AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN THE DISNEY MOVIE *DISENCHANTED*

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the types of speech acts and its strategies in *Disenchanted* movie using Searle's (1979) theory. The research qualitatively examines dialogues from all characters, identifying 89 instances of speech acts: 22 directive, 35 representative, 9 commissive, 19 expressive, and 4 declarative. It also reveals 24 direct and 12 indirect speech act strategies. The findings show that representative speech acts are the most frequent, with direct strategies being the most commonly employed in the movie. Data were collected through observation of audiovisual material, and analysis was conducted using relevant theoretical frameworks.

Keywords: *Disenchanted, Speech Acts, Strategies, Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is essential for conveying ideas and opinions. Kramsch (2014) notes that understanding language requires not only knowing the words spoken but also the context in which they are used. Linguistics, particularly pragmatics, examines how language is used in specific situations. As Bach (2006) explains, pragmatics focuses on how language functions in real-life contexts, considering social aspects and intentions behind speech [1]. Central to pragmatics is speech act theory, which explores how speaking is not just about conveying information but also performing actions. Austin (1962) introduced speech acts as communicative behaviours where utterances correspond to actions, such as making promises or giving commands. Searle (1979) further developed this theory, emphasizing the intentionality behind these acts and the rules governing them. Discourse analysis and pragmatics both explore how language functions within social contexts, focusing on how meaning is constructed and communicated. Discourse analysis extends beyond the sentence level, examining language use in its natural form, while pragmatics emphasizes the role of context in understanding intended meanings. A key aspect of these fields is the study of speech acts, as formulated by Austin and expanded by Searle. Speech act theory categorizes communication into three acts: locutionary (the act of saying something), illocutionary (the intention behind the utterance), and perlocutionary (the effect on the listener). These acts are further classified into types, such as declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives, which represent various functions language serves in communication. Together,

discourse analysis, pragmatics, and speech act theory provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing how language is used to perform actions, convey meaning, and influence others within different social and cultural contexts [2]–[5]. Speech acts are present in various media, including movies. This research examines the Disney movie *Disenchanted*, a sequel to *Enchanted* (2007), which depicts numerous interactions involving speech acts. The purpose of this study is to analyze the types of speech acts and the strategies used in *Disenchanted* based on Searle's speech act theory. Given the movie's influence on popular culture, this research aims to provide insights into how it reflects and shapes language use in modern society, contributing to the fields of linguistics, media studies, and popular culture.

METHOD

This research employs qualitative methods for data collection and analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. The process involves describing, classifying, and connecting phenomena to conceptual frameworks. The data consists of dialogue from the movie *Disenchanted*, focusing on speech acts using Searle's theory. Data collection includes repeated viewing, note-taking, and classification of speech acts. Analysis follows Miles and Huberman's interactive model, involving data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The data is then represented by categorizing conversations and nonverbal cues to identify and interpret the speech acts and their functions.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study identifies a total of 89 speech acts within the movie *Disenchanted*. These include 22 directives,

35 representatives, 19 expressives, 9 commissives, and 4 declaratives. Additionally, the research categorizes 24 speech acts as using a direct strategy and 12 as employing an indirect strategy.

DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS

Data 1: 00:29:52 (*commanding*)

Morgan: I've been riding the subway alone since I was 13. Let's calm down, please.

Robert : *Don't tell me to calm down.*

In this dialogue, tension arises when Morgan returns from an unauthorized trip to New York, leading to a parent-child confrontation influenced by social and epistemic context. Morgan uses an indirect strategy by saying, "Let's calm down," which is a softer, inclusive suggestion rather than a direct command. Conversely, Robert employs a direct strategy with his response, "Don't tell me to calm down," clearly commanding Morgan not to instruct her. This interaction exemplifies Searle's theory of directive speech acts, where speech acts aim to prompt specific actions, whether through explicit or implicit commands, to achieve the speaker's goal.

REPRESENTATIVE SPEECH ACTS

Data 2: 00:05:09 (*claiming*)

Robert: *You know, a lot of people move to the suburbs from the city and they are wildly happy*.

Morgan: Yeah, well. I was wildly happy here.

In this dialogue, the physical context influenced here is the family's preparation to move, with Robert loading the car, while the social context highlights the tension between Robert and Morgan regarding the move. Here Robert employs a representative speech act of claiming, where he presents the idea that people move to the suburbs to be happy, attempting to persuade Morgan that their family will also benefit from the move. Searle's theory categorizes this as a representative act because Robert expresses his belief in this outcome. Morgan's response, however, employs an indirect strategy, where she refutes Robert's claim by expressing her dissatisfaction,

contrasting her personal experience to subtly argue against the move without directly confronting her father.

COMMISSIVE SPEECH ACTS

Data 3: 00:05:28 (*promising*)

Giselle: *But, Morgan, I promise, Monroeville is the perfect place.*

The dialogue between Giselle and Morgan takes place within the context of their family's physical and social transition to the village of Monroeville. The physical context is the family's move, while the social and emotional context involves Giselle's effort to convince an unhappy Morgan that Monroeville will be a good home. Giselle's statement, "I promise, Monroeville is the perfect place," is a commissive speech act, which commits the speaker to a future action. Here, Giselle uses the direct strategy of promising, which emphasizes her commitment to ensuring that Morgan will eventually find Monroeville suitable. The use of "I promise" is a direct expression of Giselle's intention and serves to reassure Morgan by conveying her confidence in the decision. The strategy also aims to build trust and alleviate Morgan's concerns about the move. Through this commissive act, Giselle not only asserts that Monroeville will be ideal but also stakes her credibility on the promise, reinforcing the illocutionary force of her words.

EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS

Data 4: 00:12:01 - 00:12:04 (*praise)*

Giselle: Oh. (*chuckles*)

Robert: Oh! Wow. Giselle! (*chuckles*)

Giselle: *It's really something*.

Neighbor: She made it all herself. Even the baskets.

Giselle: Really?

Monroe: I weave.

Giselle: *Well, that's very nice of you*.

Morgan: And a little weird.

Robert: Morgan, why don't we take these into the kitchen?

Giselle: *Thank you!*

The interaction between Giselle, Robert, and their neighbour about the handmade baskets occurs in a social context, specifically within the setting of their new home and during an initial meeting with neighbours. This exchange showcases both physical and social elements, such as the interaction taking place in their new home and the social dynamics of greeting new neighbours and accepting a gift. The expressive speech acts are influenced by these contexts. Giselle's utterance "Oh. (chuckles)" and "It's really something" uses an indirect strategy to express praise and appreciation for the neighbours' craftsmanship. The neighbours' comment on Monroe's weaving skills and Giselle's response "Well, that's very nice of you" employ a direct strategy, conveying positive sentiments. These utterances highlight the speakers' personal reactions and judgments, embodying the core of expressive speech acts as per Searle's (1979) theory.

DECLARATIVE SPEECH ACTS

Data 5: 00:30:05 - 00:30:22

Morgan : Look, I know that you want to live in some perfect fairy-tale land, but we don't.

Robert : Okay, we live here! If you want to be mad, be mad at me.

Morgan : …in this stupid town, and I hate it!

Robert : But do not talk to your mother like that!

Morgan : My mother? She is not my mother. *She is my stepmother. That's all she will ever be.*

In this dialogue, Morgan's utterance "She is not my mother. She is my stepmother. That's all she will ever be" can be analyzed as a declarative speech act according to Searle's theory. A declarative speech act is one that changes the state of the world through its utterance, with the speaker aiming to change the situation through their speech. In this case, Morgan is making a declarative statement that asserts Giselle's identity as Morgan's step mother, which is influenced by epistemic context, shared knowledge about the real relationship between Morgan and Giselle. Based on the theory, this is an example of a direct speech act strategy. The character is directly stating them

relationship with the other person, making it clear that she (Giselle) is a stepmother, not a biological mother. The use of the declarative form ("She is not my mother", "She is my stepmother") conveys the speaker's direct assertion about the nature of their relationship. The statement "That's all she'll ever be" further reinforces the direct stance, leaving no ambiguity about the speaker's perspective on the stepmother's role.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the types and strategies of speech acts in the Disney movie *Disenchanted* using Searle's theory (1979). The research, conducted qualitatively, focuses on dialogues, scenes, and utterances from all characters as the primary data source. The observation technique was employed to collect data from audiovisual materials. A total of 89 speech acts were identified: 22 directives, 35 representatives, 9 commissives, 19 expressives, and 4 declaratives. The study also found 24 instances of direct speech act strategies and 12 of indirect strategies. The physical and social context of the movie influences the characters' speech acts, as they navigate various interpersonal interactions. The analysis reveals that representative speech acts and direct strategies are the most frequently used, highlighting the characters' tendency to assert beliefs, make claims, and communicate intentions clearly. The study underscores the role of language in shaping social interactions and how characters strategically use both direct and indirect speech acts to influence outcomes within the narrative. While the findings focus on speech acts, the study suggests further exploration of the movie from other linguistic perspectives, such as pragmatics and sociolinguistics, to gain deeper insights.

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