



Assertive Illocutionary Acts in The Main Character in Wish Movie

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Abstract

This study examined the illocutionary acts of assertive in the Wish movie using Searle's speech act theory. The study explored how the protagonist, Asha, used assertive language to convey beliefs, provide information, and influence the narrative process. The study used a qualitative research design especially content analysis, to examine Asha's dialogues and categories them into assertive acts such as asserting, reporting, informing, and arguing. The results showed that Asha frequently used assertive acts, indicating a strong tendency to reinforce beliefs and convey information. In addition, the analysis showed that reporting and telling actions were significant, indicating that Asha was a source of information in the film. This research contributes to understanding language use in cinematic contexts, emphasizing the importance of assertive communication in character development and storytelling. The study offers valuable insights into the pragmatic aspects of film dialogue and provides a foundation for further research in linguistics and media studies.

Keywords: *assertive action, speech act theory, pragmatics, film dialogue, character development*

Introduction

Humans are inherently social beings, meaning that they require the presence of others in order to survive and thrive. They must collaborate. In order to collaborate effectively, they must establish a means of communication to facilitate their everyday interactions. In order to establish communication, individuals require a means of utilizing language. Each individual on Earth has a unique language to communicate, influenced by their culture and place of residence. They utilized it to express their thoughts or personal viewpoints. Language can effectively communicate all the ideas and messages that the speaker wishes to communicate (Virginia & Ambalegin, 2021). Language serves as a means of

communication for exchanging ideas, thoughts, and other forms of expression.

Communication is the act of transferring and sharing information between people. It is a two-way street where the sender conveys the message through a channel (such as speech, text, or body language) and the receiver interprets that message. Communication is an important thing we need to do in our daily lives. Communication allows people to express their feelings about what they want to say and provide important information, ideas, and opinions. Communication can be bidirectional or direct. While talking about products, we can also enable the target audience to create products or promotions based on our ideas. Language is used for communication between people, thanks to language people can communicate with each other in their daily lives.

The function of Language as a device or media of communication is also supported by Sapir (1921:7), who states that Language is a purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires through systems of voluntarily produced symbols. On any account, communication depends on recognizing the meaning of words in every utterance and what speakers mean by their utterances. Then, the relationship between Language and the context in which it is used and concerned with the description and analysis of spoken and written interactions should be considered (McCarthy, 1991).

Language is a device of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols. Through language, humans can express themselves as social group members and participate in their culture. Language has the function of identifying expressions and communicating with other people. The interesting aspect of language is its use in a context studied in the linguistic branch of science, known as pragmatics.

Pragmatics is concerned with the interaction between signals and their users, according to Renkema and Schubert (2018). Pragmatics describes communication as an interaction between writers and readers, or speakers and hearers, that adapts their illocution while upholding cooperative communication. The pragmatic principles of communication cooperation include communication context and speech act theory—pragmatic studies human language usage situations as they are modified by social environment (Mey, 1993). Speech act refers to the relationship between utterances and performances. The theory behind the speech act analyzes conceptual problems by examining common language and trying to find what insight it may bring into reality. Language is viewed as a form of acting in the speech act.

Linguistics is a language discipline, and pragmatics is an essential linguistic field. Additionally, it discusses the contextual meaning due to the fact pragmatics involves interpreting what people imply in a specific context and how the context affects what's said. The pragmatics are included in the analysis speech act. A speech act analysis is an utterance with both a literal meaning and a specific illocutionary

pressure (Paltridge, 2000:16), and it usually involves actions that can be performed via utterances. When there is no pragmatics in every communication or conversation, the second speaker will not understand the meaning of what the first speaker is talking about, and there is no speech act. So, it is essential to understand the speaker's meaning for the second speaker to comprehend the speech act. Utterance has come to be a focus of speech act analysis. This is why this area became necessary for further investigation. It is one of the processes of understanding language. According to Yule (1996: 47), both speakers and listeners require knowledge of the language and appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

Moreover, people naturally communicate in an unstructured manner. This is not a problem because the most important thing is that others can understand and accept their language. Similarly, Yule (1996: 47) argued that to show and interact, people produce grammatical sentences and produce or express actions in that language. Speech acts refer to the utterances made by a speaker that convey meaning and prompt the listeners to carry out particular actions (Austin, 1962). According to him, when a speaker engages in a performative utterance, they do an additional action.

There are three categorizations for speaking acts. The first type of speech act is known as a Locutionary Speech act. This occurs when a speaker utters words with a specific intended meaning. The second category is the Illocutionary act, which involves the expression of a statement with a particular intention or objective. However, a statement's purpose or intended meaning is called an Illocutionary act. It will ascertain whether the audience comprehends or takes action. Perlocutionary speech is the third form of speech act, characterized by the speaker's words impacting the listener.

The ability to understand and produce a communicative act is considered a pragmatic skill, which often includes knowledge of the social status of the speaker involved, cultural knowledge, and linguistic knowledge (Kasper, 1990:56). Austin, (1962) suggests that when uttering a sentence, a speaker generally involved in three different acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. Of these three acts, there is the concept of a speech act.

J. R. Searle (1969: 25) contributed significantly to the study of speech acts. He says that one must understand the speaker's intention to understand language. According to him, language is intentional behavior. Therefore, it should be treated as a form of action. Searle refers to statements as speech acts. The speech act is the basic unit of language that expresses meaning. An utterance expresses an intention. Mostly, a speech act is a sentence, but it can be a word or phrase as long as it follows the rules necessary to carry out the intention. According to him, there are five

speech acts: Assertive (representative), Commissive, Expressive, Directives, and Declaratives.

This research focuses on the assertive act of the main character in the movie "Wish," about Searle's theory of speech acts and the five characteristics of act utterances. Assertive speech acts where the speaker affirms the truth of a claim using verbs like affirm, believe, conclude, report, deny, etc. (Searle, 1969). Put, forceful speech is communication when the speaker expresses their belief. Assertive sentences can be studied based on their sentence pattern, which can be verbal or nominal.

A movie is a cinematic production consisting of a sequence of images created by combining multiple individual shots. A crucial element that frequently arises in movies is dialogue, which refers to the conversations between the characters. The characters engage in dialogue and perform illocutionary acts. Movies can serve as a compelling illustration of speech acts, as they depict the intricate dynamics of communication through the actions and words of the main characters. Wish is a 2023 American animated film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios. It was directed by Chris Buck and Fawn Veerasunthorn (in their directorial debut) and written by Jennifer Lee and Allison Moore. The art form that combines computer animation is similar to traditional animation. The film stars the voices of Ariana DeBose, Chris Pine, Alan Tudyk, Angelique Cabral, Victor Garber, Natasha Rothwell, Jennifer Kumiyama, Harvey Guillén, Evan Peters, Ramy Youssef and Jon Rudnitsky. The story revolves around a 17-year-old girl named Asha (DeBose) who calls out to the stars in her time of need. She encounters a living, magical shooting star, and together they discover the kingdom of Magnifico (Pine), the suspicious ruler of Rosas.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research design, explicitly using content analysis, to investigate assertive speech acts in the animated film Wish (2023), created by Walt Disney Animation Studios. The primary data source used is the film's dialogue, focusing explicitly on the main character, Asha, to identify assertive speech acts according to Searle's speech act theory. Data collection included the transcription of Asha's relevant dialogue, focusing explicitly on affirmative verbs, such as affirm, believe, conclude, report, deny, etc. The analysis is carried out with Searle's framework, which categorizes each act of assertive speech and examines its context to understand the character's intentions and the impact of his words on the story. The results provide insights into the function of affirmative speech acts in film's communication dynamics, focusing on how language is used to express beliefs and intentions in a cinematic context.

Results

This research found several dialogues performed by the main characters of the "Wish" movie that are considered assertive illocutionary acts. An assertive illocutionary act occurs when a speaker expresses their belief or perception about the truth of a proposition. Depending on the context in which the utterance is performed, an assertive illocutionary act serves different purposes.

The study's findings indicate that the central characters in "Wish" employ 26 assertive remarks. These are divided into many functions: Asserting, Reporting, Claiming, Arguing, Admitting, Informing, Reminding, and Confessing. The table displays these classes. The overall number of utterances and the percentages of each category complete the table. The categorization is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of Assertive acts used by the main character in the Wish movie.

No	Types of Assertive Acts	Frequency	Percentage
1	Asserting	12	46,2%
2	Reporting	4	15,3%
3	Claiming	1	3,9%
4	Arguing	2	7,6%
5	Admitting	1	3,9%
6	Informing	4	15,3%
7	Reminding	1	3,9%
8	Confessing	1	3,9%
Total		26	100%

Based on the data in Table 1, the main character in the film "Wish" most frequently used assertive action is "asserting," which appears 12 times, accounting for 46.2% of the total assertive actions. This shows that the main character tends to assert their opinions or beliefs consistently in dialogue. Additionally, the actions of "reporting" and "informing" appear four times, or 15.3%, indicating that the main character also often plays the role of a source of information or an explainer in the story. Other assertive actions such as "arguing," "claiming," "admitting," "reminding," and "confessing" occur with lower frequency, appearing only once or twice each. This indicates that the main character rarely engages in confrontations, acknowledgements, or significant claims. Overall, this distribution depicts the main character as someone who asserts their views and provides information, with minimal involvement in other assertive actions.

Discussion

This study analyzed the assertive illocutionary acts in the "Wish" movie. It discusses the types of assertive utterances used in the dominant type of assertive utterances. As presented in Table 1, eight types of assertiveness were found in research data: research data Asserting, Reporting, Claiming, Arguing, Admitting, Informing, Reminding, and Confessing. The discussion below represents the analysis of assertive utterances uttered by the main characters, which were elaborated in the form of dialogue and the analysis of the utterances.

A. Asserting

Asserting is the same as pointing out something definitely and emphatically. Asserting is a form of assertive act that pursues to arouse appreciate, deliver someone's truth, importance or energy. Asserting is also the act of mentioning something optimistically without belittling or intimidating others. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985:183), asserting is the same as the act of upholding that is the illocutionary strength of affirmation. It entails clear, direct, and impactful verbal exchange, allowing you to hopefully explicit your opinions, desires, or desires without offending others. The following are examples of asserting acts namely asserting contained in this research:

Data 1

- King : "He was a philosopher, wasn't he? Always talking about the stars."
Asha : "We used to climb that tree on the high ridge, where it becomes just you and the stars. You know, he'd say, "The stars are there to guide us, to inspire us, to remind us to believe in possibility." Well, even when he was sick, he'd take me out at night to dream. All I dreamed about was him getting better."
King : "How old were you when he passed?"
Asha : "Twelve."
King : "That's not fair, is it? When I was young, I too suffered great loss."
Asha : "I... I didn't know that. I'm sorry."
Asha : "And that's why **I want to work for you.**"
King : "Mm-hmm. Come with me."

The text is classified as asserting because Asha clearly and firmly expresses her desire to work for the King. The statement "I want to work for you" is a strong example of asserting as Asha expresses her wish directly and without hesitation. This aligns with the definition of asserting as the act of stating something clearly and emphatically. Asha conveyed her intentions in an optimistic and non-

intimidating manner while trying to evoke appreciation from the King. This statement also reflects the truth and significance of Asha's desires, which are characteristic of assertive actions. By expressing her desires directly, Asha engaged in a clear and impactful verbal exchange without hurting Raja's feelings, using the concept of asserting, as explained by Searle Vanderveken, which emphasizes the importance of clear and direct communication in assertive acts.

B. Reporting

Reporting is one of the functions of the illocutionary act that aims to report something that has been done (Hornby, 1995: 993). Underneath are several examples of statistics classifications determined in this research information source:

Data 2

Saba : "Putt, putt, putt, and knock on wood."
 Asha : "Tonight's your night, Saba. I can feel it."
 Sakina : "Asha, let's bake a cake."
 Asha : "Oh! (INHALES SHARPLY) Uh... (HESITANTLY) No."
 Saba : "But I love cake."
 Asha : "I mean, I... I can't. I'm giving a tour and then..."
 Sakina : "Hmm."
 Asha : "Um, **I'm helping. I'm helping Dahlia.** Yeah. So, eh..."
 Saba : "Hmm."

The textual content is considered reporting because Asha is reporting the activities, she will be able to undertake. When offered to make a cake, Asha declined by explaining her plans. She said, "I'm helping. I'm helping Dahlia," which is a report about the activities she could be doing. That is an example of reporting because Asha is informing others about her activities. Even though there are indications that Asha might not be entirely honest (evident from her hesitation before answering), the act of providing information about her plans still falls into the category of reporting. Asha reported her activity plan as a reason to say no the invitation to bake, in accordance with the definition of reporting as the act of conveying something that has been or might be done.

C. Claiming

According to Smith (1985), claiming is the act of expressing one's rights or needs in a clear and assertive manner, without letting others take advantage of us. In expressing rights or needs, it is important to use a clear way, namely using simple and unambiguous language, and not using vague or confusing language that can make others misunderstand. The following is an example of the claiming category identified in the data source:

Data 3

- Asha : "It's my weakness. Figured I might as well get through all the bad stuff right up front."
King : "Fair enough. And your strengths?"
Asha : "Glad you asked. **I'm a quick learner and a hard worker, and I help well.** (CHUCKLES NERVOUSLY) And I'm young, so I'm malleable, but not too young so that I'm too malleable."

The text is considered a claiming because Asha clearly and firmly states her positive qualities. While the King asked about her strengths, Asha immediately spoke back, "I'm a quick learner and a hard worker, and I help well." this is an example of claiming because Asha explicitly asserts her rights or abilities. She uses easy and unambiguous language to specify his strengths as a fast learner, hard worker, and someone who enjoys helping others. Asha also claims that her age is a strength, mentioning that she is young enough to be easily shaped, however not too young. With these statements, Asha assertively claims the qualities that she believes make her worthy of being the King's student, in accordance with the definition of claiming as the act of clearly and firmly stating one's rights or needs.

D. Arguing

In the Oxford dictionary, to argue means (1) to express disagreement, to argue, (2) to oppose something/to give reasons (1991:18). The following are several examples of classification statements contained in the data sources for this research:

Data 4

- Saba : "But I love cake."
Asha : "I mean, I... I can't. I'm giving a tour and then..."
Sakina : "Hmm."

- Asha : "Um, I'm helping. I'm helping Dahlia. Yeah. So, eh..."
 Saba : "Hmm."
 Sakina : "Why'd you say it like that?"
 Asha : "Like what?"
 Sakina : "What are you up to?"
 Asha : "**What makes you think that I'm up to something?**"
 Sakina : "Because I know your pauses."
 Asha : "I'm maturing. My pauses are changing."

The text can be considered argumentative since Asha expresses dissent and offers justifications to substantiate her stance. When Sakina accused Asha of scheming, Asha retorted with the rhetorical enquiry, "What makes you think that I'm up to something?" This can be considered an argument as Asha indirectly questions Sakina's assumption. Asha then provides reasons to explain her behavior, stating that she is "maturing" and "pauses are changing." This demonstrates Asha's endeavor to protect herself and counter Sakina's allegations. Asha's behavior conforms to the definition of arguing in the Oxford dictionary, which involves expressing disagreement and providing reasons to oppose something. Despite Asha's non-confrontational argument, she tried to defend her position and counter Sakina's assumptions.

E. Admitting

According to Jakubowski and Lange (1978), admitting to assertive acts is acknowledging our limitations and taking responsibility for our mistakes honestly and openly. Admitting means recognizing our limitations, whether in abilities, knowledge, or resources and taking responsibility for our mistakes sincerely and transparently, without lying or covering up our errors. This allows us to demonstrate that we are accountable for our actions, do not blame others or make excuses, and help us correct our mistakes and improve our quality. The following is an example of the admitting category identified in the data source:

Data 5

- Asha : "Best friend and honorary doctor of all things rational, my interview is in one hour, and I'm so nervous I think I'm going to explode."
 Dahlia : "Interview. What interview?"
 Asha : "Dahlia?"
 Dahlia : "You mean the interview with our velvety sweet buttercream of a king."

- Asha : "Oh, please don't say it like that."
Dahlia : "My best friend, the King's apprentice. I'll be famous."
Asha : "I have forgotten how to talk. I have no words. Is my mouth drooping? I feel like it's drooping. Quick, ask me an interview question."
Dahlia : "Okay, Asha, what's your weakness?"
Asha : "Weakness? Um... **I get irrational when I'm nervous.**"
Dahlia : "No, no. You care too much."

The text is considered admitting because Asha acknowledges her weaknesses. When Dahlia asked about her weaknesses, Asha responded, "I get irrational when I'm nervous." this is a clear example of admitting, as Asha openly acknowledges her limitations, does not try to hide or lie about her weaknesses, takes responsibility for her emotional state while anxious, and demonstrates self-awareness and honesty during the interview. By acknowledging that she becomes irrational when nervous, Asha demonstrates the quality of admitting that aligns with the definitions of Jakubowski and Lange. She actually and openly acknowledges her weaknesses without trying to hide them or blame external factors, suggesting that Asha takes responsibility for her actions and feelings.

F. Informing

Informing is the technique of conveying statistics, news, information, activities, or expertise about a selected issue or object to everybody. Informing way claiming the listener but the listener will not be aware of what is going to be advised to him (Searle & Vanderveken (1985:185)). This assertive category features to inform something that the listener does no longer but know. This category intends to increase information, add knowledge, and offer new facts to everyone approximately the topic discussed. The following is an example of the informing category identified in the data source:

Data 6

- Asha : "I'm maturing. My pauses are changing."
Sakina : "Asha!"
Asha : "Can't talk now, I'm gonna be late. (BLEATS) Oh. I'll see you at the wish ceremony."
Saba : "Oh, I wouldn't miss it."
Asha : "I've got a good feeling about it!"
Asha : "I'm here! I'm here. **I'm here. Whew! Just one second. Let me catch my breath.**"

The text is classified as informing because Asha provides information about her current state and situation. When Asha says, "I'm here! I'm here. I'm here." Phew! Just a moment. "Let me catch my breath," she told her audience about essential matters. First, she informed me that she had arrived at her destination. Second, she mentioned that she needed a moment to catch her breath. This is an example of informing because Asha conveys new facts previously unknown to her listeners. She provided an update on her attendance and physical condition after arriving. This information is relevant and essential for the situation at that time, by the definition of informing as conveying new information or facts to others.

G. Reminding

According to Jakubowski and Lange (1978), "reminding" in assertive acts refers to keeping our statements or positions and not being easily stimulated by pressure or grievance from others. In this context, "remaining" means we are able to uphold our beliefs and stances and aren't easily swayed or inconsistent. The following is an example of the reminding category identified in the data source:

Data 7

King : "Oh, again. It's hopping. That is a unique talent. Do we call that a talent?"
 Asha : "Oh, well, it's just something my father taught me."
 King : "I think I remember your father."
 Asha : "Really?"
 King : "He was a philosopher, wasn't he? Always talking about the stars."
 Asha : "We used to climb that tree on the high ridge, where it becomes just you and the stars. You know, he'd say, **"The stars are there to guide us, to inspire us, to remind us to believe in possibility."** Well, even when he was sick, he'd take me out at night to dream. All I dreamed about was him getting better."
 King : "How old were you when he passed?"
 Asha : "Twelve."

The text serves as a reminder that Asha clearly remembers and restates her father's profound statement, "The stars are there to guide us, to inspire us, to remind us to believe in possibility." While Jakubowski and Lange's definition of reminding primarily emphasises maintaining a particular perspective, in this instance, Asha prompts both herself and Raja to recall her father's philosophy. She

kept her father's beliefs and teachings by directly citing his words. This action demonstrates Asha's unwavering commitment to the principles instilled by her father, aligning with the notion of "reminding" in assertive conduct. Asha uses this memory to exemplify her connection with her father and the impact of his teachings on her perspective, showcasing her steadfastness in upholding her father's teachings and memories.

H. Confessing

According to Bolton (1979), confessing in assertive acts means that we are able to acknowledge our mistakes sincerely and openly, without looking to cover up or avoid our mistakes, for this reason demonstrating that we possess integrity and honesty, and are not afraid to learn from our mistakes, while developing self-focus and the ability to understand our limitations. The following is an example of the confessing category identified in the data source:

Data 8

Dahlia : "Okay, Asha, what's your weakness?"

Asha : "Weakness? Um... **I get irrational when I'm nervous.**"

Dahlia : "No, no. You care too much."

Asha : "I do? Wait. Is that a weakness?"

Dahlia : "That's why it's perfect. You're welcome. Just relax."

The text is considered confessing because Asha openly acknowledges her weaknesses. When Dahlia asked about her weaknesses, Asha answered, "I get irrational when I'm nervous." that is a clear example of confessing because Asha acknowledges her shortcomings without trying to cover them up or avoid them. She demonstrates integrity and honesty by revealing her vulnerability. This acknowledgement demonstrates Asha's self-focus on her limitations and her readiness to learn from her shortcomings. By acknowledging that she becomes irrational when nervous, Asha shows the quality of confessing according to Bolton's definition. This action reflects honesty, the courage to face one's imperfections, and the ability to understand one's limitations. Although Dahlia later recommended a different answer, Asha's initial response remains an example of authentic confessing.

Although data 5 and 8 appear similar in that Asha states her weakness by saying, "I get irrational when I'm nervous," they are categorized as different assertive acts, namely admitting and confessing, based on the difference in context and focus of the confession. In the admitting category, Asha openly admits her limitations in terms of emotions and anxiety when facing interviews, showing self-

awareness and responsibility for these weaknesses. In this case, Asha's admission shows a willingness to accept her limitations without covering up or blaming others, which is by Jakubowski and Lange's (1978) definition of admitting. In contrast, in the confessing category, Asha acknowledges her emotional weaknesses and shows the courage to face them honestly. According to Bolton (1979), confessing includes sincere acknowledgment of mistakes or weaknesses without trying to cover them up, and it demonstrates integrity and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Therefore, although both data reflect the same confession, the nuance of the difference lies in the focus on confession-admitting, which emphasizes personal limitations in general and confessing, which focuses more on acknowledging specific mistakes or weaknesses. The two data were not combined and categorized as different assertive actions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of assertive illocutionary acts used by the main character in the film "Wish," applying Searle's speech act theory to examine how these acts function within the narrative. The findings demonstrate that the protagonist predominantly employs asserting and reporting acts, revealing a solid tendency to assert beliefs and convey information throughout the story. This research contributes to the field of pragmatics by offering new insights into the use of assertive speech acts in cinematic dialogue, highlighting their role in character development and narrative structure. The study underscores the importance of assertive communication in fictional narratives and real-world interactions, suggesting avenues for further exploration in the intersection of linguistics and media studies.

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