

## ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS PERFORMED BY MEILIN IN “TURNING RED” THE MOVIE

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### ABSTRACT

This analysis entitled "Illocutionary Act Performed by Meilin in *Turning Red* the Movie," aims at determining and analysing the types of illocutionary acts and direct and indirect illocutionary acts performed by Meilin as the main character in "Turning Red." This analysis was based on qualitative research, and data was collected through the documentation method and a note-taking technique. After collecting all relevant data, the data were analysed using the descriptive qualitative method. The data source was the utterances of Meilin, the main character in "Turning Red," the movie. This article analysed the data using the types of illocutionary acts theory proposed by Searle (1979) to categorise and analyse the collected data into five groups: declarations, assertive, expressive, directives, and commissives; and the approach proposed by Yule (1996) to determine and analyse direct and indirect illocutionary acts. Based on the result of the analysis, there were only four types of illocutionary acts used by Meilin in the movie: assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. Assertive was expressed 17 times, directive was expressed 20 times, commissive appeared 9 times, and expressive appeared 2 times. In this analysis, no declaration acts were found because there were no utterances by Meilin that contained utterances to declare something. Therefore, the analysis also found that direct speech was the type most often expressed by Meilin; it was expressed 25 times, while indirect speech was only expressed 23 times. She mostly expressed her utterances directly because that is the easiest way to communicate with the listener.

**Keywords:** Illocutionary acts, Types of illocutionary acts, Direct and indirect acts

### INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, communication is one of the pragmatics concerns that are being studied and analyzed. Pragmatics deals with the spoken language (utterances) used by speakers and hearers in communication. Regarding communication and utterances, speech acts are one of the scopes of pragmatics. Speech acts are a field of research that helps to understand human communication better. Speech acts, according to Yule (1996:47), are utterances that are carried out in action by two or more people as speakers and listeners. This relates to the types of speech acts that are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

When speech act occurs, the person speaking may say something and mean it while also possibly meaning something entirely different. Searle (1979: 12-16) also divided "illocutionary acts

into five types: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.” Based on these categories, the speaker's utterances are separated. In the current era, illocutionary acts can easily be found in daily life conversations, both direct and indirect. Moreover, it can also be found in electronic or printed media.

Illocutionary acts are carried out with the intended meaning hidden behind the utterance. This meaning can be found by looking at how the utterance is used in direct and indirect communication, such as when someone asks, tells, advises, or gives advice. Moreover, the topic of illocutionary acts is not a new issue anymore. The researcher believes that studying illocutionary acts is essential because it can help people understand and convey their intent or purpose correctly, allowing them to achieve their communication goals. Furthermore, for the hearer to be able to communicate effectively with the speaker, the hearer is expected to be aware of the current situation and comprehend the speaker's intended message.

Based on the phenomenon above, there are two problems of the study are formulated the first is what are the types of illocutionary acts performed by Meilin in “Turning Red” movie? And the second is what are the direct and indirect illocutionary acts performed by Meilin in “Turning Red” Movie?

## **DATA SOURCE**

According to Hornby (2010: 295), “data is defined as any information or fact that is used in deciding and discussing something.” The data source for this research is the movie “Turning Red.” This movie is an American fantasy comedy animated in 2022 by Pixar Animation Studios. “Turning Red” is a famous movie about a 13-year-old girl named Mei Lee, who is usually called Meilin. She is a confident, nerdy girl who is torn between being a good daughter to her mother and getting caught up in the chaos of adolescence. She turns into a giant red panda when she gets too excited. The analysis in this article focused on the utterances uttered by the main character, who is also the protagonist of the movie, Meilin. The complexity of Meilin's situation as the main character caused her to frequently imply the meaning of her utterances in the movie, indicating that it contained illocutionary acts that were interesting to analyze and showed that it provided enough data for analysis in this research.

## **METHODS**

This study was conducted using qualitative research because it presented descriptions and analysis rather than statistical or counting data (Wray & Bloomer, 2006: 97). The data were the utterances of the main character in a movie containing illocutionary types and collected through the documentation method and note-taking techniques. The data in this research was analysed using a descriptive qualitative method that focused on a deeper and more detailed analysis to improve the quality of the research. In addition, the data were presented in an informal method in order to provide a simple and clear explanation. The researcher presented the analysis of the data in the form of words

and sentences, with no numbers or statistical forms. The purpose was to provide descriptive details that helped the audience understand the topic of discussion.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Several theories served as a theoretical framework for this study and complemented one another. The theories were applied to Meilin's utterances in "Turning Red," the movie. The speech act theory used in this study was specified in the illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979: 12–16) to identify the types of illocutionary acts. Meanwhile, the theory proposed by Yule (1986: 54–56) was used to analyze direct and indirect speech acts.

### **1. Speech Act**

Speech acts, according to Austin (1962) in Cutting (2002: 16), is "the action performed when an utterance is produced." The speaker's utterances may perform specific actions, in which case the utterance is called "performative," or it can be described as an object and called "constative." According to Yule (1996: 47), a speech act is the study of utterance-based actions. It shows the context in which the statement can influence the listener. During a conversation, people not only say things, like putting together words and grammatical structures, but they also do things with those things. The speaker's objective is communicated to the listener through the speech act.

Furthermore, speech acts have three types; according to Austin (1962: 108), the types of speech acts are locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Since this study is focused on illocutionary act, therefore, the explanation is focused on illocutionary act while the other types of speech acts is explained briefly.

#### **A. Locutionary Act**

Austin (1962:108) states that a locutionary act is a speech act that has a certain meaning and a certain reference. A locutionary act can be shown as the mere utterance of some words in a particular language. According to Yule (1996: 48), the process of producing meaningful utterances is an example of a locutionary act. For instance, the locutionary act of requesting, "Would you kindly open the door?"

#### **B. Illocutionary Act**

Austin (1962:108) states that a locutionary act is a speech act that has a certain meaning and a certain reference.

The illocutionary act, according to Austin (1962: 108), is what people accomplish by means such as persuading, discouraging, or even surprising or misleading. It means that what people say will affect the hearer. For example, by using words like "promise," "please," and "thank you," the speaker wishes to convey a message to the hearer. These words serve the purpose of identifying and encoding illocutionary acts within an utterance.

#### **C. Perlocutionary Act**

The term "perlocutionary act" refers to the effect that an illocutionary act has on the listener's feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and actions, whether it was meant to have that effect or not. According

to Kreidler (2002: 181), the perlocutionary act is described as the message that the speaker's words convey to the listener. In other words, a perlocutionary act is the listener's response to the speaker's utterance.

## **2. Type of Illocutionary Act**

There are five primary types of illocutionary acts, according to Searle (1979: 12–16): assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

- A. Assertives: According to Searle (1979: 12), "the purpose or intent of members of the assertive class is to bind the speaker, to varying degrees, to the truth of the expressed proposition."
- B. Directives: According to Searle (1979: 13), "directives are the attempt of the speaker to get the hearer to do an action or something."
- C. Commissives: According to Searle (1979: 14), "Commissives are to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to some future course of action."
- D. Expressives: According to Searle (1979: 15), the illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state described in the sincerity condition about a situation related to the propositional content
- E. Declarations: According to Searle (1979: 16), "a declaration is a successful performance that ensures that the propositional content corresponds to the world." It means that a word has the power to change the world.

## **3. Direct and Indirect of Illocutionary Act**

Yule (1996: 54–55) states that direct and indirect speech acts refer to how a speaker uses different kinds of language for different purposes. There is a link between the three structural forms (declarative, imperative, and interrogative) and the three main communication ways (statement, question, and command or request). Yule (1996: 54–55) also stated that, on the one hand, a speech act is said to be direct when both the way it is put together and what it means can be linked directly to each other. On the other hand, indirect speech acts occur when the structure of the utterance and the function it serves are not directly connected to one another.

## **4. Context**

Context, according to Leech (1983: 13), is the listener's interpretation of the meaning of the speaker's speech, which is shared as knowledge. Context is the situation or condition in which the utterance is produced. By understanding the situation when the utterance was made, listeners can guess what the speaker meant by that utterance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of this section is to present the results and discussion of the research findings on the types of illocutionary acts and direct and indirect acts performed by Meilin. The results showed that Meilin performed 48 illocutionary acts. Based on the result, the most frequent type of act performed

in the movie was the directive act, while the most minor type performed by Meilin was the commissive act. Moreover, the writer also found that Meilin's utterances in the conversation mostly used direct acts to convey her message to the addressees. The complete data results are presented in the table below.

**Table 1.** Research Result of the Illocutionary Acts Types.

| <b>Illocutionary Acts Types</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Assertive Act                   | 17               | 35,41%            |
| Directive Act                   | 20               | 41,67%            |
| Expressive Act                  | 9                | 18,75%            |
| Commissive Act                  | 2                | 4,1%              |
| <b>Total =</b>                  | <b>48</b>        | <b>100%</b>       |

**Table 2.** Research Result of Direct and Indirect Speech Act.

| <b>Illocutionary Acts Types</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Direct Act                      | 25               | 52,08%            |
| Indirect Act                    | 23               | 47,92%            |
| <b>Total =</b>                  | <b>48</b>        | <b>100%</b>       |

The detailed discussion of each type is presented as follows:

### **Assertive Act**

#### **Data 1**

**MEILIN** : "He looks like a hobo."

**ABBY** : "A hot hobo."

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:03:59 – 00:04:02)

### **The Context of Dialogue**

Based on the dialogue above in Data 1, the conversation involved Meilin and her friends: Miriam, Abby, and Priya. The conversation itself happened in front of a market, the Daisy Mart. The context shows that they peek through the market glass to see an employee named Devon. While her friends agree that Devon is handsome, Meilin disagrees with them.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

According to Searle's theory of speech acts (1979), the type of illocutionary act used in this dialogue is assertive. The assertiveness is shown because Meilin is trying to complain to her friends. By saying her utterance, "He looks like a hobo," Meilin wants her friends to agree that Devon is ugly. Therefore, in her utterance, the speaker applies an assertive act because she wants to complain to the hearers and make them agree with her statement.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

In the conversation between Meilin and her friends in data 1, it can be found that an indirect act is performed. Although she uses a declarative sentence with the act of asserting by complaining

about her friends' opinions. However, in her implied message, the utterance actually functions as an order to make her friends agree with her statement that Devon is ugly. As a result, Meilin's utterance is classified as indirect speech because it contains the act of ordering.

## Data 2

MIRIAM : "Mei, every day is cleaning day. Can't you just get one afternoon off?"

MEILIN : **"But I like cleaning. Plus, I got this new feather duster and, oh, my gosh, you guys, it picks up so much dirt, it's bananas!"**

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:04:55 – 00:05:07)

## The Context of Dialogue

Based on the dialogue in Data 2 above, the conversation involves Meilin and Miriam, which happened on the way home from school. The context shows that Miriam asked Meilin to join Abby, Priya, and her for karaoke. They want Meilin to go karaoke with them for once because she always refuses their request. However, Meilin still cannot go with them because she must go home and clean the temple.

## The Type of Illocutionary Act

Based on the conversation above, the type of illocutionary act found is assertive. By using her utterance, Meilin shows that she informs her friends that she cannot go karaoke with them and wants them to believe in her. It is because she must go home to clean the temple. Also, as another reason, she states to her friends that she enjoys doing cleaning activities. Therefore, in her utterance, Meilin uses an assertive act to inform the hearer of her situation and make the hearer believe her.

## Direct/Indirect Act

In the dialog above, it can be found that what is being said by Meilin is a declarative sentence and the direct type of illocution is asserting, while indirectly, the utterance is refusing. In her implied message, Meilin refuses her friends' invitation by stating that she cannot join them in karaoke. As a result, Meilin's utterance classifies as indirect speech with the act of refusing.

## Directive Act

## Data 3

MING : "It's going to be okay."

MEILIN : **"No, it's not! Will you just get out?"**

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:17:35 – 00:17:36)

## The Context of Dialogue

Based on the dialogue above in Data 3, the conversation involved Meilin and her mother, which took place in the house while Meilin was in the bathroom. The context shows that Ming insists on entering the bathroom, but Meilin does not like it. She wants privacy because she does not want her mother to see her when she is turned into a red panda.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

Based on the conversation in Data 3, it can be classified as a directive act because Meilin's utterance is a request to her mother that she wants Ming not to enter the bathroom. Therefore, Meilin uses a directive act that she wants her mother to perform, which is not to come into the bathroom and leave her alone.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

In the conversation between Meilin and her mother in data 3, it can be found that an indirect act is performed. Although she uses an interrogative sentence with the act of requesting, by asking her mother not to enter the bathroom. However, it functions as an imperative sentence, which is used to make her mother stop forcing Meilin to let her in. As a result, Meilin's utterance is classified as indirect speech because it contains the act of ordering.

### **Data 4**

**MEILIN** : “Don’t look at me! Stay back!”

**MING** : “Sweetie, it’s okay. Mommy is here.”

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:26:22 – 00:26:29)

### **The Context of Dialogue**

Based on the Data 4 dialogue above, the conversation involved Meilin and her mother and took place in Meilin's bedroom. The context shows that Meilin hid under the blanket because she did not want her mother to see her in a red panda form. She wants her mother to leave and not look at her.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

Based on the conversation in Data 4, it can be classified as a directive act because Meilin's utterance is an order to her mother to leave her alone. Meilin hates it when she is seen as a red panda. Therefore, in her utterance, Meilin uses a directive act to give an order and make her mother perform it, which is to not see her and leave her.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

Based on Meilin's utterance in Data 4 above, it can be found that Meilin performed a direct act. It is an imperative sentence that serves as an order to stop her mother from asking about her situation and to leave her. As a result, Meilin's utterance classifies as a type of direct speech with the act of ordering.

### **Commissive Act**

### **Data 5**

**MEILIN** : “We'll karaoke another time, I promise!”

**MIRIAM** : “Okay, sure, Mei!”

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:05:52 – 00:05:55)

### **The Context of Dialogue**

Based on Data 5 above, the conversation involves Meilin and her friends, especially Miriam. The conversation happened on the way home from school. The context shows that Miriam asked Meilin to join Abby, Priya, and her for karaoke. They want Meilin to go karaoke with them for once because she always refuses their request. However, Meilin still cannot go there and promise that one day she will come and pay all the bills for karaoke and food for them.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

The type of illocutionary act found in this data is a commissive act. The speaker's utterance shows that she is promising her friends that she will come and join them to karaoke together in the future. Therefore, Meilin's utterance can be concluded as a commissive act since it shows the action that Meilin will take in the future.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

In the dialog above, it can be found that what is being said by Meilin is a declarative sentence, and the type of direct illocution is stating. She states directly that she promises to go karaoke with them in the future. However, the function of her statement can also be identified as an imperative sentence because it has the act of refusing. By implying her message, Meilin indirectly declines her friends' invitation to go karaoke because she must go home. As a result, Meilin's utterance is classified as indirect speech because it has the act of refusing.

### **Data 7**

**MEILIN** : "I'll call you, I promise."

**PRIYA** : "We love you, Mei."

(*Turning Red* Movie 00:35:55 – 00:35:56)

### **The Context of Dialogue**

Based on the dialogue above in Data 7, the conversation involved Meilin and her friends, and it took place in Meilin's house, especially outside the window of Meilin's bedroom. The context shows that Miriam, Priya, and Abby are coming to see her because they are worried about Mei. However, Meilin promised her friends that she would call them later because she feared that her mother would see them in her room.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

Based on the conversation in Data 7, the type of illocutionary act found is commissive. That is because by saying, "I'll call you, I promise," Meilin promised her friends that she would call them as long as they came back and forth from her house. Therefore, Meilin's utterance can be concluded as a commissive act because it shows the action that she will take in the future, which is calling her friends.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

In the dialog above, it can be found that what is being said by Meilin is a declarative sentence, and the direct type is guaranteeing. However, the function of her statement can also be identified as



an imperative sentence because it contains the act of ordering. Meilin implied a message in her utterance by ordering her friends to leave the room so her mother would not see them. As a result, Meilin's utterance is classified as indirect speech because it contains the act of ordering.

### **Expressive Act**

#### **Data 8**

MIRIAM : “And here is your reward. Ninety-nine Australian tour, with the Girl I Love You Jeans remix.”

MEILIN : “O-M-G, Mir! I'll guard it with my life! Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!”  
(*Turning Red* Movie 00:05:35 – 00:05:48)

### **The Context of Dialogue**

Based on Data 8, the conversation involves Meilin and her friends, especially Miriam. The conversation happened on the way home from school. The context shows Miriam gave Meilin a music disk of a boy band named 4-Town as a gift. As a response, Meilin was really happy and appreciated the present that was given to her.

### **The Type of Illocutionary Act**

The dialogue in Data 8 above was performed in the category of expressive illocutionary acts, in which Meilin expresses her thanks and gratitude by saying, "O-M-G, Mir! I'll guard it with my life! Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!" to her friend. Meilin's expression of happiness toward Mir clearly shows from her words. Therefore, in this dialogue, Meilin applies an illocutionary act, namely, an expressive act.

### **Direct/Indirect Act**

In the dialog above, it can be found that what is being said by Meilin is a declarative sentence to make a statement. She states that she is really happy about the gift and guarantees to guard it with her life. As a result, Meilin's utterance classifies as direct speech with the act of assuring.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

After analyzing the 48 pieces of data, the result showed that there were only four types of illocutionary acts used by Meilin in the movie: assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives. However, the declarative act is not performed by Meilin, the main character in the movie, since this act needed a special event and a special speaker. As a result, Meilin's utterances have no authority over the listener to change their condition. The most frequent types used by Meilin are assertive and directive acts; assertive appears 17 times, and directive appears 20 times in her utterances. This showed that the main character's assertive and directive acts were mainly due to her enthusiasm for direct communication and her need to convey and express a lot of information to the listener. Meilin barely uses the commissive act, and it only appears twice in her utterance. Meanwhile, the expressive act is only used 9 times by Meilin.

Typically, people use assertive and directive speech acts in face-to-face communication, as the speaker and listener are in direct contact, and the speech is delivered spontaneously. Similar to the result of this analysis, the main character's utterances are predominantly assertive and directive because she addresses the listener directly. As the main character, Meilin has the authority to request something from her companions, so she mostly uses directive speech.

Regarding the second problem, Yule has identified two categories of speech acts: direct and indirect. The two previously mentioned types can be distinguished by analysing the structure and purpose of the sentence. The main character in the *Turning Red* movie, Meilin, expressed both direct and indirect acts, although one was more often expressed. She mainly used direct speech, expressed 25 times, while indirect speech was only expressed 23 times. Since speaking directly to the listener is the simplest method of communication, the main character preferred to express herself in a direct act most of the time. In addition, direct speech is less complex to communicate and easier for the listener to understand. On the other hand, indirect speech is used to convey a message politely, such as requesting something, using the interrogative form, as the main character in this movie does several times.

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