

THE EXPLORATION OF DIRECTIVE ILLOCUTIONARY ACT IN “THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS” MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

According to Austin (1962:1) “a statement can only be to describe some state of affairs, or to state some fact, which it must do either truly or falsely. It have been regularly pointed out that not all sentences are used in making statements.” Leech (1983:13) “context deals with relevant aspect of physical or social setting of an utterance. Therefore, social setting in this case comes from the speaker and the listener.” Lyons (1977:34) states that “A clear difference can happen between the listener (the person who receives and interprets the utterance) and the speaker (the person to whom the utterance is delivered).” This research entitled The Exploration of Directive Illocutionary Acts In “The Pursuit of Happiness” Movie is aimed to analyze the context of situation of directive illocutionary act that indicate directive illocutionary act found in “The Pursuit of Happiness” movie script and identify the types of directive illocutionary act found in “The Pursuit of Happiness” movie script. Documentation and observation method were applied in conducting this study. Descriptive qualitative method was applied in analysing the data in this study. Informal method was used in presenting the final result of the analysis. The research findings showed that there were a total of eighteen scenes in the movie “The Pursuit of Happiness” which indicate the directive illocutionary acts. There were six types of directive illocutionary acts in the movie “The Pursuit of Happiness”: Request, Question, Prohibition, Requirement, Permission, and Advice.

Keywords: Context of Ssituation, Directive Illocutionary Act, Speech Act

I. Introduction

According to Austin (1962:1) “a statement can only be to describe some state of affairs, or to state some fact, which it must do either truly or falsely. It has been regularly pointed out that not all sentences are used in making statements.” “For he does promise the promise here is not even void, though it is given in bad faith. His utterance is perhaps misleading, probably deceitful and doubtless wrong, but it is not a lie or a misstatement. At most we might make out a case for saying that it implies or insinuates a falsehood or a misstatement to the effect that he

does intend to do something.” Austin (1962:11). Yule (1996:48) states that “On any occasion, the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts. There is first a locutionary act, which is the basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression. We form an utterance with some kind of function in mind. This is the second dimension, or the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance. We do not, of course, simply create an utterance with a function without intending it to have an effect. This is the third dimension, the perlocutionary act.”

In short, Austin's theory emphasizes the intricate structure of language communication, where promises and claims can transmit meanings that extend beyond the simple binary of truth or lie. His paradigm promotes advanced comprehension of language use by emphasizing the importance of implicate, context, and intention in comprehending the meaning and consequences of speech acts. Meanwhile, Yule's framework provides a comprehensive approach to understanding speech acts by describing the sequential processes involved in linguistic communication. These processes begin with the production of meaningful utterances (locutionary act), move on to the intended communication function (illocutionary act), and conclude with the observed or intended effect on the listener. According to Leech (1983:13) “context deals with relevant aspect of physical or social setting of an utterance. Therefore, social setting in this case comes from the speaker and the listener.” Lyons (1977:34) states that “A clear difference can happen between the listener (the person who receives and interprets the utterance) and the speaker (the person to whom the utterance is delivered).” In the present study, the author will limit the scope to the examination of one of the linguistic phenomena that manifest in the field of speech acts illocutionary act with the main concern about directive illocutionary acts. This study analyses The Pursuit of Happyness movie script to investigate directive illocutionary acts used in the movie. With its focus on directive illocutionary acts and context of situation to support the research. A proposed theory from Allan (1986:199) is required to explain the types of directive illocutionary acts and the proposed theory by Hymes (1972:59) ethnography of communication theory, which can be used to analyze context of situation.

II. Methods

The data that was studied in this research is in the form of written data in the form of dialogue in the movie script. Moreover, The Pursuit of Happyness movie was chosen because the themes and dialogue from the characters are suitable to become the source of the data in the form of utterances indicating directive illocutionary acts. Then, the data found in the movie script was analyzed for the main purposes of this current research. Flick (2009:195) states that “the scope of data collection, it is attempted to collect the data in context”. To collect data in the form of a movie, documentation method was used to find movies about family life that can support the formulation of problems in my research, especially in the misunderstanding of the use of speech

act theory. Then, the note-taking technique is also used to note all of the utterances contained in the movie script. In order to analyze the data, the method that applied in this study was qualitative descriptive method. According to Blaxter et al (2006:199) “qualitative data offer more detail about the subject”. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows for better understanding of the various types of utterances in the movie. The data in this study was analyzed through simultaneous procedures. There are two theories was used to address the formulated research problems in this study: ethnography of communication theory about context of situation proposed by Hymes (1972:59) and directive illocutionary acts theory proposed by Allan (1986:199).

III. Findings and Discussion

This chapter consists of the context of situation and the types of directive illocutionary acts analysis, including request, question, prohibition, requirement, permission, and advice, as expressed through dialogue between characters in the movie script of *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

Request

Data [1-1] (16:23)

Chris : “How you doing in here, man?”

Christopher : “Okay. **Can we go to the park today?**”

Chris : “Well, maybe. We’ll see.”

In the movie, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, several directive illocutionary acts, particularly requests, play a key role in interactions between characters. A request is a type of directive speech act in which the speaker seeks to get the hearer to do something. Requests are generally made when the speaker does not have the authority to command and thus asks for voluntary compliance. The context of directive illocutionary acts in the form of requests generally emerges when characters seek assistance, permission, or cooperation from others. Some typical contexts from *The Pursuit of Happiness* include Christopher, the son, often makes requests of his father Chris. These are typically about day-to-day activities, like going to the park or doing something fun. The context here is that of a close father-son relationship, with Christopher relying on his father for permission.

Data [1-2] (1:01:45)

Chris : “**Can I speak to you for a moment?** I really need this opportunity.”

Jay Twistle : (Surprised) “What opportunity?”

In this scene where Chris says, *Can I speak to you for a moment? I really need this opportunity*, the context is critical to understanding the directive illocutionary act. Chris Gardner is at a desperate point in his life, struggling to secure a steady job that will provide financial

stability for him and his son. The opportunity to land a position at Dean Witter, a brokerage firm, could change his life. Here, he is addressing Jay Twistle, a key figure who can offer him a chance at a coveted internship. In this scene, Chris's line Can I speak to you for a moment? I really need this opportunity is an example of a request, one of the key types of directive illocutionary acts. Chris's request for assistance is straightforward. He needs a Favor from Jay Twistle — specifically, time and consideration for an important opportunity. Chris asks for a moment to speak, which, although a small request, holds significant meaning because of the high stakes involved. "I really need this opportunity" indicates the seriousness and urgency of his request. This type of directive illocutionary act is typical in situations where the speaker does not have direct power but must rely on persuasion and politeness. Though the initial request is for time, Chris's underlying goal is to be evaluated and considered for the internship. "I really need this opportunity" implicitly asks Jay to consider his skills and potential for the job. This indirect request focuses not just on getting time with Jay but also on creating a chance for further evaluation and potentially securing the job.

Question

Data [1-4] (1:29:15)

Chris : **"How many people are you going to hire?"**

Manager : "One."

This conversation occurs during an interview or evaluation process in the office of a senior manager at Dean Witter. Chris is competing for an internship position, which makes this a high-stakes situation for him. The formality of the interview environment shapes the way Chris frames his question. Chris is in a position of lower power, as he is an interviewee, while the manager has the authority to make hiring decisions. In this case, Chris's question, "How many people are you going to hire?", serves as a request for specific information. He wants to know the scope of his competition and whether he has a realistic chance of securing the job. The manager's simple answer, "One," provides the information Chris needs but also heightens the pressure, as he knows only one candidate will be selected.

Data [1-5] (1:07:30)

Christopher : **"Are we going to be okay, Dad?"**

Chris : "Yeah, we're gonna be fine."

This dialogue takes place in a vulnerable and private moment between Chris and his son, likely in their temporary shelter or a less formal setting after experiencing the hardships of homelessness. The social relationship here is between a father and his young son. The power dynamic is one of care and protection, where Christopher looks to Chris for emotional reassurance and stability. The child, Christopher, asks for guidance and support in a time of

uncertainty. Christopher's question, "Are we going to be okay, Dad?", is a request for reassurance. He seeks emotional security and confirmation that, despite the hardships they are facing, things will eventually improve. This type of directive illocutionary act seeks not just information, but emotional validation and comfort from Chris. Although the question is explicitly about their well-being, it also functions as an indirect request for guidance. Christopher is asking his father for both emotional and practical direction on how they will move forward. He relies on Chris not only for reassurance but also to steer them through their difficulties.

Prohibition

Data [1-7] (1:36:20)

Chris : **"Don't ever let somebody tell you... you can't do something. Not even me."**

Christopher : (Silent, listening to his father)

The scene takes place outdoors, where Chris is watching Christopher play basketball. After Christopher remarks about how he might not be very good, Chris uses this moment to provide a powerful life lesson. The conversation occurs between a father and son, with Chris as the authoritative figure. However, the tone is not harsh but rather loving and motivational. Chris uses his position to prohibit his son from adopting a defeatist attitude. The power dynamic is one of care and mentorship, where Chris guides his son on how to approach challenges in life. This is an emotionally charged moment for both characters. Chris's statement, "Don't ever let somebody tell you... you can't do something," is a clear example of a prohibition. He is instructing his son to avoid allowing others to place limits on his abilities. The directive illocutionary act here is used to set a boundary, not just in behavior but in mindset. Chris wants to prohibit his son from internalizing negativity or doubt, regardless of where it comes from. This prohibition is expressed in an absolute manner, with "Don't ever" emphasizing the importance and permanence of the instruction. It shows that Chris is making a strong, non-negotiable statement about his son's future attitude toward life's challenges.

Data [1-8] (0:58:30)

Chris : **"Don't mess around, stay focused."**

Christopher : (Nods and pays attention)

This scene occurs in a moment when Chris is teaching or guiding his son on an important task. It might be during their daily struggle or a specific lesson Chris is trying to instill in Christopher, particularly about focus and discipline. The social dynamic here is a father instructing his son, where Chris acts as both a guardian and a mentor. As a parent, Chris holds authority over his son, and this authority gives him the social right to issue prohibitions. His tone is caring but firm, showing the seriousness of the lesson. Chris's emotions at this moment may reflect frustration mixed with care. He understands how important focus and discipline are for

achieving success, particularly because they are in difficult circumstances. The directive illocutionary act here is a prohibition, where Chris tells Christopher, “Don’t mess around, stay focused.” Chris is instructing his son to avoid distractions and concentrate on the task at hand. The prohibition in this context acts as a warning and guidance, teaching Christopher the value of concentration in moments that require attention and effort. This prohibition is simple but direct, aiming to correct Christopher’s behavior and steer him toward the right course of action.

Requirement

Data [1-10] (0:49:20)

Chris : **“You need to finish your homework before you play.”**

Christopher : (Sighs but nods in agreement)

This scene takes place at home, likely during a moment of routine family life. Chris is emphasizing the importance of completing responsibilities (homework) before engaging in leisure activities (play). The setting is informal, but the instruction is clear and tied to Christopher’s education. As the parent, Chris is in a position of authority over his son, giving him the right to impose requirements. Christopher, as the child, is expected to obey. The social dynamic reflects a typical parent-child interaction, where guidance and discipline are provided to instill responsibility and structure in the child’s life. Chris’s tone is one of gentle authority. He knows that Christopher may not be thrilled with the requirement but stresses its importance nonetheless. Chris’s statement, “You need to finish your homework before you play,” is a clear requirement. This directive illocutionary act demands that Christopher complete a task (homework) before being allowed to do something else (play). The word “need” emphasizes the necessity of fulfilling this obligation, making it non-negotiable in this context. Chris is setting up a conditional requirement: only after Christopher completes his schoolwork can he engage in leisure. This teaches Christopher the importance of responsibility and time management, which are key themes in Chris’s life as he balances fatherhood and his own professional struggles.

Data [1-11] (1:05:10)

Manager : **"You have to meet the sales quota by the end of the month if you want to stay."**

Chris : "Understood."

This scene takes place in a professional office setting during Chris’s internship at the financial firm. The manager is setting clear professional expectations for Chris regarding his job performance, specifically mentioning a sales quota he must meet. The social dynamic here is between a manager and an intern, where the manager holds authority over Chris and is responsible for evaluating his performance. Chris is in a subordinate position and must follow the manager’s directives to keep his internship and potentially secure a full-time position. For

Chris, this moment holds significant emotional weight. He is desperate to prove himself in this job because of his financial struggles. The manager's requirement puts pressure on Chris, but it also gives him a clear goal to work toward. The manager's statement, "You have to meet the sales quota by the end of the month if you want to stay," is a direct requirement. This directive illocutionary act imposes a clear and measurable expectation on Chris's performance. The use of "have to" indicates a non-negotiable condition, meaning that if Chris fails to meet the quota, he risks losing his position at the firm. The requirement establishes a clear relationship between Chris's actions and the consequences of those actions. If Chris wants to remain at the firm, he must meet the sales target, creating a direct correlation between effort and reward. This directive is not only a performance expectation but also a condition for Chris's continued employment. The phrase "if you want to stay" frames the requirement as a necessary step for achieving job security.

Permission

Data [1-13] (0:28:45)

Chris : "Excuse me, **could I speak with Mr. Twistle for a moment, please?**"

Receptionist : "Let me check if he's available."

This scene takes place in the lobby of a financial firm. Chris is trying to gain access to someone important—Mr. Twistle, who could offer him an employment opportunity. This is a crucial moment for Chris as he is navigating the corporate world in hopes of improving his financial situation. The interaction here is between Chris, who is seeking help or access, and the receptionist, who has the power to grant or deny that access. Chris is in a vulnerable position as a job-seeker, while the receptionist holds a gatekeeping role in the company, deciding who gets access to the executives. Chris is likely feeling anxious and determined, as this moment represents one of his few chances to make a strong impression on someone who could potentially change his life. Chris's statement, "Could I speak with Mr. Twistle for a moment, please?" is a request for permission. He is asking the receptionist for access to Mr. Twistle, recognizing that he cannot proceed without the receptionist's approval. The use of "could I" is a polite way of framing the request, making it clear that Chris understands the receptionist's role as the gatekeeper and that he is asking for her authority to allow the conversation. This is an important form of directive illocutionary act because it shows that Chris, despite his desperation, is following the formal and social rules of the situation. He is not demanding access but requesting it in a manner that shows respect for the receptionist's position.

Data [1-14] (1:15:35)

Chris : "Excuse me, **can I go up to the 6th floor? I have an appointment.**"

Security Guard : "Do you have an ID or visitor pass?"

Chris : "Not with me right now, but it's important."

Security Guard : "Alright, go ahead."

This exchange happens at the entrance to a corporate building where Chris is trying to attend a critical meeting. Without the proper identification, Chris is not immediately granted access, and he needs the security guard's permission to proceed. The interaction occurs between Chris, who is seeking permission, and the security guard, who holds authority over who can enter the building. Chris is trying to comply with formalities but is constrained by his lack of ID. The guard, on the other hand, has the power to either allow or deny access. Chris is under stress and time pressure because this meeting could be crucial to his professional success. His request for permission is urgent but polite. Chris's request, "Can I go up to the 6th floor? I have an appointment," is a polite way of asking for permission. He acknowledges that he needs the security guard's approval to access the building, demonstrating respect for the rules. This is an example of how Chris carefully navigates societal structures to achieve his goals, often needing permission to overcome barriers. The phrase "Can I" signals a direct request for permission, showing that Chris understands the power dynamic in this interaction—he is asking, not demanding, and recognizes that the security guard holds control over whether he can proceed. The politeness in Chris's request is significant given the urgency of his situation. Despite his stress, Chris remains respectful, framing his need as a polite inquiry rather than a demand. This reflects Chris's persistence and professionalism, qualities that help him navigate a challenging world.

Advice

Data [1-16] (1:43:30)

Chris : **"Don't ever let someone tell you that you can't do something. Not even me. Alright? You got a dream, you gotta protect it. People can't do something themselves, they wanna tell you you can't do it. If you want something, go get it. Period."**

Christopher : (Nods, listening carefully)

This scene takes place outdoors, possibly at a basketball court, where Chris and Christopher are spending time together. It's an intimate moment between father and son, as Chris reflects on his struggles and encourages his son to have confidence in his dreams. The conversation is between Chris, the father, and Christopher, the son. The power dynamic here is typical of a parent-child relationship, but Chris is careful not to impose limitations on his son. Instead, he positions himself as a source of wisdom and guidance. Chris's advice comes from his own experience of facing adversity, and he uses this moment to impart important life lessons to his son. Chris's statement, "Don't ever let someone tell you that you can't do something. Not even me," is an example of advice as a directive illocutionary act. He is advising his son on how

to handle negativity and discouragement from others, warning him not to allow others to define his potential. This advice is shaped by Chris's own experiences, reflecting his desire to protect Christopher from the hardships he has endured. Chris's advice is delivered as a strong imperative, reinforcing the importance of the message. He frames it as a rule his son should live by, making it clear that this is not just a suggestion but a guiding principle for life. This highlights the protective nature of his advice, ensuring that his son has the resilience to pursue his dreams without being derailed by others' doubts.

Data [1-17] (1:21:45)

Chris : **"Hey, don't let anybody tell you you can't do something, not even me. You got a dream, you gotta protect it. If you want something, go get it."**

Christopher : (Looks up at his father) "Okay, Dad."

The scene occurs outdoors, possibly on the street or in a park, as Chris and his son walk together after a difficult day. The casual, everyday setting allows for a heartfelt conversation between father and son. This interaction occurs between Chris, a father deeply invested in his son's future, and Christopher, his young son who looks up to him. Chris is in a protective and nurturing role, wanting to instill resilience and determination in his son. The social context emphasizes the parental responsibility Chris feels in guiding his son's character development. Chris is emotionally charged, as this moment comes after facing numerous personal and professional challenges. He wants to ensure that his son does not become discouraged by the hardships they are going through. Chris's statement, "Don't let anybody tell you you can't do something, not even me," is a clear example of advice. He advises his son to ignore naysayers and not internalize others' doubts, even if those doubts come from people close to him, like his father. The advice reflects Chris's belief in the importance of self-confidence and perseverance, values he has had to rely on throughout his struggles. By saying "not even me," Chris acknowledges that even well-meaning people can sometimes unintentionally limit others' potential. He is advising his son to be discerning in whose opinions he listens to, reinforcing the idea that external negativity should not deter him from pursuing his dreams. Chris follows up with, "You got a dream, you gotta protect it. If you want something, go get it." This part of the advice is empowering and motivational. He is urging his son not just to dream but to actively protect those dreams from being crushed by doubt or fear. The phrase "go get it" frames success as something within Christopher's reach, provided he works hard and stays focused.

IV. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the context of situation in the analysis in such way, the participant often had the conversation informally, through face-to-face communication which indicates the directive illocutionary act and the types of directive illocutionary acts that occur in

the movie entitled “The Pursuit of Happyness” using theory proposed by Hymes (1972) and Allan (1986). The conclusions of this study are described in the following paragraph. It was found that there were a total of eighteen scenes in the movie “The Pursuit of Happyness” that indicate the occurrence of directive illocutionary acts along with the context of situation. There are six types of directive illocutionary acts found in the movie “The Pursuit of Happyness”: Requests are made when the speaker requests assistance, support, or action from the audience but cannot order it. Question typically occurs in contexts of information seeking, clarification, or knowledge acquisition that the speaker does not have but wants to know. Prohibition are designed to halt or prevent the listener from completing a specified activity, usually for reasons of safety, ethics, rules, or societal standards. Requirement are intended to convince the listener to take a specific action that is deemed required, usually owing to regulations, formal responsibilities, or situational needs. Permission often appears in themes of authorization, freedom, or consent. and Advice frequently occurs within the themes of well-being, improvement, and guidance.

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