yes /

G1 suggests assigning tutors to supervise foster children’s academic performance (line 1). The multiple lexical choices, such as the adverb ‘specifically’ (line 1), ‘solely’ (line 3) and the phrase ‘very involve’ (line 5), emphasise the necessity to appoint a staff member who takes charge to fully monitor the foster children’s academic performance and importantly, he or she is not involved in any other task. G1 also asserts in his suggestion by repeatedly using the explicit intensifier ‘really’ to strengthen the force of the verb ‘look’ (line 1). Additionally, G1 uses the hedge ‘maybe’ (lines 2 and 5) to soften his suggestions. The transition of G1’s focus is marked by the pragmatic connector ‘but’ (line 7). Such a transition could be to emphasise that his earlier

suggestion is valid under the circumstances of him not being able to fulfill his plan to assign tutors. Moreover, it is evident that G1 could not fulfill his plan due to lack of committed staff members through his statement “not enough people to supervise them” (line 8).

From the findings, G5 uses the modal verb ‘need’ in Excerpt 120. Similarly, G1 also uses the modal verb ‘need’ to assert “I still need the monitoring”, particularly on foster children’s academic performance. This is a direct request for more staff members to improve the care of the foster children.

(iv) The Need for Financial Support

The need for financial support is highlighted by two caregivers to address the academic needs of foster children. Such a need is depicted in Excerpts 122 and 123 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 122

- [1] G2: **I would** send them all for home schooling / **but** the money is the issue
[2] over here / okay / why / like **I** said er majority of them have already lost
[3] out / and erm / private schools / their standard is higher / okay / so even
[4] the ones that are doing well / **I don’t see why they shouldn’t be in a**
[5] **private school setting** / okay / it’s good for them / okay / so that’s the
[6] first thing **I would** do / er **I would** try to get in more tutors / currently
[7] we are **very stretch** / **there are still a few more kids who don’t have**
[8] **tutors** / a few subjects were not covered /

In Excerpt 122, G2 uses the modal verb ‘would’ (lines 1 and 6) to suggest that foster children can be home schooled and more tutors can be provided. Further, not only does the utterance “I don’t see why they shouldn’t be in a private school setting” (lines 4 and 5) acts as a statement, it also signals G2’s indirect suggestion for placing the foster children in a private school. G2’s suggestion can be identified in the stage of refocusing as she intends to make changes to improve the academic performance of foster children. However, the contrastive marker ‘but’ in line 1 signals a restricted action to fulfil her

wish as it marks the non-satisfaction of the illocutionary condition. G2 speaks on behalf of the foster care organisation as she uses the personal pronoun ‘we’ (line 7) to address the financial issue. She states that “currently we are very stretch” (line 7). Literally, the verb ‘stretch’ (line 7) means the act of straightening or extending something without tearing it apart. Yet, in this context of use, it exemplifies complaining about the lack of funds to employ more tutors for the foster children. Lack of fund is further strengthened by the explicit intensifier ‘very’ in line 7. In this excerpt, financial issue is a concern as “there are still a few more kids who don’t have tutors” (lines 7 and 8). Such a financial issue could affect the academic performance of foster children. G2’s statement also denotes the need for financial support as she lacks ability to effectuate the tasks she previously suggested.

Similarly, G6 in Excerpt 123 also highlights on the need for financial support, especially in terms of creating motivational programme for foster children.

Excerpt 123

- [1] G6: *Kem motivasi sekarang lebih kepada keseronokan pergi mencari benda /*
 Camp motivation now more towards fun go searching things /
 The current motivation camp is more towards fun and searching for things /
- [2] *macam tak berapa jiwa / and then kalau motivasi tu / pergi tengok kat*
 like not really soulful / if motivation that / go see at
 like not really effective / if for motivation / go and see the
- [3] *luar / orang lebih susah / patut bersyukur /*
 outside / people more difficult / should be thankful /
 outside (world) / those who have a tougher life / should be thankful /
- [4] *kadang-kadang kan ada yang lebih susah daripada sini /*
 sometimes right there are more difficult from here /
 sometimes there are people who have a tougher life than those who are here /
- [5] **G6 nak mereka rasa macam tu / and then kadang-kadang kat sini**
 G6 wants them feel like that / sometimes at here
 I want them to feel that way / sometimes here
- [6] *memang anak-anak ni susah / tapi bila kami bela / bila*
 indeed children these difficult / but when we raise / when
 indeed the children have a tough life / but when we raise them / when
- [7] **makanan banyak kadang-kadang mereka tak menghargai / and then**
 food a lot sometimes they do not appreciate /
 there are a lot of food sometimes they do not appreciate it /
- [8] *dia kata ada orang bagi ada orang bagi / marah kami ni sebenarnya /*
 he/she said got people give got people give / angry we this actually /
 he/she said got people give got people give / we became angry actually /

- [9] *kami nak dia orang rasa juga / ingat daripada mana asal usul kamu / ah*
 we want them feel too / remember from where origin yours /
 we want them to feel it too / remember where you came from /
- [10] *kalau bolehlah G6 nak buat macam tulah /*
 if can PARTICLE *lah* G6 want do something like that PARTICLE *lah* /
 if can I want to do something like that /
- [11] *tapi masalahnya kita dari segi kewangan /*
 but problem PARTICLE *nya* we in terms of financial /
 but our problem is in terms of financial /
- [12] *kami tak mampulah /*
 we not afford PARTICLE *lah* /
 we cannot afford /

In lines 1 and 2, G6 explains how motivational camps these days have been converted into an entertainment ground. Thus, she hopes for a motivational programme that can help the foster children towards enhancing their motivation in learning or embedding positive value in them by visiting the needy. Instead of making indirect suggestion like G2 in Excerpt 122, G6 explicitly expresses her desire with the verb *nak* (want) (line 5) to request for a motivational programme that can provide positive impacts on the foster children towards learning. G6 justifies her request with the description of the foster children's behaviour in the home by stating that they do not appreciate the food they were given (line 7). However, the contrastive marker *tapi* (but) (line 11) emphasises the non-satisfaction of the illocutionary condition in which she is unable to organise a motivational programme for these children due to the lack of financial support (line 12). This in a way illustrates her concern regarding foster children's lack of motivation towards learning. Moreover, G6's use of *kita* and *kami* (we) (lines 11 and 12) contributes further to marking herself as an organisational member of the foster home who is speaking on behalf of her staff members.

(v) The Need for Caregiver's Rights

Besides the need for financial support, G6 further highlights on the need for caregiver's rights. This is illustrated in Excerpt 124 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 124

- [1] G6: *sebenarnya bila tengok mak dia kadang-kadang kita ada rasa marah /*
 actually when see mother his/her sometimes we got feel angry /
 actually when we see his/her mother sometimes it makes us feel angry /
- [2] *sebab bila dia dah okay / kadang-kadang dia datang sini /*
 because when she already / sometimes she comes here /
 because when she is financially stable / sometimes she comes here /
- [3] *kita tengok dia punya pakaian / dia dah ada handset /*
 we see her own clothing / she already has /
 we see her clothing / she has a handphone /
- [4] *and then tapi anak masih di sini / so kita agak marah / kita kata kenapa*
 but child still here / we quite angry / we said why
 but the child is still here / we are quite angry / we asked why
- [5] *kamu dah ada ni er at least hulurkan bantuan / bagilah*
 you already have this extend aid / give PARTICLE lah
 you already have all these extend your support / give
- [6] *sedikit belanja untuk anakkah / kamu dah mula bekerja dah*
 little expenditure to child PARTICLE kah / you have started working already
 a little expenditure to your child / you have started working and
- [7] *okay sikit / tapi bila nak minta duit memang agak susah /*
 little / but when want request money indeed quite difficult /
 seems okay / but when the child requests for money it is quite difficult /
- [8] *bila ada bantuan di sekolah mereka akan pergi dulu /*
 when there is aid in school they will go first /
 when the school gives financial support they will be the first to retrieve it /
- [9] *selalu agak bergaduh dengan kamilah / bab-bab ni / and then saya rasa*
 always quite arguing with us PARTICLE lah / chapters this / I think
 always they argued with us / in this issue / I think
- [10] *patutnya pihak sekolah tetapkan siapa yang menjaga /*
 should PARTICLE nya party school set PARTICLE kan who that takes care /
 the school should decide the person who takes care (of the children) /
- [11] *kalau rumah kebajikan / rumah kebajikan yang berhak dapat*
 if home foster / home foster that entitled get
 if it is the foster care / then the foster care has the right to retrieve it
- [12] *walaupun mereka mak bapa dia / sebab bila*
 although they mother father his/her / because when
 although they are his/her parents / because when
- [13] *duit seratuskah apakah / laju /*
 money hundred PARTICLE kah what PARTICLE kah / fast /
 it is a hundred ringgit / fast /
- [14] *mereka sampai dulu / ah inilah hakikatnya /*
 they reach first / this PARTICLE lah fact PARTICLE nya /
 they are the first to arrive / this is the reality /
- [15] *tapi bab anak / ambil mudahlah / mereka ambil mudah /*
 but chapter child / take easy PARTICLE lah / they take easy /
 but for the child / they take for granted / they take for granted /
- [16] *patutnya kerajaan ada undang-undanglah bab-bab macam ni G6 rasa /*
 should government have rules PARTICLE lah chapters like this G6 think /
 the government should have the rules in issues like this I think /

In lines 1 to 9, G6 complains about the irresponsible attitude of the biological parents who deprive the foster children's financial needs. This could in a way affect the foster

children as the financial funds are for the children's school supplies to facilitate academic purposes. Hence, she suggests in a form of directive *patutnya kerajaan ada undang-undanglah bab-bab macam ni G6 rasa* (the government should have the rules in issues like this I think) (line 16) on the caregivers' rights to safeguard the financial support given to the foster children in order to protect them. Her suggestion could be considered as an expression of concern and intention to help.

(vi) The Need for Awareness

Apart from the need for caregiver's rights, G1, in Excerpt 125, suggests that there is a need to create awareness among social welfare department regarding the foster children's needs (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 37).

Excerpt 125

- [1] G1: I guess er in terms of er handling the children into looking into the
[2] individual children's needs and one of the basic main lists is that er a
[3] lot of children are still in these kind of situations / outside there / and a
[4] lot of people still unaware / so I believe there's still a lot of work to
[5] be done by JKM or government about all of these / to create **more**
[6] awareness / to let people know that there is still **a lot** of these kinds
[7] of things happening in the community outside / so they can do **more**
[8] in terms of creating awareness / yeah / which I see is **still not enough lah**

G1 suggests with the explicit intensifiers 'more' (lines 5 and 7) and 'a lot' (line 6) to reinforce the crucial move in raising awareness about the foster children's needs. G1 is discontent as the degree of awareness on the part of the government is "still not enough" (line 8). This may suggest that G1 wants more support from social welfare agency in creating awareness among the community of foster children's needs.

4.2.2.2 Stage of Management in Foster Caregivers' Responses

This section illustrates a caregiver's use of directive act in the stage of management to request for support from social welfare as she encounters challenges in managing

foster children. The analysis of the caregiver's response can be seen in the following excerpt.

(i) The Need for Social Welfare's Support

G5 complains about the barriers she encounters in managing the foster children as the social welfare agency is constantly finding faults in them instead of providing them with support. With that, she uses directive act in the form of a request for support of social welfare management system, as illustrated in Excerpt 126 (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 15).

Excerpt 126

- [1] G5: In terms of er support / erm what I see / what I see **they always**
[2] search for **our** mistakes / *selalu* / **they're not helping much** /
always
[3] more to the mistakes that **we** do / **help us** / I every time when I see
[4] **them** / **we** don't want anything / **we** started by ourselves /

Initially, G5 frequently uses the personal pronouns 'they' (lines 1 and 2) and 'them' (line 4) instead of explicitly mentioning the subject, which could be to acknowledge the social welfare agency. Additionally, the use of 'we' (lines 3 and 4) and 'our' (line 2) also signals her organisational membership as she speaks on behalf of her staff members from the foster care, indicating that they share the same predicament while trying to get support from the social welfare agency. Besides, G5 also states that she and her colleagues do not want much from the social welfare agency (line 4); instead, only a little support are needed rather than any criticism.

G5's dismay with the social welfare system not giving adequate support when needed can be observed in the utterance "they're not helping much" in line 2. It seems that she uses the adverb 'always' (line 1) and code-switches to Malay *selalu* (always) (line 2) to emphasise her discontentment with the social welfare agency. Additionally,

the directive act takes the form of a request for support from the social welfare when G5 utters “help us” (line 3) in an explicit manner. This form of request by G5 which is in a form of a directive act may indicate challenges to address foster children’s academic needs without the support of social welfare agency.

The findings show that caregivers use directive act to suggest and request for committed tutors for foster children and to suggest for social welfare department to support the children financially. Through their suggestions and requests, caregivers’ responses fall in the stage of refocusing and management as they aspire to change and improve the situation by addressing the academic needs of foster children, at the same time share the challenges in managing these children. Caregivers’ directive act can be seen through their frequent use of direct statements and modal verbs such as ‘need’, ‘would’, ‘should’ and ‘must’, *patutnya* (should) and *nak* (want) when they request or suggest. They also opt to use conditional marker to put forth their requests and suggestions and subordinate clause to give explanation of an intended action to further justify the positive aspect of their requests and suggestions. The conditional markers ‘if’ and ‘unless’ also soften the force of caregivers’ suggestions and simultaneously denote that several of the suggestions are only applicable if certain conditions are fulfilled. Explicit and double intensifiers are also prominent in the caregivers’ responses, which strengthen the importance of their suggestions and requests. However, at times they do mitigate their stance with hedges to indirectly reach out for support.

4.2.3 Analysis of Expressive Act in Foster Caregivers’ Responses

Based on the findings, expressive act is the only category that can be found in stage of personal where 33% of foster caregivers use this act to express concern about foster children.

4.2.3.1 Stage of Personal in Foster Caregivers' Responses

Based on the findings, foster caregivers in this study employ expressive act in the stage of personal to express concern about foster children's family problems and poor academic performance.

(i) Foster Children's Family Problems in Custody

One of the family problems faced by the foster children is custody. In Excerpt 127, G6 states that some of the foster children's custody is not assigned when their parents have either divorced or passed away (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 32).

Excerpt 127

- [1] G6: *Kebanyakannya kalau anak yatim okaylah / mak atau bapa meninggal /*
Mostly if orphans / mother or father passed away /
Mostly if the orphans / mother or father passed away /
- [2] *salah seorang / tapi lebihnya ialah masalah social sekarang ni /*
one of them / but the rest are problems now this /
either one of them / but the others are experiencing social problems /
- [3] *memang banyak berlakunya masalah social terutama dari segi*
indeed many happen problem especially in terms of
indeed there are many cases on social problems especially in terms of
- [4] *perkahwinan tidak didaftarkan / and then erm masalah bila bercerai /*
Marriage not being registered / problems when divorced /
unregistered marriage / problems after divorced /
- [5] *yalah tak er / hak penjagaan tu tak ditetapkan di mana / jadi*
yes PARTICLE lah not / right custody that not been assigned where / so
not / no custody has been assigned / so
- [6] *masalah anak ni lah / ah paling kesian sebenarnya nasib mereka*
problem child this PARTICLE lah / most pity actually fate theirs
the problem is the child / the most pity actually is their fate
- [7] *bukan nasib mak bapa / tapi bila kita ingat / kita akan marah dengan*
not fate parents / but when we remember / we will be angry with
not the fate of their parents / but when we remember / we will be angry at
- [8] *mak bapa dia punya perangai kan / tapi kita tak boleh nak marah dengan anak /*
parents their own attitude right / but we cannot want angry with child /
their parents' attitudes right / but we cannot be angry at the child /
- [9] *jadi kesian tahu / actually lebih kesian dengan anak /*
so pity you know / more pitiful with child /
so it is a pity you know / the more pitiful is the child /

G6 can be seen using expressive act when she voices her sentiments about the foster children from three occurrences of the emotive adjective *kesian* (pity) in lines 6 and 9. Her feeling of empathy towards the foster children is further strengthened by the

explicit intensifier *paling* (most) (line 6). Subsequently, in line 9, the pragmatic expression *tahu* (you know) further boosts the strength of G6's feeling of sympathy *kesian* (pity). G6's concern is expressed through the use of adjective, explicit intensifier and pragmatic expression. Such an expression could be classified under the stage of personal as she highlights her concern on the problem foster children encounter due to their parental issues.

(ii) Poor Academic Performance

One of the caregivers in this study employs expressive act to express her feelings regarding the foster children's poor academic performance (see Appendix E, Section 3, Question 32).

Excerpt 128

- [1] G5: we feel **very sad** / we feel **very sorry** / so my challenge is I want to
[2] groom them / as G6 / we want to groom them to give education to /
[3] they have got a future life / you know / they got a long way to go /

G5, in Excerpt 128, conveys her empathy for the foster children's poor academic performance. Line 1 contains emotion from her not only through the verb *rasa* (feel), but also through the adjectives 'sad' and 'sorry'. G5's use of explicit intensifier 'very' (line 1) further reinforces her feelings of sympathy, which can be seen as an expression of her affective empathy towards the foster children's academic struggles. Furthermore, the use of 'we' (lines 1 and 2) refers to both G5 and another caregiver from the same foster home, G6, who shares the same empathy as G5. Subsequently, this feeling of empathy also motivates her as she expresses her desire to help these children gain a better future (lines 2 and 3).

The findings show that caregivers employ expressive act in the stage of personal to express concern about the foster children's family problems and poor academic performance. Caregivers prefer to adopt the adjectives *kesian* (pity), 'sad' and 'sorry' as well as the explicit intensifiers *paling* (most) and 'very' to strengthen their sympathies about the foster children's academics and family issues. The caregivers' expressions also indicate that they care for these children and are hoping to assist them whenever necessary.

4.2.4 Overlap Stages of Concern in Caregivers' Use of Representative Act

There is one response of a foster caregiver with two different stages of concern in the interview data. This response excerpt is placed in a new section (i.e. 4.2.4) in order to avoid any repetition during the analysis and discussion. However, the percentage is still counted respectively according to the number of caregivers who used the categories of speech acts and stages of concern. In other words, the caregiver who uses the same category of speech act (i.e. representative act) although in two different stages of concern (i.e. stages of refocusing and collaboration) is counted as one for the category of speech act used, and one each for the two stages of concern.

In Excerpt 129, G2 employs representative act to describe the actions taken by her for foster children to be placed in a suitable school. She also uses representative act to describe her collaboration with school teachers to monitor the children.

Excerpt 129

- [1] G2: When I came in I transferred everyone this year to Methodist School was
[2] because the teachers are so **good** / if they don't have their water bottles /
[3] I get a phone call to say they forgot to bring their water bottles to school /
[4] they actually **open their bags in the morning and check** whether they
[5] have a snack inside / and the snack is enough for the child / that's an
[6] **excellent** school / so that means I have to make my way there every few
[7] weeks but **it's okay with me** because I get to know / **you know** / exactly
[8] what the child is doing /

G2 compliments the school and the teachers with the adjectives ‘good’ (line 2) and ‘excellent’ (line 6). Her positive evaluation on the school denotes her satisfaction and contentment with the education services provided by the teachers. G2 further describes the teachers’ willingness to monitor these children in school and their action “open their bags in the morning and check” (line 4). The description G2 provides on the teachers’ action in monitoring the foster children further illustrates her compliments on the teachers’ efficiency for being careful and concerned with these children. Although it is G2’s obligation as a caregiver to monitor the foster children at the home, it is also her willingness to constantly check on them in school as she agrees to do so “it’s okay with me” (line 7) by collaborating with the school teachers. G2’s acceptance allows her to monitor their academic progress. Therefore, this excerpt can be categorised in the stage of refocusing for G2’s action in helping the foster children as well as stage of collaboration for keeping in contact with the teachers in monitoring these children.

Overall, foster caregivers are concerned about foster children and the types of academic issues that might affect these children’s academic performance. By voicing concern through the use of representative act, directive act and expressive act, caregivers’ extent of concern towards foster children’s poor academic performance, financial issues and lack of tutors can be clearly observed. Caregivers’ responses are also prominent in stage of refocusing as they suggest or request for a better educational service in order to address the academic needs and issues of foster children. Similar to teachers, findings also revealed foster caregivers’ challenges while addressing the needs of foster children, where their concern are largely found in stage of management. Therefore, caregivers’ plights should be treated with concern and assistance should be provided by the responsible agents such as social welfare.

4.3 Language of Concern from Foster Children

The findings show foster children employ expressive act, representative act and directive act to voice their concern on their academic performance (see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Speech Act Categories in Foster Children's Responses

No.	Speech Act Categories	Percentage
1.	Expressive Act	50%
2.	Representative Act	16%
3.	Directive Act	8%

Based on foster children's use of speech act categories, the data indicate that majority of the responses of foster children fall in the stage of personal than stage of management as they mostly express their concern rather than sharing their predicaments. As expressive act is mostly used by 50% of foster children, Section 4.3.1 begins with the analysis of expressive act.

4.3.1 Analysis of Expressive Act in Foster Children's Responses

Expressive act seems to be the most common speech act category used by foster children compared to representative act and directive act. A total of 50% of foster children used expressive act during interview to express concern about their academic performance.

4.3.1.1 Stage of Personal in Foster Children's Responses

The following sections present each type of issues as well as the examples of expressive act found in the stage of personal.

(i) Poor Academic Performance

Poor academic performance has been the main concern of foster children when they were asked about their weak subjects during interviews (see Appendix D, Section 3, Question 4). Their concern can be seen from Excerpts 130 to 132.

Excerpt 130

- [1] C1: *Subjek er kurang paling kurang mahir saya Maths /*
Subject less most less skilful my Mathematics /
The subject that I am the least skilled in is Mathematics /
- [2] *saya memang tak pandai er / saya pandai mengira /*
I really not clever / I clever calculating /
I am really not skilled / I am good at calculation /
- [3] *tapi saya tak boleh tengok nombor / saya memang lemah*
but I could not look number / I really weak
but I could not look at numbers / I am really weak
- [4] *dalam bab-bab nombor ni tapi saya kuat menghafal /*
in chapters number this but I strong memorising /
in the chapters on numbers but I am good at memorising /
- [5] *lepas tu er Maths saya selalu gagal dan saya dah cuba*
after that Mathematics my always fail and I have tried
after that I always fail in Mathematics and I have tried
- [6] *macam-macam cara tapi tak boleh /*
all kinds methods but could not /
all kinds of methods but I could not (excel) /

From lines 1 to 3, C1 expresses concern about her poor performance in Mathematics by using the adjectives *kurang mahir* (less skilled), *tak pandai* (not skilled) and *lemah* (weak). Probably, she feels a lack of understanding in Mathematics despite having attempted numerous ways to improve her performance in the particular subject (lines 5 and 6). Additionally, C1 employs multiple intensifiers *paling kurang* (least) (line 1) and explicit intensifier *memang* (really) (lines 2 and 3) to strengthen the illocutionary force of her academic struggles. The use of adjectives and intensifiers represent her feelings of concern in relation to her poor academic performance.

Another foster child in Excerpt 131 also expresses concern about not being able to fare well in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

Excerpt 131

- [1] C2: *Maths / Sains /*
Mathematics / Science /
Mathematics / Science /
- [2] *tak boleh buat / kalau Math tu / nak kena kira*
cannot do / if Mathematics that / want have to count
I cannot do it / if it is Mathematics / I have to count
- [3] *nombor-nombor / pening / lepas tu yang Sains*
numbers / dizzy / after that the Science
numbers / confusing / after that in Science
- [4] *tu nak tahu pasal sel / lepas tu /*
that want know about cells / after that /
I need to know about cells / after that /
- [5] *bikar-bikar semua benda tu / ah susah / susah /*
beakers all things that / difficult / difficult /
all those beakers / difficult / difficult /

C2 expresses concern about her poor performance in Mathematics and Science with the adjectives *pening* and *susah* (lines 3 and 5). Literally, the adjective *pening* (line 3), which refers to dizzy, is used to indicate C2's feeling. However, in this context, *pening* indicates that C2 is being in a state of confusion of her performance in both subjects. C2 also seems concern about the subjects she is not performing well by using the adjective *susah* (difficult) in line 5. Nevertheless, C2 does not employ any intensifier to reinforce her expression of concern of her poor academic performance, unlike C1 who uses intensifiers to strengthen her academic struggles.

Compared to C2 (Excerpt 131) and also C1 (Excerpt 130), C10 tends to have a different way of expressing her concern about her academic performance, which is shown in Excerpt 132.

Excerpt 132

- [1] C10: *Maths / BM / Sains /*
Mathematics / Malay language / Science /
Mathematics / Malay language / Science /
- [2] ***Lemahlah*** *semua tu /*
Weak PARTICLE lah all that /
I am weak in all those subjects /
- [3] *Tak / buat bodoh je /*
No / make dumb only /
Nothing / I do not do anything /

- [4] *Kita rasa macam malas nak belajar /*
 We feel like lazy to learn /
 I feel lazy to study /
- [5] *Pening nak fikir tu /*
 Dizzy want think that /
 Stressful to think about it /

C10 employs several adjectives to describe her concern on poor performance in Mathematics, Malay language and Science subjects. C10's concern can be seen in line 2 where the adjective *lemahlah* (weak) is used to describe her poor performance in the subjects she mentions in line 1. Additionally, the use of particle *lah* (line 2) by C10 further strengthens the description on her weak subjects. However, her low self-esteem about being weak in these subjects can be observed through the use of adjectives *bodoh* (dumb) and *malas* (lazy). In line 3, the adjective *bodoh* (dumb) in this context of use may connote C10's unwillingness to make any effort to improve her weak subjects with the idea that her poor performance in these subjects has in a way demotivated her from studying. Such unwillingness is also evident in the use of adjective *malas* (lazy) in line 4 where C10 describes the consequence of not being motivated to improve her weak subjects. Additionally, C10 adopts the adjective *pening* (line 5) to describe that it is stressful for her to think about ways to improve the subjects she is weak in. However, what is communicated in the adjective *pening* (dizzy) in Excerpt 132 may not be the same as noted in Excerpt 131 as it could indicate stressful rather than confusion. The use of adjectives in this excerpt could imply that C10 is willing to open up to express her concern about her academic problem.

From the voices of C1, C2 and C10, expressive act is used by foster children in the stage of personal to express concern about their poor academic performance. Expression of concern often begins with foster children's revelation of weak subjects and descriptions on their academic problems with the use of adjective and intensifiers such as *paling kurang mahir* (least skilled), *lemahlah semua tu* (I am weak in all those

subjects) or *pening nak fikir tu* (stressful to think about it) (e.g. Excerpt 132, line 5) These expressions are related to foster children's concern and frustration towards their poor academic performance and their true explication about the academic problems they experience. Therefore, the findings show that in the stage of personal, foster children's willingness to share their feelings of concern indicates their intention to seek help in order to improve in their weak subjects.

4.3.2 Analysis of Representative Act in Foster Children's Responses

A total of 16% of foster children use representative act in the stage of management to report, state, assert, narrate and describe the various academic struggles which they face, which is discussed in the next sub-section.

4.3.2.1 Stage of Management in Foster Children's Responses

In the stage of management, foster children reveal the barriers they face in relation to their poor academic performance. Their poor academic performance is discussed in Excerpts 133 and 134 (see Appendix D, Section 3, Question 4).

(i) Poor Academic Performance

In Excerpt 133, C11 expresses concern of the challenges he faces in his academic performance.

Excerpt 133

- [1] C11: *PT3 tu susah / sebab benda baru apa ni /*
 PT3 that difficult / because thing new what this /
 PT3 is difficult / because when a new topic /
- [2] *memperkenalkan sehari / esok tu kita tak tahu benda /*
 introduced a day / tomorrow that we do not know thing /
 was introduced in a day / if we do not know it by tomorrow /
- [3] *kita kena marah / dia dalam dua hari /*
 we have to be reprimanded / he/she in two days /
 we are reprimanded / in two days /
- [4] *mana nak tahu cara dia punya format dia kan? / lepas tu*
 where want know way his/her own format his/her right? / after that

- how would we know the format right? / then when
- [5] *dia tanya tak tahu / dia marah /*
 he/she asks do not know / he/she angry /
 he/she asks and (we) don't know / he/she is angry /
- [6] *cikgulah / kadang-kadang kalau benda yang tanya*
 teacher PARTICLE *lah* / sometimes if thing that ask
 the teacher / sometimes when I ask the same thing
- [7] *banyak kali / dia marah /*
 many times / he/she angry /
 too often / he/she is angry /

C11 states that the teacher easily gets upset whenever he makes a second attempt to find out certain aspects due to his lack of understanding. As evident in lines 3, 5 and 7, C11 reports what he experiences and describes the teacher's response towards his action in class using the word *marah* for three times. Although the word *marah* in the literal translation is associated with one's emotion of being angry or upset, in this context, it could refer to the teacher's action of reprimanding C11. Through the statement *kita kena marah* (we are reprimanded) in line 3, C11 indirectly indicates the teacher's impatience in class might be one of the challenges he faces in trying to improve his academic performance.

Similar to C11, in Excerpt 134, C12 also describes the struggles she faces when attempting to improve the subject she is weak in.

Excerpt 134

- [1] C12: *Saya tak boleh bawa Add Math dan saya kalau saya*
 I cannot bring Additional Mathematics and I if I
 I cannot cope with Additional Mathematics and even if I
- [2] *belajar pun saya takkan belajar / saya tengok je Add*
 learn also I will not learn / I look only Additional
 tried I will not study / I will only look at Additional
- [3] *Math tu / kadang-kadang tidur dalam kelas sebab tak ada /*
 Mathematics that / sometimes sleep in class because do not have /
 Mathematics / sometimes I sleep in class because there is no /
- [4] *saya tak faham dan saya dah minta banyak kali*
 I do not understand and I have requested many times
 I do not understand and many times I have requested for
- [5] *nak orang nak ajar sebab memang kalau saya tak faham /*
 want people want teach because indeed if I do not understand /
 someone to teach me because if I do not understand /
- [6] *saya takkan suka subjek itu / bila saya faham subjek tu /*

- [7] I will not like subject that / when I understand subject that /
I will not like the subject / when I understand the subject /
baru saya akan suka / bila tak faham /
just I will like / when do not understand /
only then will I like it / when I do not understand /
- [8] *nak faham juga / saya paksa diri saya faham juga /*
want understand also / I force myself understand also /
I try to understand / I still force myself to understand /
- [9] *tapi memang saya tak dapat faham / bila saya tak dapat*
but indeed I could not understand / when I could not
but I really could not understand / when I could not
- [10] *faham / saya takkan belajar /*
understand / I will not study /
understand / I will not study /

C12 is concerned about her inability to understand and cope with the subject, Additional Mathematics. The utterance *kalau saya belajar pun saya takkan belajar* (even if I tried to study I will not study) (lines 1 and 2) describes her frustration about not being able to comprehend the subject. C12's description of her frustration for the subject implies that she is concerned and is in need of guidance. Furthermore, she describes her ignorance *saya tengok je Add Maths tu* (I will only look at Additional Mathematics) (lines 2 and 3) as she relates her unawareness on how to improve this subject. She further describes the effects out of her lack of comprehension towards the subject which reduces her interest in learning. The effects are obvious through the use of *tidur* (sleep) (line 3) as well as negative statements *saya takkan suka subject itu* (I will not like the subject) (line 6), *saya takkan belajar* (I will not study) (line 10), *saya tak boleh bawa* (I cannot cope) (line 1), *saya tak faham* (I do not understand) (line 4) and *memang saya tak dapat faham* (I really could not understand) (line 9). These negative statements are concerns that signify the struggles of C12 where she needs guidance in her weak subjects.

Moreover, while attempting to improve her academic performance, C12 describes the difficulty of obtaining a tutor for Additional Mathematics subject (lines 4 and 5) by explicitly asserting *banyak kali* (many times) to intensify her constant effort to request for a private tutor. Additionally, the phrase *paksa diri* (force myself) in line 8 connotes

her desperation to improve the subject she is weak in. In this instance, C12 is being direct in voicing concern of her weak subject when she uses a wide range of lexical choices to narrate her problems and needs.

Based on the findings, foster children employ representative act to state, assert, report, narrate and describe in a direct manner about the problems they face in their academic pursuits. The foster children assert the need to address their academic issue with modal verb, connective marker and explicit intensifiers. Moreover, the negative statements and verb phrases also indicate their concern and struggles while attempting to improve their weak subjects. Hence, their willingness to share their academic problems and seek help to address the problems is in line with Hall and Hord's (1987) stage of management.

4.3.3 Analysis of Directive Act in Foster Children's Responses

Directive act is employed by foster children to complain and request for tutors to guide them in their weak subjects. Based on the findings, only 8% of foster children use directive act in the stage of management.

4.3.3.1 Stage of Management in Foster Children's Responses

The following section provides an example of analysis of a foster child who employs directive act to request for tutors to academically assist her in hoping to improve her poor academic performance.

(i) The Need for Tutors

The following excerpt illustrates the way C12 complains and requests for a private tutor (see Appendix D, Section 3, Question 11).

Excerpt 135

- [1] C12: *Saya perlukan* private teacher *yang boleh ajar saya ataupun*
I need that can teach me or
I need a private tutor to teach me or
- [2] tuition / *tapi saya tak nampak* / *saya dah minta* tuition
/ but I do not see / I have requested
classes / but I do not see it / I have requested
- [3] *sebelum sekolah lagi* *saya cakap* / er *encik* / *saya nak* tuition /
before school still I say / sir / I want /
before school I had already said / sir / I want /
- [4] *saya sebab* *saya kelas Sains* *saya perlu* bantuan daripada
I because I class Science I need help from
I because I am in the Science class I need help from
- [5] *seseorang yang boleh menolong saya* / *tapi dia orang cakap*
someone that can help me / but they say
someone who can help me / but they said
- [6] *dia orang akan usahakan* / *dia orang akan usahakan* dan
they will try / they will try and
they will try it / they will try and
- [7] *sekarang dah* *bulan lapan* / *still lagi tak ada* /
now already month eight / still none /
now it is already the month of August / there is still none /

When C12 was asked during the interview about what she needs in order to improve her academic performance, she requested for a private tutor with the frequent use of the modal verb *perlu* (need) in lines 1 and 4. She uses the connective marker *sebab* (because) as she may want to justify the significance of her request, as evident in the utterance *sebab saya kelas Sains* (because I am in the Science class) in line 4. This could point to the idea that being a student in the Science stream is not easy as she needs to handle many challenging subjects.

Nevertheless, her request for tuition classes has not been granted by the foster home. In addition, C12 complains about not getting a tutor to guide her in her weak subject in line 2 *tapi saya tak nampak* (but I do not see it). Within her complaint, C12 states the duration of time since the last she made the request in the utterances *sebelum sekolah lagi saya cakap* (before school I had already said) (line 3) and *sekarang dah bulan lapan* (now it is already the month of August) (line 7) to further explain that she has been waiting for a long time for her request to be granted.

Furthermore, in another instance of representative act, C12 could be reporting with the statement *dia orang cakap dia orang akan usahakan* (they said they will try) in lines 5 and 6. The use of the modal verb *akan* (will) with grammatical future implication indicate that the foster caregivers promise to try to look for tutors. However, they were unable to grant C12's request. Additionally, in the negative statement *still lagi tak ada* (there is still none) in line 7, the adverbs 'still' and *lagi* (still) are used to reinforce her dismay with the management of the foster home for not granting her request for months. The use of contrastive marker and negative statement indicate the conflicting issue C12 encounters while attempting to improve her weak subject.

In conclusion, expressive act, representative act and directive act can be found in the foster children's response. Foster children in this study express concern on their poor academic performance in the stage of personal and describe the challenges in trying to improve their performance in the stage of management. The use of linguistic features such as adjectives, intensifiers, modal verbs, connective marker, contrastive marker, negative statement and verb phrase reveals the academic issues and needs of foster children. The revelation of these children's academic struggles shows their concern and willingness to seek assistance to improve their academic performance. Therefore, those who are responsible for foster children's academic progress should take initiative to address these children's academic needs and issues to improve their academic performance.

4.4 Results of Speech Act Categories and Stages of Concern among Teachers, Caregivers and Foster Children

Based on the overall results of the use of categories of speech acts and stages of concern among teachers, caregivers and foster children, the following figure shows the realisation patterns in speech act of concern.

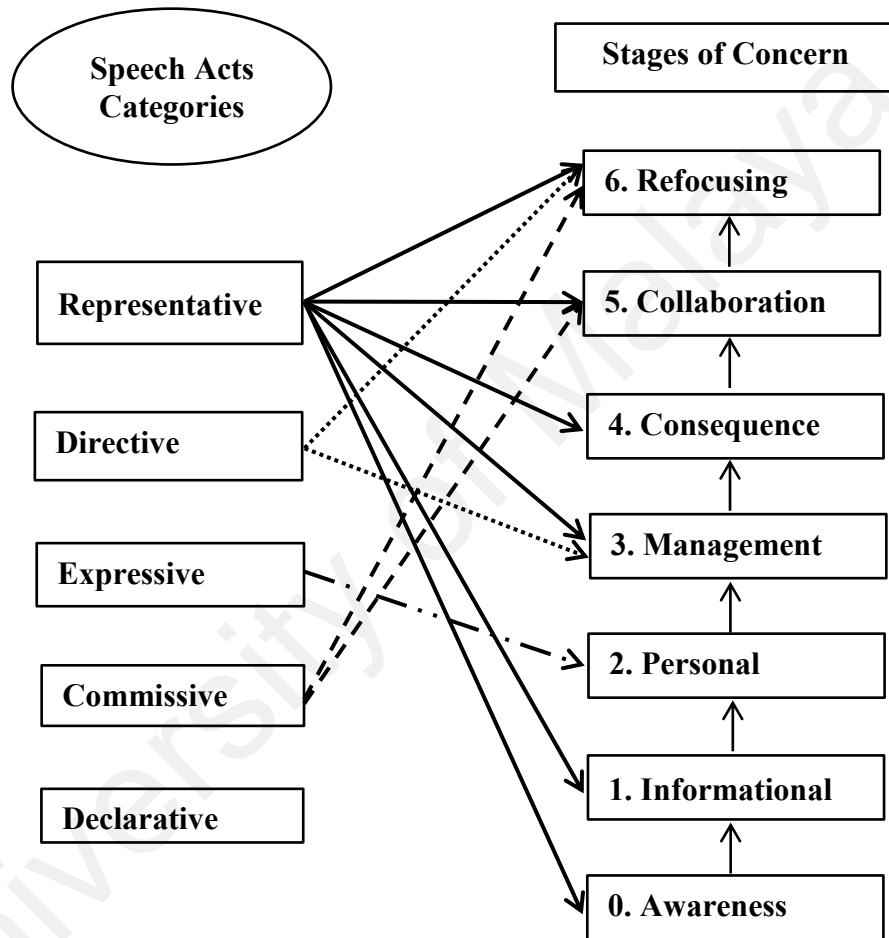


Figure 4.1: Results of Speech Act Categories & Stages of Concern

The following is the value of each type of arrow illustrates in Figure 4.1.

- Representative act
- Directive act
- - - Expressive act
- · - · Commissive act

As depicted in Figure 4.1, the voices of 'concern' falls largely in the category of representative act, followed by directive act, expressive act and finally, commissive act. The result also indicates that representative act mainly appeared in the stage of awareness, followed by stages of management, refocusing, consequence, informational and collaboration. Refocusing, which is the highest stage of concern, consists of three categories of speech act, which are representative, directive and commissive. On the other hand, the stages of awareness, informational, personal, and consequence only have one category of speech act respectively. This shows that the higher the stage is (i.e. refocusing), the more categories of speech act are found because the participants try to reach out their concern with representative act, directive act and commissive act in hoping to improve the academic performance of foster children. Such findings indicate that the concern voiced by participants could be identified based on their use of language and measured through stages of concern.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Overview

To recapitulate, this study aims to examine the language of concern on the academic performance of foster children in Malaysia via interviewing teachers, caregivers and foster children. The language of concern was analysed with Searle's speech act categories and Hall and Hord's stages of concern as studies from the language perspective and Malaysian perspective in this area are scarce. This concluding chapter addresses the research objectives and questions which entail categories of speech act, stages of concern, as well as types of academic needs and issues highlighted by teachers, caregivers and foster children during interviews regarding the academic performance of foster children in Malaysia. Implications of the study as well as recommendations for future research are then presented.

5.1 Categories of Speech Acts in Language of Concern

The first research objective examines the realisation patterns of the speech act of concern from the school teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's responses in relation to the poor academic performance of children in foster care. Based on the findings, 'concern' can be identified in more than one category of speech act, which are representative act, directive act, expressive act and commissive act. In other words, it is not only an expression or a feeling, but also involves thoughts and consideration of a particular issue. This finding contradicts with Carretero et al. (2015) and Kampf (2016) which classified 'concern' as an expressive. The following sub-sections discuss the categories of speech act together with the embedded linguistic features found in the teachers', caregivers', and foster children's responses in relation to the poor academic performance of children in foster care.

5.1.1 Representative Act

Representative act is the most prominent in teachers', caregivers' and foster children's responses. However, these three groups of participants use this act in a different way. Teachers appear to use representative act to assert and report more than the caregivers because they lack authority to address certain needs such as providing foster children with tutors at foster home to monitor their academic progress. Teachers frequently assert, report describe and state on their awareness on the types of behavioural problems portrayed by foster children such as rebellious behaviour in class and truancy using the adverb *macam* (like) and multiple intensifiers *memang selalulah* (indeed always). Due to their behavioural problems, teachers further assert the need for providing foster children with attention using the explicit intensifier *sangat* (really), multiple intensifiers *amat perlu sangat* (absolutely need) and the modal verb *perluan* or 'need'. Teachers also tend to use the multiple intensifiers *memang sangat* (indeed really) and *memang sentiasa* (indeed always) to assert, affirm, describe and state the actions taken to assist the foster children in regards to their need for motivation, financial support and attention.

Furthermore, teachers employ the conjunction 'because' or *sebab* (due to), verb *buatkan* (triggered), noun *faktor* (factor) and negative statements to exemplify, state, affirm and describe their concern with regards to foster children's lack of attention, lack of self-confidence and peer influence, which could be the factors that affect their academic performance. This finding shows that the teachers share their concern in order to reach out for support to help foster children address their academic issues. Not only do they reach out, teachers also affirm to have probed into foster children's financial issues and describe ways to provide attention to them through the verb *tanya* (ask) and the first person pronoun *saya* (I). Moreover, teachers employ the verb *berbincang*

(discuss) and modal verb *perlu* (need) to assert, state and affirm their collaboration with school personnel regarding the need to address foster children's financial issue.

Besides, teachers describe and report with intensifiers on the challenges they encounter in addressing the academic needs of foster children such as time constraint. The findings show that intensifiers are also employed after adjectives when teachers increased the force of evaluation such as *sikit sangat* (very little) to emphasise the inadequate amount of time spent with the foster children. Nonetheless, when compared with Moghaddam's (2012) explicit intensifier such as 'so sorry' where the adverb comes before the adjective, the structure *sikit sangat* (very little) differs. In this structure, the adverb *sangat* (very) is placed after the adjective *sikit* (little). This suggests cultural differences in the use of intensifiers among Malaysian speakers.

The very least types of representative act found in the teachers' response is when they admit. The teachers use prolongation of pause filler /er:::/, connective marker 'even though' and negative statement to admit to not knowing every aspects and needs of foster children due to time constraint.

Unlike teachers, caregivers are not found to admit any shortage of knowledge on foster children because they are aware of the problems these children encounter. Instead, they mostly state and describe the poor academic performance of foster children in order to indicate their concern on the children's academic standing. They justify the consequences of parental influence and lack of monitoring towards foster children's academic performance as parents' involvement and mentorship do play a significant role in motivating foster children in their academic achievement (Mallett, 2012; Segermark, 2017). Additionally, the caregivers report and describe the financial

issues and lack of tutors at foster home. They also employ pragmatic connector 'if' to show that financial issue at the home can be addressed and foster children can be provided with tutors only under the condition when support is given from social welfare agency. Besides, they state and assert with intensifiers 'very' and *memang* (indeed), particle *lah* and modal verb 'have to' in order to show the necessity to provide foster children with tutors to monitor their academic progress.

Moreover, caregivers state and describe their collaborations with other parties to address the need for monitoring, awareness, tutors, maintain rapport between parent and child, and secure future plans for foster children. They use verbs such as 'linked', 'meet up', 'come together' or 'work with them' affirm their collaboration. Caregivers also use personal pronoun 'I' or 'we' to assert, affirm, exemplify and describe ways they help foster children in addressing these needs.

As for foster children, they only state, assert, report, and describe about their inability to improve their weak subjects, teacher's impatience in class, lack of monitoring and tutoring for their academic performance. Hence, foster children are being direct when they intensify the challenges they encounter while trying to improve their poor academic performance with negative statements as well as the intensifier *memang* (really).

Overall, it appears that teachers, caregivers and foster children share their problems to reach out for support in order to improve the academic performance of children in foster care.

5.1.2 Directive Act

Directive act has the second highest percentage in the data. Teachers and caregivers employed directive act to suggest, insist, request and complain. However, teachers appear to use this act to suggest more than the caregivers. Teachers mostly used modal verbs such as *kena* (have to) and *perlu* (need to), followed by *mesti* (must) and 'should' to put forward their suggestions in addressing the foster children's need for monitoring and motivation. At times, they also used the modal verb 'need' to request for support from foster caregivers. The least used modal verb is *mesti* (must) when teachers insist on the necessity for an appropriate pace of teaching along with teaching aid. All these modal verbs through the language of concern show their obligation to their duty and responsibility towards addressing the academic needs of foster children. While using these modal verbs, the teachers also decrease the force of their suggestions and requests through hedges, prolongation of pause filler /er:::/, Malay particle *kut* and tag questions. Sometimes, teachers express their wishes or requests for support from caregivers in a subtle way by using pronouns 'those' and 'they'. The act of mitigation and the subtle expression could suggest teachers' preference to maintain positive face values and thereby be able to avoid any confrontation with the aim of respecting authority and sustaining social harmony in workplace (Gom et al., 2015). The safeguarding act of teachers and caregivers in this study are in line with Asma and Koh's (2009) claim that Malaysians opt to express their thoughts and opinions indirectly or through a third party in order to preserve a positive face and harmony in a workplace environment.

The reason teachers give more suggestions than caregivers could be due to the different roles played by them where teachers' duty is only to provide education services to foster children at school. As such, they might be unable to assist foster children at the home if compared to caregivers who monitor them at foster home.

Therefore, teachers provide suggestions not only to school, but also to parties who are responsible in taking care of foster children (e.g. caregivers and social welfare agency) with the hope to improve these children's well-being.

Unlike teachers, caregivers can be seen more frequently making request for tutors, financial support and motivational programme through the modal verbs *nak* (want), 'need' and 'should' in order to reach out for assistance as foster children are under their care. They also suggest ways to monitor foster children in a subtle way via the use of modal verb 'would' and conditional markers *kalau* (if) and 'unless'. The conditional markers are used to indicate the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order for their suggestions to be applicable. Sometimes, caregivers also mitigate their suggestions with pause filler /er/ and particle *kut*, which has the same function as hedge (Lee, 2010), to indirectly reach out for support possibly from social welfare agency.

Furthermore, the personal pronoun *kita* (our or we) is also employed by the teachers to show being inclusive of others in addressing the foster children's academic needs. Such finding is concurrent with Asma Abdullah and Koh's (2009) statement where employees in Malaysia prefer to practise the the value of collectivism by using the 'we' orientation rather than individual basis when it comes to decision making process (Gom et al., 2015).

Besides making suggestion and request, it is also observed in the findings that both teachers and caregivers make complaints through the researcher (who is the third party) regarding the addressees when they express their feeling of displeasure regarding the addressee (Ndenguino-Mpira, 2009). Such act is a norm for Malaysians to safeguard their social positions in workplace (Asma & Koh, 2009). In such a context, the

researcher plays the role of a transmitter of requests and suggestions made by teachers and caregivers during interviews because the targets of the messages are not physically present to hear their plights (Mauri & Sanso, 2011).

Apart from teachers and caregivers, foster children also use directive act to request for tutors in regards to their poor academic performance with the modal verb *perlu* (need).

5.1.3 Expressive Act

The findings showed that expressive act is employed by teachers and caregivers to express concern towards foster children. The teachers and caregivers' affective levels are identified through their emotional responses in the process of reaction and voicing concern, which relatively turn up to be negative and direct. Teachers' feelings of concern and sympathy towards foster children's need for attention and secure future plan are displayed through their use of emotive adjectives such as *kesian* (pity), *sedih* (sad), *takut* (worry), and *kekecewaan* (disappointment). These adjectives are further reinforced with the intensifier *memang* (really) and Malay particle *lah* and *nya*. Whereas, caregivers express their concern and sympathy towards foster children's poor academic performance and family problems through the use of emotive adjectives such as *kesian* (pity), 'sad' and 'sorry'. They further strengthen the illocutionary force of their expression of concern and sympathy for foster children for lacking attention with the use of intensifiers *paling* (most) and 'very' as well as the Malay particles *lah* and *nya*. Besides, *lah* and *nya* which are possessive adjectives (Alfred et al., 2013) are used to intensify the lexical item which could be considered as "being emphatic in meaning" (Goddard, 1994, p. 151) such as *kesiannya* (pity) or *sedih lah* (sad). Thus, teachers and

caregivers' affective levels are identified through their emotional response in their voices of concern, which relatively turn up to be negative and direct.

The foster children's sense of concern and insecurity towards their academic performance can also be identified through their use of expressive act. Such act is used to show their concern and disappointment with their weak subjects, which can be observed through their use of negative lexical items such as the adjectives *kurang mahir* (least skilled), *tak pandai* (not skilled), *lemah* (weak), *pening* (confusing or stressful) and *susah* (difficult). They also employed the intensifiers *paling* (most) and *memang* (really) to strengthen the illocutionary force of their academic struggles. The use of negative lexical items by foster children when describing their academic performance represents their emotional contents (Kaasila, 2007) which show their negativity towards the subjects they are weak in.

5.1.4 Commissive Act

Commissive act only emerged in teachers' responses but none in caregivers' and foster children's responses. Teachers employ the modal verb 'will' to indicate assurance (Leech, 1983) in resolving the academic problems of foster children in relation to the lack of attention and financial issues. At the same time, the teachers' responses show care and willingness to help these children because their words commit to their forthcoming action through promises (Cutting, 2002, p. 17) in which they are obligated to fulfill the act (Searle, 1976).

5.2 Stages of Concern of Teachers, Caregivers and Foster Children

The second research objective determines the school teachers', foster caregivers' and foster children's stages of concern based on their use of speech act categories. The

degree of concern from teachers, caregivers and foster children can be measured in stages where the more concern they are, they would show intentions to improve the situation based on their responses. Teachers' responses can be found in the stages of refocusing, management, awareness, personal, collaboration, consequences, and informational.

In the stage of awareness, teachers indicate their awareness on the foster children's behavioural problems, financial issues, peer influence, lack of books and resources, the need for attention, the need for improving poor academic performance. Besides being aware, the teachers also take initiative to get to know the foster children in class by identifying the problems they encounter in school, such as financial issue, behavioural problems and need for attention. Such an act falls in the stage of informational for their willingness to learn more about foster children's conditions. Furthermore, teachers express their concern and sympathy about foster children's need for attention and secure future plan in the stage of personal. Due to their concern and sympathy, the teachers try to help the foster children by addressing their needs such as attention and monitoring. These stages focus on teachers' self-concern (Fuller, 1969; Hall & Hord, 1987).

However, teachers do encounter issues while addressing the academic needs of foster children such as lack of class time with them. Such issues shared by the teachers are prominent in the stage of management. Correspondingly, Hall and Hord (1987) have also illustrated the similar example in their study where time constraint is one of the barriers in making a better change. As a consequence of time constraint, teachers are concerned on foster children not receiving enough attention in school. Such constraint is found in the stage of consequence as it indicates teachers' concern on the factors that affects foster children.

In addition, teachers' responses are also found in the stage of collaboration when they indicate assurance to collaborate with their colleagues in addressing foster children's need for monitoring and financial support. Finally, the teachers seem to put forth their suggestions in the stage of refocusing by providing ideas to address the foster children's poor academic performance, financial support, as well as the need for motivation, attention and monitoring.

Apart from teachers, most caregivers' responses can be found in the stages of management, refocusing, collaboration, awareness, personal and consequences. In the stage of awareness, they indicate their awareness on the poor academic performance of foster children. Caregivers also express their feelings of concern and sympathy towards their foster children's family problems in custody along with the academic struggles they face, which can be found in the stage of personal.

However, in the stage of management, caregivers complain about the financial issues in foster home and not having sufficient tutors to help monitor foster children with their studies. In other words, they are concerned about the financial issues at foster home as they could not afford to hire tutors to guide foster children with their weak subjects. Hence, in the stage of consequence, caregivers state their belief that foster children's poor academic performance is the consequence of lack of monitoring.

Due to foster children's poor academic performance, caregivers take various actions and make suggestions and requests to address this issue, which can be found in the stage of refocusing. Through their suggestions and requests for tutors, monitoring, financial support, motivation and awareness, they attempt to improve the situation of the foster children. Further, they also state to have collaborated with teachers to help monitoring

the foster children in relation to their academic problems, which can be found in the stage of collaboration. This finding is in line with the examples provided by Hall and Hord (1987) in stage of collaboration by “relating what they are doing to what others are doing”.

Nevertheless, the responses of foster caregivers in this study are not found in the stage of informational unlike teachers. This aspect of findings suggests that being actively involved in taking care of foster children could be one of the reasons they are very much aware of their backgrounds and academic problems.

As for foster children, their responses can only be found in the stages of personal and management. In the stage of personal, foster children express concern about their weak subjects and share their academic problems. To overcome these problems, the children have requested for private tutors to be assigned to them in order to guide them with the subjects they are weak in. Their request shows that they are attempting to improve their academic performance. Nevertheless, in the stage of management, they state that their request for tutors to date has not been fulfilled.

Furthermore, there are differences between the younger foster children (i.e. age 13-15) and the older foster children (i.e. age 16-17) when voicing concern about their academic performance. The findings indicate that the younger foster children tend to conceal their problems about the subjects they are weak in. This is seen as their attempts to present themselves positively despite not performing well academically. In this case, foster children with this behaviour may be viewed as being egoistic. Students who are often ‘egoistic’ tend to avoid asking questions, are afraid to admit their mistakes and often lack interest in their studies (Nachiappan et al., 2012, p. 143-146).

The consequence of not disclosing their problems may result in teachers not being aware of the children's needs. Thus, attending to these children's needs would be a great challenge for the teachers. On the other hand, the older foster children tend to be more concern about their academic performance and are willing to share their problems in order to improve their grades. They voice concern about the lack of extra classes and tutors to help them with the subjects they are weak in. The foster children share their problems differently according to their age group. This finding is also in line with Carretero et al.'s (2015) finding where the older students in their study find it easier to express concern than the younger ones. Hence, it is significant for the teachers to address the foster children's academic needs differently based on their age group. Despite that, the findings of this study correlates with Straub's (2009) findings with the number of years of working experience as well as age and gender among teachers and caregivers in their work force did not affect their concerns towards foster children's needs.

Interestingly, the findings of this study also concur with Anderson's (1997) and Straub's (2009) claims but contradict with Charambous' (2004) assumption on the hierarchical stages of concern (see Section 2.7.1.1). The result implies that stages of concern are neither in a hierarchical form as the participants' concerns from the succeeding stages nor "influenced by their preceding stages" (Anderson, 1997; Straub, 2009).

5.3 Types of Academic Issues and Needs for Foster Children

The third research objective investigates the types of needs and issues raised by the school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children about the academic performance of children in foster care based on their categories of speech act and stages of concern.

There are various types of academic issues and needs highlighted by the teachers, caregivers and foster children in this study. However, the most frequent issues raised by these participants are foster children's poor academic performance, lack of attention, motivation, monitoring, tutors, financial issues and behavioural problems. Whereas, the needs that are prominent throughout the data are foster children's need for improving their poor academic performance, attention, motivation, monitoring and financial support. Findings show that the types of academic issues are interrelated with the types of academic needs.

Teachers and caregivers are concerned about foster children's poor academic performance; likewise, foster children are concerned about the subjects they are weak in. Due to poor academic performance, teachers indicate that there is a need to give due attention to foster children by monitoring their school work as some of them have behavioural problems such as difficulty to stay focus during class lesson (see Excerpt 42) or learning problem such as slow pace (see Excerpt 10). Apart from the need for attention and monitoring, these children also need to be motivated by enhancing their interest in academics (see Excerpts 55 to 61).

Though foster children have attended classes in school, they might not receive enough guidance from teachers due to time constraint, large number of students in a class and teachers' heavy workload (see Excerpts 1 to 9). At foster home, it is also beyond caregivers' nature of capacity to provide foster children guidance in their school work as they are not academicians. Hence, foster children need extra guidance out of school hours from tutors to improve their weak subjects (see Excerpt 134).

Caregivers highlighted the need for tutors to assist foster children with their school work and ensure assignments are done. However, according to the caregivers in this study, they mostly rely on voluntary tutors due to lack of financial support (see Excerpt 85). Tutors need to be hired at regular basis as voluntary tutors are not reliable because they might not be committed (see Excerpt 83). As such, financial support is crucial in order to ensure dedicated tutors are provided to foster children to improve their academic performance.

5.4 Implications of the Study

This study implies that the teachers and caregivers need to be aware of the challenges encountered by foster children in their academic pursuits. Teachers and caregivers need to work together to provide more attention and monitor foster children's academic progress to ensure these children perform well academically in school and are well taken care of at foster home. Moreover, foster children also have to be given ample opportunities to voice and share their concern in regards to their academic achievement and well-being through counselling or interview sessions. Additionally, based on the suggestions and requests from teachers, caregivers and foster children from this study, there is a need to:

- Initiate remedial classes after school hours to assist foster children in their school tasks or with the subjects they are weak in.
- Assign a trained teacher specifically teaches foster children so that more time can be allocated for these children to better understand them.
- Inform teachers of foster children's health condition beforehand.
- Prepare foster children's books and resources prior to class lesson.
- Monitor foster children's school tasks and academic progress.

- Appoint a caregiver who fully monitors the foster children's academic performance without involving them in other tasks.
- Create motivational programme for the foster children to enhance their motivation towards learning and more committed volunteers to tutor these children in the home.
- Provide financial support for foster homes in order to hire or assign private tutors for foster children to guide them with the subjects they are weak in.
- Give more attention to the younger foster children (i.e. age 13-15) as they tend to conceal their problems.

These recommendations and requests from the participants serve as a guide for social welfare agency or the ministry of education to effectuate the tasks to address the academic needs of foster children.

In terms of language use, the combination of Searle's (1976) speech act categories and Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern allows more comprehensive analysis on language of concern since language can be analysed based on Searle's (1976) categories of speech act. Additionally, the teachers, caregivers and foster children's degree of concern can be coded and analysed with the help of stages of concern. This study shows that Hall and Hord's (1987) stages of concern are highly applicable globally in analysing the language of concern linguistically with the combination of Searle's (1976) Speech Act Theory, which adds to the existing body of literature on speech act of concern. In other words, the theoretical framework in this study can be applied to international research. However, the findings on the academic needs and issues of the foster children are only applicable locally as the study is conducted on foster children in Malaysia.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Study

A larger sample of school teachers, foster caregivers and foster children may be considered in order to explore academic issues or needs which are not found in this study. Future study is recommended to conduct observation in natural setting such as interaction between teachers and foster children in school or caregivers and foster children at foster home as the permission to collect data from observation is not applicable in this study. Such natural occurring interaction without participants' consciousness on being recorded could yield valuable data in identifying their degree of concern compared to the controlled method.

In addition, comparative studies could be undertaken between foster children from rural and urban areas in Malaysia to identify the differences in their academic performances and how their academic needs are addressed. Moreover, studies on university students with low academic performance level and family background with low income similar to foster children's background could be carried out to examine the students' concern on low performance and lack of financial support.

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