
An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts of The Main Characters Shown in *The Nun* Movie (2018)

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Abstract: *This paper explores the illocutionary acts performed by the main characters in the 2018 movie "The Nun," directed by Corin Hardy. The study focuses on Sister Irene and Father Burke, examining their dialogues to identify and analyze the types and meanings of illocutionary acts based on Austin's speech act theory. This research used a qualitative research method, the thesis investigates how the characters' utterances convey specific meanings and intentions within the context of the film's narrative. The technique of data collection in this research was collected by downloading the movie script, watching the movie, reading the dialogue in movie script, taking notes and collecting the data in table in order to make the writer is easier in analyzing the illocutionary acts. The analysis reveals various types of illocutionary acts, such as verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives, and discusses their implications in the movie's context. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of language use in cinematic dialogues and provides insights into the pragmatic aspects of character communication in film.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of speech acts in movies is an interesting field because it can provide insight into how language is used to shape characters and advance the plot. In movies, speech acts include how characters use language to perform actions such as requesting, offering, refusing, or suggesting. By analyzing the speech acts of the main characters, researchers can delve deeper into the motivations, power dynamics, and relationships between characters.

Movies often feature rich and complex dialog, which serves not only to convey information, but also to establish character and atmosphere. Speech acts can provide clues about the main character's personality, goals and internal conflicts. For example, the way a protagonist speaks to his interlocutors may reflect his attitude towards conflict or may reveal his doubts and emotional tensions.

In addition, analyzing speech acts in films aids understanding in how language affects the dynamics of social interaction and narrative structure. Dialogue used by the main characters often serves to advance the storyline or reveal the central themes of the film. By examining how the main characters use language in the context of the film, researchers can identify patterns of

communication that support the development of the story and how language is used to achieve specific dramatic goals.

In this study, we focus on the speech acts of the main character in the movie *The Nun* (2018). The main characters to be analyzed are Father Burke and Sister Irene. Through an in-depth analysis of the way the main characters speak, the researcher can explain how dialog shapes the audience's perception of the characters and how language serves as a tool to drive conflict and resolution in the narrative. As such, this research contributes to a better understanding of the interplay between language, character, and narrative structure in film.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics studies how language is used in context, focusing on the relationship between language and its users to achieve communicative goals. According to Levinson (1983), it involves how speakers and hearers use linguistic knowledge to convey and interpret meaning. Pragmatics covers phenomena like Deixis (contextual references such as "here" and "now"), Presupposition (assumptions needed for an utterance to make sense), Implicature (indirect communication), Speech acts (performing actions through language), and Discourse structure (organization of utterances into larger units like conversations and stories).

Speech act

According to Marmaridou (2000), speech acts are fundamental in understanding the meaning of sentences by analyzing the speaker's intent and the listener's interpretation. J. L. Austin's speech act theory, a subfield of pragmatics, posits that utterances are not just about conveying information but also performing actions. Austin identified three types of speech acts:

1. Locutionary acts. It is the act of saying something.
2. Illocutionary acts. It can be defined as doing something by saying something, like promising or apologizing.
3. Perlocutionary acts. It is the effect an utterance has on the listener, such as persuading or making them feel a certain way.

2. Illocutionary acts

According to Austin (1962), illocutionary acts involve doing something by saying something, as outlined in his book "How to Do Things with Words". He posited that speech acts can be felicitous (successful) or infelicitous (unsuccessful) based on their fulfillment. Illocutionary acts are central to speech act theory, which also includes locutionary acts (saying something) and perlocutionary acts (effects on the listener). Austin's theory emphasizes that utterances are actions governed by social norms and expectations, expanding the function of language beyond mere information conveyance to include a broad spectrum of human activity. Austin has classified Illocutionary Acts into five types, including Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Expositives, and Behabitives.

1. Verdictives

This type is utterances that assess or evaluate something, such as a judgment or a verdict. Verdictives are typically uttered by people in positions of authority, such as judges, priests, referees, and teachers.

2. Exercitives

This type is the act that is used to perform an action on someone or something else. They are typically used to express a command, order, or request.

3. Comissives

This type is the act that commits the speaker to performing a future action. It is used to commit the speaker to a certain course of action, such as promise, vow, pledge, covenant, contract, guarantee, embrace, and swear.

4. Expositives

This type is the act that is used to expound on one's views, conduct arguments, or clarify usages and references. It refers to affirm, deny, emphasize, illustrate, answer, report, accept, object to, concede, describe, class, identify and call.

5. Behabitives

This type includes the notion of reaction to other people's behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct. It deals with expressing or describing the speaker's feelings, thoughts, and emotions.

3. Main character

The main character in a movie is the central figure who drives the plot and undergoes significant development, facing major conflicts that shape the story. This character often possesses traits that help overcome obstacles or has a complex side that emotionally connects with the audience. According to Baldick (2001), Character is a personage in a narrative or dramatic work, also a kind of sketch briefly describing some recognizable type of person. Characters are created in a literary work to distinguish each person's role. Characters may represent certain ideas, values or themes in the play. Characters in narratives represent distinct roles, ideas, values, or themes, with protagonists embodying positive traits and antagonists negative ones. The main character is crucial as they are the focus of the story, driving the plot and helping the audience understand the main theme .

4. Context of Situation

The context of a situation refers to the conditions in which communication occurs, influencing how language is used and perceived. Halliday (1973) introduced this concept in his systemic functional linguistics theory, highlighting its importance in understanding language function and meaning. He identified three components of the context of situation:

1. Field (subject matter and activities).
2. Tenor (participants, their roles, and relationships).
3. Mode (role and form of language, and the communication channel).

These elements help explain how language generates meaning in specific communication instances.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach to analyze the speech acts of the main characters in the film. Qualitative method is research that is conducted with descriptive patterns and tends to use analytical techniques. This method allows in-depth exploration of the meaning and context behind the characters' use of language, as well as providing a more nuanced understanding of how speech acts shape and reflect the dynamics of the characters and plot. This research was designed as a quantitative content study. The main focus is on analyzing the dialog of the main characters to identify the types of speech acts they use along with their meanings. This study aims to identify the types of illocutionary speech acts in the main characters of the movie and how the meaning is generated from the interaction between characters in the movie.

RESULTS

The Analysis of Types and Meanings of Illocutionary Acts by the Main Characters of *The Nun Movie (2018)*

Based on the analysis, the five types of illocutionary acts proposed by Austin (1962) were found in this study. There are Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Expositives, and Behabitives.

1. Verdictives

Verdictives are speech acts that entail providing conclusions, judgments, or assessments are known as verdictives.

Data 1

00:07:29 -->00:07:51

Cardinal Conroy : We have received news that a nun has taken her own life at an abbey in the mountains of Romania.

Father Burke : *Suicide is a terrible, terrible sin.* But it doesn't strike me as strong enough reason for a reunion.

Cardinal Conroy : But the news of it would not bolster our argument to keep with the faith and the Church.

Father Burke : You're not telling me something.

The meeting between Father Burke and Cardinal Conroy took place in a classic room in the monastery. They discussed a plan to investigate an incident that had occurred in Romania. Cardinal Conroy asked Father Burke to investigate the case. Cardinal Conroy introduced the topic by noting the gravity of the situation which was the suicide of a nun in a convent in Romania. Father Burke responds with an evaluative comment to his statement.

By stating "Suicide is a horrible sin, a horrible sin", Father Burke is expressing an expression and unrest towards the act of taking a life that is not commendable. In the context of the above conversation, Father Burke conveys the speaker's strong feelings or attitude towards suicide, emphasizing the severity of the act by repeating the word "terrible". In addition, it can be said that he is making a moral judgment on the statement of suicide. He expresses strong moral condemnation of the act, calling it a significant sin. He makes statements about the nature of suicide, expressing their belief that it is a serious moral wrong. The use of the word "sin" usually has strong connotations in religious contexts, implying that it is against divine or moral law. This expression refers to the illocutionary act of verdictives in which Father Burke makes a judgment on an action.

2. Exercitives

Exercitives are speech acts known as exercises entail carrying out tasks or using language to persuade people to behave a certain way.

Data 2

00:10:10,947 --> 00:10:30,897

Father Burke : You were recommended for the journey because of your familiarity with the territory.

Sister Irene : The territory?

Father Burke : Yes. Romania.

Sister Irene : I'd never been in that part of the world.

Father Burke : Really?

Sister Irene : There must've been some mistake. *I apologize if you coming here was a waste of your time.*

A sister came into the classroom and told Sister Irene that there was a priest who

wanted to see her. Sister Irene, looking a little surprised and curious, quickly finished her work and headed to the school hall to meet the visitor. Father Burke met Sister Irene at the school where she worked. Father Burke aimed to inform and also invite Sister Irene to go to Romania because of an assignment to investigate a case.

Sister Irene was surprised by Father Burke's invitation to Romania for investigation. She asked how she could be assigned to go there. Then Father Burke told her that he was familiar with the place. Sister Irene denied the statement saying "I apologize if you coming here was a waste of your time". This utterance expresses a regret that Sister Irene apologized to Father Burke. She expresses regret for the inconvenience caused. However, based on the context of the conversation that took place earlier, Sister Irene had another intention. She subtly rejected Father Burke's invitation by asking him not to see her again. This is because Sister Irene felt there was something wrong, so she did not want to get into matters that she should not. This utterance refers to the exercitives illocutionary act with the meaning of requesting to do something.

3. Commissives

Commissives are speech acts in which one commits to future actions or duties.

Data 3

00:19:09 --> 00:19:32

Sister Irene : Father, what is it?

Father Burke : It seems to be a key of some kind.

(DOOR RATTLING)

Father Burke : That's the door the nuns would enter from to retrieve the supplies. So, they wouldn't have to leave the castle. *We should give her a proper burial.*

Frenchie shared the information that he had moved a nun's body to a safe place. He immediately showed it to Father Burke and Sister Irene. Once in the room, they found the body and interrogated it until Father Burke found a key in the body's hand. And, Father Burke had a premonition that they should immediately bury the body where it belonged.

Father Burke proposed an action that he thought should be taken regarding the nun's funeral. Father Burke suggested that they take responsibility for ensuring that the deceased nun had a proper burial. This statement means to ask someone to do something. He proposes an act of kindness that should be done to respect human rights. Father Burke by saying "We should give her a proper burial." Besides asking to do an action, Father Burke has another intention by giving a commitment to a practice that must be done to honor the death of a nun. This utterance refers to a commissive illocutionary act where Father Burke commits to the idea that they should ensure the nun is given a proper burial, reflecting a sense of responsibility towards the deceased. The implied meaning is to hold a commitment to the responsibility of serving human rights.

4. Expositives

Expositives are speech acts that convey information, explanations, descriptions, or interpretations.

Data 4

00:11:17,143 --> 00:11:40,797

Father Burke : Mr. Theriault?

Frenchie : Hi. Jealous husband or angry father?

Father Burke : I'm sorry, what?

Frenchie : Well, usually it's one of the two when an older man and a young, beautiful, not-so-innocent girl show up on my doorstep at this hour of the morning.

Sister Irene : *I beg your pardon, Mr. Theriault.*

Arriving in a remote village in Romania, Father Burke and Sister Irene sought out Frenchie, a local resident who they hoped would help them reach the monastery where they were headed. They met Frenchie at his residence, a small house located on the outskirts of the village. Frenchie is initially skeptical of their arrival and unsure if he can help, but when Father Burke explains their noble goal of investigating a mysterious event in a remote monastery, Frenchie agrees to lend his assistance.

Frenchie greeted Father Burke and Sister Irene with an unfortunate suspicion. She thought that they wanted to intimidate her by accusing Father Burke of being Sister Irene's father or husband. The accusation was based on Frenchie being prejudiced. Hearing this, Sister Irene apologized sincerely to him. By saying "I beg your pardon, Mr. Theriault", Sister Irene meant to show respect, maintain politeness, and comply with the norm by apologizing for a mistake that she did not even make. Behind her apology, Sister Irene implies that she has never met Frenchie before. She hoped Frenchie would understand the purpose of meeting her. She explained that Frenchie and she had never been bound by an introduction, either as friends or as a couple. So, this utterance refers to expositives illocutionary act with the meaning of explaining a truth.

5. Behabitives

Behabitives are speech acts that convey attitudes, emotions, feelings, or states of mind.

Data 5

00:09:07 --> 00:09:19

Girl : Mother Superior says that dinosaurs were never really alive. God just put their bones here to test our faith.

Sister Irene : *That seems like a pretty dirty trick, don't you think?*

Girl : But they're not in the Bible.

Set in St. Vincent's Hospital in London, England, a woman named Sister Irene is talking to girls in a room. They seem enthusiastic in listening to the story of pre-historic times by Sister Irene. So, they made a statement that dinosaurs were never really alive. God just put their bones here to test our faith.

Sister Irene indirectly criticizes the idea presented by the girls that God would deceive people by planting dinosaur bones to test their faith, in which case the girls' statement contradicts Sister Irene's opinion. By calling it a "dirty trick", she implies disapproval of this idea. Sister Irene's expression indicates Sister Irene's attitude of distrust and perhaps also a moral judgment about the justice or integrity of such an act attributed to God. Thus, Sister Irene's utterance has the meaning of criticizing the concept presented by Mother Superior, reflecting her own view that such an act would be deceptive and unjust.

CONCLUSION

The study explores the illocutionary acts performed by the main characters in the movie "The Nun" (2018). The research aims to identify and analyze the types and meanings of illocutionary acts in the characters' utterances. The study leverages Austin's speech act theory was focusing on illocutionary acts, there are verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives. Verdictives involve judgments and conclusions. The characters use them to make

statements and assessments. Exercitives refer to acts are about influencing actions, including commanding, suggesting, advising, urging, and deciding. Commissives, these acts commit the speaker to a future action or obligation, such as requesting, proposing, assuring, and committing. Expositives provide explanations, descriptions, and interpretations. They include confirming, stating, addressing, explaining, and seeking information. Behabitives, these acts express attitudes and emotions, such as criticizing, pointing out, complimenting, apologizing, and expressing gratitude. The verdictives found have the meaning of making judgment. Exercitives found have the meaning of requesting someone to do something. Commissives found have the meaning of committing. Expostives are found to mean explaining. Behabitives that are found have the meaning of criticizing.

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