

Speech Function Used by the Characters in *We're the Millers* Movie

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Abstract—This study aims to find the speech function category used by the characters in the movie entitled *We're the Millers* and analyze the reason of the characters for using speech function category. In collecting data, this study used non-participant observation as a method and note taking as a technique. Descriptive qualitative was a method used to analyze the data. Then, the informal method was used as a method to present the results of the analysis to describe the speech function category used by the characters and the reason of the characters for using the speech function category in *We're the Millers* movie. This study used the sociolinguistics theory proposed by Holmes (2013) about speech function category. The results of this study showed that the utterances that uttered by the characters in *We're the Millers* movie contains all categories of speech function. Those categories were expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic. In addition, it was also found that the reasons of the characters for using the speech function categories were to express feeling, to give commands, to give information, to explain things, focuses on the aesthetic values on language, and to express empathy.

Keywords—*Sociolinguistics, Speech Function, We're the Millers, Characters*

Abstrak—Studi ini bertujuan untuk mencari kategori fungsi bahasa yang digunakan oleh karakter di dalam film yang berjudul *We're the Millers* dan menganalisis alasan karakter menggunakan kategori fungsi bahasa. Dalam mengumpulkan data, studi ini menggunakan observasi non-partisipan sebagai metode dan mencatat sebagai teknik. Deskriptif kualitatif adalah metode yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Lalu, metode informal digunakan sebagai metode untuk menyajikan hasil analisis untuk mendeskripsikan kategori fungsi bahasa yang digunakan oleh karakter dan alasan karakter menggunakan fungsi bahasa di dalam film *We're the Millers*. Studi ini menggunakan teori sosiolinguistik yang dikemukakan oleh Holmes (2013) tentang kategori fungsi bahasa. Hasil studi ini menunjukkan bahwa ujaran yang diucapkan oleh karakter di dalam film *We're the Millers* mengandung semua kategori dari fungsi bahasa. Kategori tersebut adalah expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, dan phatic. Selain itu, ditemukan juga bahwa alasan karakter menggunakan kategori fungsi bahasa adalah untuk mengekspresikan perasaan, untuk memberikan perintah, untuk memberikan informasi, untuk menjelaskan sesuatu, memfokuskan nilai estetika pada bahasa, dan untuk mengekspresikan empati.

Kata kunci—*Sosiolinguistik, Fungsi Bahasa, We're the Millers, Karakter*

1. Introduction

Language is a tool of social interaction and human communication. Every human communication conveys information to each other in the form of thoughts, ideas, intentions, feelings, and emotions directly. Language has a crucial role in society because it is the main means of communication. With language, humans can interact with other humans, both orally and in writing. Without language, it is certain that it will be very difficult for humans to convey their wishes, ideas, opinions, feelings, messages and so on. The existence of language provides the possibility for humans to learn from each other, understand each other, and most importantly communicate with each other. Based on this explanation, it can be ascertained that language and social activity are closely related.

Sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary science between sociology and linguistics. In short explanation, sociology can be interpreted as the science of social, while linguistics is the science of language. According to Holmes (2001:1), sociolinguistics study the relationship between language and society that explain why we speak differently in different social context and concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it used to convey social meaning. Meanwhile, Wardhaugh (2006:13) stated that sociolinguistics is the study of relationship between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and how language functions in communication. From these definitions, it can be concluded that sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society which underlines the idea of the diversity of language activities carried out by a group of people to communicate and interact in an environment.

Speech function is the part of sociolinguistics. From a conversation or communication, language can show various functions. Speech function in communication can be described based on the response from the

interlocutor. In addition, speech function can also be used to express emotions, provide information, influence the interlocutor, give commands, and others. Holmes (2013) describes the speech function into six parts, namely expressive to express speakers feeling, directive to give commands, referential to provide information, metalinguistic to comment on the language itself, poetic to focus on the aesthetic value of language and phatic to express empathy.

We usually used speech function when talking to other people. However, speech functions can also be found in the movies that we watch. The characters in the movie usually carry out conversation and uttered an utterance according to the situation. By understanding the speech function, we can understand the intent and reason of the characters when they uttered an utterance. Therefore, this study is conducted to find out the speech function used by the characters and analyze the reason of the characters using the speech function categories. The data source of this study was the movie entitled *We're the Millers*. Apart from this movie having an interesting storyline, *We're the Millers* was chosen because it provide the data needed by this study as it has the utterances with various kinds of expressions.

There are several studies that are relevant to this study. These studies have supported this study to find a gap because they are discussing the same topic as this study. The first previous study is a journal article conducted by Wilany, et al (2018). The study aims to describe kinds of speech function used in the data and find the most dominant category used in the data. Qualitative method used as the method of the study. The data used in the study were from the utterances of Sara Crewe in the novel entitled *A Little Princess*. The results of the study were Wilany, et al found 50 utterances that uttered by Crewe contain speech function categories and only five speech function categories were used. Expressive function is the most found category in the study. The difference between the study

conducted by Wilany, et al with this study are that the study focuses to describe kinds of speech function used in the data, while this study focuses on the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

The second previous study is a journal article conducted by Wijayanti, et al (2021). The study aims to identify the categories of speech function used in the data and to describe the application of speech function found for teaching speaking. Descriptive qualitative methods used as the method of the study. The data used in the study were from the utterances from the main character in *Wonder* movie. The results of the study were Wijayanti, et al found that all speech function categories were used by the main character in *Wonder* movie. Wijayanti, et al also concludes that the categories of speech function used by the main character in *Wonder* movie can be applied in teaching speaking at the eleventh grade of senior high school. The difference between the study conducted by Wijayanti, et al with this study are that the study focuses to describe the application of speech function found for teaching speaking, while this study focuses on the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

The third previous study is a journal article conducted by Taridi, et al (2022). The study aims to analyze the categories of speech function used in the data and to find the most prevalent categories of speech function used in the data. Qualitative method used as the method of the study. The data used in the study were from the utterances that uttered by the teachers in the tenth grade of English Vocational high school in Jambi. The results of the study were Taridi, et al found 60 utterances contain speech function categories. Taridi, et al also concludes that the most prevalent category of speech function used by the teachers was directive function. The difference between the study conducted by Taridi, et al with this study are that the study focuses on the most prevalent category used in the data, while this study

focuses on the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

The fourth previous study is a journal article conducted by Khaerunnisa, et al (2022). The study aims to analyze how speech function is used in the data and find the most dominant category used in the data. Descriptive qualitative method used as the method of the study. The data used in the study were from the utterances of English mentors in classroom interaction of English course at Balle Village. The results of the study were Khaerunnisa, et al found that all speech function categories were used by English mentors. Expressive function is the most found category in the study. The difference between the study conducted by Khaerunnisa, et al with this study are that the study focuses to analyze how speech function is used in the data, while this study focuses on the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

Based on the explanation above, this study conducted to find out the speech function used by the characters in *We're the Millers* movie by using the theory proposed by Holmes (2013) and analyze the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

2. Research Methodology

The movie entitled *We're the Millers* serves as the data source of this study. This American crime comedy movie was released in 2013. This movie was directed by Rawson M. Thurber and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. This movie tells about the story of David, a low-level marijuana dealer who was ordered by his boss to smuggle drugs from Mexico into the United States. The primary data of this study was taken from the utterances that uttered by the characters in the movie. The movie was taken from the official website of Warner Bros. Pictures. Apart from this movie having an interesting storyline, *We're the Millers* was chosen as the data source because it provide the data needed by this study as it has a lot of utterances with various expressions uttered by the characters.

The data collection method used in this study was non-participant observation. This method was used because this study observes the characters in the movie without directly participating or interacting with them. This study also used note taking as the data collecting technique. The steps taken to collect the data were downloading the movie from the website on the internet, then watching the movie to find the utterances that used speech function categories, and lastly doing note taking in order to collect the utterances that contain speech function categories.

After collecting the data, descriptive qualitative method was used to analyze the data. Crocker (2009) defines the qualitative method as the act of gathering largely textual material and understanding it through interpretive analysis. The descriptive is not about the data with forms of numbers, but it uses data with form of words. The steps taken to analyze the data were classifying the data that has been found based on the speech function categories proposed by Holmes (2013) and analyzing the data that has been collected to find the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

The analysis results of the study were presented by using informal method. The informal method is expressed in the form of short, precise, and clear verbal statements. Informal method was used as a method to present the result of the analysis because the reasons of the characters using the speech function categories were explained descriptively in words and sentences. The steps taken to present the analysis were the utterances that contain speech function categories were displayed in the form of sentence with an italic and bold font and the results of the data that have been analyzed were displayed below the sentences to provide an explanation of the reason of the characters using the speech function categories.

3. Results and Discussions

In the analysis, the data were classified into six categories based on the speech function that proposed by Holmes (2013). After the data were classified, the utterances that contain speech function then analyzed to find out the reason of the characters for using speech function. The data with a total of 12 utterances were selected to be analyzed to provide an explanation regarding the use of speech function by the characters and their reason for using it. The results of the analysis were explained as follows.

Expressive Function

Expressive function is used to express the feelings of the speaker. In addition, expressive function also serves to show the speaker's psychological attitude towards a situation, such as thanking, congratulating, apologizing, praising, blaming, and condolences. The analyses of the utterances that contain expressive functions were as follows:

Data 1 (00:11:46):

Brad: "*I bought an orca, I make a lot of money. Well, I don't like sports cars.*"

The utterance that uttered by Brad contains expressive function. The context of this utterance is that David was coming to Brad's house. Then, David saw an orca swimming in Brad's aquarium. David was surprised when he saw an orca swimming in Brad's aquarium and then he asked Brad why he kept an orca in his aquarium. The reason Brad uses the expressive function is to express his feelings that he does not like buying sports cars and prefers to buy an orca.

Data 2 (00:42:41):

David: "*I didn't even like this song when it was popular.*"

The utterances that uttered by David contains expressive function. The context of this utterance is that David celebrated their success in smuggling drugs from Mexico by playing a

song. After finding out that the song he was playing was a song that he did not like, he immediately changed the song. However, Casey and Kenny asked for the song to be played again because they liked the song. The reason David uses the expressive function is to express his feelings that he had never liked that song even since it was popular.

Directive Function

Directive function is used to seek, order, or ask someone to do something. There are three ways to express directives, namely by using imperative, declarative, and interrogative. The analyses of the utterances that contain directive functions were as follows:

Data 3 (00:19:11):

David: “*Shut up, okay? Please. I don’t need to hear your hard-luck backstory right now.*”

The utterances that uttered by David contains directive function. The context of this utterance is that Kenny offends Casey by saying that she is a homeless. Then, Casey, who did not accept Kenny's words, clarified that she is not a homeless. Casey told that she just ran away from her house because she had problems with her family. The reason David uses the directive function is to give command for Casey to not speak anymore because David did not want to listen her story.

Data 4 (01:49:05):

Brad: “*Let’s just shake hands and call it even.*”

The utterances that uttered by Brad contains directive function. The context of this utterance is that David has succeeded in smuggling drugs to Brad’s headquarters. Then, David asked the money that Brad had promised him if he managed to smuggle drugs from Mexico into the United States. Brad offered to just shake hands because Brad actually had no intention of giving the money to David. The reason Brad uses the directive function is to give

command for David so Brad does not have to give him money.

Referential Function

Referential function is used to provide information to the listener. The analyses of the utterances that contain referential functions were as follows:

Data 5 (00:31:42):

Brad: “*Everything’s gonna be fine, man. I greased the guard in lane one at the border.*”

The utterance that uttered by Brad contains referential function. The context of this utterance is that David was calling Brad to ask why he has to carry a ton of marijuana. David was afraid that if he smuggled a ton of marijuana, he would be caught by border guards. Then, Brad tells David that he will be safe because he has already bribed the border guards. The reason Brad uses the referential function is to give information to David that he had bribed the border guards so that David would be safe crossing the border.

Data 6 (00:51:14):

Edie: “*Yeah, my Don has been an agent for the last 22 years.*”

The utterance that uttered by Edie contains referential function. The context of this utterance is that David saw a gun and a badge in Don’s car. David was so panicked because he knew that the person who gave him a ride is a DEA agent. Then, David immediately asked if Don is a DEA agent. Then, Edie replies that her husband is a DEA agent. The reason Edie uses the referential function is to give information to David that her husband is a DEA agent who has served for 22 years.

Metalinguistic Function

Metalinguistic function is used to express or comment on the language itself. This function is used when the speaker wants to explain something to the listener. The analyses of the

utterances that contain metalinguistic functions were as follows:

Data 7 (00:13:46):

David: *“Drug smuggling is the activity of taking drugs into or out of a country illegally.”*

The utterance that uttered by David contains metalinguistic function. The context of this utterance is that David was telling Kenny that he was going to smuggle drugs from Mexico into the United States. Then, Kenny asked David if he would become a drug dealer. David explained that he would not become a drug dealer, but he would become a drug smuggler. The reason David uses the metalinguistic function is to explain to Kenny the meaning of drug smuggling so that Kenny knows the difference between drug dealers and drug smuggling.

Data 8 (01:35:40):

Ben Folds: *“‘Five’ is the name of the band.”*

The utterance that uttered by Ben Folds contains metalinguistic function. The context of this utterance is that Brad was telling David that a band was playing at his house. Brad thought that Ben Folds Five was the name of the band that was playing at his house. The reason Ben Folds uses the metalinguistic function is to explain to Brad that the correct band name was 'Five' and not Ben Folds Five.

Poetic Function

Poetic function is used to focus on the aesthetic value of the language. The word 'poetic' in this case does not refer to the ability to write poetry, it refer to the ability to manipulate language in a creative way. The analyses of the utterances that contain poetic functions were as follows:

Data 9 (00:43:11):

Kenny: *“Leavin’ a trace of not one God-given ray, is it because my life is 10 shades of gray.”*

The utterance that uttered by Kenny contains poetic function. The context of this utterance is that Casey was playing a song in their car. Then, Kenny who heard it immediately joined in giving the utterance in rhythmic language. The reason Kenny uses the poetic function is to give utterance in aesthetic way and rhythmic language.

Data 10 (01:37:38):

Rose: *“You put your hands on her one more time, I swear I’m gonna rip that f*cking tattoo right off of your chest.”*

The utterance that uttered by Rose contains poetic function. The context of this utterance is that Casey was talking to Scottie P, a man that she just met. However, after a while, Scottie P attempted to kiss Casey. Rose who saw the incident then immediately threatened Scottie P. The reason Rose uses the poetic function is to give a warning as well as give utterance in aesthetic way by using hyperbole.

Phatic Function

Phatic function is used to express solidarity and empathy towards the listener. This function is also considered to show feelings, friendship, or social solidarity. The analyses of the utterances that contain phatic functions were as follows:

Data 11 (01:20:59):

Casey: *“How bad is it, Kenny?”*

The utterance that uttered by Casey contains phatic function. The context of this utterance is that Kenny has just been bitten by a spider in his testicles. Then, Kenny winced in pain after his testicles were bitten by a spider. Casey who saw Kenny was grimacing then asked Kenny about his condition. The reason Casey uses the phatic function is to give Kenny empathy because he had just been bitten by a spider.

Data 12 (01:23:45):

Rose: *“Hello, how are you?”*

The utterance that uttered by Rose contains phatic function. The context of this utterance is that Kenny was taken to the hospital to be given treatment after he was bitten by a spider. Then, Rose who saw the doctor that treating Kenny immediately greeted him. The reason Rose uses the phatic function is to show her social solidarity with the doctor who had treated Kenny.

4. Conclusion

This study entitled *Speech Function Used by the Characters in We're The Millers Movie* focuses on the utterance that are uttered by the characters in the movie. Based on the title and the data in this study, two problems of the study have been formulated. From the two problems, it produces two aims. First, to find out the speech function category used by the characters in *We're the Millers* movie and second, to analyze the reason of the characters for using speech function category in *We're the Millers* movie. Based on the results of the research and analysis, it was found that all categories of speech function based on the theory that proposed by Holmes are used by the characters in *We're the Millers* movie. Those categories are expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic. This study also found that the reasons of the characters for using the speech function categories are to express feeling, to give commands, to give information, to explain things, focuses on the aesthetic values on language, and to express empathy.

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