

ABSTRACT

The study examines the illocutionary acts in the dialogues of Darby Shaw, the main character in John Grisham's *The Pelican Brief*. It investigates how those acts contribute to her characterization as a brave person. The objectives are to identify the types of illocutionary acts she performs, describe their functions within the narrative context, and explain how they construct bravery. The analysis applies Searle's speech act theory and characterization theory as its theoretical framework. By using a descriptive qualitative method with the data collected through close reading, note-taking, and purposive sampling of utterances containing identifiable illocutionary force in contexts involving risk, conflict, or decision-making, the findings reveal that Darby Shaw uses assertives and expressives dominantly and also uses directives moderately and a few commissives. Pragmatically, these acts function to report facts, construct legal reasoning, challenge assumptions, express emotions, manage fear, influence others, and commit to future actions. The analysis further demonstrates that Darby's speech acts construct three forms of bravery: intellectual bravery through assertiveness, operational bravery through directives and commissives, and relational bravery through expressives under conditions of threat, risk, and uncertainty. Overall, this study highlights the value of pragmatic analysis in revealing how character traits are linguistically constructed in literary works.

Keywords: bravery; characterization; illocutionary acts; literary pragmatics; *The Pelican Brief*