

## **SPEECH ACTS IN JOHN GREEN'S NOVEL "PAPER TOWNS"**

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### **Abstract**

The novel "Paper Towns" in a mystery and young-adult genre tells about Q's adventures with his friends in his search for Margo. This study aims to identify the types of speech acts that appear in John Green's novel "Paper Towns". Speech acts are a subfield of pragmatics that studies how words are used not only to present information but also to perform actions. The theory used is Austin's theory (1962) where Austin divides into three categories of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. This study uses a qualitative data analysis method based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The data were taken from John Green's novel "Paper Towns" and analyzed by reading as much of the novel as possible and trying to understand all the conversations. The researcher categorizes several dialogues that show the types of speech acts in the Paper Towns novel and the meanings of speech acts based on the context of the characters. The results of the study show that the types of speech act in John Green's novel "Paper Towns" include locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts and the meaning of each utterance of the characters in the novel is in accordance with Austin's theory. The conclusion of this study is that the characters in John Green's novel "Paper Towns" use more illocutionary speech acts in each of their speeches and the meaning of each speech act uttered by the characters in the novel is in accordance with the theory put forward by Austin, where locutionary acts are used by characters to say something according to the true meaning. Illocutionary acts are performed by characters to state or inform something that has an implied meaning and purpose. And perlocutionary acts are used by characters so that the interlocutor obeys the wishes of the character.

**Keywords:** Speech Acts, A Locutionary, An Illocutionary, A Perlocutionary, and Novel

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a valuable instrument for speaking and conveying ideas, concepts, or feelings. Speakers express feelings or emotions they are experiencing not only physically but also verbally. In this scenario, the listener can identify times when the speaker is sad, angry, or excited. According to Barton (1994), language is a symbolic system that connects what is happening inside our minds with what is happening outside.

Communication is a vital aspect of both producing and understanding a language. People become more connected because of their understanding of language and its meaning. To reach the speaker's interpretation, the hearer must comprehend the utterance rather than words and phrases. Understanding the speaker and what they are trying to say go hand in hand. Furthermore, context also affects what the speaker implies. Context is essential to help the listener understand what the speaker means and examples of context include when, where, what situation, whom they are talking to, and under what conditions (Sbisa & Turner, 2013; Ariel, 2010).

Austin as quoted by Tsui, 1994, p. 4 describes that speech acts are actions that correspond to the function of produced reports. The three types of speech acts are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

The communication style of a speaker does not only include speaking the language orally or in face-to-face conversation but also written language such as in newspapers, magazines, books, novels, film scripts, short stories, and other publications. A novel is a creatively written, long, and complex imaginary prose story that explores the human experience, usually with a series of related incidents involving several people within a specific specification.

From the novel, the researcher then established two questions in response to the problem of speech acts that occurred to the characters in Paper Towns' novel.

1. What types of speech acts are used in John Green's novel "Paper Towns"?
2. What do speech acts mean based on the context of John Green's novel "Paper Towns"?

## **Review of Literature**

### ***Pragmatic***

Pragmatics addresses the interaction between signs, their users, and interpreters. Levinson (1983) says pragmatics is the study of the interaction between language and context. The ability of language users to link and harmonize sentences, as well as how language is employed in conversation, is referred to as pragmatic. Also, language users' capacity to appropriately match sentences to context and how language is used in conversation. Pragmatics studies the relationship between what is said and what is understood by the listener. Consequently, it is more interesting in knowing what people mean when speaking than in figuring out what the words or phrases they use on their own signify (Yule, 1996).

### ***Speech Acts***

Speech acts are, in general, acts of communication. A specific attitude must be expressed to communicate, and the speech act utilized to do so must match the attitude being expressed. According to Trask (2007, p. 267), the definition of speech acts is an effort at doing something purely by speaking. Austin asserts that there are three types of behaviors that can emerge from any speech or utterance (Paltridge, 2000, p. 16). The three different kinds of deeds are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

#### **1) Locutionary Act**

Locutionary is the practice of merely repeating a sentence from a language or, to put it another way, describing what the speaker says.

#### **2) Illocutionary Act**

The speaker's intention when pronouncing a sentence is an illocutionary deed. Acts like stating, promising, apologizing, threatening, forecasting, ordering, and requesting fall into this category.

#### **3) Perlocutionary Act**

A perlocutionary act is when a speaker uses their words to affect their audience. Some of the outcomes are persuasion, embarrassment, intimidation, boredom, irritation, and inspiration

### ***Discourse Analysis***

Discourse analysis offers us the means to examine bigger units of text, like particular words and textual order, that are characteristic of specific linguistic uses. Discourse analysis, according to Paltridge (2000, p. 3), can help us explain what we say and what we mean and comprehend in a particular scenario.

The description and analysis of spoken interaction is simply one aspect of discourse analysis. McCarthy (1991, p. 5) describes that discourse analysis focuses on examining the connection between language use and the context in which it occurs. Discourse analysis examines how language is used in the real world, including all forms of written texts and spoken data ranging from casual conversation to highly institutionalized modes of communication.

### ***Novel***

A novel is a piece of literature that is constructed through language. Kennedy and Dana (1979, p. 231), in their book "Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama," states that "A novel is a book-length story in prose whose authors try to seat the sense that, while we read we experience actual life." The novel has many words and sentences in terms of number of words and sentences. As a result, the relative meaning procedure is considerably more

straightforward within. Novel stories are lengthier than short stories because they can portray something in greater depth, and many of them contain a variety of complex problems.

A reader cannot be removed from the context of speech while interpreting conversation in a novel because a profound comprehension of the dialogue in the novel cannot be acquired if the reader is unaware of the context in which the speech is being uttered.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

In this study, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive method to achieve the purpose of this research which is to analyze the Speech Acts in John Green's novel "Paper Towns". With the theory that has been presented to support the truth in this research, the researchers have collected data and then described and drawn conclusions about the main problems that exist in this study.

### **Instruments**

There will be two categories of data used in this study: primary and secondary. The first, primary data is the leading data which is the object of this research which is John Green's novel "Paper Towns". Reading multiple books connected to speech act analysis, reading several theses on speech acts, and searching for papers on linguistics as well as some previous research that focuses on analyzing speech acts are examples of secondary data. There will be papers or journals, and many books that can provide the researcher with material, such as vast information about speech acts, which will be investigated in this study's novel Paper Towns.

### **Procedures**

The procedure for collecting data in this study was that the researcher would carefully read John Green's novel "Paper Towns" with the novel in English and Indonesian (translation) then the researcher would try to identify, classify, and understand the dialogue text of the characters in the Paper Towns novel. The next stage is that the researcher will categorize the types of speech acts based on Austin's theory contained in John Green's novel "Paper Towns". The next step, which will take a long time, is for the researcher to interpret the types of speech acts used in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." Finally, the researcher will then provide a summary of the types of speech acts in Paper Towns.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis will be an essential step of every research. Three current flows of activity make up the analysis, according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. There are three steps to do in this research because the researcher will utilize Miles et al. (2014) theory to analyze the data:

#### **Data condensation**

The first step in assessing the data for this study is to condense the data. Data condensation, according to Miles et al. (2014), entails choosing, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and changing data in field notes or written transcripts. The data for this study comes from a transcript of a discussion between a character in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." According to Miles et al. (2014), in this step, the researcher will first assess the data by attentively reading the book and double-checking the data. The researcher will then select the characters in the dialogue or speech that include the speech act to be studied. The researcher will next divide the information into three categories of speech acts: locution, illocution, and perlocution. The researcher will also make various notes related to the speech acts theory found in the transcription of the discussion of characters in John Green's novel "Paper Towns," as well as a summary to help assess the data and move on to the subsequent phases.

#### **Data display**

The data is displayed in the second stage. According to Miles et al. (2014), a view is an organized and compressed collection of data that enables the withdrawal and conclusion of

actions. The researcher will show or display data that contains speech acts in this step. The researcher will demonstrate which conversations or sayings contain speech acts, which categories of speech acts are present in that conversation or speech, why they are classified as one of the speech acts categories, and finally, the meaning of speech acts found in John Green's novel "Paper Towns."

#### ***Conclusion drawing/verification***

The final step in this research data analysis will be to conclude after completing the data condensation and data display. According to Miles et al. (2014). In this step, the researcher synthesizes the study's findings using the research problem, and the speech acts theory from John Green's novel "Paper Towns".

### **FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Types of speech acts**

##### ***a. Locutionary act***

###### **Extract 10**

(Radar told Lacey, Ben, and Q that his parents were irritated) (page 243)

Radar is the last to get off the phone, and when he finally does, he says, **"I'd like to make an announcement. My parents are very annoyed that I'm missing graduation. My girlfriend is also annoyed because we were scheduled to do something very special in about eight hours. I don't want to get into details about it, but this had better be one fun road trip."**

"Your ability to not lose your virginity is an inspiration to us all," Ben says next to me.

The speech acts above include locutionary speech acts. A locutionary act is a type of speech act that says something according to its meaning. The locutionary act of the conversation is "I'd like to make an announcement. My parents are very annoyed that I'm missing graduation. My girlfriend is also annoyed because we were scheduled to do something very special in about eight hours. I don't want to get into details about it, but this had better be one fun road trip." In this case, Radar explained that his escape on graduation night upset his parents and girlfriend. For that, he hopes that the journey he is taking with Lacey, Ben, and Q will be pleasant. The meaning of the utterance uttered by the Radar character when he informs Q, Ben, and Lacey that his parents and girlfriend are disappointed, is based on the context of Q, Ben, and Lacey who are his close friends and experience the same incident as him, so he doesn't have to worry about expressing it.

###### **Extract 12**

(Ben complained by holding his urine) (pages 247-248)

Ben keeps bouncing his legs up and down.

**"I've had to pee for three hours."**

"You've mentioned that."

"I can feel the pee all the way up to my rib cage," he says. "I am honestly full of pee. Bro, right now, seventy percent of my body weight is pee."

"Uh-huh," I say, barely cracking a smile. It's funny and all, but I'm tired.

"I feel like I might start crying, and that I'm going to cry pee."

The speech acts above include locutionary speech acts. A locutionary act is a type of speech act that says something according to its meaning. The locutionary act of the conversation is "I've had to pee for three hours." In this case, Ben says that he has to urinate and has been holding his urine for 3 hours. Ben also added a joke that he couldn't hold it in for too long, and now his whole body was filled with urine. The meaning of the speech uttered by the character Ben when he reveals that he has to urinate is based on the context of Q, Lacey, and Radar who are his traveling companions so he doesn't need to feel embarrassed.

##### ***b. Illocutionary act***

### **Extract 20**

(Q and Margo have coffee after punishing Chuck) (page 67)

Margo leaned across the minivan and put her head on my bony shoulder, her hair falling against my neck. **"I'm tired,"** she said.

"Caffeine," I said. She reached into the back and grabbed us each a Mountain Dew, and I drank it in two long chugs.

The speech acts above include illocutionary acts. Illocutionary act is a speech performed by speakers to state or inform something that is used to do something. The illocutionary act of the conversation is "I'm tired" which means "give me something refreshing." In this case, Margo informs him that she's tired, and Q fires back with caffeine, hinting that they need coffee to recharge after performing Chuck's penalty stunt. The meaning of the speech uttered by the character Margo when she says that she is tired is based on the context of Q who is her best friend, so Margo is free to express her feelings.

### **Extract 22**

(Margo and Q are caught by security guards) (page 76)

"You know a man got kilt here a couple years ago jumping in the big tank, and they told us we can never let anybody go if they break in, no matter if they're pretty." Margo pulled her shirt out so it wouldn't look so clingy. And only then did I realize he was talking to her breasts.

"Well, then I guess you have to arrest us."

**"But that's the thing. I'm 'bout to get off and go home and have a beer and get some sleep, and if I call the police they'll take their sweet time in coming. I'm just thinkin' out loud here."**

The speech acts above include illocutionary acts. Illocutionary act is a performed by speakers to state or inform something that is used to do something. The illocutionary act of the conversation is "But that's the thing. I'm 'bout to get off and go home and have a beer and get some sleep, and if I call the police they'll take their sweet time in coming. I'm just thinkin' out loud here" which means "give me some money to shut me up." In this case, Margo and Q were spotted by a security guard while they were already inside SeaWorld. The security guard scared them that someone who was breaking in would not be released. The security guard also said that he had just finished work and wanted to enjoy it, which hinted that the security guard asked for some money as a sign of silence. The meaning of the speech uttered by the security guard when he wanted to arrest Q and Margo was based on the context that he wanted Margo to give him money.

### **c. Perlocutionary act**

### **Extract 41**

(Q forbade Margo from entering SunTrust Building) (pages 54-55)

I rolled my eyes. "Nope. No. No way. You said no breaking and entering."

"This isn't breaking and entering. It's just entering because there's an unlocked door."

"Margo, that's ridiculous. Of c—"

**"I will acknowledge that over the course of the evening there has been both breaking and entering. There was breaking at Jase's house. And there will be entering here. But there has never been simultaneous breaking and entering. Theoretically, the cops could charge us with breaking, and they could charge us with entering, but they could not charge us with breaking and entering. So I've kept my promise."**

The speech acts above include perlocutionary acts. Perlocutionary act is a speech acts that produces an effect, intentional or not, that is achieved by a speaker through his/her utterances. The perlocutionary act of the conversation is "I will acknowledge that over the course of the evening there has been both breaking and entering. There was breaking at Jase's house. And there will be entered here. But there has never been simultaneous breaking and entering.

Theoretically, the cops could charge us with breaking, and they could charge us with entering, but they could not charge us with breaking and entering. So I've kept my promise." which gives a consequence to someone in the form of peace of mind to continue to believe. In this case, Margo said he was going to SunTrust Building which was immediately rejected by Q. Margo explained that they weren't breaking in but they were just going in. Q was worried because according to him the guarding of the SunTrust building was tight, which Margo immediately calmed him down. The meaning of the speech uttered by the character Margo to Q is based on the context that Q is his best friend, so she doesn't need to worry and feel embarrassed if she explains this to Q emotionally.

**Extract 48**

(Q, who will not attend the graduation, is scolded by Ben and Radar) (pages 238-239)

Radar said, "I don't want to criticize, but maybe on this particular topic, the person who is chronically late needs to listen to the person who is always punctual. But you gotta come here at least for a second because otherwise, your parents will freak out when you don't show when your name is called, and also, not that it is the most important consideration or anything, but I'm just saying—you have all our beer in there."

"I obviously don't have time," I answered.

Ben leaned into the phone. **"Don't be an ass. It'll cost you five minutes."**

The speech acts above include perlocutionary acts. Perlocutionary acts is a speech act that produces an effect, intentional or not, that is achieved by a speaker through his/her utterances. The perlocutionary act of the conversation is "Don't be an ass. It'll cost you five minutes." which has consequences for Q to come to the place of his graduation. In this case, Q, who has a definite clue about Margo's whereabouts, tells Radar and Ben that he won't be coming to the graduation. Radar reminds him that he has to tell his parents if he doesn't want them to worry, but Q insists that he doesn't have time. Ben, who couldn't stand it straight away, said that their graduation place was only five minutes away, which made Q give in and do what Ben said. The meaning of the speech act uttered by the character Ben to Q is based on the context that Q is his best friend, so Ben doesn't have to hesitate to scold and shout at Q.

**2. Speech acts mean based on the context**

**Extract 3**

(Q expresses his concern to Margo) (page 42)

**"I really don't want to get in any trouble,"** I told Margo back in the minivan as she used the bottled water to wipe the black paint off her face with the tissues. She'd only needed the makeup, apparently, to get out of the house. "In my admission letter from Duke it actually explicitly says that they won't take me if I get arrested."

"You're a very anxious person, Q."

The speech acts above include locutionary speech acts. A locutionary act is a type of speech act that says something according to its meaning. The locutionary act of the conversation is "I really don't want to get in any trouble" which has the same meaning as he hopes to avoid various troubles. This is because Q is still unsure and tells Margo that he doesn't want to get into trouble because he is worried about his college acceptance. Margo says that Q is a worrier. The meaning of the speech act uttered by character Q when expressing his worries to Margo is based on the context of character Q, who is Margo's close friend.

**Extract 24**

(Ruthie asked for five dollars to shut up) (111)

"Margo doesn't like people in her room," Ruthie said. "'Cept me. And sometimes Mommy."

"But we're her friends."

"She doesn't like her friends in her room," Ruthie said.

I leaned down toward her. "Ruthie, please."

“And you don’t want me to tell Mommy and Dad,” she said.

“Correct.”

“**Five dollars**,” she said.

The speech acts above include illocutionary acts. Illocutionary act is a performed by the speaker to state or inform something that is used to do something. The illocutionary act of the conversation is “Five dollars” which means “give me money to cooperate.” In this case, Q asked Ruthie to keep it a secret that he and his friends would go into Margo’s room to look for information, Ruthie was initially reluctant but after some persuasion she finally agrees by saying five dollars, meaning she would shut up if given money. The meaning of the speech act uttered by the character Ruthie to Q is based on the context that she wants Q to give his money.

#### **Extract 45**

(A junior gives thanks to Q) (page 120)

I jogged through the halls toward my locker, rubbing Radar’s head as I ran past him. He was talking to Angela and a freshman girl in band. “**Don’t thank me. Thank Q,**” I heard him say to the freshman, and she called out, “Thank you for my two hundred dollars!”

The speech acts above include perlocutionary acts. Perlocutionary act is a speech act that produces an effect, intentional or not, that is achieved by a speaker through his/her utterances. The perlocutionary speech act of the conversation is “Don’t thank me. Thank you Q,” which has the consequence of changing one’s expression of gratitude to the right person. In this case, a female junior thanked Radar and Angela, but Radar told the junior to thank Q to which the junior immediately complied by shouting thanks to Q. The meaning of the utterance uttered by the Radar character to the freshman is based on the context that the freshman is his junior who has a position slightly below Radar, so he doesn’t need to be afraid to give orders.

#### **DISCUSSION**

There are two main topics discussed in this research. The first is about the types of speech acts that appear in “Paper Towns” novel and the second is that the researcher wants to know the meaning of speech acts based on the context of the characters in John Green’s novel “Paper Towns” by using Austin’s theory (1962) where Austin divides speech acts into three; locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

This study found as many as 50 extracts. In John Green’s novel “Paper Towns”, the researcher found 17 locutionary acts used in conversation by the characters. The characters use locutionary acts to express something without having a specific purpose or purpose. This is in accordance with Austin’s theory (1962) which states that a locutionary act refers to the act of saying something or the actual utterance itself. Furthermore, the researcher also found 20 extracts of illocutionary acts used in conversation by the characters in the novel, where illocutionary speech acts are used by characters to inform something that has implied intentions and goals. This is in accordance with the theory expressed by Austin that an illocutionary act refers to the intention of the speaker or the social function of the statement. Finally, there are 13 perlocutionary acts extracts in the novel. Perlocutionary acts are used by characters when they want action from another character (the interlocutor). This is in accordance with the theory put forward by Austin where A perlocutionary act refers to the actual effect or consequence of the utterance. From these data, it can be concluded that there are three types of speech acts and the characters in Paper Towns use more illocutionary acts in conversation. This means that the characters prefer to state or inform something by hiding certain meanings and goals in communicating with other characters. This study also found the meaning of speech acts based on the context in which the characters were used, which is because this novel is in the young-adult genre and most of the characters are teenagers. So communication between characters uses casual everyday language to build friendship and show the environmental conditions of adolescents.

This study has differences with other studies including, this research as a whole takes three types of speech acts in a novel to be analyzed. The three types of speech acts are locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Besides that, the researcher does not only focus on the main character's dialogue, but all the dialogues of the characters in the novel are involved for analysis. This difference is very prominent because other studies only analyze one type of speech act and focus on the main character's dialogue.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are three types of speech acts used in John Green's novel "Paper Towns". The first speech act is a locutionary act, this speech act is to express something that is in accordance with its original meaning, without any specific purpose. Based on the data found, this act is the second most used speech act by a character in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." The second speech act is an illocutionary act, this act is a speech act that functions to convey something and has the implied intent and purpose of the speaker. This act is the most abundant or dominant speech act found in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." The last speech act is a perlocutionary act, where this speech act produces a consequence desired by the speaker. This act is the lowest or least used speech act in the conversation of each character in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." From these data, it can be concluded that the characters in John Green's novel "Paper Towns" prefer to use illocutionary acts when communicating with other characters.

The meaning of the three categories of speech acts varies based on the context of the characters in John Green's novel "Paper Towns." Because this novel tells about the lives of teenagers, most of the interactions between the characters are not too formal. This is done to build friendships and show the condition of the adolescent association. However, there are several styles of interaction that are polite. This is to show the difference in social status among the characters in John Green's novel "Paper Towns".

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