

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF THE ANTAGONIST IN THE MENU (2022): PRAGMATICS STUDY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the illocutionary acts found in the utterances of the antagonist character in *The Menu* (2022) to find out the reason why the acts are used and to find out which five functions of illocutionary acts are frequently used in the movie. This study used qualitative research. Through an analysis of speech acts, conversational implicatures, and contextual cues, this study investigates the nuances of language usage by antagonistic figures. By deciphering their illocutionary acts, this research seeks to illuminate the intricate interplay between linguistic maneuvers, character motives, and their impact on the narrative structure. The result of this study; there are 49 statements with illocutionary acts in them. Based on Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, these statements are split into five groups. Six expressive utterances, three declarative utterances, one commissive statement, 16 representational utterances, and 23 directive utterances are all present. The dominant illocutionary acts that occurred in the movie is directive utterances 26 data.

Keywords: illocutionary act, directive, commissive, motives, expressive

A. Introduction

Language is one of the mediums used by someone to communicate. Through language, people can express their aims and ideas in their mind to someone else. Through language, people can understand what the others are talking about. Through language as well, people could mix, adopt, or even follow the whole idea of somebody's ideas. Therefore, language is one of the most important things in communication. Although language is a tool for a better and easier understanding in communication, sometimes there are

moments when the speaker and hearer cannot understand each other. This happens when the hearer misinterprets the speaker, and the hearer doesn't share the same idea as the speaker, especially when the idea is hidden in the utterances (Ratri & Bram, 2022). Nordquist (2019) explained that utterances themselves have a lot of meaning: the linguistic view (unity of a language), phonetic view (an extent of spoken language that is started with silence and followed by another silence or a change from the speaker), orthographic view (starts with capital words and ends with a period,

question mark, or exclamation mark), and etymology view (means “outward, make known”).

To avoid miscommunication, a branch of linguistics was created to help people understand and analyze communication called Pragmatics. According to Rushdie (2021), pragmatics is a study focusing on the relationship between language and its users. Upen (2018) expressed that pragmatics is the analysis of the meanings of a language that are not only taken from its literal side but also from the context that is affected. Pragmatic analyses the meaning of the utterances that are said by the speaker, so that the hearer can presume the intention of the speaker.

One of many aspects of pragmatics that can be studied to find a better understanding of communication is Speech Acts. According to Yule (1996, as cited by Ibrahim, 2021), speech acts are utterances used to carry out actions. Speech Acts are used when someone wants to apologize, ask for help, complain, invite, give praise, or refuse (University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2021). Speech acts have three types: locutionary (an act of uttering meaningful expression), illocutionary (an act of uttering hidden meaning), and perlocutionary (a result of the utterances uttered by the speaker).

The study of illocutionary acts is one of the ways to prevent miscommunication as it is intended to give a basic or advanced understanding of relating the utterances and meanings with their contexts. Yule (1996, as cited by Ibrahim, 2021) mentioned that an illocutionary act is an utterance that has its function. This function acts as the communicative force inside the utterances. Searle (1997, as cited in Khaterina, 2022) explained that illocutionary acts have the function of informing things and using it to

do an action. Therefore, the illocutionary acts in the utterance of a speaker give the hearer direction of what the speaker wants the hearer to do. Searle divided the illocutionary acts into five types.

The first type according to Searle (1997, as cited in Khaterina, 2022) is representative. It has the purpose of the speaker to give the ‘truth of prepositions.’ The functions of representatives include stating, claiming, hypothesizing, describing, telling, insisting, suggesting, asserting, reporting, concluding, confessing, and swearing.

The second type according to Searle is directive. It has the purpose of making the listener do the things that are caused by the speaker. The functions of directives include asking, questioning, ordering, begging, praying, inviting, permitting, forbidding, challenging, advising, and others.

The third type according to Searle is commissive. It has the purpose of making the speaker do something due to the utterance. What makes commissive different from directives is that commissive makes the speakers act, however, directives make the hearers the ones who act. The functions of commissions include promising, offering, refusing, threatening, intending, vowing to do or swearing, and refraining from doing something.

The fourth type according to Searle is expressive. It has the purpose of making the speakers express their mental states. The functions of expressive include congratulating, blaming, thanking, deploring, pardoning, condoling, welcoming, and apologizing.

The fifth type according to Searle is declaration. It has the purpose of getting the speaker to change the situation of the intended object of speaking. The functions of the declaration include blessing, firing, baptizing, resigning, dismissing, naming, appointing, and sentencing.

One of the media that can be used to analyze illocutionary acts is the utterances that appear in a movie. Movies are sequences of moving images with voices that can tell a story (Hornby, 2005, as cited in Yulfani & Rohmah, 2021). Since it conveys ideas through a story, a movie may cause a lot of miscommunications in the eyes of the general audience if it is not studied thoroughly. Therefore, this research aims to study the illocutionary acts used in a movie entitled *The Menu* (2022).

The Menu is a movie that has the genre of dark comedy. Dark comedy is used as a medium that takes taboo matters lightly, almost in a mocking manner (Bedard, 2020). Similar to other comedy movies, this dark comedy movie has the aim to entertain the audience. However, the topic of entertainment is not commonly to be made fun of, which in this case is the phenomenon of 'pretentious foodie' where people act like they are criticizing and knowing all matters about food instead of just enjoying it. Bedard (2020) added that dark comedy also aims to provoke the thoughts of the audience and make them discuss the things that are rarely talked about by other people.

There are many researchers who have conducted studies about illocutionary acts with a movie as the research object. Some of the studies have been reviewed for this study. The first study is the analysis of illocutionary acts in the movie *How to Train Your Dragon 2* by Setiani and Utami (2018). The result from this study is that the most used type of illocutionary acts by the protagonist, Hiccup, is the representative act of around 43.8%. The second study is the analysis of illocutionary acts in the movie *Incredible 2* by Sihombing, Silalahi, Saragih, and Herman (2021). The result from this study is that all of the types of illocutionary acts are found, and the most

used type of illocutionary act in this movie is the directive act. The third study is the analysis of illocutionary acts in the movie *Mulan* (2020) by Zakiyah & Rosyidah (2022). The result from this study is that the most used types of illocutionary acts in this movie are directive acts, and mostly include advising, commanding, ordering, and requesting the factors.

After reviewing the studies, it can be concluded that most of the researchers analyzed the types of illocutionary acts and the most used function of illocutionary acts found in the movie. The subject of the studies mainly used the protagonist or all of the characters in the movie. However, contrary to the use of the protagonist as the subject analysis, there are very few studies that analyzed the antagonist, and due to this, a gap has been found. Thus, this study is intended to fill the gap, which is to analyze the illocutionary acts of the antagonist of *The Menu*.

The analysis of illocutionary acts in *The Menu* movie came from the utterances of the main antagonist, Julian Slowik. The character has a cold yet professional attitude towards his clients. He also has full power of control and respect over all of his cooking staff, to the point that the staff are willing to die for him. This character is portrayed as someone who is perfectionist and ambitious.

In a movie, the character is one of the most important elements. Commonly, the character is divided into two roles: Protagonist and antagonist. According to Chase (2022), the protagonist is the main character of the movie since the story revolves around the aims of this character; the antagonist is the character made to be the opposite of the main character and keeps trying to block the main character for achieving the aims. Therefore, evil characters can also be the protagonist if they

are the main character in the movie, which means, not all protagonists are good people.

This research aims to identify the types of illocutionary acts that appeared in *The Menu* (2022) and to identify the function of the illocutionary acts that occurred in the movie. This research is expected to be able to contribute to spreading the information about illocutionary acts, especially the ones inside the movie entitled *The Menu* (2022). For the general audiences, this study can help give them a general understanding of illocutionary acts. For linguistic audiences, this study can also give more understanding of the practice of illocutionary acts, specifically in the movie.

B. METHOD

This study used qualitative research. According to Creswell (2004:32), qualitative research is an approach that includes gathering data, analyzing inductive data, building the research from specific to general, and interpreting data based on its meaning (as cited by Kumala, 2018). Creswell also added that the qualitative method produces a flexible and structured written report. Sutopo (2006:40) also explained that qualitative research includes a detailed and in-depth illustration of the content that currently is occurred in the field of study (as cited by Sidiq & Simatupang, 2019).

The data in this study is collected by obtaining the movie script of this movie. The script is obtained from the website Script Slug. The data was gathered by watching the movie and matching the movie with its script to make sure no utterance was left out or different. The utterances from Margot Mills and Julian Slowik would be selected for further use.

The data that has been selected before would be analyzed for the illocutionary acts. The utterances would be analyzed with

the help of the library study that had been done before. After finding out the illocutionary acts, these utterances were going to be classified based on their types (representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration as mentioned before by Searle, 1997, as cited in Khaterina, 2022). After that, the analyzed data would be related to the aim of this study, which is to find out what function of illocutionary acts are presented in the movie. Finally, the conclusion was made after making sure the aim of the study had been achieved.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Based on the data analysis, types of illocutionary acts using Searle's theory in the utterances uttered by Julian Slowik were found. The identification is presented in the following table:

No	Types of Illocutionary Act	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Representative	16	33%
2.	Directive	23	47%
3.	Expressive	6	12%
4.	Commissive	1	2%
5.	Declarative	3	6%
Total		49	

Table 1. The types of illocutionary acts

Forty-nine illocutionary acts are founded in the utterance of Julian Slowik, the antagonist of the movie. The forty-nine illocutionary acts consist of fifteen (15 times or 31%) representative acts, twenty-three (23 times or 47%) directive acts, six (6 times or 12%) expressive acts, two (2 times or 4%) commissive acts, and three (3 times or 6%) declarative acts.

Discussion

The following is a discussion of the types of illocutionary acts that are uttered by the antagonist character, Julian Slowik. The types of illocutionary acts found are representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

This research analyzes the theory of Searle's types of illocutionary acts to find out the answer to the first problem. It is then followed by the function of the illocutionary acts to answer the second problem.

Data 1

“Welcome to Hawthorn. I am Julian Slowik, and **tonight it'll be our pleasure to feed you.**” (0:15:49 – 0:15:55)

The context in Julian's utterance is that Julian shows himself to the public after all of the guests are seated inside the restaurant. He proceeds to introduce himself for formality and tells the audience the intention of the night's event.

The utterance “tonight it'll be our pleasure to feed you” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of representative type. It is considered as representative type since the aim of the utterance is to make the dining audiences believe that Julian and his cooking crew will give them the best service voluntarily.

The function of illocutionary acts that appeared in this utterance is claiming. It is considered as claim since Julian states that he and his cooking crew will enjoy feeding the dining audience without providing proof.

Data 2

“I've served many Margots. **You're not a Margot.**” (01:13:32 – 01:13:35)

The context in Julian's utterance is that Julian asks Margot to meet him and talk face-to-face. Julian asks Margot her name when they meet for the first time, but he doesn't believe that her real name is Margot. Thus, he asks her name again this time as

he shows the guest book in his room. Julian has kept record of his guests since the first time he opened his restaurant, and he cannot recall that ever meets someone with the name 'Margot' like her. When she keeps answering that her name is Margot, Julian utters these sentences.

The utterance “You're not a Margot.” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of representative type. It is considered as representative type since Julian expresses his own belief and his distrust towards Margot's dishonesty in revealing her name. The sentence does not only state that Julian is wary of Margot, but it also indirectly pressures Margot to reveal her real name. After all, Julian has a cooking crew who does everything he says and even voluntarily dies for him.

The function of illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is insisting. It is considered as insisting since Julian states that he still doesn't believe Margot's name is Margot, even going as far as implicitly going through his guest book to find her.

Data 3

“**Fallen angel, please.**” (53:43.5 - 53:45.3)

The context in Julian's utterance is that Julian tells the dining audience that he was arguing with his investor, the one who really owns the restaurant. Julian then opens the restaurant's curtain to show his guests a man who is struggling in the air a lake. The man is adorned with a pair of big white wings. Ironically, Julian calls that man with the wings his 'angel', his investor who helps Julian economically. However, since Julian and his investor has a big argument, Julian

decides to make him part of his show by killing his investor on the same day as his grand menu event. He says ‘fallen angel’ as the cue to lower the investor and let him drown to death.

The utterance “Fallen angel, please.” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of directive type. It is considered a directive type since the aim of the utterance is to make Julian’s cooking crew (the hearer) to lower the man towards the river as ordered by the speaker.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is ordering. It is considered as ordering since Julian gives his cooking crew member and order to lower his investor, which the crew member gladly does so.

Data 4

“**Please eat.** The menu only makes sense if you eat. (00:27:18 – 00:27:22)

The context in Julian’s utterance is that Margot refuses to touch the food that Julian’s crew has made. Margot does not want to eat the food since she is bewildered by the food since it looks plain and the portion is very small. Margot’s boyfriend, Tyler, offers to eat her portion, but he accidentally knocks a wine glass off the table, resulting it being shattered in pieces and catching the attention of Julian. Julian approaches Margot’s table and notices that her portion is eaten by Tyler. he says that “The menu only makes sense if you eat” Julian then begs Margot to eat her portion since he associates people who eat his fancy food with his enemy. If Margot eats his food, Julian will brand Margot as one of the people who deserved to be killed by him.

The utterance “Please eat.” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of directive type. It is

considered a directive type since the aim of the utterance is to make Margot (the hearer) eat the food as Julian (the speaker) has ordered her to do.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is begging. It is considered as begging since Julian has asked her to eat her portion before. However, Margot keeps declining his request. This utterance is the last request from Julian to make Margot eat her portion before leaving her alone.

Data 5

“**So, let me tell you a memory of mine.**” (00:29:44 – 00:29:45)

The context in Julian’s utterance is that Julian is serving the dining audience their third course: *Chicken Tacos with Scissors in It*. Just like the first and second course, Julian also gives a brief speech that relates to this course. For this dining course, he tells the dining audience that the course is supposed to evoke the ‘memory’. However, before the dining audience can get a look at the cooking, Julian is giving the audience his own version of memory. His memory is one when Julian’s father came home drunk on Taco Tuesday night and hurt his mother. Julian tried to stop him by stabbing a pair of scissors in his father’s thigh. The memory explains the reason why the dish is served with a small pair of scissors.

The utterance “let me tell you a memory of mine” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of commissive type. It is considered as commissive type since the aim of the utterance is to make the speaker, Julian, to commit telling his own memory by saying “Let me tell you”. The sentence does not only state that Julian wants to share his experience, but he also wants to remind the dining audience that everyone there in the

restaurant is awful people. That also includes him since he shares to the dining audience his bad experience and his bad decision to stab his own father.

The function of illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is intending. It is considered as begging since Julian is planning to tell the audience his version of memory and hoping that the audience will acknowledge their own 'memory' through the imprinted pictures on the taco.

Data 6

“Um, ladies and gentlemen, I wanna apologize to you all. What you just saw was not originally part of tonight's menu. We strive for perfection, which of course does not exist, and that is a hard truth for me to accept, so **please forgive me.**” (01:12:31 - 01:12:46)

The context in Julian's utterance is that after Julian serves Margot's request to make her a cheeseburger, Julian is left with a fleeting happiness of serving other people. Julian has not felt this kind of feeling for years, and since he only feels it for a brief second, Julian feels confused. He is confused since he realizes that he still has his passion left inside of him, but at the same time, he wants his show to finish like the perfectionist he is. So, after Margot leaves the restaurant, he genuinely feels embarrassed for not following the plan he has made.

The utterance “please forgive me” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of expressive type. It is considered as expressive type since the aim of the utterance is to express Julian's embarrassment for deviating from his plan. He is not supposed to serve Margot at her request, but due to his ego, he does so to prove Margot wrong. Thus, he gives the dining audience his sincere apology.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is apologizing. It is considered as apologizing since Julian does feel like he owes the dining audience an apology for not following the original plan of the event.

Data 7

“I take my work very seriously, and you're not eating. **And that wounds me.**” 00:36:58 – 00:37:03

The context in Julian's utterance is that when Margot is smoking in the bathroom, Julian enters the room to have a private conversation. Julian tells her that she shouldn't be at the restaurant's event because he has the feeling that Margot is not one of the prestigious people in Julian's eyes. Julian also points out that Margot has not eaten his food that has been crafted with precision and perfection. Implicitly, Julian also specifies that Margot's action hurts him because she prefers to smoke in the bathroom than enjoy the meal provided for her.

The utterance “And that wounds me” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of expressive type. It is considered an expressive type since the aim of the utterance is to express Julian's hurtful feelings towards Margot who doesn't want to eat his food but smokes.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is blaming. It is considered as blaming since Julian thinks that Margot is the cause of his hurtful feelings. Julian does not do something wrong as he does his work perfectly without a mistake, but since Margot rejects his work, he blames his hurtful feelings on her.

Data 8

“Of course not. Can't you see that, that would ruin the menu? **We're all gonna die tonight.**” (00:46:49 - 00:46:54)

The context in Julian's utterance is that he has asked Margot whether Margot is on Julian's side or the dining people's side. Julian emphasizes that it is a very important question, Margot asks him whether the answer will make her live in the end. Julian then denies her, saying that all of them, including Julian and his crew, will die at the end of the dining event.

The utterance “We're all gonna die tonight” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of declarative type. It is considered as declarative type since the aim of the utterance is to affect Margot's safety situation immediately after Julian utters his sentence. Margot is hopeful for a chance of survival, but it does not last for long when Julian says that she will die anyway no matter the decision she chooses.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is sentencing. It is considered as sentencing since Julian declares that Margot is going to die at the end of the dining event. Margot's survival is changed immediately after Julian sentenced her to die.

Data 9

“What school did you go to?”

“Brown.”

“Student loans?”

“No.”

“I'm sorry. **You're dying.**” (01:15:54 - 01:16:02)

The context in Julian's utterance is that one of the dining audience, a movie star, is asking about the fate of Felicity, a member of the dining audience and his manager since Felicity has never interacted with

Julian before. Julian then asks her two questions. When Julian gets his answer, Julian sees Felicity as an entitled student due to her not having student loans. Therefore, Julian formally apologizes to her and tells her that she will join those who will die at the end of the dining event.

The utterance “you're dying” in bold quotation suggests that Julian implemented an illocutionary act of declarative type. It is considered a declarative type since the aim of the utterance is to affect the situation of Felicity who is supposed to be safe since she does not relate to Julian's misery. After all, Felicity is only there to discuss something as a manager of the movie star. However, since Felicity is the stereotype of an entitled student, Julian deems her as one of the people who deserve to die.

The function of the illocutionary act that appeared in this utterance is sentencing. It is considered as sentencing since Julian declares that Felicity is going to die since he sees her as entitled as the other dining audience.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the analysis that has been done above, 49 utterances contain illocutionary acts. These utterances are divided into 5 categories based on Searle's types of illocutionary acts. There are 16 representative utterances, 23 directive utterances, one commissive utterance, three declarative utterances, and six expressive utterances.

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