

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Every research project requires a theoretical foundation as a reference point. This study integrates two frameworks: **speech act theory** as its primary analytical framework, serving as a linguistic coding system, and **literary characterization theory** as its interpretative framework. These frameworks are employed in a complementary manner; together, they allow the researcher to examine not only what Darby Shaw says but also what her language does and what it reveals about her brave characterization.

2.1.1. Pragmatics

This study is grounded in pragmatics, which examines how utterances' meaning is conveyed in context and interpreted in actual communication beyond the literal meaning of words. As Yule (1996: 3) defines it, pragmatics focuses on how speakers produce utterances and how the listeners interpret them, focusing on the speaker's intended meaning that may differ from the semantic meaning of the sentence itself. Pragmatics, therefore, provides the basis for analyzing the speech of literary characters such as Darby Shaw, whose dialogues are examined in this study, allowing each utterance to be interpreted within its situational context.

2.1.2. Speech Act

As one of the central concepts in pragmatics, speech act theory was first introduced by J. L. Austin in his 1955 Harvard lectures and his posthumously published book

How to Do Things with Words (1962), which argues that utterances do not merely represent reality but also constitute actions. Following Austin (1962: 94-108), when people speak, they simultaneously perform locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The **locutionary act** is the basic act that produces meaningful linguistic expressions, the act of saying something (including phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts). Then, the **illocutionary act**, which this present study focuses on, is the action performed *in* saying something, such as asserting, promising, warning, requesting, or apologizing. Represents the communicative intentions through an utterance. For instance, the utterance “It is cold in here” may function not as a description but as a request to close the window. The **perlocutionary act** refers to the effect that an utterance has on the listener or the situation, such as convincing, persuading, alarming, or inspiring, and depends on the consequences that follow the utterance in a given context. However, Austin’s illocutionary acts taxonomy (verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives) was later criticized for overlap and a lack of clear criteria. This limitation led John R. Searle to make a more systematic taxonomy.

Searle (1969; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985) expanded and systematized Austin’s framework by proposing that speech acts can be distinguished by three analytical criteria: illocutionary point, direction of fit, and sincerity conditions. Based on these criteria, he identifies five, and only five, fundamental types of illocutionary acts: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985: 37-38; Yule, 1996: 53-54).

Table 2.1.2 Searle's Classification of Illocutionary Acts

Type	Illocutionary Point	Direction of Fit	Sincerity Condition	Example Verbs
Assertive (ASS)	Commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition	Words to world	Belief (genuinely means what she said)	<i>state, conclude, inform, report, tell, describe, remind, assert, correct, guess, predict, assure, agree, believe, claim</i>
Directive (DIR)	Attempt to make the hearer or listener perform an action	World to words	Desire (wants or desires the world, i.e., the listener's actions, to be in accordance with the spoken word)	<i>request, plead, command, invite, ask, interrogate, urge, recommend, propose, demand, advise, question, encourage, warn, instruct</i>
Commissive (COM)	Commit the speaker to a future action	World to words	Intention (genuinely intends to do it)	<i>promise, offer, swear, guarantee, refuse, threaten, pledge, commit, vow, volunteer, agree, dare, consent</i>
Expressive (EXP)	Express psychological state or attitude	None	Emotion (presupposes the proposition's truth and expresses her emotional stance, inner feelings, or evaluations, aligning words with the world of feeling)	<i>apologize, greet, congratulate, like, condole, lament, complain, blame, welcome, praise, and thank; also express surprise, fear, regret, displeasure.</i>
Declaration (DEC)	Bring about a change in reality using the utterance itself	Both	Institutional authority (requires having a special institutional role in a specific context)	<i>Declare, sentence, appoint, condemn, define, pronounce, bless, authorize, nominate, dismiss, excommunicate</i>

1. Assertives (Representatives)

As stated in the table above, assertives, also called representatives, represent the act where the speaker commits to believing something is true or not; that is, the speaker represents a state of affairs as being the case. The illocutionary point of this speech act is to describe the world as the speaker believes it to be. This speech act can make statements ranging from strong to weak, and it can contain varying degrees of commitment to the truth. Linguistically, assertives are identifiable through declarative sentence structures; first-person epistemic expressions such as “I believe” or “I think”; and evaluative adverbs that signal the speaker’s level of commitment, like “certainly,” “probably,” or “apparently.”

2. Directives

Directives are illocutionary acts in which a person attempts to get the listener to act (Yule, 1996:54). The illocutionary goal of directives is to influence others’ (listeners’) behavior. Thus, its sincerity condition is want or desire. The power of this speech act varies, from a mild suggestion or invitation to a strong command or demand. However, it is important to note that although verbs “ask,” “advise,” and “request” also appear under commissives in some classifications, the directive function is directed at the *listener’s action*, not the speaker’s future action. Directives are realized through the imperative mood; interrogative constructions, for example, “Can you...?”; and modal expressions of obligation or possibility.

3. Commissive

Commissives are illocutionary acts in which the speaker commits to a future course of action. Its purpose is to obligate the speaker to do something in the future (Yule, 1996: 54; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985: 182). It is crucial to distinguish these speech acts from directives. Although both commissives and directives have a world-to-words direction of fit and can use overlapping surface-level verbs like “advise” and “request,” as already mentioned in directives, the key difference lies in who bears the obligation. For example, “I will help you” commits the speaker to a future action, whereas “Help me” aims to elicit action from the hearer. This distinction is essential when categorizing Darby Shaw’s utterances in the data for accurate analysis.

4. Expressive

Expressive speech acts are those in which the speaker expresses what they feel, such as their emotions, mental state, and behavior. The illocutionary point of expressives is not to represent the world or to change it, but to express the speaker’s emotional stance toward it. The sincerity condition corresponds to the specific emotional state being expressed (Yule, 1996:53). It might be expressions of pleasure, suffering, preferences, joy or sadness, surprise, apologies, or appreciation. Expressives are frequently characterized by evaluative adjectives, exclamations, hedging expressions, and emotional verbs. They are particularly useful in characterization analysis, as they directly reveal a character’s emotional and psychological state in a given situation.

5. Declarations

Declarations are a type of illocutionary act that, by virtue of being performed, bring about a change in the state of affairs; they simultaneously describe and create a new reality. The illocutionary point is to make the propositional content true by saying it in the right institutional context. Crucially, it needs the speaker to have a special institutional role in a specific context; if not, it will not work. Examples include a judge pronouncing a verdict, a chair declaring a meeting adjourned, a priest baptizing a child, or a judge sentencing a criminal to prison (Yule, 1996: 53). Because declarations require institutional authority, they are comparatively rare in everyday conversation and in fictional dialogue. When they do occur, they mark a significant shift in social or narrative reality.

These criteria form the analytical indicators used as the primary coding framework to classify each of Daby Shaw's utterances in this study.

2.1.3. Characterization

Characterization is how an author constructs his characters and shapes the reader's understanding of them in literature. To understand characterization more clearly, it is necessary to examine how it is constructed in literature. As Bennett and Royle (2004: 65) stated, characterization is conveyed through the language used by and about a character, both in terms of what is said and how it is said. Then, Burroway and Stuckey-French (2019: 84) note that character can be seen through their speech, thoughts, actions, and appearance, identifying language as central to literary characterization.

From a psychological perspective, research on language and personality has shown that a person's linguistic patterns show underlying psychological traits (Pennebaker et al., 2003; Caplan et al., 2020:312). This principle equally applies to literary characters, whose speech serves as a vehicle for the expression and development of character. In the present study, characterization is examined through the speech act theory's lens: the illocutionary acts a character performs, their pragmatic functions, and the contextual conditions in which speech functions as an indicator of character traits.

This study aims to identify indicators of Darby Shaw's bravery characterization through her speech. Bravery, as a character trait, is not self-declared but must be inferred from behavior and language. In pragmatic terms, bravery may be linguistically realized through assertive speech acts that challenge authority, directive acts that prompt risk-taking, commissive acts that commit the character to dangerous courses of action, and expressive acts that reveal emotional resilience in the face of adversity. These pragmatic functions serve as the analytical indicators through which bravery is operationalized in this study.

1. *Direct Characterization*

Direct characterization is when a character's traits are stated explicitly in literary works, whether by the narrator, another character, or the character itself (Bennett & Royle, 2004:65). In this characterization's mode, the author directly informs the reader of a character's traits, personality, or background without requiring inference. Burroway (2007:81) identifies four key elements of how direct characterization approaches in literature are achieved. It is by the character's

speech, thoughts, actions, and appearance. Direct characterization makes readers understand a character quickly and clearly, because the traits are openly stated.

In this study, Darby Shaw's direct bravery characterization is analyzed by examining her assertive speech acts in which Darby explicitly states her own beliefs, position, or evaluations of risk, thereby directly revealing her psychological orientation.

2. Indirect Characterization

The author uses indirect characterization by showing it through a character's behavior, interactions, and the interpretation of other characters, rather than direct description. Burroway (2007: 137) identifies an indirect characterization approach through the author's interpretation, namely through the character's origins, motives, and values as they emerge across the narrative. This technique requires readers to infer character traits from evidence, making it a more interpretive and often more revealing mode of character construction.

In this study, indirect characterization is analyzed across four dimensions, which serve as the primary analytical framework for identifying bravery in Darby Shaw's speech. First, the **type of speech act**: the illocutionary category of each utterance (representative, directive, commissive, expressive, or declaration) is identified in accordance with Searle's (1969) and Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) taxonomy. The type of speech act provides the foundational classification for each datum. Second, from the **context of the utterance**, the contextual conditions of the utterance are described because context is central to pragmatic interpretation, showing the same utterance can have different illocutionary forces depending on its

context (Yule, 1996). Then, the **pragmatic function**: the illocutionary force and communicative purpose of the utterance are analyzed. Also, identifying what the speech acts accomplish in the context. For example, whether a directive is used to challenge authority, whether a commissive constitutes a self-imposed risk, or whether a representative is used to expose a dangerous truth. Lastly, **linguistic indicators of courage and bravery**: each utterance is examined for specific linguistic features that mark brave behavior. These include the use of assertive modality (“I will,” “I know,” “I am certain”), direct address to figures of power or authority, confrontational or challenging illocutionary acts, commissive acts that impose self-risk, and the absence of hedging or evasion under conditions of threat and danger. The frequency, consistency, and escalation of these indicators throughout the narrative are used to build a characterization of Darby Shaw’s courage as an emergent, traceable character trait.

By combining these four dimensions, the analysis moves beyond a surface reading of character to a systematic, pragmatically grounded account of how bravery is constructed through language in the novel.

2.1.4. Bravery Characterization

Bravery or courage is generally understood as the willingness to confront danger, risk, pressure, or authority despite potential negative consequences. Contemporary psychological studies consistently emphasize that bravery is not the absence of fear but decisions to act under conditions of **fear**, **risk**, and **meaningful purpose** (Rate et al., 2007; Woodard, 2004). Bravery is further associated with speaking up for

what is right, defending principles, and confronting threats despite damaging results (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Accordingly, because bravery has visible behavior, it can be examined through language or physical action. In narrative texts, characters usually show bravery using words, responding to threats, and communicating under uncertain conditions. Consequently, this study conceptualizes bravery as a communicative performance realized by speech acts.

Drawing upon Rate et al. (2007), Wooddard (2004), and Peterson and Seligman (2004), a speech act is identified as brave when it fulfills three conditions: it occurs under genuine threat, uncertainty, vulnerability, intimidation, or perceived danger (fear condition); the act of speaking carries potential negative consequences (risk condition), such as social rejection, professional repercussion, legal consequences, loss of status, physical harm, or exposure to danger; and the utterance's intent is directed to a moral or prosocial goal like protecting others, seeking justice, revealing truth, preventing harm, resisting corruption, or maintaining ethical principles (noble purpose condition). When these three conditions co-occur, an utterance becomes an act of bravery within this study.

Based on this theoretical framework, Darby Shaw's bravery is operationalized as a character trait manifested through speech acts performed under those conditions, which are classified into three broad types: **Intellectual Bravery** (IB), which is the willingness to defend truth, knowledge, or reason despite opposition; **Operational Bravery** (OB), which is the commitment, decision-making, and action under conditions of risk; and **Relational Bravery** (RB), which

involves emotional openness, vulnerability, or interpersonal honesty despite possible rejection or misunderstanding.

Table 2.1.3 Speech Act Types, Their Corresponding Forms of Bravery and Risk

Type	Bravery Type	Communicative Mechanism	Primary Risk Condition
Assertive (ASS)	Intellectual Bravery	Public commitment to truth under challenge	Epistemic risk
Assertive (ASS: strategic self-presentation)	Operational Bravery	Identity performance under threat	Exposure risk
Directive (DIR)	Operational Bravery	Influencing others despite constraints	Social and power risk
Commissive (COM)	Operational Bravery	Commitment to future action despite uncertainty	Accountability risk
Expressive (EXP)	Relational Bravery	Emotional disclosure despite vulnerability	Interpersonal risk

This synthesis framework works as the conceptual bridge between speech act theory and characterization analysis. Speech act theory identifies the communicative action, whereas the bravery framework determines if that action functions as evidence of brave characterization.

2.2. Research Method

2.2.1. Data and Data Source

The primary data source of this study is John Grisham's *"The Pelican Brief"* (1992), a legal suspense novel. The data are Darby Shaw's direct utterances in which she appears as an active speaker in the novel. Only her utterances are analyzed as primary data, while her interlocutor's utterances are used to provide the needed context for interpretation.

2.2.2. Unit of Analysis

Utterances are this study's unit of analysis, defined as Darby Shaw's turn or an identifiable segment within a turn that expresses a dominant illocutionary force. When Darby's turn contains multiple identifiable illocutionary acts, it is treated as a separate analytical unit. For example, an assertive statement followed by a directive question within the same turn is counted as two different speech acts.

2.2.3. Method of Collecting Data

These data were collected through close reading and systematic note-taking. First, after obtaining the novel digital book, the researchers repeatedly examined it to identify the dialogues between Darby and her interlocutors. The needed data were compiled into a spreadsheet corpus and coded according to their information (turn, dialogue, IFIDs, felicity condition, and bravery mode).

Given the length of the novel, this study uses *purposive sampling*, a data sampling technique that selects a sample from specific sources of consideration (Sugiyono, 2013; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The sampling was conducted in two stages. First, all 1,787 of Darby Shaw's utterances were collected and analyzed to search for the illocutionary force classifiable within Searle's (1969) taxonomy and their pragmatic function that this study identified inductively. Then, the next stage is to screen the data to address the third research question using the courage condition by Rate et al. (2007).

2.2.4. Method of Analyzing Data

The researcher uses a qualitative research method that follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994: 10), consisting of data reduction, data display, and

conclusion drawing/verification. The analyses combine deductive and inductive procedures in line with Mayring's (2014: 104) qualitative content analysis framework.

During **data reduction**, four stages were carried out. First, deductively, the utterances were selected and classified using Searle's (1969) taxonomy and criteria. Then, all classified data were annotated with recurring pragmatic functions identified by repeated close reading of the corpus. Next, the synthesized bravery framework from multiple brave sources (Rate et al. (2007), Baumert et al. (2024), Dungan et al. (2019), and Halmburger et al. (2016)) was inductively developed, resulting in three bravery categories to organize the findings.

During the **data display**, the data were organized into spreadsheets and analytical descriptions to make patterns visible in facilitating systematic comparison and supporting interpretation.

For the final stage, **conclusion drawing and verification**, this was drawn from the displayed data and was systematically verified against the theoretical framework employed. Illocutionary classifications were checked using Searle's (1969) criteria, while interpretations of Darby's bravery were supported by contextual evidence of fear, meaningful risk, and noble purpose. With these processes, the study's findings remained consistent with both speech acts and the characterization of bravery in Darby Shaw.