

Types and Functions of Speech Acts in the Film Imperfect (2019): A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the types and functions of the speech acts used in the Indonesian movie Imperfect (2019) from a pragmatic point of view. In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative descriptive method based on Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts and Searle's (1969) classification of illocutionary acts. The data for this study were obtained from the dialogues between the main and supporting characters. Then, the data were analyzed according to the types of the speech acts performed: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The results showed that assertive and directive speech acts dominated the movie Imperfect, which reflects the characters' inner conflicts and social pressures regarding physical appearance. In addition, commissive and expressive acts emphasize the characters' support and expression. Declarative acts signal the characters' social status change and the climax of the story. These results show that the use of the speech acts in the movie Imperfect not only functions as a means of communication but also as an effective narrative and moral tool for character building, influencing the audience, and delivering social messages.

Keywords: *Speech acts, Imperfect, pragmatics, perlocutionary effects*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis dan fungsi tindak tutur dalam film Indonesia Imperfect (2019) dari perspektif pragmatik. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teori tindak tutur Austin (1962) dan klasifikasi ilokusi Searle (1969). Data penelitian diperoleh dari dialog tokoh utama dan pendukung, kemudian dianalisis berdasarkan jenis tindak tutur asertif, direktif, komisif, ekspresif, dan deklaratif serta efek perlokusiner terhadap interaksi sosial dan perkembangan karakter. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tindak asertif dan direktif paling dominan, mencerminkan konflik internal tokoh dan tekanan sosial terkait penampilan. Sementara tindak komisif dan ekspresif menekankan dukungan interpersonal dan ekspresi emosi, serta tindak deklaratif menandai perubahan status sosial dan klimaks naratif. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa tindak tutur tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai komunikasi verbal, tetapi juga sebagai alat naratif dan moral yang efektif untuk membangun karakter, mempengaruhi penonton, dan menyampaikan pesan sosial tentang self-acceptance.

Kata Kunci: *tindak tutur, film Imperfect, pragmatik, efek perlokusiner*

Introduction

The movie Imperfect, released in 2019, is an Indonesian film that touches on various social issues that encompass the perspectives of people regarding physical appearance, beauty, and acceptance. The movie revolves around Rara, a young Indonesian woman who works in a media company and has to deal with social pressure from individuals in her environment concerning her physical appearance. This is a clear

representation of the Indonesian social situation where urban Indonesian people are pressured concerning beauty and physical appearance, leading to psychological impacts.

The first aspect, which involves the language used by characters, particularly in terms of conversational dialogue, represents a key medium within which conflict, feelings, or interactions between characters emerge. Beyond providing information, language in terms of dialogue has been perceived as a social act that shapes interpersonal relations and interactions. Thus, a pragmatic focus, like a speech act analysis, becomes important in addressing issues that pertain to interactions between characters in terms of opinion expression, advice, or even social status changes.

In this research, Austin's (1962) speech act theory will be applied as a way to identify and analyze speech acts in films that are classified into illocution according to Searle's (1969) theory. This analysis has an important role to play in terms of its relation to language, characters, and morality in films, as well as its contribution to pragmatics, specifically in the Indonesian film industry.

Method

The approach for this research is a qualitative description approach. This approach focuses more on providing an in-depth look into language use phenomena and speech acts that are presented in the film **Imperfect** (2019). This approach was appropriately chosen for this research since its focus is primarily an analysis, rather than quantification.

The sources for the research data are dialogue between the protagonist, Rara, and the other supporting characters in both formal and informal settings. The data was collected from the scenes that were pertinent to the theme portrayed in the film:

1. Rara's inner conflict about her looks and social pressures.
2. Social interactions with friends, superiors, or best friends.
3. Emotional expressions and interpersonal support that appear throughout the storyline.

The data was collected by observing the film dialogue and writing it down. All instances of communicative intent, emotion, and social influences were documented, including the context of the scene, the interactions of the characters, and so on. The transcription of the dialogues was carried out word-for-word to obtain accurate data, facilitating the analysis of pragmatics. To obtain greater validity with the information gathered, various tools of source triangulation were incorporated. The data gathered is compared with visual depictions, facial reactions, and the interactions of other characters. The accuracy of the transcripts is revised to obtain the appropriate context and pragmatics of the data.

Findings and Discussion

Based upon the analysis of dialogues and scenes depicted within the movie *Imperfect*, which was released in 2019, different uses of speech acts have been identified that are particularly related to the speech situation, social relations, and conflicts. Each different speech act has been identified within a separate scene, which creates a powerful effect of illocution and perlocution. The major forms of speech acts identified are representative, expressive, directive, commissive, and declarative speech acts, which are related to different social prescriptives over the body, identity, and self-acceptance of the main character.

Data 1 - Representative speech act

One particular example is when Rara is at home with her family and she, even though unconsciously, compares herself to her young sister, Lulu, whose body is slim and whose skin is fair. This is a clear example of the behavior and practices within a social setting that impact one's beauty.

Example dialog:

Rara: "Aku sadar kok, aku nggak secantik Lulu"

Explanation:

This utterance can be referred to as a *representative speech act* since, in the discourse, Rara reveals opinions she genuinely believes to be true of herself. In this instance, Rara is not giving a direct answer to a query but rather contemplating a personal reality that has been cultivated by her physical comparisons. From a pragmatic point of view, the utterance shows Rara's internalization of body shaming, which is indicative of her psychological struggle.

Data 2 - Expressive Speech Act

The scene involves Rara and Malathi's office, where Rara receives sneering comments from her colleagues following her experience with discrimination based on her looks.

Example dialog:

Marsha: "Kamu tuh terlalu baper, Ra. jangan lebay"

Explanation:

The utterance fits into an *expressive speech act* category since Marsha here reveals her attitude, belittling and being non-empathetic to Rara's feelings. In this scene, language plays a role in exercising social dominance. This utterance pragmatically not only reveals an individual attitude but also assumes a corporate culture that endorses a workplace setting that allows for body shaming. Its perlocutionary effect is that it instills a sense of inferiority among Rara and thus contributes to more social conflict in the workplace.

Data 3 - Directive speech act

Scene of an internal meeting at Malathi's company after the resignation of Sheila, when Kelvin explains the needs of the company, introduces the profile, and the characteristics of a new manager.

Example dialog:

Kelvin: "kalau kamu mau jabatan itu, kamu harus memperbaiki penampilan kamu"

Explanation:

The utterance can be identified as a *directive speech act* as it directs Rara to undertake a certain action. When we consider the context, we can see that it comes from a position of power in that utterance. The pragmatics of this utterance illustrate how language can be a tool of structural pressure. This utterance in particular lays the groundwork for Rara's physical and mental transformation, as well as highlighting the film's commentary on conventional professional standards.

Data 4: Commissive Speech Act

A continuation scene after the conversation with Kelvin, where Rara thinks about her future and decides to accept the challenge.

Example dialog:

Rara: "Baik, saya akan berusaha berubah"

Explanation:

The utterance above can be seen as a *commissive speech act* because in the statement, Rara commits herself to performing an action in the future. Given the setting in the scene, this utterance could have been prompted by pressures at the social and professional levels. The pragmatic implication of the utterance is that Rara commits herself to a promise that has profound health implications. This utterance introduces the transformation of Rara's character and speaks to power balance.

Data 5: Expressive speech act

The scene where Dika (Rara's boyfriend) realizes a change in Rara's attitudes and way of life, which are becoming more and more deviated from the values that they have initially learned.

Example dialog:

Dika: "Aku bener-bener kecewa lihat kamu yang sekarang"

Explanation:

The utterance made here can be classified as an *expressive speech act* as it expresses the feelings that the speaker has developed, i.e., disappointment and sadness. With regard to this particular scene from the play, this utterance shows how changes happening outside affect a person emotionally as a result of the changes that Rara has undergone.

Data 6 - Directive speech act

The scene at home finds Rara exhibiting physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from the rigid diet. This prompts her mother to shield Rara from increasing pressure.

Example dialog:

Ibu Rara: "hentikan semua ini sebelum kamu benar-benar menyakiti diri kamu sendiri"

Explanation:

This utterance is a *directive speech act* because the speaker's goal is to influence the action of the person she is speaking to by asking Rara to stop extreme dieting. However, it is not a peremptory order, but also includes a sense of care and consolation, typical of a mother. The pragmatics of this utterance lie in the moral intervention that it implies, questioning Rara's social and professional circumstances. Its perlocutionary effect is the emergence of a conflict within Rara.

Data 7 - Declarative Speech Act

The scene of the announcement where it is made in Malathi's company meeting hall after the management decided on the position of the new manager.

Example dialog:

Kelvin: "Mulai saat ini, jabatan manager riset secara resmi berada ditangan Rara"

Explanation:

The speech act presented in this utterance fits under the category of *declarative*, as it changes Rara's professional status directly. This utterance is a pragmatically correct one because it comes from an authorized member of an institution. From a plot point of view, this utterance symbolizes Rara's success as a social criticism, which is inextricably linked to the demands of a physical change. The perlocutionary effect of this act is Rara being placed under more psychological pressure to maintain the new image.

Data 8 - Expressive speech act

The scene where Rara comes visiting Fey personally upon realizing that she has been selfish and not very nice to her best friend.

Example dialog:

Rara: *"Aku sadar sekarang betapa egoisnya sikapku selama ini"*

Explanation:

This is an *expressive speech act*; Rara reveals emotional awareness and regret regarding her behavior. This utterance is not meant to request or command; rather, it shows the psychological state of the speaker. Pragmatically, this functions as a form of moral responsibility and an attempt to improve social relations. Its perlocutionary effect is the reopening of communication and empathy between Rara and Fey.

Data 9 - Representative speech act

A reflective scene after Rara faints and receives medical attention makes her begin to question her decisions.

Example dialog:

Rara: *"Aku kira perubahan fisik bisa membuat aku hidup lebih enak"*

Explanation:

This utterance *represents a speech act* that is representative because Rara expresses an opinion that represents her new beliefs about what her reality is all about. This speech act is reflective and evaluates Rara's previous experiences. From a pragmatic point of view, this utterance shows a shift in perspective for the main character. This speech act has a perlocutionary effect because it changes Rara's perspective about beauty and success.

Data 10: Representative Speech Act

The scene where Malathi presents her new concept to management and colleagues is where the main conflict of the film gets resolved.

Example dialog:

Rekan-rekan kerja: *"Setiap perempuan berhak merasa cukup tanpa harus menyesuaikan diri dengan standar tertentu"*

Explanation:

This utterance can be classified as an instance of *the speech act of representation* since it expresses an ideological statement that the speaker thinks to be true. Within the context of the dialogic scene, this utterance may be understood as an expression of professional statements and a reflection of social commentary on beauty standards. Pragmatically, the speech act of this utterance illustrates significant perlocutionary impact on management's beliefs and changes the course of the company's policies. The utterance likewise underscored the key moral lessons of the movie on the acceptance of diversity.

Conclusion

From a pragmatic point of view, it can be concluded that, based on a pragmatic analysis of a film called "Imperfect" (2019), the film can be classified as a data-rich empirical study, where different forms of speech acts emerge in a clear manner within the characters' dialogue. Assertive and directive speech acts are the most dominant types of speech acts. Assertive speech acts are related to the main character's inner conflicts related to perception and the influence of the environment, while the directive speech acts reveal the influence of the environment, comprising friends and superiors, on the character's direction of action. Expressive and commissive speech acts are very significant

in enhancing emotional support, relationships, and psychological resonance. Expressive speech acts show a character's feelings and response to the social situation, and commissive speech acts show support and promise, enhancing social dynamics between the character and others. Declarative speech acts, although infrequent, are often used as signals of major changes in the plot, such as a change of social status, a promotion, or an official decision. Declaratives are often used to signal climactic turns in the plot that significantly shape the direction of the plot and character growth. The results of the study verify theories stating that speech acts in films are not only oral interactions but also add up to being a narrative, social, and moral tool that influences characters, social interactions, and moral messages that address issues like self-acceptance and criticism of beauty standards in society. This study adds an empirical dimension to the study of pragmatics in terms of Indonesia's cinematic universe and verifies the importance of speech act analysis as a means to explore further the relationship between language, character, and social interactions in films.

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