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ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF MAIN CHARACTERS IN *DEAD POET SOCIETY* AND *FREEDOM WRITERS*

Etika Rachmawati

English Education Program, Galuh University – Ciamis

Iskhak

English Education Program, Galuh University – Ciamis

Adiyastri Nashrullah

adiyatsri@gmail.com

A Specialist for English Course in Bandung

Abstract

This study analyzed speech acts contextualized in *Dead Poet Society* and *Freedom Writers*. This study focused on the use of illocutionary acts used by main characters in both movies. In analyzing the data, this study included content analysis. In this regard, three research questions are addressed: 1) What dominant types and functions of illocutionary acts are uttered by the main characters in certain contextual scenes in both movies? 2) What are the intended meanings of those illocutionary acts?, and 3) How frequently are the illocutionary acts used in both movies? The collected data included 97 utterances of the main character in the *Dead Poet Society* and 84 utterances in the *Freedom Writers* which contain illocutionary acts in certain scene contexts. The findings revealed that the kinds of illocutionary acts on both films consisted of five kinds: assertive (representative), directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Moreover, the second result of the study showed that the most frequently illocutionary acts used by the main characters in both movies were suitable with its movie scene contexts. Thus, the intended meaning of the main characters are well described and understandable by the viewers. The third result showed the different percentage of the use of illocutionary acts classification expressed by the main characters in both movies. The most frequently used illocutionary in *Dead Poet Society* is representative (47.06%) which emphasized on informing (30.59%), and directive (45.87%) in *Freedom Writers* which emphasized on asking (21.10%). Pedagogically, the findings above recommend that the lecturers develop their creativity in teaching pragmatics (sociolinguistics) to improve teaching and learning process by adapting other relevant sources such as movies.

Keywords: Illocutionary acts, Main Character, Movie

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there is a need for teachers to learn professionally how to make good relationship over communication with their students. They may be able to engage their students in teaching-learning activity and students have to learn how to convey meaning of utterances they make in order to efficiently as well as effectively cope with their teaching and learning activity. One of methods to learn how verbal communication affects addresser and addressee can be experienced in enjoying movie.

Henceforth, movie has significant influences in language learning as an asset to enrich learning preferences. Students or teachers are not only able to watch and learn life lessons existed in its moral value but also they may effectively acquire language. As a matter of fact, there are numerous speech acts that may appear in movies that can trigger up the viewers' senses. According to Austin in Schrifin (2005, p.39), there are three separate types of acts that are performed by an utterance within a conversation: the performance of an act of saying something (locutionary act), an act in saying something (illocutionary act), and an act by saying something (perlocutionary act). Speech act like illocutionary act appears to make people especially language learners better understand what the actors and actresses utter during the show.

Previously, there have been some researchers who conducted speech acts studies to offer easy ways to better understand existed meaning of utterances simply in movies. For instances, Nemani and Rasekh (2013) analyzed speech categories in the context of the movie called 'A Separation'. They concluded that speech is multi-functional; on the other hand, speakers live in a multi-dimensional space being surrounded by such factors as age, status, quality of relations, and class. Amanah (2009) conducted a study related to illocutionary acts analysis in *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* movie script by Stuart C. She found there are types of illocutionary acts in the movie script she analyzed based on certain context of situation in each different scene set. And the last, Oktoberia (2012) analyzed types of direct speech acts used in *Harry Potter- The Deathly Hallows* and *Bride Wars* movie script. She concluded that the dominant type of directive speech act in fiction film is command. Then, in comedy film, the dominant type of directive is request. These significant previous studies help the writer to find basic foundation in both theory and practice to conduct his study.

Though numerous of studies have been conducted relating to illocutionary onto movies, there has not been a study yet on comparisons of illocutionary acts analysis among

main characters in two typical movie genres. Hence, the writer intended to focus on the topic, and find out the emerging samples through his paper entitled “Illocutionary Acts Analyses of Main Characters in ‘Dead Poet Society’ and ‘Freedom Writers’ Movies“. (A Descriptive Comparative Study in both Contemporary Movies). Both movies are explicitly draw pictures about school lives, struggle, and how teachers affect their environments by having good communication and action feedback mainly with their students. Obviously, these movies are relevant to teacher education directions and pedagogical implications.

Speech Act

According to Chaer and Leone (2004, in Hariyana, Masduki, Ayuningtias; 2011, p.2), speech act consists of a social event because it involves some parties who speak in certain situation and certain place. This social event is essentially a string of a number of speech acts that are organized to achieve a goal. Speech acts theorists said that the action performed when produced utterance is analyzed by three different types (Austin, 1967, p.101; Cutting, 2002, p.16; Yule, 1996, p.48; Kristani&Muhartoyo, 2009, p.2), they are: *Locutionary act* is an act of speaking that reveals something or expresses something. Austin (1967, p.99) said that locutionary act is “performance of an act of saying something”. It is the same as an act of saying certain things accompanied with certain sense and reference.

Illocutionary act is an act which is performed by saying something e.g. warning and asking. Austin (1967, p.99) stated that illocutionary act is “performance of an act in saying something.” *Perlocutionary act* is an act which is done by saying something, to make others believe in something by urging the others either to do something or to influence others. Austin (1967, p.121) stated that perlocutionary act is “the achieving of certain effects by saying something.”

Illocutionary Acts

According to Yule (1996) as cited in Sitanggang and Natsir (2012, p.4), there are five general functions of illocutionary acts. Those are declarations, representatives, expressive, directives and commissives. *Declarations* are those kinds of illocutionary acts that change the world via their utterance. Statement of bless, bet, approve, confirm, curse, declare, resign. *Representatives* are those kinds of illocutionary acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not, to the truth. Statements of facts, assertions, conclusions, descriptions, describe, inform, reports, insists, suggest, claim. *Expressive* are

those kind of illocutionary acts that state what the speaker feels. Statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow.

Directives are those kinds of illocutionary acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They are commands, orders, requests, suggestions, invites, permits, asks, begs. The directive illocutionary acts are speech acts uttered by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. It includes commands, orders, requests, and suggestions (Yule, 1996, in Trisnawati, 2011, p.2). The illocutionary point of directive illocutionary acts, according to Vanderveken (1990, p.105) consist of making efforts to get the hearer to do the speaker's intention. There are function of directive illocutionary acts such as ordering, requesting, suggesting, and so forth (Trisnawati, 2011, p.7).

Commissives are those kinds of illocutionary acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends. They are promises, threats, refusals, pledges, accepts, offers. While Narthey (2013, p.132) argued that intended meanings can be identified as making requests, asking questions, giving advice and suggestions, making confessions, thanking, showing excitement, good wishes, greetings, complaints, reminiscence, teasing/making mockery and expressing disappointment.

Movie Contextualized Illocutionary Acts: Its Relationship and Roles

The relationship between movie and Illocutionary acts is about how meaning of contextual situation constructed because the idea that vocabulary acquisition is a process that occurs along a continuum (wesche&Paribakht, 1996; Schmidt, 2001, as cited in Yuksel and Tanriverdi, 2009, p.52). In line with the statement above, Holtgraves (2002, p.12) said that:

Maintaining a view of language use as action, Searle (1969) argued that the conditions for the felicitous performance (in Austin's sense) of an illocutionary act can be viewed as constituting the performance of that speech act. That is, the felicity conditions for a particular speech act must be met for that act to be performed successfully, and the meeting of these conditions constitutes the performance of that speech act.

From the statement above, it can be seen that the relation between movie and illocutionary acts indicate clearer phenomena and the speech acts have to do with the conceptual discussion in the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics is concerned with the speakers' intentions, and what the speakers mean when they use the particular linguistics

in context (Hatch, 1992 in Sitanggang&Natsir, 2012, p.4). The speech act theory is usually studied under the broad rubric of pragmatics which, in turn, can be defined as “the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate” (Levinson, 1983, p.24), or as defined by Farghal (1995, *ibid*) as “the study of language in use or operation”.

Vanderveken (1994, in Moeschler, p.2), speakers perform their illocutionary acts within entire conversations where they are most in verbal interaction with other speakers who reply to them and perform in turn their own speech acts with the same collective intention to pursue with success a certain type of discourse.

The basis of this argument is that conversation is made of sequences of speech acts. Conversation has recently become a focus of interest for speech act theory and several proposals have been formulated concerning the possible extension of speech act theory to the analysis of conversation (Moeschler, p.1&3).

In the terms of its role, in recent years, to promote the learners’ mastery of language skills, language teachers have been eager to look for a variety of quality teaching materials and aid to be used in EFL classes to ensure that the students can gain optimum to learn. Knowing the advantages of using films/movies to teach language, and the entertainment value of movie can bring to students’ learning progress; movies will bring good impact to students’ process of learning. Thus, movies should be incorporated into the language class to motivate students’ interest in learning, to make lessons more interesting and to nurture students’ understanding of the target language as Istanto (2009, p.281) supports the writer’s thought.

To prepare students for the challenges presented by our globalized, networked, culturally diverse world, educators should put into practice strategies and activities that underpin the new media literacies involved in accessing, analyzing, interpreting, understanding and creating visual messages in a multimedia environment (Chan and Herrero, p.11). In regard to this, Istanto (2009, p.278) stated that movies also play a vital role in furnishing students with background knowledge of the target language; provides strong motivation for students to learn the target language and culture because students can learn in more interesting ways compared to traditional class activities (Istanto, 2009, p.288). Chan and Herrero (p.11) added the use of film in the classroom or as an outside school activity can uphold the motivation of the learners, because of its playful component. Using films through specific task activities provides an ideal vehicle for active learning, as

well as encouraging interaction and participation. The communicative potential of its use have been commended; it facilitates comprehension activities that are perceived as 'real', it creates a *curiosity* gap that facilitates the exchange of opinions and ideas about the film, it helps to explore non-verbal elements, it improves oral and aural skills (Altman, 1989, *ibid*), it provides meaningful contexts and vocabulary, exposing viewers to natural expressions and natural flow of speech.

METHOD

The population of this study was all of the main characters' utterances. There are 293 utterances of Mr. John Keating as the main character in the *Dead Poet Society* and 258 utterances of Mrs. Erin Gruwell as the main character in another one. The sample of this study was 97 utterances of the main character in the *Dead Poet Society* and 84 utterances in the *Freedom Writers* which contain illocutionary acts in certain scene contexts.

In collecting the data, the study was divided into two steps. First, the movie was watched and certain scene contexts which contains illocutionary acts uttered by the main characters in both movies were selected. Second, the illocutionary acts uttered in those scene contexts were analyzed. Movie script was also used to be analyzed. Obviously, the data obtained from observation and content analysis. According to Neueundorf(2002,p.1) Content analysis defined as the systematic, objective analysis of message characteristic. In content analysis, data were resulted from the chosen procedures to answer specific questions concerning phenomena based on the scene context. Furthermore, several conclusions and suggestions were drawn based on the results of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study focused on speech acts in two films, namely *Dead Poet Society* and *Freedom Writer*. It analyzed the kinds of illocutionary acts as stated by Searle (1969) that the kinds of illocutionary acts consist of five. There are assertive acts (Representative acts), directive acts, commissive acts, expressive acts, and declarative acts. The analysis of illocutionary acts was conducted with the purpose of finding out the dominant type and function of illocutionary acts are uttered by the main characters in certain contextual scenes, the intended meaning of those illocutionary acts and the comparison of the most frequently illocutionary acts used in *Dead Poet Society* and *Freedom Writers*. Through analyzing illocutionary acts in both films, the writer found the result as follows:

For the first result, it was found that the kinds of illocutionary acts on both films consisted of five kinds. There were assertive acts (Representative acts), directive acts, commissive acts, expressive acts, and declarative acts. Moreover the second result of the study showed that the most frequently illocutionary acts used by the main characters in both movies were applicable/suit with its movie scene contexts. Thus the intended meaning of the main characters well described and understood able by the viewers. The third result showed the difference of usage percentage of illocutionary acts classification by the main characters in both movies. The most frequently used illocutionary in *Dead Poet Society* is representative (47.06%) which emphasized on informing (30.59% of usage) and directive (45.87%) in *Freedom Writers* which emphasized on asking (21.10% of usage).

The writer found the similarity results in both studies. In addition, this research finding also was in line with Nemani and Rasekh (2013) and Amanah (2009) that found there were the five Searle's (1979) illocutionary acts. Besides, this present study also suit with Oktoberia (2012) which found the general function of speech acts based on contextual. On the other hand, this present study also in contrast with Nemani and Rasekh (2013) which shown their study results' most used illocutionary acts, namely directive, expressive, and commissive. However the writer found there only representatives and directives were mostly used by the main characters in the two different movies within its various general functions as previously described.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and the result of the study, the usage of the fifth illocutionary acts were found in both movies although there were several unavailability general functions in the main characters' utterances in certain movie scene context. From the fifth illocutionary acts, representative could be found most frequently used in *Dead Poet Society* with the percentage 47.06% which emphasized on the use of informing (30.59%). In the case of *Freedom Writers*, directive was mostly used with the percentage 45.87% which emphasized on the use of asking (21.10%).

In line with the findings of the study, it is recommended that the lecturers develop their creativity in teaching semantics and sociolinguistics to improve teaching and learning process. For the students, this study can be used as a reference for their understanding about speech act. For further researchers, they can analyze speech acts with more extended data.

For the implication of this study, the existence of speech act, especially illocutionary acts has good contribution to build communication during teaching and learning process. For students, they are able to use illocutionary acts in context of classroom interaction to achieve sociolinguistic competence as one of communicative competence that should be mastered by students.

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