

# An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in the Disney+ Short Film *Once Upon a Snowman*

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**Abstract**—People not only produce sentences but also perform actions when using language. In the study of language, an action performed by saying something is known as a speech act. Speech acts are divided into three categories: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. In this research, the main purpose is to find out each type and function within the category of illocutionary acts in a Disney+ short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman*. According to Searle's theory on speech acts, an illocutionary act is classified into five types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. It was found that the short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman* consists of four types (representatives, directives, expressives, and commissives) out of the five types in the category of illocutionary acts. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to accumulate all the data. The result shows that there are fifty-four utterances that consist of illocutionary acts in *Once Upon a Snowman*, with 24 utterances classified as representatives, 15 utterances as directives, 13 utterances as expressives, and 2 utterances as commissives.

**Index Terms**—illocutionary act, short movie, speech act

## I. INTRODUCTION

In society, language plays a significant role since it is used as a way to communicate with others. Language exists to express ideas, information, feelings, and thoughts. In other words, language is a means of communication used by the speaker to deliver messages to the hearer. However, when using language to communicate, misunderstandings tend to happen between the hearer and the speaker. Therefore, in order to evade misunderstandings and ensure the continuity of successful communication, linguistics has a branch of study that discusses the intended meanings expressed by the speaker through their context. This study is known as pragmatics.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context affects what is said. Therefore, it requires a consideration of how speakers manage what they want to say in conformity with whom they're talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. Regarding this definition, Joan Cutting (2008) defines pragmatics as an approach that scrutinizes the relationship between language and its contextual background characteristics. In other words, pragmatics is a study of meaning based on its context.

The context here is simply defined by Yule as the physical environment in which words are spoken. On the other hand, Mey (1993) depicts context as more than just a reference and an understanding of what it means. Context gives a deeper meaning to an utterance. The utterance "what a beautiful morning," when uttered by a new bride on honeymoon in Bali, will have a different meaning from when it is said by someone who just got fired from their job, which can be considered sarcastic. Therefore, knowing the context of an utterance can be considered the most important key in pragmatics.

Pragmatics is indeed a study that examines the meaning of what you actually say (your utterances) and not the meaning of the sentence. In addition to that, pragmatics is also a field of study that explores the function of speech: what the utterance is performed for. The branch of pragmatics that studies how an utterance performs certain actions is known as speech acts. Initially, speech acts were introduced by John Langshaw Austin in 1962 and developed by John Rogers Searle in 1969. According to Austin (1962), speech acts are an act performed in saying something. Hence, in speech acts, people do not merely use language to say something but to perform some kind of action via their utterances.

Austin stated that a speaker can perform three acts via their utterances simultaneously, which are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is basically an act of saying something, which means the way to interpret an utterance is still based on a traditional sense. This traditional sense is a way to interpret an utterance through its literal meaning by analyzing the grammatical rules of a language. Therefore, Levinson (1983) identified the locutionary act as an utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference. Yule (1996) also stated that a locutionary act is the basic act of utterance, meaning that the speaker's intended meaning lies in the actual words that the speaker uses.

On the contrary, an illocutionary act is an act performed in saying something. In other words, there is an intended meaning behind the utterance that requires the hearer to do something, whereas a perlocutionary act is known as an act of affecting someone. Therefore, when someone is using a perlocutionary act, the utterance will generate a certain effect or influence on the hearer.

Out of the three major classifications of speech acts by Austin mentioned above, the focus of this research is on the illocutionary act. Illocutionary acts are classified into five types, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Searle (1979) argues that the main aim of a representative act is to utter what the speaker believes.

Directives aim to express what the speaker wants from the hearer; usually, the utterance is used to get someone else to do something. A commissive act is one that the speaker uses to commit to doing some future action. An expressive act states what the speaker feels about certain things. Lastly, utterances that give immediate effect to someone else's life are called declaratives.

From all the statements mentioned above, it is concluded that people can understand another person's intentions by their utterances through speech acts. Utterances that contain speech acts can be found in various sources; one of them is obtaining the data from movies. Research on illocutionary acts in movies was done by Fita Nur Rahayu, M. Bahri Arifin, and Setya Ariani on "Illocutionary Acts in the Main Characters' Utterances in Mirror Mirror Movie" (2018) from the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University. Their result from analyzing the illocutionary acts that appeared in the utterances of the main characters of the Mirror Mirror movie was a collection of 55 utterances, which they categorized into representatives with 5 utterances, directives with 37 utterances, commissive with 1 utterance, and expressive with 12 utterances. However, they did not identify any utterances containing illocutionary acts classified as declaratives. The result of this study shows that directives are the dominant type among the other types of illocutionary acts. This is because, in most cases, the main characters expressed their utterance in a direct way, such as ordering, requesting, asking, or commanding.

Another research on illocutionary acts was conducted by Dilla Ramayati and Leni Marlina on "The Analysis of Types of Illocutionary Acts in 'Tangled' Movie" (2018) from the English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Padang State University. They found four types of illocutionary acts in the movie Tangled. These types are representative, commissive, directive, and expressive. They collected 197 utterances categorized as follows: 86 directives, 49 representatives, 48 expressives, and 14 commissives. Compared to the first review above, they have a similarity in not having any declarative utterances in their research. Additionally, the most dominant type of illocutionary act found in this research was directives.

The last research is an analysis by Zulfa Tutuarima, Nuraeningsih, and Rusiana on "An Analysis of Speech Acts Used in 'London Has Fallen' Movie" (2018) from Muria Kudus University. The result of this study shows that they collected 76 utterances in the London Has Fallen movie, which they categorized into 3 types of speech acts: 37 utterances as illocutionary acts, 25 utterances as perlocutionary acts, and 14 utterances as locutionary acts. The illocutionary acts appear as the acts primarily used in this movie, with the result showing 32 utterances classified as directives, 26 utterances classified as assertives, 23 utterances classified as expressives, 12 utterances classified as commissives, and 6 utterances classified as declaratives. This confirms that most utterances in the movie are used to give an order to someone to do something, which is why the dominant type is directives.

From all the research conducted before, movies are most likely to be objects analyzed by linguists because they consist of characters having conversations with other characters, which means any kind of linguistic scope can occur anytime, including speech acts and illocutionary acts. In movies, it is necessary to pin down what the characters actually mean by their utterances to clarify the messages being delivered. Therefore, this research was conducted to identify, describe, and analyze illocutionary acts and their function that are found in the Disney+ short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman*.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The general belief of the speech act theory is that there is an action in saying something, which is why Yule (1996) claimed that speech acts are actions carried out through speech. Austin (1962) added that in uttering an utterance, speakers can perform three actions simultaneously, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts are known as acts that interpret an utterance in a traditional way, which refers to interpreting an utterance by using the grammatical elements of an existing language. Levinson (1983) stated that locutionary acts are equivalent to saying an utterance with certain meanings and references, which defines its true meaning.

This statement, however, is different from illocutionary acts because they occur when the speaker implies certain meanings in their utterances. For instance, when the speaker utters an utterance, it's not merely them saying something but also performing a function. In this regard, they have a certain purpose with their utterances, such as asking, offering, ordering, or encouraging. Meanwhile, perlocutionary acts are acts where an utterance gives certain effects to the hearer. Likewise, Yule argues that the utterance uttered by the speaker has a certain function and purpose to have an effect on the hearer, such as convincing, persuading, obstructing, or even misleading.

Amongst the three classifications of speech acts by Austin, the author's main concern in this research is the illocutionary act, which was developed by Searle. Searle's classification of illocutionary acts is used because it's known as a modification of Austin's general theory of speech acts, and it is more specific and detailed than Austin's classification. Searle categorized illocutionary acts into five, namely Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declaratives.

Representative's main purpose is for the speakers to state what they believe in, which can be determined by asking whether the utterance is true or false. The examples of representatives include stating, reporting, concluding, boasting, and complaining, among others. Whilst directives have the intention of getting the hearer to do something, such as ordering, requesting, inviting, asking, advising, prohibiting, encouraging, and more. The main point of commissives is basically to commit the speaker to some future action, such as promising, threatening, refusing, offering, and so forth.

Expressive acts are meant to express the psychological state of the speaker, such as expressing their joy, pain, sorrow, thanking, apologizing, and so on. Meanwhile, declarations are acts to state an immediate effect that can change someone else's world by their utterance, which can only be done by someone with a special institutional role.

Pragmatics is associated with studies that discuss the meanings in an utterance within a certain context. Morris (1938) argues that the study of pragmatics has aspects of meaning that depend on the context. Therefore, meaning is examined through certain contexts and systematically analyzes the composition of its own content and logical forms. In line with Morris's statement, Leech (1983), in his book entitled *Principles of Pragmatics*, also stated that pragmatics is one of the scopes of linguistics that talks about how an utterance has meaning in a particular situation.

Yule (1996) defines pragmatics in four ways. First, pragmatics is concerned with the study of the meaning spoken by the speaker and interpreted by the hearer. Pragmatics in this sense is referred to as the study of the meaning spoken by speakers. Second, pragmatics is a study that interprets meaning based on a certain context. When interpreting meanings, it is necessary to consider how speakers prepare what they want to say along with the other elements, such as who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. In this sense, pragmatics is referred to as the study of contextual meaning.

Third, pragmatics also investigates how the speech partner can make inferences about what is said by the speaker, so they can understand the meaning of the speaker's words. Therefore, pragmatics is the study of how there are more implied meanings than explicit ones. Fourth, pragmatics is the study of language in which what is expressed by someone will depend on the closeness between each participant. This closeness can be classified as physical, social, conceptual proximity, etc.

So far, the benefit of learning pragmatics is that it helps people understand what other people actually mean, their assumptions, their goals, and what actions they take in speaking. Pragmatic studies can also be found in several sources. First, there is the theory of J.L. Austin and John Searle about speech acts.

Speech acts were first proposed by John Langshaw Austin in 1962 in his book entitled *How to Do Things with Words*. Then the study of speech act theory was developed by John Rogers Searle in 1969. They developed a theory of speech acts based on the belief that language is used by humans to perform actions. When humans interact using language, humans do not only state propositional statements about objects, entities, states, and so on. Therefore, Nunan (1993) argues that when humans interact using language, they also fulfill other functions, such as asking, denying, introducing, and apologizing.

Basically, the theory of speech acts has the belief that an action is taken when someone says something. Therefore, Yule argues that speech acts are actions that are carried out by someone through their words. It can be said that when uttering their utterances, speakers do not arbitrarily use language to say something, but also to do something. Austin (1962) also adds that in telling an utterance, speakers can perform three actions simultaneously, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts.

Out of the three types, this research focuses on the types of illocutionary acts based on Searle's theory. According to Searle (1979), illocutionary acts are categorized into five types: they are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

#### A. Representative

This type of illocutionary act is defined as any utterance uttered by the speaker as something that they believe in. Searle (1979) argues that the purpose of a representative is to state something that the speaker believes is factual. Therefore, utterances that consist of representatives are usually found by questioning whether the utterance is factual or not from the speaker's point of view. Examples of representative acts are usually to state something, to conclude, to boast, to complain, to report, etc. For example:

##### (a) *Stating Something*

**Abby: Eric borrowed his step dad's car.**

The utterance above is expressed by the speaker in accordance with her understanding and what she believes in. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because the aim of the utterance is to state information that she knows to be true.

##### (b) *Concluding*

Eric: Sorry. The less time spent at a crime scene, the better.

Joel: What do you know about it?

**Eric: My stepdad's a cop and I enjoy the internet, and the first thing about crime is you don't wanna get caught.**

The utterance above is expressed by the speaker in accordance with her understanding and what she believes in. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because the aim of the utterance is to state information that she knows to be true.

(c) *Boasting***Sheila: We did it! We got an offer!**

The utterance above is a statement made by Sheila to her husband Joel, who works as a real estate agent and recently got an offer from their client. The utterance is considered a representative illocutionary act because it aims to boast about their recent achievement, namely getting an offer from a client.

(d) *Complaining***Joel: Would've been nice to have the lid.**

The statement was said by Joel Hammond, who was pushing a large box containing blood and corpses without a lid. This utterance is a representative illocutionary act because Joel expressed the complaint he was experiencing. Joel expressed dissatisfaction regarding the situation he was in. In this case, it was a container that did not have a lid.

(e) *Reporting***Abby: I saw the broken toaster in the yard, and there was blood on the lawn, and no one was home.**

This utterance is a representative illocutionary act because it reports what she saw. The purpose of a representative act in reporting is to convey something that the speaker has heard, seen, or investigated.

*B. Directive*

Utterances used by the speaker to get the hearer to do something are classified as illocutionary acts under directives. It is when someone has a certain intention of instructing or ordering the hearer to take any action desired by them. This type of illocutionary act usually happens in the form of asking, requesting, inviting, advising, prohibiting, etc. For example:

(f) *Asking***Sheila: Did you send them an email?**

Utterances used by the speaker to get the hearer to do something are classified as illocutionary acts under directives. It is when someone has a certain intention of instructing or ordering the hearer to take any action desired by them. This type of illocutionary act usually happens in the form of asking, requesting, inviting, advising, prohibiting, etc.

(g) *Requesting***Sheila: I just wanna go home, get out of these clothes and take a bath.**

The sentence above was uttered by Sheila to her husband Joel, which can be said to be a requestive directive sentence. This sentence was uttered when Sheila was in the hospital waiting room. She uttered the sentence above with the aim of requesting her husband to take her home instead of waiting in the hospital waiting room.

(h) *Inviting***Lisa: Hey, some of us girls are going out tonight.****Drinking, dancing, etcetera. You wanna come?**

The sentence above is an invitation that was expressed by Lisa to Sheila, where the sentence has the aim of inviting Sheila to do what Lisa wants, which is to go out with Lisa and her friends.

(i) *Advising***Eric: Always keep her fed.**

I'm pretty sure we don't want to find out what happens when she's hungry.

The utterance above is advice, where an utterance uttered by the speaker is believed to be a good thing to do and is for the benefit of the listener themselves.

(j) *Prohibiting*

Sheila: Let's buy a Range Rover.

Abby: Fuck yeah.

**Joel: No. We are going home and coming up with a plan.**

The utterance stated by Joel is a prohibiting directive sentence because it has the intention to get the hearer to take the actions that have been prohibited by the speaker.

(k) *Commanding***Carl: None of this "try" bullshit. Do it!**

The utterance above was uttered by Carl, who is the boss of a company where Sheila works. The utterance is considered a directive illocutionary act in commanding, because the boss directly ordered Sheila to sell the Peterson family home as soon as possible.

*C. Commissive*

If someone made a promise to do certain actions in the future, that person has performed commissive speech acts. Searle (1979) proposed that the aim of a commissive is to commit the speaker to perform some future action. Therefore, a person is using a commissive when they want or will to do something in the future. According to Tarigan (2009), examples of commissive speech acts are promising, vowing, wishing, threatening, refusing, offering, volunteering, etc. For example:

(a) I'll show you your office. (Promising)

(b) You know, 15 years ago, I would have punched you, once. I might have dropped you. (Threatening)

(c) If you want me to go away, I will. (Offering)

- (d). Well, we can't start killing people. (Refusing)

#### D. Expressive

Someone can be considered to be engaging in an expressive act when the person has expressed the feelings they are experiencing. Therefore, Searle (1979) agrees that the aim of an expressive is to express the psychological state of the speaker. For instance, statements of joy, pain, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, welcoming, etc. For example:

- (a). Hi Gary. Welcome aboard. (Welcoming)
- (b). Thanks for the flowers, Gar. (Thanking)
- (c). You look so pretty today. (Complimenting)
- (d). Sorry buddy, I don't know how that happened. (Apologizing)
- (e). I love this room. (Statement of joy)

#### E. Declarative

Utterances will be classified as declaratives if the utterance can give an immediate effect to a person's life. However, Yule (1996) argues that the speaker should have a special institutional role that has the privilege to do a declarative act. For instance, the boss of a company who has the right to fire one of the employees, a jury in a court that has the privilege to convict someone of guilt, or the queen of England who has the power to declare war.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The method used for this research is a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher decided to use this method is because the aim of this research is to describe each type of illocutionary act and to elucidate the functions of each type of illocutionary act itself. Consequently, all the data and the results in this study are mostly in the form of words and are presented descriptively rather than with numbers or statistics.

In order to collect the data for this research, the writer had to use a few techniques. First, the researcher had to watch *Once Upon a Snowman* on Disney+. Then, the researcher had to find the full script of the movie on Google. For analyzing the data, the researcher had to go through four steps. The researcher had to write down the entire script from [https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once\\_Upon\\_a\\_Snowman](https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once_Upon_a_Snowman). Then the researcher had to identify the categories of illocutionary acts that were found in *Once Upon a Snowman*. After that, the researcher had to analyze the data into more specific categories of illocutionary acts based on Searle's theory. Moreover, the researcher had to explain the functions of the types of illocutionary acts that were found in the short movie. Lastly, the researcher had to interpret the utterances results which were categorized into illocutionary acts.

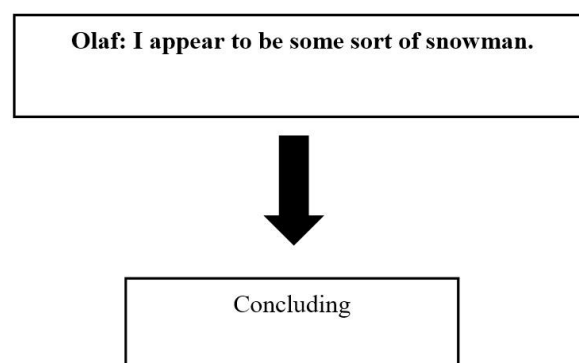
The data obtained in this research was taken from Disney+, which is the newest streaming subscription video service besides Netflix. *Once Upon a Snowman* came out on October 23, 2020. The short movie is the unrevealed story of Olaf, the snowman from *Frozen*, who came to life and embarked on a journey to find his destiny. The data was downloaded from Disney+. Then, the researcher found the full script on [https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once\\_Upon\\_a\\_Snowman](https://transcripts.fandom.com/wiki/Once_Upon_a_Snowman). The data for this research was chosen because the utterances contain many illocutionary acts, mainly representatives.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fifty-four utterances occurred that contain illocutionary acts in *Once Upon a Snowman*. All the data was focused on illocutionary act classification by Searle. This was followed by 24 utterances classified as representatives, 15 utterances as directives, 13 utterances as expressives, and 2 utterances categorized as commissives.

#### A. Representative

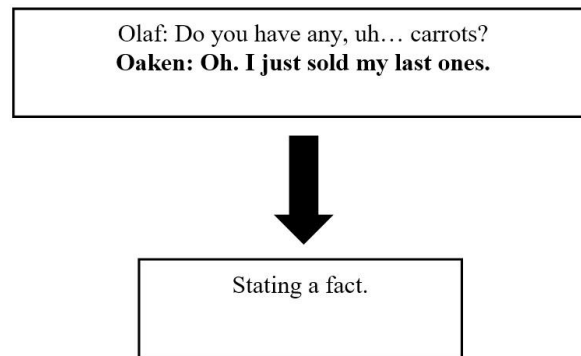
##### Data 1



Context: The short movie entitled *Once Upon a Snowman* is Olaf's journey as he comes to life to find his identity. At one point, Olaf realizes that he has come to life and is observing what he is by looking around his whole body. He looks

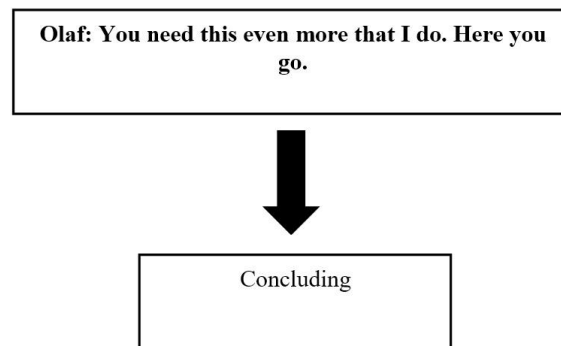
at his hands that are made of sticks or twigs, and his body and legs that are made out of snow. The utterance above is considered representative because it concludes what the speaker believes in. In this case, Olaf concludes what he sees and what he believes a snowman should look like.

**Data 2**



Context: In the middle of the snowy forest, there is a little shop called Wandering Oaken's. A person named Oaken owns the place. Olaf decides to go there to find a nose. Since Olaf is a snowman, he looks for carrots for his nose. However, Oaken has just sold his last carrots to Anna. So, Oaken tells Olaf that he has just sold his last ones, which is the truth. In other words, the utterance above is expressed by the speaker to inform something that he knows is true. Therefore, the utterance above is considered representative in stating a fact.

**Data 3**



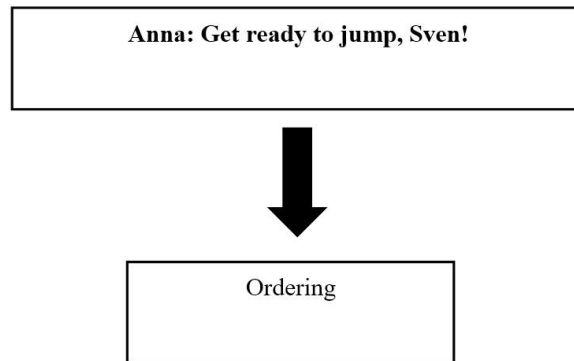
Context: A wolf comes up to Olaf with a puppy face, showing an expression that the wolf wants the sausage stuck on Olaf's face. Olaf looks at him with pity because he understands what it wants by the look on its face. He then looks away to think and finally decides to give the wolf his sausage nose because he concludes that the wolf needs it more than he does. The utterance above is considered representative because it concludes what the speaker believes in. In this case, Olaf concludes what he sees, and what he believes in, which is that the wolf needs the sausage more than he does.

*B. Directive*

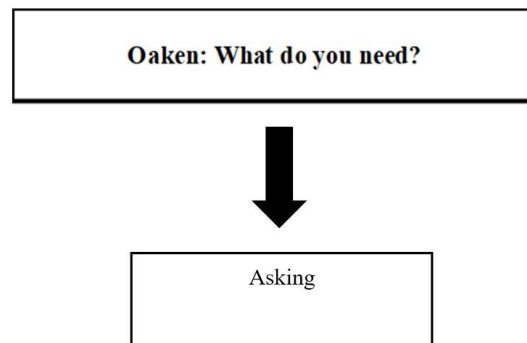
**Data 1**



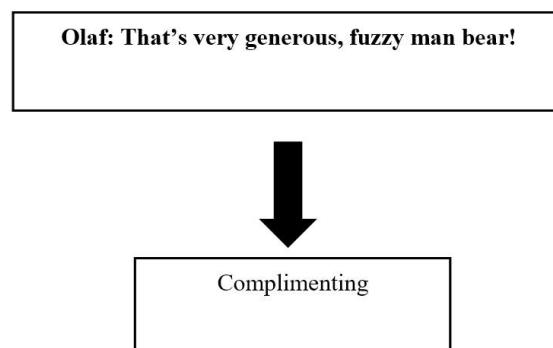
Context: After Olaf decided to swap a carrot with a meat sausage for his nose, he was chased by a pack of wolves. He was running and sliding down the snowy forest to save his nose from the hungry wolves. The utterance above is considered a directive command because Olaf wants the wolves to stay away from him, which is something he wants them to do.

**Data 2**

Context: Anna, Kristoff, and Sven the reindeer were in the middle of their journey to find Anna's sister Elsa. In the middle of the forest, they were found and chased by wolves. They tried to run away from the pack of wolves, but they were at the edge of a cliff. Therefore, Anna was telling the reindeer to jump so he would not get eaten by the wolves. This utterance is considered a directive order because Anna was ordering Sven the reindeer to jump before it's too late.

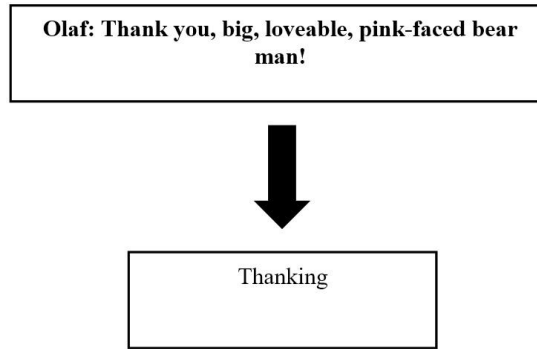
**Data 3**

Context: Oaken was asking Olaf what brought him to his shop and what he needed. The utterance above can be considered a directive illocutionary act in asking because it has the intention to get the hearer to answer and provide the information that the speaker has asked for.

**C. Expressive****Data 1**

Context: Olaf happened to come to Oaken's little shop looking for something until he realized he did not have a nose. Oaken then offered him a nose, and Olaf replied by saying, "Yes, but I don't have any money," but Oaken said that it's okay. Therefore, Olaf was expressing his gratitude by complimenting Oaken for being so generous and willing to give him a nose for free. The utterance above is considered an expressive compliment because that was how he expressed what he felt about how nice Oaken was to him.

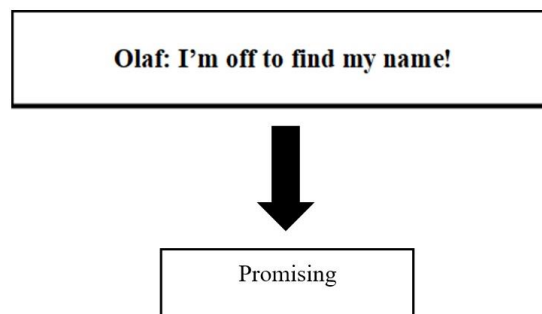
**Data 2**



Context: The utterance above was uttered by Olaf after Oaken gave him a free sausage in exchange for a carrot for his nose, which makes Olaf a snowman with a sausage nose. This utterance is categorized as an expressive thank-you because Olaf was expressing how happy he felt by thanking Oaken for the free sausage.

#### D. Commissive

##### Data 1



Context: The utterance above was spoken by Olaf after he thanked Oaken for giving him a new sausage nose for free. "I'm off to find my name!" is considered commissive in promising because he commits himself to some future action, which is to find his name or some sort of identity.

## V. CONCLUSION

An illocutionary act is known as a part of speech that involves an act performed through speaking. Searle divided the illocutionary act into five categories: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Each of them has a different function and is performed differently in utterances. A representative is a type of illocutionary act that tells what speakers believe to be factual or not. Representatives were frequently used in *Once Upon a Snowman*, with 24 utterances in total. A directive is used by the speakers to make an attempt to get the hearer to do some particular actions for them, of which the writer found 15 utterances in directive illocutionary acts. This is followed by expressive acts, with 13 utterances that occurred in the short movie, which are defined as the way the speakers express their psychological state. Then commissive acts, with 2 utterances, occurred in *Once Upon a Snowman*, which are known as actions where the speaker intends to do something in the future, such as promising, threatening, vowing, etc. The research on illocutionary acts in this study is intended to share better information about the types and functions of illocutionary acts.

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