



Review Article

Jill Santopolo's "The Light We Lost": Speech Act Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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In this paper, the researcher examines the American novel "The Light We Lost" according to Searle's Speech Act theory. Many studies use speech acts theory on political discourse, medical discourse and even on some literary works, but non-has studied Jill Santopolo's "The Light We Lost" according to Searle's speech act theory or any linguistics theory. Thus, the study tries to fill a gap in the study by answering the following research question

1. Is it possible to apply pragmatics theories to modern fiction?
2. What are the speech act features introduced by Jill Santopolo's "The Light We Lost"?
3. What speech act is used more than others in the selected texts "The Light We Lost"?

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1. Speech Acts

The idea of speech acts was first founded by the British language philosopher John L. Austin. His ideas were delivered in 1955 at Harvard University known as "the William James Lectures". Later, this observation was published in Austin's famous book "How to Do Things with Words". It is Austin who introduces the basic terms of Speech Acts (Justová, 2006, p.6). As Lyons states "Austin's main purpose was to challenge the view that the only philosophically (and also linguistically) interesting function of language was that of making true or false statements." (Lyons, 1981, p.173) Austin shows that there are certainly additional functions (Justová, 2006, p.6).

J.R. Searle was one of Austin's students at Harvard University. Later, he became one of America's outstanding language philosophers. He states that all linguistic communication, such as making promises, giving commands, making statements, or asking questions is performing speech acts. Understanding speech acts depends on the context in which they are performed. To decode the whole utterance and its suitable meaning. The speech acts are used in standard routine exchanges, in drama and jokes as well (Justová, 2006, p.6).

The speech act theory is one of the hardest attempts to explain how language works.

Speech Acts theory is extensively influential in areas such as language philosophy, communication, and linguistics (Mabaquiao, 2018, p.1). Austin (in Tsui, 1994: 4) states that speech acts are acts that are acted by produced utterances. Meanwhile, Yule (1996: 47) defines speech acts as "action which is performed via utterances". Birner (2013) also states the same idea, saying that

"uttering something means doing something". Thus, people can act only by saying something. In speech acts, the speaker can convey physical action simply via phrases and words

(Hidayat, 2016, p.2). Austen distinguishes three types of acts in the speech acts, they are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Leech (1983: 199) defines them briefly as follows:

locutionary act: performing an act of saying something.

illocutionary act: performing an act in saying something.

perlocutionary act: performing an act by saying something.

This can be understood with a simple example:

-Would you close the door, please?

The locutionary act means in this utterance is only a question of clear content (Close the door.) The illocutionary act represents a request on the part of the speaker. While the perlocutionary act shows the speaker's desire that the listener should go and close the door. (Justová, 2006, p.11)

These individual essentials cannot be constantly separated that easily. Bach and Harnish state that they are closely related in a large measure (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p.3).

2. Classification of Speech Acts

Searle in Levinson (1983: 240) classified speech acts into five categories:

2.1 Representatives

Representatives are speech acts in which the utterance reflects the truth from the speaker's interpretation. Thus, the utterances

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are produced according to the speaker's observation of certain things. If the speaker says *she's beautiful*, this fact or opinion is founded according to his/her observation. Statements of descriptions, facts, conclusions, and assertions, are all examples of the speaker representing the world as s/he sees it. For instance, if someone states *"The earth is flat"*, it represents the speaker's view of the earth. Representatives' speech acts can be distinguished by using some speech act verbs, such as: inform, insist, remind, deny, correct, tell, assert, state, agree, claim, beliefs, guess, predict, report, describe, assure, and conclude.

2.2 Directives

Directive's speech acts are when the speaker gets someone to do something. These speech acts include questioning, suggesting requesting, orders, and commands. For instance, if someone says *"Could you lend me a pencil, please?"*. In this utterance, the speaker requests the listener to lend him a pencil.

2.3 Commissives

In commissive speech acts, the speaker commits him/herself to a future course of action, such as promising, pledging, threatening, refusing, or offering. As in *"I'll be back"*, which represents the speaker's promise that they will be back.

2.4 Expressives

Expressive speech acts are utterances that express a psychological state, such as congratulating, thanking, welcoming, and apologizing. For instance, someone says *"Don't be shy, my home is your home."* The utterance expresses welcoming someone.

2.5 Declarations

In Declarations speech acts, the utterances create immediate changes in someone or institutional state of affairs, such as firing from employment, declaring war, marriage, christening, etc. For example, *"You are dead to me."* (Hidayat, 2016, p.6)

3. Previous Study

In 2009, Al-Halawachy and Al-Bayati published a paper entitled "The Speech Act of Requestives in Iraqi Romantic Poetry with Reference". In which, they study requests in a speech act. The request is any attempt for the speaker to ask the listener to do something. The researchers examine requestive speech acts in literary texts; especially Iraqi free verse poetry, which was revolutionary and created during the 20th century. They analysed Al-Malaa'ikah's, Al-Sayyaab's and Blake's works. The study concludes that each poet uses requests to express his/her inner conflict feelings.

In 2011, Yarahmadi and Olfati examined "The Seagull" which is one of the well-known works of drama written by Anton Chekhov in 1896. The researchers use Speech Act Theory to explore the personalities of different characters in the play. The study was entitled "Speech Act Analysis of Anton Chekhov's The Seagull". The researchers establish a link between dramatic discourse and speech acts. The study is commissive, expressive, assertive, directive, and declarative according to Searle's speech acts. The researchers conclude that speech acts theory helps in revealing the hidden motives, and intentions of characters in the play.

In (2015), Hashim studied Speech Acts in Political Speeches. The researcher selects the political speeches of John Kerry during his Presidential Campaign in 2004 and George Bush's Inaugural speech in 2001 as both speeches have the same specific goals. The study examined only Twenty sentences from the two selected speeches. The Findings show that Kerry depends more on commissive acts as he gives a lot of promises. Bush, on the other hand, used assertive acts more than other speech acts.

Chen and Zhang (2019) study "Speech Act Theory and Its Application in the Titles of Articles in WeChat". The researchers selected the British philosopher John Austin's speech acts theory to study the daily language on the Internet. Among social media, they examine the titles of articles in WeChat. The study concludes the readers' curiosity is aroused by good titles. Additionally, increasing the number of reader titles should be about some hot issues or people's daily life or. The titles need to be brief with some attractive words to emphasize something.

Ramanathan, Paramasivam, and Hoon (2020) write a paper entitled "Discursive Strategies and Speech Acts in Political Discourse of Najib and Modi", which examines the political discourse of Twitter of two Asian premiers: Former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Tun Razak and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The researchers use Searle's speech acts theory to examine both Prime Ministers' tweets during election campaigns. This study explored the illocutionary acts of commissives and directives, in addition to Wodak's discursive strategies. Finally, the study concludes that the citizens are willing to obey and accept commands given by leaders for a better future.

In 2019, Fatimah Al-Mashhadani wrote a thesis entitled "Speech Acts in Doctor-Patient Linguistic Communication". In this study, she examines doctor-patient interviews according to the speech acts theory by Austin (1962). The study investigates seven medical interviews recorded at two internal medicine departments in Al-Batool Teaching Hospital and Baqubah Teaching Hospital / Iraq. The study aims to examine the frequencies of speech acts. The study concludes that the most repeated speech acts are questions and statements, which is relevant to medical discourse. The doctor usually asks questions to make the best diagnosis.

Another study about medical discourse is represented by Susanthi el (2019) entitled "Speech Act Taking Place in the Medical Conversation". This study aims to examine the five features of speech act and the maxim theory. the textbook "English for Midwives: Practical Guidance for Antenatal Care" is used as data. The study aims to analyze the speaker's intended meaning. The text is also rich with quantity and quality maxims.

Lastly, there are many studies about speech acts as mentioned above, some use literature discourse, and others use political discourse, in addition to using medical discourse.

4. Methodology

The researcher selects Jill Santopolo "The Light We Lost" (2018) and analyses it according to Searle's Speech Acts Theory (SAT). The researcher selects four chapters from this novel as data. The chapters are from the beginning, mid, and ending to ensure covering as much from the novel as possible.

5. Analysis of "The Light We Lost"

5.1 First Text

1. "It's the most incredible view of New York City you'll ever see".
2. "The whole sky was turning gray, the city shrouded in ash".
3. "The tears filled my eyes".
4. "There were people in those buildings".
5. "We stood there, staring at the aftermath of destruction".
6. "Tears dripping down both our cheeks..."
7. "Our eyes, still wet with tears".

The first text is chapter three of the novel. The heroine Lucy meets the hero Gabriel Samson (for short Gabe) during Shakespeare's class at Columbia University, exactly on 11 September 2001. The day that a plane hits the Twin Towers. In chapter three, the author describes how Lucy and Gabe go up to the dorm's roof to see what is happening. From the roof, one can

see "It's the most incredible view of New York City". This description is representative speech acts. However, because of the attack on the Twin Towers, the sky was grey and New York City was covered with ash as seen in (2), which is again a representative speech act. Lucy's eyes filled with tears at the sight, realizing that there were people "in those buildings". Lucy holds Gabe's hands while they are staring at "the aftermath of destruction". Jill Santopolo depicted this scene in a very emotional way "tears filled my eyes", "Tears dripping down both our cheeks", and "Our eyes, still wet with tears" which is a expressive speech act as seen in (3, 6, and 7). In addition to using description to enrich the depiction of the scene as in (4 and 5) which is representative speech act.

1. As if the only way to stay safe was to keep my lips on yours
2. I felt safe
3. I forgot the world. In that moment, there was only you.
4. I felt guilty about it...Guilty that we kiss.... guilty that I was able to lose myself in you
5. Said I love you for the first time.
6. There's something about death that makes people want to live.
7. I don't blame us for it.
8. I listened to your heart and was comforted by its steady beating.

Even though they have just met and they are strangers, Lucy and Gabe find comfort in each other's. They kiss each other as if "the only way to stay safe was to keep my lips on yours". This makes they feel safe. They forgot the world around them. This deep emotion in (8,9, and 10) is representative speech act. Later, Lucy felt guilty for having their kiss on 11 September with the shadow of death around the city. Later, she knew that a lot of people get engage and say "Love you" for the first time during that day. This because human desire to live increase around death. Thus, Lucy decides that she is not going to blame herself any more. After that kiss, Lucy puts her head on Gabe's heart and feels "comforted". In all the above extracts, there is expression for different kind of emotion such as feeling "safe", "forgot the world", "I love you", "want to live", "blame", and "comforted". All these emotions is expressive speech acts.

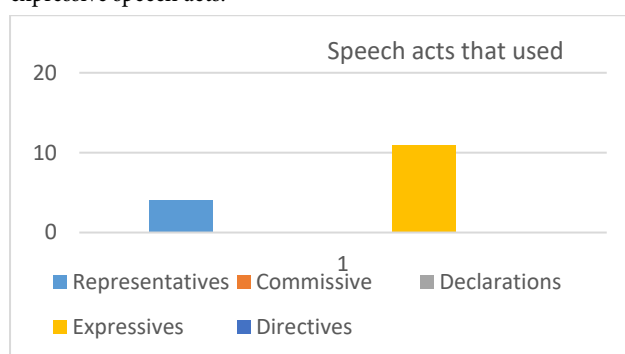


Figure (1) Use of Speech Acts in Chapter Three of "The Light We Lost"

5.2 Second Text

1. "I never told you how broken I was."
2. "How I looked at the spaces your books left on the bookshelves."
3. "I couldn't eat waffles without crying."
4. "I burned my lips when I drank it,"
5. "And it dulled the pain."
6. "I felt like hell the next morning"
7. "Learning how to live with the pain."
8. "Because all I felt was your absence"

The second text is XXII (22) in the novel. Lucy and Gabe now broke up after a wild relationship for fourteen months. In this chapter, Lucy is alone in the apartment struggling with her deep sorrow. Everything around her reminds her of Gabe, the space his

books left in the bookshelves after he gather his stuff "the spaces your books left on the bookshelves". She cannot eat Waffles because it reminds her of him. She cannot cross many stores and restaurants because she has a great deal of memories there. She starts drinking all night and, in the morning, she feels "like hell", thus, she does not go to her job. All the above extracts are a clear expression of the feeling of pain and sorrow; thus, it is an expressive speech acts such as: "pain", "broken", "crying", "felt like hell", and "your absence".

1. "I can't stay here"
2. "I could not take it anymore."
3. "How I was falling apart"
4. "I wrote with false cheer"
5. "I waited and waited and waited"
6. "I kept thinking about you"
7. "How you said you'd always love me"
8. "I'd feel a combination of rage and sadness, disappointment deeper than anything."

Staying in their apartment by herself reminds Lucy about their good times together. After staying there in depress for a couple of days, she decides she "can't stay here" and "could not take it anymore". Thus, she decides to move on with her friend Kate. She even sends Gabe an email with "false cheer", pretending that she is doing good. However, Gabe does not reply. Lucy "waited and waited and waited" for an answer, while she "kept thinking" about him, how Gabe told her that they would keep in touch and that he always loves her. This waiting turns into "rage and sadness, disappointment deeper than anything". Again, all the above extracts are a pure expression of feeling, accordingly, they are an expressive speech act.

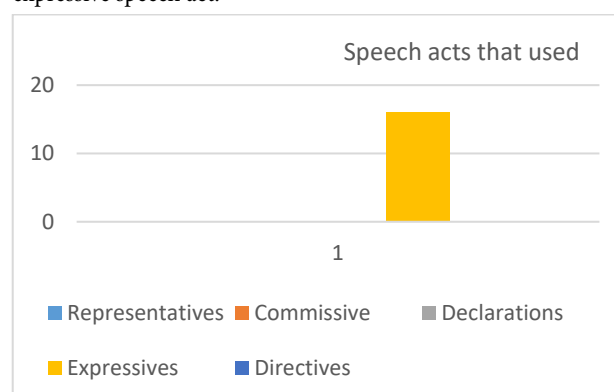


Figure (2) Use of Speech Acts in Chapter Twenty-one of "The Light We Lost"

5.3 Third Text

1. "THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD- who loved giving gifts and others who loved receiving them."
2. "loved getting gifts and still do."
3. "loved giving gifts as well."
4. "We were supposed to go with Darren's family"
5. "like to spend so much time with them"
6. "I'd miss my own family"
7. "His family promised a big Christmas tree"
8. "my brother had offered to watch her"

In chapter xI (40), Lucy already meets a nice guy named Darren during the summer. Now it is Christmas and they are planning it together. Lucy opens the chapter by stating the fact, that some people love giving gifts while others love receiving them. This is a representative speech act. For so long Lucy loved getting gifts, but now with Darren, she finds out that she loves giving gifts as well. She also likes spending time with his family, even though she misses her own family. This expressing of positive feeling of "loved", "like", and "miss" in extracts (2,3,4, and 6) are

expressive speech acts. While any future commitment and promise is a commissive speech act as in “supposed to go with Darren’s family”, “my brother had offered to watch her”, and “His family promised a big Christmas tree” in extract (4, 7, and 8)

1. "My plan to spend Christmas with Darren's family"
2. "I don't want to love anymore"
3. "My feelings had clearly changed"
4. "I am happy for you, even if I'll miss you at Christmas"
5. "I'll miss you,"
6. "I'll see you when I get back"
7. "He was so excited about this holiday trip"

Darren and Lucy plan to spend Christmas with Darren’s family in Colorado. This planning for future commitment is a commissive speech act as in (9). Lucy calls her brother, Jay. Together they recall when Lucy told him that she “don’t want to love anymore” after her harsh break-up with Gabe. Now after a year and a half, she is in love again and her feelings change that is expressive speech act. Jay uses an expressive speech act to express his happiness for his sister and that he would miss her at Christmas. She tells him that she is going to miss him as well. And they should meet when she comes back from Colorado. Again, this future commitment is a commissive speech act as in (14). Darren is so excited about their Christmas together. This excitement is an expressive speech act.

1. "He declared us all set to leave"
2. "The plan was for both of us to stay at the apartment"
3. "His eyes filled with tears."
4. "The first time I'd ever seen him cry."
5. "I felt like I was giving him some of the happiness that he'd gave me"
6. "Saw tears in his eyes"
7. "I love you so much that I don't know how my heart can stand it."
8. "Show him how much I loved him"
9. "The more I loved him"

After double-checking their bags, Darren declares that they are ready to travel. This Declarations speech act. They plan to stay at Darren’s apartment and then head to the airport. This planning is definitely a commissive speech act. However, Darren has a terrible flu and his eyes fill with tears when he tells Lucy that cannot get out of bed. This is the first time Lucy sees him crying. Thus, she decides to bring Christmas to him by decorating his house with a tree and putting all the gifts under it. To give him some “of the happiness that he’d gave” her. When Darren wakes up and see the Christmas decoration he cries again, but this time out of his happiness. There he tells her that he loves her so much and she says the same. Here the expressing of the feeling of love in (22,23, and 24), Darren’s tears and crying in (18, 19, and 21), and Lucy attempts to make him happy in (20) is an expressive speech act.

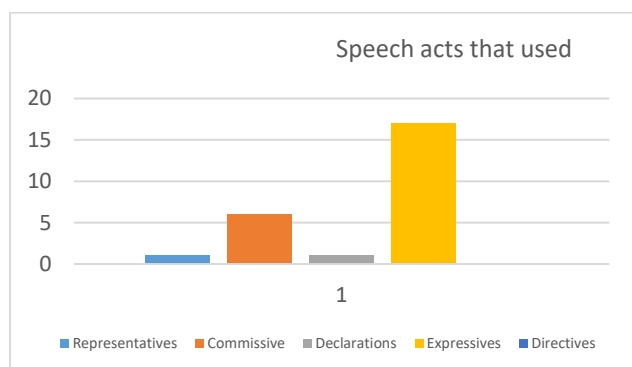


Figure (3) Use of Speech Acts in Chapter Forty of "The Light We Lost"

5.4 Fourth Text

1. "Mr. Samson is a brain-dead"
2. "Don't think about it,"
3. "Focus on what you're doing now"
4. "Stay strong"
5. "Think about his apartment"
6. "I missed them already"
7. "I wish I could hold them, feel their little bodies warm against mine."
8. "I felt like an intruder"

The last text is the last chapter of the novel. Lucy got married to Darren and now has two kids, Violet and Liam, and now she is pregnant with her third child. She is still in touch with Gabe and even loves him. Now Gabe is in intensive care, after getting hurt in a bomb in Gaza. They call Lucy because she is listed as his emergency contact. Almost against Darren’s agreement, Lucy flies to Jerusalem. Gabe suffers from extremely brain injury that he is “a brain-dead” This is a representative speech act. After seeing his him in the intensive care, Lucy has a really harsh nervous breakdown. The doctor orders her a taxi to take her to Gabe’s apartment. Lucy orders herself to “Don’t think about it”, “Focus on what you’re doing now”, and “Think about his apartment”. These commands in (2,3, 4, and 5) is directives speech act. Lucy is already missing her children she wants to hold them to feel the warm of their little bodies against her. This expression of missing in extracts (6 and 7) is expressive speech acts. Moreover, entering Gabe’s house, Lucy feels like “an intruder” this is also an expressive speech act.

1. "There were boxes of books opened but not unpacked"
2. "A few photographs framed and leaning against walls, but not hung"
3. "rugs patterned in bold colors... A brown couch"
4. "A wooden desk piled with electronics and wires."
5. "That's the farthest you'll ever read in that book."
6. "I'll finish the book... I'll read it for you, Gabe"

His apartment is not set up yet. It seems that he works like crazy. The boxes of books are open but not arranged. The few photographs are framed on the walls. There is a rug with a bold colors and a brown couch. A desk filled with wires and electronics. All this description in (9, 10, 11, and 12) are a representative speech act. There is a book that Gabe’s read till page 254. This is the “farthest you’ll ever read in that book” He will never be able to finish it because his life cut short. This is a representative speech act (a fact). Thus, Lucy promises to finish reading that book for him. This future is a commitment commissive speech act.

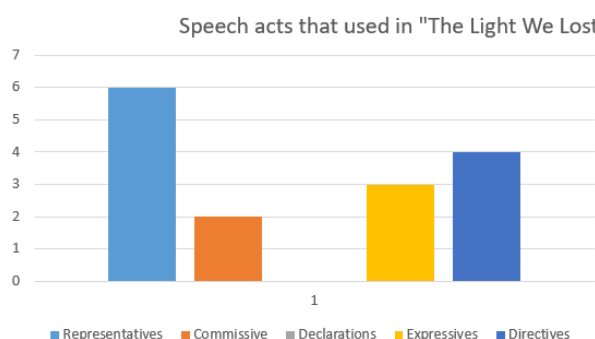


Figure (4) Use of Speech Acts in fourth text of "The Light We Lost"

6. Conclusion

This paper studies the novel “The Light We Lost” by the American novelist Jill Santopolo. The researcher uses Searle’s speech act theory. According to the research question, all the speech acts classification has been used in the selected texts. However, It is obvious from the above analysis that the expressive

speech act has been used more than any other type. The majority of the chapter in the novel describes the deep emotion of love, pain, break up and loss. As shown in the table below.

Representatives	11
Commissive	8
Declarations	1
Expressives	47
Directives	4

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