

## **WHITE LIES AS A SPEECH ACT IN RICHARD LINKLATER'S TRILOGY FILM 'BEFORE'**

Irma Harmin<sup>1</sup>, Abdul Halim<sup>2\*</sup>

*Universitas Negeri Makassar*

\*Corresponding email: [abd.halim@unm.ac.id](mailto:abd.halim@unm.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

This research aimed to find out the differences between real lies and white lies, white lies uttered in films related to speech acts, and the effects of a white lie on a relationship between the speaker and the listener using a pragmatic approach. This research method used descriptive qualitative, namely the process of processing data by selecting and simplifying the data, then analyzing and compiling it systematically so that conclusions can be drawn. The sources were from the Before trilogy films, namely Before Sunrise, Before Sunset, and Before Midnight. The white lies spoken throughout the entire three films were varied from the innocent one night stand journey Celine and Jesse had in the first film Before Sunrise, then the short encounter yet so meaningful they had in Paris in the second film Before Sunset, and last but not least, Before Midnight, the third film making it as a complete trilogy where Celine and Jesse already married and a parent to twin girls, additionally continued their bittersweet discussion about love and life to remain as a loving, married couple. The results of this study showed twenty-five white lies as speech acts recorded in the three films. Three out of five types of speech acts appeared in the films, specifically assertive, commissive, and expressive speech acts. Eleven assertive speech act data, five commissive speech act data, and nine expressive speech act data were found in the trilogy films in the context of white lying. The results of the research also showed that people can lie when uttering speech acts such as promising, offering, convincing, and refusing. The results also indicated that white lie has always been an inevitable aspect of daily life conversation.

**Keywords:** White lies, Speech act, Trilogy films

### **INTRODUCTION**

Various subfields of linguistics that focus on the interpretation of language use or word meaning are employed in the study of language. Among the numerous subfields of linguistics, pragmatics is worth exploring. In the eyes of translators and pragmatists alike, pragmatics is closely linked to the concept of "meaning." According to David Crystal (1971:243), "pragmatics investigates the variables that influence the language that speakers and writers choose to employ." One of the central ideas in pragmatics is the notion of the "speech act," which can be described as the way in which language is used in a specific setting, with consideration given to the verbal and nonverbal contributions of both the speaker and the addressee in the negotiation of meaning during interaction. Speech acts, as defined by Austin (1962), are utterances that have some practical effect on the way we interact with one another. When we make a request, lodge a complaint, extend an invitation, meet a new acquaintance, pay praise, or turn down a compliment, we are all engaging in speech acts. Many thinkers and linguists examine speech act theory in hopes of better comprehending human communication.. "Part of the joy of doing speech act theory, from my strictly first-person point of view, is becoming more and more remindful of how many surprisingly different things we do when we talk to each other," (Kemmerling, 2002)". The locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts are the three parts of the speech act based on Austin's theory in 1952. If the locutionary act is what you do while you speak, then an illocutionary act is what you do when you're not talking, and vice versa. A promise is an example of an illocutionary activity, while a persuasion an example of a perlocutionary behavior. The main distinction between the two is conventionality, nevertheless comprehending a clear semantic content that is only based

on its independent truth conditions does not constitute knowing an utterance's meaning. Discursive encounters walk a fine line between successful communication and communication not being openly and explicitly sought after. Then there is the situation where the speaker's attitude appears to be purposefully vague.

When a speaker acts as though they wish to communicate, are they sincere? For that matter, I intend to explore the act of lying as one of many forms of speech act, specifically in telling white lies by using pragmatic approach and how white lies can be classified to the level of ages in the three films of Before Trilogy which are "Before Sunrise," "Before Sunset," and "Before Midnight". Furthermore, this research will also examine how the theory of speech acts can be used to the study of white lies, and how it may affect the theory of speech acts themselves. In the generic sense, dishonesty is commonly understood to be the same as telling a lie. Davidson (1984, p. 258) observed that this is not the correct perspective on falsehoods "Sometimes it is said that telling a lie entails falsity, but this is incorrect. Lying requires not that what you say be untrue, but rather that you believe it to be false. Since we typically believe true sentences and disbelieve false ones, the majority of lies are fallacies, but in this instance, it was merely an oversight ". In other plausible situations, the distinction between speaking the truth and telling a lie depends on the speaker's intentions and beliefs. The issue of lying is not a simple one. In spite of the fact that lying is a very common discursive phenomenon, at every level of social life, there is no consensus regarding either its common understanding or its scholarly definition. By lying, one understands a spectrum of discursive attitudes, such as deception, duplicity, manipulation, insincerity, falsehood; therefore, it is difficult to provide a definition of the concept which captures each specific meaning and individual features.

Lies are sometimes, but not always a discursive phenomenon. Even though most of us lie from time to time, it is really quite surprising how little is known about such behaviors. According to (Bok, 1978), "lie is perhaps the most primary example of deception that men use". However, according to (Boyers,1974), the majority of us find ourselves telling white lies more or less frequently; occasionally, but eventually, we find trying to lie as the most effective option to overcome interpersonal communication issues.

According to Bok (1999), "white lies are at the opposite end of the spectrum of deception from lies during a severe crisis." They are the most prevalent and trivial types of deceit. Their protective coloring derives from the fact that they are so prevalent. In comparison to more dangerous deception, their triviality makes it unnecessary or even absurd to blame them. Lying has a negative connotation that is at least dissonant with the more conventional negative connotations of deception, and it is also a little dissonant with the standard treatment in communication research, where lies are regarded as undesirable (Kursh,1971).

Consider the issue of the white lies (socially acceptable and unlikely to have a significant impact on the recipient (e.g., little or no harm), Turner, Edgely, and Olmstead (1975) conducted a fascinating study in which 130 volunteers were instructed to record and examine the validity of their assertions in natural discussions. Less than two-thirds (38.5%) of these comments were entirely truthful, while the overwhelming majority of conventional assertions were judged to be dishonest by the communicators themselves. Furthermore, respondents validated lying as "the correct thing to do," specifically when used to avoid humility, interruption, disagreement, or to end encounters and relationship.

Researchers haven't paid much attention to the fact that society doesn't like it when people lie, but it is okay for people to tell white lies. The majority of existing deception literature, on the other hand, has centered on comprehending the cognitive and behavioral processes involved in both telling and detecting lies. This research (Burgoon & Qin, 2006; Granhag&Stromwall, 2001) have looked at how liars use nonverbal indicators like body language and verbal cues like sequencing to reveal that they are lying (i.e. Burgoon&Buller, 1994; White &Burgoon, 2001). This literature has given us a plethora of information about how individuals distinguish between true and false statements, but it stops short of explaining how falsehoods are examined and assessed after they are discovered.

The issues of white lie as speech act in 'Before' trilogy film by Richard Linklater are interesting to discuss. The trilogy consists of 'Before Sunrise' (1995), 'Before Sunset' (2004), and 'Before Midnight' (2013). The trilogy told about the love life of Celine and Jesse. Their relationship is explored over the course of several years as they meet and reconnects. Throughout the trilogy, the characters occasionally tell "white lies" to each other in order to avoid hurting each other's feelings or maintaining the illusion of a perfect romance. For example, in Before Sunrise, Jesse tells Celine that despite having been in a serious relationship in the past, he has never been in love. Celine initially lies to Jesse about being in a relationship in Before Sunset before admitting the truth. These lies may appear to be relatively harmless because they are intended to maintain a romantic and idealized view of the relationship rather than to deceive or manipulate the recipient. The lies, however, become more significant and potentially damaging as the trilogy progresses and the characters' relationship becomes more complicated and tense. For instance, in 'Before Midnight', Jesse and Celine's heated argument is sparked in part by a sequence of half-truths and omissions they have been keeping from each other. The researchers then established three questions in response to the issue of white lie that arise to the main characters dialogues in 'Before' trilogy films.

1. What are the differences between lie and white lie as part of speech act in the trilogy film 'Before'?
2. What are the functions of white lie in 'Before' trilogy film?
3. How can white lies affect the relationship between the speaker and the listener?

### **Review of Literature**

#### ***Pragmatics***

Pragmatics studies word meaning in context. Contemporary linguistics knows pragmatics well. 15 years ago, linguists hardly discussed it. Many believe that pragmatics—how language is used in communication—is essential to understanding language. After Katz and his partners (Katz and Fodor in 1963; Katz and Postal in 1964; Katz in 1964) began incorporating meaning into formal language theory, a pragmatics colonization of California or bust began. Pragmatics studies language-context interactions based on linguistic structure, according to Levinson (1983: 9). Pragmatics has five rules. Deixis, presupposition, entailment, implicature, and speech act. Pragmatics studies meaning in speech environment. An utterance achieves a goal.

Speech acts consist of assert, inform, demand, request, prohibit, suggest, offer, promise, refusal, threat, thank, apologize, and congratulate. Social speech interpretation and conduct are studied in pragmatics. Conversations depend on statement context. In most cases, the goal of a speaker is to be understood. Leech (2016) considers context to be a significant aspect of the physical or social setting of utterances and preexisting knowledge shared by both the speaker and the hearer, because context helps the hearer comprehend what the speaker means.

### ***Context***

Context is the words and sentences around a discourse that assist define its meaning. Sometimes referred to as linguistic context. Context can relate to any feature of an event when a speech-act takes place, including the social setting and the status of the speaker and the addressee. Also known as the social context. As (Halliday, 1978) explained that "the context of situation is a theoretical construct for explaining how a text relates to the social processes within which it is located." It consists of three components: the main social activity taking place, the people involved (plus how they relate to one another), and the roles and functions of the text within this social activity known technically as "field," "tenor," and "mode."

### ***Speech Act***

Speech act is actually uttering anything. Say we apologize immediately after saying it. Our body language or regret communicate our apology. Yule (1996) defines speech acts as utterance-based actions. He also uses "apology," "complaint," "compliment," "invitation," "promise," and "request" to characterize it.

In his book "How To Make Things With Words," Austin introduced Speech Act Theory to linguistics. "Promising isn't better than wanting and intending," adds Austin. Promising is an intention, not a cognitive effort. Searle (1969) expanded Austin's general theory of speech acts by developing a theoretical framework that harmonized utterance, meaning, and action in speech acts. According to Searle (1969), the speaker utilizes directive verbs to induce positive or negative actions. Advising, prohibiting, warning, instructing, encouraging, ordering, requesting, insisting, persuading, pressing, and recommending.

The Types of speech act

Searle constructed five speech acts from Austin's illocutionary act in 1969. Assertive, commissive, expressive, directive, and declarative. He suggested it to better understand how language achieves distinct communicative purposes. Austin's initial theory of illocutionary acts centered on how language might be used to make commitments, provide orders, or make declarations. Searle contended that Austin's framework was too narrow and didn't cover all language-based illocutionary behaviors. Searle expanded on Austin's theory by identifying five distinct types of illocutionary acts, which he called "speech acts." These speech acts include:

a. Assertive

Assertive is the type of speech act that is used to make claims or statements over something.

b. Commissive

Commissive is the type of speech act that commit the speaker to a particular action in the future.

c. Expressive

Expressive is the type of speech act that express the speaker's attitudes or emotions.

d. Directive

Directive is the type of speech act that is used to influence the actions of others.

e. Declarative

As for declarative, it is a type of speech act that bring changes

**White lie**

Lies are occasionally discursive. In this view, a white lie is a harmless untruth (Bok, 1999). "I wish to explore whether there are such falsehoods; if there are, whether their cumulative repercussions are still without harm; and, finally, whether many destructive lies are not defended as "white"." (Bok, 1999, p. 61) White lies are harmless. It's unrelated to deception, manipulation, victimization, and other discursive objectives. A minor lie to prevent upsetting someone. We tell white lies daily. Say you slept all day and forgot about your friend's birthday celebration. You can lie about forgetting your friend's birthday to avoid hurting them. You can pretend you had an important issue and couldn't attend the celebration to avoid upsetting your friend. White falsehoods like this justification are common. As can be seen of the examples below:

a. You tell your friend that she doesn't look fat in that dress when she asks your opinion because you don't want to hurt her feelings that she's actually gained a lot of weight and therefore the dress makes her look fat.

b. You tell your mother over the phone that you washed the dishes so you won't get in trouble, and then you hurry to complete the task before she arrives home.

c. You tell your sister that her baby girl is adorable, despite the fact that you do not agree. However, what matters is that your sister believes the baby is adorable.

d. You tell your sister that her baby girl is adorable, despite the fact that you do not agree. However, what matters is that your sister believes the baby is adorable.

e. You tell your sister that she has an adorable baby girl when in fact you think the baby is not adorable at all, but she thinks that way and that's what matters.

f. You tell your partner his new haircut looks okay although you don't like it because you don't want to hurt his feelings.

g. You tell white lies to your boyfriend by agreeing to what he says about the political issues when in fact you don't really think the same but after all, you figure out that he has an important point in his opinion and it matters to him and you show him your appreciation in the form of respect in your relationship.

h. You tell your girlfriend that her eyes looks beautiful in her new glasses when in fact you prefer her to wear the old one, but she looks really happy with her new look and you can't help but happy for her too because that's what matters.

White lies are innocent and are told to save someone's feelings or avoid little arguments. Some say you should never lie, yet the world wouldn't be a nice or cheerful place if everyone told the truth all the time.

**METHOD**

**Design**

In this research, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive method in to collected, obtained, analyzed, and verified the data of 'Before' trilogy films by Richard Linklater. With the theory that has been presented to support the truth in this research, the researchers has collected, described, and drawn conclusions of the data related to the main problem that occurred in this research. Ary (2010: 426) stated that "research design is the researcher's plan of how to proceed to gain an understanding of some group or some phenomenon in its context". Therefore, using this qualitative

descriptive method can assist the researchers in obtaining accurate information that is useful in this research process.

### **Source of Data**

In this research, the researchers used two sources of data, namely primary data and secondary data. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) in 2011 mentioned primary data as "information collected directly from the source" and secondary data as "information collected by someone other than the user." They emphasize that while secondary data can be useful for providing context and background information; primary data is required for answering specific research questions.

### **Procedures**

The data collection methods included; First, the researcher watched all three films in the trilogy multiple times to make sure no important scenes were missed and to collect the most reliable data possible. Second, the researcher read the trilogy's screenplay multiple times to identify key terms and phrases that would help answer the research questions. Furthermore, in order to gather supporting evidence for the white lie as speech act in the trilogy films, as well as its functions, and the impact it bring to the relationship between the speaker and the listener, the researchers also create a list of words or dialogues so that they can quickly recognize the pattern or structure. The researchers also compared the data from the previous studies of related topic on seeing lies specifically white lies as speech act. Lastly, the researchers using the data collected during the gathering process, the researcher's primary issue will be addressed.

### **Data analysis**

The researchers used technique of data analysis by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014). The technique consists of data condensation, data display, drawing and verifying conclusions.

#### **1) Data condensation**

According to Miles et al. (2014), data condensation ) is a process where data is selected, then sorted, simplified, and abstracted from visual data into written data. Data condensation is used to change the collected data from visual to textual data. After the visualization of the trilogy film 'Before', the researchers converted the visual data into textual one. The textual data was obtained using the researchers understanding of the dialogues in the trilogy films and underlining the important data of the films. From the data that has been collected, the researchers categorize it into John Searle's theory of speech act and Sissela Bok's theory of white lie and adjust it to the needs of the researchers related to research problems.

#### **2) Data display**

Data display is the next step to be carried out in this research. Display is a collection of information that has been arranged, systematically organized so that it is possible for researchers to draw conclusions (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). In this step, the data related to white lies as speech act that have been obtained from the main characters were explained in detail to reach the expected research conclusions.

#### **3) Drawing conclusion**

The last stage of the research was drawing conclusions. In order to draw conclusions, it is necessary to evaluate the significance of the findings from the examined data with respect to the posed questions (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). In drawing conclusions, data collection related to white lies as speech act in the three movies of Before Trilogy and its relation to the formulation of

the problem were answered in the final conclusion from all data analysis that has been obtained based on Searle's theory. With that being said, verification is also needed to review the required data. From this review, important data were obtained as well as data presentation and the researcher drew conclusions based on the findings.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

#### **1. White lies as assertive speech act (state and assure)**

##### **Extract 1: (00:17:40 – 00:18:06)**

The First film: Before Sunrise

*Stranger 1: "Why did you come to Vienna? What could you be expecting?"*

*Celine: "We're on honeymoon"*

*Jesse: "Yeah, she got pregnant, we had to get married---"*

*Stranger 2: "No, I don't believe you, you're not a good liar (Celine and Jesse chuckles)"*

The above extract 1 showed a piece of dialogue between Jesse, Celine, and the locals they met in Vienna. When the locals asked them why were they here for an entertainment, Celine replied them that she and Jesse were on honeymoon when in fact they barely even know each other. She lied, specifically told them the little white lie just to get away from awkward situation given that their situation they got themselves into was hard to explain. The function of the little white lies told in this situation was to avoid awkward moment and negative reaction from the locals. Telling a white lie to a stranger, as Celine (the speaker) told a white lie to the locals (the listeners) have short-term positive effects, such as avoiding awkwardness or preserving privacy.

##### **Extract 2: (00:47:02 – 00:47:47)**

The First film: Before Sunrise

*Celine: "But if we spent all our time together, what is it about me that would drive you crazy first?"*

*Jesse: "I'd rather not discuss that right now. Once upon a time, I dated this one female who frequently posed that very question to me. Finally, I told her I felt she handled criticism poorly. She exploded and dumped me. She just wanted to tell me what was wrong with me. Tell me what bothers you about me."*

*Celine: "No, nothing at all"*

*Jesse: "Tell me, what is it?"*

*Celine: "I can't think of anything"*

In extract 2, Jesse asked Celine if he irritated her on their first date. Celine said she couldn't think of anything, but she was upset by Jesse's juvenile and cynical palm reader behavior. She lied about her feelings. Celine lied to save Jesse's feelings and avoid conflict. Jesse and Celine's relationship is affected by white lies. A white lie can save someone's feelings or avoid an uncomfortable confrontation. Yet, persistent white lies can undermine trust and cause betrayal and hurt. Maintaining the deception and remembering one's story can also be stressful and emotional.

##### **Extract 3: (00:33:01 – 00:33:06)**

Second film:

Before Sunset

*Jesse: "Is it that forgettable? I mean you really didn't remember? In the park"*

*Celine: "Okay, wait a minute; I think you might be right"*

The above extract 3, Jesse was mentioning something special about he and Celine had on their first met, but she forgot about it and it almost hurt his feeling but she immediately told him the little white lies by agreed and assured him that he might be right after all. The function of the little white lies Celine told in this situation was because she did not want to hurt his feelings about how special the thing they had on their first date when she could not even remembered a single thing about any of that. The effect of white lie in the relationship between the speaker (Celine) and the listener (Jesse) in this dialogue was nothing but a positive effect where the speaker tried to spare the listener's feelings.

**Extract 5: (00:09:14 – 00:09:32)**

Second film: Before Sunset

Jesse: "Were you able to give it a read?"

Celine: "Yes. I was very surprised, as you might guess. Actually, I had to read it two times before I realized it"

Jesse: "Comme ci comme ca?" (Jesse speak in french)

Celine: "No, I really enjoy it because it is romantic. I normally don't like that, but it's well written. Congratulations"

Jesse: "Thanks"

In extract 5, Celine told Jesse his book is romantic. Celine told Jesse she loved the book because it was well-written and romantic. Yet, Celine told him little white lies in the shape of assertive speaking acts, Searle (1979), about how she felt about the book. At the end, she assured him she was OK until she read his book. The "romantic" book wrecked her. Celine's small white lies were meant to complement Jesse on his romantic book even if she didn't intend it. White lies in this discourse improve their relationship. White falsehoods given to save someone's feelings might immediately ease discomfort or conflict. Long-term impacts are more complicated. A white lie can cause remorse or fear of discovery. It can also lead to a pattern of dishonesty that erodes self-respect. Even with good intentions, telling a white lie can damage trust and personal growth.

**Extract 11:(1:12:09 – 1:12:15)**

Third film: Before Midnight

Celine: "In fact, perhaps he'll be better able to deal with it if he can find the humor in the situation. This is what I assume"

Jesse: "Okay. You're right. As always. Let's just not talk about it okay?"

In the above extract 11, shows a piece of dialogue from the film. Unfortunately, the argument still remain unfinished so Celine continued it with so much anger but Jesse, once again, tried to calm the nerves Celine had by telling her the little white lies that she's right and all so they should have just ended the argument. The function of the little white lies told by Jesse was to calm Celine's nerve and to avoid unnecessary drama between them. In this case, the short-term effect of the white lie that Jesse told Celine was decent. Telling a white lie can help solve a problem or stop an argument in the short term. This can make the relationship more peaceful and reduce stress and tension between the two people.

**2. White lies as a commissive speech act (promise and offer)**

**Extract 12: (1:16:17 - 1:16:22)**

First film: Before Sunrise



*Jesse* : “**You know, I mean I could come back here**”

*Celine* : “*Let’s just be the rational adults about this*”.

In extract 12, Jesse and Celine speak openly. Jesse said he thought he could come back soon, but Celine said they should think seriously about their relationship. Jesse lied and said he could have organized their reunion. He told Celine the tiny white lies in the shape of commissive speech act by Searle (1979) about how he would fly miles away to visit her again, and he promised himself and Celine that he would return to Vienna. Jesse gave Celine a tiny white lie to distract her from the possibility of never seeing each other again after their amazing time together. If you tell a white lie when making a promise to someone, it can damage your relationship's trust and credibility and make it harder for you to be believed in the future. Jesse's white lie to Celine in this conversation almost certainly had lasting negative effects.

**Extract 13: (1:15:37 – 1:16:10)**

First film: Before Sunrise

*Celine*: “*Most likely, we won't see each other again after tomorrow morning, yeah?*”

*Jesse*: “*You do not really think we'll ever meet up again, do you?*”

*Celine*: “*What do you think?*”

*Jesse*: “*It's possible that you could visit the United States, but I also know how much you despise air travel*”

*Celine*: “***I'm not so scared of flying, I mean I could***”

In the above extract 13, the two discussed whether or not they were going to see each other again, when Jesse told her that Celine could visit him in the U.S. but also knew that she hates to fly, Celine then responded the opposite. She told him the little white lies saying that she could fly but if truth to be told she could not. Thus, she would have to fly to make up the lie she said to him. The function of the little white lies told by Celine was to please Jesse that somehow she would managed to take a flight and visit him when truth to be told, she was actually really scared to fly. Celine's white lie helped keep the peace between her and Jesse in the short term, but in the long run, it affect their relationship. Even though telling the truth about breaking a promise could have caused upset and arguments, not telling the truth led to deeper problems in their relationship.

**Extract 14: (00:54:55 – 00:55:25)**

Second film: Before Sunset

*Celine*: “*Well, your driver's here... I guess this is goodbye*”

*Jesse*: “*No, no, why don't we just give you a ride home? Wherever you're going, huh?*”

*Celine*: “*Well, I can take the metro. I'm fine*”

*Jesse*: “***No, no. My flight's not until ten. They've got me arriving two hours early***”

Jesse and Celine's conversation was shown in extract 14. Jesse gave Celine a ride home in the final hours before his flight. He lied to give them more chance to talk. Jesse's falsehood was a commissive speech act (Searle 1979) that led him to spend extra time with Celine and miss his flight. He told Celine a Pareto white lie, which is a deception used to get an advantage without hurting the interlocutor or having moral consequences. The effect of pareto white lie in this dialogue was benign. The listener (Celine) was offered a ride and the speaker gets a chance to talk to her longer.

**Extract 15:(00:44:05 – 00:44:30)**

Third film: Before Midnight

Stefanos: “you gotta go”

Celine: “No, it's a lovely present you've provided us, but the girls and I are so busy getting ready to pack—“

Ariadni: “No, no , no”

Stefanos: “We agreed upon a compromise for you to look after our children. And you're going to enjoy it”

Ariadni: *Walking to the hostel is an amazing experience that you won't soon forget. If you don't go, we'll be very upset”*

Celine: “**okay, we will thank you**”

In the above extract 15, Celine and Jesse were actually telling lies, specifically white lies for the gift they did not feel comfortable with to accept, this is in line with Bok (1978) stated that “still other white lies are told in an effort to flatter, to throw a cheerful interpretation on depressing circumstances, or to show gratitude for unwanted gifts”. They told Ariadni and Stefanos that they will take the gift and with that being said, they should also go the hotel and use their gift. Because they already commit to the white lies they told them. The white lie Celine and Jesse told their friend was purely because they did not want to hurt them and tried to show their gratitude for the unnecessary gift. Celine's white lie to Ariadni has a short-term positive effect because she doesn't want to disappoint her, but if it happens again, it will hurt their connection.

### **3. White lies as an expressive speech act (appreciate and congratulate)**

#### **Extract 17:(00:48:25 – 00:52:29)**

First film: Before Sunrise

Celine: “It's beautiful, no?”

Jesse: “**That was lovely, I agree. He didn't merely sit down and compose that sonnet, you know... Not that I don't think he wrote that poem. Just that he didn't do it tonight. He literally just inserted the word 'milkshake' into the poem”**

Celine: “What do you mean?”

Jesse: “**Nothing. It was great. It's awesome”**

In the above extract 17, Jesse uttered the little white lies (Bok, 1978) to Celine in a form of assertive and expressive speech act (Searle, 1979), by showing expressions of agreement to Celine that the poem indeed amazing yet conceal his cynical feeling toward the poet that literally made a poem and just adding the word *milkshake* literally in one line of the whole poem. The white lie Jesse told Celine was to avoid conflict between them out of personal opinion. The little white lie in this conversation between Jesse and Celine had a short-term good influence on their relationship. A white lie might resolve a problem or prevent an argument in the short term. This can contribute to a more harmonious relationship and decrease stress and tension between spouses. But, it is essential to consider the long-term effects of lying, as it can damage trust and credibility over time.

#### **Extract 20: (00:42:26 – 00:42:35)**

Second film: Before Sunset

Celine : “So I read in that article you are married and have a kid? That's great!”

Jesse : “Yeah, he's four. Can you believe it?”

Celine : “What's his name?”

Jesse : “Henry, hank. He's amazing”.

In the above extract 20, Celine congratulate Jesse about the news that he has been married and have a kid and how she was happy for him. Truth to be told, she was actually uttered the little white lies in the form of expressive speech act by congratulating him about his marriage and his kid, when in fact she was not happy about it at all. The white lie Celine uttered function as a cheerful interpretation in depressing circumstance. She congratulated him for the news when she did not even mean it. The innocent white lie Celine's statement to Jesse had severe effects on their relationship since she hid her genuine thoughts that she was not happy with him being married and instead conveyed them through a white lie, which had a bad effect on her mental and emotional health. In this situation, it would be preferable for the speaker to communicate their genuine feelings and engage in an open and honest dialogue with the person they are deceiving.

**Extract 21:(00:42:54 – 00:43:06)**

Second film: Before Sunset

*Celine: "I'm in a good relationship, though"*

*Jesse: "Yeah? **That's nice.** What's he like?"*

*Celine: "He's amazing. He is a photojournalist who writes about wars. Since he travels so oftenly, I have a lot of time on my hands"*

*Jesse: "Isn't that risky? It looks like a lot of those guys are dying today"*

In the above extract 21, Celine told Jesse that now she's in a relationship with a man. When Jesse heard this, he hides his feeling by showing expression of him being okay with the news when in reality he didn't. The white lie Jesse uttered was to throw cheerful interpretation in a depressing circumstance by congratulated her with her new boyfriend when in reality he did not okay with it. The small, harmless lie that Jesse told Celine hurt their relationship because he didn't tell her how he really felt and covered it up with the lie. This hurt him mentally and emotionally. In this situation, it would be better for the speaker to tell the person they are lying to how they really feel and have an open and honest conversation with them.

**Extract 22:(00:57:15 – 00:57:31)**

Third film: Before Midnight

*Jesse: "You think you want to go to the service with me?"*

*Celine: "To Texas?"*

*Jesse: "Uh, it's not going to be in Paris"*

*Celine: "How bad do you want me there? I mean **I would come but it's really expensive with the flights...**"*

*Jesse: "**Just skip it, it'd be simpler to go alone**"*

In the above extract 22, Jesse asked Celine whether or not she wanted to go to the funeral. Thus Celine replied that she will consider it since the flight ticket is really expensive. Jesse, on one hand, told her that it is alright for her if she couldn't attend the funeral. Nevertheless, Jesse actually wanted Celine to come with him to his grandmother's funeral but he lied instead and said it might be better if he went alone because he felt Celine already hinted that the flight ticket is really expensive thus she could not go. The white lie Jesse told Celine solely to understand his wife financially. The white lie Jesse told Celine had a positive effect to their relationship because he was being an empathetic spouse who recognized his wife's financial circumstances.

**Extract 24:(00:19:22 – 00:19:25)**

Third film: Before Midnight

Ella: *“How much longer to the ruins?”*

Jesse: *“We’re gonna catch them on the way back when we’re going to the airport”*

In the above extract 24, Ella was being told the little white lies by her parents because they didn’t think it was a good idea to wake her up since she fell into a deep sleep. So, Jesse and Celine told the lie in a form of expressive speech act in order not to upset the daughter. Bok (1979) in her book *“Lying: moral choice in public and private life”* also stated similar quotation *“Whether to lie or to speak honestly, about what to say and what to hold back”*, pp.4. In an attempt to please their daughter, Celine and Jesse told her that they would stop by the ruins on the way back. Parents' motives for telling their children "white lies," whether to keep the peace or keep their children safe, are not always clear. For this reason, the parents' white lie to their daughter had a positive short-term effect but a potentially devastating long-term effect: it could make it harder for the child to tell the difference between the truth and a lie and could damage the child's trust in her parents.

**Extract 25: (1:29:33 – 1:30:24)**

Third film: Before Midnight

Jesse: *“That's when the fighting began, you know. And all at once, I saw everything. All of this petty jealousy and selfishness makes me think, "Okay, this is human nature." We're always disappointed and never satisfied, and here we are in the Garden of Eden, fighting”*

Celine: *“If you see that when you watch our girls play, it implies you're depressed and since I don't think there is a single natural human state; the human state is diverse”*

Jesse: *“okay, maybe I am”*

Celine: *“When I watch them fight, I find beautiful energy of pushing themselves forward and not letting anyone step on them and take what they desire”*

Celine and Jesse argued in extract 25. As shown in the preceding passage, they had different views on their daughters when fighting. Jesse believed fighting over something like that was selfish, but Celine thought it was great for their daughters to fight since it gave her hope to not allow someone steal what they desire. She told Jesse that if he thought like that, he was depressed. Jesse accepted it and told her the tiny white lies in a form of expressive speech act that maybe she was correct but he had his own view but chose to tell her the little white lie to ended the conflict. Jesse told his wife a white lie to avoid an argument. The influence of white lie uttered in this part of the dialogue has negative effect on their relationship. In this case, if Celine was to find out that Jesse kept lie to her, even if it was a “white lie”, the trust of the listener (Celine) may be damaged. Additionally, if the listener (Celine) feels that the speaker (Jesse) consistently use white lies as an excuse to get away from the argument, it may erode the confidence in the speaker’s honesty and integrity.

**Discussion**

***1) Real lies and white lies differences as a speech act in the trilogy film ‘Before’***

The researcher will address research objectives in this discussion. First, falsehoods vs. white lies. There's a fine line between white lies and true lies. The first difference between falsehoods is intention. Unlike white lies, true lies are malicious. White lies benefit the liedto or relationship, whereas actual lies profit the liar. The outcome is this. White falsehoods rarely have serious effects,

but genuine lies do. Liliana Hoinarescu's research work "Lying as speech act: A Sociodiscursive and Interactional approach" examined political discourse's dialogical representation of lying.

She also evaluated the offensive and self-prejudicing possibilities of spontaneous, faceto-face lying. Unlike Hoinarescu's research objectives, this research found nothing disrespectful or self-prejudicial about lies because it specifically explored white lie, which white lie itself is commonly told to save someone's feelings and avoid conflict. In extract 1 for instance, where Celine and Jesse lied to the locals that they were on honeymoon when they were not. This in line with Ekman (2009) stated that "lies conceal and falsify things.

To conceal, the liar may withhold any information, including emotion, while to falsify is to say anything the speaker believes to be false to cover the concealment, nevertheless Celine and Jesse lied to them to avoid awkward and embarrassing moments because their relationship was hard to explain. She told the lie, specifically white lies to escape a difficult circumstance and avoid local repercussions. Bok (1978) said "white lies are at the other end of spectrum of deceit from lying in a critical crisis." These are the most prevalent and trivial types of deception, which protects them." In conclusion, lying and white lies are speech acts, but their goal, perception, impact, and degree of untruth varies.

## **2) White lies function in the trilogy film 'Before'**

Based on the data presented above, we can see the little white lies that appeared in the form of speech acts that showed up in the *Before Trilogy* films, namely assertive, commissive, and expressive speech acts. The researchers discussed the three types of speech acts in each film that the major characters uttered in the context of lying. The first dominant type of speech act in *Before Sunrise* (1995) was assertive, where Celine lied to the locals that they were on their honeymoon and Jesse assured them that she was right and she got pregnant and so on when in reality they barely even know each other. Their relationship is complicated and awkward to explain, so they told them the little white lies in a form of assertive speech act by Searle. "Still other white lies are spoken in an effort to flatter, to throw a cheery interpretation on dismal events, or to show thanks for unwanted gifts," according to Bok (1979).

Commissive speech acts were the second most common white lies in the three films. In extracts 15–19, the main characters told white lies as a commissive speech act. In extract 18 of the third film, *Before Midnight*, Celine told her friend Ariadni that she would take her gift and use it, committing to using it with Jesse even though she didn't want to. In the second film, *Before Sunset*, Jesse offered to transport Celine home in the last hours before he left for the airport. He told the tiny white lie in a commissive way that he still had time until the departure so they could talk a little longer, but he missed his flight because he held her to it. "Commissives are speech acts that the utterances commit the speaker to some future course of action, these include promising, threatening, offering, refusal, pledges," Searle (1979) said. Expressive verbal acts were the third most common in films. Expressive speech acts involve speakers expressing themselves. "Expressive speech act is the type of speech act that indicates the attitude and emotions of the speaker when he stated apologize, regret, appreciate, thank, welcome, etc." (Searle, 1979). In excerpt 23 of *Before Sunset*, Celine congratulated him on his marriage and pretended to be thrilled about it. "Still other white lies are spoken in an effort to flatter, to shed a cheery interpretation on dismal events, or to show thanks for unwanted gifts," Bok (1978) said. The three films have no declarative or directed speech acts spoken in the context of white lying.

### **3) *The impact of white lie in the relationship between the speaker and the listener***

The effect of white lies on their relationship seems to change over time. In the first film, *Before Sunrise* (1995), their anonymity (strangers in a foreign city) allows them the freedom to be completely honest with each other. Then, in the end, they naively begin to distort the truth to not hurt the other's feeling. *Before sunset* (2004) starts with lies to protect the other, then dives into naked honesty. *Before Midnight* (2013) when Jesse and Celine already married and have daughters, white lies became an important aspect of their conversations as husband and wife as well as parents. In extract 25 for example, the piece of dialogue was taken from the dialogue of the third film *Before Midnight* (2013). The extract showed the male lead, Jesse, told his wife, Celine, the little white lies that she was right as always to avoid unnecessary argument between the two of them because he knew that Celine was very stubborn and no matter how Jesse explained his opinion, it would only lead to futility.

White lies have both short- and long-term repercussions, and the one Celine and Jesse told each other had both. However, the long-term negative effect is that Jesse and his wife will no longer be able to trust each other, as they will become accustomed to using white lies as an excuse to avoid uncomfortable situations that they should talk about instead of avoiding. White lies like this have the potential to keep the peace between the speaker and the listener, but only temporarily. This is align with Bok (1999) in her book "Lying: moral choice in public and private life" where she quoted that "In some of these predicaments, only one lie or a few may be necessary. In others, and especially where survival within the institution is the only alternative, continuous lying may be at stake. People then have to choose between "living a lie" and breaking away in some way through by taking the risks of overt disregard for the prevailing norms, or of actual escape". Furthermore, it will harm relationships by fostering distrust and alienation between people. Being caught in a lie can damage relationships and make it harder to recover trust, and it can also reinforce the speaker's negative patterns of dishonesty and lying, making it easier for them to lie again in the future.

### **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the trilogy films, which the first film *Before Sunrise* (1994), and the second one *Before Sunset* (2004), and the last film *Before Midnight* (2013), making it as a complete trilogy, the researcher concludes that there is a specific relation of the main characters utterances and the speech act by Searle connected in the little white lies they told to each other in their relationship from time to time.

The following data are: The researcher found the five type of speech act by Searle in 1979 that the main characters, Celine and Jesse, uttered in their conversations throughout the films. Specifically, the little white lies (Bok 1999) hidden in their dialogues in the form of speech act. The most dominant type of speech act appeared in the dialogues were assertive, expressive, and commissive speech act that the characters uttered in the context of lying. Eleven extracts for assertive speech acts were found in the context of white lies spoken by the main characters, Jesse and Celine, in the three films namely *Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset*, and *Before Midnight*, while the forms of commissive speech acts are found in five extracts, and nine extracts for expressive speech acts, there were twenty-five extracts in total. The researcher found that it is very possible for people to utter speech acts by lying. Even though the very notion of lying is the very different from the general definition of the speech acts itself. By lying, we want others to believe what we say is true but we know it is false. Speech act, on the other way around, is when you utter

something, you're doing it and it is likely when we uttered all those types of speech acts including promising, apologizing, and complimenting is a complete lie. Additionally, the researcher also observed that little white lies seemed selfish despite the assumption that they are unselfish. The researcher observed that little white lies could cause poisonous positivity. Toxic positivity is the concept that people should always be optimistic. "Tyranny of positivity" or "poison positivity" was first used in Susan Cain's 2022 book "Bittersweet: How Sadness and Longing Make Us Whole" as a cultural mandate that urges, "Whatever you do, don't reveal the truth of what it's like to be alive." Despite our good intentions when telling white lies, sometimes we need to relax. If you're having a rough day and need to talk, you don't have to say you're fine. This could negatively impact our mental health. Hence, white lying to parents, friends, and partners is important but harmful if done repeatedly.

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