

Commissive Illocutionary Acts in the American Comedy Movie Entitled: *Home Alone*

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Abstract: This study is entitled *Commissive Illocutionary Acts in the American Comedy Movie Entitled: Home Alone*. It focuses on a branch of speech act namely illocutionary acts, in particular to commissive and its types. The aims of this study are to identify the types of commissive illocutionary acts used by the characters in the movie and analyze the context of situation that supports the utterances which contain commissive illocutionary acts in the movie entitled *Home Alone*. The data of this study is taken from the American comedy movie entitled *Home Alone* (1990). The method used to collect the data in this study is the documentation method. The movie was watched repeatedly and the utterances was noted using note-taking technique. The descriptive-qualitative method was applied in analysing the data. In presenting the data, this study used the informal method which presented the data in the form of sentences. This study used the theory of Commissive Illocutionary Acts proposed by Searle (1969) and the theory of Context of Situation proposed by Holmes (2013); both theories were used in an attempt to answer the problems of this study. The findings of this study shows that there were forty-two utterances which are categorized under the types of commissive illocutionary acts, namely; promise, threat, refusal, intend and promise to do something, and offer to do something. Refusal type of commissive illocutionary acts is the most frequent one found in the analysis. Meanwhile, the context of situations are indeed beneficial to support the use of commissive illocutionary acts in *Home Alone* movie.

Keywords: *commissive illocutionary acts, context of situation, home alone movie*

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important aspect of human activities because people are able to convey some information through utterances. It includes speech or oral communication, and writing as well as graphical representations. According to Murphy, et.al (1997) states that communication is a process of transmitting and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. It is considered effective when it achieves the desired response or reaction from the receiver. According to Yule (1985:127), communication clearly depends on not only recognizing the meaning of words in an utterance, but recognizing what speakers mean by their utterances. Pragmatics is the study of what speakers mean, or “speaker meaning” during their utterances. According to Levinson (1983:3) pragmatics is

the study of aspect of language that requires reference to the users of the language then led to a very natural, pragmatics is the field of linguistic which points out speech utterance expressed by speaker related to the context.

In attempting to express themselves, people do not only produce utterances containing grammatical structures and words, they perform action via those utterances which generally called speech acts (Yule, 1996:47). According to Austin in Levinson (1983:236), speech act consists of three related acts, there are locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Among these acts, illocutionary act is essential to any discussion of speech acts. It explains what speaker does in uttering something to hearer in context. Meanwhile, Searle (1979) divides speech acts into five basic types; assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

The analysis of speech acts can be found not only in real life, but also in dialogues in literary works and movies.

Speech acts are more easily seen in the movie because there will be some utterance and it will use a gesture to help the utterance while the dialogue is going. The focus of this study is commissive illocutionary act that appears in the movie entitled *Home Alone* and how the context of situation supports the utterance.

The movie entitled 'Home Alone' was chosen as the data source because it is interesting to analyse a kind of classic Christmas movie usually played in Indonesian television channels every year. This movie also showed a lot of family values that include many moral messages which can be learned in this life. This topic is interesting to analyze because the appearance of the kinds of commissive illocutionary acts in the movie can be a suitable example to show how the society used language to commit the speaker to do some future actions such as promising, threatening, refusing, and also offering something.

Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, it is interesting to analyze the commissive illocutionary found in the *Home Alone* movie. There are some problems are formulated as follows:

- a. What types of commissive illocutionary acts are uttered by the characters in the movie entitled *Home Alone*?
- b. How does the context of situation support the utterance containing commissive illocutionary acts in the movie entitled *Home Alone*?

Aims of the Study

Based on the problems of the study above, the aims of study are formulated as follows:

- a. To identify the types of commissive illocutionary acts used by the characters in the movie entitled *Home Alone*.
- b. To analyze the context of situation that supports the utterances which contain commissive illocutionary acts in the movie entitled *Home Alone*.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method of this study consists of four following aspects, they are: data source, method and technique of collecting data, method and technique of analyzing data, method and technique of presenting data analysis.

Data Source

The data source of this study was taken from the American Comedy Movie entitled *Home Alone*, as the primary data. This movie was written and produced by *John Hughes* and directed by *Chris Columbus* in November 16, 1990. The movie entitled *Home Alone* was chosen as the data source because this movie showed a lot of family values which many moral messages contained therein. It makes this movie totally unique in addition in speech acts

used in the dialogue which can be classified as the types of commissive illocutionary acts.

Method and Technique of Collecting Data

This research is a library research that applies several techniques in collecting the data. This study used the documentation method with note taking techniques in order to collect the data. The documentation method that was used to arranging this research is followed by some steps as follow:

- a. The movie entitled *Home Alone* was downloaded from the internet through this link: <https://www.y2mate.com/home-alone-1990/id5>
- b. The movie was watched repeatedly in order to find out the utterances contained commissive illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1969).
- c. The data found in the movie entitled *Home Alone* was compared with the movie script which downloaded from the internet through this link https://www.scripts.com/script/home-alone-1990_13216, to know the aspect meant of the character role, sequence of event, setting and passage were fully understood to collect the data.
- d. All the utterances spoken by the characters which were identified as commissive illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1969) noted using note-taking technique.

Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The data in this study were analysed by using descriptive qualitative method. The data were analysed by explaining it in words or sentences descriptively. It meant that graphics or chart and numbers are not used in the analysis. After analysing the data, classifying was the next step to identify utterances which were spoken by the characters according to the kinds of commissive illocutionary acts in the movie entitled *Home Alone*. The data found in the movie were written differently in the bold types.

Method and Technique of Presenting Data

The data analysis was presented using an informal method. In presenting analysed data, the informal method is to use terms to explain the data results through verbal interpretation. The data was described in a descriptive manner based on the theory by illustrating and describing it in words or sentences using the following steps:

- a. In the conversations and timelines, the collected data was divided into several types of commissive illocutionary acts.
- b. In addition, the data is clearly clarified by analyzing the different types of commissive illocutionary acts as well as the context of the situations. Paragraphs are used to present all of the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Commissive Illocutionary Acts in the American Comedy Movie Entitled: *Home Alone*

This chapter presents the analysis of commissive illocutionary acts that appear in the American comedy movie entitled *Home Alone*. The result of the analysis are presented in the form of paragraph which belongs to commissive illocutionary acts. The utterances are classified and grouped by its types based on the theory proposed by Searle (1969), then discussed the context of situation proposed by Holmes (2013) that supports the utterances.

a. Promise

Data 1

Time: 00:10:45 – 00:11:18

HARRY : “Having a reunion or something?”

KATE : “Oh no. My husband's brother transferred to Paris last summer and both of his kids are still going to school here, and I guess he missed the whole family. (Harry smiles at Kevin, showing his gold tooth) He's giving us all this trip to Paris for the holidays, so we can be together.”

HARRY : “You're taking a trip to Paris?”

KATE : “Yes. We hope to leave tomorrow morning.”

HARRY : “Excellent. Excellent.”

KATE : “If you'll excuse me, this one's a little out of sorts. **I'll be right back.**”

The utterance "**I'll be right back**" is identified as an illocutionary act as stated by Yule (1996:48) that the illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance and Kate's utterance above is identified as a commissive because the speaker utters words or phrases to the listener to commit him or herself to do a future action. In this scene, Harry was disguised as a police officer who checked the neighborhood situation before Christmas and make sure that the house has a suitable security system to avoid the robbery which often happened during the Christmas holiday. He asked if Kate having a reunion or not because her house looks so busy, to avoid suspicion from McCallister's family. Kate explained that they just have a gathering the night before their flight to Paris, so her house looks so busy on that evening. Kate never realized that she gave information to a robber who wants to rob her house. Actually, Harry comes to McCallister's house to make sure that all of those family members have a vacation to Paris, so no one will stay at that house. The utterance "**I'll be right back**" uttered by Kate is categorized as the act of promise since Kate as the speaker promises to do a future action to the hearer which is Harry.

Based on the components of the context of the situation, there were two participants involved in the conversation. They were Kate as Kevin's mother, and Harry the robber who disguised as a police officer. The setting of this scene was at McCallister's house which is located at 671 Lincoln Blvd, and the setting of time was in the evening before their flight to Paris. The topic of this scene

was about Harry who asked some questions to Kate, to make sure that all the people in that house would have a flight to Paris tomorrow morning. When the conversation happened, Kate is still holding Kevin's hand which previously caused chaos in the dining room. Furthermore, Kate intends to bring Kevin to his room first before returning to answer the questions asked by Harry. The main function of Kate's utterances "**I'll be right back**" is to promise Harry that she will back as soon as possible to see Harry and continued their talks.

b. Threat

Data 2

Time: 00:04:37 – 00:04:58

LINNIE : “P.S.: You have to sleep on the hide-a-bed with Fuller. If he has something to drink, he's going to wet the bed.”

KEVIN : “**This house is so full of people. It makes me sick!** When I grow up and get married, I'm living alone! Did you hear me? I'm living alone! I'm living alone!”

The utterance uttered by Kevin, "**This house is so full of people. It makes me sick!**" is identified as an act of threat which the part of commissive illocutionary acts. Kevin, the speaker of this utterance express his feeling of being threatened by his family. Kevin McCallister is an eight-year-old kid who often makes trouble. He has two brothers and two sisters, Buzz, Megan, Linnie, and Jeff. They were having a flight to Paris. On the night before their flight to Paris, they had a gathering with Uncle Frank's family. McCallister's house was so busy at that time. Kevin's aunt, Leslie reminded all of them to pack their suitcase. Therefore, Kevin asked his siblings to pack his suitcase since he did not know how to do it. Buzz, Megan, Linnie, Jeff, and even all his cousins refused to help him. His siblings and cousins start to bully him and said that he was useless. Megan and Jeff even said that Kevin was an idiot. Kevin felt furious and left them. Furthermore, he asked for help from Linnie. However, Linnie refused to help Kevin and said that their mother would do that for Kevin. Linnie said that Kevin could not do anything at the age of 8 years. Linnie added that Kevin should sleep with Fuller, his cousin who likes to wet his bed. Kevin's utterance "**This house is so full of people. It makes me sick!**" showed that he was in serious condition and felt threatened since all of his siblings bullied him. The chaotic state of his house and Linnie's words that he had to sleep with Fuller made him even more threatened.

Based on the components of the context of situation, two participants were involved in this conversation. They were Kevin and Linnie. Kevin was the one who uttered the utterance above. The setting of place of this conversation was in McCallister's house when they were busy packing their suitcase, and the setting of time was at night before their flight. The topic of this conversation talked about Kevin's siblings who told Kevin to sleep with Fuller. Before this conversation happened, Kevin was being bullied by his siblings and cousins. They said that Kevin is useless and

could not do anything at his age of eight. The situation of his-busy-house and all of his sibling's words make him felt threatened. The utterance "**This house is so full of people. It makes me sick!**" showed that Kevin felt threatened since there were so many people in his house who liked to bully him and refused to help him. The function of the utterance uttered by Kevin, "**It makes me sick!**" as if re-affirming that what happened at that time made him feel even more threatened where everyone was saying bad things to him.

c. Refusal

Data 3

Time: 00:18:55 – 00:19:05

FRANK : "That's real. It's real crystal."

LESLIE : "Yeah, so?"

FRANK : "Put them in your purse"

LESLIE : "**Frank, I can't do that**"

FRANK : "Put 'em-- put 'em-- put 'em... Put them in your purse!"

The utterance "**Frank, I can't do that**" is classified as an act of refusal which is a part of commissive illocutionary acts. The utterance uttered by Leslie above was an act of refusal since she refused her husband's request. McCallister's family was on the flight to Paris. Peter, Kate, Frank, and Leslie were in the first class. Meanwhile, the kids were in the coach. Peter sat beside Kate, and Frank and Leslie were directly in front of them. On the plane, they were served food by the flight attendants. Frank said, "That's real. It's real crystal" because the cutleries that were given looked so beautiful and looked like crystal. He loved those cutleries and told his wife to put them in her bag. Therefore, his wife immediately refused her husband's request since she realized that it was wrong by saying "**Frank, I can't do that**"

According to the components of the context of situation, two participants were involved in this conversation. They were a married couple, Frank and Leslie. The setting of place of this conversation was on the plane in the air. Meanwhile, the setting of time was at noon. The topic of the conversation talked about Frank's intention to take the cutleries given by the flight attendants as his own. Frank said, "That's real. It's real crystal" because the cutleries that were given looked so beautiful and looked like crystal. He loved those cutleries and told his wife to put them in her bag. Leslie was directly refuse it. The function of Leslie's utterance "**Frank, I can't do that**" as the refusal of her husband's request.

d. Intention and promise to do something

Data 4

Time: 00:26:53 – 00:27:05

FLIGHT ATTENDANT : "The captain's doing all he can, but your phones are still out of order."

LESLIE : "**We'll call as soon as we land, Kate. I'm sure everything's okay.**"

KATE : (sigh)

The utterance above "**We'll call as soon as we land, Kate. I'm sure everything's okay**" is identified as part of commissive illocutionary acts. The utterance uttered by Leslie is classified as an act of intention and promise to do something since the speaker has a plan in their mind and promise to do something in the future. McCallister's family was panic since they realized that Kevin was left behind. The plane was in the air when they realized that. Kate felt so worried and wanted to back to Chicago if she can. The kids were in the coach and Peter, Kate, Frank, and Lesli were in the first class. Peter told Kate to be calm and said that Kevin would be safe. However, she felt sad and disappointed thinking about being a bad mother who left her son alone. Peter asked the flight attendant about how long they will arrive in Paris. Furthermore, he also asked the flight attendant to make a call to their house in Chicago to check his son. The flight attendant asked for help from the captain to make a call. Unfortunately, their house-phone-number could not be reached because it was out of order. Kate became panic even more and confused. Therefore, Leslie tried to think of another way to get in contact with her nephew and hoped Kate would be calm down. Leslie said, "**We'll call as soon as we land, Kate. I'm sure everything's okay**" is classified as an act of intention and promise to do something because she has a plan in her mind that she would call Kevin directly when they were landed in Paris, and she was promised that everything would be okay then. "**I'm sure everything's okay**" was the other Leslie's utterance that represents an action of promise. She was intended to call her nephew and promise that everything would be okay so Kate should not be worried even more.

Based on the components of the context of situation, there were three participants involved in the conversation. They are the flight attendant, Leslie, and Kate. The flight attendant was the one who gave information about their phone which was out of order, Leslie was the speaker who uttered the utterance above, and Kate was the hearer who only gave a sigh when the speaker uttered the utterance. The setting of place of the conversation was on the plane in the air. They were on their flight to Paris. The topic of this concersation talked about Kate, Peter, Frank, and Leslie realized that they left Kevin behind, then try to find a way to get contact with him. On the other hand, the flight attendant gave information about their phone which was out of order. Leslie who has a plan in her mind to call her nephew as soon as possible when they landed in Paris. The utterance "**We'll call as soon as we land, Kate. I'm sure everything's okay**" is classified as an act of intend and promise to do something. The function of that utterance was to convey the plan in her mind and to commit her to do an action in the future, which is called her nephew when they arrived in Paris.

e. Offer to do something

Data 5

Time: 01:00:03 – 01:00:37

KATE : "I'm sorry, did you say you could help me?"

- GUS : "Anyway, I'm rambling on here. Our flight was cancelled, so we got to drive. See the guy in the yellow jacket over there? He's going to rent us a nice big van and we're going to drive to Milwaukee. Now, I heard you had some problems getting to Chicago? To see your kid or something?"
- KATE : "My son. He-- We left, and he's there."
- GUS : "Oh, jeez. **If you have to get to Chicago, we'll gladly drive you.** It's on the way to Milwaukee."
- KATE : "You'd give me a ride?"
- GUS : "Sure we would, why not? You know, you've got to get home to see your kid."

The utterance "**If you have to get to Chicago, we'll gladly drive you**" is categorized as part of commissive illocutionary acts. The utterance uttered by Gus is identified as an act of offer to do something since there were two participants involved in the conversation and the speaker was offer help by doing something to the hearer. This conversation happened when Kate was arguing with the male ticket agent. Kate asked help to have a flight to Chicago but the flights were fully booked. The male ticket agent offered to help book a room so Kate could wait for the next flight but Kate refused it. Suddenly, Gus Polinski walked over to Kate and asked her to chat for a while. Gus told her about who he is and the friends behind him. He said that his flight was cancelled so Gus and his friends had to drive to Milwaukee. Then he pointed to one of his friends who was wearing a yellow jacket behind him. He said the man would rent a nice big van and they would drive to Milwaukee. Gus was overhears Kate's conversation with the ticket agent, intended to provide assistance to Kate so that she can meet her child. He said, "I heard you had some problems getting to Chicago? To see your kid or something?" to confirm the information he heard earlier. Kate replied "My son. He-- We left, and he's there" Furthermore, Gus was offered a ride to Kate by saying "If you have to get to Chicago, we'll gladly drive you. It's on the way to Milwaukee" because he thought the big van was enough to accommodate them all and would be nice if they could help Kate.

Based on the components of the context of situation, there were two participants involved in the conversation. They were Kate and Gus Polinski. The setting of place of this conversation took place at Scranton Airport. The setting of time was in the afternoon. The topic of this conversation was about Kate who was looking for a flight to Chicago but nothing left. Furthermore, Gus Polinski came over her. He explained that his flight was cancelled and he should drive to Milwaukee with his friends. They rent a nice big van and they would drive to Milwaukee. The main function of the utterance uttered by Gus "**If you have to get to Chicago, we'll gladly drive you**" was to offered help to Kate. Gus and his friends gladly drove her with a nice big van they rent to Chicago and make her meet her son.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study entitled "Commissive Illocutionary Acts in The American Comedy Movie Entitled: *Home Alone*" focuses on illocutionary acts in commissive context. The findings show that there are five types of commissive illocutionary acts developed by Searle (1969) encountered in the movie entitled *Home Alone*. They are; promise, threat, refusal, intend and promise to do something, and offer to do something. This study found forty-two utterances that contain illocutionary acts. Five utterances were chosen randomly to be analysed in detail. In analyzing the commissive illocutionary act by its types, the theory of context of situation used in order to clearance and elaborate the situation why the utterance arises. All data in this study consist of all components of the context of situation such as the participants, the setting, the topic, and the function.

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