

A Speech Act Analysis of Expressive Language in the Animated Movie *Brave* (2012): Investigating Emotional Communication Through Movie Dialogue

Eva Dwi Asri¹

Sigit Suharjono²

¹² Universitas Muhammdiyah Kotabumi

¹ evamobile971@gmail.com

² sigit.suharjono@umko.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the use of expressive speech acts in the movie "Brave" to identify their types and perlocutionary effects in character interactions. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on the utterances produced by the characters in the film. Data were collected through observation and note-taking techniques and analyzed using Searle's classification of expressive speech acts. The findings reveal that 36 locutions are categorized as expressive speech acts, which are classified into six types: thanking, congratulating, apologizing, complaining, welcoming, and praising. Among these types, complaining appears most frequently, while congratulating is the least frequent. Additionally, the interpretation of these speech acts is influenced by contextual factors and the responses of the interlocutors, which depend on the situation. Furthermore, the study finds that expressive speech acts produce various perlocutionary effects on the listeners, including happiness, silence, emotional reactions, disagreement, forgiveness, and supportive responses. These effects are reflected through both verbal and non-verbal reactions shown by the interlocutors during communication. Therefore, the findings highlight that expressive speech acts play an important role not only in conveying emotions and supporting character development but also in influencing the interlocutors' attitudes and responses throughout the interactions in the movie.

Keywords: *expressive speech acts, pragmatics, movie analysis*

Introduction

Movies are not only a form of entertainment but also a medium of communication that reflects human life and social interaction (Meha & Heryono, 2025). Through dialogue, movie characters express ideas, thoughts, intentions, and emotions, such as gratitude, anger, regret, and admiration. These expressions are closely related to the use of language in communication, where every utterance performed by the characters represents a speech act. Therefore, movies provide meaningful data for analyzing how language is used to convey emotions and achieve communicative purposes in different contexts.

Speech acts are one of the main topics studied in pragmatics because they explain how language functions as a form of action in communication. Speech acts occur in both verbal and nonverbal contexts and are closely related to the situational context in which the utterances are produced (Haula, Mahyuni, 2025). In pragmatic studies, speech acts are regarded as communicative actions performed through spoken or written language. Their effectiveness depends on the shared understanding between speakers and listeners regarding the intended meaning of an utterance (Wahyuningsih et al., 2024). J.L. Austin first introduced the concept of speech acts, and John Searle later developed it. According

to (Austin, 1962), when people produce utterances, they are not merely saying words but also performing actions that carry particular communicative intentions.

(Austin, 1962) identified three dimensions of speech acts, demonstrating that speaking involves more than merely producing words; it also involves performing actions. For example, when someone says, "I apologize," they are not only uttering words but also performing the act of apologizing. Austin classified speech acts into three categories: locutionary acts, which involve the production of utterances; illocutionary acts, which refer to the speaker's intended meaning or communicative function; and perlocutionary acts, which concern the effects of the utterance on the listener.

Later, (SEARLE, 1979) expanded Austin's theory by classifying illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Among these, expressive speech acts are particularly significant because they reveal the speaker's emotions, attitudes, and psychological state toward a particular situation. In movie discourse, expressive acts play an essential role in portraying emotional communication, especially in scenes involving family conflict. Through expressions such as complaints, apologies, praise, gratitude, and admiration, characters communicate their feelings while shaping interpersonal relationships and emotional tension. Therefore, the analysis of expressive speech acts provides a deeper understanding of how family conflicts are constructed through dialogue and how the characters' emotions develop throughout the dialog.

In this study, the researcher is interested in analyzing the expressions in the animated film "Brave." Expressive speech acts are particularly important because they reveal how speakers feel. Searle argues that expressive acts serve as a means for speakers to express or demonstrate their feelings and psychological attitudes toward a situation, such as congratulating, thanking, apologizing, expressing regret, offering condolences, and praising (Dini & Rika, 2023). Through expressive speech acts, we not only communicate with others but also reveal aspects of an individual's character, attitude, and perspective, as noted by (Anastasya & Zuraida Supri, 2024). These expressive acts can occur in conversation through the use of language as a means of communication to convey information, exchange ideas, discuss, and interact with one another.

The use of expressive language can also be observed in movies, as they often reflect real-life communication (Dwi Kusumawardani & Yulianti, 2023). Movies provide rich examples of expressive speech acts through conversations and emotional interactions between characters. Film dialogue serves not only to develop the plot but also to portray interpersonal relationships, conflicts, and emotional experiences. The animated film *Brave* (2012), produced by Pixar Animation Studios, is particularly suitable for this study because it centers on the conflict between Merida and her mother, Queen Elinor. Their interactions illustrate emotional communication shaped by family relationships, authority, resistance, and negotiation of identity. Throughout the film, Merida expresses emotions such as anger, disappointment, regret, gratitude, and admiration while challenging traditional expectations imposed upon her as a princess. These expressive speech acts not only reveal the characters' psychological states but also demonstrate how language constructs emotional tension, family conflict, and character development, making *Brave* an appropriate source for pragmatic analysis.

Studying expressive speech acts in "Brave" is valuable for several reasons. First, it helps us understand how emotions are communicated through language in a fictional yet realistic setting. Second, it shows how movie dialogue can mirror everyday communication, making films useful for teaching language and pragmatics. Third, it highlights cultural values, since expressions of emotion are often shaped by cultural

traditions. For example, the way Merida and her mother express anger reflects both family expectations and cultural norms.

Many researchers have studied speech acts, but most of them focus on different contexts such as TV series, textbooks, short films, or live-action dramas. For example, in (Haula, Mahyuni, 2025) Analyzed a study of pragmatics and speech acts in 'Stranger Things 3', which focuses on analyzing the speech acts in the characters' utterances to determine their types using Searle's theory. She found that assertive and directive acts were the most dominant, while expressive acts were less frequent. Another study by (Nabila et al., 2024) analyzed speech acts in the short film "Validation." In this short film, the researcher focused on classifying the speech acts based on Searle's theory and the types of speech acts used in the Validation short film. She found that the characters engaged in various types of speech acts, including representative, directive, commissive, and expressive acts; she also found that direct speech acts were used more frequently than indirect ones. Meanwhile, research by (Made et al., 2021) which analyzed speech acts in students' textbooks focused on the social functions of speech acts, language features, and language elements. He identified four types of speech acts, namely directive, assertive, expressive, and commissive acts in the students' textbook at a vocational high school using Searle's theory.

Based on these previous studies, it can be concluded that most researchers have focused on identifying and classifying speech act types in various communicative contexts. Although expressive speech acts have been included in several studies, they have generally not been examined as the primary focus of analysis. Instead, previous research has emphasized the forms and classifications of speech acts rather than the communicative effects they produce on interlocutors. Moreover, limited attention has been given to the relationship between expressive speech acts and their perlocutionary effects in animated movie dialogues, particularly in movie portraying family conflict, parent-child relationships, emotional tension, and identity negotiation. This indicates a gap in the existing literature on how emotional expressions influence the feelings, attitudes, and responses of other characters during family interactions. Therefore, this study differs from previous research by not only identifying the types of expressive speech acts but also analyzing their perlocutionary effects in the animated movie "Brave" (2012). As "Brave" presents communication within the context of family conflict and emotional relationships, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how expressive speech acts shape interlocutors' reactions and contribute to the broader field of pragmatic studies on emotional communication in animated films.

This shows that movies can represent real-life communication, especially in expressing emotions. Therefore, this study is conducted under the title "A Speech Act Analysis of Expressive Language in the Animated Movie Brave (2012): Investigating Emotional Communication through Movie Dialogue."

The research questions are as follows:

1. What types of expressive speech acts are used in the animated movie "Brave" (2012) ?
2. What are the perlocutionary acts in the animated movie "Brave" like?

Method

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to explore the phenomenon in depth, focusing on interpretation and meaning. Qualitative research is suitable for studies that seek to understand human experiences, emotions, and interactions (Haula, Mahyuni, 2025). The unit of analysis in this study consisted of the characters' utterances containing expressive speech act functions in the animated film "Brave" produced by Pixar Animation Studios in 2012. The film was chosen due to its strong emphasis on family relationships and emotional conflicts conveyed through dialogue.

The data were collected in several stages. First, the film was played and watched repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline, character development, and emotional contexts. Repeated viewings were necessary because expressive speech acts are often influenced by tone of voice, facial expressions, and situational contexts that may not be clearly identified in a single viewing. Second, the movie script was carefully examined to identify expressive speech acts and to confirm the accuracy of the selected data. Utterances were selected based on their emotional content, such as expressions of apology, gratitude, anger, disagreement, praise, regret, and happiness. Third, note-taking was used to document each selected utterance along with relevant contextual information, including the speaker, the listener, and the situation.

After the data was collected, data analysis was conducted in several stages using a pragmatic approach based on Searle's theory of speech acts. First, the researcher transcribed the dialogues and selected utterances containing expressive acts. Second, the data was reduced by selecting only utterances relevant to the research focus, while unnecessary dialogues were discarded. Third, the selected utterances were coded based on the type of expressive acts using abbreviations such as CMP (Complaining), PRS (Praising), THK (Thanking), APO (Apologizing), CONG (Congratulations) and WLC (Welcoming).

Table 1. Operational Indicators of Expressive Speech Acts

NO	Code	Expressive Speech Acts	Operational Indicators
1	CMP	Complaining	Expressing dissatisfaction, disappointment, annoyance, or criticism toward a situation or person.
2	PRS	Praising	Expressing admiration, or positive evaluation of someone or something.
3	THK	Thanking	Expressing gratitude or appreciation for a benefit, help, or kindness received.
4	APO	Apologizing	Expressing regret or asking forgiveness for a mistake.
5	CONG	Congratulating	Expressing pleasure or happiness for another person's success or achievement.
6	WLC	Welcoming	Expressing hospitality in receiving or greeting someone.

To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by combining data from repeated observations of the film, analysis of the movie script, and relevant theoretical references.

In conclusion, the methodological approach of this study allowed for a comprehensive analysis of expressive speech acts in "Brave". By integrating observation, script analysis, note-taking, and pragmatic interpretation, the study successfully captured both the linguistic features of the utterances and the emotional meanings embedded

within them. This approach highlights the importance of expressive speech acts in conveying emotional and interpersonal functions in cinematic discourse.

Results

This study analyzed expressive speech acts found in the movie “Brave”, focusing on how the characters use language to express their feelings and attitudes in different situations. Based on the analysis, a total of 36 locutions were identified as expressive speech acts produced by the characters throughout the movie. These utterances were then classified into four types according to Searle’s classification of expressive speech acts: thanking, congratulating, apologizing, complaining, and praising. Each type reflects a different psychological state of the speaker, such as gratitude, happiness, regret, disagreement, admiration, or dissatisfaction. The identification and classification of these utterances help to demonstrate how expressive speech acts function in conveying emotions and supporting the development of interactions between characters in the film. The distribution of expressive speech acts found in the data is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 2. Types of Expressive Speech Acts Found in *Brave* (2012)

No	Types of Expressive Speech Acts	Frequency
1	Congratulating	1
2	Praising	7
3	Thanking	2
4	Apologizing	3
5	Welcoming	2
6	Complaining	21
Total		36

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that complaining is the most frequently used type of expressive speech act, with 21 occurrences. This is followed by praising which occurs 7 times; welcoming occurs 2 times; apologizing occurs 3 times; thanking occurs 2 times; while congratulating occurs only 1.

To provide a deeper understanding of the findings, in table 2 the researcher displays the detailed data analysis of the expressive speech acts, including the dialogue excerpts, the speakers, the hearers’ responses, situational contexts, and their communicative functions.

Table 3. Perlocutionary acts of the Dialog Analysis from the Animated Movie *Brave* (2012)

No	Characters	Locutions	Expressive Acts	Perlocutionary Acts	Relations
1	King Fergus	Expresses birthday wishes	Congratulating	Merida feels happy and appreciated.	Father and Daughter
2	King Fergus	Gives praise for her action	Praising	Merida feels encouraged.	Father and Daughter
3	Queen Elinor	Praising her daughter	Praisinsg	Merida feels uncomfortable.	Mother and Daughter
4	Queen Elinor	Expresses admiration	Praising	Lad feels surprised and encouraged.	Mother and Daughter

5	Merida	Compliments someone's strength	Praising	Merida feels annoyed.	Father and Daughter
6	King Dingwal	Expresses appreciation for his son achievement.	Praising	Lad becomes surprised and encouraged.	Father and Son
7	King Dingwal	Expresses admiration to her speech	Praising	Everyone becomes attentive.	Alliance
8	King Fergus	Expresses admiration and appreciation.	Praising	Merida feels appreciated.	Father and Daughter
9	Queen Elinor	Expresses gratitude for someone's help	Thanking	Maudie feels appreciated.	Royal Servant
10	Witch	Expresses appreciation for someone's visit	Thanking	Merida and Elinor become confused.	Witch and Member of the royal family
11	Merida	Tries to apologize by giving her mom a cake	Apologizing	Queen Elinor forgives Merida.	Mother and Daughter
12	King Dingwal	Expresses regret and asks for forgiveness.	Apologizing	Queen Elinor accepts the apology silently.	Alliance
13	Merida	Blames herself and expresses deep regret for what she did	Apologizing	Queen Elinor is emotionally touched.	Mother and Daughter
14	Guard 1	Announces the arrival of the lords.	Welcoming	Guard 2 becomes startled by the announcement.	Alliance
15	Witch	Welcomes visitors to the Crafty Carver.	Welcoming	Merida and Elinor become confused.	Witch and Member of the royal family
16	Merida	Expresses her dissatisfaction and frustration	Complaining	Queen Elinor acknowledges the complaint.	Mother and Daughter
17	Queen Elinor	Expresses annoyance and dissatisfaction	Complaining	Merida disagrees with her mother.	Mother and Daughter
18	Queen Elinor	Expresses dissatisfaction and sarcasm	Complaining	Merida feels frustrated.	Mother and Daughter
19	Merida	Express dissatisfaction	Complaining	Queen Elinor reinforces the rule.	Mother and Daughter
20	Merida	Expresses anger or frustration	Complaining	Queen Elinor becomes angry.	Mother and Daughter
21	Merida	Expresses dissatisfaction toward the marriage arrangement.	Complaining	Queen Elinor justifies the tradition.	Mother and Daughter

22	Merida	Expresses feelings of dissatisfaction with the situation she faces.	Complaining	Queen Elinor attempts to calm Merida.	Mother and Daughter
23	Queen Elinor	Express her dissatisfaction with Merida's stubborn behavior	Complaining	King Fergus realizes the conflict.	Husband and wife
24	Queen Elinor	Express her disappointment and frustration	Complaining	King Fergus encourages discussion.	Husband and wife
25	Merida	Expresses discomfort	Complaining	Queen Elinor realizes Merida's discomfort.	Mother and Daughter
26	King Fergus	Expresses annoyance	Complaining	Queen Elinor becomes annoyed.	Alliance
27	Someone	Expresses disagreement	Complaining	King Dingwall becomes offended.	Alliance
28	Queen Elinor	Expresses anger and disapproval	Complaining	(Keep shooting)	Mother and Daughter
29	Queen Elinor	Expresses disappointment	Complaining	Merida defends herself.	Mother and Daughter
30	Merida	Express her frustration	Complaining	Queen Elinor asserts her authority.	Mother and Daughter
31	Merida	Expresses frustration toward situation	Complaining	Queen Elinor questions the complaint.	Mother and Daughter
32	Merida	Expresses anger toward her mother's controlling behavior	Complaining	Queen Elinor rejects Merida's complaint.	Mother and Daughter
33	Merida	Express her frustration toward her mother's	Complaining	Queen Elinor tries to stop Merida.	Mother and Daughter
34	Witch	Express her dissatisfaction with the customers	Complaining	Merida insists on staying.	Witch and princess
35	Merida	Expresses frustration because she cannot understand her mother's words.	Complaining	Queen Elinor is unable to communicate effectively.	Mother and Daughter
36	King Machintos	Expresses disapproval of the suitors as potential husbands for his daughter.	Complaining	King Dingwall becomes angry.	Alliance

In addition, the analysis shows that expressive speech acts produce various perlocutionary effects on the hearers. These effects include making the hearers feel

appreciated, accepted, guilty, disappointed, surprised, emotionally affected, or encouraged to respond verbally or non-verbally. The hearers' responses are reflected through both verbal reactions and non-verbal behaviors, such as smiling, remaining silent, expressing disagreement, showing surprise, or using physical gestures. These findings indicate that expressive speech acts influence the hearers' emotions and subsequent actions in various communicative situations throughout the movie, including moments of conflict, appreciation, and reconciliation.

Discussion

The analysis of expressive speech acts in "Brave" (2012) shows that each type serves a different communicative function. "Complaining" is the most dominant type because the story focuses on the conflict between Merida and Queen Elinor, whose differing views on freedom, responsibility, and marriage frequently lead to expressions of dissatisfaction. In contrast, praising, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and welcoming mainly appear in scenes of support, appreciation, and reconciliation. These findings indicate that the use of expressive speech acts is closely related to the plot development and the emotional relationship between the characters.

The analysis also shows that expressive speech acts produce various perlocutionary effects, such as silence, smiles, surprise, and changes in attitude or behavior. These responses contribute to the development of conflict and its eventual resolution, particularly in the mother-daughter relationship. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on identifying speech act types, this study examines the relationship between expressive speech acts and their perlocutionary effects, highlighting their role in shaping emotional communication in the animated film "Brave" (2012).

Congratulating

Data 1

King Fergus: "Happy birthday, my wee darling!"

Merida: (smiles)

The limited occurrence of congratulating expressions in Brave reflects the film's focus on family conflict rather than celebratory events. According to (SEARLE, 1979), congratulating is one of the paradigm expressive speech acts because it expresses the speaker's psychological state toward the hearer's special occasion. King Fergus's utterance, "Happy birthday, my wee darling!", expresses his pleasure and affection toward Merida on her birthday. Following (Austin, 1962) concept of perlocutionary acts, the utterance produces an effect on the hearer, which is reflected in Merida's smile, indicating that the congratulation is positively received.

Praising

Data 2

King Fergus: "Now, there's a good girl."

Merida: (smiles)

Data 2 contains the utterance "Now, there's a good girl," which is classified as an expressive speech act of praising. The utterance is produced by King Fergus after Merida successfully hits the target with the bow he has given her. The expression serves as a form of parental validation, acknowledging Merida's achievement and encouraging her self-confidence. By calling her "a good girl," King Fergus conveys his pride and emotional support as a father. The perlocutionary effect of the utterance is reflected in Merida's

smile, which indicates that she feels appreciated and emotionally affirmed by her father's words. Thus, the utterance functions not only to express admiration but also to reinforce parental support and strengthen the emotional bond between the two characters.

Data 3

Queen Elinor: "You look absolutely beautiful."

Merida: "I can't breathe."

Data 3 contains the utterance "You look absolutely beautiful," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of praising. The statement is expressed by Merida's mother to show admiration for Merida's appearance after she is given a formal dress. However, the context reveals that the dress is tight and uncomfortable, making it difficult for Merida to move. This is reflected in her response, "I can't breathe," which indicates discomfort rather than appreciation.

Data 4

King Dingwal: "Well done, Lad! Well done!"

Lad: (shocked)

Data 4 contains the utterance "Well done, Lad! Well done!", which is classified as an expressive speech act of praising. King Dingwall says this after his son successfully hits the target during the archery competition. The utterance expresses his pride in his son's achievement. The perlocutionary effect is shown by the lad's shocked reaction, indicating that he did not expect either his success or his father's enthusiastic praise. Thus, the utterance functions not only as praise but also as a form of parental recognition.

Data 5

Queen Elinor: "It's perfect!"

Merida: (growled)

Data 5 contains the utterance "It's perfect!", which is categorized as an expressive speech act of praising. Queen Elinor uses the utterance to express her approval of Merida's appearance and to indicate that it meets her expectations. However, Merida's growl shows a negative perlocutionary effect, reflecting her frustration and rejection of her mother's expectations. Thus, the utterance functions not only as praise but also as an expression of recognition that intensifies the conflict between mother and daughter.

Data 6

Merida: "Good arm."

King Fergus: and such a lovely flowing locks

Data 6 consists of the utterances "Good arm" and "And such lovely flowing locks," which can be classified as expressive speech acts of praising. Merida uses "Good arm" to acknowledge someone's ability or physical strength, showing her positive judgment. In a similar way, King Fergus says "And such lovely flowing locks" to express admiration for someone's appearance,

Data 7

King Dingwall: "That's beautiful".

Everyone: "(silent and listen to merida speak)"

Data 7 contains the utterance "That's beautiful," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of praising. King Dingwall expresses his admiration and appreciation for Merida's speech. The perlocutionary effect is shown by the other

characters remaining silent and listening attentively to Merida. Their silence reflects acceptance and respect for her words, indicating that King Dingwall's praise encourages them to pay closer attention to what Merida is saying. Thus, the response is considered a perlocutionary effect because it demonstrates how the utterance influences the listeners' attitudes and behavior.

Data 8

King Fergus: "Just like your mom. You devil."

Merida: (Smile)

Data 8 contains the utterance "Just like your mom. You devil," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of praise. King Fergus says this to express his affection and admiration for Merida after she displays a trait similar to her mother's. Merida responds with a smile, indicating that she accepts and appreciates her father's compliment.

The use of praising expressions in *Brave* is relatively limited because the story mainly focuses on conflict rather than positive evaluation. According to (SEARLE, 1979), expressive speech acts express the speaker's psychological state. In this study, praising reflects the speaker's admiration toward the hearer. Following (Austin, 1962), these utterances produce perlocutionary effects such as making the hearers feel appreciated, encouraged, surprised, or uncomfortable.

Thanking

Data 9

Queen Elinor: "Thank you, Maudie."

Maudie: (smiles)

Data 9 contains the utterance "Thank you, Maudie," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of thanking. Queen Elinor says this after receiving a letter from Maudie, expressing her appreciation. The utterance also reflects social politeness in the relationship between a queen and her royal servant, showing respect despite their different social status. The perlocutionary effect is shown by Maudie's smile, indicating that the expression of gratitude is positively received and appreciated.

Data 10

Witch: "*Thank you for visiting. Have a lovely day.*"

Merida and Queen Elinor: (shocked)

Data 10 contains the utterance "Thank you for visiting. Have a lovely day," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of thanking. However, in this context, the expression functions as a social formula used to politely end an interaction rather than as a genuine expression of personal gratitude. The perlocutionary effect is reflected in Merida and Queen Elinor's shocked reaction, as they are surprised that the witch dismisses them instead of helping to break the curse. Thus, the utterance serves as a conventional closing expression that creates an unexpected response from the hearers.

The limited number of thanking expressions in *Brave* can be attributed to the movie's emphasis on conflict rather than polite interaction. (SEARLE, 1979) identifies thanking as one of the paradigm expressive speech acts because it expresses the speaker's psychological state of gratitude toward the hearer. From (Austin, 1962) perspective, these utterances produce effects on the hearers, such as feeling appreciated or acknowledged. Although thanking appears only in a few scenes, it helps maintain positive interpersonal relationships.

Apologizing

Data 11

Merida: "It's peace offering, I made this for u special."

Queen Elinor: You made this for me (shocked)

Data 11 contains the utterance "It's a peace offering, I made this for you special!" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of apologizing expressed indirectly. Merida says this to show her intention to fix the relationship after a conflict. Even though she does not directly say "I'm sorry," the statement shows her regret and desire to make things better.

Data 12

King Macintosh: "My lady queen, I feel terrible, *My humblest apologies.*"

Queen Elinor: (silent)

Data 12 contains the utterance "I feel terrible. My humblest apologies," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of apologizing. King Macintosh says this to show his regret and admit that he has made a mistake. The statement reflects his feelings of guilt and responsibility. Therefore, the illocutionary force of this utterance is apologizing, as it expresses the speaker's remorse toward the hearer.

Data 13

Merida: "*This is all my fault. I did this to you. To us.*"

Queen Elinor: (kiss merida)

Data 13 contains the utterance "This is all my fault. I did this to you. To us," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of apologizing. Merida says this to admit her mistake and show her regret for what has happened. The statement reflects her feelings of guilt and responsibility. Therefore, the illocutionary force of this utterance is apologizing, as it expresses the speaker's sense of remorse toward the interlocutor.

Apologizing occurs only in several important scenes because expressions of regret mainly appear during moments of reconciliation. According to (SEARLE, 1979), apologizing is an expressive speech act through which the speaker expresses regret for a previous action or situation. Based on (Austin, 1962) concept of perlocutionary acts, apologies produce different effects on the hearers, including forgiveness, acceptance, or reconciliation, depending on the context.

Welcoming

Data 14

Guard 1: "My lord. I want to announce you the arrival of the lords."

Guard 2: "Who goes there? Who goes there"

Data 14 contains the utterance "I want to announce to you the arrival of the lords," which can be associated with an act of welcoming because it announces to inform the king that the lords have arrived and are about to be received. Guard 2 responds by asking, "Who goes there? Who goes there?" which indicates that he is startled by the sound because he is asleep.

Data 15

Witch: "Welcome to the Crafty Carver, home of bear-themed carvings and novelties."

Queen Elinor and Merida: "(Confused)"

Data 15 contains the utterance "*Welcome to the Crafty Carver, home of bear-themed carvings and novelties,*" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of welcoming. The Witch uses the utterance as a conventional greeting to receive visitors into her shop and create a hospitable atmosphere. The perlocutionary effect is reflected in Queen Elinor and Merida's confusion, as they are surprised by the Witch's unusual way of greeting them from inside the wooden carving.

Welcoming appears only a few times in *Brave* because the story focuses more on conflict than on social interaction. (SEARLE, 1979) includes welcoming among the paradigm expressive speech acts because it expresses the speaker's positive psychological attitude toward the hearer's arrival. Following (Austin, 1962), the utterances produce different effects on the hearers, such as surprise or readiness to continue the interaction, depending on the situation.

Complaining

Data 16

Merida: "This is all for naught."

Queen Elinor: "I heard that"

Data 16 contains the utterance "*This is all for naught,*" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida expresses disappointment because she believes her efforts have been meaningless. Queen Elinor's response, "*I heard that,*" shows that she recognizes Merida's complaint, indicating that the utterance successfully draws her attention.

Data 17

Queen Elinor: "Merida, a princess does not place her weapons on the table."

Merida: "Mum! It's just my bow."

Data 17 contains the utterance "Merida, a princess does not place her weapons on the table," which is analyzed as an expressive speech act of complaining. Although the utterance is expressed in the form of a reminder, its primary function is to convey Queen Elinor's dissatisfaction with Merida's behavior, which she considers inappropriate for a princess. Rather than simply stating a rule, Queen Elinor expresses her disappointment that Merida fails to meet royal expectations. Merida's response, "Mum! It's just my bow," shows disagreement, indicating that the complaint is rejected and further intensifies the conflict between them.

Data 18

Queen Elinor: "Honestly, Merida. I don't know why you're reacting this way."

Merida: "ughh" (Frustrating)

Data 18 contains the utterance "*Honestly, Merida. I don't know why you're reacting this way,*" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Queen Elinor expresses frustration over Merida's attitude and behavior. The perlocutionary effect is reflected in Merida's expression "*Ughh,*" which indicates irritation and emotional frustration because she feels misunderstood by her mother.

Data 19

Merida: "I suppose a princess just does what she's told."

Queen Elinor: "A princess does not raise her voice."

Data 19 contains the utterance "*I suppose a princess just does what she's told,*" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Through sarcasm, Merida

expresses dissatisfaction with the restrictions placed upon her and her lack of personal freedom. Queen Elinor's response reinforces royal expectations rather than addressing Merida's feelings, showing that the complaint fails to change her mother's attitude.

Data 20

Merida: "No, it's what you've been preparing me for my whole life. I won't go through with it. You can't make me."

Queen Elinor: "Merida!"

Data 20 contains the utterance "*No, it's what you've been preparing me for my whole life. I won't go through with it. You can't make me,*" which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida voices her dissatisfaction with the arranged marriage and rejects the expectations imposed on her. Queen Elinor's response, "*Merida!*", reflects shock and anger, indicating that Merida's complaint intensifies the conflict between mother and daughter.

Data 21

Merida: "Mother. Suitors? Marriage?"

Queen Elinor: "Once there was an ancient kingdom..."

Data 21 contains the utterance "Mother. Suitors? Marriage?", which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Although expressed in the form of questions, the utterance conveys Merida's disbelief and dissatisfaction upon learning about the *arranged* marriage. Instead of directly responding to Merida's concerns, Queen Elinor begins telling a story about the ancient kingdom to justify the tradition. This response indicates that she avoids confronting Merida's complaint and attempts to persuade her by referring to royal customs.

Data 22

Merida: "It's not fair."

Queen Elinor: "Merida. It's marriage. It's not the end of the world."

Data 22 contains the utterance "It's not fair," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida utters this statement to express her dissatisfaction with the marriage tradition imposed upon her. Queen Elinor responds, "Merida. It's marriage. It's not the end of the world," which indicates an attempt to downplay Merida's concerns and calm her emotions.

Data 23

Queen Elinor: "It's entirely from your side of the family."

King Fergus: "I take it the talk didn't go too well, then?"

Data 23 contains the utterance "It's entirely from your side of the family," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Queen Elinor utters this statement to express her dissatisfaction with Merida's stubborn behavior, which she believes comes from King Fergus's family. King Fergus responds, "I take it the talk didn't go too well, then?" which indicates that he realizes the discussion between Elinor and Merida ended unsuccessfully.

Data 24

Queen Elinor: "I do speak to her. She just doesn't listen."

King Fergus: "Come on, now. Pretend I'm Merida. Speak to me. What would you say?"

Data 24 contains the utterance "I do speak to her. She just doesn't listen," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Queen Elinor says this to express her disappointment and frustration because Merida does not listen to her advice or instructions. King Fergus responds, "Come on, now. Pretend I'm Merida. Speak to me. What would you say?" indicating his attempt to help Elinor understand Merida's feelings and improve their communication.

Data 25

Merida: "I can't move. It's too tight."

Queen Elinor: (amazed)

Data 25 contains the utterance "I can't move. It's too tight," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida makes this statement when she puts on a formal dress prepared by her mother and feels dissatisfaction because the dress restricts her movement. Queen Elinor's surprised reaction shows that she is more focused on Merida's appearance than on her discomfort.

Data 26

King Fergus: "I look fine, woman! Leave me be!"

Queen Elinor: (Growled)

Data 26 contains the statement "I'm fine, woman! Leave me alone!" which is categorized as an expressive discourse act in the form of a complaint. King Fergus utters this sentence to express his annoyance and dissatisfaction with Queen Elinor's attention and interference. Queen Elinor responds with a growl, which indicates her dissatisfaction and annoyance with Fergus's reaction.

Data 27

Someone: "Lies"

King Dingwall: "What? I heard that. Go on. Say it to my face."

Data 27 contains the utterance "Lies," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. The utterance is spoken by someone during King Dingwall's speech to express disagreement and dissatisfaction with what has been said. King Dingwall's response, "What? I heard that. Go on. Say it to my face," indicates anger and confrontation because he feels challenged by the accusation.

Data 28

Queen Elinor: "Merida, stop this! Don't you dare loose another arrow."

Merida: (Keep shooting)

Data 28 contains the utterance "Merida, stop this! Don't you dare loose another arrow," which is analyzed as an expressive speech act of complaining. Although the utterance takes the form of a command, it also expresses Queen Elinor's frustration and dissatisfaction with Merida's refusal to follow royal traditions. The directive is therefore motivated by the speaker's negative emotional state toward the hearer's behavior. Merida's decision to continue shooting demonstrates that the complaint fails to change her behavior and instead reinforces the conflict between mother and daughter.

Data 29

Queen Elinor: "You embarrassed them. You embarrassed me."

Merida: "I followed the rules."

Data 29 contains the utterance "You embarrassed them. You embarrassed me," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. The utterance is spoken by Queen Elinor to express her disappointment and dissatisfaction with Merida's behavior during the gathering that disrespectful and humiliating toward both the guests and the royal family. Merida responds, "I followed the rules," to defend herself and justify her actions.

Data 30

Merida: "Just listen."

Queen Elinor: "I am the queen. You listen to me!"

Data 30 contains the utterance "Just listen," which is analyzed as an expressive speech act of complaining. Although it is realized as a request, the utterance primarily expresses Merida's frustration because she feels that Queen Elinor refuses to listen to her thoughts and feelings. The request functions as an expression of dissatisfaction with the ongoing communication between them rather than as a simple directive. Queen Elinor's reply, "I am the queen. You listen to me!", rejects Merida's complaint and further escalates the interpersonal conflict.

Data 31

Merida: "This is so unfair."

Queen Elinor: "Unfair?"

Data 31 contains the utterance "This is so unfair," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida utters this statement to express her dissatisfaction and frustration with the situation she is facing. The response "Unfair?" indicates the listener's surprise and disagreement with Merida's complaint.

Data 32

Merida: "Do you ever bother to ask what I want? No. You walk around telling me what to do, what not to do, trying to make me like you. Well, I'm not going to be like you."

Queen Elinor: "You're acting like a child."

Data 32 contains the utterance "Do you ever bother to ask what I want? No. You walk around telling me what to do, what not to do, trying to make me like you. Well, I'm not going to be like you," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida utters this statement to express her frustration, disappointment, and anger toward her mother's controlling attitude. Queen Elinor responds, "You're acting like a child," which shows criticism and disapproval of Merida's emotional reaction.

Data 33

Merida: "I'll never be like you."

Queen Elinor: "No, stop that!"

Data 33 contains the utterance "I'll never be like you," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. Merida utters this statement to express her dissatisfaction and frustration toward her mother's expectations and pressure to make her become someone like Queen Elinor. The utterance reflects Merida's rejection of her mother's control over her life. Queen Elinor responds, "No, stop that!" which indicates her shock and her attempt to stop Merida's action.

Data 34

Witch: "I'm not a witch! Too many unsatisfied customers. If you're not going to buy anything, get out."

Merida: "No! The wisps led me here!"

Data 34 contains the utterance "Too many unsatisfied customers," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. The Witch says this to express her annoyance and dissatisfaction with the customers she has dealt with before. Then she says, "If you're not going to buy anything, get out," which shows her irritation toward Merida. Merida responds, "No! The wisps led me here!" indicating her refusal to leave because she believes the wisps guided her to the Witch's cottage.

Data 35

Merida: "Sorry, I don't speak bear."

Queen Elinor: (silent)

Data 35 contains the utterance "*Sorry, I don't speak bear*," which is categorized as an expressive act of complaining. Merida says this because she cannot understand her mother, who has transformed into a bear. Although the utterance begins with "*sorry*," it functions as a complaint rather than an apology, expressing her frustration with the communication barrier. Therefore, the illocutionary force of this utterance is complaining, as it reflects the speaker's dissatisfaction with the situation.

Data 36

King Fergus: "None of your sons are fit to marry my daughter."

King Dingwall: "Then our alliance is over! This means war!"

Data 36 contains the utterance "None of your sons are fit to marry my daughter," which is categorized as an expressive speech act of complaining. King Fergus utters this statement to express his dissatisfaction and disapproval of the suitors presented by the other clans. King Dingwall responds, "Then our alliance is over! This means war!", which indicates anger and the breakdown of the alliance due to Fergus's rejection.

The relatively higher frequency of complaining expressions in the movie *Brave* can be attributed to the intense emotional conflicts experienced by the characters throughout the story. Complaining is commonly used to express dissatisfaction, frustration, disagreement, and emotional pressure, especially in situations involving family expectations and personal freedom. According to (SEARLE, 1979), expressive speech acts express the speaker's psychological state toward a particular situation. In this study, complaining reflects the characters' psychological state of dissatisfaction and frustration. Following (Austin, 1962) concept of perlocutionary acts, these complaints produce various effects on the hearers, such as disagreement, rejection, anger, and silence. In this movie, complaining frequently appears in the interactions between Merida and Queen Elinor, where Merida often expresses her unhappiness toward the strict rules and responsibilities imposed on her as a princess. These expressions reflect the emotional tension between mother and daughter and support the development of the central conflict in the story. This finding is consistent with study of (Haula, Mahyuni, 2025), which found that complaining is frequently used to express frustration and annoyance in interpersonal conflicts. However, while Haula's study focuses on conflicts among friends, the complaints in *Brave* mainly arise from family conflict, particularly between Merida and Queen Elinor.

Conclusion

This study examined the use of expressive speech acts in the film “Brave” based on Searle’s classification. The results indicate that the characters use six types of expressive speech acts: thanking, congratulating, apologizing, complaining, welcoming, and praising. Among these categories, complaining occurs most frequently, while congratulating appears only once, reflecting the limited presence of celebratory situations in the storyline. The findings also show that each type of expressive speech act carries a particular communicative function, such as giving approval, showing regret, expressing dissatisfaction, and maintaining social relationships. In addition, the meaning of each utterance is shaped by the context and the response of the interlocutors, which may differ depending on the situation. Moreover, the findings show that expressive speech acts generate different perlocutionary effects on the listeners. These effects can be observed through both verbal and nonverbal reactions, including smiling, silence, emotional expressions, disagreement, surprise, forgiveness, and supportive actions. The perlocutionary effects identified in the movie illustrate how expressive speech acts affect the listeners’ emotions, attitudes, and responses within the communication process. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The data are limited to a single movie, so the findings may not represent the use of expressive speech acts in other contexts. Furthermore, the analysis mainly focuses on verbal expressions, while non-verbal elements are only briefly considered. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to pragmatic studies by offering insight into how expressive speech acts and their perlocutionary effects operate in film discourse. It emphasizes the role of language in expressing emotions, influencing listeners’ responses, building relationships between characters, and supporting the development of the narrative.

Suggestion

Based on the results and limitations of this study, several suggestions can be proposed for future research. First, future researchers are encouraged to examine expressive speech acts in different movies or genres in order to obtain broader and more varied findings. Second, further studies may focus on other types of speech acts or adopt a multimodal approach by analyzing non-verbal aspects such as gestures, facial expressions, and intonation more thoroughly.

In addition, the findings of this study can be applied in the context of English language teaching. Movie dialogues may serve as authentic learning materials to help students understand how expressive speech acts are used in real communication. This can support the development of students’ pragmatic competence, particularly in expressing emotions appropriately in various contexts.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the academic advisor who provided valuable guidance, direction, and academic feedback throughout the research and writing process for this article. Appreciation is also extended to the lecturers of the English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi for their guidance and support in completing this research.

References

- Anastasya, F., & Zuraida Supri, I. (2024). A Pragmatics Study of Expressive Illocutionary Acts in Season 2 of The Summer I Turned Pretty. *English Journal Literacy Utama*, 8(2), 131–141. <https://doi.org/10.33197/ejlutama.vol8.iss2.2024.2655.455>
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *[J. L. Austin]_How_to_Do_Things_with_Words* (pp. 1–147).
- Dini, D. A., & Rika, R. N. (2023). Analyzing Expressive Speech Acts in Comments on 'Teacher Welfare Issues in the National Education System Bill.' *JURNAL ARBITRER*, 10(3), 283–291. <https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.10.3.283-291.2023>
- Dwi Kusumawardani, E., & Yulianti, F. (2023). Expressive Speech Acts found on The Main Character in Venom: Let There Be Carnage Movie. *ELITE JOURNAL*, 5(1), 93–100.
- Haula, Mahyuni, A. (2025). Speech Act In Stranger Things Season 3: A Pragmatics Study. *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10, 121–133.
- John R. Searle. (1979). *Expression And Meaning Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*.
- Made, N., Sukmayanthi, I., Education, E. L., Ganesha, U. P., Tantra, D. K., Education, E. L., Ganesha, U. P., Santosa, M. H., Education, E. L., & Ganesha, U. P. (2021). An Analysis Of Speech Acts In The Student's Textbook At The Senior Vocational High School. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(2), 72–78.
- Meha, D., & Heryono, H. (2025). Expressive Speech Act in the Film 'the Shawshank Redemption': a Pragmatic Study. *English Journal Literacy Utama*, 9(1), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.33197/ejlutama.v9i1.280>
- Nabila, N., Raja, P., & Nurweni, A. (2024). Exploring Speech Acts in the Short Film "Validation." *Premise: Journal of English Education*, 13(3), 1001–1017. <https://doi.org/10.24127/pj.v13i3.10852>
- Wahyuningsih, S., Sakinah, R. M. N., & Fauziyah, S. W. (2024). Speech Act Analysis Experessive Of The Movie "Sing" Analisis Speech Act Experessive Pada Karakter Moon Di Film "Sing." *The GIST*, 6(2), 11–18.