
AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN MOVIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Speech acts are actions that occur simultaneously with utterances. This research aims to elucidate the current research landscape regarding the use of speech acts in several movies based on a literature review. The research approach employed is qualitative descriptive. Through a comprehensive literature review, the researchers apply a synthesis method to assess selected studies, culminating in the amalgamation of findings when comparisons allow. Ultimately, the study reveals that each examined movie contains various types of speech acts used by respective characters. However, some studies focus solely on one type of speech acts.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of language as a tool by society when they communicate and interact with each other in everyday life is commonplace. Kurnia & Yuhdi (2022, p. 207) state that language is a means of communication used by society and then poured into everyday life. Communication is the process of exchanging thoughts, ideas, or thoughts between a speaker and a listener.

In order for communication to go well and smoothly, there is a need for an understanding of the speech act. It aims to minimize the occurrence of misinterpretations of what is to be talked about. Any utterance that has meaning in accordance with the function, situation, and context of the action that occurs is also called a speech act.

Austin (1962) defined speech act functions as the actions carried out during speaking. Austin distinguished between three levels of speech acts: perlocutionary effect, illocutionary force, and locutionary act. The locutionary act is all that we stated. The illocutionary force is the reason or objective of what we said. The hearer's response to our words is known as the perlocutionary effect. Austin also divides speech acts into five macro-classes, including directives, expressives, representatives, commissives, and declarations (Cutting, 2002, p. 2).

The use of speech acts is not only in everyday conversation but can also be found in literary works, such as movies. A movie is a two-dimensional literary work that is a combination of audio and visual. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003), a movie or a film is a story recorded as a set of moving pictures to be shown on television or at the cinema. In simpler terms, movie

conversations are full of speech acts that means characters change the way they talk depending on what's going on around them. They might ask questions, give orders, or make promises depending on the situation (Khalish and Fitrawati, 2024).

It is fascinating to conduct a study about speech acts because it is so common in everyday life, especially in conversation. Speakers can also communicate what they want the listener to do through a speech act. Sometimes communication fails simply because the hearer does not understand what the speaker is saying. As a result, the intended message could not be sent effectively. As a result, in this study, the researcher applied the speech acts theory by Austin (1962) to analyze the movies.

The researchers choose six relevant studies as the objects of research because those studies related to the use of speech acts in movies. Therefore, the researchers were interested to study about the use of speech acts in movies based on a literature review.

METHOD

The qualitative descriptive research method was applied in this study. The qualitative research is more descriptive in nature, with data collected in the form of words or images (Sugiyono, 2020, p. 17). Qualitative research is a study that emphasizes descriptions over numbers. The researchers utilized literature study as the data collection technique. The synthesis method is used to meticulously evaluate and analyze studies, with findings combined when a sufficient number of studies that can be compared are identified. This review interprets the use of speech acts by characters in movies.

This review employs a systematic search using specific keywords related to interventions and desired outcomes to identify relevant studies. The search is limited to studies published in academic journals between 2011 and 2023. Additional searches using more specific keywords related to speech acts are also conducted. Informal approaches, such as referencing selected studies, consulting experts, and leveraging personal knowledge, are utilized. The identified studies undergo screening in pre-designed Excel sheets in two stages, with inclusion criteria applied based on title, abstract, and keywords in both stages.

When conducting a thorough examination of full-text content, inclusion criteria are implemented, and additional methodological criteria are meticulously assessed to guarantee the ultimate selection of studies. These criteria involve a concentration on investigating speech acts in movies and the presentation of findings in the English language.

Following the selection of studies based on the criteria, researchers extract pertinent information and apply coding. Content coding is utilized to steer the literature synthesis and gather data.

Table 1 displays the chosen studies according to inclusion criteria. The table encompasses themes, author names, topics, publication years, and concise study descriptions. These studies delve into subjects like speech acts and the utilization of speech acts based on gender.

Table 1. Speech Act in Movies: Relevant Studies

Theme	Author (s)	Year	Topics
Speech Act	Maharani and Mubarak	2023	Analyzed the existence of illocutionary acts and the types of illocutionary acts used in "Searching" movie
Speech Act	Yudha	2022	Found the directives speech act in the utterances

				spoken by the two main characters of I Still Believe movie.
Speech Act and Language Use	Ashfiya and Degaf		2023	Explored the usage of commissive speech acts in the women-centric movie “Little Women” and “Enola Holmes.”
Speech Act	Trihanto Al.	et.	2022	Identified the kinds and the forms of directive speech acts found in Jumanji: The Next Level movie directed by Jake Kaschan
Speech Act	Susmita Adha	and	2023	Described the form of directive speech acts and the functions of directive speech acts
Speech Act	Wijayanti		2012	Analyzed speech acts in The Blind Side movie produced by the main characters.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data about speech acts from six relevant studies, the findings on the use of speech acts in the studies are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The Usage of Speech Acts in Movies

Code	Types of Speech Acts				
	Declarative	Representative	Commissive	Expressive	Directive
S.1	√	√	√	√	√
S.2					√
S.3			√		
S.4					√
S.5					√
S.6	√	√	√	√	√

The analysis of the six studies revealed the presence of declaratives, representatives, commissives, expressives, and directives, aligning with Austin's theoretical framework.

Declaratives

Declarative speech acts refer to words and expressions that, simply through their utterance, have the power to bring about a change in the world. In this research, instances of declarative speech acts were identified in two studies, S.1 and S.6.

S.1

David Kim: “This is David Kim, Margot’s father”.

Mrs. Shahinian: “Yes. I’m in the middle of a lesson. May I call you back afterwards?”

The initial statement articulated by David Kim falls under the category of declarative speech acts, as it involves the explicit declaration of a fact. In this particular instance, David Kim asserted and unequivocally stated that he is, in fact, the father of Margot, using language that serves the primary function of affirming a specific truth or reality.

S.6

Leigh Anne: “Michael?! Michael, of course, you’re not stupid. Michael?! Come on.

A declarative speech act was enacted by Leigh Anne when she conducted an assessment of Michael, affirming unequivocally that he was not characterized by stupidity. In this particular instance, Leigh Anne employed declarative language with the express purpose of making a definitive statement regarding Michael's intellectual capacity, emphasizing her belief in his intelligence and countering any notion of him being deemed unintelligent. The declarative nature of her expression served to assert a positive and categorical judgment about Michael, contributing to the overall discourse with a clear and affirming declaration concerning his cognitive abilities.

Representatives

Representatives encompass a category of speech acts with the primary objective of articulating the speaker's beliefs regarding a particular state of affairs. In the context of this research, instances of representatives were discerned within the datasets corresponding to S.1 and S.6.

S.1

Mrs. Shahinian: “Margot Kim canceled her classes six months ago”.

David Kim: “What?”

The initial statement issued by Mrs. Shahinian to David Kim, wherein she conveyed the information about the cancellation of Margot's class, falls within the realm of representative speech acts. In this particular instance, Mrs. Shahinian engaged in a representative act by presenting factual information to David Kim. By explicitly reporting the cancellation of the class, she assumed the role of a communicator conveying accurate details, and her utterance functioned as a representative speech act aimed at providing David Kim with an accurate representation of the situation pertaining to Margot's class cancellation.

S.6

Michael: “I didn’t lie!”

Michael engaged in a representative speech act when he asserted, with heightened vocal intensity, that he had already truthfully communicated information about his family to Granger. In this specific interaction, Michael not only conveyed factual details but also expressed a heightened emotional state, evident in his elevated voice. This representative act served as a means for Michael to affirm the

authenticity of the information he had shared with Granger, emphasizing his frustration and annoyance at Granger's apparent disbelief. The use of a declarative statement, coupled with the emotional intensity conveyed through the elevated voice, underscored Michael's commitment to expressing the truth and his dissatisfaction with any skepticism surrounding his communication.

Commissives

Commissives represent a category of speech acts characterized by expressions that bind the speaker to undertake future actions. These particular speech acts were identified within the datasets corresponding to S.1, S.3, and S.6, signifying instances where speakers commit themselves to forthcoming endeavors through linguistic articulation.

S.1

David Kim: "This is David Kim, Margot's father".

Mrs. Shahinian: "Yes. I'm in the middle of a lesson. May I call you back afterwards?"

The second statement uttered by Mrs. Shahinian can be classified as a commissive speech act, specifically in the form of an offer or promise extended to David. In this particular instance, Mrs. Shahinian engaged in a commissive act by expressing her intention to reconnect with David after completing her job. This form of speech acts not only involves conveying information but also included a commitment or pledge on Mrs. Shahinian's part to initiate further communication with David in the future. By framing her words in the context of a commitment to future interaction, Mrs. Shahinian utilized a commissive speech act to establish a potential ongoing connection, thereby imbuing the conversation with a sense of promise and assurance.

S.3

Eudoria: "Thank you for your irises. Now, if you ever... ever need me, I'll be looking out for them".

Enola: "You have to go".

Eudoria: "Yes, but... let's just stay like this for a bit".

Enola: "I'd like that too". (Pro.Eh.2)

In the cinematic narrative of "Enola Holmes," a poignant instance of a promise unfolds during a heartfelt conversation between Eudoria and Enola. In this particular scene, Eudoria extends her gratitude to Enola for a thoughtful gift she has received. Beyond the surface expression of appreciation, the statement assumes a commissive dimension, signifying Eudoria's commitment and assurance to Enola. Implicit in her words is a promise, a sincere vow that if Enola ever finds herself in need of assistance or support, Eudoria will be there for her. This commissive speech act not only underscores the depth of the emotional bond between the characters but also sets the stage for a thematic thread of trust and reliance within the storyline. The promise, laden with sincerity and warmth, serves as a pivotal moment in the narrative, contributing to the overall richness of the characters' relationships and the unfolding dynamics of the film.

S.6

Leigh Anne: “Go, Mike, Okay? Go, Michael? Michael! I’ll be waiting for you in the lobby, alright?”

The commissive nature of language was vividly demonstrated when Leigh Anne made a solemn promise to Michael, assuring him that she would not abandon him. Despite the absence of the explicit phrase "I promise" in her utterances, the inclusion of the phrase "I will" served as an equivalent performative expression, carrying the same weight of commitment and assurance. In this significant exchange, Leigh Anne's words transcended mere verbal communication; they became a binding pledge, a testament to her unwavering dedication to stand by Michael's side. By employing commissive speech acts, she not only conveyed a sense of security to Michael but also underscored the profound depth of her commitment, setting the stage for a powerful and enduring connection between them.

Expressives

Expressives, in the realm of linguistic interactions, entail the speaker expressing their emotions or feelings through spoken words. This specific type of speech act, referred to as expressives, was identified in the datasets of both S.1 and S.6. These occurrences illuminate the speaker's internal sentiments, introducing an emotional dimension to the communication.

S.1

David Kim: “Hi, sweetheart. Sorry I missed your call. I was asleep”.

David Kim: “Um, just checking in ‘cause it looks like you already left for school this morning”.

The sentence articulated by David Kim, expressing his apology to his daughter, can be categorised as an expressive speech act. In this emotionally charged interaction, David engaged in an act of self-expression, conveying not only remorse for his actions but also a genuine acknowledgment of the emotional impact on his daughter. The use of apologetic language served as a means for David to openly articulate his feelings of regret and sorrow, transcending mere information exchange. This expressive speech act, embedded with emotional nuances, not only conveyed David's sincere remorse but also contributed to the intricate layers of communication within the context of their relationship, fostering a deeper understanding and connection between father and daughter.

S.6

Leigh Anne: “Of course, I did. We love Ole Miss!”

The expressive nature of Michael's communication came to the forefront when he articulated his belief that Leigh Anne genuinely desired him to attend the university they held affection for, Ole Miss, rather than any other institution. In this instance, Michael's expression carried the weight of sincere emotion, reflecting his perception that Leigh Anne and her family's preference for Ole Miss was rooted in a pure love for the university rather than any ulterior motives. The depth of Michael's conviction, as conveyed through his expressive communication, highlighted not only his understanding of their

intentions but also underscored the profound sense of trust and authenticity within their relationship. This expressive act went beyond the mere conveyance of information, serving as a testament to the emotional intricacies and genuine connections that permeated the dynamics between Michael and Leigh Anne.

Directives

Directives encompass instances where verbal expressions are designed to prompt the listener to take specific actions. Instances of this speech act type were identified in the datasets corresponding to S.1, S.2, S.4, S.5, and S.6.

S.1

David Kim: “Yeah. Can you put my daughter on the phone, please?”

Isaac: “Did my mom not tell you?”

The communicative act undertaken by David Kim can be aptly categorized as a directive, specifically within the context of a request. In the preceding conversation, David explicitly asked Isaac to facilitate the transfer of his phone to his daughter. This falls under the broader category of directives, as David not only communicated information but actively sought a specific action from Isaac. The use of language in the form of a request underscores David's intent to influence Isaac's behavior, exemplifying the dynamic nature of their interaction. By employing directives, David engaged in a communicative strategy that extended beyond mere information exchange, signaling a clear desire for Isaac to undertake a particular action on his behalf, thereby adding a layer of complexity to the ongoing conversation.

S.2

Jeremy: “Tonight? Oh, that depends. There’s lots of stuff I could be doing, really. A lot of things”.

Melissa: “Oh, okay. Well, if you find yourself free at 8:00, I’ll be at the beach, Oceanside Pier. You know, stop on by”.

The sentence uttered by Mellisa as a response to Jeremy’s previous statement, is considered as directives form of illocutionary act because this utterance provide function that can get the hearer to do something, namely to invite the hearer, Jeremy, to come to the beach in order to join the speaker, Mellisa, hanging out with her friends tonight. Then, this utterance is a form of an invitation.

S.4

Franklin Mouse Finbar: “You are a terrible driver”.

Dr. Smolder Bravestone: “What are you talking about? We’re fine”.

Franklin Mouse Finbar: “Nobody fine. You. Oh, no. Oh, help. Hold on, Eddie. Please don’t let go. Oh, no”.

The directive speech act discernible in the aforementioned utterance leans distinctly toward a plea or a request for mercy. In this significant exchange, the character Franklin Mouse Finbar, in a moment of vulnerability, explicitly implores Dr. Smolder Bravestone with a poignant plea, uttering the words "Please don't let go." The boldness of this directive speech act encapsulates a deeper emotional context, as Franklin Mouse Finbar communicates his desperate desire for Dr. Smolder Bravestone not to relinquish his hold. This entreaty goes beyond a mere request; it carries a profound emotional weight, revealing Franklin Mouse Finbar's reliance on Dr. Smolder Bravestone for safety and security. By employing such a directive, the character not only seeks a specific action but also lays bare a vulnerability that adds a poignant layer to the evolving dynamics and relationships within the narrative.

S.5

Tuturan: "Percayalah sama aku!"

The spoken discourse transpires as Fidyah, assuming the role of the speaker, directs her words to Salma, who acts as the hearer. This communication unfolds within the confines of Fidyah's father's cafeteria. With a measured and moderate tone, Fidyah delicately urges Salma to place confidence in the presented arguments, appealing to a mutual understanding and trust between the two communicators in this particular setting.

S.6

Michael: "Shut up!"

The verbal expression initiated by Michael can be characterized as a series of directive speech acts, wherein he assumed a commanding stance by instructing Alton not to demean his family, emphasizing their inherent goodness. Delivered in hushed tones, Michael strategically employed a subdued voice to convey his message, intending to avoid any potential confrontation or conflict with Alton. This directive, couched in a desire to protect his family's honor and maintain a harmonious atmosphere, exemplifies Michael's tactful communication approach, seeking to assert his position while simultaneously prioritizing a peaceful resolution to the situation. The deliberate modulation of his voice adds a layer of nuance to the communicative exchange, underscoring Michael's consideration for the delicate dynamics at play in the interaction.

CONCLUSION

In light of the comprehensive examination and discussions presented above, a synthesis of the findings across selected studies yields a conclusive understanding that a diverse array of speech acts permeates the dialogues of characters within each analyzed movie. These speech acts, as identified through rigorous scrutiny, encompass the spectrum outlined in Austin's classification, comprising declaratives, representatives, commissives, expressives, and directives. Austin's taxonomy serves as a foundational framework, offering a nuanced lens through which the myriad communicative functions within these cinematic contexts can be dissected and comprehended.

The preeminent focus in the amalgamated dataset emerges as the directive speech act, warranting an elevated level of scrutiny and investigation. This prevalence underscores the significance of understanding how characters within cinematic narratives employ directives as a pivotal element in shaping the plot, character dynamics, and overall thematic development. The in-depth exploration of this specific speech act type enriches our comprehension of its nuanced manifestations within the cinematic realm.

Beyond the immediate purview of film analysis, the implications of this research extend to a broader recommendation for a heightened awareness and understanding of speech acts in everyday communication. Given the consistent and pervasive utilization of speech acts in routine conversations, a nuanced appreciation of their dynamics becomes paramount. Such an understanding serves as a pragmatic tool to mitigate potential miscommunications and enhance the efficacy of interpersonal interactions.

Furthermore, the proposition is advanced that the analysis of speech acts in movies can serve as a valuable methodological approach to achieving a profound grasp of these linguistic phenomena. Movies, as a reflection of societal norms and cultural nuances, encapsulate a rich tapestry of communicative acts, providing an insightful and engaging medium for the examination of speech acts in various contexts. Therefore, this research contributes not only to the existing body of knowledge concerning speech acts but also broadens our understanding of their diverse applications, paving the way for future inquiries into the intricacies of language use within both cinematic and everyday communicative domains.

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