Illocutionary Acts in Angelina Jolie's Selected Speeches about Humanity

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the field of Pragmatics, specifically analyzing the Illocutionary Speech Acts in three selected speeches by Angelina Jolie about humanity. The study aims to identify the types of illocutionary acts found in these speeches and examine the context in which they were used. Searle's (1979) theory of Illocutionary Acts was applied to classify the speech acts, while Nunan's (1993) framework was used to analyze the contextual elements. The research adopts a qualitative approach, analyzing data from 60 selected utterances identified as illocutionary acts. The findings reveal that all types of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle were present, with "expressives" being the most dominant. Additionally, the study highlights the role of non-linguistic factors in shaping the contextual view of the speeches.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Speech Act, Illocutionary Act, Angelina Jolie, Humanity*

A. Introduction

Language is an essential tool for communication and the primary system through which people express their thoughts and emotions. It plays a vital role in social interactions and connects individuals across various aspects of life, including culture, education, economy, politics, and humanity. According to Taylor (1990), language is a system of signs—such as speech sounds, hand gestures, and written symbols—that conveys messages. The meaning behind these messages depends on the context in which the language is used, and understanding the speaker's intent is critical for effective communication.

Linguistics, as the scientific study of language, explores how language works in communication. It encompasses several subfields, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Pragmatics, in particular, focuses on the use of language in context, especially how meaning is conveyed through speech. It is concerned with understanding the speaker's intended meaning, which is often influenced by the situation and environment in which the conversation takes place (Yule, 1996).

Pragmatics includes the study of speech acts, which are actions performed through speech. Speech act theory, introduced by Austin (1962) and expanded by Searle (1975), distinguishes between three types of acts performed when people speak: locutionary acts (the actual utterance), illocutionary acts (the speaker's intention), and perlocutionary acts (the effect on the listener). Understanding speech acts is crucial for avoiding misunderstandings, as it allows people to interpret not just the literal meaning of words but also the underlying intention of the speaker.

An example of speech act theory can be illustrated by the following:

- If someone says, "The earth is flat," the **locution** is the literal statement that the earth is flat. The **illocution** could be expressing a hypothesis or belief. The **perlocution** is how the listener reacts to the statement, whether they agree or disagree.

In a globalized world, effective communication, particularly in English, has become more important than ever. Social media platforms, for example, provide a space where speeches and opinions are shared, and these speeches can provoke varying reactions. A speech on a sensitive topic like humanity may generate both support and opposition. Understanding the meaning behind such speeches requires careful attention to the speaker's intent and the context in which the speech was made.

One of the most effective ways to study this is by analyzing the illocutionary acts in speeches. This study focuses on the speeches of Angelina Jolie, a well-known actress and humanitarian who has worked closely with the United Nations Refugee Agency since 2001. Through her public speeches, Jolie advocates for humanitarian causes, such as defending internationalism, ending sexual violence in conflict, and preventing wartime rape. The speeches selected for this study include *In Defense of Internationalism*, delivered at the Sergio Vieira de Mello Annual Lecture in Geneva; *End Sexual Violence in Conflict Summit* in London; and her *G8 Speech on Preventing Wartime Rape*, also in London.

In her speeches, Jolie expresses deep concern for humanitarian issues and invites audiences to engage in her fight against injustice. By analyzing the illocutionary acts in these speeches, this study aims to explore the context in which Jolie's words are used and identify the dominant speech acts she employs to convey her message.

The choice of humanity as the central theme of this analysis is driven by the understanding that language is key to expressing human values. Studying Jolie's speeches on humanitarian issues provides insights into the ways language can be used to advocate for causes that aim to "humanize" people and promote empathy and action. Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of speech acts, pragmatics, and their relevance to addressing humanitarian concerns. Ultimately, the goal is to inspire more individuals to use language as a tool for positive social change, much like Jolie does in her advocacy for human rights.

B. Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the illocutionary acts found in selected speeches by Angelina Jolie, focusing on her humanitarian work. The study is rooted in pragmatics, particularly speech act theory, which emphasizes the importance of understanding language in context. By analyzing the illocutionary acts in Jolie's speeches, the study seeks to uncover the types of speech acts she uses and how they contribute to conveying her messages on humanitarian issues.

The primary data for this study are three speeches delivered by Angelina Jolie that focus on humanitarian topics:

1. *In Defense of Internationalism*, delivered at the Sergio Vieira de Mello Annual Lecture in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. *End Sexual Violence in Conflict Summit*, delivered in London.
3. *G8 Speech on Preventing Wartime Rape*, delivered in London.

These speeches were selected because they highlight Jolie's engagement with humanitarian concerns, making them suitable for analyzing speech acts in the context of humanity.

The data collection process involves several steps:

- Speech Transcription: The three selected speeches will be transcribed verbatim from video or audio sources.
- Segmentation of Utterances: The transcribed speeches will be broken down into individual utterances to facilitate the analysis of speech acts.
- Contextualization: The context of each speech will be considered, including the location, audience, and socio-political circumstances at the time of delivery, to better understand the illocutionary acts.

The analysis will be based on Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1975) speech act theory, which categorizes speech acts into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The focus of this study is on illocutionary acts, which reflect the speaker's intention.

The steps in analyzing the illocutionary acts include:

- Identification of Speech Acts: Each utterance in the transcribed speeches will be examined to identify the type of illocutionary act it represents. According to Searle's classification, illocutionary acts can be categorized into five types:
    1. Assertives: Statements that express the speaker's belief or describe reality.
    2. Directives: Utterances that aim to get the hearer to do something.
    3. Commissives: Utterances that commit the speaker to a future course of action.
    4. Expressives: Utterances that express the speaker's feelings or emotions.
    5. Declarations: Utterances that bring about a change in the external world.
- Contextual Interpretation: Each identified illocutionary act will be interpreted within the specific context of the speech, considering the audience and the social or political climate during its delivery.
- Dominant Illocutionary Acts: The frequency and relevance of each type of illocutionary act will be examined to determine the dominant speech acts used in Jolie's speeches. This analysis will highlight how her speech acts align with the themes of humanity and advocacy for human rights.

The results will be presented in a descriptive form, outlining the types of illocutionary acts identified in each speech and providing examples to illustrate how these acts contribute to Jolie's overall message. The findings will also discuss the implications of these speech acts in the context of advocating for humanitarian issues.

The study will conclude by summarizing the dominant illocutionary acts used by Angelina Jolie in her speeches and discussing their significance in communicating humanitarian concerns. The analysis will also suggest how understanding speech acts can enhance the interpretation of speeches in advocacy and political communication.

This method allows for a thorough and nuanced examination of the ways in which language is used to advocate for social change and human rights, with a specific focus on speech acts that promote understanding and empathy.

C. Findings and Analysis

A. Types of Illocutionary Acts

This section provides an in-depth analysis of the various illocutionary acts identified in Angelina Jolie's speeches, focusing on the five types of illocutionary acts based on Searle's framework: assertive, directive, expressive, declarative, and commissive. The analysis reveals that Jolie employs a wide range of speech acts to achieve her communicative objectives, with expressive acts being the most dominant in her speeches.

1. Expressive Acts

Expressive illocutionary acts, which reflect the speaker's emotions and attitudes, dominate Jolie's speeches, with 20 instances identified across the data. This dominance suggests that Jolie uses her speeches as an opportunity to convey emotional depth, empathy, and personal sentiment, particularly in commemorating Sergio Vieira de Mello and other UN workers.

For example, in *Datum 3* ("This is sometimes forgotten: that in serving under the UN flag they died in our names, as our representatives"), Jolie uses an expressive act of regret to highlight her emotional connection to the sacrifices made by UN workers. The illocutionary force in this case is "regretting," as Jolie expresses her sorrow that these sacrifices may sometimes be overlooked.

Similarly, in *Datum 7* ("He is truly missed, even today"), Jolie employs an expressive act of deploring, showing her deep sadness over the loss of Sergio. This use of expressive acts allows Jolie to create an emotional bond with her audience, drawing them into the narrative and evoking shared feelings of loss, respect, and admiration.

2. Directive Acts

Jolie's use of directive acts, which aim to get the hearer to do something, is also prominent in her speeches, with 17 instances identified. These acts are essential for the persuasive and motivational aspects of her speeches, as they encourage action or change in the audience.

In *Datum 2* ("We remember all those who died, to acknowledge each valuable life cut short, and the families who share, even today, in their sacrifice"), Jolie commits her audience to the action of remembering and acknowledging the sacrifices made by UN workers. This commissive act, which carries the illocutionary force of commitment, reflects Jolie's intent to inspire her audience to share in the collective memory of those who died.

3. Assertive Acts

Assertive acts, where the speaker commits to the truth of a proposition, appear 10 times in Jolie's speeches. These acts are used to establish facts and reinforce the credibility of her statements, thereby supporting her overall message.

For instance, in *Datum 1* ("We are here in memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello and the 21 other men and women, most of them UN workers, who died with him in the bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003"), Jolie employs an assertive act to provide factual information about the purpose of the event. The illocutionary force of this statement is

"announcing," which serves to set the context for her speech and ground her message in real-world events.

4. Commissive Acts

Commissive acts, in which the speaker commits to future actions, are less frequent but still significant, with 10 instances identified. These acts are typically used by Jolie to show solidarity with the cause and to encourage her audience to take responsibility.

In *Datum 2* ("We remember all those who died, to acknowledge each valuable life cut short, and the families who share, even today, in their sacrifice"), Jolie commits herself and the audience to remembering the sacrifices of the fallen UN workers. This commissive act is a pledge to keep the memory of these individuals alive, thus fostering a sense of responsibility and shared action.

5. Declarative Acts

Declarative acts, where the speaker brings about a change in the external situation through their utterances, are the least frequent in Jolie's speeches, with only 3 instances identified. These acts serve to formally declare or announce important aspects of the speech.

In *Datum 5* ("A man who gave 30 years to the United Nations, rising from a field officer to High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Representative to Iraq"), Jolie uses a declarative act to officially acknowledge the achievements of Sergio Vieira de Mello. This declaration reinforces the significance of his contributions to the UN and his lasting legacy.

B. Analysis of Dominant Illocutionary Acts

The data shows that the expressive illocutionary acts dominate Jolie's speeches, followed by directive, assertive, commissive, and declarative acts. This distribution highlights Jolie's reliance on emotional engagement to connect with her audience, as well as her use of directives to inspire action. The expressive acts reflect the highly personal and emotive nature of her speeches, particularly when addressing sensitive topics like loss and sacrifice.

Jolie's ability to balance different types of illocutionary acts enhances the impact of her speeches. The expressive acts enable her to build an emotional rapport with her audience, while the directive acts encourage the audience to take action. The assertive acts lend credibility to her statements, and the commissive acts solidify her commitment to the cause. Finally, the declarative acts provide a formal recognition of the individuals and events she discusses.

D. Conclusion

The analysis of Angelina Jolie's speeches demonstrates her skillful use of various illocutionary acts to achieve a range of communicative goals. Her speeches are characterized by a strong emotional appeal, achieved through the use of expressive acts, while her directive and commissive acts help to inspire action and commitment among her audience. By employing a mix

of assertive, expressive, and commissive acts, Jolie is able to deliver powerful and moving speeches that resonate on both an emotional and intellectual level.

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