

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This section explores the theories used to analyze the data gathered for this research. Particularly, the theories used in this research include:

2.1.1. Speech Act

Actions are not always reflected in behavior. Actions can also be reflected in other ways, such as utterances. According to Austin (1955), speech acts are those acts of making statements or questions, giving commands or orders, refusing, complimenting, apologizing, and many more. Thus, in speech acts, words are used to do something, not just to say something. As stated by Austin (1955: 4), there are two kinds of utterance: constative and performative. Constative is a statement of fact and can be confirmed as true or false by using the world's knowledge. Meanwhile, performative means that utterances are a part of the doing of an action.

Performative acts include several kinds: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. According to Austin (1955: 94, 99, & 101), a locutionary act is the act of saying something. An illocutionary act is the performance of an act in saying something. Perlocutionary acts are the impact upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of other persons (the hearer). Examples of the three kinds of performative acts are in the following paragraph.

In the sentence “Shoot her!”, the locutionary act simply means that the speaker said to the hearer ‘Shoot her!’. Meanwhile, the illocutionary act means that the speaker urged the hearer to shoot ‘her’. In a perlocutionary act, there is an impact of uttering the utterance, which means that the speaker persuaded the hearer to shoot her. Then, the speaker made the hearer shoot her. Locutionary is simply an act of producing utterances, illocutionary is an act of using utterances to do an action, and perlocutionary means the impact of an utterance on the hearer.

2.1.2. Illocutionary Acts

As explained earlier, an illocutionary act is the performance of an act in saying something (Austin: 1955). This research paper focuses on using the illocutionary acts theory. Austin’s speech act theory becomes the foundation of every speech act theory in the future. Searle (1969) developed an understanding of illocutionary acts based on their illocutionary forces.

The illocutionary force indicating device denotes how the proposition will be comprehended by the speaker’s performance of illocutionary acts. The illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) includes word order, stress, intonation, and a performative verb (Searle: 1969). There is a discrepancy between the IFID and the indicator of propositional content. In the sentence, “I promise that I will come.”, the IFID is the word “I promise...”; meanwhile, the indicator of propositional content is the word “...that I will come.” (Searle: 1969). However, a sentence that does not include the proposition in it can still be considered an illocutionary act on condition that the sentence has meaning. The

examples of illocutionary acts that do not have a proposition are the words “Hurrah” and “Ouch” (Searle: 1969).

Searle (1969: 42) states that a difference that makes a speech is considered an illocutionary act is characteristically has meaning. In speaking, the speaker attempts to communicate using speech acts to the hearer by getting him to recognize the speaker’s intention. Then, if the hearer recognizes the speaker’s intention through the speaker’s speech act, the speech act can be considered to have a meaning. For instance, when a speaker says “Hello” to a hearer, the speaker intends to generate in the hearer’s knowledge that he is being greeted. If the hearer recognizes it, the speech act has a meaning (Searle: 1969). Generating in the hearer’s knowledge that he is being greeted means that there is an indirect relationship between the structure and the function of the speech act. The structure of the word “Hello” does not include the words “You are being greeted.” Thus, this can be considered an indirect speech act.

A speech act that has a similarity between its structure and its function is considered a direct speech act. Meanwhile, a speech act that has no similarity between its structure and its function is considered an indirect speech act (Yule: 1996). A certain structure can also address a different function depending on its context. After we grasp the understanding of an illocutionary act, which must have meaning and must include its context, it is not difficult to distinguish the classification of speech acts. Yule (1996) divides illocutionary acts into five categories: declaration, representatives, expressive, directive, and commissive speech acts.

2.1.3. Types of Illocutionary Acts

According to Yule (1996: 53 – 54), illocutionary acts can be categorized into five distinct types. The first type is declarations, which are utterances used by speakers to change the world through their speeches. An example of declarations is a priest's pronouncement of marriage. The second type is representatives, which speakers use to convey beliefs or statements they consider to be true. Examples of representatives include statements, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions. The third category is expressive, which includes speech acts used by speakers to express what they feel. The examples of expressive are statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, and sorrow. The fourth one is mentioned as directives, which are utterances used by speakers to get someone to do something. The examples of directives are commands, orders, requests, and suggestions. The last category is commissive, which is speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to future actions. The examples of commissive speech acts are promising, refusing, guaranteeing, offering, and threatening.

2.1.4. Commissive Speech Acts

One thing that differentiates the commissive speech act from other speech acts is the focus. The focus of the commissive speech act is the commitment that the speaker states. According to Searle (1985), the classification of the commissive speech acts which are in the following.

1. **Promise** refers to the speaker's action that is made to the hearer for the hearer's benefit while creating an obligation for the speaker to do the future action. Here are some examples of promises.

- a. *"I'll be back."*
- b. *"We will not do that."* (Yule, 1996: 54)

2. **Threat** signifies that the speaker's action is made to the hearer not for his benefit, but the opposite of it. The difference between a promise and a threat is the object of the action. A promise is an action by the speaker for you; meanwhile, a threat is an action by the speaker to you. The example of threats can be seen as follows.

- a. *"If you don't hand in your papers on time, I promise you I will give you a failing grade in the course."* (Searle, 1969: 58)

3. **Refusal** is uttered by the speaker under the condition that the speaker does not wish to do what the hearer wants, under the condition that the hearer has given an offer or a request previously. Therefore, the speaker prevents the obligation that was given by the hearer. The example of a refusal is below.

- a. *"I refused the offer."* (Searle, 1985: 195)

4. **Guarantee** uses by the speaker to assert that a certain object, condition, or action will continue and align with the speaker's statement. The example of a guarantee is as follows.

- a. *"Everything is fine! We are the Madrigals!"* (Azka & Candria, 2024: 25)

5. **Offer** denotes that the speaker would give something to the hearer if the hearer accepts his willingness, thus, it will be done under the hearer's acceptance. The example of an offering is below.

a. *"My dear, I am willing to give you some more tea."* (Traugott & Pratt, 1980: 235)

6. **Volunteer** indicates that the speaker would do certain future actions without being forced or compelled. The difference between a promise and a volunteer is in their situations. A volunteer is often used by the speaker to show their willingness to do an action for the hearer without any external encouragement. In other words, the speaker would do the action by his wish. Here is an example of a volunteer.

a. *"Let me help you escape."* (Devi & Degaf, 2021: 50)

Regardless of its type, every commissive speech act can be considered a speech act if it fulfils all of the felicity conditions. Thus, if a speech act does not fulfil one or more of the felicity conditions, it cannot be considered a speech act.

2.1.5. Felicity Conditions of Commissive Speech Acts

Felicity conditions in speech acts must be fulfilled for that speech act to be what it is intended by the speaker. According to Yule (1996: 50), "Felicity conditions are certain expected or appropriate situations or conditions for the performance of a certain speech act to be recognized to be intended." Searle (1969: 57–61) divided felicity conditions of commissive speech acts into five categories, as follows.

- (1.) Normal Input and Output Conditions:** The output term refers to the conditions of understandable speaking. Meanwhile, the input term refers to the conditions under which understanding occurs. These two terms mean that both the speaker and the hearer understand what they are doing.
- (2.) Propositional Content Conditions:** a commissive speech act must contain a statement about a future action, and cannot be about a past act.
- (3.) Preparatory Conditions:** Commissive speech acts must be something that the hearer wants done (promise, guarantee, offer, and volunteer); the speaker realizes that these commissive speech acts consider the hearer's interests. Meanwhile, threat and refusal must be something that the speaker does to the hearer, not for the hearer. The speaker's future action is not obvious at the time the commissive speech act is performed; the speaker's future action is not an action that the speaker will obviously do.
- (4.) Sincerity Conditions:** The speaker's intention in doing what he said. Promise is divided into two: sincere and insincere promises. A sincere promise refers to the speaker's intention to fulfill the act; meanwhile, an insincere promise refers to the speaker's lack of intention to fulfill the act. However, these two are still considered felicitous.
- (5.) Essential Conditions:** The speaker intends that his commissive speech acts will place him under an obligation to act as he said.

2.1.6. Antihero

An antihero is a protagonist who does not have one or more of the common traits of a hero, such as skill, idealism, and a sense of purpose (Kennedy & Gioia, 1976: 69). However, an antihero is not the opposite of a hero. An antihero is a character who is unable to demonstrate his heroism due to circumstances that prevent him from doing so. In other words, an antihero is a hero who is forced to do villainous actions, such as killing and terrorizing. (Favaro, 2021: 2). Hence, an antihero also has the same qualities as a hero, such as courage and bravery, but he tends to be adaptive according to his situation (Wilson, 2013: 15). If heroes are characters who stand with their principles in whatever situation, an antihero is a character that flexible to his situation; he is willing to do anything to reach his goal, despite whether his actions are good or evil. (Favaro, 2021: 3). This flexibility shows that an antihero embraces moral complexity (Favaro, 2021: 2). Moral complexity refers to the actions of a character that cannot be considered as good or bad; an antihero, for instance, kills or tortures, but somehow his actions are justified by his circumstance (Favaro, 2021: 3).

Moral complexity can be seen in a character's speech act. Since commissive speech acts primarily focus on expressing the intention of the speaker himself (Searle, 1976: 4), thus, commissive speech acts can be used to reveal the moral complexity of a character.

2.2. Research Method

This subchapter describes the research method used in this study. The discussion begins with the type of research used and the reasons for adopting that type, the data and data sources used in the research, and the method of collecting and analyzing data.

2.2.1. Type of Research

I used qualitative methods in this research, as the data is text-based, not numerical. Qualitative research is intended to improve and comprehensively understand textual data. This method is used to analyze Walter White's antihero traits through how he uses his speeches to other characters, as depicted in Vince Gilligan's *Breaking Bad*, using commissive speech acts. This allows for a thorough exploration of the topic.

2.2.2. Data and Data Source

The data used in this research are Walter White's utterances that contain commissive speech acts. The data are obtained from Vince Gilligan's American TV series *Breaking Bad* (2008 – 2013).

2.2.3. Method of Collecting Data

The data of this research were collected by using the observation method, which involved listening to Walter White's utterances that contain his commitments

from all of the episodes of the series, which are in total of 62 episodes. To ascertain that no important details are missed, I adopt a note-taking method while taking comprehensive notes on Walter White's commitment through his utterances. I chose the data that represents other data and the data that had been carefully chosen by specific criteria that aligned with the research topic. Therefore, this research uses purposive sampling in collecting the data.

2.2.4. Method of Analyzing Data

I use the distributional method in analyzing the data, which is done by classifying the data according to its discrepancy. The data are classified according to their types of commissive speech acts. I filter all the gained data and choose data that can represent other data and are appropriate for being the objects of the research and to be discussed further. Finally, I conclude the discussion regarding how Walter White's commissive speech acts represent his antihero traits.