E-Journal of English Language and Literature Volume 15 No. 1
E-Journal of English Language & Literature
ISSN 2302-3546
Published by English Language & Literature Study Program of
FBS Universitas Negeri Padang
available at http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jell

AN ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN *THE LITTLE MERMAID* (2023) MOVIE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in *The Little Mermaid* (2023) Movie. Speech acts are divided into three types: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. In this study, illocutionary acts are the main focus because they represent the speaker's intention in an utterance. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method for this research. This study applied Kreidler's theory (1998) to analyze the types of illocutionary acts. The subjects of this study are the main characters (Ariel, Eric, and Ursula) in *The Little Mermaid* (2023), and the object of the study is the utterances containing illocutionary acts in the movie script. The findings reveal six types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters, including assertive 175 (48.61%) data, verdictive 11 (3.06%) data, expressive 59 (16.94%) data, directive 61 (16.94%) data, commissive 18 (5.00%) data, and phatic 36 (10.00%) data. Among these types, assertive is the most dominant, with 175 (48.61%) utterances.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Illocutionary Acts, Movie, The Little Mermaid (2023), Main characters, Script

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A. INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a system of words and grammar, but also a means through which people perform actions in communication. When someone speaks, they are not merely producing sentences, but also expressing intentions, influencing others, and creating effects in social interaction. This idea is explained in the concept of speech acts, which views language as a form of action rather than just a tool for conveying information. According to Green (2016), speech acts are actions in communication that can be done by speaking and meaning what is said, such as making a promise, stating a fact, giving a warning, or expressing a threat. This shows that every utterance carries a purpose and functions as an action performed through language.

To understand how these actions are realized in communication, speech acts are generally classified into several types. Cutting (2015) explains that speech acts consist of locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act refers to the actual utterance produced by the speaker, the illocutionary act refers to the speaker's intention in saying something, and the perlocutionary act refers to the effect of the utterance on the listener. Among these types, illocutionary acts play a central role because they reflect what the speaker intends to do through language, such as asserting, requesting, promising, or expressing feelings. Therefore, analyzing illocutionary acts helps researchers understand not only what is said, but also why it is said and what function it serves in communication. Because of their central role in conveying intention, illocutionary acts are particularly important in pragmatics. Kreidler (1998) classifies illocutionary acts into seven types: assertive, performative, verdictive, expressive, directive, commissive, and phatic. This classification provides a comprehensive framework for identifying how speakers perform actions through language in communication.

In practical contexts, the use of language and illocutionary acts can be observed clearly in movies, especially through dialogue. Language in a movie is not only used to tell the story, but also to show the characters' emotions, personalities, and relationships. Through dialogue, audiences can understand what characters feel, think, and want, even when their words are simple. Moreover, language helps create the mood of a scene, whether it is tense, humorous, romantic, or emotional. The way characters speak is also influenced by social and cultural contexts, allowing viewers to observe different communication styles and values.

For this reason, movies have become an important object of linguistic research. By watching movies, people can experience various stories and emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, and tension, while also being introduced to new cultures and perspectives. Bordwell and Thompson (2012) state that a movie is a series of moving images shown on a screen to tell a story or depict a situation. Ramrao (2016) adds that movies developed from visual arts such as photography and painting into a medium that combines images, sound, and motion to convey meaning. Because movies present natural conversations

ISSN: 2302-3546

within rich contexts, they provide valuable data for pragmatic analysis, particularly in the study of speech acts.

Previous studies have analyzed illocutionary acts in various forms of discourse such as movies, speeches, songs, debates, and interviews. Most of these studies focus on identifying the types of illocutionary acts and commonly apply Searle's theory. Although several studies have discussed illocutionary acts, the analysis is often not conducted in detail using a clear classification of types. In addition, the use of Kreidler's (1998) classification is still limited, even though it provides more specific categories, including phatic and verdictive acts that are often overlooked in previous research.

This research aims to analyze the types of illocutionary acts used by the characters in *The Little Mermaid* (2023). Speech acts show that language is not only used to say something but also to perform actions, such as expressing opinions, making requests, or showing feelings (Doerge, 2006). This movie was chosen because its dialogues provide rich data for pragmatic analysis, combining everyday language, emotional interaction, and fantasy elements. Unlike other romance movies such as The Vow, which focus on realistic relationships and everyday emotional conflicts, *The Little Mermaid* (2023) presents romance in a fantasy and musical setting, involving magical elements, power differences, and moral conflicts. These differences influence how the characters express their intentions and emotions through language. The interactions between Ariel, Eric, and Ursula reflect various communicative purposes such as cooperation, conflict, and negotiation, while also showing character development and relationships. In addition, the combination of dialogue and songs makes this movie suitable for analyzing the use of illocutionary acts in expressing intentions and supporting the development of the storyline.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the research problem, this study uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative descriptive research is an approach used to explore and understand the meanings ascribed by individuals or groups to a social or human problem. This method is chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the meaning behind speech and illocutionary acts produced by the main characters, which cannot be measured quantitatively. In this study, the researcher analyzes the utterances of the main characters, namely Ariel, Eric, and Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* (2023), to identify the types of illocutionary acts. The data consist of utterances containing illocutionary acts taken from the movie script, specifically from the dialogues of Ariel, Eric, and Ursula. The researcher collects and examines these dialogues to classify the types of illocutionary acts in the characters' interactions.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

1) Types of Illocutionary Acts

Based on the research, six types of Illocutionary acts were found by the main characters (Ariel, Eric, and Ursula) in *The Little Mermaid* (2023) movie. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Findings Table of Types of Illocutionary Act

Character	Assertive	Verdictive	Expressive	Directive	Commissive	Phatic	Total
Ariel	41 (11.39%)	2 (0.56%)	22 (6.11%)	9 (2.50%)	2 (0.56%)	11 (3.06%)	87 (24.17%)
Eric	70 (19.44%)	3 (0.83%)	21 (5.83%)	30 (8.33%)	8 (2.22%)	22 (6.11%)	154 (42.78%)
Ursula	64 (17.78%)	6 (1.67%)	16 (4.44%)	22 (6.11%)	8 (2.22%)	3 (0.83%)	119 (33.06%)
Total	175 (48.61%)	11 (3.06%)	59 (16.39%)	61 (16.94%)	18 (5.00%)	36 (10.00%)	360 (100%)

Based on the data in the table, the most dominant type of illocutionary act used by the main characters in *The Little Mermaid* (2023) is assertive, with a total of 175 utterances. Eric produced the highest number of assertive utterances, 70 (19.44%), followed by Ursula, 64 (17.78%), and Ariel, 41 (11.39%). This shows that most of the characters' dialogues consist of statements expressing beliefs, opinions, and information. The next most frequent type is directive, found 61 times, mainly spoken by Eric 30 (8.33%), Ursula 22 (6.11%), and Ariel 9 (2.50%). This indicates that efforts to influence and prompt action play an important role in the characters' interactions and in driving the development of the story.

Expressive utterances appear 59 times, used mostly by Ariel 22 (6.11%), Eric 21 (5.83%), and Ursula 16 (4.44%). This indicates that emotional expressions

ISSN: 2302-3546

such as happiness, regret, and affection play an important role in their interactions and character development throughout the story. Meanwhile, phatic utterances were found 36 times, mostly used by Eric 22 (6.11%), Ariel 11 (3.06%), and Ursula 3 (0.83%), showing moments when the characters use language to open conversations, keep interactions going, and maintain social relationships in a natural way. Commissive utterances appear only 18 times, mostly spoken by Ursula and Eric 8 (2.22%), and Ariel 2 (0.56%), suggesting that expressions of commitment and promises are not frequently used, but they still play an important role in highlighting key decisions and future actions in the story. Lastly, verdictive utterances are the least frequent, with only 11 instances, mostly used by Ursula 6 (1.67%), Eric 3 (0.83%), and Ariel 2 (0.56%), suggesting that verdictive or judgmental expressions are not commonly used in the movie and usually appear only in certain moments where characters give assessments or decisions about specific situations.

Overall, these findings show that assertive and directive utterances dominate the movie, suggesting that *The Little Mermaid* (2023) focuses on the sharing of personal beliefs among characters as well as on guiding actions and directing responses through dialogue rather than on promises or judgments.

2. Discussion

The researcher conducted a study to find out the types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in *The Little Mermaid* (2023). This research used Kreidler's (1998) theory to analyze the types of illocutionary acts. According to Kreidler (1998), there are seven types of illocutionary acts, but only six were identified in *The Little Mermaid* (2023): assertive, verdictive, directive, commissi ve, expressive, and phatic. The most dominant type is assertive (175 utterances), which is used to express beliefs, opinions, and information. The high number of assertive utterances shows that the characters often express their thoughts and motivations. Eric shows curiosity and confidence, Ariel asserts her dreams and determination, while Ursula uses assertive speech to influence others. This suggests that the movie focuses on the characters' personal beliefs and intentions throughout the story.

The findings also show that the most dominant type of illocutionary act in *The Little Mermaid (*2023) is assertive, with a total of 175 utterances. This type is used when characters state their beliefs, opinions, or information. The large number of assertive utterances shows that the characters often explain what they think, what they feel, and what they want. Eric often expresses his curiosity and confidence through assertive statements; Ariel uses assertive language to show her dreams, hopes, and determination; and Ursula uses assertive utterances to present information in a way that helps her manipulate others. These results show that the

movie places strong emphasis on the characters' personal thoughts, beliefs, and intentions throughout the story.

These studies show that assertive is a common type of illocutionary act across various contexts and individuals, especially among main characters in movies. The findings indicate that assertive speech acts often appear in main characters because they serve as the core of the story, expressing their thoughts, beliefs, and major decisions. In *The Little Mermaid* (2023), the use of assertive speech acts is clearly seen in Ariel, Eric, and Ursula. Through their utterances, the audience can observe how each character conveys emotions, determination, and perspectives toward the situations they encounter. This shows that assertive speech acts not only function to share information but also help illustrate character growth and the relationships between the characters throughout the storyline.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was conducted to identify the types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters (Ariel, Eric, and Ursula) in the The Little Mermaid. The researcher applied Kreidler's (1998) theory to analyze the types of illocutionary acts. The findings reveal six types of illocutionary acts performed by the main characters: assertive, verdictive, directive, commissive, expressive, and phatic. Assertive acts were the most dominant, as the main characters—Eric with his curiosity and confidence, Ariel with her dreams and determination, and Ursula with her manipulative intent—often used assertive utterances to express their thoughts and motivations. This reflects the movie's focus on the personal beliefs and inner drives of its characters. In addition, this study shows how linguistic choices in the movie contribute to character development and narrative progression, where the dominance of assertive utterances highlights the characters' strong intentions and emotional clarity throughout the story.

Before concluding the study, it is important to present several suggestions that may be useful for future research and the development of similar studies in pragmatics. Future research is encouraged to expand this study by involving more characters or by comparing *The Little Mermaid* (2023) with other Disney movies in order to identify whether similar patterns of illocutionary acts and their functions appear across different storylines and characters. In addition, future studies may broaden the scope of analysis by examining not only illocutionary acts but also perlocutionary acts, so that a deeper understanding can be gained of how the characters' utterances not only express intentions but also influence the emotions, reactions, and actions of other characters.

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