

AN ASSERTIVE SPEECH ACTS ANALYSIS ON MEI LEE'S UTTERANCES IN *TURNING RED* MOVIE

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Abstract

This research examines Mei Lee's assertive speech acts in the *Turning Red* movie with the aim of identifying and categorizing them. It utilizes a qualitative descriptive method to analyse these speech acts and complements the analysis with a simple quantitative approach for numerical representation. The findings of the research reveal 53 assertive speech acts utterances by Mei in the movie, which are classified into seven types: stating, claiming, reporting, reminding, admitting, predicting, and explaining. Among these, stating is the most frequently used 19 data, followed by claiming 13 data, while explaining and admitting each occur 6 data. Predicting and reporting both appear 4 data. The dominant speech act in this study is stating, which serves the function of explaining or describing something. This followed by claiming, which asserts truths in situations where some may argue otherwise. Explaining provides clarification to enhance understanding, while suggesting recognizes the truth of specific propositions or statements. Predicting makes future-oriented statements with evidence, and reporting conveys information about events. Reminding reaffirms information to listeners who may have previously known but possibly forgotten it. Notably, the speech act of suggesting, which typically provides ideas to the listener, was not found in Mei's utterances in the *Turning Red* movie.

Keywords: *assertive, speech acts, Turning Red movie, types, utterances*

INTRODUCTION

People are social beings who are interdependent with one another. As social beings, people interact by communicating with each other. In communicating there is a context that is conveyed and has a certain meaning. To be able to understand how the context of a meaning in communication requires an understanding of the language used to avoid misunderstanding. The study of how to understand human language use is called as pragmatic. Pragmatics investigates how individuals use language in certain situations to achieve certain communication.

Pragmatics is the study of the use of language, especially the relationship between language and context, which forms the basis for explaining language understanding and facilitates drawing conclusions regarding the acceptance of what is said and what is assumed (Levinson 1983, p.5). According to Yule (1996, p.3), pragmatics is the study of how speakers communicate and how listeners interpret speech. Pragmatics focuses on understanding contextual meaning by examining how speakers structure their intended messages. Moreover, pragmatics explores how the listener grasps the implied meaning behind a speaker's statements. In pragmatics there is an element that functions as a means of enactment in utterance, is called as speech act.

Speech acts contain a purpose or meaning because a person does not merely speak or just speak. Therefore, the speech acts become an affirmation of speech. Speech acts are the study of intended meaning the utterances spoken and written. Furthermore, the most important thing in speech acts is the message of the speaker's intention in order for the listener to understand the speaker's message. There are three kinds of speech acts, the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

Nowadays, the language used in movie contains many expressions that give different meanings than the actual meaning of the word. When people watch movies, they do not only get entertainment but also learn about educational, moral or other values. In the movies we can also learn a lot about the actors' acting, social relationships and the language or speech dialogue they use. One of the important aspects mostly occur in movie is that the dialogue or conversation among the characters.

Assertive speech acts can also be found in animated movies. One of the animated movies that can be used to analyze the existence of Assertive speech acts is *Turning Red*. This movie told the story of a 13-year-old girl named Mei Lee. She was described as a confident and smart girl. Mei was also represented as devoted to her parents. However, one morning, after having a nightmare, she suddenly turned into a giant red panda. Apparently not without reason, Mei turned into a red panda whenever she was angry or emotional. She could return to normal if she could calm herself down. Mei also later learned that her ancestors had the same history as what she experienced then. She could release the red panda in her if she underwent a ritual on a full night. This movie was released on March 11, 2022.

The researcher chooses the *Turning Red* movie as the object of study because it is relevant to the current tendency of today's youth when they idolize idol groups. The movie portrayed teenager who idolize boy band, similar to the numerous children and teenagers in the real world today who idolize idol groups. Researcher examined assertive speech acts in the movie because Mei's character is a teenager who is very confident in conveying, describing her feelings and emotional experiences accurately. Whenever Mei experiences intense emotions, she will transform into a panda. She clearly conveys her feelings to the listener through her words, deeds and facial expressions. She does not only undergo a physical transformation she also openly conveys her emotions and her belief that this is an important aspect of who she is by becoming a red panda. For example, I'm going to the concert! In this sentence, the speaker emphatically announces or states an action or fact, which is that they are going to the concert. This is an example of an assertive speech acts.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method. The data is taken from the *Turning Red* movie script. This information will help the researcher to understand about the data that is being analysed. This method is facilitating on the analysing and explaining the research data. The data taken from *Turning Red* movie script in form of word, phrase, clause, and sentence that contain assertive speech acts. The main data source of the research is the *Turning Red* movie that released in 2022 by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios. The duration of the movie is 1 hour 55 minutes 9 seconds which contained several types of assertive speech acts performed by Mei in the movie. The main instrument of this research is the researcher herself and the second instrument is datasheets. In collecting the data, the researcher using some steps: downloading the movie from Disney+ Hotstar, watching the movie, trying to understanding the story well, watching the movie several times and transcribing the assertive speech acts that expressed by Mei, and Putting the assertive speech acts in the datasheet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher collected a total of 53 data frequencies, which are comprehensively presented in a table shown the frequency of various types of Assertive Speech Acts observed in the *Turning Red* movie. The primary objective of this section is to address the research problem posed earlier. The data analysis establishes a connection between the research problem's inquiry and the identification of Assertive Speech Acts categorized by their respective types. The analysis revealed 53 instances of Assertive Speech Acts in the *Turning Red* movie, which were then categorized into eight different types and all these instances of assertive speech acts were categorized as direct speech. More detailed results are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Types of Assertive Illocutionary Act Findings

Types	Frequency	Percentage
Stating	19	35.84%
Claiming	13	24.52%
Reporting	4	7.54%
Predicting	4	7.54%
Suggesting	0	0%
Reminding	1	1.88%
Explaining	6	11.32%
Admitting	6	11.32%
Total	53	100%

Based on Table 1. above, the total findings of assertive speech act contained in the *Turning Red* movie script are 53. The assertive speech act with the highest frequency is stating, found as many as 19 frequencies (35.84%). Then the second highest type is claiming as many as 13 frequencies (24.52%), explaining and admitting is six frequencies (11.32%). Then, there is predicting and reporting four frequencies (7.54%), reminding one frequency (1.88%), while for suggesting the researcher did not find anything at all.

According to the explanation from Table 1., in *Turning Red* movie, there are eight types of assertive speech act. The highest type of assertive speech act in the movie is stating. Shown that in the *Turning Red* there are many utterances which refer to describing something. The utterances aim to convince the audience of the truth of particular situation or the truth of the proposition expressed. In this study, it is found that all examples of assertive speech acts analyzed belong to the category of direct speech. This shows that in the context of the *Turning Red* movie, every assertive speech act performed by Mei in her utterances shown the characteristics of direct and frank communication. In this situation, Mei clearly conveys information, statements, or ideas to the audience without trying to refine the communication.

Based on Searle's theory, there are a total of eight types of assertive speech acts, but within Mei's character dialogues in the *Turning Red* movie, only seven of these types are identified. These include: stating, claiming, reporting, predicting, suggesting, reminding, explaining, and admitting.

1. Stating

Mei employed this function to convey information or make statements regarding her facts, feelings, or thoughts. The purpose of a statement is to bind the speaker to the truth of a specific situation or to the truth of a proposition that has been articulated. Here are examples of findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"The number one rule in my family? Honor your parents." (00:00:47)

The word rule indicates that there are specific controls or guidelines that apply in the family, creating certain conditions or circumstances that govern relationships and behavior within the family. Therefore, the function of this utterance is to state that the most important rule in Mei's family is to honor the parents. This is based on Searle's theory that the purpose of assertion is to bind the speaker to the truth of a certain situation or the truth of stated propositions. This utterance is conveyed directly about the rules or values adopted in Mei's family.

2. Claiming

Mei utilized this function to affirm the veracity of something, yet some may argue that this is not accurate. Making a claim differs from making a statement since it carries a more forceful tone, whereas asserting does not. Here are examples of claims from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"It's easy. When I start to get emotional, all I do is imagine the people I love most in the whole world." (00:37:37)

In this sentence, Mei uttered Claim. The word **It's easy** referred to a word of claiming expression. **It's easy. When I start to get emotional, all I do is imagine the people I love most in the whole world.** This means she claimed that

she could control her emotions when she imagined the people that she loved. Therefore, the sentence functioned as a claim because the speaker stated that coping with their emotions by imagining their loved ones is an easy way for her. This was a direct statement about Mei's coping strategy.

3. Reporting

Mei used this function to provide details about the propositional content of something that had already occurred, been experienced, accomplished, or examined, or alternatively, it might have concerned the present. This involved depicting or making a certain subject known. Below are examples of reporting findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"Killed it per usual. Check it out". (00:07:08)

The words that indicated that is a report are **Killed it per usual**. The phrase killed it in this context is a phrase that is commonly used to express that someone has succeeded or performed exceptionally well at something. When someone used the phrase **Killed it per usual**, they are actually providing information that the other person has performed very well as they usually do. The phrase **per usual** emphasizes that is a report of the person's consistent or usual performance. In other words, it is a way to illustrate that the achievement is something that the person has become accustomed to or regularly does. This utterance conveyed directly to express her success.

4. Predicting

Mei effectively employs this communication function to articulate and convey ideas or statements, particularly when they are relating to future events while she is speaking. Furthermore, this function underscores the importance of the speaker having strong evidence or supporting information to substantiate the truth of the statements. In other words, Mei highlights the significance of having a strong and reliable foundation when expressing something related to the future, thus ensuring the reliability of the information within the context of the current time being discussed. Below are three examples of predicting findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"I'll be back before she even knows I'm gone". (00:47:56)

The word **before** in the utterance shows usage that supports the element of prediction. It is used to set the timing or order of events in relation to other events in the sentence. In this context, the sentence implies a prediction that Mei will return before the person called, **she** in the speech realizes that Mei has left. Therefore, the use of the word **before** indicates that this is a prediction about the sequence of events that will happen in the future. This utterance is conveyed directly to express the belief correctly.

5. Reminding

Mei effectively employs this particular function to serve as a reminder, expressing her clear intention to remind someone of a specific matter or piece of information. In doing so, Mei leverages this function to prompt and jog the memory of the individual or individuals in question. This helps ensure that the relevant information or important details are not forgotten or overlooked in the hustle and bustle of daily life, making it a valuable tool for maintaining effective communication and ensuring that key facts or tasks are remembered and addressed. Here is an example of the findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"May I remind you what real men look like?" (00:04:03)

In the sentence, the word that supports that it is remind is **May I remind you**. The word **remind** is used in this context as a request or question about whether the speaker can remind someone about something. So, this sentence tries to remind or remind others about how **real men** should look like, so the word **remind** indicates the act of reminding. Therefore, this sentence is classified in the Reminding type of assertive speech acts. It is stated directly because Mei's openly states her intention.

6. Explaining

Mei effectively employs this function to guarantee that the information she conveys becomes clear and easily understood by her listeners. In essence, her goal is to make sure that the message she's trying to communicate is not shrouded in confusion or ambiguity but rather presented in a way that makes it unmistakable and straightforward for those she's addressing. Through this function, Mei is not only simplifying complex ideas or concepts but also facilitating effective communication, ensuring that her audience can grasp and fully comprehend the information she is imparting. Below are three examples of findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"I can't. We need to see this concert. Why doesn't my mom get that? I never ask for anything. My whole life I've been her perfect little Mei-Mei. Temple duties, grades" (00:41:00)

In the sentence, the word that supports that it is explain is **Why**. The word **Why** is used here to ask a question, which indicates that the speaker wants to explain or seek an understanding of why her mother doesn't understand Mei's desire to go to the concert. This indicates that Mei is trying to explain or understand the reason behind her mother's attitude, which may not match the speaker's expectations. Therefore, this sentence is classified as an explain. This sentence is delivered directly to express Mei's disappointment and annoyance.

7. Admitting

Mei effectively utilizes this particular function to openly acknowledge an action she has taken. By doing so, she openly recognizes and accepts responsibility for her own actions. This acknowledgment serves as a reflection of Mei's character and her willingness to take ownership of her choices, regardless of the consequences. It also showcases her commitment to being honest and transparent in her interactions and relationships with others. Here are examples of findings from the *Turning Red* movie used by Mei.

"I know and I'm sorry. I've been, like, obsessed with my mom's approval my whole life. I couldn't take losing it, but losing you guys feels even worse." (01:12:02)

In the sentence, the word that supports that it is an admit is **I know and I'm sorry**. By saying **I know and I'm sorry**, Mei admits that she is aware of her mistake, and she also expresses an apology. Therefore, she was admitting her actions or feelings that may be wrong or harmful to others. Because of this, this sentence is classified as an admit. Mei conveyed it directly to her friends as an apology.

CONCLUSION

The analysis results reveal that there are seven types of assertive illocutionary acts in the movie, in accordance with Searle's theories. These types include stating, claiming, reporting, predicting, reminding, explaining, and admitting. A comprehensive examination of the data confirms that Mei uses a total of 53 assertive speech acts in the *Turning Red* movie, categorized into eight types. The most frequently observed type is stating, accounting for 35.84% of the total occurrences, followed by claiming with 24.52%. Explaining and admitting both account for 11.32%. Predicting and reporting are less frequent, with 7.54% occurrence, while reminding appears only 1.88% of the time. Interestingly, no instances of suggesting were found throughout the research. The movie primarily features the assertive speech act of stating, emphasizing Mei's use of direct and straightforward communication to convey information, statements, and ideas to the audience. These findings highlight Mei's character as a frank and direct communicator in the context of the *Turning Red* movie. In suggestion, please describe your recommendation for further studies regarding your research implication.

There are several suggestions that the researchers would like to convey in this research. For future researchers who wish to conduct research on assertive speech acts, it is recommended to master a good understanding of the research topic to be studied. Thus, it is hoped that this can help simplify the research process on the topic of assertive speech acts. Apart from that, it is hoped that readers will not misunderstand or make mistakes when conducting research.

Understanding how assertive speech acts are used or conveyed is also important for other readers. This is because, if there is a misunderstanding regarding the method of delivery, it will not be understood properly. With this research, it is hoped that readers can understand more about assertive speech acts and how they are delivered directly or indirectly. That way, the meaning of the expression can be conveyed well.

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