

Assertive Speech Acts in Spiderman: Far from Home (2019): A Pragmatic Study

Yusrizal Adam Firdaus¹, Fani Indrawan²
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2}
✉ yusrizal150302@gmail.com

Abstract:

This research analyzes assertive speech acts in the film Spiderman: Far from Home (2019) through a pragmatic lens. The purpose of this study is to identify and interpret how these assertive acts are manifested in the film's dialogue to reveal the characters' intentions, attitudes, and relationships. The study applies a descriptive qualitative method, with the film's transcript serving as the main data source. Selected dialogues involving the main characters Peter Parker, MJ, Nick Fury, and Mysterio were analyzed contextually to uncover their pragmatic functions. The results show five main types of assertive acts with the following frequencies: stating (16 occurrences or 24%), reporting (23 or 34%), claiming (14 or 21%), suggesting (11 or 16%), and complaining (8 or 12%), with a total of **67** utterances. Examples include Peter expressing his wish for an ordinary trip (state), Mysterio proclaiming his power to defeat the Elementals (claim), and Nick Fury giving information about them (report). The findings indicate that assertive acts significantly shape the characters' psychological portrayal, intentions, and social dynamics. Overall, the study concludes that assertive speech acts are essential to understanding character development and narrative progression, as well as the broader pragmatic meaning conveyed through film dialogue.

Keywords: Speech act; Assertive; Spiderman Far from Home

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini menganalisis tindak tutur asertif dalam film Spiderman: Far from Home (2019) melalui sudut pandang pragmatik. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dan menginterpretasi bagaimana tindak tutur asertif ini diwujudkan dalam dialog film untuk mengungkap maksud, sikap, dan hubungan antar tokoh. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, dengan transkrip film sebagai sumber data utama. Dialog-dialog terpilih yang melibatkan tokoh utama Peter Parker, MJ, Nick Fury, dan Mysterio dianalisis secara kontekstual untuk mengungkap fungsi pragmatiknya. Hasilnya menunjukkan lima jenis utama tindakan asertif dengan frekuensi berikut: menyatakan (16 kejadian atau 24%), melaporkan (23 atau 34%), mengklaim (14 atau 21%), menyarankan (11 atau 16%), dan mengeluh (8 atau 12%), dengan total 67 ucapan. Contohnya termasuk Peter yang mengungkapkan keinginannya untuk perjalanan biasa (state), Mysterio menyatakan kekuatannya untuk mengalahkan Elementals (claim), dan Nick Fury memberikan informasi tentang mereka (report). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa tindakan asertif secara signifikan membentuk penggambaran psikologis, niat, dan dinamika sosial karakter. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tindakan bicara asertif sangat penting untuk memahami perkembangan karakter dan perkembangan naratif, serta makna pragmatis yang lebih luas yang disampaikan melalui dialog film.

Kata kunci: Tindak tutur; Assertive; Spiderman Far from Home

INTRODUCTION

People need to have relation in social life. In social life, people met with other people and they were used language to communicate even though it's just one phrase. (Sukmawati & Tarmizi, 2022). The speech act theory is a theory in the philosophy of language which rigorously attempts to systematically explain the workings of language (Jr Mahinay Mabaquiao et al., 2018). The speech act theory is applied in each daily conversation with context happened among people (Yusanti et al., 2022). Speech act is a theory put forward by J.L Austin When Austin first introduced his theory of Speech Act, he stated that it was not a new phenomenon (Elbah, 2022). However, it has not been paid attention to, "The phenomenon to be discussed is very widespread and obvious, and it cannot fail to have been already noticed, at least here and there, by others. Yet I have not found attention paid to it specifically" (Austin, 1962). Assertive is how the speaker conveys intention and confidence in conveying communication Speech acts are a very important part of understanding the flow of a communication, how this speech act is part of pragmatic. The pragmatic, intent and purpose of speech communicated by a speaker with regard to the psychological condition of his speech partners have to be concerned to achieve an effective way of communication. That is; to communicate effectively, one needs to anticipate the impolite utterances production through paying attention on the aspects of pragmatic language (Boswell & Dixon, 1993). This article discusses how speech acts also appear in films, and here the researcher identifies assertive speech acts in the film Spiderman: Far from Home. From a demographic perspective, this study uses Searle's theory (1979), whereby the research was conducted by identifying the dialogue in the film.

The Spiderman Far from Home movie targets teenagers aged 13 and above, or young adults, as its audience, which is an age group that is at a level of cognitive and social development that includes pragmatic language aspects. The discussion of assertive speech acts in a film is considered very important, not only as a form of communication between characters but also as a medium for conveying values, ideologies, and social messages, where at the adult level, each individual begins to be able to understand indirect speech, interpret hidden meanings, and recognize the social function of language in a particular context.

Spider Man Far from Home is a superhero film released in 2019, inspired by the Marvel Comics character Spiderman. The movie was a collaborative production by

Columbia Pictures and Marvel Studios, with Sony Pictures Releasing handling its distribution. Serving as the followup to *Spiderman Homecoming* (2017), it is also the 23rd installment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). Directed by Jon Watts and penned by Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers, the film features Tom Holland reprising his role as Peter Parker or Spiderman.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Study

This study uses Sharle's theory (1979), whereby the research was conducted by identifying the dialogue in the film. Assertive act is an action which used to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed. State, suggest, complain, claim, and report are parts of assertive act (Sukmawati & Tarmizi, 2022). In previous research, there has also been a discussion that examines the speech act in assertive in a movie which is examined in an article entitled *Analysis Assertive Speech Act in "Purple Hearts" Movie by Tess Wakefield: Pragmatic Approach* (Sukmawati & Tarmizi, 2022). This research aims to identify and analyze the use of assertive speech acts in the film *Purple Hearts*. Focusing on the characters' speech, this study uses Searle's (1979) speech act theory as the basis for classifying the types of assertive acts, namely state, suggest, complain, claim, and report. Using qualitative method, the researcher analyzed 15 speech data taken from film transcripts, showing the distribution of five types of assertive acts: 4 data declare, 3 data suggest, 2 data complain, 3 data claim, and 3 data report. in addition, other studies have examined the use of assertive as a form of speech act in film analysis. This can be found in an article entitled "*Assertive Illocutionary Act Used by the Main Character in 'The Adam Project' Movie*" (Dhaneswara et al., 2024) The results of the study show that there are five main forms of assertive illocutionary acts, namely stating, reporting, explaining, asserting, and showing. Each form serves to emphasize the truth of a statement and influence the listener to understand or believe the content of the utterance. This reinforces the view that language in the context of film is not only communicative, but also reflects social actions that are rich in pragmatic meaning. Other studies have also contributed to the study of assertive speech acts through film analysis, such as the article "*An Assertive Speech Acts Analysis on Mei Lee's Utterances in Turning Red Movie.*" (Diffani & Kholis, 2023). This study analyzes the assertive speech acts uttered by Mei Lee in the film *Turning Red* using a qualitative descriptive method. The results

show that there are 53 assertive utterances divided into seven types, namely stating, claiming, reporting, reminding, admitting, predicting, and explaining. The most dominant form is stating, indicating that the main character more often uses language to explain and assert her views. The absence of suggesting indicates that Mei tends to convey beliefs and facts rather than give advice. These findings show that assertive speech acts reflect Mei's character and emotional development in the context of the film.

The concept of assertive speech acts was introduced by Searle (1979).

According to Searle (1969), the speech act is the smallest part of linguistic communication. The theory of speech acts underscores the pivotal role that language plays in human interaction (Alsamhori et al., 2025). Assertive is an act that states what the speaker believes to be the case or not. There are many different types of assertive acts, each with its unique features and characteristics. Some examples of assertive acts include stating, affirming, denying, and disclaiming (Zega et al., 2024). An assertive is a speech act that commits the speaker to the truth of a proposition. Assertives are Either true or false and have the world-to-word direction of fit (Indari, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze assertive speech acts in the movie *Spider Man Far from Home*. A qualitative method is ideal for understanding how language works in its natural context, focusing on meaning and interpretation instead of numbers or statistics. According to Creswell (2009), Qualitative methods are research approaches that aim to explore and comprehend phenomena by analyzing data in a descriptive or non-numerical form. The descriptive aspect involves identifying and explaining the types and functions of assertive speech acts used by the characters to share facts, beliefs, and intentions. The research focuses on key dialogues from the movie, especially those involving characters like Peter Parker (Spider Man), MJ, Nick Fury, and Mysterio, as their conversations are essential to the storyline and character development. The data is collected from the movie's script and scenes, ensuring an accurate and detailed representation of the speech acts. Dialogues were chosen based on their importance to the plot and how they highlight relationships between characters, providing insights into their communication styles. To collect the data, relevant dialogues were carefully selected and transcribed from the movie. The transcription process involved watching and reviewing scenes multiple times to ensure the accuracy and

reliability of the dialogue. Special attention was given to context to better understand the purpose and impact of the assertive speech acts. This approach helped categorize and interpret how this speech acts contribute to the narrative and character dynamics. The study aims to uncover the various ways assertive speech acts function in cinematic storytelling, highlighting how language conveys intentions, truths, and beliefs while shaping relationships between characters. By analyzing these elements, the research provides a deeper the importance of speech acts in building compelling stories and engaging character interactions.

FINDINGS

The analysis of assertive speech acts in the movie reveals that the characters employ various linguistic forms to express beliefs, provide information, share emotions, and influence others within specific conversational contexts. According to Searle's (1979) classification, assertive speech acts are those in which the speaker commits to the truth of the expressed proposition. The examples observed in the film illustrate how different types of assertive acts perform distinct pragmatic functions that contribute to the narrative's coherence and the characterization of each speaker.

To understand how assertive speech acts function in the film Spiderman: Far From Home (2019), the following data summarize the frequency and percentage of each assertive type identified in the characters' dialogues. This classification provides an overview of how often certain linguistic strategies appear and how they contribute to the film's communicative dynamics.

No.	Type Assertives	Frequency	Presentage
1.	State	16	24%
2.	Suggest	11	16%
3.	Complain	8	12%
4.	Claim	14	21%
5.	Report	23	34%

Total frequency dialog: 67

Total percentage : 100%

A.
B.

State

Data 1

0.28.00 – 0.28.13

Nick Fury : you are difficult to contact, Spiderman.

Peter Parker : you're nick Fury

In this scene, Peter Parker is in his hotel room during a school trip when Nick Fury

suddenly appears sitting on the sofa. The utterance “You are difficult to contact, Spider Man” is categorized as an assertive speech act of the state type. Through this utterance, Nick Fury states a fact that Peter has been hard to reach, showing his commitment to the truth of the statement.

Data 2

0.44.18 – 0.44.44

Peter Parker: Hey, my friends are here. And we're putting them in danger.

Nick Fury : Are you afraid of hurting your friends?

You're the one who sent the drone attack to your own school bus.

Stark gave you a smart tactical system worth millions of dollars, and the first thing you do is blow up your friends. For me, you're not ready for this.

In this scene, the dialogue illustrates Nick Fury’s anger and disappointment toward Peter Parker, who refuses to help save the city from the monster attack at the fair. Peter hesitates to join the mission because he knows his friends are there, and the situation is too dangerous. Suddenly Nick Fury got angry because Peter was afraid to join in saving the city, even though he had almost killed his friend while on the bus. The utterance “For me, you’re not ready for this” is categorized as an assertive speech act of the state type. In this sentence, Nick Fury expresses his personal judgment and belief that Peter is not yet capable of handling the responsibilities and risks that come with being Spider-Man.

Claim

Data 1

0.15.48

–

0.16.13

Peter Parker: No illegal goods, I swear.

Officer : This is prohibited.

In this scene, Peter Parker and his friends arrive in Venice, Italy. During the airport luggage inspection, Peter claims that he is not carrying any illegal goods. When the officer opens his suitcase, he finds Spiderman’s suit but overlooks it, instead jokingly pointing out a banana as “forbidden.” The line “No illegal goods, I swear.” is a claim type assertive speech act. Through this utterance, Peter asserts the truth of his statement and expresses his belief that he carries no prohibited items, reinforcing his sincerity with the phrase “I swear.”

Data 2

0.15.04-0.15.26

Betty: Hey honey, can you hold this for me?

Ned: Yeah, of course.

Betty: Thanks.

Peter Parker: What is it?

Ned: We were talking on the plane and it turns out we have a lot in

common. So we're dating now.

In this scene, a humorous moment occurs when Ned suddenly becomes romantically involved with Betty. Ned explains that during their flight, they discovered many similarities between them, which led to their decision to start dating. Upon arriving in Venice, Peter is surprised when Betty affectionately calls Ned “babe.” The line “We talked on the plane, and it turns out we have a lot in common.” is a claimtype assertive speech act, as Ned asserts his belief and conclusion about their shared similarities based on personal experience. The utterance functions to state a perceived truth that supports the beginning of their relationship.

Report

Data 1

0.56.29 – 0.56.47

Nick Fury: Stark chose you and made you an Avenger. I need that. The world need that

Peter Parker: Maybe Stark was wrong.

Nick Fury : Is he wrong? The choice is yours.

In this scene, Nick Fury hopes that Peter will join the mission to Berlin, but he does not want to force him. Instead, he reminds Peter that Stark had chosen him to become an Avenger. The utterance “Stark chose you and made you an Avenger” is categorized as an assertive speech act of the report type.

Through this line, Nick Fury reports a factual event that occurred in the past Stark’s decision to recruit Peter into the Avengers. The illocutionary force of this utterance is to inform and remind Peter of his role and responsibility as part of the team. Therefore, this statement serves a reportive function, as it conveys information that the speaker believes to be true without expressing any command or request.

Data 2

0.17.07 – 0.17.15

Dekathlon: Everyone, we have arrived.

Betty Brant: Let's say we're not staying here

In this scene, the students have just arrived at their hotel and are shocked to find that the place is in poor condition and partially flooded. At that moment, their teacher, Mr. Harrington, announces their arrival by saying, “Everyone, we have arrived.” The line is a report type assertive speech act, as it functions to inform or state a factual event that the group has reached their destination without expressing emotion or persuasion. This utterance reflects the speaker’s role in delivering information objectively.

Suggest

Data 1.

0.57.16 – 0.57.25

Mysterio: Hey, you should celebrate. We did well tonight.

Peter Parker: yeah

In this scene, Mysterio invites Peter Parker to have a drink at a bar to celebrate their success in completing the mission at the fair. However, Peter appears thoughtful, as he is still considering the offer to join the Berlin mission and reflecting on being chosen by Tony Stark as an Avenger.

The utterance “Hey, you should celebrate” is categorized as a directive speech act of the suggest type. Through this line, Mysterio encourages Peter to celebrate their success, expressing a friendly suggestion rather than a command. The illocutionary force of this utterance is to influence the hearer’s behavior politely, showing support and optimism. Thus, the line functions as a suggest-type directive speech act, aiming to motivate Peter to relax and appreciate their achievement.

Data 2.

0.05.38 - 0.05.45

MJ: By the way, a tip for your upcoming trip: Download a VPN on your phone so the government can't track you when you're abroad.

Peter Parker: Smart ,, Good

In this scene, Peter and Ned are talking about MJ when she suddenly joins them and gives a piece of advice about using a VPN during their vacation so that the government cannot track Peter’s location. The line “By the way, a tip for your upcoming trip: Download a VPN on your phone so the government can’t track you when you’re abroad.” is a suggest type assertive speech act, as MJ provides a recommendation based on her belief about what would be beneficial for Peter. This utterance functions to offer advice rather than command, reflecting her concern and awareness of online privacy.

Complain

Data 1

0.33.07 - 0.33.22

Nick Fury: We have one mission: to kill him. And you're coming with us.

Peter Parker: Sorry, did you say Prague? Mr. Fury, this is too much for a powerful superhero. I'm just Spiderman, a friend.

In this scene, Nick Fury informs Peter Parker that he will be involved in a mission to Prague, which seems too challenging for him. The line “Mr. Fury, this is too much for a powerful superhero.” is a complain type assertive speech act, as Peter expresses his dissatisfaction and reluctance toward the mission. Through this utterance, he conveys his

sense of inadequacy and frustration, indicating that he feels the task is beyond his capability as a young hero.

Data 2

0.07.48 – 0.07.58

Peter's Uncle: Nick Fury is going to call you.

Peter Parker: Nick Fury is going to call me? Why?

Peter's Uncle: Maybe he has a mission for you. You're a superhero. He calls superheroes. **Peter Parker:** If it's important, he would call someone else, not me.

In this scene tells him that Nick Fury will call because there might be an important mission to deliver. Peter, however, seems doubtful and responds with hesitation. The line “If it’s important, he would call someone else, not me.” is a complain- type assertive speech act because Peter expresses his dissatisfaction and self-doubt about being chosen for something important. His statement implies a complaint and lack of confidence in his own worthiness as a superhero, showing his reluctance to take responsibility.

DISCUSSION

Compared with the previous study by (Sukmawati & Tarmizi, 2022), which analyzed 15 data from Purple Hearts, this research shows a wider and more varied distribution of assertive speech acts because it uses 67 data from Spiderman: Far from Home. While the earlier study found a relatively balanced number of assertive types (4 stating, 3 suggesting, 2 complaining, 3 claiming, and 3 reporting), the current study shows that reporting becomes the most dominant category (23 data), followed by stating, claiming, suggesting, and complaining. These differences are influenced by the film genre, where Spiderman: Far from Home relies heavily on informational dialogue related to missions and threats, whereas Purple Hearts focuses more on interpersonal and emotional interactions. Despite the different distributions, both studies use Searle’s (1979) theory and confirm that the five assertive types state, suggest, complain, claim, and report appear consistently in film dialogue.

CONCLUSION(S)

Based on the findings and analysis, it can be concluded that assertive speech acts play a crucial role in constructing character identity, expressing beliefs, and advancing the narrative in Spider-Man: Far from Home (2019). Through the use of assertive types state, claim, report, suggest, and complain the characters convey their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives in ways that reflect their social and psychological conditions.

The results show that state acts are the most dominant form, indicating that characters frequently express their feelings and beliefs about reality. Report acts serve an informative function, providing essential background or situational details to other characters. Claim acts demonstrate confidence or conviction, often used to establish credibility or assert control, as seen in *Mysterio's* dialogues. Suggest acts reflect attempts to influence others politely, often used by supportive characters like MJ and Happy. Lastly, complain acts represent dissatisfaction or emotional conflict, most often expressed by Peter Parker as he struggles with the dual burden of being a teenager and a superhero.

Pragmatically, these assertive acts not only reveal the characters' inner states but also create meaningful social interactions that mirror real-life communication. The study highlights that assertive speech acts contribute significantly to both character development and narrative coherence, showing how language in film functions as both a communicative and expressive tool. Therefore, analyzing assertive speech acts offers valuable insights into how films use dialogue to construct meaning, emotion, and interpersonal dynamics. Based on the findings and analysis, it can be concluded that assertive speech acts play a crucial role in constructing character identity, expressing beliefs, and advancing the narrative in *Spider-Man: Far from Home* (2019).

Through the use of assertive types state, claim, report, suggest, and complain the characters convey their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives in ways that reflect their social and psychological conditions. The results show that state acts are the most dominant form, indicating that characters frequently express their feelings and beliefs about reality. Report acts serve an informative function, providing essential background or situational details to other characters. Claim acts demonstrate confidence or conviction, often used to establish credibility or assert control, as seen in *Mysterio's* dialogues. Suggest acts reflect attempts to influence others politely, often used by supportive characters like MJ and Happy. Lastly, complain acts represent dissatisfaction or emotional conflict, most often expressed by Peter Parker as he struggles with the dual burden of being a teenager and a superhero.

Pragmatically, these assertive acts not only reveal the characters' inner states but also create meaningful social interactions that mirror real-life communication. The study highlights that assertive speech acts contribute significantly to both character development and narrative coherence, showing how language in film functions as both a communicative and expressive tool. Therefore, analyzing assertive speech acts offers

valuable insights into how films use dialogue to construct meaning, emotion, and interpersonal dynamics.

REFERENCES

- Alsamhori, M. A. O., Seine, M. I., & Al-Zuriqat, Z. K. (2025). "Speech Acts as a Means of Influence and Social Interaction: Perspectives from Austin and Searle." *Journal of Posthumanism*, 5(3), 627–637. <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i3.771>
- Boswell, T., & Dixon, W. J. (1993). Marx's Theory of Rebellion: A Cross-National Analysis of Class Exploitation, Economic Development, and Violent Revolt. *American Sociological Review*, 58(5), 681. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096281>
- Dhaneswara, P. A. S., Indrawati, N. L. K. M., & Aryani, G. A. I. (2024). Assertive illocutionary act used by main character in "the adam project" movie. *Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, 3(5), 3211–3220.
- Diffani, H., & Kholis, A. (2023). An Analysis of Speech Act in the Movie "Turning Red." *Journal of Linguistics, Culture and Communication*, 1(2), 100–115. <https://doi.org/10.61320/jolcc.v1i2.100-115>
- Elbah, Z. (2022). Speech Act Theory: The Force of an Utterance *Ichkalat journal Speech Act Theory: The Force of an Utterance. Ichkalat Journal*, 11(4), 2022–2605. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366020664>
- Indari, A. (2020). The Analysis of Assertives And Expressives on The Students' Speaking Exam in English Department Student of STKIP BUDI DAYA-BINJAI. *Indonesian Journal of Education, Social Sciences and Research (IJESSR)*, 1(2), 108–114. <http://jurnal.umsu.ac.id/index.php/ijessr>
- Jr Mahinay Mabaquiao, N., Mabaquiao, N. M., & De, J. (2018). Speech Act Theory: From Austin to Searle. *Augustinian: A Journal for Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Education*, September, 19. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353274370>
- Sukmawati, R., & Tarmizi, M. I. (2022). Analysis Assertive Speech Act In "Purple Hearts" Movie By Tess Wakefield: Pragmatic Approach. *Tjyybjb.Ac.Cn*, 27(2), 58–66. <http://117.74.115.107/index.php/jemasi/article/view/537>
- Yusanti, G., Ningrum, A. S. B., Aini, N., & Al Aziz, E. N. (2022). Speech Act Analysis on Joe Biden's Speech about Covid-19. *Jurnal Arbitrer*, 9(1), 57–70. <https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.9.1.57-70.2022>
- Zega, F., Ambalegin, A., & Arianto, T. (2024). the Assertive Acts in Spider-Man No Way Home Movie. *IdeBahasa*, 6(1), 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.37296/idebahasa.v6i1.159>