PERLOCUTIONARY ACTS OF MAN CHARACTERS IN THE RON CLARK STORY MOVIE

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tindak perlokusi yang dilakukan oleh tokoh utama dalam film *The Ron Clark Story*, dengan menekankan pentingnya bahasa tidak hanya sebagai alat komunikasi tetapi juga sarana memengaruhi pendengar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan jenis tindak perlokusi yang digunakan oleh tokoh utama serta menjelaskan pengaruhnya terhadap tokoh lain. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis wacana. Data dikumpulkan dari ujaran tokoh utama dan dianalisis menggunakan teori tindak perlokusi Geoffrey Leech. Hasil penelitian menemukan 45 data tindak perlokusi yang diklasifikasikan menjadi tujuh jenis: membujuk (7), memberi dorongan (10), menginspirasi (7), menarik perhatian (4), membuat pendengar bertindak (10), membuat pendengar berpikir (3), dan membuat pendengar belajar (4). Jenis yang paling dominan adalah memberi dorongan dan membuat pendengar bertindak. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Ron Clark sering menggunakan bahasa tidak hanya untuk memberikan instruksi tetapi juga untuk memotivasi, menginspirasi, dan membujuk murid-muridnya. Hal ini menegaskan peran penting tindak perlokusi dalam membentuk sikap, motivasi, dan keterlibatan belajar siswa sebagaimana digambarkan dalam film.

Kata Kunci: Tindak Perlokusi; Analisi Wacana; Ron Clark; Film

Abstract

This research explores the perlocutionary acts performed by the main characters in The Ron Clark Story movie, emphasizing the significance of language not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of influencing listeners. The study aims to identify and classify the types of perlocutionary acts used by the main characters and explain their effects on other characters. A qualitative method with a discourse analysis approach was employed. Data were collected from the utterances of the main characters and analyzed using Geoffrey Leech's theory of perlocutionary acts. The findings reveal 45 instances of perlocutionary acts classified into seven types: persuasion (7), encouragement (10), inspiration (7), attention-getting (4), getting the hearer to do something (10), getting the hearer to think (3), and bringing the hearer to learn (4). Encouragement and getting the hearer to do something were the most frequently occurring types. These results demonstrate that Ron Clark frequently uses language not only to give instructions but also to motivate, inspire, and persuade his students. This highlights the importance of perlocutionary acts in shaping students' attitudes, motivation, and engagement with learning as depicted in the movie

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a medium for conveying information but also a tool for performing actions and influencing others. Communication is fundamental to human social life, allowing individuals to express feelings, share knowledge, and build relationships. Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics, focuses on how context shapes meaning, making it crucial for understanding how language functions in real situations (Yule, 1996). One of the key elements of pragmatics is the study of speech acts, which explore how utterances go beyond literal meaning to perform actions such as commanding, requesting, or persuading (Austin, 1962).

Speech act theory, as introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle, categorizes speech into three components: locutionary acts (the literal meaning of an utterance), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intended function), and perlocutionary acts (the effect produced on the listener). While much research has focused on illocutionary acts, perlocutionary acts deserve equal attention because they reveal how language shapes emotions, cognition, and behavior (Irianita, 2022). Understanding perlocutionary acts allows researchers to analyze how utterances generate psychological or behavioral responses such as motivation, fear, or inspiration.

Perlocutionary acts are particularly relevant in educational contexts. Teachers use language not only to deliver content but also to encourage participation, instill discipline, and inspire students to reach their potential (Mercer, 2019). The effectiveness of teaching is therefore not determined solely by the clarity of instruction but also by the emotional and motivational impact of teachers' utterances. According to Kuhl (2016), the language used by educators can shape students' learning experiences and affect academic outcomes, making perlocutionary analysis a valuable tool for educational research.

Movies are a rich source for studying language use and perlocutionary effects because they present dialogue that mirrors real-life interactions while offering a controlled context for analysis (Rohmah, 2018). Film dialogue is designed to be both natural and purposeful, combining elements of everyday speech with dramatic intent to advance the plot and develop characters (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010). This makes films ideal for pragmatic studies, as they capture a wide range of speech acts, including those that produce emotional and behavioral responses.

The Ron Clark Story (2006) is an especially compelling subject for this type of analysis. The film tells the true story of Ron Clark, an innovative teacher who leaves his secure job in North Carolina to teach at a challenging inner-city school in Harlem. Faced with undisciplined and disengaged students, Clark uses creativity, strict rules, and motivational strategies to transform his classroom. His interactions with students frequently involve perlocutionary acts—persuading them to follow rules, encouraging them to work harder, inspiring them to dream, and guiding them toward better behavior. These dialogues provide valuable data for understanding how language can produce real change in attitudes and actions.

Previous research has examined perlocutionary acts in other films, such as *The Theory of Everything* (Septiani, 2019) and *Aladdin* (2018), finding that perlocutionary acts often function to persuade, motivate, and emotionally

engage characters. However, few studies have analyzed perlocutionary acts in educational-themed movies, leaving a gap that this research aims to fill. By focusing on *The Ron Clark Story*, this study highlights how perlocutionary language contributes not only to character development but also to broader themes of learning, perseverance, and empowerment.

This study uses Geoffrey Leech's framework of perlocutionary acts, which classifies them into categories such as persuasion, encouragement, inspiration, attention-getting, and more. By identifying and categorizing these types within the movie, the research provides a detailed understanding of how Ron Clark's speech impacts his students. For example, utterances like "You will follow all my rules" function not only as directives but as persuasive acts designed to establish authority and classroom order.

Another strength of using a film as a data source is its multimodal nature. Beyond the words themselves, perlocutionary effects are reinforced through tone, facial expression, and gesture. This study analyzes both the linguistic and contextual features of Ron Clark's utterances, considering how paralinguistic cues amplify their perlocutionary force (Gee, 2011). This approach aligns with discourse analysis, which focuses on language-in-use and the meaning it generates within specific contexts.

The educational value of this research extends beyond film analysis. It contributes to pragmatic studies by showing how perlocutionary acts function in pedagogical settings, offering future teachers practical insights into effective communication strategies. Encouragement, persuasion, and inspiration are critical tools for motivating students and fostering a supportive learning environment (Utami, 2021). Understanding these speech acts can help educators reflect on their own language use and its potential impact on learners.

Moreover, this study serves as a model for integrating authentic media into language learning and teacher education. By examining film dialogues, students of linguistics can see how speech act theory applies to real interactions. This not only strengthens theoretical understanding but also enhances analytical skills, making pragmatics more engaging and relevant (Ary et al., 2010).

The findings are expected to show that Ron Clark frequently uses perlocutionary acts of encouragement and directives to motivate students, confirming that language can function as a transformative tool in education. These results may also inspire further interdisciplinary research combining linguistics, psychology, and pedagogy, exploring how teacher-student communication shapes classroom dynamics and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the introduction of this study establishes the significance of perlocutionary acts in understanding communication, highlights the suitability of film as a research medium, and frames *The Ron Clark Story* as an ideal case for exploring how language influences behavior. This research aims to identify and classify the perlocutionary acts used by the main characters and analyze their effects on listeners, thereby contributing to the broader field of pragmatics and educational discourse analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a discourse analysis approach to examine the perlocutionary acts performed by the main characters in *The Ron Clark Story* movie. Qualitative research was chosen because it focuses on exploring meaning, understanding language use in context, and interpreting the impact of utterances rather than

quantifying data (Creswell, 2014). Discourse analysis was considered appropriate for this study since it allows the researcher to analyze language-in-use and uncover how utterances function pragmatically to produce psychological and behavioral effects on listeners (Gee, 2011).

The research was conducted using *The Ron Clark Story* movie as the primary source of data. The film was selected because it presents rich classroom interactions where language plays a crucial role in motivating and transforming students. The research process took place from March to July 2025, including data collection, transcription, classification, and analysis of the perlocutionary acts.

The population of this study consisted of all utterances spoken by the main characters in *The Ron Clark Story* movie. The sample was determined through purposive sampling, selecting only those utterances that contained potential perlocutionary effects. The main characters included Ron Clark, Shameika Wallace, Tayshawn Mitchell, and Julio Vasquez. These characters were chosen because their dialogues significantly contributed to the storyline and reflected meaningful perlocutionary interactions.

Data were collected through non-participant observation. The researcher watched the movie multiple times and transcribed all utterances spoken by the main characters. An observation sheet was used to record utterances, speakers, hearers, and situational context. Each utterance was then identified and categorized based on Geoffrey Leech's (1983) framework of perlocutionary acts, which includes seven categories: persuasion, encouragement, inspiration, attention-getting, getting the hearer to do something, getting the hearer to think, and bringing the hearer to learn.

The measurement of data was carried out by classifying each utterance according to its perlocutionary type and

recording the hearer's response as the perlocutionary effect. This process ensured that each piece of data was systematically categorized and its effect clearly identified. Contextual features such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures were also considered to determine the strength and nature of the perlocutionary effect.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of qualitative data analysis, which consists of three steps:

1. **Data Reduction:** selecting, simplifying, and focusing on relevant utterances that contained perlocutionary acts.
2. **Data Display :** organizing the data into tables and descriptive narratives to highlight the types of perlocutionary acts and their effects.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification :** interpreting the results to identify patterns and dominant perlocutionary types, then verifying the consistency of the classification through repeated checks to ensure reliability.

This process provided a comprehensive understanding of how the main characters' utterances influenced the hearers and contributed to character development and thematic progression within the film.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
A. Finding
Description of the Data

The data of this research consisted of utterances spoken by the main characters in *The Ron Clark Story* movie, namely Ron Clark, Shameika Wallace, Tayshawn Mitchell, and Julio Vasquez. A total of 45 utterances were identified as containing perlocutionary effects. Each utterance was transcribed

and classified according to the speaker, hearer, context, and type of perlocutionary act. The data represented a variety of communication situations, including classroom interactions, personal conversations, and motivational dialogues, reflecting the characters' attempts to persuade, encourage, inspire, and influence one another.

Results on Data Analysis

The analysis revealed that the utterances of the main characters produced a range of perlocutionary effects on the hearers. The data showed that Ron Clark frequently used language to motivate students, gain their trust, and establish classroom order. Shameika Wallace, Tayshawn Mitchell, and Julio Vasquez responded to Ron Clark's utterances with noticeable behavioral and emotional changes, such as increased attention, improved participation, and higher motivation to learn. The identification process confirmed that all collected utterances fell into at least one category of perlocutionary act as proposed by Leech's theory.

Types of Perlocutionary Acts in the Ron Clark Story Movie

Based on the analysis, 45 utterances were categorized into seven types of perlocutionary acts. The distribution of the data is as follows: persuasion (7 utterances), encouragement (10 utterances), inspiration (7 utterances), attention-getting (4 utterances), getting the hearer to do something (10 utterances), getting the hearer to think (3 utterances), and bringing the hearer to learn (4 utterances). The most frequently occurring types were encouragement and getting the hearer to do something, each with ten instances. This indicates that the main characters, particularly Ron Clark, often used language to stimulate student action and maintain their motivation throughout the movie.

B. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that perlocutionary acts play a significant role in shaping communication outcomes in educational contexts. The results showed that Ron Clark frequently used utterances categorized as encouragement and getting the hearer to do something, suggesting that his communication style was both motivational and directive. This aligns with Austin's (1962) claim that perlocutionary acts produce real effects on listeners, including emotional responses and behavioral changes. In the context of teaching, these effects are essential because they contribute to student engagement and classroom order.

The dominance of encouragement acts indicates that Ron Clark prioritized motivating his students to achieve beyond their perceived limitations. This supports Mercer's (2019) argument that teacher-student dialogue has the power to enhance participation and foster a positive classroom climate. Rather than relying solely on discipline or authority, Ron Clark balanced strictness with moral support, leading to significant transformation among his students.

Persuasion acts also appeared frequently, showing that Ron Clark used language to influence students' attitudes and decisions. Persuasion in educational discourse is a powerful tool for reshaping students' beliefs about learning (Leech, 1983). In the film, persuasion was not merely about compliance but about

helping students internalize values such as responsibility and perseverance. This finding highlights how perlocutionary acts can go beyond momentary compliance to produce long-term attitude change.

The presence of inspirational utterances adds depth to Ron Clark's teaching style. Inspirational speech acts, as found in this study, encouraged students to dream big and develop a sense of purpose. This resonates with Kuhl's (2016) claim that teacher language can affect the development of students' motivation and aspirations. By inspiring students, Ron Clark not only improved their academic engagement but also helped them reimagine their future possibilities.

Attention-getting acts were also significant because they created focus during classroom interactions. According to Gee (2011), successful communication involves capturing the listener's attention to ensure the intended message is fully received. By using strategic language to attract students' attention, Ron Clark created moments of heightened engagement that facilitated learning.

Interestingly, the findings also showed several instances where utterances led students to think critically or learn new knowledge. This reflects the cognitive dimension of perlocutionary acts, which aim not just to elicit action but also to promote reflection and understanding. Searle (1969) emphasized that perlocutionary effects depend on the listener's interpretation, and in this case, students were encouraged to rethink their choices and recognize the importance of education.

One of the most important aspects of this study is the combination of emotional and behavioral effects generated by Ron Clark's speech. Encouragement and directives worked together to foster compliance while maintaining student morale. This combination demonstrates the pragmatic power of language, showing that effective teachers must balance authority with empathy (Utami, 2021).

Compared with previous studies, such as Septiani (2019) who analyzed perlocutionary acts in *The Theory of Everything*, this research contributes new insights by focusing on an educational setting where perlocutionary acts have direct pedagogical consequences. Rather than merely influencing interpersonal relationships, the acts in this study shaped students' academic performance and classroom behavior.

Another notable finding is that the perlocutionary effects were not uniform; they depended heavily on the context and the listener's background. This is consistent with Irianita (2022), who noted that perlocutionary effects cannot be fully controlled by the speaker because they rely on how listeners interpret the message. For instance, the same utterance of encouragement might motivate one student but intimidate another depending on personality and past experiences.

This research also highlights the role of film as an effective medium for pragmatic analysis. Movie dialogues provide semi-natural but structured language data that allow researchers to examine speech acts systematically (Piazza et al., 2011). The Ron Clark Story offers a rich narrative where language use is central to character development and thematic progression, making it a valuable object for perlocutionary study.

From an educational perspective, the study demonstrates that perlocutionary acts are not simply theoretical constructs but practical tools that can be consciously applied by teachers to improve learning outcomes. Encouragement and persuasion, in particular, can be intentionally incorporated into classroom discourse to build students' confidence and intrinsic motivation (Mercer, 2019).

The results also suggest that perlocutionary acts can serve as indicators of teacher effectiveness. Teachers who

successfully employ perlocutionary strategies are more likely to create inclusive, supportive environments that foster both academic and socio-emotional growth. This insight can inform teacher training programs, emphasizing the development of pragmatic competence alongside pedagogical skills.

Furthermore, this research provides a framework for future studies to explore perlocutionary acts in different contexts, such as online learning environments or cross-cultural classrooms. As communication dynamics shift in digital education, examining how perlocutionary acts function in virtual settings could yield valuable insights for improving student engagement.

In summary, this study not only identified and classified perlocutionary acts in *The Ron Clark Story* but also revealed their critical function in shaping students' attitudes, motivation, and learning behaviors. The findings reinforce the idea that language is a powerful educational tool capable of transforming students' lives when used with intention and empathy

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that perlocutionary acts are a crucial component of communication that significantly influence how listeners respond emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. Through the analysis of the dialogues in *The Ron Clark Story* movie, it was found that the main characters, particularly Ron Clark, frequently used language not only to deliver information but also to motivate, inspire, and persuade students to change their attitudes and behaviors. The results demonstrate that Ron Clark's communication style successfully created a positive learning atmosphere, encouraged students to engage actively, and fostered personal growth.

Furthermore, this research provides a framework for future studies to explore perlocutionary acts in different contexts, such as online learning environments or cross-cultural classrooms.The study achieved its objective by identifying and classifying various types of perlocutionary acts and interpreting their effects on other characters in the movie. The findings highlight that encouragement and directive utterances were dominant, showing that effective teaching involves both inspiring students and guiding them toward constructive action. This confirms the theoretical perspective that language in educational settings has the power to transform student motivation and participation. Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of understanding perlocutionary acts as a tool for educators to enhance communication effectiveness, build meaningful relationships with students, and create an environment that supports learning and character development.

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