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# An Analysis of Speech Act in the Movie "Turning Red"

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### **ABSTRACT**

A movie consists of a dialogue between its characters. Both the speaker and the listener use many different kinds of utterances. In communication, we use utterances in action, also known as speech actions. This research aimed to determine the types of speech acts performed by the characters and determine the function of the speech acts performed by the characters in Turning Red's movie. A movie can deliver a message to the audience as one form of communication. It contains a variety of genres, making it an interesting topic to be research. In this case, understanding speech act theory becomes essential for solving the issue. Speech acts are things that can be accomplished through speech. There are three types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. The movie has been chosen since it is a children's genre movie representative of Asian parenting style and leaves the deepest messages to children. The data were taken directly from the movie dialogue, focusing on the speech acts uttered by the characters and the context of the occurrence of the utterance. In collecting the data, the researchers transcribed the data comprehensively, which were analyzed using content analysis on the movie Turning Red. The researchers analyzed some illocutionary acts in the movie conversation. The data was divided into five types: directive, representative, declarative, commissive, and expressive. Teachers can create relevant and engaging learning experiences that build pragmatic competence and improve students' communicative skills by adding actual speech acts from movies into language lessons. It helps to understand how movies can be used as valuable instruments in English language teaching, especially in the development of language acquisition.

**Keywords**: speech acts; illocutionary act; turning red; movie; utterance

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is one of the essential aspects of human life. Language can take many forms, including spoken, written, and signed. People use language to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and intentions to others and deliver information once they have spoken. Communication can be done through writing or talking. For example, when someone writes a thing, they apply formal language that is grammar-conscious. When someone speaks, they pay close attention to what they say, how it sounds, and how they gesture. Language may have a significant influence on one's social and cultural identity. Languages represent our cultural background and can serve to define our sense of self and place in society. Language may also be used to gain power in society and politics, with specific languages dominating others in particular settings.

A movie, like a drama or a novel, consists of a dialogue between its characters. The movie's meaning may be gathered from the dialogue of each character. Bitrus and James (2014) believe that film/video movie is a communication medium for spreading important acknowledgment with the aim that film/video is a communication medium for spreading vital knowledge to bring about positive societal changes. It indicates that movies can be a communication medium for delivering messages. A movie's message can be words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. These are spoken discourses, which are made up of numerous types of speech actions. Discourses are means of using and integrating words, actions, interactions, ideas, feelings, objects, tools, times, and locations to enact and acknowledge various socially situated identities (James, 2011). In the film, one figure can execute several activities while conveying some statements. The characters each have a part in displaying the information. The movie is mainly intended for entertainment but may also be used as a learning tool. Movies are a valuable extension of what we can term language acquisition methods, which have been utilized to teach students the basics of English learning in elementary and high schools or colleges (Hossein, Mohammad, and Zeynab, 2015)

Turning Red is one of the 2022 American computer-animated fantasy comedy movies produced by Pixar Animation Studio and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

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Turning Red is a children's genre movie representative of the Asian parenting style, especially in Chinese families. It tells the story of a teenage girl trying to find her way through puberty while dealing with her mother-daughter relationship and her friendship. There is an event in Pixar Studio and Walt Disney Turning Red about how speaking acts are regularly employed in the movie. It was chosen as the research subject because the excellent movie contains several dialogues in the form of utterances that may be analyzed the types of speech acts performed by the characters and to find out the function of the speech acts performed by the character in *Turning Red's* movie.

Linguistics is a branch of study that seeks to learn more about language (Syahril & Taufiq, 2022). As stated by Cameron (2001:17), in applied linguistics during the previous several decades, it has been well-known to split language into four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and to add grammar, vocabulary, and phonology to each of these. Language as a communication tool, a conversation can sometimes fail due to misunderstandings between the speaker and the listener. The speaker's objective in communication is to communicate a message or information to the hearer, whose goal is to obtain information from the speaker. As a result, communication is impossible to separate from our lives. Both the speaker and the listener use many different kinds of utterances. In English linguistics, this type of utterance is referred to as a speech act (Yule, 1996). Speech act included in pragmatic. Studying pragmatics deals with meaning concerning its context in society.

According to Leech (1983), pragmatics is the study of meaning in the context of speaking situations. It means pragmatics understands that language usage extends beyond the literal meaning of words to incorporate the speaker's goals, the listener's assumptions, and the interaction's social and cultural context. To summarize, pragmatics deals with how individuals use language to accomplish social and communicative goals, and it offers an approach to comprehending the complicated and ever-changing character of the language in context.

The idea behind speech actions is that rather than a sentence or other expression, speech acts—such as compliments, asking questions, issuing instructions, describing,

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explaining, apologizing, promising, praising, and so on, are considered the minimal unit of human communication rather than a sentence or other expression. A speaker often performs one or more of those actions by stating phrases; nevertheless, the act should not be confused with the sentence or other expression used to do the act (Searle, 1979).

Austin (1962) stated three categories of acts in the speech act: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

## 1. Locutionary Act

Locutionary acts are the activities performed to communicate, the act of actual uttering (the particular sense and reference of an utterance), and the study is the region of fields such as phonetics, phonology, and linguistic semantics. A locutionary act is fundamental to making an utterance or producing a meaningful language expression.

## 2. Illocutionary Act

An illocutionary act is accomplished by speaking something, making a pledge or promise, thanking, asking a question, and so on. On the other hand, an illocutionary act is conducted by the communicative force of an utterance, such as making a statement, offering an explanation, or for some other communication purpose.

## 3. Perlocutionary Act

A perlocutionary act is one that is accomplished by speaking something in a particular context. It depicts the shift that occurs each time in a specific situation. These acts are byproducts of communication; they are conducted by saying something, inciting someone to anger, calming someone in pain, and others. It implies making a speech with a function but not to affect someone.

Searle (1974) defines a speech act as an action that changes the universe of discourse when uttered by a speaker and grasped by a recipient. It can be conveyed orally, through writing, or via other means of communication, such as sign language. Searle splits the Illocutionary Act into five types: directive, representative, declarative, commissive, and expressive.

Directives refer to the speaker's desire for the listener or someone else to do something. Commands, requests, invites, advice, and recommendations fall within this type

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of speech action. The main feature of a directive is that it attempts to affect the listener's behavior or actions. For example, in the line "Could you please turn off the light?" the speaker requests that the listener take a specific action. Directives can be expressed in two ways: directly and indirectly. Directives are an important component of speech actions that are utilized in several kinds of situations.

Representatives refer to whether the speaker believes something is true or false. Statements, asserts, descriptions, reports, and conclusions are examples of speech acts in this type. A representative's main feature is sharing information about the world or the speaker's opinions. For example, the phrase "I am bad guy" is an assertion that conveys the speaker's belief about themselves. Representative speech actions are a type of speech act that are utilized in several kinds of situations,

Declaratives refer to an act that occurs immediately. Declarations have the power to transform the world. For example, "I now declare you husband and wife" is a declarative speech act that changes the couple's marital status. Declaratory acts can be divided into two types: verdictives and effectives. A verdictive speech act causes the propositional content to coincide with reality, but an effective speech act causes the condition of the events it shows.

Commissive refers to the speaker's commitment to future action. Promises, vows, pledges, guarantees, contracts, oaths, and threats are examples of speech acts in this type. The main feature of a commissive is that it conveys the speaker's intention to carry out a future action. In the line "I will come to your home tonight," the speaker employs a commissive to commit to visiting the listener's home later that night.

Expressive refers to the speaker's expression or feelings. Expressions of appreciation, apologies, congratulations, and greetings are examples of this speech act. The main feature of an expressive is to convey the speaker's emotional condition. In the statement "I'm so happy for you!" for example, the speaker uses an expressive to convey their enthusiasm to the listener.

The study was carried out in order to contribute to the larger body of knowledge, notably in the field of linguistics. This study aimed to analyze the contents of the film "*Turning Red*" in various aspects, including locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary

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acts. This study is essential to know many kinds of acts to help students improve their ability to use and comprehend speech actions in English course. The outcomes of this study might be utilized as teaching materials and examples for teaching speech actions. Future studies in the linked subject will provide more information for linguistics research, particularly speech actions.

### RESEARCH METHOD

The content analysis in the qualitative method was chosen in this study. The objective was to describe each form of illocutionary action in the *Turning Red* movie and the purpose of illocutionary acts performed by the characters in the movie *Turning Red*. Qualitative research focuses on the detailed context description and frequently brings situated problems (Sarah, 2013).

The data were taken directly from the movie dialogue, focusing on the speech acts uttered by the characters and the context of the occurrence of the utterance. Indeed, the researchers identified visual motifs that appear repeatedly in certain films. In collecting the data, the researchers transcribed the data by watching the movie comprehensively, which were analyzed using descriptive qualitative research on Turning Red. The researchers were evaluated using Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1974) classification theory of illocutionary acts as the foundation theory of speech acts. The data were in the form of linguistic units, such as words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, because it was a descriptive qualitative method.

The process of data analysis started with the researcher collecting the data. Following data identification, the data was classified and analyzed according to the types of speech acts. The researcher described and evaluated the data to answer the research objective. To validate the data, the researchers used content validity by analyzing video contents using theories of linguistics then interpreted by researchers' comprehension. Indeed, the researchers compared the findings with relevant literature in research area whether findings support or contradict with the previous research. The first step was to select a corpus of films that were representative and relevant to study. Then, selecting the unit of

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analysis, such as a particular scene, character, or symbol, to be the focus of the analysis. Next,

developing a clear coding framework to categorize the visual motifs you find. During the

analysis process, systematically, the researchers recorded findings and developed an in-

depth interpretation of the meaning and function of these motifs in the film's narrative.

Moreover, the researchers tried to refer to relevant film theories to strengthen the analysis.

Finally, putting together a well-structured research report explaining the methodology,

findings and implications of the results of analysis for further understanding of the films

studied.

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION** 

In this part, the researchers discovered five types of speech acts in the movie Turning

Red. They were representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The

following were additional explanations based on the data in the movie.

Representative

A representative expresses someone's belief that something is true or false.

Statements, claims, hypotheses, descriptions, telling, urging, recommending, asserting,

reminding, reporting, forecasting, agreeing, complaining, concluding, and deducing are

examples of representative acts (Suryanti, 2020). The first data shown below was an

example of the use of representatives.

The context of the situation can be noticed when Mei parted from Miriam, Abby, and

Priya because she had other things to do and promised to do something with her friends

later.

Mei

: We'll karaoke another time. I promise!

Miriam: Okay, sure, Mei!

Mei

: It'll be on me. The snacks, the tunes

Abby

: You're my jam, girl.

Priya

: She's so brainwashed.

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From Priya's utterance, a representative act is an assertion or statement of opinion. 'She's so brainwashed' expresses her belief or opinion regarding the condition of Mei. Priya's claims that Mei has been heavily influenced or manipulated to adopt certain beliefs or behaviors suggest a lack of independence. It makes Mei unable to play with her friends due to her responsibilities.

Mei, Priya, Abby, Mirriam explained why they cannot go to the concert in the second data point, which can be seen during the dodgeball game.

Teacher: Eyes on the balls, guys! Be water! Be...

Mei : That presentation was bomb-dot-com. I cited all my sources. I had sparklers.

And she still said no!

Priya : **My parents said I could go when I'm 30.** 

Abby: **Mine called it stripper music.** What's wrong with that?

Miriam: Mine said yes, but I have to buy the ticket.

The illocutionary speech in Mei, Priya, Abby, and Mirriam's utterance is a report. 'My parents said I could go when I'm 30' Priya is reporting what her parents said. This utterance's illocutionary purpose is to communicate the meaning or details of her parents' statement. Priya is conveying their remarks or stating their viewpoint on her going to the concert, suggesting that her parents have set the condition of her being 30 years old before she can go. Abby said, 'Mine called it stripper music'. It means Abby is relaying her parents' words, indicating that her parents described the music as "stripped music" based on their own perception or interpretation.

In the movie "Turning Red," characters use a variety of representational illocutionary speaking actions to portray their thoughts, beliefs, and viewpoints. These speaking actions are critical in moving the plot along and expanding the audience's comprehension of the characters' motivations and struggles. It aligns with Sundari & Fatma (2021), they claimed that the representative act is the most common illocutionary act type in 'Frozen II' because the protagonist Anna employs informing form to highlight the truth to be stated while discussing anything. As a result, the protagonist's statement expresses how they feel psychologically. Moreover, it also related to the (Annida et al., 2023) study with the title An

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Analysis of Speech Act In Award-Winning Short Movie (The English Teacher-2020). The

results included in types of representative speech acts were utterances stating, demanding,

confess, report, show, mention, testify, peculate and so on.

**Directive** 

Directive is used to persuade the addressee to do something. It involves giving

requests, commands, and asking (Sari et al., 2013). The data shown below was an example

of the use of directive. The context of the situation happened when Mei made a presentation

in front of her parents to get permission to go to the concert.

Dad

: Ming, maybe we should trust her.

Mom

: It's them I don't trust. Look at those glittery delinquents with their...

gyrations. Why on earth you want to go so badly?

Mei

: Like I said, I just want to broaden musical horizons.

Mom

: This isn't music. This is filth. And it's not worth jeopardizing your life over.

**Right, Jin? See?** Your father agrees. No concert. And that's final.

Mei's mom utterances show the question of directive speech act. She asks, 'Why on

earth do you want to go so badly?'. It means Mei's mom is seeking clarification or information

on the purpose or cause for Mei's strong desire to go. Then she asks, 'Right, Jin? See?'. It

means she asks rhetorical questions seeking confirmation or agreement from Mei's dad. She

overprotects her daughter and won't permit her to go to the concert.

For the second data point, when Mei turns into a red panda in the bathroom, she gets

caught by Stacy and her friends. Mei immediately hid in one of the bathroom stalls and asked

Stacy to leave.

Stacy

: O-M-G.

Mei

: Go away!

Stacv

: That was you in the bathroom! I didn't imagine it!

Mirriam: Yeah, you did.

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Priya : **Get lost, Stacy.** 

From the data above Mei's says, 'Go away!' to Stacy while hiding. Mei's commanding

Stay to get out of the bathroom and not to look her. Mei's friends help her and one of them

Priya says, 'Get lost, Stacy.'. It means Priya's utterance is giving a command to stacy to leave.

Characters in the movie Turning Red use directive speech acts, such as instructions,

requests, and recommendations, to influence the actions of others. According to Asykin,

Suyadi, Silfia (2021), directive is The most common illocutionary conduct seen in their study.

It illustrates that the protagonists in the movie use their time in the restaurant to do

something productive.

**Commissive** 

Commissive commits the speaker to some future action. Examples of commissive

speech acts include promises, swearing, threatening, declaring ability, vowing, and offering

(Degaf & Devi, 2021). The data shown below was an example of the use of commissive.

The context of the situation happened when Tyler was frightened to see Mei

approaching him as a red panda.

Tyler

: Wonder if your mom knows her precious little Mei-Mei has been flaunting

the panda all over school.

Mei

: That's none of your business!

Tyler

: **One more step and I'm telling her everything**. Now, put that thing away

and hear me out.

Mei

: What do you want?

The conversation above illustrates the use of commissive speech acts in the form of

warning or threat. Tayler's proverbial utterance 'One more step and I'm telling her anything'

means that he issuing a warning to Mei, indicating that if she took one more step or continue

with her current course of action, Tyler will disclose or reveal something to another person

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("her"). The illocutionary force of this utterance is to caution or threaten the listener,

conveying the consequence of her actions and potentially influencing her behavior.

The next commissive data is a situation where Mei was about to go out and asked

permission from her parents who were ready for dinner.

Mom

: What if I come with you?

Mei

: Wha...

Mom

: What are you doing? Linear equations? Geometry? I have a double-jointed

elbow! Look! I can make a perfect circle.

From Mei's mom utterance, a commissive act is offered. Mei's mom offers herself to

follow Mei to her extra math class, Mei's mom asks what she is doing in class and offers her

help to her daughter. Mei who heard it immediately reacted surprisedly to her mother's offer.

In "Turning Red," commissive speech acts are observed when characters make

promises, commitments, or pledges. According to Laia, Waruwu, and Laiya (2021), they

differentiate between two forms of commissive acts: pledges and promises. In the movie,

each of them receives at least one piece of data. These commissive speech acts flesh out the

protagonists' characteristics while creating emotional connections with the audience.

**Expressive** 

Expressive describes a person's emotional condition. It includes the following: thank

you, congrats, condolences, praise, blame, forgive, and pardon (Sapta, 2019). The data shown

below was an example of the use of expressive.

The context of the situation occurred when Mei's mom told the story of how they

turned into red pandas, she couldn't control her emotions.

Mom

: But over time, our family chose to come to a new world. And what was a

blessing became.... an inconvenience.

Mei

: Are you serious?!

Mom

: Mei-Mei, no!

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Mei : It's a curse!

Mom : She meant it as a blessing.

Mei : You cursed us! It's all your fault!

From the data, Mei's utterance shows an angry expression after hearing the explanation from her mom. 'Are you serious?!' Mei said it angrily while trying to damage her ancestor's painting. Followed by 'It's a curse!', 'You cursed us! It's all your fault', she was so angry and disappointed that she blamed his ancestors for the red panda curse. Mei could not accept her being turned into a red panda.

The second data with the context of the situation happened when Mei's mother was outraged and disappointed with her daughter's actions as a result, she could not control her emotions and her amulet necklace was broken when Mei pushed her, Mei's mother's red panda came off.

Grandmother: She's out of control!

Dad : Ming, it's okay.

Aunt : Ming! Ming! Answer me! What are we going to do about this?

Mom : How could she? How could she do this to... her own mother?

Grandmother : Ming?

Mom : Mei-Mei!

From the data above Mei's mom says, 'How could she do this to her own mother?' she is expressing surprise, disbelief, or possibly outrage at her daughter's actions. Ming conveys a strong emotional reaction to the situation, emphasizing the perceived betrayal or Mei's wrongdoing towards her mother.

The last data with the context of the situation occurred when Mei met her young mother in the forest, huddled and crying. Mei approached her mom.

Mei : Mom? **Are you okay?** We have to.... Mom?

Mom: I'm sorry. **It's all my fault.** 

Mei : What happened?

Mom: I....I hurt her.

Mei : Who?

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Mom : My mom! I got so angry, and I lost control. I'm just so sick of being

perfect! I'm never gonna be good enough for her or anyone.

From the conversation between mei and her young mother, Mei showed an expression

of sympathy seeing her young mother crying and asking about her condition. Her mother

replied and cried, showing regret and disappointment at what she had done to her mother.

Mei's young mother shows an expression of being tired of being perfect with great sadness.

The expressive act is the one most commonly used by the characters in Turning Red.

The movie "Turning Red" features numerous expressive speech acts, where characters

convey their emotions, feelings, and attitudes. Mei's transformation into a red panda is an

expressive speech act reflecting her emotional state. Additionally, other characters, such as

Mei's parents and friends, use expressive speech acts to show concern, joy, or surprise during

critical moments in the narrative (Searle, 1966).

Furthermore, Sarair, Farsia, and Jannah (2021) revealed that the main character in

Zootopia often takes part in expressive acts, while engaging in the five types of illocutionary

acts. The expressive act displays the character's emotions, as shown in the film Brave.

**Declarative** 

A declarative refers to an act that occurs immediately. The data shown below was an

example of the use of declarative. The context of the situation can be noticed when Ming was

very sorry for what she had done in the past and apologized to her mother.

Grandmother: Ladies.

Mom : I'm sorry.

Grandmother: You don't have to apologize. I'm your mother. May Sun Yee guide you

and keep you safe.

From Grandmother's utterance, a declarative act is making a statement that asserts

their identity as the Ming's mother. It declares a familial relationship and establishes or

reaffirms that connection. Grandmother is stating that she occupies the role of the Ming's

mother, asserting their parental connection.

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According to Chairina, Fitriani, Masrizal (2020), who discover that the least common

usage in their research is declarative. They claim that the main character of the movie they

studied utilized representative act the most frequently. In contrast, declarative act appeared

to be used the least frequently and contained just one single of data.

**CONCLUSION** 

After analyzing and presenting the data, the researchers would like to conclude that

there are five types of speech acts in the movie Turning Red. These are representative,

directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative examples. According to the data research,

the most common occurrence of speech actions in the movie Turning Red is expressive.

Teachers can create relevant and engaging learning experiences that build pragmatic

competence and improve students' communicative skills by adding actual speech acts from

movies into language lessons. It helps children learn how to express their beliefs, persuade

others to do something, commit to future action, express their psychological condition, and

act immediately in one situation. For future research, this study can be the primary reference

to be developed later with some relevant studies. The others can analyze some aspects of

films rather than just speech acts.

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