

ANALYZING ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN THE WHERE HOPE GROWS MOVIE: A FOCUS ON CALVIN AND PRODUCE

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Abstract

This study explores the use of illocutionary acts in the movie *Where Hope Grows*, focusing on the communication dynamics between the main characters, Calvin and Produce. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, the dialogues and interactions between Calvin and Produce were transcribed and coded based on John Searle's Speech Act Theory. The analysis reveals that representative acts account for 42.25% of the total illocutionary acts, while expressive acts account for 29.58%, reflecting the movie's emphasis on emotional expression and personal struggles. Directive acts contribute 23.94%, while commissive acts are found to be only 4.23% and declarative acts are absent. These findings suggest that *Where Hope Grows* highlights the use of representative and expressive acts to build a narrative based on the characters' beliefs and emotions, while directive and commissive acts are more limited. The study provides insights into how language is used to convey emotions, share thoughts, and influence others within the movie's context, and its implications for communication in various settings, such as personal relationships, education, and counseling.

Keywords: Illocutionary Acts, Speech Act Theory, Where Hope Grows Movie

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential for human interaction, enabling the exchange of ideas, emotions, and information crucial for success in various life aspects. Effective communication not only conveys messages but also creates emotional bonds, prevents conflicts, and supports personal and professional development. When we engage in conversation, we simultaneously convey meaning and perform actions through the way we structure our language, a phenomenon known as speech acts (Tauchid & Rukmini, 2016). In linguistic pragmatics, speech acts are one of the central phenomena that any general theory must account for, along with pre-supposition and implicature (Yule, 1996). Speech acts, as defined by Austin (1975) and expanded by Searle (1979), are integral to communication, involving actions performed through language. They are expressions of language that can be used to perform actions through connotative and performative utterances (Austin, 1962). These acts can be classified into three categories: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary (Austin, 1975).

Illocutionary acts are a specific type of speech act that involves doing something with intended meaning behind the utterance (Austin, 1962). Searle (1979) identifies five types of illocutionary acts that reveal a speaker's intentions in communication. First, assertives are statements that provide information, such as saying, "The sky is blue." Second, directives aim to get the listener to do something, like asking, "Could you pass the salt?" Third, commissives involve making promises, as in, "I will help you with your project." Fourth, expressives convey the speaker's feelings, such as when someone says, "I'm sorry for your loss." Finally, declaratives change a situation simply by being spoken,

like when someone says, "I now pronounce you husband and wife." Understanding these types helps us grasp how people communicate and what they mean with their words.

Previous studies (e.g., Ningrum et al., 2022; Duha, 2023) analyze speech acts in movies, but they do not focus on the interactions of characters with disabilities, particularly down syndrome actions. Next study was conducted by Friska Sari Luksiana Hutajulu and Herman (2019) with the title "Analysis of Illocutionary Act in The Movie "You Are My Home" English Subtitle". The results of this study indicate that in the analysis it is only four types of locutionary acts (Representatives, Directives, Expressives, Commissives) that occur in this movie subtitle. Based on the film subtitle, the researchers found that the dominant type of illocutionary act found in the film subtitle is directive action. Another study by Siti Sarah Fitriani, Diana Achmad, Fitria Rasmita (Fitriani et al., 2020) with the title "An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in a Fantasy Movie". The results of this study indicated that only four types of illocutionary acts were found in the movie, they are representative, directive, expressive, and commissive. Moreover, Illocutionary Speech Acts in The Short Movie "The Translator": Pragmatic Study by Widyawanti found 4 illocutionary functions in inter-player conversations.

According to Duha (2023), movie serves as a medium that captures a variety of conversations about everyday experiences, which subsequently reflect the cultural and social contexts of the characters involved. Since movies reflect and represent real societal activities, the researcher is interested in leveraging movie as a research medium. The movie *Where Hope Grows* exemplifies this, highlighting the relationship between a baseball player, Calvin Campbell, and a young man with Down syndrome, This movie underscores the importance of inclusion and understanding through their interactions.

Movies serve as a medium rich in dialogues that depict everyday life, reflecting the backgrounds and cultures of the characters portrayed (Ningrum et al 2022)., analyzing dialogues in *Where Hope Grows* provides valuable insights into inclusive communication dynamics, particularly in portraying characters with Down syndrome. *Produce*, portrayed by David DeSanctis, influences Calvin positively despite his limitations, emphasizing the power of human bonds. This study focuses on analyzing the illocutionary acts in the *Where Hope Grows* movie, particularly examining the communication dynamics involving a character with Down syndrome. This research addresses a gap in existing studies by exploring the speech acts of characters with Down syndrome in movies, aiming to provide deeper insights into their communicative interactions and implications.

This research focuses on identifying the types of illocutionary acts employed by the main characters in the *Where Hope Grows* movie. The analysis seeks to categorize and understand the various speech acts used by the characters, particularly in the context of their interactions and relationships. By analyzing the dialogue of the main characters and the context of each scene, this study aims to offer insights into how these illocutionary acts contribute to the narrative and character development within the movie.

Speech Acts

According to Austin (1975), speech acts are categorized into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. An illocutionary act involves performing an action with an intended meaning behind the utterance, encompassing

functions such as requesting, asking, ordering, and advising. On the other hand, a perlocutionary act refers to the act of influencing or affecting someone through speech.

Illocutionary Acts

Searle (1969) classified illocutionary acts into five distinct categories: representatives, directives, commissives, declaratives, and expressives. The following are explanations and examples for each category.

Representatives

John Searle's theory of speech acts provides a detailed framework for understanding how language is used to convey meaning. One key category in his theory is representatives, which are statements aimed at conveying information or describing a situation. The main function of representatives is to assert a belief or present information about the world, thereby representing a particular state of affairs. When a speaker makes a representative statement, they commit to the truth of the proposition expressed, inviting the listener to accept the belief as true. Examples of representative performative verbs include affirm, assert, claim, conclude, and state. For instance, the statement "The sky is blue" not only describes a condition but also expresses the speaker's belief in its truth.

Directives

Another important category in Searle's theory of speech acts is directives, which are attempts by the speaker to prompt the listener to perform a specific action. The primary goal of directives is to request, command, or suggest an action, guiding the listener's behavior accordingly. These statements function as efforts by the speaker to influence the listener to act. Examples of directive performative verbs include advise, command, encourage, instruct, and request. For example, the statement "Please pass the salt" is a polite request for the listener to hand over the salt.

Commissives

In Searle's theory (1979), commissives represent the speaker's commitment to future actions. The primary function of commissives is to make promises, offers, or other forms of commitment, thereby obligating the speaker to carry out a specific action in the future. These statements indicate the speaker's intention to perform a future act. Performative verbs commonly associated with commissives include guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, and vow. For example, the statement 'I promise to meet you at 5 PM' exemplifies a commissive, where the speaker commits to a future meeting time.

Expressives

Expressives, in Searle's theory, are expressions of the speaker's psychological state or attitude towards a particular situation or fact. The primary function of expressives is to convey emotions, feelings, or attitudes, sharing the speaker's inner state with the listener. These speech acts serve to express the speaker's psychological state and create an emotional connection or acknowledge something significant. Performative verbs for expressives include apologize, congratulate, deplore, regret, and thank. For example, the statement "I apologize for being late" conveys the speaker's regret for their tardiness.

Declarations

Declarations, according to Searle's theory, are speech acts where the act of saying something brings about a new state of affairs. This category of speech acts emphasizes the authority vested in the speaker and the context in which the utterance occurs. Declarations rely on the performative power of language, requiring both linguistic competence and appropriate social standing for their effectiveness. Performative verbs for declarations include announce, appoint, declare, decree, and proclaim. For instance, statements like "I now pronounce you husband and wife" or "You are fired" exemplify how declarations alter realities, changing marital or employment status instantly upon being uttered.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which emphasizes the in-depth exploration and depiction of phenomena without manipulating variables. John W. Creswell, a notable expert in this field, defines descriptive qualitative research as a method that provides detailed portrayals and contextual understanding of the subject matter (Creswell, 2013). This research is categorized as descriptive qualitative because it aims to describe the types and functions of illocutionary acts used by the main characters, Calvin Campbell and Produce, whose evolving relationship drives the plot of redemption, with Produce's support helping Calvin overcome addiction and guilt while reinforcing themes of faith, hope, and human connection. The primary data source includes words, phrases, and utterances spoken by the main characters, analyzed and presented in narrative form. The research methodology involved a multi-step process. First, the researcher observed the movie of *Where Hope Grows* closely, focusing on the dialogue and verbal interactions of the main characters, and downloaded the subtitles to capture all spoken content in written form. The dialogue was then classified by systematically arranging and categorizing the speech of each character, particularly focusing on utterances that contain illocutionary acts. The data was then analyzed using techniques outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involved data reduction, where the researcher selected and categorized the data according to John R. Searle's types of illocutionary acts. The analyzed data was then organized and presented in a structured format for clear interpretation and further analysis, and finally, the researcher synthesized the findings and drew conclusions based on the analyzed data, ensuring alignment with the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in the movie *Where Hope Grows* are examined in this study. Illocutionary acts are recognized as a crucial aspect of language use, as the speaker's intention and attitude towards the listener are revealed through them. In this movie, various conversations are engaged in by the main characters, Calvin and Produce, which reflect their personalities and relationships. Searle's (1979) theory of speech acts is employed in this study to analyze the illocutionary acts used by these characters.

The results of the analysis are presented in the following table, which shows the distribution of illocutionary acts used by Calvin and Produce.

Table 1 Illocutionary Acts Found in the Where Hope Grows Movie

No	Type of Illocutionary Acts	Calvin		Produce		Total	
		Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
1.	Representative	14	33.33%	16	55.17%	30	42.25%
2.	Directive	12	28.57%	5	17.24%	17	23.94%
3.	Commissive	2	4.76%	1	3.45%	3	4.23%
4.	Expressive	14	33.33%	7	24.14%	21	29.58%
5.	Declarative	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total		42	100%	29	100%	71	100%

Representative

The research findings indicate that in the *Where Hope Grows* movie, the most dominant type of illocutionary act used by the two main characters, Calvin and Produce, is representative, with an overall percentage of 42.25%. Produce frequently uses representative acts (55.17%) to convey information or express a belief, which aligns with Searle's (1979) theory that representative acts aim to assert the truth of a proposition. This suggests that Produce tends to talk more about facts or statements he believes to be true, reflecting his honest and confident nature.

Data 3

Calvin : *Well... that's pretty good information.*

Produce : *Thanks.*

(Where Hope Grows (2014), 00:09:56-00:10:00)

In Data 3 the interaction between Calvin and Produce in the *Where Hope Grows* movie, Calvin declines Produce's offer to demonstrate his intelligence, citing his poor condition as the reason. According to John Searle's theory of illocutionary acts, Calvin's response represents a direct expression of his current state or emotions regarding the situation (Searle, 1969). In Searle's framework, this type of illocutionary act is categorized as a representative act, where the speaker objectively conveys a state of affairs or describes factual circumstances. In the phrase "good information," the speaker is expressing their belief or assessment of the information's quality, presenting it as a statement of fact or evaluation. This qualifies as a representative act because it reflects the speaker's perception of reality rather than attempting to influence the listener's actions.

Directive

Data 63

Calvin : *All right, have a good Sunday.*

Produce : *Well, I don't want to be late. If I ride my bike, I'll be late. Can you please give me a ride? Please?*

(Where Hope Grows (2014), 00:37:18-00:37:31)

In Data 63, Calvin wishes Produce a happy Sunday, and Produce responds by saying he will be late for church if he rides his bike and asks Calvin for a ride instead. According to John Searle's theory of illocutionary acts, Produce's statement "Can you please give me a ride? Please?" can be classified as a directive illocutionary act. Produce is requesting Calvin to perform a specific action, namely providing him a ride to church. The request is framed politely and emphasizes urgency with the repeated use of "please," highlighting the importance of the request (Searle, 1969).

Commissive

Commissive acts, which account for only 4.23%, reflect a commitment to future actions. The low usage of commissive acts, particularly by Calvin (4.76%) and Produce (3.45%), may indicate that these characters rarely make explicit verbal commitments, possibly due to the situation or interpersonal relationships that do not require many explicit commitments.

Data 41

Produce : *I'm going to hit a home run!*

Calvin : *Well, not if I strike you out first, kid. You ready? Here comes the heater.*

(Where Hope Grows (2014), 00:24:09-00:24:20)

In Data 41, Produce enthusiastically states that he will hit a home run, while Calvin playfully challenges him, asking if he can prevent Produce from hitting the ball. According to John Searle's theory of illocutionary acts, Produce's statement "I'm going to hit a home run!" can be classified as a commissive illocutionary act. Produce expresses his intention or determination to hit a home run by saying "I'm going to," indicating a commitment or plan to do something in the future. This phrase demonstrates a commissive act in Searle's terms, where the speaker commits to a future action, signaling determination or a promise to fulfill that intention.(Searle, 1969).

Expressive

Expressive acts, which function to express emotions or attitudes, have an overall percentage of 29.58%. Both Calvin and Produce use expressive acts at a relatively high frequency, with 33.33% and 24.14%, respectively. According to Searle (1979), expressive acts are used to express the speaker's psychological state, which suggests that both characters often express their feelings directly, reflecting the emotional depth and interpersonal relationships in the story.

Data 5

Calvin : *You're pretty smart.*

Produce : *You think I'm smart?*

Calvin : *Sure.*

(Where Hope Grows (2014), 00:10:01-00:10:05)

In Data 5, during the conversation between Calvin and Produce in the Where Hope Grows movie, Calvin praises Produce by saying, "You're pretty smart," after receiving

information from Produce about tomatoes and other fruits. This statement can be classified as an expressive illocutionary act according to the theory of illocutionary acts developed by John Searle. This is because the phrase "pretty smart" indicates that Calvin expresses his judgement or feeling that Produce is a smart person (Searle, 1979).

Declarative

No declarative acts were found, which, according to Searle's (1979) theory, can change the status or condition of the world simply by being uttered, such as "I'm ending this relationship." The absence of declarative acts may be due to the lack of situations in the movie where characters have the authority or social context to use these acts.

Overall, this analysis suggests that the *Where Hope Grows* movie emphasizes the use of representative and expressive acts to build a narrative based on character beliefs and emotions, while the use of directive, commissive, and declarative acts is more limited, reflecting the character dynamics and story context that focus more on statements and emotional expressions than direct influence or future commitments.

Based on Searle's Speech Act Theory, representative speech acts describe or depict the state of the world. The findings reveal that both Calvin and Produce frequently employ representative speech acts, though at different rates. Produce uses this type of speech act more dominantly (55.17%) compared to Calvin (33.33%), indicating that Produce more often conveys information and opinions. Directive acts, intended to influence others' actions, are also commonly used by both characters. However, Calvin employs this type of speech act more frequently (28.57%) than Produce (17.24%), suggesting that Calvin is more active in trying to direct or influence others' behavior. Expressive acts, which express the speaker's emotions or attitudes, hold a significant percentage for both characters, with Calvin and Produce using them 33.33% and 24.14% of the time, respectively, reflecting the importance of emotional expression in their interactions.

Commissive acts, which indicate the speaker's commitment to future actions, are rarely used by either character, implying that they seldom make verbal promises or commitments. The absence of declarative acts suggests that neither character uses language to directly alter social status or conditions through their speech. The movie's focus on the characters' personal struggles, such as overcoming difficulties and finding hope, also influences their use of speech acts. The characters predominantly use speech acts to express emotions and thoughts, as well as to influence others within their personal challenges, resulting in the dominant use of representative, directive, and expressive speech acts in the movie.

The prominence of expressive speech acts in *Where Hope Grows* shows how the characters frequently use language to convey emotions, contributing to the film's emotional intensity. This study highlights the role of language in film and its impact on the audience, demonstrating how the characters use speech acts to express feelings, share thoughts and opinions, and influence others in their struggles. These interactions enhance the movie's emotional depth and strengthen the connection with the audience.

The study underscores the importance of analyzing the movie's context and character dynamics when examining speech acts, which can inform the development of more effective communication strategies in film and other media. Furthermore, the

findings have practical implications for real-life communication in areas such as personal relationships, education, and counseling. Understanding how language conveys emotions, thoughts, and intentions can help individuals develop better communication strategies to achieve their goals.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the role of language in cinema and its broader implications for communication. By analyzing the illocutionary acts of characters in *Where Hope Grows*, it demonstrates that language influences character and advance the story. These cinematic communicative strategies mirror real-life interactions, influencing social bonds, trust, and conflict resolution. Ultimately, this study enriches our understanding of character dynamics in cinema and highlights the power of language to foster meaningful connections in both fictional and real-world contexts.

CONCLUSION

This research successfully identifies and categorizes different types of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in the *Where Hope Grows* movie. By analyzing the dialogue and context of each scene, the study finds that these speech acts not only reflect the personalities and relationship dynamics between characters but also play an important role in shaping the narrative and character development within the movie. The findings highlight the frequent use of representative and expressive acts, showing how the characters convey information, share emotions, and manage their relationships. Produce's frequent use of representative acts illustrates his role as a source of perspective and support, while Calvin's tendency to use directive acts reveals his active role in guiding and influencing others. The prominence of expressive acts also adds emotional depth to their relationship, reinforcing themes of personal growth and redemption. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into how speech acts shape character interactions, advance the plot, and reinforce the movie's central themes, such as hope and the power of human connection. This research also contributes to a broader understanding of the role of language in movie, offering opportunities for further studies on the use of illocutionary acts in other cinematic contexts.

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