تحليل أفعال التنبيه التعبيرية في رواية نعيمة روبرت ، صبي مقابل فتاة

An Analysis of Expressive Illocutionary Acts in Na'ima Robert's Novel, *Boy vs. Girl*

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Abstract

This study examines the expressive illocutionary acts uttered by the characters in the novel *Boy vs. Girl* (2010) by Na'ima Robert. It aims at exploring the kinds of expressive illocutionary acts as suggested by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The study data consist of the utterances used by the characters in the text of the selected novel *Boy vs. Girl*, containing expressive illocutionary acts. This study follows a descriptive qualitative method to examine the collected data. The results showed that there are nine kinds of expressive illocutionary acts used in *Boy vs. Girl*, expressing dislike, longing, desire, surrender, anger, apology, admiration, grief and praising. Since this study observes the expressive illocutionary acts in *Boy vs. Girl* novel to reveal the hidden meaning of the expressive acts, it is recommended that speech act theory can be used by other researchers in reading other literary works.

Key words: speech acts, illocutionary acts, expressive illocutionary acts, *Boy vs. Girl*

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسـة الأفعال التعبيرية التي اسـتخدمتها الشـخصـيات في رواية "صـبي مقابل فتاة" للكاتبة نعيمة روبرت(2010). و تهدف هذه الدراسـة إلى اسـتكشـاف أنواع الأفعال التعبيرية على النحو الذي اقترحه أوستن (1962) وسيرل (1969)، حيث أن بيانات هذه الدراسة عبارة عن ألفاظ تحتوي على أفعال معبرة استخدمتها الشـخصـيات في نص الرواية المختارة "صـبي مقابل فتاة ". واتخذت هذه الدراسـة المنهج الوصـفي النوعي لفحص البيانات التي قد تم جمعها. و أظهرت النتائج أن هناك تسـعة أنواع من الأفعال التعبيرية المسـتخدمة في رواية "صبي مقابل فتاة" ، والتي تعبر عن الكراهية والشـوق والرغبة والاستسـلام والغضب والاعتذار والإعجاب والحزن والثناء. و نظرًا لأن هذه الدراسة تركز على الأفعال التعبيرية في رواية "صبي مقابل فتاة" للكشف عن المعنى الخفي لهذه الأفعال، فإنه يُوصى بأن يستخدم باحثون آخرون نظرية فعل الكلام في قراءة أعمال أدبية أخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

أفعال الكلام، أفعال الخطاب، أفعال تعبيرية ، صبي مقابل فتاة

1. Introduction

One of the fundamental elements of human existence is language which helps human to live and communicate in a society. Through language, human beings may share ideas and information as intended. Therefore, communication is the way of people to interact with each other using language. By doing so, the speaker can convey the intention of his/ her utterances to the hearer. Indeed, the speaker has intention in what she/he says. This intention is conveyed through sentences or utterances. In other words, every sentence or utterance, which is spoken or written by the speaker, contains meaning and purpose. When the hearer understands the speaker's intention, it means that they can communicate well (Rabiah, 2018).

In order to produce effective communication, the speaker must be able to concentrate on how to relate the language with its context. The context is supposed to be relevant to the utterances that the speaker is making. In some cases, an utterance in a situation may be delivered and understood differently by the hearer. Therefore, it is necessary to comprehend not just the word meanings and sentence patterns, but also the overall meaning of the utterances themselves.

Studying meaning within a situational context is what pragmatics deals with. Yule (1996:3) states that "pragmatics is a study of what people mean by their utterances than the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves". In novels, the literal or denotative meaning of an utterance might be insufficient to comprehend the interpersonal conversations of the characters and the social situation in which they are used. Therefore, pragmatics could provide a useful approach to analyze the characters' use of language in their social interactions in the novels. One important pragmatic concept which relates utterance's meaning to context is speech act (Leech & Short, 1981). Speech act influences the hearer to do something. Therefore, speech act is the basic unit of language used to express meaning, an utterance that expresses an intention (Searle, 1975: 135).

Yule (1996: 47) defines speech act as the action performed by a speaker with an utterance. In other words, there are activities intended to be done by the speaker by saying something. Speech act, firstly delivered by Austin (1962: 103), is divided into three different acts: locutionary act (the act of saying something), illocutionary act (the act of doing something) and perlocutionary act

(the act of affecting someone). By saying an utterance, the speaker is also doing a certain action. Later, Searle (1976: 10-12) distinguishes five classes of illocutionary acts and bases on illocutionary point, the result of illocutionary point, and the relationship of word and world. These five classes are assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the expressive illocutionary acts that are found in Robert's novel *Boy vs. Girl* to convey the psychological state of minds and feelings of the novel's characters. To address this objective, the current study attempts to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the expressive illocutionary speech acts existed in the selected Robert's novel *Boy vs. Girl*?

(2) What are the types of expressive illocutionary speech acts used by the novel's characters?

Na'ima B. Robert, the author of the selected novel under study, is an author of multicultural literature and an editor of *Sisters* magazine. She was born in Leeds on 19th September 1977. Her father is Scottish and her mother is Zulu. Robert grew up in Zimbabwe and attended the university in England. After her conversion to Islam in 1998, she lives between Cairo and London. She has three sons and two daughters. Her husband, Henry Amankwah, died in April 2005. She has written a lot of multicultural books and novels which have won several awards, such as a Muslim Writers Award, a British Writers Award, the African Image Award, and WOW Award (Bushra, 2010). She wrote *From Somalia, with Love*, *Boy vs. Girl, Far from Home* and *She Wore Red Trainers*.

Boy vs. Girl is a young adult novel, which highlights the generation gap between parents and their children that occurs in many cultures. In addition, it is a look at the pressures teenagers face trying to fit in with a non- Muslim society. The novel is about a brother and sister, Faraz and Farhana, during the month of Ramadan who stray from their goals and find a way back in somewhat drastic way to themselves. Both Farhana and Faraz share the narration of the story, and the writing style of the novel is readable, and the characters are very inspiring.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Speech Acts

Communication plays an important role in the daily life of people. People use language in order to exchange information and to express their ideas, such as requesting, ordering, thanking, promising, refusing, apologizing, and offering. In expressing ideas, people do not just say something, but at the same time they take actions via their words. Those expressions are called speech acts. Thus, speech act is a kind of verbal communication and it is a subdivision of pragmatics (Rumahorbo, 2016). Yule (1996) states that speech act is a theory which analyzes an action performed via utterance. Bach (1979) explains that an action in verbal communication has message in itself, so the communication is not only about language but also with action. In speech act, communication depends not only on recognizing the meaning of words in an utterance, but also recognizing what speakers mean by their utterance. It means context is needed as part of communication to understand what the speaker means.

Speech act theory was developed by Austin (1962), the originator of the term "speech act," who states that language is not only used to say something but to do something. In his William James lectures which he delivered at Harvard in 1955, and posthumously published under the title *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), he developed his first systematic theory of utterances as human action and derived his theory from the basic notion that language is used to perform actions. Thus, the concept of "speech act" and his speech act theory was built on the basis of the belief that speakers do not only use language to say something, but to do something. Therefore, utterances whether spoken or written in literary or non-literary contexts are regarded as speech acts. Speech act is an integral part of any communicative situation involving a speaker and a hearer. Furthermore, there are many kinds of acts associated with the speaker's utterances such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, greeting and warning.

In addition, Searle (1969), who was Austin's student, observed that the theory of speech act starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expressions, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statement, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, making promises and so on.

2.2 Expressive Illocutionary Acts

Searle (1976) states that expressive illocutionary acts are used to express the psychological state of the speaker. Apologizing, complaining, welcoming, praising, and congratulating are kinds of expressives. Yule (1996: 53) states that an expressive act can be a statement of pleasure, pain, like, dislike, joy or sorrow. It can be said that the expressive speech acts are concerned with the emotions of the speaker.

2. 3 Previous related studies

Three previous related studies are briefly examined in the following in terms of their focus and findings.

Tiloli (2021) studied the expressive illocutionary acts in *Inside Out* animated movie. This study explores the different kinds of the expressive illocutionary acts that are used by the characters in the movie. It used a descriptive qualitative method. Based on the results, the kinds of expressive illocutionary acts used in the movie are thanking, apologizing, stating pleasure, and blaming. In addition, the most dominant expressive

illocutionary act used is stating pleasure. This study is supposed to help in learning English through speech acts.

Selviyani and Pujiati (2019) conducted a study focusing on analyzing the expressive illocutionary acts in *Dialogue the Perfect Husband* novel. The main aim of this study is to identify the functions of these expressive illocutionary acts in the novel based on Searle's theory. It used a descriptive qualitative method. The researchers classified the functions of the expressive speech acts that are found in the selected novel into thanking, apologizing, flattering or praising, blaming, criticizing, quipping, and complaining.

Royanti (2019) studied the expressive speech acts in *La La Land* movie. The purpose of this study is to identify the types of the expressive speech acts used in the movie based on Searle's theory of speech act. It used a descriptive qualitative method. The researcher found 35 expressive utterances and classified them into eight types of expressive speech acts. Those are 10 expressions of apology, 10 expressions of thanking, 5 expressions of welcoming, 2 expressions of lamenting, 2 expressions of deploring, 2

expressions of boasting, 1 expression of congratulating, and 3 expressions of forgiving.

3. Study methodology

This study followed a descriptive qualitative method. It is based on the analysis of the collected data, which will be descriptively examined. The collected data include all the utterances used in the text of the Robert's selected novel *Boy vs. Girl* by that contain expressive illocutionary speech acts.

For the sake of data analysis, first the data that contain expressive illocutionary acts which occur in the utterances used in the selected novel are presented based on Austin's and Searle's theories of speech act. Then, the context of each utterance in which the speaker performs expressive illocutionary act is described. In addition, the relationship between the speakers and the hearers, and the occasion of the utterances are discussed in detail. It is described to introduce the background of every expressive illocutionary speech act. Finally, a conclusion is presented after the discussion.

4. Findings and Discussion

According to the analysis of collected data, the researcher found a number of expressive speech acts including expressing dislike, longing, praise, desire, surrender, anger, apology, admiration and grief. All these are discussed in the following.

4.1 Dislike

Two utterances for expressing dislike were found as follows:

Data (1)

Shazia: "**That is too disgusting! What a cheap flyer!**" (p. 47)

This utterance is classified as expressing dislike. The context of this speech act is when Robina comes to Shazia and Farhana at school. She tells them about a party next week as they walk down the stairs towards their next lesson. At that time, she shows them a flyer. It is a bikini-clad woman with dark eyes and endless legs. She is draped over a brooding Asian man with designer stubble and diamond earnings. When Shazia sees it, she says, "*That is too disgusting! What a cheap flyer!*". It shows that she does not like the flyer.

Data (2)

Farhana: "**You look a bit rough.**" (p.254)

This utterance is classified as expressing dislike. The context of this speech act is when Farhana

opens her eyes for the first time after the dawn prayer on the last day of Ramadan. Faraz waits for her in the hospital for a week to regain consciousness after a car hit her. She says to Faraz, " *You look a bit rough*". Farhana does not like that Faraz looks rough. It means that she expresses what she feels when she sees Faraz.

4.2 Longing

Only one utterance to express longing was found as follows.

Data (1)

Farhana's mothers: "**Khala Sajda is dying to see you!**" (p. 60)

This utterance is classified as expressing longing. The context of this speech act is when Farhana comes home wet because of the heavy rain. When she opens the door, she hears her aunties having a big conversation in the kitchen. Her mother comes out of the kitchen and sees that she is too wet. Therefore, she tells her that she should change her wet clothes and says, "*Khala Sajda is dying to see you!*" Farhana's mother states to her daughter that her Auntie Sajda misses her so much.

4.3 Praising

Two utterances regarding expressing praising as follows.

Data (1)

Faraz: "**And, I thought it looked brilliant… just brilliant**." (p.122)

This utterance is classified as praising. The context of this speech act is after Faraz met Imran at the mosque. Imran told him about the Muslim arts organization, and he gave him a card of it. Therefore, Faraz called Imran and told him that he had looked at the website of the organization, and he found it brilliant, saying "*And, I thought it looked brilliant… just brilliant*". Faraz praised what he saw on the website of the Muslim arts organization. It means that he expressed what he felt about the website.

Data (2)

Farhana: "**Nothing Miss Farhana Ahmed can't handle.**" (p.124)

This utterance is classified as praising. The context of this speech act is when Faraz waits for Farhana at the bus stop after school. It is the first day for Farhana to wear the scarf, so Faraz worries about how the girls at school would deal with her. Therefore, he asks her how the girls at school take her new look, and she replies, "*Nothing Miss Farhana Ahmed can't handle*". Farhana praises herself that she can manage and handle anything.

4.4 Desire

Only one utterance was found regarding expressing desire as follows.

Data (1)

Farhana: "**But Ammiji, Auntie Najma invited me and I would really like to go.**"(p.156)

This utterance is classified as expressing desire. The context of this speech act is after Farhana decided to wear the scarf as full-time, which made her mother angry with her, because she does not want her to wear it. Therefore, the relation between them becomes full of tension. This tension makes Farhana hesitant to ask her mother about going out with her aunt. However, finally she asks her mother to give her the permission and tries to convince her by expressing her desire to go with her aunt by saying "*But Ammiji, Auntie Najma invited me and I would really like to go*". Farhana wants to go with her aunt, so she tries to convince her mother to allow her to go with her aunt by expressing her desire.

4.5 Surrender

Only one utterance was found regarding expressing surrender as follows.

Data (1)

Farhana: "**I just feel so weak, like everything is wearing me down. *I don't know how long I can hold on***" (p.188)

This utterance is classified as expressing surrender. The context of this speech act is when Farhana talks with Shazia. She tells her how she feels when she has first put on the scarf. She has felt strong and powerful. But lately, she loses some of that confidence. She says, "*I just feel so weak, like everything is wearing me down. I don't know how long I can hold on*". Farhana's expression of surrender appears when she tells Shazia that she is weak like everything is wearing her down.

4.6 Anger

Two utterances were found regarding expressing anger as follows.

Data (1)

Farhana: "**Why do you have to be such a first class cow?**" (p. 192)

This utterance is classified as expressing anger. The context of this speech act is when Robina, Shazia and Farhana wait for the next lesson to start. Robina starts teasing Farhana about Malik, and how he will never want her, because she wears the scarf. Shazia has enough of Robina's attitude, so she tries to stop her. However, Robina mocks her that she wears the scarf too. That puts Shazia in an embarrassing situation, and she hardly holds her tear. At that moment, Farhana becomes very angry and says, "*Why do*

you have to be such a first class cow?" Farhana is angry with what Robina has said to Shazia.

Data (2)

Malik: "**That's just pathetic! I'm not into you, get it?**" (p.230)

This utterance is classified as expressing anger. The context of this speech act is when Malik meets Robina after calling him. He looks angry, because Robina keeps going after him. He argues with her that he does not want her. He says, " *That's just pathetic! I'm not into you, get it?*" He is angry with Robina, because she chases him all the time.

4.7 Apology

Only one utterance was found regarding expressing apology as follows.

Data (1)

Faraz: "**I'm so sorry, sorry for everything!**" (p.216)

This utterance is identified expressing apology. The context of this speech act is when Faraz gets home, and his mother and father go to the mosque to take food for the community iftar. He goes straight to Farhana's room, and asks her to come in. He directly says, "*I'm so sorry, sorry for everything!*", because their relationship is not as good as before and all the time in tension.

The apologizing expression is explicit in the word *sorry.*

4.8 Admiration

Two utterances were found regarding expressing admiration as follows.

Data (1)

Mr. McCarthy: "**That sounds fantastic, Faraz!**" (p.200)

This utterance is classified as expressing admiration. The context of this speech act is when Faraz completes a piece of Arabic calligraphy, graffiti style. Mr. McCarthy sees it when it is up on the display board. He likes it, and then Faraz tells him about the Muslim artist, Ahmed Ali. Mr. McCarthy says, "*That sounds fantastic, Faraz!* " Mr. McCarthy shows the expression of admiration.

Data (2)

Mr. McCarthy: "**I can't wait to see the finished product.**" (p.224)

This utterance is classified as expressing admiration. The context of this speech act is when Mr. McCarthy gives Faraz permission to stay after school to work on his coursework. When he at last stands back to get a better view of his painting, he is pleased with what he sees. It is shaping up beautifully. Then, he decides to stop and asks Mr. McCarthy to leave. When Mr.

McCarthy looks up to the painting, he says, "*I can't wait to see the finished product*". Mr. McCarthy admires the painting of Faraz, so he cannot wait till it is finished.

4.9 Grief

Only one utterance was found regarding expressing grief as follows.

Data (1)

Faraz's mother: "**But I was wrong… I was wrong.**" (p.252)

This utterance is classified as expressing grief. The context of this speech act is after Faraz spoke with his parents more honestly than ever before in his life about Skrooz, Maj, the fights and the car crash. The parents were shocked by what Faraz revealed. The mother states to her husband that she thinks she knows her children, but after she hears Faraz, she believes that she is wrong. She says, "*But I was wrong… I was wrong*". The mother is so sad, because she finds out that she does not know her children well.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that expressive illocutionary acts are used in the utterances of the characters of *Boy vs. Girl* (2010) novel by Na'ima Robert. The kinds of expressive illocutionary acts used in the novel are classified into expressing dislike, longing, praising, desire, surrender, anger, apology, admiration and grief. The characters in this novel use expressive illocutionary acts to express their feelings and the states of their minds, which adds beautiful touches to the novel. As this study focuses on analyzing the expressive illocutionary speech acts in *Boy vs. Girl* novel, similar studies can be conducted to explore expressive illocutionary acts in other fictions.

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