

Speech Acts of Hope in the Film *Moonlight Shadow 2021*: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the forms, functions, and meanings of hope speech acts found in the film *Moonlight Shadow*. The research problem concerns how hope speech acts are used in film dialogue and how pragmatic contexts influence their meanings, using the pragmatic theories of J. L. Austin, John Searle, and Geoffrey Leech. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with observation and dialogue note-taking techniques. The data source consists of character dialogues from the film *Moonlight Shadow 2021*, directed by Edmund Yeo. The results show that hope speech acts appear in both direct and indirect forms, with the main function of expressing hopes for happiness, emotional recovery, and future change. Contextual factors such as situation, interpersonal relationships, and the psychological condition of the speaker greatly influence the interpretation of illocutionary meaning. This study concludes that hope speech acts play an important role in conveying emotional messages and narrative meaning in the film.

Keywords: pragmatics, speech acts, expressiveness, hope, film

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language is not only a system of grammatical structures but also a medium used by speakers to perform actions and convey intentions in social interaction (Ai Santi¹, Yeti Mulyati², 2022). In the field of Pragmatics, language is studied in relation to context, speaker intention, and social conditions that shape meaning. According to (Jacob L. Mey, 1998), pragmatics examines how language is used in communication and how meaning is constructed through interaction between speakers and listeners in particular situations. Thus, an utterance cannot be interpreted solely from its linguistic form, but must also be understood through the communicative context in which the utterance occurs (Soelistyowati, 2019). According to C. R. Snyder (1994), as cited in (Sidabutar & Candra, 2008), hope is understood as a form of anticipation toward achieving future goals, influenced by the importance of those goals to the individual and functioning as a motivator that encourages individuals to strive to achieve them.

One of the most important approaches in Pragmatics is the speech act theory introduced by J. L. Austin in the book *How to Do Things with Words*. In the research journal conducted by (Akhmad, 2019), Austin argues that utterances not only convey information but also perform actions. This perspective was later further developed by John Searle, who classified speech acts into several illocutionary categories, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Among these categories, expressive speech acts function to express the psychological state or emotional attitude of the speaker toward a particular situation.

Expressive speech acts are a category of illocutionary acts used by speakers to express psychological attitudes toward a situation, such as gratitude, apologies, sympathy, or hope (Akhmad, 2019). In the context of Japan culture, expressions of hope have an important social function because they are related to prayers, future aspirations, and expressions of empathy toward others (Afif, 2023). However, studies on hope speech acts in films are still relatively limited.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Previous research has examined expressive speech acts in film discourse. Research conducted by (Hidayati et al., 2022) analyzed expressions of anger in the television series *Death Note*, identifying patterns of direct and indirect expressive speech acts influenced by situational context. Another study by (Mulya et al., 2021), examining expressive speech acts in the film *Ano Hi Mita Hana*, identified several communicative functions such as apologizing, thanking, sympathizing, and expressing hope. Previous research has focused on understanding expressive speech acts in audiovisual media. Its analysis focused on general emotional expressions and did not specifically investigate the pragmatic characteristics of hope as a distinct communicative phenomenon.

According to Austin (1965: 150–151) as quoted by (Mulya et al., 2021), expressive speech acts are known as behabitive, which is a type of speech act that includes various actions related to the speaker's social attitudes and behavior. These forms of speech acts include expressions of apology, congratulations, praise, condolences, curses, challenges, and wishes (expressing hopes). In this type, the speaker hopes for the speech partner's happiness or pleasure that will occur in the future. Included in this speech act are blessings (praying), curses (cursing), toasts (expressing hopes by raising glasses), and drinking to (expressing hopes by clinking glasses).

According to John R. Searle (1979), as cited in the research of (Astawa et al., 2017), speech acts are divided into three main types, namely:

Locutionary Acts are utterances that only function to say or convey something directly. This type of speech act is easily recognized because its meaning can be understood without needing to consider the situation or context of the conversation.

Illocutionary Acts are utterances that not only convey information but also have a specific purpose, such as requesting, suggesting, or promising. The meaning of this dialogue is greatly influenced by the communication context, such as who is speaking, to whom, when, and under what circumstances the dialogue is delivered. Therefore, illocutionary acts are considered the most important part in understanding the true meaning of an utterance.

Perlocutionary Acts are utterances that have an impact or effect on the listener, for example, making the listener feel happy, offended, afraid, or compelled to do something, whether or not the speaker intended this effect.

Based on this gap, this study focuses on the expressive speech act of wish. This study examines how the speech act of wish is analyzed based on the speech act analyzed. Classification of hope functions such as good wishes, future happiness, and commiserations/condolences in the dialogue of the film *Moonlight Shadow* 2021. In addition, this study not only identifies the form of expression, but also analyzes the structure of speech acts (locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary) and the level of continuity of meaning delivery (direct and indirect) so as to show the communication mechanism of hope in more depth.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is the listening and note-taking method, the object of listening is the dialogue of the characters in the film *Moonlight Shadow* 2021. After the listening process is carried

out, relevant data is then recorded for analysis. The next stage is data grouping, namely by arranging, equalizing, and differentiating the data. The data classification process is carried out by referring to the purpose of this study, namely to analyze the function and pattern of the expressive speech act of wishing (wish) in the use of Japanese speakers in expressing expressive dialogue to interlocutors based on the principles of politeness contained in the film *Moonlight Shadow* 2021, by Edmund Yeo, which has a duration of 1:32:30 minutes. The data corpus in the form of conversations between characters in the film is then categorized into the types and functions of the expressive speech act of wishing (wish). This grouping aims to facilitate the process of developing analysis of the classified data. After the data is compiled, the final stage is the analysis of the data.

The meaning of expressive speech acts, according to Searle (1979), in the research journal (Untiani et al., 2021) states that expressive dialogue is part of an illocutionary act which in the identification process needs to pay attention to the context of the dialogue, such as who the speaker and the interlocutor are, the time, place, and situation when the dialogue is spoken.

In Geoffrey Leech's book, *The Pragmatics of Politeness, Classification and Function*, Leech groups good wishes along with congratulations and condolences as speech acts that are highly sensitive to politeness. These speech acts serve to maintain harmonious social relations between the speaker (S) and the interlocutor (O). In the context of sympathy (such as in films or difficult situations), expressions such as "I hope they do work out" often overlap with apologies or condolences, because they express regret or hope for another person's misfortune (Pragmatics, 2014, p. 208-214).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis from the 2021 film *Moonlight Shadow*, several direct and indirect expressive speech acts of hope were found that appeared in dialogues between characters. The author presents and analyzes in more depth several examples of expressive speech acts of hope that have been identified.

1. Direct Speech Act of Hope With Good Intentions

- (1) Yumiko : この現象を経験したら、誰に会いたいですか？
- Yumiko : Kono genshō o keiken shitara, dare ni aitaidesu ka?
- Yumiko : 'If you experienced this phenomenon, who would you want to meet?'
- Hitoshi : もし私が、一年生の中学校のときに非常に価値のある科学教師に会いたい 名前はババ先生です。彼に会いたい。
- Hitoshi : Moshi watashi ga...ichi Nensei no chūgakkō no toki ni hijō ni kachinoaru kagaku kyōshi ni aitai. Kare no namae wa baba-Sensei desu. Kare ni aitai.
- Hitoshi : 'If I... I want to meet my very helpful science teacher when I was in first grade of junior high school. His name is Mr. Baba. I want to meet him'.

(19:38)

Context :

The dialogue in data (1) occurs when Hitoshi, Satsuki, Hiiragi, and Yumiko discuss a mysterious phenomenon called “moonlight Shadow.” This phenomenon is a condition where someone who is deeply loved and has passed away can reappear when the moon is shining. Yumiko’s question is reflective and creative, prompting the characters to discuss who they would most hope to meet if such a possibility existed. Hitoshi answers by mentioning the name of his science teacher, Mr. Baba, who played an important role during Hitoshi’s school days.

Analysis :

The dialogue demonstrates an exchange of personal hopes through polite and considerate speech. Yumiko's remark serves as a conversation starter by asking the question “この現象を経験したら、誰に会いたいですか” *Kono genshō o keiken shitara, dare ni aitaidesu ka?* ‘If you experience this phenomenon, who would you like to meet). The question does not force the interlocutor, but gives the freedom to answer according to personal feelings and experiences. From a pragmatic politeness perspective, Yumiko's way of speaking shows concern for the interlocutor because it creates a comfortable and empathetic conversational atmosphere. In addition to seeking information, the question also helps build emotional closeness and encourages self-reflection.

Hitoshi’s response reflects a personal hope filled with memories. The utterance “一年生の中学校のときに非常に価値のある科学教師に会いたい” *ichi Nensei no chūgakkō no toki ni hijō ni kachinoaru kagaku kyōshi ni aitai* ‘I want to meet the science teacher who was very valuable to me in my first year of junior high school’, demonstrates respect and appreciation toward a teacher from the past. Locutionarily, the dialogue is a statement expressing the desire to meet someone. Illocutionarily, the dialogue belongs to an expressive speech act because it conveys hope as well as indirect gratitude. Perlocutionarily, the utterance may evoke empathy and emotional feelings in the listener because it relates to a meaningful personal experience. The simple yet meaningful words indicate that the hope emerges as a form of longing and respect for a social relationship that once existed.

Judging from the form of delivery, Hitoshi's dialogue is a direct speech act because his desire is conveyed clearly through the expression “会いたい” *aitai* ‘want to meet’. The speaker's intention can be understood directly without requiring complicated interpretation. However, the context of the supernatural phenomenon in the dialogue provides additional meaning in the form of longing for the past. Thus, this dialogue shows the relationship between politeness of language, expression of personal hope, and direct speech acts that describe the emotional state of the speaker in warm and reflective communication. The dialogue that expresses hope with the intention of good hope is also found in the continued dialogue data in 1 by Hitoshi, namely:

(2) Hitoshi : 私も彼のように魅力的な大人になりたいと思いました。

Hitoshi : *Watashi mo kare no yō ni miryoku-tekina otona ni naritai to omoimashita.*

Hitoshi : ‘I also wanted to become an admirable adult like him.’

(19:44)

Contexts :

The dialogue in data (2) occurs when Hitoshi appears when Hitoshi, Satsuki, Hiiragi, and Yumiko are discussing the mysterious phenomenon called “Moonlight Shadow,” which refers to the possibility of meeting again with someone deeply missed. In a calm and reflective conversation, Hitoshi recalls his science teacher, Mr. Baba, who had played a very important role in his life. After expressing his wish to meet his teacher again, Hitoshi also states that he hopes to grow into an attractive and wise adult like him. This scene takes place outdoors in a quiet setting with a warm yet melancholic nighttime atmosphere, which strengthens the emotional nuance, respect, and admiration Hitoshi feels toward his teacher.

Analysis :

Hitoshi's dialogue “私も彼のように魅力的な大人になりたいと思いました” *Watashi mo kare no yō ni miryoku-tekina otona ni naritai to omoimashita* ‘I also want to be an adult like him’, shows an expression of hope conveyed through an attitude of respect for the admired figure. Pragmatically, the use of the word he signifies politeness and social respect, so this dialogue not only expresses personal desires, but also reflects admiration and exemplary values that the speaker wants to follow.

Locutionarily, the dialogue expresses a desire to become a mature person like a respected figure. Illocutionarily, this dialogue functions as an expressive speech act that expresses hope and appreciation for a role model. Perlocutionarily, this utterance has the potential to create a positive impression on the listener, such as respect, empathy, and understanding of the speaker's maturation process.

Based on the level of continuity of meaning, this dialogue is a direct speech act because the intended hope is stated explicitly through the word “なりたい” *naritai* ‘wanna be’. The meaning conveyed can be understood without further interpretation, thus demonstrating a clear, reflective, and communicative expression of hope.

2. Indirect Speech Act with Good Hope

(3) Yumiko : もし可能なら...母の祖父母に会ってみたいと思います。母は祖父母とあまり仲が良くないんです。

Yumiko : Moshi kanōnara... haha no sofubo ni atte mitai to omoimasu. Haha wa sofubo to amari naka ga yokunai ndesu.

Yumiko : ‘If possible... I would like to meet my mother’s grandparents. My mother does not get along very well with them’.

(20:23)

Contexts :

The dialogue in data (3) has the same context of the time of the incident as data (1), after Hiiragi conveyed his hopes, then Yumiko conveyed what she had felt so far that Yumiko wanted to meet her grandparents, where in the past, when she was alive, she had a less harmonious relationship with Yumiko's mother.

Analysis :

Yumiko's dialogue, “*会ってみたい*” *attemitai* ‘I want to meet’, reflects an expression of hope conveyed in a careful and reflective manner. The opening phrase “*もし可能なら*” *moshi kanounara* ‘if possible’, functions as a politeness strategy to lessen the certainty of the hope so that it does not sound demanding or excessive. The speaker demonstrates humility while also considering the emotional conditions related to family relationships. This way of conveying the message shows that the hope is presented as a personal desire that is sensitive to social situations and the feelings of others.

Locutionarily, the dialogue consists of a statement expressing the desire to meet her maternal grandparents as well as an explanation about an unharmonious family relationship. Illocutionarily, the utterance functions as an expressive speech act that conveys hope as well as longing for a family relationship that has not been well established. Implicitly, the speaker shows a desire to understand Yumiko's family past. Perlocutionarily, the dialogue may evoke empathy, sympathy, and emotional understanding from the listener toward the family situation experienced by the speaker.

From the way the meaning is conveyed, Yumiko's utterance is classified as a direct speech act because her desire is expressed clearly and directly through the phrase “*会ってみたい*” *attemitai* ‘want to meet’. However, the depiction of an unharmonious family relationship also contains an implied meaning, namely the hope of repairing and restoring the family relationship. Therefore, this dialogue demonstrates the expression of hope that is direct in its linguistic form, while still containing emotional depth and personal reflection.

3. Indirect Speech Act with the Intention of Condolences (Commiserations/Condolences)

- (4) Satsuki : ひいらぎ、どうしたの？.
- Satsuki : Hiiragi, doushitano?.
- Satsuki : 'Hiiragi, what happened?'.
- Hiiragi : 事故が...事故が起きた.
- Hiiragi : Jiko ga... jiko ga okita.
- Hiiragi : 'An accident... There was an accident'.
- Satsuki : 事故？ 大丈夫？ 何があったの？.
- Satsuki : Jiko? Daijōbu? Nani ga atta no? .
- Satsuki : 'An accident? Are you okay? What happened?'.
- Hiiragi : 私が寝てしまったせいなの.
- Hiiragi : Watashi ga nete shimatta seina no
- Hiiragi : 'It's because I fell asleep'

- Satsuki : ひいらぎ何て言ったの？.
- Satsuki : Hiiragi nanite itta no?.
- Satsuki : 'what did you say?'.
 Hiiragi : 由美子を家まで送る途中、二人は事故で亡くなった.
- Hiiragi : Yumiko o ie made okuru tochū, futari wa jiko de nakunatta
- Hiiragi : 'On the way to take Yumiko home...they both died in an accident'.

(36:30)

Contexts :

The dialogue in data (3) of the film Moonlight Shadow takes place when Satsuki is talking with Hiiragi about the tragic event that happened to Hitoshi and Yumiko. At that moment, Satsuki was still trying to understand the reality of the deaths of the people closest to her. Hiiragi then explained that after Hitoshi escorted Yumiko home, they were involved in an accident that caused both Hitoshi and Yumiko to die. This explanation became an emotional moment that revealed a deep sense of loss, as well as the beginning of Satsuki's inner struggle in dealing with grief and memories of Hitoshi, including an indirect or symbolic expression of condolence when Satsuki placed a flower on the gravestone of the late Hitoshi.

Analysis :

The dialogue between Satsuki and Hiiragi shows a communication situation filled with shock, sadness, and emotional loss. Satsuki's utterance, “ひいらぎ何て言ったの” *Hiiragi nanite itta no?* 'Hiiragi, what did you say', appears as a spontaneous response after hearing the news about the deaths of Hitoshi and Yumiko. The question reflects the speaker's need to reconfirm information that is difficult to believe. Satsuki's way of speaking also shows the closeness of their interpersonal relationship, allowing her to express her shock directly without using overly formal language. Meanwhile, Hiiragi's response is delivered seriously and carefully to explain the tragic event that actually occurred: “事故が...事故が起きた” *Jiko? Daijōbu? Nani ga atta no?* 'An accident... an accident happened'. In addition to the verbal dialogue, Satsuki's act of placing a flower on Hitoshi's gravestone becomes a form of symbolic communication containing respect, prayer, and an indirect expression of condolence. Overall, the scene creates a strong emotional atmosphere and illustrates the characters' inner process in dealing with loss.

In terms of speech act levels, Satsuki's utterance is locutionarily a question asking for clarification about the information she has just received “事故？大丈夫？何があったの？” *Jiko? Daijōbu? Nani ga atta no?* 'An accident? Are you okay? What happened?'. Illocutionarily, the utterance functions as an expression of shock as well as a request for confirmation of the interlocutor's statement. Perlocutionarily, the question encourages Hiiragi to provide further explanation regarding the accident that caused the deaths of Hitoshi and Yumiko: “仁志が由美子を家に連れて帰った後

...二人は亡くなった” *Yumiko o ie made okuru tochū, futari wa jiko de nakunatta* ‘After Hitoshi took Yumiko home... the two of them died in the accident’.

In Hiiragi’s utterance, the locutionary act consists of conveying information about the deaths of the two characters. Illocutionarily, the utterance functions to communicate facts or realities believed to be true by the speaker. Perlocutionarily, the statement creates emotional effects such as sadness, shock, and a sense of loss for Satsuki as well as the audience. Furthermore, Satsuki’s symbolic act of placing a flower on Hitoshi’s grave can also be understood as a form of nonverbal expression that implicitly conveys respect and condolences.

The emotional context and symbolism in the scene provide a deeper meaning. Expressions of condolence are not conveyed through explicit words of sympathy, but rather through the atmosphere of the conversation, expressions of loss, and symbolic actions such as placing flowers on the grave. Thus, the scene demonstrates that the meaning of grief and condolence can be constructed not only through verbal language, but also through symbolic actions and emotional context that reflect a reflective and empathetic process of accepting loss.

4. Indirect Hope Speech Act with the Intention of Praying

(5) Satsuki : 挨拶を交わしながら... もっと先へ進めそうだ。流れる川の水を見ながら... 私は生きていく。ずっと祈るよ... 幼い頃の私の面影が... いつもあなたのそばにいることを祈る。

Satsuki : *Aisatsu o kawashinagara... motto saki e susume-sō da. Nagareru kawa no mizu o minagara... watashi wa ikite iku. Zutto inoru yo... osanai koro no watashi no omokage ga... itsumo anata no soba ni iru koto o inoru.*

Satsuki : ‘While exchanging greetings... I feel that I can move further forward. While looking at the flowing river water... I will continue living. I will always pray... that the image of my younger self... will always remain by your side’.

(1:27:39)

Contexts :

The dialogue in data (5) spoken by Satsuki appears near the end of the story when she begins to accept the loss of Hitoshi after going through a long grieving process and a spiritual experience related to the “Moonlight Shadow” phenomenon. While gazing at the flowing river, Satsuki expresses her desire to continue living little by little while still keeping memories of the person she loved. The utterance illustrates Satsuki’s emotional transformation from deep sorrow toward acceptance, while also showing her hope that their relationship and feelings will remain preserved in memory even though they have been separated by death.

Analysis :

Satsuki's utterance demonstrates the speaker's psychological shift from attachment to past attachment to acceptance of change. The statement “私は生きていく” *watashi wa ikite iku* ‘I will go/I must move on’, does not simply convey factual information, but rather functions as an illocutionary act of self-

commitment that leads the interlocutor to accept the separation as an unavoidable consequence. Perlocutionarily, this utterance encourages Hitoshi to validate the decision without eliciting overt emotional conflict.

Satsuki's utterance reflects an expression of self-acceptance after going through a profound emotional experience. Through the metaphors of moving forward and the flowing river “*流れる川の水を見ながら*” *Nagareru kawa no mizu o minagara* ‘While looking at the flowing river water, the speaker illustrates the process of continuing life while still holding on to memories of the past. The gentle and reflective choice of words demonstrates an effort to maintain politeness and emotional stability in communication. This utterance contains values of empathy and warmth because the hope being expressed is not centered solely on oneself, but also includes prayers and wishes for others.

At the level of speech acts, the locutionary act appears in the statement about the desire to continue living and the prayer that the image of herself will remain by the interlocutor's side. Illocutionarily, “*いつもあなたのそばにいたいことを祈る*” *itsumo anata no soba ni iru koto o inoru* ‘will always remain by your side’. this dialogue functions as an expressive speech act of hope as well as a prayer, reflecting feelings of affection, sincere farewell, and the desire to maintain an emotional connection even though physically they must continue their lives separately. As for the perlocutionary effect, the utterance is expected to evoke feelings of peace, emotion, and emotional acceptance from the interlocutor regarding the process of separation.

Judging from the way it is conveyed, this dialogue is classified as an indirect speech act. The hope and prayer are not expressed in the form of direct requests or explicit statements, but rather through natural symbolism and personal reflection. This strategy demonstrates a high level of politeness because the speaker conveys deep feelings without placing pressure on the interlocutor, allowing the meaning of hope to be understood implicitly through the emotional context of the conversation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis in the film *Moonlight Shadow 2021* by Edmund Yeo, expressive speech acts of wishing are used by the characters as a means of expressing longing, loss, respect, and the desire to continue living after experiencing the death of loved ones. The research data show that expressions of hope are conveyed both directly and indirectly through expressions such as “*会いたい*” *aitai* (wanting to meet someone), prayers, and emotional reflections. The analysis results indicate that the meaning of expressive speech acts of wishing in the film is strongly influenced by situational context, interpersonal relationships, and the psychological condition of the characters. Illocutionarily, most utterances function to convey good wishes, condolences, and prayers, while perlocutionarily they generate empathy, sadness, and emotional closeness in both the interlocutors and the audience. Thus, expressive speech acts of wishing in the film *Moonlight Shadow 2021* function not only as a means of communication between characters, but also as an important element in constructing the emotional meaning and psychological development of the story.

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