

Speech Acts Analysis of The Main Characters on Amy Tans The Joy Luck Club

by Nanik Mariani

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Speech Acts Analysis of The Main Characters on Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club"

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Nanik Mariani¹
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat
e-mail: nanik_mariani@ulm.ac.id¹

2

Sulistyo Rini²
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat
e-mail: sulistyo.rini@ulm.ac.id²

3

Irie Satrio³
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat
e-mail: adrie.satrio@ulm.ac.id³

Abstract: This study tries to describe how speech acts are applied through the main character in The Joy Luck Club. It is broken down into: (1) a description of the types of illocutionary speech acts performed, (2) a description of how the speech acts are carried out which is also translated into two sub-objectives, namely: (1) a description of how the illocutionary acts are performed; and (2) a description of how the perlocutionary act was carried out. The description of the types of illocutionary acts is based on Searle's category of illocutionary acts which is also used as a category for the actual meaning of an utterance. While the forms are based on the syntactic form of the sentence. While the perlocutionary act is said to be effective if the speech act has an influence on the thoughts, actions, or feelings of the listener in accordance with what was intended by the speaker. To answer these research questions, a qualitative research design was carried out. Data was collected from the language use of the main characters in Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. Then, dialogues, monologues, and actions were collected, recorded, and analyzed. The results showed that the type and highest meaning used by the main character was representative. Meanwhile, in terms of form, most use declarative. Moreover, the perlocutionary acts produced are mostly ineffective.

Keywords: Speech Act, Type, Meaning, Form, Illocutionary Act,

INTRODUCTION

Novel is a form of literary work in the form of prose which has intrinsic and extrinsic elements, both of which are interconnected because they affect the existence of a literary work. Like other literary works, novels are also formed by various elements, including characterizations, plot/plot, setting, point of view, and themes. All these elements are considered important in building a complete work.

Linguistic problems from the point of view of oral and cross-cultural understanding never ending. One of the language problems is the phenomenon of interference. Therefore, this phenomenon always deserves to be studied by many parties (Nanik:2021).

People must have knowledge that enables them to produce and understand utterances in relation to certain communicative purposes and certain speech contexts. They must know what types of communicative functions they perform and how they are organized to elicit appropriate responses. Searle and Bierwisch (1980:16) speech act is the basic or minimal unit of linguistic communication that occurs in all linguistic communication. The unit of linguistic communication is not symbols, words or sentences, or even symbols, words or sentences, but

the production or production of symbols or words or sentences in the implementation of speech acts.

A philosopher, Austin (1962: II 1) states that sentences can be considered as statements, constative and performative. He believed that statements could only be used to describe some circumstances or to state some facts, which must be true or false, but later he preferred to use the word constative for true or false statements that did not record information about the facts. While performative relates to the main function of language to do something or perform an action. Furthermore, Austin developed a theory of speech acts that are used simultaneously in communicating with other people. There are three types of actions in speech. Locutionary act is the act of producing recognizable grammatical utterances in language. It is the act of saying something or producing a series.

In Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club*, the characters' actions are lively and interesting to study. The main character in this novel always communicates in certain contexts in different cultures. There are four mothers representing eastern culture and four daughters representing culture. The older generation grew up in China. They migrated to the United States, when they grew up and Chinese immigrants settled in this country.

Nanik et al (2019) As a science, linguistics must meet several scientific prerequisites. First, it must have subject matter. Language is said to be the subject of linguistics. As a subject matter, language must be defined clearly and explicitly. Before analyzing a language, some linguists define language in different ways. language as an arbitrary system of vocal symbols that allows all people in a particular culture, or others who have studied the system of that culture, to communicate or interact.

They communicate in Chinese and some English with girls but girls mostly answer in English the younger generation on the other hand are born in the United States. They are married to Chinese and American ancestry. They always speak in English even with their parents. Differences in the cultural orientation of mothers and daughters greatly affect their speech and behavior.

The Joy Luck Club like that discusses language and language use in novels This reason attracts the reader's interest to study the language in this literary work. This reason interests her to study the language in this literary work- Since literary language is considered as indirect speech, locutionary act is not going to be discussed, but the emphasis is on illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts.

Based on the background described above, the general problem of this research is How is the application of speech acts in the characters of *The Joy Luck Club*?

1. What are the types of illocutionary speech acts performed?
2. How is the speech act performed by the main character?
3. How is the illocutionary act performed by the main character?
4. How effective is the perlocutionary act by the main character?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study analyzes literary language as a text in its context and uses content analysis. Literary works are considered as complete texts that touch the elements that build them, the relationships between the elements, along with the structure of the text which includes the propositions in sentences and their relationships to have a complete meaning. It is also related to the study of the relationship between language and context which is used as a basic concept to understand meaning in a communication. This study is intended to link

literary language with contextual communication as the background. Sugiyono (2012), the qualitative characteristics of research are, the research has a natural setting and the data source must be directly from the object of research and the researcher is the key instrument.

Research Design

This type of research is a qualitative research. The data is collected from the language use of the main characters in Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. Then, dialogues, monologues, and actions are collected, developed, and analyzed.

Berg (1985:7) states that qualitative research has four characteristics (1) Researchers are the main instrument for investigating subjects in their natural setting to see how they attribute meaning to social situations. The investigation is to gain an understanding of the social, cultural and historical setting of the subject; (2) Studies are designed and redesigned by their flexibility; (3) Researchers pay attention to social processes and with meaning to understand how participants perceive a situation; 4) Data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously.

The design of the research can be described in the following chart:

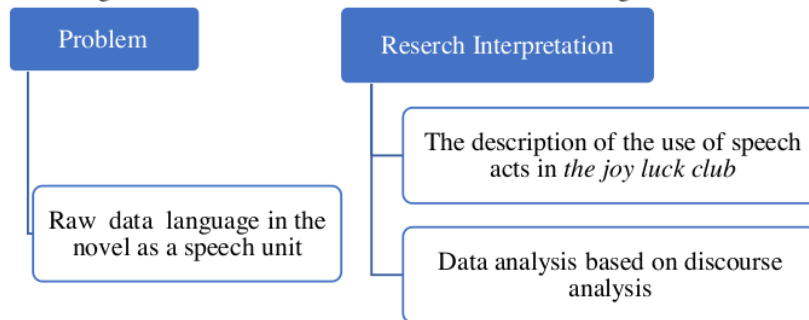


Chart: Research Design

Speech acts in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* were investigated using word analysis. By using discourse analysis, the meaning of the text is confirmed, analyzed, and interpreted. The use of speech acts in novels that are in accordance with the context which is considered as a single text in a literary speech situation is interpreted as such. Qualitative descriptive analysis is a complete and accurate description of the data obtained from various sources to achieve the research objectives.

Research Instrument

use of instruments in research data in the form of literary works description of language that requires interpretive activity. This research requires him to be an active reader. The researcher reads *The Joy Luck Club* continuously, recognizes the units of speech acts in each section that will be related to each other as a whole and recognizes and identifies the context for interpreting the meaning and use of the act.

Data Analysis

Data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman (1984: 21-23). This analysis consists of three concurrent streams of activity that form an interactive cyclical process: (1) data

reduction; (2) data display; (3) drawing conclusions/verification. Data analysis does not stop at a certain point. For example, in verification, the researcher can refer back to the data.

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming "raw" data. The first step in conducting data analysis is that the researcher reads the novel as a whole carefully. Then he chooses dialogue, The next step is drawing conclusions and verification using the transcribed data and Using local interpretation, analogies, and context theory which means interpreting data based on context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types, Meanings, and Forms of Illocutionary Acts in The Joy Luck Club

Based on the findings of the research, it was found that the types of illocutionary acts produced by the main characters in *The Joy Luck Club* were mostly representative types as seen in 62 items. The second is a directive type which has 40 items and the last one is an expressive which only has 1 item. In addition, the main characters tend to use the same illocutionary acts in meaning and type to perform certain purposes. It is said so because 48 out of 86 items have the same illocutionary acts in type and meaning. While the difference is 38. Meanwhile, in terms of form, the most widely used declarative by the main character is stated in 77 items. The second is interrogative, 31, and the last is imperative, 13.

This finding is understandable because language production is correlated with cultural background. The generations of the main characters of this novel have different backgrounds. The first generation, the mothers, were born and raised in China. While the second, a daughter, was born and raised in the United States, which is very different from China, especially its culture. Despite their conflicting cultural values, they seem to realize that in conveying their intentions they need to apply several strategies to achieve their communicative goals and avoid violating the interlocutor.

In addition, to achieve the purpose of communication, one needs to have pragmatic principles because it deals with the relationship between language and context which is grammatical, or encoded in structure. So, in maintaining communication, both the speaker and the listener must practice the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness to produce the correct interpretation. Grice determined four maxims of the cooperative principle. They are: quantity, quality, relationship, and means.

Quantity is given the right amount of information. This principle first has the rule to make contributions to the necessary informative speech and not to make contributions more informative than necessary. The second, quality, is to try to make a right contribution by not saying what is believed to be wrong and not saying that the speaker does not have enough evidence. The third is the relational principle which tells the speaker and listener to be relevant. The fourth is the principle of manner which advises the speaker to be clear, avoid ambiguity of expression, avoid ambiguity, and be concise. The last principle is order.

While the principle of politeness has a general law that is more emphasized on other than oneself. These Maxims are: wisdom, generosity, approval, humility, approval, and sympathetic relations.

The first maxim, the maxim of wisdom is a directive and commissive maxim which states to minimize costs for others and maximize benefits for others. Second, the maxim of generosity which is directive and commissive. Its function is to minimize benefits to oneself

and maximize costs to others. The third is the maxim of praise which is used expressively and representatively to minimize the criticism of others and maximize the praise of others. The fourth is the expressive and representative maxim of politeness to minimize the criticism of others and maximize the praise of others. Fifth, the maxim of agreement which is a representation of the labyrinth of disagreement between oneself and others; and maximize agreement between self and others. The last one is the sympathy maxim which is used in representation to minimize antipathy between oneself and others; and maximize sympathy between self and others.

In accordance with pragmatics, these principles cannot leave the context which is the biggest background of interpretation. If we take a closer look, the cooperative principle allows participants in a conversation to send as well as interpret messages. While the principle of politeness is to maintain social relations and friendship. The two are brought together in contexts that operate variedly in different cultures or linguistic communities, in different social situations, among different social classes, etc. Aspects of the communicative context are relevant to your product and interpretation of speech. One aspect is constitutive rules, namely knowledge of what conditions need to be held if an utterance is counted as a certain speech act. The second is social circumstances or social contexts such as social institutions, wants and needs of others and so on that provide a framework within which an utterance is successfully manifested as a sign of a certain type of action. This factor has a role in the abstract knowledge underlying the types of speech acts, the role in interpreting the actual signs of speech acts can be reduced or increased depending on the actual situation in which an utterance is issued. Furthermore, It helps listeners to infer the illocutionary power of certain utterances in order to find appropriate constitutive rules for interpreting the function of, and formulating a response to, an utterance (Leech, 1983).

In this novel, mothers are not much influenced by western culture even though they are surrounded by that culture. In maintaining their eastern culture, they always speak Chinese and mingle only with Chinese in China Town. They have a strong belief that their culture is better than western culture so they always try to pass it on to their daughters. As Chinese, mothers want their children to be true Chinese, which means to be real women. At least they should try to have some ideal characters. According to Hsu (1971), a true Chinese must have gentleness, that is, in a gentle temperament, maintain a balance of mind in all circumstances. They are passive qualities, indicating calmness and passive strength rather than youthful power and romance. So the ideal Chinese character should be. 1) tenderness; 2) patience; 3) indifference; 4) old deception; 5) pacifism; 6) satisfaction; 7) humor; and 8) conservatism. An example of its implementation is that mothers believe that young children or children must restrain their manners when parents speak and parental instructions from early childhood must be tolerated and adapted. That's why 'not hers' always tells girls what to do and hopes that girls will live up to her expectations. Daughters, although they respect their mothers, they don't always say yes to everything their mothers command them in Chinese culture.

The daughters are of Chinese descent who have never been to China. They grew up in a western environment, which greatly affected them. They don't speak Chinese even though they understand the language passively. They know about Chinese culture from their families, especially from their mothers, but they use western culture more, which means they understand the west more. Young people often think that their mother's culture is too complicated to understand. For example, it is strongly believed that mothers do not support daughters in everything because mothers always tell them what to do. It seems that the old ones interfere too much in their personal lives. In addition, they also have difficulty

understanding their mother's true intentions when they say or do something. Although young people find it difficult to understand the old, young people still have a great dependence on the old for making important decisions, which shows that they respect their mothers.

Based on Hsu's (1971) explanation, Chinese people cannot say anything directly because it would violate some ideals of character. They should try to keep their etiquette of speech in all things gentle and patient. In addition, they should not offend others because maintaining relationships with other people, especially with family, is the most important value in the culture. So, the principle of politeness is here. These principles are used as the main consideration in carrying out a certain purpose, whether it is representative, directive, or expressive of conversational principles.

In addition, the main characters use the same type and meaning because the mothers realize that their job is to inform, remind and tell their daughters what they have to do to make them real men according to their cultural values. In doing this, they had to give a lot of representation to let their daughters know their mother's true intentions. While girls need to explain more about their real intentions too as they have different cultures which can lead to misunderstandings. This action means that they produce multiple representative meanings which are also conveyed through representative types.

Meanwhile, in the type and meaning of the directive, both must dare to communicate their goals. Mothers assume that it is the duty of parents to control children's lives in terms of directing them to do something, but girls have been influenced by western culture because of their courage in assigning someone to do something. In addition, the cause of the difference in type and meaning is because the main character considers the principle of politeness to avoid misunderstandings that cause them to produce indirect illocutionary acts.

In addition, to be polite, the main character's words tend to violate the principle of cooperation. For example when Waverly Jong wanted to tell his plan to marry his girlfriend, he did not do it directly but he told his mother about the expensive gift his girlfriend gave him. Thus, he violates the maxims of quantity, relation, and manner. The reason he did so was because he felt his mother would be offended if he told her about the relationship in person because in Chinese custom, it would be very embarrassing to have a romantic relationship behind one's parents. This kind of violation is often done by the main character to fulfill their expectations.

The Effectiveness of Perlocutionary Acts

Shows the finding that there is a tendency for the main character to use the same type and meaning of illocutionary acts to show certain intentions through appropriate syntactic forms. However, if examined further, the perlocutionary acts in this novel tend to be ineffective. It was found that 25 items were ineffective and 18 items were effective, while 36 data did not have a perlocutionary act because the effect was not mentioned in the novel.

The types and meanings of illocutionary acts can be different because in performing a particular illocutionary act, the speaker can do it through other illocutionary acts. For example, when a mother wants to do the directive type by telling or asking her daughter to practice piano lessons, she does not need to do the directive type directly but she can do it through the representative type by telling her daughter about the time. Furthermore, this indirect form can be effective or otherwise ineffective in terms of perlocutionary speech acts. The ineffectiveness of perlocutionary acts is often caused by the listener's misinterpretation of the speaker's intent. It seems that the main character has difficulty in interpreting the speaker's intent. They do not have the communicative competence to make them understand the intentions or expectations

of others. These competencies are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Savignon, 1983).

Grammatical competence is a person's ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological characteristics of language to operate these components to form words and sentences. The application of abilities is by using rules, not by stating rules.

Sociolinguistic competence is an understanding of the social context of language use. The components of these competencies are the role of participants, the information shared, and the function of the interaction.

In addition, the biggest obstacle that can be found in the relationship of the main characters is that they share different cultural backgrounds from eastern and western cultures. The younger generation feels China is not America. They understand Chinese culture from their mother which they often find confusing. While the older generation thinks the east is the best. This kind of background leads them to many misunderstandings. Mothers always consider their daughters to be disrespectful and disrespect them as parents by being bold.

Meanwhile, daughters think that their mothers interfere too much in their lives. That is why they often fail to interpret their intentions or expectations which results in speech acts not being successful. In addition, the aspect of the communicative context is relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances. The main character needs knowledge of certain conditions that need to be held and the social context to arrive at the correct interpretation of a particular speech act.

The ineffectiveness of perlocutionary acts is also caused by a violation of the principles of cooperation and politeness. As we know that the main characters try to be polite in conveying their intentions or expectations, but unfortunately the interlocutor still considers his words to be rude, causing misunderstandings between them. In addition, in producing politeness, the main characters often violate the principle of cooperation which later it is known that the violation does not end in politeness, but in violation of the listeners. This misunderstanding shows that perlocutionary acts are not effective.

CONCLUSION

The main character in *The Joy Luck Club* shows that speech acts also occur in the literary world. When performing communicative actions, they use a certain type in a certain form to transfer the meaning. In addition, to choose the type of illocutionary act to convey meaning in a certain form, they must consider several aspects of communication included in pragmatics. These aspects are the principles of cooperation and politeness based on context. Furthermore, in addition to pragmatics, to interpret the speaker's true intentions, the main character must have communicative competencies such as grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies.

In terms of illocutionary acts, most of the main characters use the same type and meaning in carrying out their illocutionary acts through appropriate syntactic forms. However, not all categories of illocutionary acts are produced. Main characters mostly use representative types followed by directive and expressive types.

Meanwhile, in terms of perlocutionary acts, most of the conversations ended with a skewed understanding which indicated that perlocutionary acts were not effective. This happens because the main character lacks communicative competence in producing and interpreting certain meanings. In addition, a big obstacle to understanding other people is that the main characters have very different cultural backgrounds which lead to different

values. In addition, the main character's efforts to avoid causing them to apply the principle of politeness found that its application often violates the principle of cooperation

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