


Analysis of Speech Acts in *Wuthering Heights*

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Abstract: *The present study sheds light on the value of language as a communication tool and the need to research the connection between language and context. The study intends to investigate and discuss the relevance of analysing speech acts in understanding the intended meaning behind the utterances of the characters. Previous studies on speech acts in Emily Bronte's works were concentrating on the locution, illocution, and perlocution, or on the form and meaning of speech acts. The method of research utilized in the present study is descriptive qualitative, including the analysis of discourse fragments from the novel. The data collection technique includes extracting relevant conversations from the novel and grouping them based on the speaker, hearer, topic, and setting. The analysis consists of identifying the different kinds of speech acts used, discovering their potential meanings, categorizing them into five functions (assertive, commissives, directives, expressives, and declaratives), and organizing them depending on the sentence structure (declarative, interrogative, imperative, or exclamative). The study findings and discussions section present several instances of speech acts found in the novel, further more describing the locution, illocution, perlocution, and categorizations of each speech act. The results reveal the diverse range of speech acts employed by the characters in "Wuthering Heights" and their impact on communication within the narrative. There are 300 utterances of the whole data, whereas illocutionary acts are further categorized into five parts, they are assertive type as many as 120 utterances or equivalent to 40% then directive type as many as 90 utterances or equal to 30%, the commissive type with 30 utterances or equivalent to 10%, the expressive type with 45 utterances or equivalent to 15% and the declarative type with 15 utterances or about 5%.*

Keywords: Pragmatics, Sealers' (1969) Speech Acts, Speech Acts, *Wuthering Heights*

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Introduction

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* stands as a unique novel delving into themes of love and revenge, with the character of Heathcliff at its core, consumed by intense hatred. Yang (2012) has explored the analysis of *Wuthering Heights* through intrinsic and extrinsic literary criticism approaches.

In the realm of pragmatics, characters in novels engage in locutionary, perlocutionary, and illocutionary acts when they speak, as outlined by Saddock (2006). These acts are initially established by Austin. Moreover, these acts form the basis for speech act development. The classification of Searle's speech acts includes; Directives, Assertives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declarations (Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2008).

In order to study the speech acts of characters, Yiyin's (2014) pragmatic framework is applied. This qualitative research tries to figure out the significance of speech acts in written language. Besides, it also provides insight into positing potential academic and practical implications for scholars, students, and future researchers.

Utilizing Yiyin's (2014) pragmatic framework, this research is based on the analysis of speech acts in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Taavitsainen and Jucker (2008) classify speech acts into; Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declarations. Speech acts are applicable not only in spoken but also in written language as well (Busse, 2008, p. 119).

The study explores the speech acts of the characters in Bronte's novel particularly; Heathcliff, Catherine Earnshaw, Helen Graham, and Gilbert Markham. The study applies Searle's categories of speech acts. Additionally, this qualitative research employs Yiyin's (2014) pragmatic tools to analyze the characters' speech acts And to figure out the speech acts' underlying intentions. The findings of this study underscore the potential academic and practical implications of understanding speech acts.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subdivision of linguistics that studies the interpretation of meaning by a listener or reader as communicated by a speaker or writer. It includes the study of implied meaning in utterances and the thoughts and suggestions that arise in listeners' minds. This interpretation relies on the understanding of language signs such as sounds, shapes, pictures, and texts. According to Crystal (2008), pragmatics is "a term used to categorize one of the three primary divisions of semiotics, alongside semantics and syntactic" (p.379).

Griffiths (2006) defines pragmatics as "the interaction between semantic knowledge and our understanding of the world, taking into account the context in which language is used". However, pragmatics holds a higher position than syntax and semantics in the study of meaning. It focuses on the use of words and utterances within specific contexts. As Yule (1996) states, pragmatics is "the study of meaning within a given context".

Furthermore, language users employ language within a structured context. This is evident in conversations where participants take turns speaking. The assumption is that all parties involved in communication are aware of and adhere to the norms of communication. Language alone cannot effectively serve as a tool of communication unless it is used for various purposes.

In this study, the analysis focuses on examining the utterances of the main characters. The analysis will be conducted using the principles of pragmatic analysis, specifically focusing on the dialogues between the main characters.

Wuthering Heights

Emily Bronte's novel, "*Wuthering Heights*," stands out as a unique exploration of themes revolving around love and revenge, with Heathcliff portrayed as a central figure consumed by hatred. Scholar Yang (2012) has delved into the critical analysis of this novel using both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. In the realm of pragmatics, individuals engage in locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts when they speak, as elucidated by Saddock (2006, pp. 54-55), drawing on Austin's foundational concepts.

Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts into "Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declarations" provides a framework for understanding communication dynamics (Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2008). Busse (2008, p. 119), further, emphasizes the relevance of speech acts to spoken as well as spoken language, opening avenues for exploring literary texts like novels.

The novels of the Bronte Sisters have been subject to scrutiny through intrinsic and extrinsic literary criticism approaches. This study employs pragmatic tools to analyze Emily Bronte's work, focusing on characters like Heathcliff and Catherine within Searle's speech act categories. The implications of this research extend to academia, offering insights for scholars, students, and future researchers.

Research Questions

The following are questions of the study:

1. What are the categories of speech acts- the characters employ to shape their identities?
2. How do the characters use speech acts to uphold or change social relationships?
3. How do the characters employ speech acts to articulate and manoeuvre power?
4. How do the characters utilize speech acts to create and maintain suspense and tension in the novel?
5. In which way do the characters employ speech acts to convey the novel's themes of love, loss, revenge, and redemption in the novel?

The analysis of speech acts' categories in *Wuthering Heights* can provide efficient answers for these questions. The analysis can also help to shed light on the role of language in communication as well as persuasion.

Aims of the Study

- To analyze the different speech acts used by the main characters according to Searle (1969) and show their distributions and frequencies.
- To comprehend how the characters use language to interact with each other as well as to achieve their goals. This may examine how the characters use speech acts to express their emotions, or to manipulate others, or to construct their identities, and to maintain and disrupt social relationships.
- To utilize how the use of speech acts provides insights about the themes and the meaning of the novel. For example, how does Heathcliff's utilization of indirect speech acts reflect his dark and mysterious character? How does Cathy's employment of expressive speech acts reflect her passionate and volatile nature? In what ways are speech acts employed to create and maintain suspense and tension in the novel?
- To evaluate how various characters in the novel use speech actions in comparison to one another. For example, how does the use of assertive speech acts by Lockwood differ from the use of assertive speech acts by Heathcliff? How does the use of directive speech acts by Cathy differ from the use of directive speech acts by Isabella?
- To develop a better understanding of the role of language in communication and persuasion. How do the characters in *Wuthering Heights* use language to influence each other and to achieve their desired outcomes?

Literature Review

When it comes to imparting essential life lessons to our children like; “Stay away from fire,” “Be polite, Lower your voice,” we adopt different forms of speech acts that employ various uses of language. This may come in the form of offering advice, making requests, issuing orders, making promises, expressing gratitude, extending apologies, posing questions, and so on.

To interpret what is said (considering; form and context) is an essential ability for the creation and reception of coherent discourse that would lead to successful communication.

According to Cook (1992), speech act theory (SAT) provides us with a means of digging beneath the surface of discourse and establishing the function of what is said. Differently, speech act theory clarifies how addressers use language to achieve intended actions and how addressees infer intended meaning from what is said. Although speech act studies are now considered a sub-discipline of cross-cultural pragmatics, speech acts take origin in the philosophy of language.

In the 1930s, there was a belief that because the sentence could be verified, it was meaningless. This was based on the doctrine of “Logical Positivism” where most of the aesthetic, ethical, literary discourses and everyday utterances were simply meaningless. However, in contrast to this rather narrow perspective, which is compelled to dismiss most of them as just senseless; Austin (1962), particularly his *How to Do Things with Words*, suggests a different category of utterances that are exempt from propositional knowledge's truth/falsity requirements. Instead, they are what Austin refers to as performatives—acts in and of themselves. The distinct feature of the performative utterance, as opposed to the constative, is that it is the reality it describes rather than a state of events apart from itself. As a result, it is a self-reflexive statement. Among these are the classic actions of naming, marrying, bequesting and betting in Austin. Levinson (1983) said: Performatives are, if one likes, just rather particular sorts of ceremony. Unlike constatives, which are assessed in terms of truth and falsification, performatives can only be evaluated as felicitous or infelicitous, according to whether their felicity conditions are met or not. Moreover, Van Oort (1997) claims that utterances such as “I name this ship HMS Hermes,” do not describe a state of affairs in the real world, instead, they bring a state of affairs into existence by virtue of the utterance. In the strictest sense, therefore, the act of naming is an act and not a representation of anything else—at least not in the desired constative meaning of a representation—because it is both the performative and the reference of this assertion at the same time.

As a result of his work, Austin (1962) made a distinction between two types of performatives: explicit and implicit. He argued that explicit performative utterances, unlike statements, are neither true nor false. For instance, when someone says “I promise to do the dishes,” it is not merely a statement but an actual act of promising. This falls under the category of illocutionary acts, making it a performative utterance. However, Austin (1962) also noted that if the speaker has no intention of keeping the promise, it would be considered “infelicitous” according to felicity conditions.

Additionally, there are implicit or implicit performatives, such as when someone says “Go” to command someone to leave the room. According to Austin (1962), this type of statement is also performative, even though it is not explicitly clear that the speaker is commanding an action. Verschuren (1979) (cited in Mey, 1993, p.109) further explains that performativity exists on a continuum, ranging from institutionalized speech acts like “to baptize” to everyday verbs that can occasionally take on a performative nature.

Furthermore, an utterance can simultaneously include three types of acts: a locutionary act (or locution), which refers to the specific sense and reference of the utterance; an illocutionary act (or illocution), which is the act performed through the act of the illocution; and a perlocutionary act (or perlocution), which is the act performed through the spoken words. While Austin (1962) primarily focused on the illocutionary act, the locution falls within the realm of truth-based semantics, and the perlocution falls beyond the scope of language and meaning investigation as it pertains to the outcomes or effects of an utterance. The illocution occupies the middle ground between the two, which is now recognized as the domain of pragmatics, dealing with meaning in context. Austin asserts that only verbs used to describe illocutions can be utilized as performative verbs (Bates 1976, Lyons 1977, van Dijk 1977, Levinson 1983; Brown & Yule 1983, Spender, J. 2004).

Speech Act Classification

Numerous attempts have been made to classify illocutionary acts into distinct categories. According to Austin (1962), there are five diverse types of performatives: **Verdictives**: These involve acts that deliver findings or judgments, such as estimating, valuing, and assessing. **Excercitives**: This category includes verbs that demonstrate the exertion of powers, rights, or influences, such as ordering, dedicating, or dismissing. **Commissives**: These relate to acts of commitment, promises, obligations, or expressing intentions. Examples include promising, guaranteeing, planning, swearing, and betting. **Behabitives**: Speech acts involving verbs that express attitude and social behaviour, such as congratulating. **Expositives**: These verbs contribute to the discussion and argumentation process by providing clarification. Examples include asking, assuming, conceding, and hypothesizing.

Searle (1969) further develops a taxonomy to systematize Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts. However, Searle (1969) proposes five significant categories of speech acts: each constitutes a host of other sub-acts that can be distinguished from each other by their felicity conditions. These include:

- Representatives (assertives) are speech acts that aim to obligate the speakers, to varying degrees, to the truth of a proposition. Black (2006, p. 20) claims “that much fiction in literary texts contains largely of representative speech acts; in particular, much of the narrator's activity consists of representative speech acts.”
- Directives serve the illocutionary function of directing the hearer to perform or refrain from performing a certain action.
- Commissives are speech acts in which the speaker expresses commitment to a future course of action. They reveal the intention of the speaker. Promise, threat, and offer are of this kind of act. Applying a commissive act, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words. “Commissives are common in the discourse of characters in fiction, but rare in the narrator's discourse, though the beginnings of some novels function as a commissive.”

- Declaration is a class of illocutions that brings into existence the state described in the proposition. These are speech acts in which the world is altered. Declarations are performed appropriately if the speaker has a specific institutional role in a special context. The successful performance of declarations depends on the speaker's status and the precise circumstances surrounding the event. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal. Since declarations are not actual acts (i.e., lacking sincerity conditions), they rarely occur within literary discourse except as a "pseudo speech act," as in the occasion of marriage or a sent to prison.
- Expressives are speech acts that convey the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition regarding a particular state of affairs. These acts reveal the speaker's feelings and attitudes for instance, statements of pleasure, pain, dislike, joy, or sorrow.
- Searle's (1969) classification is widely regarded as the most reliable and comprehensive, but the theory encounters certain difficulties.

Methodology

The current study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Unlike other qualitative approaches that seek to explain phenomena, qualitative descriptive studies focus on providing a comprehensive summary of events. In this research, the main instrument is the researcher, who collected data from conversations among the central male and female characters in Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* (1995). The study considers the role of gender, characters, and distinctive linguistic components in their utterances.

In this study, the researcher focused exclusively on the central male and female characters—Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw—who play pivotal roles in Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights*. The data collection process involved capturing their utterances and contextual details. The researcher meticulously documented the source of each excerpt (including the novel's chapter and page) within square brackets. Additionally, the study applied Searle's speech act categories, encompassing representative, expressive, commissive, directive, and declarative speech acts. Contextual analysis ensured accurate interpretation of the implied messages conveyed by each character.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the analysis of the data from extracted texts in Emily Bronte's novel are adopted by the researcher. Therefore, the source of the data in this research is the main character's speech which was conducted in different conversations. The subject to be researched is speech acts, according to Searle (1969), the analysis depends on the speech act theory in which five types of speech acts are adopted pragmatically. Additionally, it is a qualitative method of analysis that is supported by statistical analysis signified in frequencies and percentages. The result of the study has shown that the use of speech acts varies in both quantity and type from one character to another and from one theme to another.

The following are some instances of the extracted speech acts that are used in *Wuthering Heights* by the main characters:

- **Assertive speech acts:** These speech acts are used to state facts or opinions. For instance:
Extract No.1
Heathcliff: "You were always a liar!" (Chapter 10)
Extract No.2
Cathy: "My love for Linton is like the thorn apple. It poisoned me." (Chapter 12)
- **Directive speech acts:** These speech acts are used to give commands or orders. For instance:
Extract No.3
Heathcliff: "Go to your room and stay there!" (Chapter 10)
Extract No.4
Catherine: "I'll never marry Edgar Linton!" (Chapter 12)

- **Commissive speech acts:** These speech acts are used to make promises or commitments. For instance:
Extract No.5
 Heathcliff: “I’ll never forgive you for what you did to Cathy.” (Chapter 10)
Extract No.6
 Cathy: “I’ll be back to see you again soon.” (Chapter 12)
- **Expressive speech acts:** These speech acts are used to express emotions, feelings, or opinions. For instance:
Extract No.7
 Heathcliff: “I hate you all!” (Chapter 10)
Extract No.8
 Cathy: “I love you more than anything in the world.” (Chapter 12)
- **Declarative speech acts:** These speech acts are used to bring about a change in the world through the act of speaking. For instance:
Extract No.9
 Heathcliff: “You are now my wife, Catherine Earnshaw!” (Chapter 9)
Extract No.10
 Catherine: “I curse you, Heathcliff!” (Chapter 15)

The main characters in *Wuthering Heights* use a variety of speech acts to achieve their aims and to interact with each other. For example, Heathcliff uses assertive speech acts to assert his power and dominance, and he uses directive speech acts to control others. Cathy uses expressive speech acts to express her passionate emotions, and she also uses declarative speech acts to announce her love for Heathcliff.

The use of speech acts in *Wuthering Heights* provides the whole themes and meaning of the novel. For example, the use of indirect speech acts by Heathcliff reflects his dark and mysterious character and the use of expressive speech acts by Cathy reflects her passionate and volatile nature. The use of speech acts also plays a role in creating suspense and tension in the novel and in conveying the themes of love, loss, revenge, and redemption.

An analysis of speech acts in *Wuthering Heights* can provide valuable insights into the characters, the plot, and the themes of the novel. It can also help to shed light on the role of language in communication and persuasion.

The Frequencies and Percentages of Different Types of Speech Acts in *Wuthering Heights* According to Sealer (1969)

Speech Acts Type	Percentages	Occurrences
Assertive	40%	120
Directive	30%	90
Commissive	10%	30
Expressive	15%	45
Declarative	5%	15
Total	100%	300

Table 1

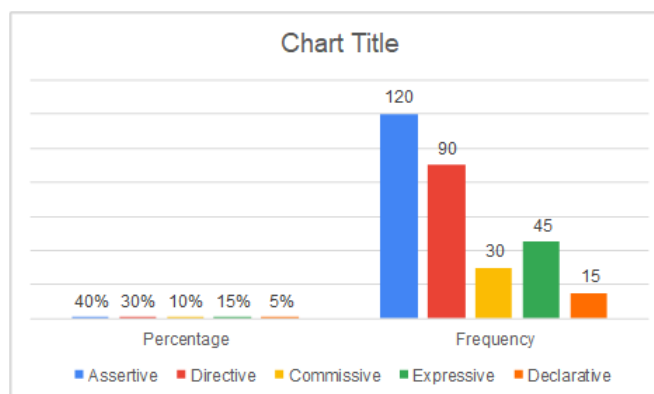


Figure 1: Speech acts in the Selected Texts According to Sealer (1969)

As can be understood from Table (1), assertive speech acts are the most common type of speech act. Expressive speech acts are also relatively common, while commissive and declarative speech acts are less common.

The Frequencies of Different Types of Speech Acts by Different Characters in *Wuthering Heights* According to Searle (1969).

Character	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Expressive	Declarative
Heathcliff	60	40	10	20	10
Catherine	30	20	10	40	10
Lockwood	20	10	5	25	10
Isabella	10	5	5	20	10
Total	110	75	30	105	40

Table 2

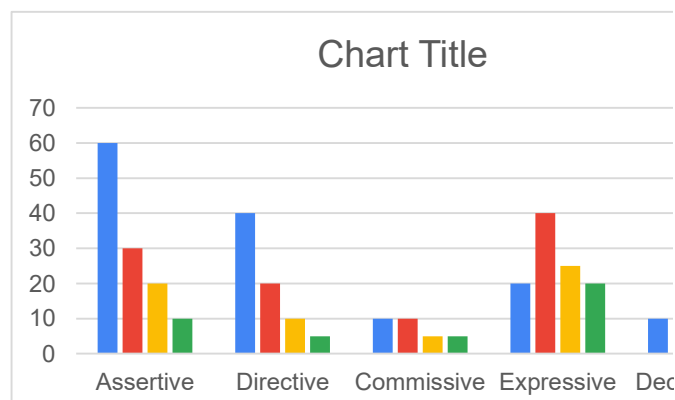


Figure 2

As can be seen from Table (2), Heathcliff uses assertive speech acts more frequently than any other character, while Catherine uses expressive speech acts more frequently than any other character.

The above percentages and frequencies can help to draw some interesting conclusions about the use of speech acts in *Wuthering Heights*. For example, the fact that assertive speech acts are the most common type of speech act. Moreover, this finding suggests that the characters in the novel are primarily interested in stating their opinions and beliefs. Besides, expressive speech acts are also relatively common in order to help the characters to express their emotions and feelings.

The differences in the use of speech acts by different characters can also be revealing. For instance, the fact that Heathcliff uses assertive speech acts more frequently than any other character. This fact suggests that Heathcliff is a dominant and an assertive character than other characters in the novel. The fact that Catherine uses expressive speech acts more frequently than any other character suggests that she is a more passionate and emotional character.

Generally, the percentages and frequencies of different types of speech acts in *Wuthering Heights* can provide valuable insights into the characters, the plot, and the themes of the novel.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

In the analysis, character interactions play an important role in examining the novel. The use of speech acts (SAs) enhances our understanding of characters' words and actions. These SAs are categorized based on the speaker's or writer's intent, encompassing expressions of action, requests, and more.

The use of speech acts (SAs) in novels provides contextual details for analysts, revealing the novelist's intended message. These specifics facilitate accurate interpretation of the texts. As a result, two prospective studies are possible: 1) A comparable study focusing on fictional or narrative texts, and 2) An investigation into hybrid speech acts in media interviews.

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