

## **ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS AND CONTEXTUAL UTTERANCES IN THE MOVIE *RAYA AND THE LAST DRAGON***

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**Abstract:** Understanding illocutionary acts in English can be challenging for EFL students. To understand illocutionary acts, EFL students can see how native speakers express utterances in their speech and understand the context that constructs the basis for using the illocutionary act. This study explored the types and contexts of utterances in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon*. Data, consisting of 31 utterances, were collected from the movie transcript and analyzed using content analysis to classify illocutionary act types and contextual utterances. Results showed the movie characters used all five illocutionary acts, and the most dominant illocutionary act was the assertive type, which occurred 13 times. The context underlined the characters expressing illocutionary acts was the place, the interlocutor, the purpose of the conversation, the use of words, and the tone. This film type of verbal communication without text was direct speech or dialogue. This study offers relevant knowledge and benefits to EFL learners and teachers in the learning-teaching processes, such as creating familiarity with complex meanings in English to avoid misinterpretation, developing their consciousness of English utterances, and growing their capability to execute the speech act flawlessly.

**Keywords:** *assertive, contextual utterance, illocutionary act, raya and the last dragon*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a means of essential and unique communication tool for interaction among human beings. Using language, humans can express their intention, mindset, understanding of something, and even emotions (Rabiah, 2018). Communication becomes effective when the listener can understand the meaning and the purpose that the speaker utters (Haucsa Marzuki, Alek, & Hidayat, 2020). In other words, language becomes our basic need to communicate, which allows us to share and obtain facts, ideas, and information in our daily conversations. However, language can ruin communication among people because there are so many messages, meanings, and

purposes delivered by other people (Abuarqoub, 2019). The speakers do not directly utter their intentions. Therefore, it is a vital role to understand the messages behind other people's utterances. The study to define and understand the hidden meaning of utterances conveyed by the speaker is called pragmatics (Siddiqui, 2018). Understanding the study of pragmatics gives a lot of benefits for both the speaker and the listener. The listener can process the speaker's intended meaning, inferences, desires, and types of behaviors (Bohn & Frank, 2019). As a result, the communication can flow as desired. To know a more definite picture of the meaning expressed by someone, the listener also needs to know the context behind the speaker's utterances (Puteri, Arifin, & Rahayu, 2020).

Yule (1996) states that people do not merely deliver words or sentences in their utterances but show action or want something in return for their statements. Some actions such as apologies, complaints, compliments, invitations, promises, or requests expressed in utterances can be defined as speech acts (p. 47). Therefore, the purpose and intention of the speaker in discourse interaction allow the listener to speculate or predict utterances in a particular context (Roberts, 2018). In simple words, speech acts are implemented as a function to accomplish the utterances (Ariesta & Simatupang, 2019). There are three types of speech acts: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act (Austin, 1962). Further discussion about these three speech acts was explained by Searle (1976). A locutionary act can be described as a surface meaning or real meaning without the hidden meaning of utterances. In simple words, the utterances are directly uttered. Meanwhile, the illocutionary act is categorized as doing something from the hidden meaning of utterances. According to Searle (1976), the illocutionary acts are divided into five categories such as representative, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive. The last category of speech acts is a perlocutionary act which is mainly interpreted as the result of the utterances conveyed by the speaker. Among the three types of speech acts divided (Austin, 1962), an illocutionary act is the most reviewed dimensions.

As stated before, the hidden meaning of utterances can cause misinterpretation by interlocutors. It is because speech acts have complex meaning, and sometimes, it is used in many contexts. This is also in line with Christison (2018), who states that understanding speech acts, especially illocutionary acts, can be challenging for EFL. An

easy way to learn English can be through songs, news, poems, novels, podcasts, movies, etc. Since the movie shows a real example of society, the researcher will use the movie as the subject of the research (Istiqomah et al., 2020). In this study, the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* is utilized because the background of this film is close to Indonesian culture, so it is more advantageous for EFL learners, especially in Indonesia, to become more familiar. This is in line with (Albiladi, Abdeen, & Lincoln 2018), who say that movies can help EFL learners in improving their cultural awareness.

Many researchers conducted related research about illocutionary acts. The first study of the illocutionary act was conducted by Hutajulu & Herman (2019). The result from the study appeared that the most used illocutionary act in the movie was a directive act, and the researcher did not find the types of declarative acts in the movie. This research also had a similar finding to Situmorang and Handayani (2020). The researchers used the theories from Searle (1975) and Hymes (1977), and the result showed the dominant use of illocutionary act in the movie was directive. The third research that also discussed the illocutionary act was conducted by (Ramadhani, Indrayani, & Soemantri, 2019). The study mainly focused on observing the frequent category of assertive in Donald Trump's speech. The result showed that the speech contained convincing facts and assertions.

In conclusion, many researchers analyzed types and the dominant types found in a movie and speech. Still, an in-depth study of the context underlines the speaker's utterances has never been studied. It is what causes the author eagers to fill the gap and investigate in-depth the speech acts in *Raya and the Last Dragon* at the hand of a pragmatic study, context, and Searle's theory classification regarding illocutionary acts that are utilized as contributions to identify and represent the forces or the intentional and intended purpose expressed by the characters in the movie. Therefore, this provides room for the author to draw causal conclusions from the utterances that appear during the movie and the implied meanings that are plausibly relevant and pragmatic.

Furthermore, there are two questions formed in this study. The first question is what types appear in the utterances in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* and the second what is the context underlying the illocutionary acts presented in the utterances. This study aimed to determine the types of illocutionary acts that appear in the utterances and to show the divulgements of the underlying context of the illocutionary

acts uttered in the conversation. Theoretically, this study affirms the contextual meaning theory in which the objectives of utterances in literary works can be analyzed with pragmatic approaches, especially in the speech act theory. Practically, this study is expected to be able to contribute as 1) material for reference which can later be used in courses related to linguistics and pragmatic studies, especially related to matters containing illocutionary acts and the context behind the utterances; 2) references and materials to improve the ability of EFL students related to the way speech acts are carried out by reflecting on pragmatic analysis; 3) references to provide an understanding of the purpose and context that underlies the characters in literary works to act in their every utterance (Saputri, 2016; Hidayat, 2016; Lin, 2021). Based on the aforementioned reasons, there is no doubt that this study will contribute significantly to EFL using English fluently and avoiding misinterpretation when they talk to English speakers.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Illocutionary Act**

Illocutionary acts can be seen in questions, statements, orders, promises, apologies, and so on. The speaker who uses the illocutionary act attempts to utter something with the proper purpose and appropriate context to understand and act according to the intended utterances (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). Illocutionary acts can be considered successful if the hearer can understand the intended meaning of the utterances performed by the speaker. Besides, illocutionary acts are challenging to identify because of considerations of the speaker and the hearer, the conversation's time, location, and so on (Nugroho, 2012). Based on Searle (1975), five categories of illocutionary acts are explained in the following.

*Assertive*; assertive can be defined as ways of the speaker to commit to telling the truth of propositions such as giving suggestions, boasting, concluding, complaining, or stating something (Roberts, 2018). *Directives*; Searle (1975) stated that directives are types of illocutionary acts that the speaker expresses to make the listener do something, such as urging, inviting, or giving suggestions. *Commissive*; speakers on the type of commissive commit several actions that must be carried out in the future. It can be making a promise, planning something, and making a bet. *Expressive*; the expressive

type in illocutionary acts shows or describes the speaker's feelings in a situation. Expressions can be in the form of apologizing, thanking, welcoming, and deploring. *Declaration*; words in declarations bring about a change in the state of an object to which it is addressed. In other words, changing the state of the world to make it match the propositional context.

### **Context in Utterances**

Searle (1969) states that illocutionary acts consist of intended meaning and action in the utterances with a particular context, term, and intention. Yule (1996) also adds that understanding an interlocutor's utterance is knowing the meaning of words and understanding the context of the conversation. In simple words, context brings a significant role in indicating the intended meaning of utterances. Furthermore, context is considered an abstract representation that places a person in an appropriate time, place, and feature. Therefore, speech can be varied and comprehensive if a language is set on contextual meaning in a particular context (Puteri et al., 2020). Wardhaugh (2010) created a model to understand the meaning of speech based on the background context. The abbreviation for this model is SPEAKING, abbreviated from Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instruments, Norms, and Genre.

*Setting and Scene (S)*; Wardhaugh (2010) illustrates that setting and scene can be linked as a state of action (abbreviated as S). Setting directs to the time and place of an utterance in general and the physical affairs. Meanwhile, the scene refers to one's psychological state. *Participants (P)*; participants are individuals or groups who have a role in delivering the speech as speakers or listeners. In general, each participant has a specific social background, culture, and function in the conversation. *Ends (E)*; ends are referred to as outcomes expected to be comprehended in a conversational exchange between the addressor and the addressee. Thus, the addresser usually has a goal or individual motive in a conversation to have a completed and good conversation. The addressee needs to understand and follow the exchange with appropriate behavior to the context and culture. *Act Sequence (A)*; according to Wardhaugh (2010), act sequence refers to content and structure contained in speech, such as the exact or appropriate words to use, how a word is used, and the relationship between what is said and the precise topic discussed. *Key (K)*; Zand-Vakil, Kashani, & Tabandeh (2012) suggest that the key in the conversation refers to the attributes given by the speaker and listener to

each other in terms of tone, attitude, or spirit. Criteria of key messages that the speaker uses in social interactions can be severe, casual, scornful, pretentious, and so on. Non-verbal attributes can also be shown with body languages, such as specific postures, behaviors, and gestures. *Instrumentalities (I)*; the instrument in the conversation employed refers to channel selection by the speaker and interlocutor. The speaker can convey something orally, written, or telegraphic. In this case, the speaker may initially express something at a certain length, then make jokes with a particular dialect, quote something from famous poetry, and use expressions in different languages. It indicates that the language, dialect, code, or register utilized does not change the topic of discussion. *Norms (N)*; norms in the context of interaction and interpretation lead to how one speaks by determining certain attitudes and properties following the existing social structure and social relations (Wardhaugh, 2010). *Genre (G)*; genre directs to the type that appears in an utterance between speaker and listener. The genre can be in the form of "poems, proverbs, riddles, sermons, prayers, lectures, and editorials" (Hymes, 1977).

## **METHOD**

This was conducted using qualitative research. According to Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie (2017), one's experiences and inner feelings can be defined using a systematic qualitative method. Moreover, they also add that qualitative research gives a comprehensive overview of an event through data collection and shows the high value and quality descriptions using a flexible research method. Thus, non-numerical data is provided in this qualitative research. The method that was used in this study is the content analysis method. Content analysis is also used to provide a thorough analysis and concern about the data (Selvi, 2020). It can be said that content analysis is designed to classify and interpret the underlying meaning of the data to explain a phenomenon (Renz, Carrington, and Badger, 2018).

## **Data Source**

The data source of this research was in the form of a movie transcript of *Raya and The Last Dragon* (2021). The transcript was taken from <https://scrapsfromtheloft.com/movies/raya-and-the-last-dragon-transcript/>. *Raya and The Last Dragon* is an American animation movie produced by Disney Studios

conducted by Don Hall and Carlos Lopez Estrada. The movie of *Raya and The Last Dragon* is adapted to Southeast Asian culture. Moreover, this movie has an illocutionary act and context to help EFL students understand the meaning of utterances made by the speaker. Understanding the meaning and context uttered by the speaker can help them avoid misinterpretation and miscommunication (Macora, 2017). The researcher is interested in conducting research ~~by using~~ movies because characters' intonation and expression can be easily observed to know the meaning of the utterances.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis Technique**

The research was conducted in Yogyakarta and the data were collected from November until December. Analyzing and interpreting the data can be directly started after all the sources are gathered (Sugiyono, 2014). The research uses Creswell's (2013) five steps in analyzing the data. The five steps of analyzing the data were preparing, reading, coding, writing the description, and creating final interpretations of the data. The first thing was to prepare by reading the script of the movie. Then, the utterances were classified by coding on the theories by Searle (1975) and Hymes (1977). After completing the classification, the descriptive analysis was written. Next, interpretations were made. Finally, the analysis results were rechecked carefully several times to ensure that all results were appropriate and accountable.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **The type of illocutionary act used by the characters in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon***

Based on *Raya and the Last Dragon* movie, it was discovered that all types of illocutionary acts were used in the utterances by the characters in this film. There were 31 utterances identified in this movie. The type of illocutionary act in this film consisted of 13 assertive utterances, three utterances of directive type, and the types of commissive, expressive, and declaration consisted of 5 utterances, respectively. The following table 1 shows the data of each illocutionary act type.

**Table 1. Total Utterances of Illocutionary Act Found in Movie *Raya and The Last Dragon***

<b>Types of illocutionary act</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Assertives	13	42%

Types of illocutionary act	Frequency	Percentage
Directives	3	10%
Commissives	5	16%
Expressives	5	16%
Declaration	5	16%
TOTAL	31	100%

From the data found above, it could be seen that the most dominant type that appeared in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* was the type of assertive speech, with a total percentage of 42%. It was followed by the commissive, expressive, and declaration types with a percentage of 16%, respectively. The most infrequent type used in this movie is the directive, with only 10%. The explanation of each type was explained as follows.

#### ***Assertive***

According to Searle (1975), assertive is an illocutionary act conveyed to show facts, beliefs, and truths. The 11 assertive utterances employed by the characters in the movie portray the true or false dimension of what the characters believe about facts or truth. An example of assertive utterance was showed below.



**Figure 1. Sisu (the Dragon) Talked about Her Swimming Ability**

In Figure 1 above, a dragon named Sisu revealed that she could swim following the rhyme. It surprised Raya because she thought dragons should have wise and authoritative characters like the legends passed down from generation to generation. However, Sisu, the dragon in this conversation, continues to insist that she has the skill of swimming even though she is a dragon. It can be considered that Sisu implemented an assertive type because she said the fact that she could swim beautifully. Here is the excerpt found in the movie:



Sisu: “I got water skills that kill. I slaughter when I hit the water. **I’m, like, really good at swimming**, through rhyme”.

(00:30:47-00:30:54)

### *Directive*

The utterances of the type of directive could indicate that the speaker has intended meaning behind his/her words. In short, the speaker requests the listener what he/she needs to do. This type of utterance could be seen as follows.



**Figure 2. Raya Prayed to the Dragon to Help Her**

In Figure 2, the movie character named Raya is in a perplexed and hopeless condition that causes her to ask a dragon to help her recover from the disaster they have been facing for approximately six years. By pleading for help with the dragon, Raya is confident that her country can recover and she can meet his father again. The intended meaning behind her words is to save her and her country to get away from the disaster. The utterance above showed that Raya employed an illocutionary act of directive type of requesting the dragon

“Look, there’s not a lot of us left, and **we really... We need your help**. If I can be honest, I need your help”.

(00:23:48-00:23:59)

### *Commissive*

Searle (1975) states that commissive is a type of illocutionary act that the speaker implements to make an agreement or plan with the interlocutor. An example of this type of utterance could be seen as follows.



**Figure 3. Raya sited beside her father in front of the gem**

In Figure 3, the utterance is uttered by, Raya's father. He said that generations of their family had an obligation to protect gems. This gem must be protected so that the world is protected from harm. This obligation is an agreement that is handed over from generation to generation. Therefore, the utterance uttered by Raya's father could be categorized as a commissive type because it contains characteristics of an agreement or plan for the future.

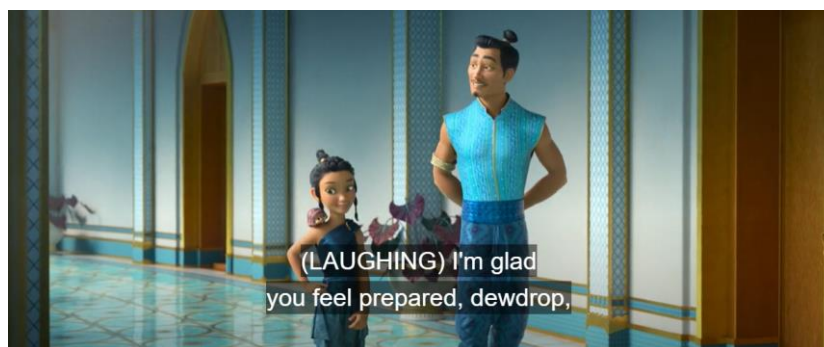
Raya: "The spirit of Sisu."

Raya's Father: "For generations, **our family has sworn to protect the gem.**"

(00:07:15-00:07:27)

### *Expressive*

The speakers express this type of illocutionary act as an intention to convey their feelings. An example of an expressive type in a movie was described as follows.



**Figure 4. Raya Felt Excited**

In Figure 4, Raya is a descendant who has a legacy to maintain the gem of peace for humanity. Even though Raya is not yet an adult, she is very enthusiastic about participating in the training and directions given by her father. Therefore, Raya's father felt very proud of her development. Raya's father expressed his joy and gratitude at the utterance for Raya's perseverance and success.

“I’m glad you feel prepared, dewdrop because I have something important to tell you. The other lands, they’re on their way here, as we speak”.

(00:08:40-00:08:44)

### ***Declaration***

As explained earlier, a declaration is a type of illocutionary act that is expressed to make a change according to the context. An example of an illocutionary act type declaration was explained in the following.



**Figure 5. Virana Gives Namari Advice**

In Figure 5, Virana, Namari's mother, delivered this utterance to say that Namari's involvement in helping her look after her citizens is enough. Her mother's words could not be refuted because Virana was the supreme leader of his people. Therefore, the utterance expressed by Virana was a must to be obeyed.

“That’s no longer your concern, my love. **You’ve done enough**”.

(01:12:35-01:12:38)

### **Context underlying the illocutionary act in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon***

The following explains the context that became fundamental for the emergence of illocutionary acts by the characters in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* using the context created by Hymes (1977). The contexts are setting, participant, end, action sequence, key, instrument, norm, and genre. The utterance and an explanation related to the context in movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* could be seen as follows.

*Raya: Hey. What do you plan on doing with us?*

*Tong: Oh, it’s gonna be bad. Horrifying! It’ll take me two weeks to clean up!*

*Raya: You have no idea, do you?*

*Tong: Yes, I do. I’m formulating this gruesome plan in my head...*

(00:57:19-00:57:33)

The setting in this film was a city full of people who had turned to stone. One person who had not turned into stone was the leader named Tong. The city that had turned to stone was called the Spine city, which means the people there were very violent. Since Tong is so violent towards anyone, he caught Raya for torture. In the conversation, it could be seen that two characters were arguing. Raya argued with Tong intending to release and help her to restore the world. Raya's request in the debate indicated the end of the film. With the word in the conversation, Raya knew that Tong, who was known for his ferocity, did not have any malicious intent for them, but Tong tried to dispel Raya's doubts by telling them the bad things he did could do to them. The doubts and nervousness experienced by the two characters were the action sequences in this movie. The key tone in this film was sarcastic because Raya doubted the seriousness of Tong's threat. The conversations carried out by the two of them directly took the form of verbal communication. Raya and Tong both had solid and kind characters, so Tong's harsh language did not look tense. The genres that appear in the dialogue are riddles.

### **Discussion**

After analyzing the data, all the data in this section were examined and the questions were answered. Based on Roberts (2018), listeners need to have the ability to understand the intended meaning spoken by the speaker so that there are no misunderstandings in the conversations. Meanwhile, understanding speech acts, especially illocutionary acts, is challenging for EFL learners. It is because English is not their mother tongue, and speech acts consist of complex meanings, idiomatic expressions, or cultural norms and can be expressed depending on the context in which the speech is uttered. Therefore, EFL students must precisely understand what they do in their first language and recognize which one is appropriate for transferring to another language. Some utterances in English cannot be directly understood without knowing their true meaning. Since the movie can be regarded as the most convenient portrait to understand someone's hidden meaning, this study can be used as a reference and material in a teaching-learning class in English to learn more about the types and meaning of illocutionary acts as well as the context behind the utterances so that EFL students can be sounded like native-speaker and avoid misinterpretation.

The theory illustrated by Searle (1975) was used to identify five illocutionary acts shown in the movie. The data above showed that Raya and the Last Dragon characters use all illocutionary acts in the movie. The most dominant type used by the characters is assertive, answering the first question developed in this study. Since the movie is illustrated as the representation of Southeast Asian culture, the characters often utter the illocutionary type of assertiveness to say facts or truth in their words. Moreover, they need to be honest and be kind because each character has a responsibility to preserve the legend and restore peace in the world.

In addition, the results of this study have differences and similarities to research conducted by (Ramadhani et al., 2019), which found that assertiveness is the most common type of illocutionary act. The assertive type used by Donald Trump in this study shows his stance on what he believes to be true. However, Ramadhani et al., (2019) did not explain the context of Trump's utterances. In short, the context became the difference and answered the second research question in this study. The context indicated in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* shows the characters' background, reasons the speaker utters words, attitudes, situations, and relationships with interlocutors, for example.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

To avoid misunderstanding in the conversation, a hearer needs to understand the hidden meaning that is trying to be conveyed by the speaker. When the listener can understand the speaker's intended purpose, the communication will be effective, and there will be no destruction in the conversation (Goodman & Frank, 2016). The movie contains utterances like an apology, compliment, complaint, request, and promise that can help EFL students understand and raise their use of consciousness or awareness of the use of language by native English speakers. In other words, understanding the utterances can help the EFL students become familiar with or effortlessly understand complex meanings in English and develop their awareness of the English utterances to enhance or expand their ability to understand English proficiency in performing the speech act flawlessly. Therefore, movies can be used as an alternative to discover the illocutionary act types and the context behind those types. The data indicate that the

movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* consists of five illocutionary act types. The most dominant type was assertive. The context that underlined the characters expressing illocutionary acts depended on the place, the interlocutor, the purpose of the conversation, the use of words, and the tone. The verbal communication used in this movie does not use any text or dialogue. The dialogue is in the form of riddles.

### **Suggestions**

Movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* tells the story of the characters' tenacity to fight back for peace in their country. Therefore, they try always to tell honesty and the truth. The characters did not talk much because this movie contained many action scenes and the journey that Raya and her friends had to go through. The researchers suggest looking for movies that reveal the illocutionary act in the utterances. Accordingly, the audiences can understand the illocutionary acts and contexts in the movie more deeply. Future researchers are encouraged to explore further the relevance and benefits of analyzing illocutionary acts in various daily contexts.

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