AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS USED BY JOHN AND SAVANNAH AS THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN DEAR JOHN MOVIE

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Abstract

The purposes of this research are 1) to identify the types of expressive speech acts used by the main characters of Dear John movie and 2) to find out the function of the expressive speech acts used. The type of this research is discourse analysis mixed with quantitative method to explain the data further. The data of the research was taken from Dear John movie. The instruments of this research were the utterances from the main characters of Dear John movie which categorized and put into observation table. The data were analyzed based on the theories of Yule (1996) and Clark (1995) of expressive speech acts to answer the research questions. The results of this research showed that the expressive speech act used by the main characters of Dear John movie consisted of 6 types out of 7 types. They are the expression of pleasure, liking, disliking, thanking, apologizing, and the expression of praise. The type of speech act that was not found in the utterances of the main character was congratulating. The most dominant type that was found in the utterances of the main character was Thanking.

Keywords: discourse analysis, expressive speech acts, main character

Introduction

Language is a means of communication. It holds important rules to communication in general. Language also aims to express what people want, need, and feel. People usually express what they need and feel using a language. Language is also needed to make fluent communication. People can communicate fluently because they are able to use language effectively. The goal of communication can be achieved when the speakers and the hearers know the situation and the context of the conversations. Nowadays, communication is more than just exchanging information. It is about understanding what people say and how other people respond. Communication is the situation when two or more make conversation to achieve the goal. There
are some important components in communication such as informant and interlocutor. Every communication begins with a context. Context is a very broad field that consists of different aspects. Sometimes when people communicate, people do not know how to express their ideas well. They are not able to express their feeling well enough so the interlocutor does not get a clear understanding of the context. For those reasons, people usually use speech acts to help them to achieve the goal of the conversation and help the speakers to convey their meanings clearly. According to Searle (1969) there are three type of acts that may be implemented by a speaker upon his/her speech. They are the act to express something (locutionary act) the act to do something (illocutionary act), the act to affect the conversations of the speaker (elocutionary act).

Expressive speech act is a speech act in which the speaker expresses feeling and attitude about something such as, asking for an apology, thanking someone, and congratulating someone. Expressive speech acts are important to be analyzed because these acts cannot be separated from human beings in daily conversation. Movie focuses on the daily life situations. It also reflects everyday life and makes it as a reflection to the real world phenomena. In this study the researcher focused on analyzing the use of expressive speech acts in conversations in a movie as a movie usually reflects and represents real conversation in the society. There are many kinds of movie that contain of expressive speech acts. One of them is “Dear John.” movie. The goal of this research is to find out which types and functions of expressive speech act used by John and Savannah the main characters of the Dear John movie.

Literature Review
Chaika (1982) states that every social institution is maintained by language. Law, religion, government, and family are all carried on with language. Language is used to reveal or conceal personal identity, characters, and background. Wardaugh (2006) also states that, “when two or more people communicate each other in speech, we can call the system of communication that they employ a code. In most cases that code will be something we may call a language”. It means that in the aspect of communication, language is really rich and has a significant role in human life.

Sociolinguistics is a study about language. It is interesting to explain why people speak differently in different social context, and also concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning. According to Yule (2006), sociolinguistics is used generally for the study of the relationship between language and society. Additionally, sociolinguistics covers some aspects that are important in communication.

Leech (1983: 36) asserts that pragmatic is the study of how utterances have meaning in situations. Furthermore, he explains that pragmatics involves problem-solving both from the speaker's and the listener's point of view. From the speaker point of view, the problem is one of planning how to produce utterances that will make the effect for the listener. While, from the listener's point of view, the problem is interpretative one where the listener can infer speaker's
reason why he/she speaks the utterance. Based on the definitions of pragmatics that have been stated above, it can be conclude that pragmatics is the study of language related to its users, contexts, and utterance interpretation. Yule (1996) says that speech act is actions performed via utterance. Parker (1986) defined speech act as every utterance of speech act constitutes some sort of fact. In general terms, it can usually recognize the type of action performed by a speaker with the utterance. The term speech act to describe actions such as requesting, commanding, questioning or informing. It can define a speech act as the action performed by a speaker with an utterance Yule (2006). Actions performed via utterances are generally is called speech acts and in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complain, compliment, invitation, promise and request Yule (1996). Speech Acts comes from two words. They are speech and act. Speech refers to the utterances and act refers to action. It means when Speech Act occurs, the utterance and action combine and then produce the meaning. Austin (in Levinson, 1983:236) divides three basic senses in which when someone says something, he or she is also doing something in the same time. For this reason, he or she proposes three kinds of acts, they are:

a. Locutionary act is the real word that is uttered by the speaker and it contains the speaker’s verbalized message. It is the act of saying, the literal meaning of the utterances. Locution is the description about what the speakers said.

b. Illocutionary act is the power or intention behind the words that is uttered by the speaker. It indicates the speaker’s purpose in saying something. The speaker’s expression can be in the form of statement, offer, promise, etc. Illocution is what the speaker is doing by uttering those words: commanding, offering, promising, threatening, thanking, etc.

c. Perlocutionary act is the effect of the illocution on the hearer, such as the effect on the feelings, thoughts, or action of hearers.

Expressive speech acts is one of the five basic categories of illocutionary speech acts identified by Searle (1976). Searle (1997) says that expressive include the words stated what the speaker feels. Searle mentions that this speech acts includes “the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affair specified the proportional content. Moreover, According to Yule (1996) “Expressive are those kinds of speech acts that speech act that state what the speakers feels. They express psychological states and can be statement of pleasure, pain, likes, dislike, joy, or sorrow. They can be caused by something the speaker does or hearer does, but they are about the speaker’s experience.” This means that expressive include one of speech acts classification that is used to show the feeling of the speaker

a. Thanking is an expression that is used by someone to say gratitude for other people for something that they have done.

b. Like is an expression that used by someone to say enjoy or approve of something or someone.

c. Dislike is an expressed that is used by someone to convey their distaste of someone or something.
d. Welcoming is a sentence used by someone to welcome someone when someone else come to her/his place.

e. Praising is an expression that is used by someone to give praises someone’s performance or appearance.

f. Greeting is a polite word or sign of welcome or recognition. Greeting is something that you say or do to greet somebody and a message of good wishes for somebody’s health, happiness (Hornby, 2010)

**Research Method**

This study belongs to discourse analysis which belongs to the qualitative research. According to Given (2008), discourse analysis is a cluster of related method for studying language use and its role in social life. However, to make it easier for other people to read, the researcher also mixed some method of quantitative method to find out each percentage and the most dominant expressive speech act used of the overall data that were found.

In this research, the researcher analyzed the conversations used by John and Savannah as the main characters of *Dear John* movie. The conversations that contained of expressive speech acts are categorized into seven types of expressive speech act, such as: pleasure, like, dislike, praise, apologizing, congratulating and thanking.

**Findings**

Based on the analysis of the data, there were 28 utterances containing expressive speech acts used by John and Savannah as the main characters in *Dear John* movie

1. Types of Expressive Speech Act used by John and Savannah as the main characters of *Dear John* movie

   There are 6 types of Expressive Speech Acts used by John and Savannah the main characters of *Dear John* movie, including *pleasure*, *like*, *dislike*, *praise*, *apologizing*, and *thanking*. The highest percentage found in the data is the expressive speech act that is the expression of thanking which is 28.5% of the data and occurred eight (8) times throughout the entire movie. The second highest percentages are the expression of apologizing with the percentage that is 21.5%. The expressions occurred six (6) times each throughout the entire movie. The third highest percentages are both the expression of praise and liking which made up the percentage of 17.8% and both occurred five (5) times each in the movie. Meanwhile, the expression of dislike occurred three (3) times or it is 10.8% of the data. The lowest percentage is the expression of pleasure with the percentage of 3.5% and only occurred once (1).

2. The Functions of Expressive Speech Act used by John and Savannah the main characters of *Dear John* movie

   There are a few functions of expressive speech act. They are showing pleasure, liking, disliking, praising, apologizing, and thanking. The expression of showing pleasure is used to convey the speaker’s satisfaction towards
something, congratulating is used to celebrate someone else’s achievement, praising is used to make someone feels appreciated and to compliment someone on something, apologizing is used to ask for an apology, to be polite, thanking is used to show one’s gratitude towards something or someone.

**Discussions**

Based on the objectives of this research, this section will further discuss the types of the expressive speech acts and the functions of the speech acts used by the main characters of *Dear John* movie. Twenty-eight (28) utterances were found in the conversations of John and Savannah as the main characters of *Dear John* movie.

1. **The Types and the Functions of Expressive Speech Acts used by the Main Characters in the *Dear John* movie.**
   a. **The Expression of Pleasure**
      According to Clark (1995), *Pleasure* is used where the speaker feeling of being pleased or gratified. There was only one example of this expressive speech act found in the data.
      Datum (14)
      Savannah : “I love this night.”
      John : /smiles/
      Setting : In the car, after a date together

      Savannah and John went on a date to a lobster place. They went back to John’s place and Savannah met John’s dad, Mr.Tyree for the first time. They talked about coins together. On the way back to Savannah’s house, Savannah told John that she loved the time they spent together by saying “I love this night.” Savannah used the expressive speech that is Pleasure to let her feelings of being satisfied showed to John.

   b. **The Expression of Liking**
      *Liking* is when speaker expresses their love about something. There were several examples of *liking* as the type of expressive speech act found in the data. The examples can be seen as follows.
      Datum (27)
      Savannah : “Seafood in this restaurant is very good.”
      John : “Yeah, I know.”
      Setting : At the seafood restaurant, ordering food

      Savannah showed that she liked the seafood in the restaurant using the expressive speech act “liking.” Savannah said the seafood is “very good.” which can be indicated as the expression of liking something a lot.
      Datum (21)
      Savannah : “Nice to meet you. Thank you so much.”
      John : “Nevermind.”
      Setting : At the beach, after John took Savannah’s bag from the ocean
Savananh felt grateful for John for getting her bag out of the ocean. Savannah were in the pier with their friends and her bag fell in the ocean and John dived to get it for Savannah. Savannah expressed her feeling of delights and gratefulness with the expressive speech act “liking.”

c. The Expression of Disliking

Disliking is when speaker expresses their dislikes towards something. Usually it has negative nuance which is used to express things that are not good. There are 3 examples of disliking found in the data. The examples and the explanation can be seen as below

Datum (6)
Savannah: “Oh shit, oh no oh no.”
Randy: “Oh! I’m so sorry.”
Setting: At the pier, Randy made Savannah’s bag fell into the Ocean.

Savannah cursed and showed her dislikes by using strong language. Randy knocked her purse off the pier and into the ocean. Savannah who was surprised did not like that her bag fell in to the water. Savannah was worried she lost everything in the bag that is why Savannah used the expressive speech act of “Disliking” to show her dislike.

Datum (25)
John: “What is he doing here?”
Savannah: “I invited him.”
Setting: At Savannah’s parents’ party. Savannah invited Randy to the party because he lives near. John was also invited to the party. John saw Randy in the party.
John did not like that Randy was also invited to the party of Savannah’s parents because they fought a week before. Randy also liked Savannah and wanted Savannah as his girlfriend. John showed his dislike by saying “what is he doing here?” which can be seen as his way of saying “I don’t like him here.” Savannah then told John that she invited him because Randy lived near. John then did not say anything but still looked uncomfortable.

d. The Expression of Praise

Praising is used to express admiration and or approval of the achievements or characteristic of a person or thing. The examples of this expressive speech act can be seen in the examples below.

Datum (1)
John: “you look good captain!”
Captain: /laughs/ “thanks john!”
Settings: At the base camp.
John and his team were at the base camp when their captain came in and talked to them. John gives the compliment to the captain by saying the captain looked good. John complimented the captain’s appearance and thus can be said as the
expression of praise with the function of *praising* the addressee or the other people.
Datum (20)  
Savannah : “You look so great Alan!”  
Alan : /smiles/  
Setting : At the barn, Alan is playing with the horse.  
Savannah praised Alan who looks great on the back of the horse. It was Alan’s first time riding the horse and Alan made it successfully that is why Savannah complimented him and told him that he looked great riding the horse. The expression praising here is a positive encouragement from Savannah to Alan.

e. The Expression of Apologizing

_Apologizing_ is used when an agent-speaker expresses negative feelings towards patient-addressee to appease them. There are 6 expressions of apologizing found in the data. The examples can be seen below.
Datum (2)  
John : “Jesus, I'm so sorry, man.”  
Tim : “Hey, I like it. Makes me look like a baddass.”  
Setting : At Savannah's house, after John fought with Randy at the beach and punched Tim's in the face.

John seen Tim with swollen eyes after he punched him in the face with his elbow accidentally and feels regret because he did not see Tim behind him after he fought with Randy. John feels regret after looking at Tim’s swollen eyes that is why he used the expression of apologizing to ask Tim's forgiveness.
Datum (12)  
Savannah : “I am so sorry, if I know..”  
John : “No problem.”  
Setting : At a barn, when they did not see each other for long time.

John just comeback from his father’s funeral and he told Savannah that his father was died and Savannah felt regret because she did not know that his father died. The expression of apologizing here shows Savannah’s regret because she did not know John’s father died.

f. The expression of Thanking

_Thanking_ is used where the speaker expresses positive feelings to the addressee, who has done a service to the speaker. There are 8 expressions of thanking found in the data. Here are some examples of the expressive speech act _thanking._
Datum (4)  
John : “Thanks for the ride, tim.”  
Tim : “No problem.”  
Setting : At John's house, at night , after Tim gave him a ride home
John feels grateful for Tim because Tim took him back to his house after he saw John at the side of the road hard to walk with the surfboard. Tim forced John to get in his truck with Alan who are going to get ice cream in town. The expression of thanking is best used because Tim helped John get home and John is thankful for Tim and Alan.

Datum (5)
John : "Hey, pop. Thank you for coming."
Mr. Tyree: "Well."
Setting : At the airport waiting room, John is going to the basecamp.

John felt thankful for his father for coming to see him at the airport before he is going to the basecamp and going to wars. Mr.Tyree came to see him and said good bye. The expression of being thankful here is expressed by John using the expressive speech act called Thanking.

Conclusion
Having analyzed the expressive speech acts in the utterances of the main characters of Dear John movie, the researcher made some conclusions. In this research, there are 28 appropriate utterances found in the movie that were analyzed as the examples of the expressive speech act occurrences. The analysis was based on the theories of expressive speech acts by Yule (1996) and Clark (1995). There are 6 types of expressive speech acts that occurred in the utterances of the main characters. They are thanking, apologizing, liking, disliking, the expression of praise, and the expression of pleasure. The most dominant expressive speech act that was used by the main characters is the expression of thanking which is the 28.5% of the data and occurred eight (8) times throughout the entire movie. The least expressive speech act that was used is Pleasure which only occurred once and made up 3.5% of the overall percentage.

There are a few functions of expressive speech act. They are pleasure, congratulating, liking, disliking, praising, apologizing, and thanking. Pleasure is used to show one’s happy feelings towards something, congratulating is used to celebrate someone else’s achievement, praising is used to make someone feels appreciated and to compliment someone on something, apologizing is used to ask for an apology, to be polite, thanking is used to show one’s gratitude towards something or someone. All the functions of these expressive speech acts were found in the utterances of the main characters.

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