

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Analyzing narrative texts using a linguistic approach is an interesting approach because it combines two aspects: language and action. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and their users. With this pragmatic approach, the focus is not only on “what” is said, but also “why” and “how” it is said, thus opening up space to understand character, power, and social relationships between characters through speech.

One of the most interesting pragmatic approaches is speech act analysis, introduced by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969). John Austin (from Levinson, 1983:236) classifies speech acts into three types: locutionary acts (acts of saying the literal meaning), illocutionary acts (utterances that have extra meaning), and perlocutionary acts (responses to the utterances). This illocutionary speech act is interesting to discuss further because speakers use speech acts not only to convey information but also to ask the listeners to respond to their utterances. Illocutionary speech acts are divided into Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, and Declarative (Searle, 1979: viii).

Of the various types of illocutionary speech acts, directive speech act is interesting to analyze because it involves several other aspects, such as power, control, solidarity, and politeness. George Yule (1996) explains that directive speech act is one of the speech acts that are usually used to ask someone to do something.

According to Searle (1979), directive speech acts are not only a means of communication but also serve as a tool to demonstrate authority and control. It can be a powerful tool for revealing a character's personality, social status, and relationships in literature. Directive speech acts can also be found in literary works such as movies.

Abrams (2009:43) states in his book that characterization can be determined by how the character is telling and showing. Moreover, Murphy (1972) explained nine methods for describing characters in literature, and one of them is from the character's speech. By analyzing how a character uses directive speech acts, readers can infer important traits such as assertiveness, authority, or politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:74), several factors cause differences in the use of speech acts by a character, including the social distance (D), the relative power (P), and the rank of imposition (R).

Despicable Me (2010) and its sequel, *Despicable Me 2* (2013) were created by SPA Studios and Illumination Entertainment in collaboration, with production companies before being distributed by Universal Studios. *Despicable Me* unravels the story of Gru's origins as he aspires to achieve the greatest by stealing the moon with the assistance of the Minions and Dr. Nefario, but is thwarted in his attempts by an opponent named Vector. Over time, Gru's criminal life undergoes a transformation when he adopts Margo, Edith, and Agnes – three orphans selling cookies – to shift the focus from Vector. Meanwhile, *Despicable Me 2* tells the story of Gru's journey as a good man and loving father. He is working alongside Lucy Wilde for the Anti-Villain League (AVL).

This research focuses on Gru's directive speech acts in *Despicable Me* (2010) and *Despicable Me 2* (2013), then relates the use of directive speech acts to Gru's character development. The object of this research was chosen because he is the main character in both films, and he has a relatively higher social status than other characters. In *Despicable Me*, Gru is a villain, so his directive speech acts are often authoritarian, commanding, and coercive. However, in *Despicable Me 2*, when Gru transitions from a villain to a hero and a father, his use of directive speech acts changes slightly and becomes softer.

Through the explanation above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the character development of Gru based on the directive speech acts used in *Despicable Me* (2010) and *Despicable Me 2* (2013) films. By discussing this phenomenon, we can see how the use of directive speech acts can be used as linguistic markers to reflect characterization and character development.

1.2. Research Questions

This study has several research questions as follows.

1. What types of Gru's directive speech acts are observed in *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*?
2. What factors influence the differences in Gru's directive speech acts in *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*?
3. How do Gru's directive speech acts reflect his character development in both movies?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research question, the researcher will provide an explanation of the problem by answering it through the following objectives.

1. To discover and analyze Gru's directive speech acts in *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*.
2. To discover factors that influence the differences in Gru's directive speech acts in *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*.
3. To analyze and explain Gru's character development through directive speech acts in both movies.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study focuses on Gru's directive speech acts in *Despicable Me* (2010) and *Despicable Me 2* (2013), then relates the use of directive speech acts to Gru's character development. The types of directive speech acts are analyzed using Searle and Vanderveken's theory (1985), but the researcher limited only the directive command, request, suggest, order, tell, forbid, advise, warn, and ask to be used for analysis.

1.5. Previous Studies

There are some studies on *Despicable Me* (2010) and *Despicable Me 2* (2013), such as the studies written by Thohiriyah (2025), Rosdiana (2018), and Ambarsari

(2018). The first research by Thohiriyah (2025) identifies the translation techniques of humor and wordplay in the subtitles of the film *Despicable Me* (2010). Meanwhile, Rosdiana's (2018) study analyses refusal strategies by the characters in the film *Despicable Me 2* using the theories of Miles and Huberman, Searle, Brown and Levinson, and Félix-Brasdefer. Lastly, the third study by Ambarsari (2018) examined types of slang are found in the subtitles of the film *Despicable Me* and how they are distributed.

In relation to the first research question, some studies discuss the types of directive speech acts, such as the studies written by Apriliana (2021), which analyze the types and functions of directive speech acts used by the main characters in the film *Luca*, Fardani et al. (2021), which analyze the types of directive speech acts used by characters in the film script *Sleeping Beauty*, and Della et al. (2018), which identify the characterization of the main character, Theodore Finch, in the novel *All the Bright Places*. Based on the research findings, various types of directive speech acts were dominant, including commands, asks/questions, and orders. The distribution of these findings is also influenced by the differences in research sources, most of which are films, though some are from novels.

Meanwhile, in relation to the second research question, several studies examining types of directive speech acts also briefly discuss the factors underlying their use, such as the study by Della et al. (2018), Trihanto et al. (2022), Hakim et al. (2024), Ismani et al. (2022), Silaen et al. (2022), Apriliana (2021), and Charisun (2019). The findings from these studies indicate that various social factors influence a character's use of directive speech acts. These factors vary, ranging from the

characters' relationships having a clear position and power, having a long social distance between characters, and expressing support and motivation rather than asserting authority.

Lastly, in terms of the third research question, a study by Tabentane et al. (2015) analyzed Gru's character development by dividing the analysis before and after the change using psychological theories of characterization, conflict, and personality. This study uses qualitative analysis with a literature study film analysis approach using Bloom's and Holman's theories to uncover Gru's traits and habits, as well as Personality theory from Dweck, Roberts, and Revelle.

Although there have been many studies examining the use of directive speech acts, the researcher has not yet found any studies that examine the types of directive speech acts associated with a character's development, particularly in two films such as *Despicable Me* and *Despicable Me 2*. Previous studies on the use of directive speech acts had the same limitations, focusing primarily on frequency and dominant types without linking it to other aspects such as characterization. Through a more comprehensive analysis that considers various aspects, including types, factors, frequency, changes in usage patterns, and context, the findings of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the use of directive speech acts that can reflect character development. This is important because no previous study has used directive speech acts as a tool to reveal character development across two sequel films, which allows for a more comprehensive analysis than previous research.

1.6. Significances of the Study

This research is significant in revealing the characterization and character development through his directive speech acts. This research is useful in the development of characterization theory, namely, the development of a person's character can be analyzed through the types of directive speech acts and how the character uses them. In addition, this research is useful in increasing readers' understanding of the types of directive speech acts that can be used in analyzing character traits.

1.7. Writing Organization

To make this research a systematic research paper, the author divides it into four chapters. The following is the organizational structure of this research paper.

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, previous studies, significance of the study, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II : THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter contains the literature review of the theories and the research method that will be used. The theories used are Searle and Vanderveken's

theory (1985) about the types of directive speech acts, character and character development theory by Meyer (2009) and Murphy (1972), and Brown and Levinson's theory about the factors that influence the use of directive speech acts. Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the Research Method that contains the Type of Research, Research Approach, Data Source, Population and Sample, and Method of Data Collection and Analysis.

CHAPTER III : RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of this research. Chapter three consists of the data collected based on the research questions. The data are displayed in tables that present the types and frequency of directive speech acts found in the movies. Each finding in the table is followed by an explanation of the factors involved to provide a better understanding of the results related to character development analysis.

CHAPTER IV : CONCLUSION

This chapter is the final chapter that consists of the conclusion of the analysis and suggestions for the next study.

