CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

"One Day" by David Nicholls, published in 2009, follows the evolving relationship between Dexter Mayhew and Emma Morley. The novel begins with the two spending a night together on 15 July 1988 after their graduation, fully aware that they must go their separate ways the next day. However, their lives are revisited on 15 July each year for the next 20 years, offering a snapshot of their personal journeys and the ongoing, complex relationship between them. As the story unfolds, the reader sees how their friendship and romantic connection develop amidst the backdrop of life's unpredictability and missed opportunities. "One Day" garnered positive reviews and was awarded 2010 Galaxy Book of the Year. In 2011, the novel was adapted into a film, and in 2024, a Netflix series on the book premiered, bringing the story to a new audience.

The novel tracks the lives of Dexter and Emma, who are initially drawn together by a single night, only to face many years of missed chances and unspoken feelings. After parting ways following their night together, their lives take unexpected paths. Emma, driven by a desire to improve the world, struggles to find success with her writing and theatre careers, while Dexter enjoys a hedonistic lifestyle, traveling the world and living carelessly. Both eventually settle in London, where Emma works as a waitress while Dexter becomes a

successful television presenter. Despite their separate lives, they remain emotionally connected, but each time they attempt to be together, something hinders them, whether it is the wrong timing, other relationships, or their personal insecurities. Their friendship is constantly tested by Dexter's reckless behavior and Emma's emotional turmoil, but the connection between them persists in the background. Eventually, after much emotional struggle, they confront their feelings for one another, but fate intervenes, and their reunion comes too late. Emma's sudden death leaves Dexter devastated, emphasizing the tragic nature of their unfulfilled love.

At its core, "One Day" explores how expressive speech acts and characterization shapes their evolving relationship. These speech acts, often filled with ambiguousness which leads to misinterpretations of meaning, keep Dexter and Emma from fully connecting emotionally, as each character struggles with expressing their true feelings. The novel highlights how their language choices play a pivotal role in the emotional distance that defines their relationship over two decades. Unspoken truths, the need of reassurance, and the fear of vulnerability contribute to the delays in their emotional connection, showcasing how expressive speech acts can shape the development of their relationship and their identities as characters.

1.2   Problem Statement

The relationship between Emma and Dexter in "One Day" is characterized by a series of unfulfilled emotional moments, largely driven by the characters' ambiguous expressive speech acts. While their expressive speech acts choices are

full of emotional expressions, they are frequently misunderstood or masked by defensiveness or vague statements. As a result, both characters struggle to understand the other's emotional needs. This research aims to examine how expressive speech acts play a central role in their romantic relationship, and shape their characterization.

1.3   Research Questions

In this research, there are two research questions addressed in the study:

1.   What kinds of expressive acts are used by Emma and Dexter to show their conflicting relationship?

2.   How can expressive acts reveal Emma and Dexter's characterization?

1.4   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how expressive speech acts and characterization in the dialogues of Dexter and Emma play a central role in their romantic relationship and shape the development of their relationship over the span of twenty years. By closely examining their interactions, the study investigate how their dialogues, often filled with emotional deflection, impact their ability to truly connect with each other. Through the lens of expressive acts, the study highlights how these speech acts, filled with subtle emotional cues, contribute to the ongoing emotional distance and misalignment in their relationship.

1.5   Scope of the Study

This study is limited to analyzing the dialogues and interactions between Dexter and Emma in "One Day" from expressive speech acts and characterization perspective. It focuses specifically on the application of expressive speech acts in understanding how they express their emotions through language during the 20 years of their relationship dynamic.

1.6   Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides a deeper understanding of how expressive speech acts shape their emotional dynamics and development of characters in "One Day" by David Nicholls. By analyzing the dialogue between Emma and Dexter, the study highlights how expressive speech acts like disapproval and apologies reveal the complexities of their relationship. The research not only contributes to the application of Searle's Speech Act Theory in literature but also expands on the role of language as both a tool for emotional expression and a barrier to connection. This study expands on existing characterization studies by demonstrating how speech acts expose the characters' inner conflicts and vulnerabilities. Additionally, the study fills a gap in research by focusing on the specific role of speech acts in "One Day", providing insights into how miscommunication.

1.7   Previous Studies

Several studies are relevant to the current research and offer valuable insights. Specifically, five studies have examined expressive speech acts in different literary works as well as a corpus material, which align with the

objectives of this study. For example, Handayani (2015) analyzed expressive speech acts in the Hannah Montana TV series and identified ten types of speech acts, including apologies, sympathy, attitudes, and greetings. This study demonstrates the variety of expressive speech acts and how they can be categorized in different ways.

Similarly, Tanjung (2021) studies expressive speech acts in the movie The Lovely Bones, aiming to identify the types of speech acts used by the characters and determine which ones were most dominant. The study found that praising was the most frequent expressive speech act, followed by others such as apologizing, blaming, congratulating, doubting, greeting, regretting, thanking, and wishing. This research further highlights how praising someone can motivate them and has a calming effect which increases the listener's confidence.

In contrast, Hidayat (2020) studies the expressive speech acts in The Late Night Show hosted by Stephen Colbert. The goal is to identify the types of expressive speech acts as well as the implied meaning of the expressive speech acts used by Stephen Colbert and Oprah Winfrey in one of the episodes using Dell Hymes' speaking mnemonic. The study found that there are twenty-two utterances of expressive speech acts described as greetings, compliments, boastings, and praisings. Furthermore, the writer concluded that both Stephen Colbert and Oprah Winfrey use hand gestures, tone-raising speeches, and facial expressions to emphasize their expressions.

Another study conducted by Ronan (2015) focused on Categorizing Expressive Speech Acts in the Pragmatically Annotated SPICE Ireland Corpus.

The research examines various types of expressive speech acts on the basis of three categories of spoken Irish English of different levels of formality: broadcast discussion, classroom discussion, and face-to-face interaction. The goal is to offer an overview and classification of expressive in the corpus material. The study categorizes the expressive speech acts into five categories, which are Approval, Disapproval, Apologizing, and Lamenting.

Similar to Ronan (2021), Carretero, Maíz-Arévalo, and Martínez (2015) explores the use of expressive speech acts in a corpus of online interaction involving three groups of university students specializing in English Linguistics. The study focuses on the relative frequency of occurrence of different subtypes of expressives across the three subcorpora. The findings revealed two main patterns: a preference for other-oriented expressive speech acts over self-oriented ones, and a high degree of conventionalization in the linguistic forms of the four most common subtypes (thanking, apologies, greetings, and compliments). The study also highlighted notable variations in the frequency of use, the specific linguistic forms of each subtype, and the application of typographic marks. These differences are likely influenced by contextual factors such as group size, age, language proficiency, and cultural uniformity.

Several studies have explored characterization in literary works. For example, Nurkamila, Indriani, and Simanjuntak (2022) explored the film "Avengers: Infinity War" specifically the character Thor. The aim of the study is to describe the character Thor as well as the representation of the superhero formula. The study found that Thor has four characters: Thor as a main character,

as a protagonist, and a flat character. It is also found that Thor's superhero formulas are mission, strength, and costume. The study concluded that superhero formulas can change according to culture, civilization, and technological sophistication.

Chrisanty (2023) explores the use of characterization of Massie Block in the movie The Clique. The study aims to identify Massie Block's characterization. The writer took the data from utterances uttered by Massie Block in the movie. The study found that Massie Block performs five types of directive speech acts: inviting, begging, suggesting, prohibiting, and requesting. It also found that Massie Block is a social butterfly with strong leadership qualities among her friends. She knows how to politely and thoughtfully request what she desires; however, she also displays traits of being a spoiled child and can be manipulative to achieve her goals.

Sahasrakirana (2021) explores the use of characterization of Hugo and Mae in Field Notes on Love novel by Jennifer E. Smith. The study aims to prove that the characterization can be identified through the analysis of transitivity. The study found that the characterization can be seen through the process that occurred in the novel. Hugo is described as careless and apathetic while Mae is a contrast of Hugo, where she is described as careful and ambitious.

Several studies have explored the novel "One Day" by David Nicholls, yet none have specifically analyzed the expressive speech acts within the text. For example, Susanti & Wedawati (2016) examine how Dexter and Emma express their love for each other and how love for each other and how love influences

their relationship. Using both objective and interpretive methods, they conclude that while Dexter and Emma are in love, they struggle to fully express it, which creates a distance between them and suggests an unfulfilled romantic connection.

In contrast, Handayani (2019) takes a different approach by analyzing Dexter and Emma's personalities through a psychoanalytic lens, employing Sigmund Freud's theories. The study focuses on how personality development shapes the characters' lives and relationships. The study found that Emma and Dexter's stubbornness or selfishness get in the way of their love and affect their personalities.

The current study differs from previous research in several important ways, particularly in its focus on expressive speech acts as a tool for analyzing both emotional expression and characterization in a literary context. While several prior studies have explored expressive speech acts across various media—such as TV series (Handayani, 2015), movies (Tanjung, 2021), talk shows (Hidayat, 2020), and corpus data (Ronan, 2015; Carretero et al., 2015)—these works primarily focused on identifying and categorizing the types of expressive acts used by speakers or characters. For instance, most of these studies emphasized more general types of expressive acts like praising, complementing, or thanking, often aiming to determine the most frequent or dominant type within a dataset. Although these studies provided valuable insights into expressive acts as a category of speech, they generally did not explore how these acts contribute to the portrayal of emotional tension or the shaping of character psychology in literary narratives.

In contrast, the current study specifically investigates expressive speech acts within the context of Emma and Dexter's relationship in "One Day" by David Nicholls, focusing on how disapproval, approval, deploring, psychological distance, and evolving characterization. Unlike Ronan (2015) or Carretero et al. (2015), who offered systematic classifications across broad contexts, this study uses a close-reading approach to highlight the indirect characterization of fictional figures through expressive acts. It examines how characters use language to mask or reveal vulnerability, sarcasm, regret, and longing—thereby providing a more nuanced analysis of emotional complexity within a narrative. Furthermore, while previous studies on "One Day" (Susanti & Wedawati, 2016; Handayani, 2019) focused on thematic elements such as love or used psychoanalytic theory to interpret personality traits, they did not categorize or measure how speech acts contribute to the characters' evolving identities. Therefore, the present study adds a new dimension by integrating speech act theory—particularly expressive acts—with literary characterization, offering a systematic yet emotionally rich lens for understanding character development and interaction in the novel.

1.8   Writing Organization

This research is structured as follows: Chapter I, Introduction, presents background information, research purpose, scope, theories, hypothesis, research method, and organization of the writing. Chapter II, Theory and Method, discusses relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies on pragmatics and miscommunication in literature and describes the research design, data collection, and analytical methods. Chapter III, Analysis and Discussion, presents findings

from the analysis of miscommunication in *"One Day"*. Chapter IV: Conclusion and Suggestions – Summarizes key findings and suggests areas for future research. This structure ensures a comprehensive and systematic analysis of expressive speech acts and characterizations in *"One Day"* Novel.