

Analysing the Illocutionary Speech Act in Underrated Characters of the Animated Film Luck

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the functional realization of illocutionary acts by secondary characters in the animated film *Luck*, focusing on pragmalinguistic patterns in their dialogue. The researchers identified relevant characters by analyzing user-generated viewer comments, then extracted and segmented their scripted utterances for pragmatic analysis. The study aims to deepen theoretical understanding of illocutionary acts in non-central characters—an underexplored area in speech act research—and to offer new insights into character construction through language. The researchers applied Searle's (1976) taxonomy of illocutionary acts and operationalized the analysis using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model of data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. They analyzed the illocutionary functions of Sam and Bob in relation to their narrative roles and interpersonal strategies within the film's discourse. The analysis identified four categories of illocutionary acts that serve specific character-building functions. Sam predominantly used expressive and directive acts, highlighting her desire to escape the misfortune that shapes her identity. In contrast, Bob consistently used assertive acts, conveying information and opinions with clarity and confidence. Theoretically, the study enhances our understanding of how illocutionary acts shape character identity in animated narratives, a domain where pragmatic functions often receive limited attention. Practically, the findings provide valuable input for English educators and learners by illustrating the real-world application of speech acts in emotionally nuanced contexts. In the context of English language learning, the study demonstrates the pedagogical value of film-based discourse analysis for developing pragmatic competence. By examining how characters express intentions, emotions, and social functions through language, learners can strengthen their grasp of speech act theory and improve their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately. The study encourages a shift beyond grammatical accuracy toward meaning-making and pragmatic fluency in authentic discourse.

Keyword: *Illocutionary Speech Act, Animated Film Luck, Underrated Characters*

INTRODUCTION

Language, especially spoken language or utterance, is an essential instrument for human communication that does not consistently fulfill social objectives. Alternative utterances may compete, remain indifferent, or even contradict the social objective. This issue is addressed in a specific speech act theory, namely the function of illocutionary acts. It is a pragmatic domain that examines how language performs actions or how an utterance conveys meaning (Ramadhani & Mustikawati, 2023). It encompasses more than mere words; it aims to fulfill the speaker's intent and prompt the listener's response (Diffani & Hikmah, 2023). Understanding this concept enables us to identify which statements can enhance social harmony, diminish social cohesion, and potentially incite conflict in interpersonal communication and social interactions (Mayrita et al., 2024). Therefore, as a speaker, this theory will assist us in fostering positive relationships within society.

This shows why both language structure and speaker intent must be considered when analysing communication. Pragmatics examines not only language form but also how messages align with speaker goals and listener interpretations. Recognising illocutionary forces helps avoid miscommunication in various social settings.

Humans need speech as a fundamental means of interpersonal communication in daily life. People can express their ideas and engage in specific social conversations to exchange information and build relationships with other people through communication (Hastuti & Wijayanto, 2023). As a result, there are many different ways to communicate with people, including written, spoken, and sign language or symbols (Grouchy et al., 2016). People occasionally have to bring up multiple conversation topics when sharing with others. Sometimes the speaker's point—which may even differ from our own—is difficult for us to understand. This example illustrates language and communication in relation to pragmatic studies.

Communication becomes more complex across linguistic and cultural differences. These differences demand awareness of context and speaker intent. Studying how meaning is negotiated is essential in multilingual interactions. One field of study that focuses on language meanings is pragmatics. People recognize the significance of the speaker's words when it comes to pragmatics. Pragmatics, according to Yule (1979), is the study of meaning as it is communicated by a speaker or writer and understood by a hearer or reader. A more practical facet pertains to speech acts, which are preoccupied with the concealed meaning inherent in speech (Andarwulan et al., 2021; Green, 2020). The study of speaker utterances is known as the speech act. Put differently, pragmatics is a theory concerning an action carried out in our assertions. Searle (1979) explains the speech act is the essential part of language that serves to convey meaning and pinpoint the purpose of a speaker's statement. Austin (1962) classified speech acts into three categories: illocutionary, perlocutionary, and locutionary. The illocutionary act is one of those that transforms into the intention toward the speech act. For instance, when someone says, "Could you close the window?" The literal meaning is a question, but the illocutionary act is a polite request (directive). Similarly, saying "I promise to come" commits the speaker to a future action (commissive). Such examples help clarify how language functions beyond its literal meaning.

Speech acts reveal how meaning is constructed through interaction. This lens focuses on what a speaker means and achieves, not just what is said. It helps clarify indirect or ambiguous statements. J. L. Austin, a philosopher, introduced the concept of illocutionary acts into linguistics during his research into the various aspects of speech. Following Austin's pioneering work, John Searle (1969, 1979) further formalised the taxonomy of speech acts, distinguishing illocutionary force from locutionary meaning and perlocutionary effects. This theoretical advancement paved the way for understanding language as not merely descriptive but as inherently performative. Later pragmatic theories, such as Grice's (1975) cooperative principle and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, enhance speech act theory by explaining how implied meanings and social norms influence communicative intent. In his framework, locution refers to what was said and intended, illocution to what was done, and perlocution to what occurred as a result. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* defines an illocutionary act as one that requires 'securing of uptake' from another person and produces 'conventional consequences' such as rights, commitments, or obligations.

Austin shows how speech can generate obligations or drive social change. His model helps analyse speech in contexts like politics and education. It forms the basis of modern speech act theory. The following categorization of illocutionary speech acts was established by Searle (1979), such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration. Speaking actions that bind a speaker to the veracity of the stated claim are referred to as assertive. Speech acts intended to elicit a specific response from the hearer are known as directives. Speech acts known as commissives, such as oaths and promises, bind the speaker to a future course of action. Speech acts that convey the speaker's attitudes and feelings about the proposition are known as expressives. Declarations are speech acts that alter reality to support their claims. Although the classes are not mutually exclusive, the classification is meant to be comprehensive. Searle's types guide real-world language analysis. They support pragmatic-focused language teaching. They prompt learners to consider how speech affects others.

Illocutionary acts are deeply influenced by contextual and cultural factors. The same utterance can perform different speech acts depending on situational context, speaker-listener relationships, and cultural norms. For instance, a directive in one culture might be considered polite, while in another it could be perceived as rude. Hence, understanding illocutionary acts demands not only linguistic

knowledge but also sociocultural awareness, making it essential for intercultural communication and second language acquisition.

Some studies about illocutionary acts are conducted by Astuti (2018) and Nayoan & Hellystia (2022). Astuti (2018) identified only four of the five categories of illocutionary acts in the film. When a character wants to inform, explain, debate, remind, express an opinion, or speculate, they use the representative role. When the speaker wishes to inquire, make a request, or offer advice, they use the directive. Expressive is a device that allows characters to express their desires to express love, apologize, greet, offer, thank, and place an order. The final type that the researcher finds endearing is commissive, which the characters employ to both promise and deny things. Second, the film illustrates four purposes for the illocutionary act. Requesting, advising, and questioning are done using the competitive function. Convivial function is employed in greeting, informing, and thanking. The collaborative function is employed in affirming, praising, persuading, and explaining. The final one is the conflictive function, which is employed in refusal and denial. In general, the results are categorized according to the illocutionary forces.

Previous studies on illocutionary acts in film dialogue, such as those by Astuti (2018) and Nayoan & Hellystia (2022), have provided foundational insights into the functional classifications of speech acts. Astuti (2018) conducted a pragmatic analysis of a film, identifying four out of five of Searle's (1979) categories—representative (assertive), directive, expressive, and commissive—while notably omitting declarations. She further categorized illocutionary functions into types such as competitive (e.g., requesting, advising), convivial (e.g., greeting, thanking), collaborative (e.g., affirming, explaining), and conflictive (e.g., denying). Although Astuti's work successfully mapped a range of speech functions, it remained largely descriptive and did not explore the pedagogical implications of these acts for language education.

Similarly, Nayoan and Hellystia (2022) extended the categorization of illocutionary act functions by applying them to a different film context. Their study identified the same four functional types—competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive—and emphasized the multifunctional nature of many utterances. However, as with Astuti, their work focused mainly on classifying speech acts and interpreting their use in cinematic discourse, without connecting these findings to practical applications in language teaching or communicative competence development.

In contrast, the present study advances the discussion by critically and constructively diverging from these earlier works in several significant ways. First, it offers a novel focus on underrepresented characters—specifically, minor or underrated figures like Sam and Bob in the *Luck* movie—rather than central protagonists. This shift provides a fresh lens on how peripheral characters employ speech acts in ways that reflect subtle interpersonal intentions and nuanced communicative goals, enriching the overall pragmatic landscape of the film.

Underrated characters in animated films often carry rich, unexplored layers of communication that contribute significantly to narrative coherence and interpersonal dynamics. While lead characters are typically analyzed for their overt actions and language use, supporting figures like Sam and Bob in *Luck* provide subtler examples of how speech acts function in everyday discourse. By examining the illocutionary acts of these minor characters, researchers can uncover implicit meaning-making strategies, such as politeness, resistance, indirectness, or solidarity, which are essential for understanding social interaction. These speech patterns mirror real-world communication, especially in group or hierarchical settings, offering learners valuable models of pragmatic behavior. Including these characters in pragmatic analyses not only expands the scope of speech act theory but also diversifies instructional content, promoting critical thinking and encouraging students to attend to linguistic subtleties across various roles and contexts.

Second, this study moves beyond descriptive analysis by integrating theoretical insights with practical implications for English language pedagogy. By examining illocutionary acts in relation to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia, it bridges the gap between pragmatic theory and classroom application. This approach aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasizing real-life communication and contextually appropriate language use. It highlights how authentic film dialogues can be used as effective materials to foster learners' pragmatic awareness and communicative competence.

Third, the research underscores the importance of contextualized learning. Rather than merely categorizing speech functions, it demonstrates how awareness of illocutionary acts can be incorporated into English instruction to enhance students' ability to interpret speaker intent and respond appropriately in diverse social settings. This emphasis on sociopragmatic competence is particularly relevant for learners in multilingual and multicultural contexts, such as Indonesia, where understanding both linguistic form and social function is essential for effective communication.

By critically engaging with the limitations of prior research, this study fills a meaningful gap in the literature on speech acts. It shifts the focus from theoretical description to practical application, offering new directions for integrating pragmatic analysis into EFL teaching. As such, it makes a significant contribution not only to the study of speech act theory but also to language education and curriculum development within Southeast Asian contexts.

Another key gap is the absence of studies addressing the communicative potential of underrated or peripheral characters. Minor characters, though often overlooked, frequently display pragmatically rich dialogue that reflects nuanced interpersonal relationships and situational subtleties. Ignoring them misses an opportunity to explore speech act diversity and sociocultural depth. Additionally, few studies have evaluated how analyzing such characters' illocutionary acts could inform instructional practices in language classrooms.

This research addresses those gaps by 1) shifting analytical focus from central to underrated characters, 2) bridging theoretical analysis and classroom application, and 3) framing authentic animated media as tools for enhancing students' pragmatic competence and communicative skills in Indonesian EFL contexts.

Film dialogue illustrates how speech acts operate in social contexts. Illocutionary functions can reveal character intent and plot shifts. Such studies aid language and media instruction. Nayoan & Hellystia (2022) found four functions of the illocutionary act—competitive (asking, ordering, and demanding), convivial (offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, apologizing, and complimenting), collaborative (asserting and reporting), and conflictive (accusing and cursing). Announcing and instructing in a collaborative function, congratulating in a convivial function, threatening and reprimanding in a conflictive function, and begging in a competitive function were some examples of illocutionary act functions that did not materialize. The conclusion also suggests that a single datum may serve multiple purposes for illocutionary acts. According to this study, the most commonly employed illocutionary act function—specifically, the assertive function—is collaborative. Since the purpose of this function is to express the speaker's opinion or the truth, regardless of its applicability, it has an aneurism goal.

Illocutionary force varies with context. Its flexible use reflects real-life speech dynamics. It also sheds light on cultural norms in communication. In the digital age, the function of illocutionary acts extends beyond face-to-face interactions into online communication platforms, where the absence of nonverbal cues makes pragmatic competence even more critical. Understanding speech acts helps avoid misunderstandings in emails, social media posts, and virtual meetings. Such knowledge has practical implications for both language teaching and effective communication in globalised, digital environments.

Despite its usefulness, identifying illocutionary acts can be challenging due to ambiguity, indirectness, and variations in cultural interpretations. Listeners must rely on contextual clues, tone, and shared knowledge to infer speaker intent. These challenges demonstrate the value of pragmatic competence in both native and second language communication.

In this research, the researchers attempted to analyze the illocutionary acts of *Luck* movie. This research is different from the previous two researches because the researchers associated the findings to the English learning implication in Indonesia. This study links speech acts to classroom language use. It highlights the need to teach communicative effectiveness, not just grammar. It promotes context-aware English learning in Indonesia.

This study offers a novel contribution to the field of pragmatics by analyzing the illocutionary acts performed by underrated characters in the animated film *Luck* through the lens of Searle's speech act taxonomy. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on categorizing speech act types or functions without pedagogical application, this research extends its scope by linking illocutionary analysis to the implications for English language learning and pragmatic competence development,

particularly in the Indonesian EFL context. Furthermore, it addresses the underexplored area of how secondary characters contribute to pragmatic meaning-making and character construction through speech. By using authentic film dialogues and connecting findings to communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, the study promotes the integration of real-world pragmatic input into classroom practice—fostering learners' ability to interpret speaker intent, navigate sociocultural nuances, and communicate effectively in diverse linguistic settings. This dual focus on theoretical exploration and instructional applicability marks an important departure from earlier descriptive studies and offers fresh insight into the pedagogical value of speech act theory.

Future research could explore illocutionary acts across different genres and cultural settings to deepen understanding of pragmatic variation. Additionally, incorporating multimedia resources like films into language instruction offers a rich context for learners to engage with real-life speech acts, enhancing both linguistic and cultural proficiency.

Integrating illocutionary act analysis into language teaching enhances learners' pragmatic competence by exposing them to authentic language use. It encourages students to grasp not only grammatical correctness but also the speaker's intended function, promoting communicative effectiveness. This focus aligns with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, emphasising real-life interaction and sociolinguistic appropriateness, which are essential for learners in multilingual contexts, such as Indonesia.

Incorporating animated films into pragmatics instruction is increasingly vital for enhancing students' English communication skills, particularly in EFL settings. Unlike scripted textbook dialogues, animated films offer authentic, context-rich speech that reflects real-world social interactions, making them ideal for analyzing illocutionary acts. Characters engage in speech that demonstrates politeness strategies, conflict management, humor, and indirect requests—all key components of pragmatic competence. Exposure to this naturalistic input helps learners develop sociolinguistic sensitivity and interpret speaker intent beyond literal meanings. Furthermore, using films as teaching materials aligns with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles by fostering interaction, promoting contextual learning, and engaging learners emotionally and cognitively. It allows students to observe pragmatic norms across different characters, contexts, and cultures, preparing them to communicate more effectively and appropriately in diverse real-life scenarios. Therefore, authentic media enriches learning and makes pragmatics accessible, meaningful, and impactful.

METHOD

This study aims to analyse the illocutionary acts in the movie *Luck* to examine how various speech acts reveal character intentions and relationships. This study focuses exclusively on spoken scripted utterances, thus excluding non-verbal cues that may also influence illocutionary force. Additionally, it explores the potential of using these illocutionary acts as authentic examples to support English language learners in improving their pragmatic competence and cultural understanding. By analysing illocutionary acts in a popular film, this study bridges theoretical pragmatics with real-life communication contexts. Movies provide rich, naturalistic language data that can better prepare learners for understanding subtle speech functions in social interactions.

This qualitative research reveals the functions of observed illocutionary acts by the characters of luck movie. To determine which characters in *Luck* were considered underrated by audiences, the researchers collected fan comments from public online platforms, including YouTube comment sections, Reddit discussions, and IMDb reviews. These platforms were selected due to their accessibility, popularity, and the spontaneous nature of user engagement, which provides authentic perceptions of character roles and dynamics (Aiche, 2024). This step aimed not to generate new research questions but to obtain fresh insights and perspectives on character relevance within the narrative (Abushalla, 2023).

The researchers applied purposive sampling to select a range of comments that directly referenced character performance, significance, or emotional impact. Only comments that mentioned specific characters and offered contextually meaningful judgments (e.g., referring to a character as "overlooked," "deserves more recognition," or "emotionally impactful despite limited screen time")

were included. This inclusion criterion helped ensure that the characters selected for analysis were genuinely perceived as underrated by the audience.

To maintain ethical integrity, only publicly available comments were analyzed, and no personal or identifying information was collected. The comments were manually reviewed, and a basic coding system was used to track recurring mentions of specific characters. We selected as subjects for illocutionary analysis those who frequently appeared across platforms and were described as underappreciated yet narratively meaningful. This procedure enhanced the relevance of the speech act analysis by anchoring it in audience perception and narrative subtlety.

Aiche (2024) explains that reviewing the comments does not introduce new research questions but merely finding out new information comprehensively within a specific field. This procedure attempts to provide or reveal new insights (Abushalla, 2023). Then, after successfully determining the underrated characters, the researchers analyzed the illocutionary acts to find the functions based on Searle (1968, 1979).

The data analysis procedure followed Miles et al. (2014) qualitative data analysis model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. All steps were conducted manually by the researcher to ensure immersion and familiarity with the data. Data reduction. First, the researcher transcribed selected dialogues from scenes involving the underrated characters, focusing solely on spoken scripted utterances. Dialogue excerpts were selected from scenes where social interaction, emotional expression, persuasion, or interpersonal conflict occurred, as these were likely to contain rich illocutionary content. Unnecessary content, such as non-verbal cues or background talk, was excluded.

Data display. Next, a coding table was constructed with columns indicating the speaker, utterance, scene context, and illocutionary act type based on Searle's (1969) taxonomy (i.e., assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives). This visual representation of the data allowed the researcher to systematically identify patterns in speech act usage and draw comparisons across characters and scenes.

Drawing Conclusions and Verification. Finally, the researcher analyzed the patterns emerging from the displayed data to interpret how the underrated characters contributed to social meaning, character development, and interpersonal relationships through speech acts. Memoing was used throughout the process to note interpretive insights, which supported the derivation of findings grounded in the coded data.

Identifying underrated characters allowed the researchers to focus on less prominent perspectives in the narrative. Reviewing fan comments offered context-specific insights that enriched the data source. This step enhanced the relevance of the speech act analysis by grounding it in public perception. Fan comments were sourced from publicly available forums to respect privacy and ethical standards in research. The fan comments were systematically coded for mentions of characters perceived as overlooked or misunderstood, focusing on those who exhibited nuanced speech acts contributing to plot and social dynamics. Using Searle's framework ensured a structured classification of functions, while Miles et al.'s method enabled systematic interpretation of qualitative data. The findings are presented according to the five categories of illocutionary acts, illustrated with representative dialogue excerpts and fan comment insights.

The verification of data in this study adhered to Searle's (1969, 1979) framework to ensure that each identified illocutionary act met the necessary structural and contextual conditions for its classification. First, each utterance was assessed against Searle's core components, including the speaker's intention, direction of fit (word-to-world or world-to-word), sincerity conditions, and propositional content. This approach allowed for precise identification of the illocutionary force of each statement.

Additionally, the context of each dialogue was reviewed to verify the pragmatic function of the utterance. Some utterances, which might seem assertive in form, actually revealed expressive or directive functions when analyzed in the context of the surrounding scene. This contextual validation helped avoid misclassification and increased the credibility of the analysis.

Repetitive analysis of similar utterances across different scenes further reinforced the reliability of classifications. Saturation was considered achieved when no new illocutionary functions emerged

from additional data. Though peer review was not employed, rigorous memoranda and classification logs were maintained, allowing for consistent self-verification throughout the analysis process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Luck is an animated fantasy comedy film from 2022 that was co-directed by Javier Abad and Peggy Holmes (Giardina, 2022). Kiel Murray wrote the screenplay, and he also conceived the story with the assistance of Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger (Goldsmith, 2020). The story was based on an original concept that Rebeca Carrasco, Juan De Dios, and Julián Romero came up with. The film explores themes of fortune and destiny through the adventures of its protagonist, who inadvertently discovers a hidden world where luck is manufactured. As the character navigates this enchanting realm, they learn valuable lessons about the importance of personal agency and the impact of choices on one's fate.

While the movie features additional characters such as Hazel and Gerry, this study focuses primarily on the interactions between Sam and Bob, as they offer the richest data for illocutionary act analysis. Therefore, we acknowledge the roles of secondary characters, but they are not central to this research. This allows for a more concentrated examination of the dynamics at play in their exchanges, illuminating the subtleties of their communication. In doing so, we hope to uncover more profound insights into the illocutionary acts that shape their relationship and drive the narrative forward.

At the beginning of the research process, the researchers attempted to watch the whole movie comprehensively to gain excellent understanding of the movie plot. The movie talks about an orphan, Sam Greenfield. Sam Greenfield, an orphaned girl, is forced out of her foster home, causing dismay to her roommate Hazel (Keegan & Giardina, 2022). She finds a penny to improve her luck, but accidentally flushes it down a toilet. Sam loses a penny to a cat named Bob, who berates her. They follow Bob to the Land of Luck, where leprechauns create good luck. They agree to get another penny for Hazel, who uses Bob's clothes. Sam discovers bad luck is managed under the Land of Luck.

From the initial process, the researchers considered that the characters named Sam and Bob were crucial to be analyzed in terms of the illocutionary acts. Then, the researchers analyzed the transcripts of Luck movie taken from (Luck (2022) - Transcripts - Forever Dreaming, 2022). The researchers analyzed the transcripts based on Searle's illocutionary act types.

By watching the entire film, the researchers ensured familiarity with both the narrative flow and character dynamics. Understanding the storyline helped identify key moments where speech acts carried significant communicative functions. Sam and Bob stood out due to their frequent exchanges and central roles in driving the plot forward. Using verified transcripts allowed for accurate extraction of utterances, while Searle's framework provided a reliable basis for classifying their illocutionary intent. This classification enabled researchers to analyse how the characters' intentions influenced their interactions and the overall narrative. By isolating these speech acts, they could discern patterns that revealed deeper themes within the film, enhancing their understanding of the characters' motivations and the emotional resonance of the story. Table 1 shows the recapitulation of Sam and Bob's illocutionary acts based on Searle's categorization.

Table 1. the Illocutionary Act Types of Sam and Bob

No	Types	Frequency
1	Directive	20
2	Assertive	9
3	Declaration	0
4	Expressive	6
5	Commissive	7

The analysis shows that directive illocutionary acts are the most frequent, reflecting the characters' efforts to influence each other's behaviours and decisions. Expressive and commissive acts also appear regularly, revealing emotional responses and commitments that enrich character development and interaction dynamics.

Table 1 shows the most frequently appeared illocutionary act type is – directive. This illocutionary act intended to elicit a specific response from the hearer. On the other hand, the results show no declarative function of the illocutionary act. Therefore, in Sam and Bob's utterances, there are no speech acts that alter reality to support their claims.

The data in Table 1 reveal that directive speech acts appear most frequently, indicating that many of Sam and Bob's utterances aim to influence the listener's actions. This evidence suggests that their communication often involves requesting, ordering, or suggesting. The absence of declarative acts highlights that their dialogue does not function to officially change a social state or status, which aligns with their roles in the storyline as characters reacting to events rather than formally defining them. This dynamic reinforces the nature of their interactions, characterised by immediacy and reaction rather than deliberation. As such, their dialogue serves to propel the narrative forward, illustrating their responsive roles within the unfolding events.

Directive

Directive function of the illocutionary act attempts to elicit a specific response from the hearer. In the movie, the excerpts of the directive function are observable in Table 2.

Table 2. The Directive Function of Sam and Bob's Illocutionary Acts

Data	Context	Excerpts	Explanation
1	In order to request another lucky penny, Sam goes with Bob into the Land of Luck. When Bob is unable to give Sam another lucky penny, they both get into a fight. During the debate, Bob claimed that Sam was the reason he gave Sam his travel penny at that particular moment—he was drawn to the meat beard. Bob was informed that the bread was known as Panini by Sam as soon as she heard him say that.	Bob, "It fell out of my collar when you lured me over with that nasty meat bread." Sam, "It is called a panini."	The bolded utterance is a directive function of the illocutionary act because the speaker tells the speech-partner the name of the meat bread.
2	Bob and Sam are going to sneak into the lucky country. They have to get past the captain's supervision, who is standing above the door, in order to enter the land of luck. When Sam noticed the leprechaun above, he asked Bob right away if the leprechaun was the captain.	Sam, "That is the captain?" Bob, "Aye, that is her. She really does not like me."	Sam's utterance, 'that is the captain' is a question that demands the speech partner's responses.

The directive function in illocutionary acts aims to elicit a specific response from the listener. In the movie *Luck*, this function is evident in several interactions between Sam and Bob. For instance, when Bob blames Sam for luring him with "nasty meat bread", Sam corrects him by stating, "It is called a panini." This utterance reflects a directive act, as she instructs Bob on the proper name. Another example occurs when Sam and Bob plan to sneak into the Land of Luck. Upon spotting a figure overhead, Sam asks, "Is that the captain?"—a question designed to elicit confirmation or clarification from Bob. Both examples illustrate the use of directives to steer or elicit responses in the dialogue. Responses in dialogue often serve to shape the conversation's direction, revealing not only character dynamics but also the intentions behind their interactions. In Sam's case, her questions and corrections indicate a proactive approach to communication, highlighting her role as a guide for Bob in their adventure.

Assertive

The assertive function refers to speaking actions that bind a speaker to the veracity of the stated claim are referred. Table 3 shows the recapitulated illocutionary acts with assertive function.

Table 3. The Assertive Function of Sam and Bob's Illocutionary Acts

Data	Context	Excerpts	Explanation
1	Bob and Sam stood at the threshold of the lucky land. Sam introduces herself before they begin their scheme to win another lucky penny, but Bob brushes her off, telling her that name is not important in this business relationship	Sam, "Great, I am Sam, anyway." Bob, "This is strictly business. Names are unimportant."	Bob's utterance is an assertive utterance. Bob the cat consider names are not important in that business. Thus, Bob asserts that matter.
2	Sam and Bob were having a conversation when a leprechaun charged Bob's travel penny for examination. Bob, however, objected and asked them to have his friend Gerry look into it. The Leprechauns informed Bob that Gerry was at the penny depot. Sam hears this and hides. Bob began complaining about his problems after the Leprechauns left. Sam suggested that he try to get another lucky penny at the penny depot, but Bob told Sam that only Leprechauns were allowed inside and that Sam was not one.	Sam, "Okay but those leprechauns just said something about a Penny Depot. Maybe we could get one there." Bob, "Only leprechauns are allowed inside, you are not a leprechaun."	Bob's utterance asserts the rule of only leprechauns are allowed to get inside. Thus, Sam cannot enter the depot.

The assertive function in illocutionary acts involves statements that commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition. This function is illustrated in the film *Luck* through Bob's dialogue with Sam. When Sam introduces herself by saying, "Great, I am Sam, anyway," Bob dismisses the relevance of names with, "This is strictly business. Names are unimportant." His statement reflects an assertive act, expressing his belief about the nature of their relationship. In another scene, after hearing about the Penny Depot, Sam suggests it as a possible place to find another lucky penny. Bob responds, "Only leprechauns are allowed inside; you are not a leprechaun," asserting a rule that excludes Sam. In the context of their conversation, both utterances demonstrate the use of assertive acts to present facts or beliefs as truth. This dynamic highlights how assertive acts can convey individual beliefs and establish boundaries within their relationship. Ultimately, these exchanges reveal the underlying tensions and playful banter that define their interactions.

Expressive

Expressive function refers to speech acts that convey the speaker's attitudes and feelings about the proposition. Expressive actions including expressing regret, gratitude, congratulations, boasting, praising, welcoming, and greeting. Table 4 shows the expressive functions of Sam and Bob's illocutionary acts.

Table 4. The Expressive Function of Sam and Bob's Illocutionary Acts

Data	Context	Excerpts	Explanation
1	Sam and Bob were having the talk that was described above. In that scenario, Sam and Bob were able to pass through the Land of Luck's entrance and verify Captain's control. And Sam, who was able to pass for the enormous Latvian leprechaun. When they finally reached the Land of Luck, Bob welcomed Sam, who was visiting the area for the first time.	Bob, "Welcome to the Land of Luck." Sam, "Incredible."	Bob's utterance expresses his welcoming feeling to Sam when he proudly introduces the Land of Luck.
2	After Bob successfully tricked Sam into the land of luck in that scenario, he led her to the leprechaun's locker. Two leprechauns who were female came up to them while they were there. When they begin to ask questions about Sam, Bob deceives them into believing that he is a gigantic Latvian leprechaun. When they were gone, Sam remarked on how adorable and tiny they were.	(Seeing the leprechauns) Sam, "They were so sweet and tiny."	Sam's utterance compliments the physical appearances and features of the leprechauns.

The expressive function of illocutionary acts refers to utterances that reveal the speaker's emotions or attitudes toward a situation. In *Luck*, this function is illustrated through Bob and Sam's expressions of sentiment. Upon entering the Land of Luck, Bob says, "Welcome to the Land of Luck," an utterance that demonstrates his sense of pride and hospitality. Sam's response, "Incredible," conveys her amazement at the new environment. In another scene, after encountering two female leprechauns, Sam expresses admiration by saying, "They were so sweet and tiny," which reflects her affection and appreciation for their appearance. These examples show how expressive acts are used to communicate emotional responses and personal evaluations within a conversation. This highlights the importance of language in conveying feelings and forming connections between characters. Through their exchanges, we gain insight into their personalities and the enchanting world they inhabit, further enriching the narrative.

Commissive

Speech acts known as commissives, such as oaths and promises, bind the speaker to a future course of action. Some actions indicating commissive functions are making promises, swearing, accepting, giving, and guaranteeing. Table 5 shows the commissive function of Sam and Bob's illocutionary acts.

Table 5. The Commissive Function of Sam and Bob's Illocutionary Acts

Data	Context	Excerpts	Explanation
1	The bunny drone cannot be activated until Sam and Bob obtain crystals. However, Bob questions Sam's ability to get the crystal and claims that Sam is extremely unlucky. Sam concurs with Bob's assessment. However, Gerry says Sam can do it and it's simple.	Bob, "She is way too unlucky." Sam, "It is true."	Sam's utterance indicates that she accepts her situation of being unlucky.
2	Sam went into the Land of Luck in order to obtain a lucky penny that was posing as a leprechaun. Even though Sam already lives in a fortunate world, she still experiences a little bit of bad luck. Bob, observing Sam's poor self-following behavior, tells Sam that she needs to change if she hopes to find the lucky penny. In response, Sam told Bob that she would make an effort to act appropriately.	Bob, "There is no unlucky here. So if you want that lucky penny for your wee friend, you best start blending in." Sam, "Uh, I promise that is what I was trying to do."	Sam's utterance indicates that she is going to pretend and behave properly.

Commissive illocutionary acts refer to statements in which the speaker commits to a future action, such as promising, accepting, or swearing. In *Luck*, Sam's dialogue illustrates this function clearly. When Bob comments on Sam's extreme unluckiness, Sam responds, "It is true," demonstrating her acceptance of that condition. This self-acknowledgement reflects a commissive stance as she agrees with the implication that her actions will be shaped by this reality. In another instance, when Bob tells her that she must blend in to obtain a lucky penny, Sam replies, "Uh, I promise that is what I was trying to do." This utterance functions as a commissive act, as Sam pledges to adjust her behaviour to achieve a future goal. This commitment indicates her willingness to adapt and conform to the expectations set before her. By making this promise, Sam acknowledges her current situation and demonstrates her determination to navigate the challenges ahead.

Illocutionary acts—communicative functions such as asserting, directing, requesting, or expressing—play a pivotal role in shaping meaning and intent in both everyday and fictional discourse. In animated and live-action films alike, these speech acts reveal character traits, drive narrative progression, and reflect sociocultural values. *Luck* (2022), for instance, uses illocutionary acts to construct contrasting personas: Sam, the protagonist, frequently employs expressive and directive speech acts, signaling her frustration with misfortune and her determination to overcome it. In contrast, Bob, a more composed character, often uses assertive speech acts to establish control and

authority. This dynamic interplay exemplifies how animated films can pragmatically illustrate identity formation and interpersonal relationships.

When compared to *Aladdin* (an animated fantasy film), *Luck* displays a more restrained use of fantastical speech while maintaining high pragmatic relevance. *Aladdin's* Genie mixes assertive and expressive acts to inject humor and offer guidance, whereas *Aladdin* himself uses directives to influence others, reflecting ambition and strategic thinking (Defiyanti et al., 2024). Similarly, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* leans heavily on representative acts (78 out of 131 utterances), particularly in Newt's dialogue, which tends to state facts or personal beliefs (Fitriani et al., 2020). Compared to these, *Luck* blends character-driven expressiveness with cultural messaging about perseverance and emotional resilience.

Illocutionary acts also reflect deeper cultural and contextual meanings. Dewi et al. (2021) analysis of *Before I Fall* found that directive acts (37.08%) dominated the protagonist's speech, underscoring her attempts to control and reshape her repeated reality. This focus on decision-making aligns with Western individualism. On the other hand, Panduputra et al. (2024) study of *Midway* highlighted how exertive and habitual speech acts mirror military hierarchy and collective duty—values deeply tied to historical and cultural contexts. Likewise, Lutfi & Widyawati (2024) analysis of *Jackie* suggests that commissives and acknowledgements in the film mirror social norms and reinforce values prioritized in Indonesia's *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, such as empathy, dignity, and community-oriented communication.

These varying use cases demonstrate that illocutionary acts do more than convey meaning; they encode cultural identity, social roles, and character conflict. For instance, the dominance of expressive speech acts in *Yowes Ben 2* (Arnoi et al., 2024) signals an emotionally driven youth culture, while the prevalence of assertives in *Dead Poet Society* (Rachmawati et al., 2017) reflects reflective academic dialogue. In contrast, the directive-laden speech in *Freedom Writers* emphasizes authority and motivation within an educational struggle. These patterns suggest that the form and function of speech acts are closely tied to both character function and genre-specific expectations.

Given these insights, incorporating film-based speech act analysis into EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction offers numerous pedagogical advantages. First, films present authentic, context-rich dialogues that demonstrate how speech acts operate within real-world-like social situations. Such an approach helps learners better understand when and how to use various illocutionary strategies. Second, by analyzing characters' use of assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives, learners can improve their pragmatic fluency, which is essential for effective communication. As supported by Widyani and Ariyaningsih (2024), film dialogue exposes students to naturalistic English usage and helps prevent pragmatic failure or cross-cultural misunderstanding.

o implement this practically, teachers can assign scene-based tasks where learners identify and categorize speech acts, then explain their pragmatic functions in relation to the scene's tone, purpose, and character relationships; use comparative analysis activities between films (e.g., *Luck* vs. *Aladdin* or *Freedom Writers* vs. *Dead Poet Society*) to highlight how genre and culture influence illocutionary choices (Aprilia & Dewi, 2022); and integrate role-play exercises based on movie scenes (Ratri & Bram, 2022), encouraging students to reconstruct or extend dialogues using appropriate speech acts and tone (Setianda & Hikmaharyanti, 2023), and encourage learners to reflect on how cultural norms, such as politeness or hierarchy, shape speech choices in both Western and local contexts (Widyawanti et al., 2024).

In sum, films—animated or otherwise—offer a rich source for analyzing illocutionary acts that reflect not only linguistic competence but also deeper cognitive, cultural, and interpersonal dimensions. By leveraging cinematic dialogue in EFL settings, educators can bridge the gap between form and function, helping students become more sensitive and effective communicators across diverse context. Future research should investigate cross-cultural comparisons and genre-specific analyses to enhance teaching practices and deepen students' understanding of English pragmatics.

Administering films could promote independent English learning. This matter is important because nowadays many students rely on AI-based tools (Aji et al., 2025). Furthermore, it would be detrimental if the implementation disregards the feedback provided by teachers (Widiyantari & Aji,

2025). Films could also avoid over-reliance while students are learning so that they can develop both linguistic accuracy and communicative confidence.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing body of research on speech act theory by applying Searle's framework to analyze illocutionary acts in *Luck* (2022), highlighting how directives, assertives, expressives, and commissives shape character development and drive the plot. By focusing on the interactions between Sam and Bob, the research demonstrates how illocutionary analysis can reveal not only communicative intent but also underlying cultural values and emotional dynamics. While the study offers valuable insights, it is limited by its exclusive focus on the two main characters, overlooking potentially rich data from secondary figures such as Hazel and Gerry. Future research should explore these underrated characters, whose dialogue may reveal alternative speech patterns, social roles, or cultural perspectives that enhance the pragmatic depth of the film. In terms of pedagogical implications, this study affirms the relevance of film-based speech act analysis for EFL pragmatics instruction. Implementing such analyses in classroom settings—through tasks like scene-based identification, role-play, and cross-cultural comparisons—can improve learners' pragmatic fluency and cultural awareness. As AI-based tools continue to dominate writing instruction, integrating authentic film dialogue into EFL curricula offers a balanced, human-centered alternative that fosters critical thinking, emotional engagement, and autonomous language use.

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