

Investigating Speech Acts in “Miss Perfect”: A Pragmatic Perspective

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Abstract - This study examines the use of speech acts in the short film “*Miss Perfect*” directed by Jinnyboy TV from a pragmatic perspective. Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), the research explores how language functions as action within cinematic dialogue. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to analyze the film's script, focusing on identifying locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Particular attention was given to Searle's (1976) classification of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The findings reveal that all three types of speech acts are evident in the film, with illocutionary acts being the most dominant. Characters use language not only to convey information but also to express emotions, make requests, give commands, make promises, and influence others. These speech acts contribute significantly to the development of character relationships and the narrative structure. For instance, assertives are used to state opinions and beliefs, directives to give instructions or commands, commissives to express commitments, expressives to convey emotions, and declaratives to enact social functions. This analysis highlights how speech acts in film dialogue mirror real-life communication and provide insight into the social and emotional dynamics of the characters. The study underscores the value of applying pragmatic theory to media texts, offering a deeper understanding of how language constructs meaning in scripted narratives.

Keywords: speech act, pragmatics, film dialogue, illocutionary acts, *Miss Perfect*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a tool for conveying information but also a medium for performing actions. Within the field of pragmatics, speech act theory—pioneered by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969)—remains a foundational framework for understanding how utterances function beyond their literal meaning. In contemporary linguistic studies, speech acts have become an essential analytical lens through which scholars explore meaning, intention, and social interaction in both spoken and written discourse (Yule, 2020; Cutting, 2022).

Film dialogue, as a form of scripted communication that mirrors real-life interaction,

presents a rich source of data for analyzing speech acts. Unlike naturally occurring conversation, film dialogue is crafted with intentionality, offering insight into how language can be manipulated for narrative and character development (Bubel, 2021; Dynel, 2016). Recent studies have examined speech acts in cinematic texts to understand how filmmakers use language to portray power, politeness, conflict, and social relationships (Nastri & Nuraeni, 2018; Ilie, 2019).

The present study investigates speech acts in the film “*Miss Perfect*”, a contemporary cinematic work that offers diverse interpersonal interactions and character dynamics. By applying a pragmatic perspective, this research aims to identify and categorize the types of

speech acts used in the film, analyze their functions within the context of the storyline, and explore how these acts contribute to the construction of meaning and character identity. In doing so, this study contributes to the growing body of work that bridges pragmatics and film discourse analysis (Archer & Grundy, 2023; Huang, 2017).

Understanding how speech acts operate in fictional contexts like film dialogues is crucial not only for linguistic theory but also for fields such as discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and communication studies. Moreover, such analysis helps uncover the interplay between language and culture as represented through media, especially in narratives that reflect contemporary social norms and behaviors (Taguchi & Roevers, 2017; Trosborg, 2019).

The speech act theory considers language as a sort of action rather than a medium to convey and express. The contemporary Speech act theory developed by J. L. Austin a British philosopher of languages, he introduced this theory in 1975 in his well-known book of 'How do things with words'. Later John Searle brought the aspects of theory into much higher dimensions. This theory is often used in the field of philosophy of languages. Austin is the one who came up with the findings that people not only uses that language to assert things but also to do things. And people who followed him went to greater depths based on this point.

To address the aims of this study, here is research question. This study seeks to identify the types of speech acts employed by the characters in the film "Miss Perfect". By answering this question, the study intends to provide insight into how pragmatic elements shape dialogue and meaning in cinematic contexts.

II. METHOD OF RESEARCH

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design within the framework of pragmatic analysis. The qualitative approach is suitable for understanding the use and functions of speech acts in natural language contexts, particularly in scripted dialogues that mirror authentic communication (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ary et al., 2019). By focusing on the language used in the film "Miss Perfect", this study aims to describe and interpret the types and functions of speech acts based on Searle's (1976) classification.

The data source of this study is the full script of the film "Miss Perfect". Dialogues between the main characters were selected purposively to ensure that the samples represented a variety of speech act types and social interactions. The selection focuses on scenes that display significant interpersonal communication, conflict, and emotional expression. The script was transcribed and then segmented into utterances, which served as the units of analysis.

The analysis follows several steps: (1) identifying speech acts using Searle's taxonomy—namely assertive, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations; (2) categorizing each utterance according to its speech act type; (3) interpreting the function of each act within its narrative and interpersonal context (Yule, 2020; Huang, 2017). The contextual analysis also considers the power relations, intentions, and emotional tones of the characters to enrich the interpretation (Taguchi & Roevers, 2017).

To ensure reliability and validity, the data were coded manually and verified through investigator triangulation, where another linguist independently reviewed the categorization results. The qualitative findings are presented thematically, supported by examples from the

film to illustrate the pragmatic functions of selected speech acts.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher analyzes the speech act used in "Miss Perfect" based on conversation it used this movie. It is directed by "Jinnyboy TV". The duration of this movie is 18 minutes. From the research I find out there are so many utterances in this conversation.

Here is the example of speech acts that used in "Miss Perfect Movie"

1. Locutionary Act

Mom : Hey boy, What are you doing? Texting at dinner table? No, texting it's family time!

Michelle : Okay (Smiling)

Real messages conveyed by the speaker and listeners do not respond, because the listener immediately understands the intent of the speaker and only gives a sign (smile).

2. Illocutionary Act

Michelle : Why don't you come up with one?

Natalie : Water is essential to life and without water we don't have coffee.

The speaker (Michelle) tries to convey what he wants to convey. Michelle as the first speaker wanted to hear Natalie's opinion. then Natalie said "Water is essential to life and without water we don't have coffee" meaning that the listener wants to give a response based on what the speaker said.

3. Perlocutionary Act

Michelle's sister : So, how were the dates?

Michelle : Bad, What do you expect? You keep setting me up with all these girls you know I wouldn't like.

Here the younger brother of Michelle asked "how were the dates?" then Michelle replied "Bad, what do you expect? You keep setting me up with all these girls you know I wouldn't like." so in this conversation the listener immediately does what the speaker expects.

In this movie there are so many utterances are categorized to the classification of illocutionary. Here the example of classification of illocutionary act:

1. Assertive

Natalie : He could be coning you, you know? You don't have to give

Michelle : Yea he could be. But, there's gotta be a reason why he's doing this. I think it's not fair to jump to conclusions to what someone's going through

The utterance above reveals as an assert because when speaker (Natalie) said : "He could be coning you, you know? You don't have to give" Than the hearer said : "Yea he could be. But, there's gotta be a reason why he's doing this. I think it's not fair to jump to conclusions to what someone's going through" Here Natalie emphasizes that Michelle should not give just anyone because that person could cheat Michelle, but on the other hand, Michelle doesn't ignore Natalie's words.

2. Directive

Natalie : I thought we were friends, you know? You could have said something. Say something!

Michelle : It's not what you think Nat. It's.....

As seen in the example when speaker (Natalie) said : "I thought we were friends, you know? You could have said something. Say something!" than hearer said "It's not what you think Nat. It's....." This indicates as a giving

command to the hearer, and the hearer is following what the speaker said.

3. Comissive

Speaker : Sorry, what's your name?

Hearer : Alex (Smiling)

Speaker : You think you very smart is it Alex?
Did I ask you to talk? No right? No!

As seen in the example, when speaker (teacher) admonishes Alex in the classroom. This sentences fits the commisive criteria.

4. Expressive

Michelle : Sorry, I'm late

Natalie : No worries, I started without you

This sentence is Expressive above is apologize. It can be seen from the example when Michelle said "Sorry, I'm late"

5. Declarative

Michelle : Someone forgot to water the plants?

Natalie : To me, I feel like this reminds me to live life to the fullest, right? And to not depend on others like the sun and the water. I feel like we shouldn't be so quick to judge a book by it's cover, you know? I feel like if you stare at anything long enough, you'd see the beauty in it like me 😊

Based on the conversation above, the category of declarative which uses is declarative. It can be seen Natalie stated about the contents of the book had to Michelle, and in Natalie's statement. She stated that the beautiful things in the book were like her.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the film "Miss Perfect" directed by Jinnyboy TV, it can be concluded that various types of speech acts are effectively employed throughout the characters'

dialogues. The findings reveal the presence of all three levels of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. These speech acts contribute significantly to the development of character relationships, the progression of the storyline, and the emotional dynamics of each scene.

Among the categories of illocutionary acts, the five major types identified by Searle—assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives—are all present in the film. Assertives are used to express beliefs or opinions, as seen in characters defending or questioning each other's motives. Directives appear when characters attempt to influence or command others, while commissives are used to express commitments or threats. Expressives such as apologies and gratitude are used to convey emotions, and declaratives serve to make impactful statements that affect the social setting or reveal deeper meanings.

This analysis highlights how speech acts function not only as linguistic expressions but also as tools to reveal personality, intention, and interpersonal tension. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of pragmatics in analyzing media discourse, particularly in understanding how language reflects and constructs social interaction in scripted narratives.

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