

## ANALYZING THE USE OF SPEECH ACTS IN THE ANIMATED FILM ENTITLED “TURNING RED”

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### Abstract

*Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics, which is the study of language. One of the pragmatics components is speech acts. Understanding speech acts is crucial for effective communication as it helps to interpret meaning beyond the literal words and to navigate the social and pragmatic aspects of language. The dialogue between the characters in a film is similar to the dialogue in a drama or novel as they are a piece of literary works. The message of the film can be gleaned from the conversations between each character. These are the uttered words, which are made up of different speech acts. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify speech acts used in the animated film entitled “Turning Red”. The researchers used a descriptive qualitative method. The findings showed that there are five speech acts used in the “Turning Red” animated film, such as declarative, commissive, directive, representative, and expressive.*

**Keywords:** *Animated film, speech acts, Turning Red*

### INTRODUCTION

Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as the study of contextual meaning supplied by speakers or writers and perceived by listeners or readers. There are some pragmatics components, including speech acts. Understanding speech acts is crucial for effective communication as it helps to interpret meaning beyond the literal words and to navigate the social and pragmatic aspects of language. The study of speech acts explores how language is used to perform different actions and how meaning is conveyed through context, social norms, and the relationship between the speaker and the listener. It considers the illocutionary force, which refers to the intended meaning and force behind the speech act, as well as the perlocutionary effect, which is the impact the speech act has on the listener or the audience.

In line of Yule (1996), speech acts can be categorized into five general functions: Declarative, representative, expressive, directive, and commissive are all adjectives. This classification system identifies these functions as the main purposes or actions performed through speech acts. Declarative is a form of speech that has the power to modify the current state of affairs simply by being spoken. To make such statements effectively, the speaker must hold a specific institutional position within a given context. By employing declarations, the speaker effectively brings about real-world transformations through the power of their words.

Representative is another category of speech acts wherein the speaker expresses their beliefs about a certain situation or condition. These statements encompass assertions, conclusions, and descriptions, all of which represent the

speaker's understanding of reality. Through representatives, speakers align their words with their beliefs about the world.

Expressive is a speech act that enables speakers to convey their emotional or psychological states. These acts can express feelings of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow. When using expressive, speakers ensure that their words accurately reflect their emotional experience. Then, directive encompasses various speech acts that speakers employ to persuade or instruct someone to perform certain actions. They express the desires or intentions of the speaker and can take the form of commands, orders, requests, or suggestions, both positive and negative. When using directives, speakers aim to bridge the gap between their intended world and the words they utter, influencing the hearer to act accordingly.

Commissive speech acts are a category that individuals employ to bind themselves to forthcoming actions. They express the speaker's intentions and encompass promises, threats, refusals, and commitments. Commissives may be fulfilled by the speaker individually or in collaboration with others, and they function as explicit statements regarding the speaker's future behavior.

The dialogue between the characters in a film is similar to the dialogue in a drama or novel as they are a piece of literary works. The message of the film can be gleaned from the conversations between each character. This indicates that one form of communication, cinema, is utilized to convey information. A film's message might take the shape of individual words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. These are the uttered words, which are made up of different speech acts. In the film, one character may communicate while performing a variety of speech acts. The roles of the characters are to display the information (Widayanti & Kustinah, 2018).

In this research, the researchers analyzed speech acts found in the "Turning Red" animated film. "Turning Red" is a 1 hour 40-minute-long American computer-animated fantasy comedy film that was released on March 11, 2022. It was developed by Pixar Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. The story follows the main character Meilin as she navigates difficult situations and challenges associated with growing up while seeking to strike a balance between who she is and what she wants and how she fits into her family and her environment (Ditriwan et al., 2023).

In an attempt to fill the gaps in research regarding analyzing the use of speech acts in the animated film entitled "Turning Red", the researchers conducted this research. Some previous research has identified the use of speech acts in animated films, such as (Widayanti & Kustinah, 2018) that the purpose of the study was to identify speech acts used in the film entitled "Frozen" through pragmatics approach. The findings indicate that there are four types of speech acts that occurred in the film. Those types are representative, expressive, directive, and commissive. Another previous study was conducted by (Sari, 2020) with the purpose to know the types of speech acts employed by the main character in "Spongebob Squarepants" and previous research on speech act analysis for understanding how the directive speech act appears. The finding of the study demonstrated that the directives speech act is the most frequently used in SpongeBob SquarePants the movie. However, a little identify in terms of using speech acts in the animated film entitled "Turning Red". The purpose of the present study is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of speech acts used in the animated film entitled “Turning Red”?
2. What are the examples of speech acts used in the animated film entitled “Turning Red”?

### **METHOD**

The speech act categories from the animated film “Turning Red” were examined in this study using a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Oakes and Ji (2012), a long sentence is used to study a descriptive statistic that is about data. Additionally, (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) contend that qualitative research is the method for examining and comprehending the significance of particular people or groups in relation to social or human issues. It implies that we can investigate the true significance of speaking from the speakers utilizing descriptive qualitative research. It then goes into greater depth about the data. In qualitative research, it is important to consider how the information reaches the listener/hearer and how they understand the language’s meaning.

a. Tool of data collection

The data used for this article was taken from the English-subtitled version of the animated film “Turning Red.”

b. Technique of data collection

The information for this article was compiled using library research with documentation as the tool of data collection. Zeid (2004) defined library research as research that obtained its data from library sources. Internet, books, journals, articles, virtual resources, and papers were used as references in this instance. There were numerous steps taken in the data collection process, such as:

1. Finding and downloading the film online with English subtitles.
2. Paying close attention to every word that each character in the movie says and taking note of them all.
3. Identifying the utterances and labeling them as speech acts.

c. Technique of data analysis

The data in this article were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative approach. This method was used to examine the data and respond to the problem’s definition. The following procedures were used to analyze the data, such as:

1. Sorting each character’s utterances according to the types of speech acts.
2. Analyzing the data based on the types of speech acts, such as declarative, commissive, directive, representative, and expressive.
3. Explaining the context of the circumstance associated with the characters’ utterances.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The researchers found five types of speech acts in the animated film entitled “Turning Red”. They are declarative, representative, expressive, directive, and commissive. Below are the examples of the dialogue in the film.

A. Declarative

This is a declarative speech act where the speaker is stating a fact or making a claim about themselves.

Ming Lee: “Mei-Mei, please. Just come with me.”

Meilin Lee: **“I’m changing, Mom. I’m finally figuring out who I am.”**

When Mei said, **“I’m changing, Mom.”** She was expressing that she is going through a process of change or transformation. Mei was informing her mother about this personal development. **“I’m finally figuring out who I am.”** This is another declarative speech act in which Mei was expressing a realization or understanding of her identity. She stated she is in the process of discovering or understanding her true self. It indicates a sense of personal growth or self-discovery. The character is communicating a deeper understanding of their identity as red panda and the personal growth they have undergone in accepting themselves. It can convey a message of self-empowerment, encouraging others to embrace their own identities and celebrate their individuality.

#### B. Representative

Representative is a category of speech acts wherein the speaker expresses their beliefs about a certain situation or condition. Below is the monologue from Meilin.

Meilin: “I know what it looks like. **I am my own person.** But that doesn’t mean doing whatever I want. Like most adults, I have responsibilities. It’s not all about me, ya know. I do make my own move, **it’s just that ... some of my moves are also hers.**”

The context of this situation is explained when Meilin returns home from her friends by bus. The bus laid out the destination, namely China Town. Meilin’s expression “I am my own person” shows that Chinese characteristics have been shown here, namely that she is one of the Chinese who has an independent personality. In addition, the expression “some of my moves are also hers” shows one thing that cannot be separated from Chinese lineage, namely the family tree. This animated story is about a 13-year-old girl named Meilin who wants to enjoy her pre-adolescence with her best friend. But she also wanted to live up to his mother’s expectations, even though she felt constrained by them.

#### C. Expressive

Expressive is a speech act that enables speakers to convey their emotional or psychological states.

Meilin Lee: “Thanks guys, you are the best.”

Miriam : **“We love you, Mei.”**

Priya : “You are our girl.”

Miriam : **“Ya! No matter what, Panda or no panda.”**

Priya’s expression in the dialogue is one of the most expressive things that shows that Mei’s best friend will always love her whether in the form of a panda or not.

#### D. Directive

Directive encompasses various speech acts that speakers employ to persuade or instruct someone to perform certain actions.

Ming Lee : “And what was a blessing became an inconvenient.”

Meilin Lee: “Are you serious?! **It’s a curse!**”

Ming Lee : “She (their ancestor) meant it as a blessing! **Stop Mei and listen to me!** There is a cure!”

When Meimei finds out she has turned into a red panda because of a blessing or a curse from her ancestors. Her mother tried to reassure her by telling her that there is a medicine or cure that can make the changes go away. Her mother could say that because the curse had happened to her before. She tried to stop her further action because at that moment she was about to rip apart her ancestor's painting.

#### E. Commissive

Commissive is a classification of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to future actions.

Meilin Lee: I gotta go.

Miriam : **We're going karaoke today.**

Abby : Ya!

Priya : **Come with us... please...**

Meilin Lee: **I ... can't. It's cleaning day.**

The conversation above shows one of the things that shows the commissive speech act between Meilin and her friends which is classified as an offer and a refusal. "Karaoke" in the conversation they used as a term to profit from hanging out together. On the other hand, Meilin refused her friend's invitation with the phrase "I can't" because there was something she had to do later, which is cleaning.

The present study focused on examining the speech acts present in the animated film "Turning Red." Through an analysis of the film's dialogue, the researchers identified five types of speech acts: declarative, representative, expressive, directive, and commissive. Each of these speech acts serves a unique purpose in the communication and characterization of the film.

Declarative speech acts were found to be prevalent in the film, particularly in the interactions between the characters Meilin Lee and her mother, Ming Lee. For instance, Mei in response, expressed her personal growth and self-discovery by stating, "**I'm changing, Mom. I'm finally figuring out who I am.**" These declarative statements indicate Mei's transformative journey and her pursuit of self-understanding. Through declarative speech acts, characters state facts and make claims about themselves. By employing declarative speech acts, the film encourages viewers to embrace their own identities and celebrate their individuality.

Representative speech acts were also observed in the dialogue, specifically through the monologue delivered by Meilin. The representative speech acts in the film allow characters to express their beliefs about specific situations or conditions. Meilin stated, "I know what it looks like. **I am my own person.** But that doesn't mean doing whatever I want. Like most adults, I have responsibilities. It's not all about me, ya know. I do make my own move, **it's just that...some of my moves are also hers.**" This monologue reflects Meilin's beliefs and her struggle to balance her desire for personal freedom with her responsibilities to her family. It highlights the cultural aspect of Meilin's identity, as her Chinese heritage influences her sense of individuality and the connection she has with her ancestors. The representative speech acts contribute to the depth of Meilin's character and the conflict she faces in the narrative.

Expressive speech acts play a significant role in conveying the emotional and psychological states of the characters. In one scene, Meilin's friends

expressed their affection and support for her, with statements such as “Thanks guys, you are the best” and **“We love you, Mei.”** These expressive speech acts, particularly Priya’s assertion, **“Ya! No matter what, Panda or no panda,”** demonstrated the unwavering love and acceptance that Mei’s friends have for her. Through these expressive speech acts, the film reinforces the theme of friendship and acceptance, fostering emotional connection and empathy from the audience.

The film also incorporates directive speech acts to persuade or instruct characters to take certain actions. When Mei discovered that she has transformed into a red panda due to a blessing or curse from her ancestors, her mother, Ming Lee, tried to reassure her by stating, “And what was a blessing became an inconvenient.” Mei, expressing her surprise and frustration, responded with a directive speech act, exclaiming, “Are you serious?! **It’s a curse!**” Ming Lee then employed a directive speech act to urge Mei to stop her actions and listen, emphasizing that there is a cure for her condition. These directive speech acts serve to propel the plot forward and convey the urgency and conflict faced by the characters.

Furthermore, the film incorporates commissive speech acts, which involve committing oneself to future actions. In a conversation between Meilin and her friends, they invite her to join them for karaoke, with Meilin responding, **“I... can’t. It’s cleaning day.”** This exchange showcases the commissive speech act of offering and refusal, as Meilin declined her friends’ invitation due to her commitment to cleaning. The commissive speech acts depicted in the film illustrate the characters’ choices, priorities, and responsibilities, highlighting the complexities of their relationships and individual obligations.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research paper aimed to analyze the use of speech acts in the animated film “Turning Red.” Through a qualitative analysis of the film’s dialogue, the researchers identified five types of speech acts: declarative, representative, expressive, directive, and commissive. These speech acts serve distinct purposes in conveying meaning, shaping character development, and advancing the narrative of the film. The findings of this research expand our understanding of how speech acts are utilized in animated films to convey meaning, shape characters, and advance the narrative. By examining the dialogue in “Turning Red,” the researchers provided valuable insights into the pragmatic aspects of communication and its role in storytelling.

This research contributes to the existing literature on speech act analysis in animated films and expands our knowledge of how language is used in cinematic storytelling. It also highlights the importance of pragmatics in understanding the social and contextual aspects of communication. By analyzing speech acts, researchers and viewers can gain a deeper understanding of the characters’ intentions, emotions, and relationships within the narrative.

Further research can explore the use of speech acts in other animated films from different cultural backgrounds and genres to uncover variations and similarities in their communicative patterns. Additionally, examining the impact of speech acts on audience perception and engagement can provide insights into the effectiveness of different speech acts in conveying messages and eliciting emotional responses.

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