

An Analysis of Assertive Acts in *Letters to Juliet* Movie

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Abstract: Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as complain, argue, promise, or request, etc. This research discusses the use of assertive illocutionary acts uttered by the main character in *Letters to Juliet* Movie. It explores (1) what types of assertive acts used by the main character (2) how are formal patterns of the dominant type of assertive acts used by the main character, (3) and what is the frequency of its formal patterns in the conversations of the main character occurring in *Letters to Juliet* movie. This research applied descriptive quantitative approach because the researcher analyzed types of assertive act, its formal pattern and counted the frequency of the assertive act found in “*Letters to Juliet*” movie. The research finding showed that there are seven types of assertive acts: informing, complaining, arguing, explaining, reporting, asserting, and retelling. the most used type is reporting act (43,10%) and the least used is informing act (1,15%). In another word, the speaker tend to use reporting in order to report something that has heard, seen, done, or felt to the hearer that does not yet know. Moreover, the formal pattern that speaker used in reporting act is positive and negative verbal form, positive and negative nominal sform, and question tag form.

Keywords: assertive illocutionary Acts, utterances. *Letters to Juliet* movie

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the factual experience, every people have communication. Sometimes, they produce a language ungrammatically even though just in an utterance. It is almost difficult to understand by hearer or someone else. Even, when the speaker speaks clearly but there is no act that the speaker use to synchrony speak, it is also sometime has less information or it can be misunderstanding. Every utterance which speaker produced have implicit and explicit meaning that should be understood by others. As Yule (1996:47) states that in attempting to convey the message trough the language, people do not only express their ideas or feelings, but also perform the actions through utterances. When people utter something, they have the intentions and it closely relates with the context of situation such as the place, the time, and the way how people utter utterances.

The function of language as a device or media of communication is also supported by Sapir (1921:7) that Language is as purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desire by means of systems of voluntarily produced symbol. On any account, communication not only depends on recognizing the meaning of words in every utterance, but also recognizing what speakers mean by their utterance. Then, the relationship between language and the context in which it is used and are concerned with the description and analysis of both spoken and written interactions are should be considered (McCarthy, 1991 in Paltridge, 2000:4).

Linguistics is one of disciplines about language and one of the important of linguistic field is pragmatics. According Morris definition (1983:3), pragmatics is the study of the relationships

between linguistics and the users and also discusses the contextual meaning because pragmatics involve the interpretation of what people mean in particular context and how the context influence what is said. The pragmatics include in analysis speech act. A speech act analysis is an utterance which has both a literal meaning and a particular illocutionary force (Paltridge, 2000:16), and it also actions that performed via utterances. When there is no pragmatics in every communication or conversation, the second speaker will not understand what the clearly meaning of the first speaker talking about, and there is no speech act also. So, it is important to understand the speaker's meaning in order to the second speaker could comprehend clearly the speech act. Utterance has become a focus of speech act analysis. It is why this area became important for investigation further. It is one of process to understand about language. According to Yule (1996: 47) both the speakers and listeners require no only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

Moreover, common people make communication unstructured. This is not become problem because the most important of that is their speech can be understood and accepted by others. Like what Yule (1996:47) said that in the effort to express and asserting himself, people not only produce grammatical structure sentences but they also produce or show actions in that language. Communication is the social media in connecting some ideas in order to convey the information and interact with others. People use many variations in communicating in order to share their feelings and ideas such as verbal and nonverbal communication. According to Buck (2002:8), there are two types of communication. They are: verbal communication and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication is the way of communicating messages by using words as elements. Nonverbal communication is the way of communicating messages by using gesture, body movements, eye contact, facial expression, or general appearances as the elements. These two types are the general media of people to interact each other in which the speech act occurs.

Verbal communication or communicative act is usually represented by the utterances of the speakers. In attempting to express themselves, people do not only produce utterance containing grammatical structure and words, they perform action via those utterance. They often do things with words. In another word, every word, phrase or sentence that is human uttered perform different implicit action or meaning in it and if the hearer cannot get the intention of every utterance, it will lead a misunderstanding. Thus, Speech act is a kind of verbal communication and it is a subdivision of pragmatics. According to Yule (1996:5), speech act is a study of how the speakers and hearers use language. Bach (1979: 153) explains that an action in verbal communication has message in itself, so the communication is not only about language but also with action. It refers to the fact that through speaking a person accomplishes goals (Bonvillain, 2003:92). That is the reason why people have to interpret the meaning of communication or language through speech acts.

The ability to comprehend and produce a communicative act is referred to pragmatic competence, which often includes one's knowledge about the social status between the speaker involved, cultural knowledge and the linguistics knowledge (Kasper, 1990:56). Austin (cited in Levinson 1983: 236) suggests that in uttering a sentence, a speaker is generally involved in three different acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. From those three different acts, the concept of an illocutionary act is central to the concept of a speech act.

J. R. Searle (1969: 25) made a significant contribution in the study of speech acts. He says that to understand language one has to understand the speaker's intention. According to him, language is intentional behavior. Therefore, it should be treated like a form of action. Searle refers to statements as speech acts. The speech act is the basic unit of language that expresses meaning. In fact, 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 types

of speech acts such as Assertives (representative), Commissives, Expressives, Directives and Declaratives.

Related to the Searle's theory of speech acts and the five elements of act utterances, this research focuss on assertive act of the main character in *Letters to Juliet* movie. Assertives are the speech acts in which the speaker asserts 'a proposition to be true, using such verbs as affirm, believe, conclude, report, deny, etc (Searle,1969). In another word assertive is a kind of speech act that commits the speaker to state his/her belief about something. There are various types in assertive that can be analyzed from its sentence pattern (verbal and nominal).

Movie is a motion picture with series of images which are constructed of multiple individual shots joined to another in an extended sequence. One of the important aspect mostly occurred in movie is the dialogue (conversation) among the characters. The characters speak each other and there will be illocutionary act. So, movie can be a good example of speech acts because it represents the complex case of speech acts in order to find out what the main character do by saying something. *Letters to Juliet* is one of the famous American romantic film in 2010, which chronicles the phenomenon of letter-writing to Shakespeare's most famous romantic heroine. It's also a film that presents speech acts as a language phenomenon. The main character in this movie is Sophie as a New York writer, especially as a fact checker. on vacation in Italy, she finds an unanswered "letter to Juliet" -- one of thousands of missives left. Sophie's utterances are chosen in this research because She has a communicative purposes expressed in her utterances.

The previous research related to *Letters to Juliet* movie was Maya Hangga Pramesti (2013) under the title "a sociopragmatic Analysis of Directive utterances used in Letter to Juliet Movie Script". The objectives of the study are to classify the language form and describe speaker's intention and the politeness pattern of directive utterance in Letters to Juliet Movie Script. The results of the study show that first, the language forms of directive utterances are: declarative sentence, interrogative and imperative sentence. Second, the speaker's intentions of using directive utterance are: commanding, requesting, suggesting, warning and permitting. Third, the politeness patterns are 9 data of Bald on Record, 13 data of Positive Politeness, 6 data of Negative Politeness, and 2 data of Off Record Strategy.

Secondly, Akinwotu (2013) did a research that investigated the role of language in communication and the interpretation of intentions by examining selected political speeches of presidential candidates in Nigeria. It gave the overview of various ways of language that were used in defending and promoting personal and group interests in subverting the opponents' goals. The researcher adopted Searle's classification of illocutionary acts (cited in Levinson, 1983:240). The results of this study showed that assertive act was the most dominant act performed in this research. Speech was mostly used as mobilization strategy, especially in political campaign which was essential for candidates to persuade their listeners toward a desired goal of winning the election.

Based on those several researches of speech acts in pragmatics scope, the methods and theories that have been employed help the writer to do the research in the same field. Eventhough this research has similar on the use of *Letters to Juliet* movie as the data source, but the researcher will focus on the analysis of types of assertive act that is used by *Shopie*, as a main character in Letters to Juliet movie. Besides, the aim of this article is try to know the formal patterns of the dominant type of assertive acts used by *Shopie* in his utterances and its frequency.

In accordance with those phenomena, objectives of the study aimed to analyse the type of assertive acts used by the main character in *Letters To Juliet* movie. Besides, this study focuses on the formal patterns of the most dominant type of assertive acts are used by the main character in *Letters To Juliet* movie.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this study, the researcher analyzes the assertive act found in “*Letters to Juliet*” movie. The writer used descriptive quantitative design since the purpose in this research was to verify the certain theory. Cohen (2007:205) explain that descriptive research is concern with how/what is or what exist is related or event. This research used quantitative approach because the researcher analyzed the dominant type of assertive act and counted the frequency of the assertive act found in conversation of the main character in “*Letters to Juliet*” movie.

The source of data is the movie and the script of *Letters to Juliet* which contains the assertive inside. In another word, this reasearch focussed on *Sophia’s* the utterances because she is the main actrist of this movie.

Procedure methodology

The technique in collecting data used by the researcher was documentary method. This method was intended to obtain data directly from the research such as movie, the script, book, or other documents. The method of data collection included watching the movie repeatedly in order to understand the story well, looking the script and comparing it to the movie in order to be sure the data obtained, and then selecting the utterances which indicates assertive acts in the script by giving highlight and rewrite to get the clear data. From the data that have been gained, the utterances are classified based on the types such as making table which set the criteria of assertive act, categorizing the data because not all the utterances consist of assertive act. Then it is analyzed further to know its formal pattern of the dominant type of assertive act, determining the percentage form by using statistical analysis, and then drawing conclusion.

III.RESULT

In order to know what types of assertive acts were found in *Letters to Juliet* movie, the researcher analyzed it by considering the pattern occurred in the utterances. The result of this study shows that there are 199 assertive utterances used by the main characters in *Letters to Juliet* movie. Those are classified based on Searle’s theory about assertive illocutionary acts which are categorized into some functions namely *asserting, informing, explaining, arguing, complaining, retelling, and reporting*. These classifications are presented in the table. It is completed with the total utterances and the percentages of each type. The classification is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of Assertive act used by the main character in Letters to Juliet movie.

No.	Types of assertive acts	Freq.	P (%)
1	Asserting	12	6,89%
2	Reporting	75	43,10%
3	Explaining	18	10,34%
4	Arguing	52	29,88%
5	Complaining	7	4,02%
6	Informing	2	1,15%
7	Retelling	8	4,59%
	N	174	100%

Based on the findings above, the researcher found 75 utterances for reporting type in delivering assertive acts. It was the most frequently used by the characters in *Letters to Juliet* movie. The second type used by the main character of *Latters to Juliet’s* movie was Arguing type. The

researcher found 52 utterances. Next, it was followed by explaining type which contained 18 utterances.

The researcher also found 12 utterances that consist of asserting acts in order to express the main character's intention. Then, the researcher found 8 utterances of retelling types of assertive act. For complaining type, the researcher found 7 utterances in delivering utterances. The last, the researcher found 2 utterances included informing as the way to express assertive acts in *Letters to Juliet* movie.

Then, to answer the second research problem, researcher analyzes the utterances of certain type that was used most often by the main characters. It can be positive verbal sentence, negative verbal sentence, positive nominal sentence, negative nominal sentence, and question tag form. The table below provided the formal pattern of reporting type, as the most dominant one found in *Letters to Juliet* movie.

Graph.1 The frequency of the Assertive act used in reporting utterance

Utterances	Verbal		Nominal		Question Tag
	positive	negative	Positive	negative	
Number of linguistic form	41	5	23	4	2
Percentage	55%	7%	30%	5%	3%

From the table above, it could be seen that the form of formal pattern used in by the main character was seventy five utterances with various form. The clearer numbers for each form on the table showed that there was 55% utterances that applying positive verbal pattern. It became the most dominant one. In the second position is positive nominal with 23 (30%) utterances. The next is 5 (7%) utterances that is applying negative verbal and 4 (5%) utterances for negative nominal pattern, and the last 2 (3%) utterances are question tag form.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to analyze the assertive illocutionary acts in *Letters to Juliet* movie. It discussed to the types of assertive, and the formal pattern which used in the dominant type of assertive utterances.

As presented in table 1, there were seven types of assertive that were found in the data of the research namely *asserting*, *explaining*, *informing*, *complaining*, *reporting*, *arguing* and *retelling*. 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. reporting

Reporting is one of the functions of assertive illocutionary act that aims to inform something that has been done (Hornby, 1995:993). It becomes the most dominant act uttered by the main character, Sophia. The speaker tries to embrace the hearer to know about something that happens in speaker's life. The following was the example of reporting utterance uttered by Sophia in the movie.

SOPHIA :(smiling)Ok, here we go, I've found photos of two of them.

(Claire takes a look and sighs.)

CLAIRE :No. Sorry.

SOPHIA : So that leaves us with thirty four.

The dialogue above, Sophia which working away at her laptop, she found the picture of Alfonso De Annmazio from online data. Then, Sophia reported what she had seen and done about a wanted person. She has been collected that identity on thirty four.

b. informing

Informing type is the least assertive type uttered by Sophia. Informing means having or showing about knowledge (Oxford dictionary, 1991: 215). The utterance that showed on assertive act of informing was presented as follows:

Sophia : What if I did a piece on the food?

BOBBY : An expose on how good Italian food is. Bold, kid. I smell a Pulitzer.

SOPHIA : You know the Mediterranean diet is one of the healthiest in the world? They have the lowest incidences of coronary disease in Europe because of all the pulses they eat...

the dialogue above prove that Sophia gave valuable knowledge to Bobby, her collega in office. She informed about the important of mediterranean diet related to the disease.

c. arguing

arguing in *Oxford dictionary* means (1) express disagreement, quarrel, (2) for against/ give reason for, agains something (1991:18). the example of assertive of arguing utterance is presented bellow.

Sophia's debating whether or not to just get off the phone.

SOPHIA : Well. I was thinking. Since I'm going to Italy already. Maybe I could try doing a travel piece or something as a feature or.....

BOBBY :I have writers that do travel features. You don't do travel features. You do fact checking.

SOPHIA : Yeah. I know. I just. I was thinking,I could try something new.

The dialogue above, Sophie had different opinion with Bobby. She's debating about her plan for vacation in Italy. She initiated to find something as feature that never been reported in magazine before. In other hand, Bobby has forbid her to make travel feature.

d. Explaining

According to Hornby (1995:405), explaining is the way to tell something in detail. The speaker usually uttered long sentences to describe something. It is the way to make something clear enough to be understood by the hearer. The utterance that includes on assertive act of explaining is presented as follows.

SOPHIA :You can say it. You just can't state it as a fact.

BOBBY : It works better as a fact. It's a fun little detail. People love fun little details.

SOPHIA : I looked at every picture I could find of him in the last ten years. I talked to his stylist. The hair changes. It's a fact if you qualify with "usually" or "typically"

BOBBY : People hate qualifiers.

The dialogue above, sophia tried to give clear description about what she has done as a fact checker. Sophia has looked pictures in years about the hair changes of Donald Trump.

e. Asserting

As Hornby (1995:61) defines that asserting is the act of conveying information about the truth and fact. The example of asserting is presented below.

(Sophia and Bella gather up the day's letters in silence. Sophia is clearly still miffed about Victor bailing on her).

BELLA: Your Victor is very... passionate.

SOPHIA : About food. My Victor is very passionate about food.

The dialogue talked about Victor's ability in cooking. Sophia as his girl friend acknowledge that Victor was actually passionate about food. It was true and fact statement. Victor fond of cooking everything.

f. Complaining

Complaining definition based on Oxford dictionary means say that one is dissatisfied or unhappy (1991:80). The dialogue below was the example on assertive of complaining utterance.

Sophia : He still treats me like I'm his assistant. He'll always treat me like I'm his assistant.

VICTOR: It's not that bad. He values you. Hey, you've got job security right? (She just looks at him).

SOPHIA : Right.

SOPHIA : I took the job because I thought it'd be a stepping stone... to features, or covers, or something. But there are no steps, there are no stones, there's just Donald Trump's hair. (She sighs - a sigh that's looking for reassurance).

VICTOR : You know you could always come work with me at the restaurant.

The utterances and the situations of both people above prove that Sophia had burdens about her job and her colleague. Bobby always treated Sophia like her assistant even though he actually had a new one. His treatment became Sophia dissatisfied at all. Even, she ever debated about the changes of Donald Trump's hair.

g. Retelling

Retelling means to tell again or in another form. In this case, the main character, Sophia tried to give her past story about her mother. She retold it to Claire in detail when she was ten years old. Retelling utterance was presented as follows.

SOPHIA: There's nothing much to say really. I was young. I don't remember much. Then one day she just upped and left. Just like that. No warning, no note, no forwarding address, not even a goodbye or good luck.

CLAIRE : How old were you?

SOPHIA : I was ten.

CLAIRE : And you haven't seen her since?

SOPHIA : Don't expect I ever will.

CLAIRE : That must've been very hard. (Sophia shrugs as if to say "not really").

SOPHIA : I started packing my own lunches, probably ironed a few more of my dad's shirts than I would have.

Sophia was one of an unlucky girl. Her mother was left her without a note, warning, not even further information. Besides, she had to do everything by herself such as preparing her lunches, or ironing hers

and father's shirt. It was uncommon job for a little daughter such as her. Thus, Sophie used their own word in telling her life story.

Thus, it could be summarized that In this research, the researcher found the reason why the main character in *Letters to Juliet* tend to use more reporting and arguing. The reason was that the speaker tend to use reporting in order to report about something that speaker has heard, seen, felt, and done to the hearer that he does not yet know what the speaker will report. Further, the speaker in the movie also tend to use arguing because the speaker always have different arguments. In this case, *Sophia* as the main character often gave arguments to the hearers *Victor, Charlie, Claire and Bobby*. So, it made her showing what was in her mind.

V. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to analyze the assertive illocutionary acts in *Letters to Juliet* movie. It discussed to the types of assertive, the formal pattern of the dominant type of assertive utterances and its frequency.

The results of this study showed that there were seven types of assertive illocutionary acts uttered by the main characters in the whole movie namely *asserting, reporting, explaining, arguing, complaining, retelling, and informing*. The pattern used by the main character is positive verbal, negative verbal, positive nominal, negative nominal, and question tag.

The reason of the main characters in producing assertive act was because the main characters have their own thoughts which are conveyed through assertive utterances. the main character tend to report something that have been seen, done, and heard. Moreover, in producing assertive utterances, the main character was used to convey information about something that happens in her life. In conclusion, this research was expected to give a clear comprehension about the use of assertive illocutionary act. By comprehending this way, a good communication would be maintained between the speaker and the hearer.

Further, for future researchers is suggested to conduct the similar research but in different subject deeply because this research is still being rarely to be analyzed.

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