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Speech Acts in Oliver McDermid-Perring's *One in Three* (2022): A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

Speech acts show that utterances do not merely convey information but also perform actions. This study aims to identify the types and functions of illocutionary acts performed by the characters in the 2022 short film One in Three, directed by Oliver McDermid-Perring, using Yule's (1996) classification. This descriptive qualitative study uses fourteen selected utterances taken from the film's dialogue with English subtitles, collected through observation and note-taking. The data were classified into declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives, and the function of each utterance was explained based on its context. The findings show that representatives (20 data, 37.74% %) and expressives (12 data, 22.64%) occurred equally often, followed by directives (19 data, 35.85%) and also Commissive (2 data, 3.77%) , while no declarations were found. Representatives were used to answer questions, to

explain the characters' imaginative game, and to reassure the child about the conflict between her parents. Expressives conveyed affection, admiration, apology, and gratitude, while directives took the form of requests, instructions, and invitations.

Keywords: Short Movie, McDermid-Perring, Speech Act Approach

Abstrak

Dalam menulis karya sastra, seorang penulis harus memasukan piranti stilistika untuk mencapai suasana tertentu yang dapat mempengaruhi pembaca. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan piranti stilistika apa saja yang digunakan serta menjelaskan gaya bahasa gotik untuk membangun suasana gotik dalam novel Demian oleh Hermann Hesse. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian Kualitatif dan data yang digunakan berasal dari ucapan tokoh serta narasi dari penulis yang dikumpulkan melalui teknik membaca cermat. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan mengkategorikan data ke dalam jenis piranti stilistika, menerjemahkan, hingga menyimpulkan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa penulis menggunakan diksi tertentu untuk mempertahankan suasana gotik, memasukkan beberapa elemen gotik dalam cerita, dan menggunakan nama filosofis yang kuno untuk para tokohnya. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan hubungan antara latar belakang keluarga dan kondisi sosial atau situasi dengan bagaimana penulis mengarang karya sastranya.

Kata kunci: Film Pendek, McDermid-Perring, Teori Tindak Tutur

INTRODUCTION

Speech is not merely speech itself; it is part of an act that is manifested through speech. Language therefore plays a crucial part in human civilization. Besides giving information and expressing feelings, people use language to command, and without it humans would struggle to interact with each other. According to their backgrounds, people develop their own ways of holding conversations. One branch of linguistics that studies this use of language is pragmatics. Maharani and Sari (2023) explain that pragmatics studies the relationship between language and context, including how context helps people understand meaning. One of the topics studied in pragmatics is the speech act, which examines how an utterance not only delivers a meaning

but also performs an action.

Based on Austin (1962), as cited in Maharani and Sari (2023), there are three types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, each with different characteristics. Maharani and Sari (2023), however, focus solely on illocution. Searle (1965) explains that the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication. Illocution can be found anywhere, from daily conversation to fictional works such as novels, dramas, songs, and movies, and a movie is an interesting source of data to observe. Yule (1996) classifies illocutionary acts based on their functions into five types: (1) declarations, (2) representatives, (3) expressives, (4) directives, and (5) commissives. Thus, the meaning beneath the characters' dialogue in a movie can be analyzed with this theory.

One example of such a work is the 2022 short film *One in Three*, directed by Oliver McDermid-Perring. In narrative works, communication frequently occurs through spoken exchanges between characters, and this film illustrates the technique. It depicts interactions among family members who are navigating familial discord in their everyday lives. Through their verbal exchanges, the characters convey information, pose questions, articulate emotions, and react to each other. Such dialogues offer valuable data for examining illocutionary acts and for understanding the linguistic strategies the characters employ in varied contexts. Consequently, the objective of this research is to categorize the illocutionary acts performed by the characters in *One in Three*, drawing upon Yule's (1996) theoretical framework, and to explain their functions within the film's conversational exchanges.

Several previous studies have examined illocutionary acts in films. Widiya and Simatupang (2025) used a descriptive qualitative method to examine the action film *Fast X* with Yule's theories and found 30 data of illocution. Widyawanti et al. (2024) studied the short movie *The Translator* and found 27 data. Simatupang et al. (2021) analyzed *The Wolf of Wall Street* using a comparative-descriptive method with Searle's and Yule's theories. Sihombing et al. (2021) analyzed 25 data from the superhero movie *The Incredibles 2* using a qualitative-descriptive method and Searle's theory. Maharani and Sari (2023) examined the Disney-Pixar movie *Soul* with Searle's theory and found 86 data. Together, these studies show that illocutionary acts have been studied across a wide range of film media.

This study differs from those studies in its subject. While the previous studies focused on feature-length films such as *Fast X*, *The Translator*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *The Incredibles 2*, and *Soul*, this study focuses on a single short film, *One in Three*. Whereas the previous

studies concentrated on illocution in the movie's dialogue in general, this research prioritizes the dynamics of communication between family members in the middle of a conflict. Using Yule's (1996) theory, this research identifies the types and functions of the speech acts performed by the characters, so as to offer another perspective on speech acts in movies. This study tackles that gap by examining the different types and roles of illocutionary acts carried out by the characters in One in Three, based on Yule's (1996) classification. It contributes in three ways. Based on actual evidence, it offers data from a less-researched context, specifically a short film dealing with family conflict, and demonstrates a different distribution of illocutionary types compared to what has been reported in previous film studies. By analyzing the function of each spoken statement within its specific context, rather than simply counting the types of utterances, it becomes clear how apparently ordinary expressions, such as responses, comforting words, and invitations, can conceal deeper tensions while offering protection to a child. In practice, these findings can act as useful examples for students and teachers of pragmatics, helping them understand speech acts in everyday family conversations, and can also provide a foundation for future research on perlocutionary effects.

METHOD

The research method used is a descriptive qualitative method. This study follows the procedure of earlier Movie studies that observe written dialogue and group the utterances by type of illocutionary act (Simatupang et al., 2021). However in this study, the implementation of observing the movie was conducted with transcript in order to make the process efficient and follows as in detail below:

1.Observe the transcript of One in Three Movie to get an understanding of the movie's story and explore each of the dialogues of the movie's characters and also read books of speech acts by (Yule 1996) and pragmatics to get a theory that fits with this research.

2.Data collection At this step, collecting and identifying the speech acts in the movie. The data on the google document. After identifying the data, the next step is to classify the data as related to the type of speech acts in the film.

3. Analysis Data that has been classified and then analyzed based on the five types of illocutionary acts (Yule, 1996) according to the speaker's intention and the context of the conversation. The function of each utterance was then explained according to its context where the data was calculated and presented in tables.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This research analyzes the speech acts contained in the short film *One in Three* by Oliver McDermid-Perring, focusing on the meaning of the characters' utterances in relation to the situation. The data were classified into the five types of speech acts according to Yule (1996), based on the transcript. Several utterances were identified as representatives, expressives, and directives. The following examples show how these types are used in the characters' conversations.

According to the result, it shows the representative illocution often appears in the Movie "*One in Three"*, with 20 of dialogues almost covering the whole data for 37,74 percent. Therefore, it shows that all those characters often give information about situations and events through the imagination and conflicts from what they know, think, and believe in certain situations.

No	Types of Speech Acts	Amount	Percentage
1	Representative	20	37.74%
2	Declaration	0	0%
3	Directive	19	35.85%
4	Expressive	12	22.64%
5	Commissive	2	3.77%
Total		**53**	**100%**

Finding

The result shows how the implementation of representative illocutionary has dominated in *"One in Three"* dialogues. However the data organized at the table contains 53 along with details of coding "D" stands for the Dialogue and the number after it in order to make it easier to read, as the following below:

No	Code	Dialogues	Classification
1.	D1	*"I'm fine, Sarah."*	Representative Illocutionary
2.	D2	*"You know mummy always takes you."*	

3.	D3	*"It's fine."*	
4.	D4	*"No, no, we were just playing, okay? Just like you and your dolls."*	
5.	D5	*"Now Sylvia Plath was born 1932 in Massachusetts US."*	
6.	D6	*"She began writing from a very young age."*	
7.	D7	*"To my knowledge, she never scrapped a thing."*	
8.	D8	*"She would surprise judges often by presenting her own poetry."*	
9.	D9	*"She later relocated to London, where she sadly died in 1963."*	
10.	D10	*"Plath's writing highlights the... entrapment she felt in her life and her desperation."*	
11.	D11	*"It was great."*	
12.	D12	*"So many obstacles."*	
13.	D13	*"I can do it with my magic!"*	
14.	D14	*"Sarah, you haven't eaten your dinner."*	
15.	D15	*"You took Sarah to school today."*	
16.	D16	*"It just does matter."*	
17.	D17	*"You're plotting against me!"*	
18.	D18	*"Walking on edges all day."*	
19.	D19	*"Couldn't put Humpty together again."*	
20.	D20	*"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall."*	

21.	D21	*"Love you."*	Expressive Illocutionary
22.	D22	*"Michael, about last night. I'm sorry."*	
23.	D23	*"Thanks."*	
24.	D24	*"I don't mind."*	
25.	D25	*"Love you too, Sarah."*	
26.	D26	*"Bye."*	
27.	D26	*"Wow, that smells good Mummy!"*	
28.	D27	*"Good idea!"*	
29.	D29	*"Yes, Princess Sarah to the rescue!"*	
30.	D30	*"Am I not good enough for her?"*	
31.	D31	*"This again?!"*	
32.	D2	*"How many times do we have to go over this?"*	
33.	D33	*"Mummy. Is your hand poorly?"*	Directive Illocutionary
34.	D34	*"Well go on then, Princess. You need to put your shoes on."*	
35.	D35	*"Can Daddy take me to school today?"*	
36.	D36	*"You take her."*	
37.	D37	*"Now have a good day at school, Princess."*	
38.	D38	*"Why were you shouting at mummy last night?"*	
39.	D39	*"Have a good day at school, okay?"*	
40.	D40	*"And when comparing Plath to Donne... you have to remember the times both poets lived in."*	

41.	D41	*"How was school today, Sarah?"*	
42.	D42	*"Let's go catch the dragon Daddy!"*	
43.	D43	*"Let's go!"*	
44.	D44	*"Daddy let's get the dragon!"*	
45.	D45	*"How can we, Princess Sarah?"*	
46.	D46	*"Princess, why don't you go play with your dolls?"*	
47.	D47	*"Why does it matter?"*	
48.	D48	*"And I don't want your filthy shoes on my perfect floor."*	
49.	D49	*"What are you talking about?!"*	
50.	D50	*"Quick daddy! Let's to stop the dragon!"*	
51.	D51	*"How can we, Princess?"*	
52.	D52	*"Okay Daddy."*	Commissive Illocutionary
53.	D53	*"I will."*	

Discussion

It is not only about the domination of representative illocutionary in *"one in Three"* like so in D1 in order to answer an ordinary conversation between mom and daughter. But it also has been implemented in conversation like when they talk about Sylvia Plath in D5 or Sarah and her Father like in D34, D45, and D46 in their roleplay game. However the Representative illocutionary used to give information, explaining the event, and clarifying the situation. Although the practice is not always to the positive things like so in D4 where the representative used to denny. After all the director Perring has good skill in order to create tension in his movie.

CONCLUSION

This research examined fifty three utterances from the short film One in Three (2022) using Yule's (1996) framework for classifying illocutionary acts. The findings show that representatives were the most frequently used type, with 20 data (37.74%), followed by directives with 19 data (35.85%), expressives with 12 data (22.64%), and commissives with 2 data (3.77%). No declarations were found in the analysis. Representatives were primarily used to respond to questions, to explain the characters' imaginative game, and to reassure Sarah regarding the conflict between her parents. Expressives were used to communicate affection, admiration, apology, and gratitude, and directives took the forms of requests, instructions, and invitations. Directives were used when the characters asked someone to do something or invited them to join an activity. Meanwhile, commissives were used when the characters promised to do something

Compared with earlier film-focused studies in which expressives (*Fast X*, *The Translator*) or directives (*The Incredibles 2*, *Soul*) were reported as the most frequent illocutionary type, the present findings show a different distribution: no single category dominated, and representatives and expressives shared the highest position. This pattern indicates that, within a film structured around family conflict, many statements that may appear routine can mask the underlying tension while safeguarding the child. However, these findings are limited to the selected data and cannot be generalized to other films. Future research may examine perlocutionary effects or the functions of these acts in more detail.

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