An Analysis of Expressive Illocutionary Acts in the Movie "Migration" by Benjamin Renner

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the types of expressive illocutionary acts employed in the movie 'Migration' directed by Benjamin Renner. This study applied a descriptive qualitative method. The object of this study was the English subtitles of the movie 'Migration', which was created and released respectively by Illumination in 2023. The researcher found 43 data of expressive illocutionary acts, which were divided into 4 types with the following description: expressive illocutionary acts thanking (23 data, 53.48%), apologizing (8 data, 18.6%), praising (5 data, 11.62%), and welcoming (7 data, 16.27%). The implication of the findings from this study for English Language Teaching lies in its potential to serve as authentic teaching material for educators to address Pragmatics, particularly focusing on Speech Acts.

Keywords: expressive; illocutionary act; Migration; movie

INTRODUCTION

The primary function of language in society is to facilitate communication. Although sometimes people engage in unstructured engagement and communication, the ability of their speech to be understood and accepted by others remains paramount. In addition to being utilized every day for daily communication in activities, language is a tool that people use to express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts (Sihombing et al., 2021). Nonetheless, communication can be impeded by language as it encompasses numerous messages, meanings, and intentions conveyed by individuals, sometimes without direct articulation of their aims (Buarqoub, 2019). Consequently, it is imperative to discern the underlying messages within others' utterances to facilitate effective communication.

Pragmatics is the study of how people use language, focusing on the decisions they make, the challenges they face when communicating in social situations, and how their words impact others involved in the conversation (Crystal, 1985). Proficiency in pragmatics is indispensable for effective communication, as its deficiency can lead to breakdowns in correspondence, potentially resulting in significant repercussions both in the present and in the future (Allami & Naeimi, 2011). Therefore, grasping the concepts

of pragmatics offers numerous advantages for both speakers and listeners. Listeners can comprehend the speaker's intended message, implications, desires, and behavioral cues, leading to smoother communication as intended.

In verbal communication, people go beyond mere words or sentences; they actively engage in actions or anticipate specific reactions to their expression (Yule, 1996). speech acts encompass various actions within utterances, including apologizing, voicing complaints, offering compliments, extending invitations, making promises, or issuing requests. A speech act occurs when a speaker verbalizes utterances (Mufiah & Rahman, 2018). There are three interconnected acts within speech acts (Austin, 1962). Firstly, the locutionary act, which is the fundamental action of producing a meaningful linguistic expression. Secondly, the illocutionary act, which is carried out through the communicative force of an utterance. The illocutionary acts are classified into five distinct categories which are representative, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive (Searle, 1976). Lastly, the perlocutionary act, where we don't formulate an utterance with a purpose without intending it to have an impact.

As mentioned earlier, the implicit meanings behind utterances can lead to misunderstandings among conversational partners. This is due to the intricate nature of speech acts, which can vary in meaning and application across different contexts. Comprehending speech acts, particularly illocutionary acts, can pose difficulties for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. One accessible method for learning English is through various mediums such as songs, news, poems, novels, podcasts, movies, and more (Ratri & Bram, 2022). Given that movies depict real-life societal examples, the researcher intends to utilize movies as the focal point of the study. In this research, the film "Migration" is selected due to its compelling visual elements, notably the portrayal of characters represented as animals, adding an intriguing dimension. Additionally, the movie features straightforward vocabulary, making it accessible and understandable. Moreover, the cleverly crafted moments of satire in "Migration" entertain adults while simultaneously captivating younger audiences (Bhandari, 2023).

This study centers on expressive speech acts, which primarily involve conveying a specific psychological state. Through expression, individuals often communicate what they may not explicitly state (Ngasini et al., 2021). Expressions typically manifest on a person's face when experiencing emotions like frustration, anger, or joy. Understanding these expressions is crucial for effective communication and reducing misunderstandings between speakers and listeners.

This study poses two questions. The first question is what types emerge in the utterances in the film 'Migration,' and the second is what background underpins the illocutionary acts shown in the utterances. The purpose of this research is to identify the many forms of expressive illocutionary acts that arise in utterances and to show the intricacies of the underlying context of these acts as they are articulated in conversation. From a theoretical standpoint this study supports the notion of contextual meaning, which states that the intentions of utterances in literary works can be evaluated using pragmatic approaches, particularly within the framework of speech act theory. In practical terms, this work is projected to serve as a reference material for linguistics and pragmatic studies courses, improving EFL students' ability to do speech acts through reflective pragmatic analysis, and offering realistic materials for English learners. Considering these factors, it is clear that this study will considerably improve EFL

learners' fluency in English and their capacity to avoid misinterpretations when talking with English-speaking people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Illocutionary acts take on diverse forms, including questions, statements, orders, promises, apologies, and comparable expressions (Leech, 1989). The speaker utilizing an illocutionary act aims to convey something with a precise purpose and context, with the expectation that the listener will understand and respond in alignment with the intended message. Searle (1976) delineates five categories of illocutionary acts, as detailed below.

The first type is Assertive. Assertive illocutionary acts entail the speaker committing to the truthfulness of a stated proposition. Examples of such acts include stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming, and reporting. When making an assertive statement, the speaker expresses their belief in the truth of the proposition (Situmorang & Handayani, 2020). Subsequently, the second type of the illocutionary act is directive. The directive illocutionary act is employed by the speaker to prompt the addressee to take action through methods such as ordering, commanding, and advising (Ratri & Bram, 2022). Then, the third type is commissive. Speakers employing commissive language commit to future actions, which may include making promises, arranging plans, or placing bets (Leech, 1989).

Subsequently, the next type is expressive. Expressive speech acts are utilized by speakers to convey their emotions or feelings (Supri & Rahmatiany, 2021). These types of speech acts are embedded within utterances spoken from the speaker to the listener and serve various purposes such as expressing gratitude, offering congratulations, seeking pardon, assigning blame, giving praise, or offering condolences. The last type is declaration. The declarative speech act pertains to utterances that alter the existing state of affairs when spoken. By making a declaration, the speaker initiates a new condition or circumstance (Leech, 1989). This may involve changing an individual's status or the ownership of something. Verbs associated with declarations include appointing, baptizing, declaring, naming, and resigning.

Several researchers have explored illocutionary acts in their studies. The initial investigation by Ratri & Bram (2022) found that characters in film 'Raya and the Last Dragon' utilized all five illocutionary acts, with assertive acts being the most common. Similar conclusions were drawn by Rismayanti, Manalu, and Anggraeni, alongside Handayani (2021), who also referenced theories from Searle (1975) and Hymes (1977) to identify four types of illocutionary acts in Five Feet Apart movie. However, they noted the absence of declarative acts in main characters' dialogues due to their specific contextual requirements. Furthermore, Situmorang and Handayani (2020) uncovered that directive illocutionary acts were predominantly employed in the movie Anger Management, reflecting individuals' tendency to express feelings and issue requests or prohibitions through their speech.

In conclusion, numerous scholars have analyzed various types and their dominance in both films and spoken language. However, there has not been an in-depth study focusing specifically on expressive illocutionary acts. This gap motivates the author to investigate the expressive illocutionary acts in the movie "Migration" through a pragmatic study, considering context and Searle's theory classification of illocutionary acts. This research aims to contribute to identifying and representing the forces or

intentional purposes expressed by characters in the movie. Consequently, this study allows the author to draw conclusions from the utterances in the movie and the implied meanings that are both relevant and pragmatically plausible.

METHOD

A descriptive qualitative method was utilized to investigate the various expressive illocutionary acts within the movie "Migration." Subsequently, the research adopted a qualitative approach, aiming to articulate individuals' experiences and inner sentiments systematically (Ormston et al., 2014). Moreover, qualitative research is renowned for its ability to offer a holistic understanding of events through adaptable data collection techniques, yielding rich descriptions of high quality. Therefore, this qualitative study presents non-quantitative data. The content analysis method was employed in this study, facilitating a thorough analysis and comprehension of the data. Content analysis serves to categorize and interpret the underlying meanings within the data, elucidating phenomena (Ratri & Bram, 2022).

Data Source

The research utilized a transcript from the movie "Migration (2023)" obtained from the popular subtitling website https://www.opensubtitles.com/en/subtitles/migration-2023-1080p. "Migration" is an American animated film created by Illumination Studio and directed by Benjamin Renner. It talks about a group of Mallard ducks on a migration journey to Jamaica. The film serves a dual purpose: entertainment and aiding English learners in understanding speech acts and context, which can prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication. The researcher chose to analyze movies because they offer clear opportunities to observe characters' intonation and expressions, facilitating comprehension of spoken language.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Technique

The study took place in Banyumas, with data collection occurring between April and May. Once all sources were assembled, analysis and interpretation of the data could promptly commence (Ratri & Bram, 2022). The process of data analysis involves five steps: preparation, reading, coding, drafting descriptions, and forming final interpretations. Initially, preparation entailed reviewing the movie script. Subsequently, utterances underwent classification through coding based on the theories of Searle (1975) and Hymes (1977). After categorization, descriptive analysis was conducted, followed by interpretation. Lastly, the analysis results underwent thorough scrutiny multiple times to ensure their suitability and reliability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Migration movie revealed the usage of four distinct forms of expressive illocutionary acts within character dialogues, comprising a total of 43 identified utterances. These acts included expressions of thanking (23 utterances), apologies (8 utterances), praise (5 utterances), and welcoming (7 utterances). Table 1 presents a breakdown of each expressive illocutionary act type and its corresponding data.

Table 1. Total Utterances of Expressive Illocutionary Act Found in Movie Migration

Types of Expressive Illocutionary Act	Frequency	Percentage
Thanking	23	53,48%
Apologizing	8	18.6%
Praising	5	11.62%
Welcoming	7	16.27%
Total	43	100%

The data above indicates that the predominant type of speech in the movie "Migration" was expressions of gratitude, constituting 53.48% of the total. Following this was apologies, accounting for 18.6%, and welcoming, representing 7%. The least common type observed was praise, making up only 5% of the total. Each type is further elaborated below.

Thanking Expression
Data 1 (00:11: 47 – 00:11:50)
Context: The dialogue occurred while Dad was pondering his wife's earlier suggestion about relocating to a new area. At that moment, he noticed Uncle Dan lying amidst mud and inquired about his unusual position. Uncle Dan explained that he had been washed away from his spot and was unable to stand up, hence seeking Dad's assistance.

Uncle Dan: "Give me a little push."

Dad: "All right."

Uncle Dan: "**Thank you.**"

Analysis:

In Data 1, the statement "Thank you." reflects an instance of expressive illocutionary speech, falling under the category of thanking. This is evident as the speaker explicitly utters the phrase "thank you" and conveys gratitude towards the listener for their assistance. Specifically, in Data 1, Uncle Dan expresses appreciation to Dad for aiding him in standing up.

The speech act observed in Data 1, "Thank you.", employs a direct speech act strategy. The structure of the sentence, "Thank you.", is indicative of a declarative form, as it presents a statement and concludes with a period. Moreover, its function solely revolves around expressing gratitude, without any additional intent. Thus, it can be inferred that the utterance "Thank you." in Data 1 qualifies as a direct speech act due to the clear alignment between its structure and function, where the speaker directly expresses thanks without any other underlying motive.

Apologizing Expression
Data 2 (00:31:39 – 00:31:42)

Context: The conversation unfolded amidst a gathering of pigeons, who took offense at the arrival of the mallards. The leader of the pigeon group, named Chump, attempted to question the mallard. Meanwhile, the father endeavored to clarify why he and his family had accidentally ended up in the park, explaining that Uncle Dan had grabbed a random sandwich intended for the pigeons. In his attempt to address the leader, the father mistakenly referred to her as "Chump," leading to her surprise and indignation. Unaware that "Chump" wasn't her actual name, the father apologized for the misunderstanding.

Dad: "So listen, Chump…"

Chump: "What did you just call me?"

Dad: "**Sorry. I thought your name was Chump**."

Analysis:

In Data 2, the phrase "Sorry. I thought your name was Chump." demonstrates an example of expressive illocutionary speech, characterized as an apology. This is clear as the speaker directly says "Sorry. I thought your name was Chump." and expresses regret to the listener for his error in addressing them. More specifically, in Data 1, the father expresses remorse to Chump for mistakenly using her name.

The speech act found in Data 2, "Sorry. I thought your name was Chump.", employs a straightforward approach to communication. The sentence structure, "Sorry. I thought your name was Chump.", is characterized by its declarative nature, presenting a statement that ends with a period. Its primary purpose is to convey an apology, devoid of any additional implications. Therefore, it can be deduced that the statement "Sorry. I thought your name was Chump." in Data 1 constitutes a direct speech act, as its structure and function align clearly, with the speaker directly expressing regret without any ulterior motive.

Praising Expression
Data 3 (01:14:05 - 01:14:11)

Context: The conversation took an interesting turn when Gwen discovered, much to her astonishment, that Dax was planning to relocate to Jamaica. Her surprise was compounded by the revelation that Dax possessed a pair of stunning wings. In response to this unexpected news, Gwen couldn't help but express her admiration, remarking on the beauty of Dax's wings. This comment not only highlighted her amazement but also served as a form of praise, indicating her appreciation for the elegance of his wings.

Gwen: "Dax, you are here."

Gwen: "Wow, your wings, they are beautiful."

Dax: "Thanks"

Analysis:

The statement "Wow, your wings, they are beautiful." found in Data 3, can be recognized as an example of expressive praise. In this utterance, the speaker clearly conveys admiration and amazement at the appearance of the listener. Specifically, in Data 3, Gwen expresses her admiration for Dax by praising the beauty of his wings. Her exclamation highlights both her surprise and her appreciation for their appearance.

The speech act strategy used in Data 3, "Wow, your wings, they are beautiful," is a direct speech act. This utterance is structured as a declarative sentence, ending with a period, and clearly expresses a statement. Its primary function is to make a statement, with no additional purpose beyond that. Therefore, Data 3, "Wow, your wings, they are beautiful," can be classified as a direct speech act because there is a direct correlation between the sentence's structure and its function, as the speaker straightforwardly delivers a statement of praise.

Welcoming

Data 4 (00:52:24 – 00:52:33)

Context: The conversation took place when the mallard family decided to rest at a nearby duck farm. Upon their arrival, they were greeted by the leader of the resident group of ducks. This leader, known for his friendliness, extended a warm and cordial welcome to the mallard family. His hospitality made them feel comfortable and accepted in the new environment, highlighting the leader's amicable nature and the welcoming atmosphere of the duck farm.

Googoo: "Hell friends, I am Googoo

Googoo: "**Welcome to our humble abode**."

Uncle Dan: "Abode? What is going on here?"

Analysis:

The phrase "Welcome to our humble home." from Data 4 exemplifies a heartfelt greeting. Through this statement, the speaker warmly welcomes the listener. In Data 4, Googoo demonstrates his hospitality by inviting visitors with enthusiasm. He is delighted that the mallard can find a resting place in his home.

The speech act technique employed in Data 4, "Welcome to our humble abode," is identified as a direct speech act. This statement is constructed as a declarative sentence, concluding with a period, and it straightforwardly conveys a message. Its main purpose is to assert a statement, devoid of any further intent. Hence, Data 4, "Welcome to our humble abode," falls into the category of direct speech acts due to the clear alignment between its structural form and its function, as the speaker plainly presents a commendatory statement.

CONCLUSION

The film features various expressions such as apologies, expressions of gratitude, praise, and welcoming, which can aid English learners in understanding and heightening their awareness of native English language usage. Essentially, comprehending these expressions can familiarize English learners with intricate English meanings and bolster their proficiency in executing speech acts effectively. Thus, movies offer an alternative avenue for discovering different expressive illocutionary act types and their contextual

nuances. Data from the movie "Migration" indicates the presence of four expressive illocutionary act types, with expressions of gratitude being the most prevalent. The context influencing character expressions of these acts depends on factors like location, conversational partner, dialogue purpose, word choice, and tone. The verbal communication in the movie is conveyed through riddles rather than traditional dialogue or text.

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