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Types and Functions of Illocutionary Acts Used by the Main Characters in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

Pragmatics examines how meaning is conveyed through context and interaction, particularly through speech act theory. This study aims to identify and analyze the types and functions of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in Neil Gaiman's novel Coraline. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method to provide a detailed explanation of how characters express intentions through their utterances. The data consisted of fifty selected utterances produced by Coraline, the Other Mother, Coraline's parents, the Cat, and the ghost children. Data were collected using documentation and purposive sampling techniques, focusing on utterances that clearly contain illocutionary acts. The analysis was conducted based on Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, which includes assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. The findings reveal that assertive and directive acts dominate the dialogues in the novel. Assertive acts are used when characters state facts, describe situations, or express beliefs, while directive acts appear when characters give commands, requests, or advice to influence others' behavior. Commissive acts occur in moments where characters show commitment, such as making promises or threats, and expressive acts are found in emotional interactions that convey feelings like fear, anger, disappointment, or gratitude. Declarative acts occur less frequently, but they still play significant roles, especially in building narrative conflict and creating turning points in the storyline. Overall, the use of illocutionary acts in Coraline highlights how context and character relationships shape meaning and support the development of the plot.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Illocutionary Acts, Speech Acts, Children's Literature, Coraline.

1. Introduction

Language is an essential tool for communication that enables individuals to convey ideas, emotions, intentions, and social meanings. However, communication is not limited to the literal meaning of words. The interpretation of language often depends on context, speaker intention, and social interaction. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, focuses on how meaning is constructed through language use in particular contexts. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics studies the relationship between linguistic expressions and the speakers' intentions in communication. Through pragmatic analysis, language can be understood not only as a system of structure but also as a means of performing actions. Pragmatics also emphasizes how meaning is influenced by situational context, social relationships, and shared knowledge between speakers and listeners (Levinson, 1983).

One of the most influential theories in pragmatics is speech act theory, originally proposed by Austin (1962). Austin suggested that when people produce utterances, they are performing actions. He divided speech acts into three levels: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts refer to the literal meaning of an utterance, while perlocutionary acts refer to the effect of the utterance on the listener. Illocutionary acts, which represent the speaker's intention behind an utterance, are considered the central element of speech act theory.

Searle (1979) further developed Austin's theory by classifying illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. Assertive acts are used to convey information or state beliefs. Directive acts aim to influence the listener's behavior. Commissive acts express commitments to future actions. Expressive acts reveal psychological states or emotions, while declarative acts change social reality through utterances. These classifications help explain how speakers use language to achieve communicative goals in different contexts.

Previous studies have examined illocutionary acts in various types of discourse, including daily conversations, films, interviews, and classroom interactions. Literary works, particularly novels, also provide rich data for pragmatic analysis because they contain dialogues that reflect realistic communicative interactions. Dialogues in literary texts illustrate how characters use language to negotiate relationships, express emotions, and construct narrative conflicts. Although those studies provide valuable insights into spoken discourse, research examining illocutionary acts in children's fantasy literature remains limited. Children's literary texts present unique communicative interactions because they combine imaginative storytelling with psychological and moral character development.

Several studies have also examined speech acts in literary works. For example, Putri (2022) analyzed illocutionary acts in fantasy novels and found that directive and expressive acts often reflect emotional conflicts between characters. Meanwhile, Hidayat (2021) revealed that speech acts in children's narratives frequently function to construct moral and educational values. These studies indicate that literary texts provide meaningful data for pragmatic analysis, although research focusing specifically on fantasy children's literature remains limited.

One literary work that provides meaningful and complex dialogues is *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman. Although categorized as children's literature, the novel presents sophisticated character interactions through imaginative storytelling. The story follows Coraline, a young girl who discovers an alternative world where she encounters characters that attempt to manipulate and control her. Throughout the narrative, Coraline frequently produces utterances that function as commands, refusals, expressions of fear, and commitments. These utterances reflect various types of illocutionary acts that contribute to character development and plot progression.

Previous studies on illocutionary acts have widely examined spoken discourse such as movies, television shows, political speeches, and interviews. Rahmawati and Lestari (2021) found that directive and assertive acts dominate movie dialogues. Similarly, Sari (2020) revealed that speech acts in television interviews are frequently used to construct persuasive interaction between speakers and audiences. However, studies focusing on illocutionary acts in children's literary works remain limited. Children's literature, especially fantasy narratives, presents unique communicative interactions because it combines imaginative settings with psychological and moral development of characters. Therefore, analyzing illocutionary acts in children's literature such as *Coraline* provides new insights into pragmatic functions in literary discourse.

Despite the growing number of pragmatic studies in literary discourse, research focusing on illocutionary acts in children's literature remains limited. Most previous studies focus on films or adult literary texts, leaving children's novels less explored from a pragmatic perspective. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types and functions of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in *Coraline*. This research is expected to provide insights into how pragmatic elements operate in children's literature and how speech acts contribute to narrative structure and character interaction.

Based on the background above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of illocutionary acts are used by the main characters in *Coraline*?
2. How do illocutionary acts contribute to character development and narrative structure?

This study is significant because it expands pragmatic research in literary discourse and provides insight into language use in children's literature. The findings may also support the use of literary texts as materials for teaching pragmatic competence.

2. Research Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the use of illocutionary acts in literary dialogues. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for analyzing language phenomena because it emphasizes interpretation, context, and meaning construction. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research focuses on exploring and understanding social and linguistic phenomena through detailed textual interpretation.

Similarly, qualitative descriptive design aims to present an accurate and systematic description of linguistic features found in research data.

The descriptive qualitative approach was used in this study to identify, classify, and interpret illocutionary acts found in the dialogues of the main characters in *Coraline*. This design allows the researcher to examine speech acts within their contextual and narrative environment. The study focuses on understanding how characters use language to express intentions, emotions, authority, and commitments in communicative interactions.

Data Source

The primary data source of this study was the novel *Coraline* written by Neil Gaiman. The novel was selected because it contains rich dialogues that reflect communicative interactions among characters. As a work of children's literature, *Coraline* presents imaginative narrative settings while maintaining realistic interpersonal communication, making it suitable for pragmatic analysis.

The data consisted of utterances produced by the main characters, including Coraline, the Other Mother, Coraline's parents, the Cat, and the ghost children. These characters were selected because they play central roles in the narrative and frequently engage in dialogue that drives the story's conflict and resolution. A total of fifty utterances containing illocutionary acts were selected as research data. The number of utterances was selected to ensure representation of all categories of illocutionary acts while maintaining in-depth qualitative analysis. Previous pragmatic studies commonly employ limited but representative samples to allow detailed contextual interpretation. The number of fifty utterances was considered sufficient to represent variation across categories.

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using documentation and purposive sampling techniques. Documentation technique was applied by carefully reading and examining the novel to identify dialogues containing illocutionary acts. The researcher conducted multiple readings to ensure comprehensive data selection and contextual understanding.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select utterances that clearly represent the five categories of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle (1979). The selection criteria included utterances that contain clear communicative intentions, represent interactions between main characters, and reflect significant narrative contexts. Each selected utterance was highlighted, documented, and organized into data classification tables.

Instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in collecting and analyzing data. The researcher conducted the identification, classification, and interpretation of illocutionary acts based on theoretical frameworks. Supporting instruments included note-taking techniques, coding sheets, and classification tables that were used to organize the data systematically. These instruments helped ensure accuracy in identifying speech act categories and functions.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis was conducted through several systematic steps adapted from qualitative content analysis procedures.

First, the researcher identified dialogues containing illocutionary acts by carefully reading the novel and selecting relevant utterances. Second, each utterance was categorized based on Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, which includes assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. Third, the researcher analyzed the communicative functions of each utterance by examining narrative context, speaker intention, and character interaction. Fourth, the researcher organized the data into classification tables to facilitate interpretation and comparison among categories. Finally, the findings were described and interpreted qualitatively to explain how illocutionary acts contribute to character development, narrative conflict, and thematic construction in the novel.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied theoretical triangulation by using established pragmatic theories from Austin (1962) and Searle (1979). The researcher also conducted repeated readings of the data to maintain consistency in classification and interpretation. Contextual analysis was applied to avoid misinterpretation of utterances by considering narrative situations and character relationships. Peer checking was applied through discussion with fellow linguistics students to ensure classification consistency. The data classification was also re-evaluated multiple times to maintain consistency and reduce subjective bias in categorizing illocutionary acts.

3. Results and Discussions

This section presents the findings of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline*. The data consist of fifty utterances taken from the dialogues of Coraline, the Other Mother, Coraline’s parents, the Cat, and the ghost children. The utterances were classified based on Searle’s (1979) five categories of illocutionary acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative

The classification of illocutionary acts identified in the dialogues is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Illocutionary Acts in Coraline Dialogues

No.	Speaker	Utterance	Illocutionary	Context
1	Coraline	“I think this house is strange, and I don’t like it very much.”	Expressive	Coraline expresses discomfort after moving into a new house and feeling unfamiliar with her surroundings.
2	Coraline	“Where does this door lead if it opens somewhere else?”	Directive	Coraline asks about the mysterious door while exploring the house and showing curiosity toward unknown places.
3	Coraline	“I know this isn’t my real home, and something feels wrong.”	Assertive	Coraline realizes that the alternative world is not her real home after observing unnatural situations.
4	Coraline	“You are not my real mother, no matter what you say.”	Assertive	Coraline rejects the identity of the Other Mother after recognizing the manipulation in the alternative world.
5	Coraline	“If you don’t let me go, I will find my own way out.”	Commissive	Coraline threatens to escape when the Other Mother attempts to keep her trapped in the alternative world.
6	Coraline	“Give my parents back to me, or I will keep searching.”	Directive	Coraline demands the return of her parents after discovering that they have been taken by the Other Mother.
7	Coraline	“I am scared, but I am not going to show it.”	Expressive	Coraline admits her fear internally but tries to remain brave while facing danger.
8	Coraline	“I promise I will find my parents and take them home.”	Commissive	Coraline promises to rescue her parents after realizing they are imprisoned in the alternative world.
9	Coraline	“This place looks perfect, but it feels dangerous.”	Assertive	Coraline evaluates the alternative world as attractive but suspicious after observing its artificial perfection.
10	Coraline	“I will not stay here, even if everything looks nice.”	Commissive	Coraline refuses the offer to stay in the alternative world despite its appealing environment.
11	Coraline	“Something is wrong with this	Assertive	Coraline senses that the alternative

		world, and I can feel it.”		world contains hidden dangers after experiencing strange events.
12	Coraline	“I hate being trapped in a place that is not real.”	Expressive	Coraline expresses frustration and emotional distress after realizing she is trapped in the alternative world.
13	Coraline	“Open the door and let me return to my real home.”	Directive	Coraline orders the Other Mother to open the door after deciding to return to her real home.
14	Coraline	“I want to go home now because this place scares me.”	Directive	Coraline requests to return home while expressing fear of remaining in the alternative world.
15	Coraline	“I will help the ghost children find their eyes.”	Commissive	Coraline commits to helping the ghost children after learning about their suffering.
16	Other Mother	“I only want what is best for you, and I made this world for you.”	Assertive	The Other Mother attempts to justify her actions by claiming she created the alternative world for Coraline’s happiness.
17	Other Mother	“Stay with me forever, and you will never feel lonely again.”	Directive	The Other Mother persuades Coraline to stay by offering emotional comfort and companionship.
18	Other Mother	“If you stay here, I will give you everything you desire.”	Commissive	The Other Mother offers rewards to manipulate Coraline into accepting the alternative world.
19	Other Mother	“You do not need your real parents when you have me.”	Assertive	The Other Mother attempts to replace Coraline’s perception of her real parents by presenting herself as superior.
20	Other Mother	“If you agree to stay, then it is a deal between us.”	Declarative	The Other Mother attempts to create a binding agreement to permanently trap Coraline in the alternative world.
21	Other Mother	“You belong here because I created this world for you.”	Assertive	The Other Mother asserts authority by claiming ownership of the alternative world.
22	Other Mother	“Be a good girl and do exactly what I tell you.”	Directive	The Other Mother orders Coraline to obey her rules to maintain control over her behavior.
23	Other Mother	“I promise that you will always be safe with me.”	Commissive	The Other Mother promises safety to persuade Coraline to remain in the alternative world.
24	Other Mother	“I built everything here just to make you happy.”	Assertive	The Other Mother explains her efforts to maintain Coraline’s happiness as part of manipulation.
25	Other Mother	“You can stay here forever if you accept my rules.”	Declarative	The Other Mother establishes conditions that Coraline must accept to stay in the alternative world.
26	Father	“We are very busy working, so you need to entertain yourself.”	Assertive	Coraline’s father explains his busy working condition when Coraline asks for attention.
27	Father	“Not now, Coraline, because I have work to finish.”	Directive	Coraline’s father refuses Coraline’s request because he is focused on his work responsibilities.
28	Father	“Go outside and play while we finish our work.”	Directive	Coraline’s father instructs her to entertain herself while he continues working.

29	Father	“We will talk about this later when we are done.”	Commissive	Coraline’s father promises to discuss Coraline’s concerns later after completing his work.
30	Father	“That is enough, and you should stop asking questions.”	Directive	Coraline’s father attempts to stop Coraline from asking too many questions during his work.
31	Mother	“Be careful when you explore because this house is old.”	Directive	Coraline’s mother warns her about the dangers of exploring the old house.
32	Mother	“Do not touch that door because it is locked for a reason.”	Directive	Coraline’s mother prohibits Coraline from opening the locked door due to safety concerns.
33	Mother	“I am working right now, so please do not interrupt.”	Assertive	Coraline’s mother explains her busy condition while working from home.
34	Mother	“You cannot have everything you want immediately.”	Assertive	Coraline’s mother refuses Coraline’s request by emphasizing realistic expectations.
35	Mother	“I will take care of it when I have time.”	Commissive	Coraline’s mother promises to handle Coraline’s concern later when she has time.
36	The Cat	“Cats do not need names because we know who we are.”	Assertive	The Cat explains his independence and mysterious identity while interacting with Coraline.
37	The Cat	“You are in danger, even if you do not realize it yet.”	Assertive	The Cat warns Coraline about the hidden dangers of the alternative world.
38	The Cat	“I can help you, but you must trust yourself first.”	Commissive	The Cat offers help to Coraline while encouraging her self-confidence.
39	The Cat	“You are braver than you think, even when you feel afraid.”	Directive	The Cat encourages Coraline emotionally when she begins to doubt her bravery.
40	The Cat	“Do not trust her because she wants to keep you trapped.”	Directive	The Cat warns Coraline not to trust the Other Mother after understanding her true intentions.
41	Ghost Child	“She stole my eyes and trapped me here forever.”	Assertive	The ghost child explains how the Other Mother trapped them after stealing their eyes.
42	Ghost Child	“You must help us find what she has taken from us.”	Directive	The ghost child asks Coraline for help to recover what the Other Mother has taken.
43	Ghost Child	“We are trapped here because we trusted her.”	Assertive	The ghost child explains their situation as victims who trusted the Other Mother.
44	Ghost Child	“Please save us so we can finally be free.”	Directive	The ghost child begs Coraline to rescue them from eternal imprisonment.
45	Ghost Child	“Thank you for helping us even though you were scared.”	Expressive	The ghost child expresses gratitude after Coraline agrees to help them.
46	Coraline	“If I challenge you and win, you must let everyone go.”	Directive	Coraline challenges the Other Mother by proposing a game to free her parents and the ghost children.
47	Coraline	“You cannot trick me anymore because I understand your game.”	Assertive	Coraline rejects the Other Mother’s manipulation after understanding her deceptive nature.
48	Coraline	“I am afraid, but I will still fight you.”	Expressive	Coraline expresses fear but demonstrates courage while

				preparing to confront the Other Mother.
49	Coraline	“I will not give up until I bring my parents home.”	Commissive	Coraline vows to rescue her parents despite facing danger and fear.
50	Coraline	“This is my home, and I am going back to it.”	Assertive	Coraline affirms her determination to return to her real home after defeating the Other Mother.

The frequency distribution of illocutionary acts is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Illocutionary Acts

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	17	34%
Directive	15	30%
Commissive	11	22%
Expressive	6	12%
Declarative	2	4%

The dominance of assertive and directive acts indicates that the narrative heavily emphasizes cognitive awareness and power negotiation. The frequency distribution illustrates variation in communicative intentions among characters. Based on Table 1, assertive acts appear most frequently with seventeen occurrences, followed by directive acts with fifteen occurrences. Commissive acts appear eleven times, expressive acts appear six times, and declarative acts appear only two times. The findings indicate that assertive and directive acts dominate the dialogues, reflecting characters’ attempts to express beliefs and influence actions.

For example, Coraline’s utterance, “You are not my real mother, no matter what you say,” is classified as an assertive act because it expresses Coraline’s firm belief and rejection of the Other Mother’s identity. The context shows Coraline’s realization of deception, which strengthens her psychological independence and resistance against manipulation.

The analysis of illocutionary acts in Coraline reveals how language is used by the main characters to construct meaning, express emotions, and establish power relations within the narrative. Each type of illocutionary act contributes not only to communication between characters but also to the development of thematic messages and character transformation throughout the story.

Assertive Acts

According to Searle (1979), assertive acts function to commit speakers to the truth of their propositions, which explains their frequent appearance in narrative dialogues where characters attempt to construct reality. Assertive acts dominate the dialogues, indicating that characters frequently use language to express beliefs, explanations, and evaluations of situations. Coraline’s assertive utterances often demonstrate her increasing awareness of the alternative world and her cognitive development as the story progresses. This finding is consistent with Yule (1996), who states that assertive acts function to represent the speaker’s belief about the world. For instance, her statement, “I know this isn’t my real home, and something feels wrong,” reflects her ability to recognize the unnatural environment and question deceptive appearances. This finding supports Searle’s theory that assertive acts represent the speaker’s commitment to the truth of a proposition.

The frequent use of assertive acts by Coraline also illustrates her gradual transformation from curiosity to critical awareness. At the beginning of the story, Coraline tends to observe and question her surroundings, but as the

narrative progresses, her assertive utterances become stronger and more decisive. This pattern reflects how linguistic choices can represent psychological growth and character maturity.

The Other Mother also frequently produces assertive acts as a manipulative strategy. Utterances such as “You belong here because I created this world for you” attempt to reshape Coraline’s perception of reality. Through these utterances, the Other Mother constructs psychological control by presenting the alternative world as a desirable and safe environment. This manipulation aligns with pragmatic theories suggesting that assertive acts can function persuasively when speakers attempt to influence listeners’ beliefs.

Similarly, the Cat and the ghost children use assertive acts mainly to provide warnings and explanations. Their utterances function as informational guidance that helps Coraline understand the hidden dangers of the alternative world. These characters serve as narrative informants whose assertive speech supports Coraline’s decision-making process.

Directive Acts

Directive acts appear as the second most dominant type, highlighting the presence of authority, control, and resistance in the narrative. The Other Mother frequently uses directive utterances to dominate Coraline, such as ordering her to obey rules or remain in the alternative world. These utterances illustrate how directive acts function as attempts to influence or control behavior, which is consistent with Searle’s explanation of directive speech acts.

Coraline also uses directive acts, especially when she begins to resist the Other Mother’s control. For example, her utterance, “Open the door and let me return to my real home,” demonstrates her transformation into a courageous and independent character. The shift in Coraline’s use of directive acts reflects her growing confidence and determination to regain control of her situation. This transformation highlights the role of language in representing character empowerment and resistance against authority. According to Searle (1979), directive acts aim to influence the listener’s behavior and reflect power relations between speakers and hearers.

Meanwhile, Coraline’s parents use directive acts primarily in domestic contexts. Their directives often focus on controlling Coraline’s daily activities, such as instructing her to entertain herself or stop asking questions. Although these utterances represent parental authority, they also illustrate emotional distance between Coraline and her parents. This emotional gap contributes indirectly to Coraline’s vulnerability and curiosity toward the alternative world offered by the Other Mother.

Commissive Acts

Commissive acts in the data primarily appear in Coraline’s dialogues. Coraline frequently produces utterances that express promises and commitments, such as “I promise I will find my parents and take them home” and “I will help the ghost children find their eyes.” These utterances indicate Coraline’s sense of responsibility, bravery, and moral determination. The frequent appearance of commissive acts demonstrates Coraline’s transition from self-centered curiosity to selfless responsibility toward others. As explained by Cutting (2002), commissive utterances often demonstrate responsibility and motivation within narrative discourse.

The Other Mother also produces commissive acts; however, these utterances serve persuasive and manipulative purposes. By offering safety, comfort, and happiness, the Other Mother attempts to influence Coraline’s decisions through deceptive promises. This contrast between Coraline’s sincere commitments and the Other Mother’s manipulative promises highlights the moral conflict within the narrative and reinforces the theme of distinguishing truth from illusion.

Expressive Acts

Expressive acts reveal the emotional states and psychological experiences of characters. Coraline frequently expresses fear, discomfort, and frustration, which help illustrate her emotional vulnerability and personal growth. Utterances expressing fear combined with courage demonstrate Coraline’s internal conflict and resilience. The ghost children use expressive acts mainly to express gratitude and relief after receiving help from Coraline. These utterances contribute to emotional resolution within the story and reinforce moral values such as empathy

and cooperation. Although expressive acts appear less frequently than other types, they provide emotional depth and strengthen reader engagement with the characters.

Declarative Acts

Declarative acts appear least frequently but hold significant narrative functions. The Other Mother uses declarative utterances to establish authority and create binding agreements. These utterances construct a new social reality within the alternative world by defining rules and conditions that Coraline must follow. Declarative acts demonstrate the power of language to create institutional or situational changes, reinforcing the symbolic representation of domination and control within the story.

Pragmatic Implications

The findings demonstrate that children's literature contains sophisticated pragmatic features that reflect realistic communicative interactions. The dominance of assertive and directive acts reflects central themes of awareness, authority, manipulation, and resistance. Commissive acts highlight responsibility, bravery, and moral development, while expressive acts contribute to emotional depth and reader empathy. Declarative acts emphasize power structures and narrative conflict that drive the story's progression.

Furthermore, this study confirms that literary dialogues can serve as valuable data for pragmatic analysis. The use of illocutionary acts in *Coraline* illustrates how language constructs character identity, emotional development, and narrative tension. This finding also supports Leech's (1983) perspective that language use reflects social relationships and communicative intentions within discourse. The findings also suggest that analyzing literary texts can enhance understanding of pragmatic competence in language learning contexts, particularly in recognizing how intentions, emotions, and social relationships are conveyed through language use.

These findings are similar to Rahmawati and Lestari (2021), who found that directive and assertive acts dominate narrative dialogues. However, this study reveals that in children's fantasy literature, commissive acts also play an important role in representing moral responsibility and character development. The findings also suggest that literary texts can be used as effective materials for teaching pragmatic competence. By analyzing speech acts in literary dialogues, students can develop awareness of communicative intentions, contextual meaning, and interpersonal relationships in language use.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the types and functions of illocutionary acts used by the main characters in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*. By applying Searle's classification of speech acts, the study identified five types of illocutionary acts, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. The analysis of fifty selected utterances demonstrates that all categories of illocutionary acts are present in the dialogues, although they occur with different frequencies and communicative functions. The findings reveal that assertive acts are the most dominant type used by the characters. These acts mainly function to express beliefs, explanations, and evaluations of situations. Coraline frequently uses assertive utterances to demonstrate her growing awareness of the alternative world and her ability to distinguish reality from illusion. Meanwhile, the Other Mother employs assertive acts as a manipulative strategy to influence Coraline's perception and construct psychological control. This indicates that assertive acts in literary dialogues not only convey information but also serve persuasive and ideological purposes. Directive acts appear as the second most dominant type, reflecting the presence of authority, control, and resistance within the narrative. The Other Mother frequently uses directive utterances to dominate Coraline and regulate her behavior, symbolizing power and manipulation. In contrast, Coraline's directive utterances illustrate her transformation into an independent and courageous character who actively challenges authority. The use of directive acts therefore represents dynamic power relations among characters. Commissive acts are primarily produced by Coraline and function to express promises, commitments, and determination. These utterances highlight Coraline's moral responsibility and personal growth throughout the story. In comparison, the Other Mother's commissive acts function as deceptive promises that attempt to manipulate Coraline's decisions, emphasizing the thematic conflict between sincerity and illusion. Expressive acts, although less frequent, play a crucial role in revealing characters' emotional states. Coraline's expressions of fear, frustration, and courage contribute to her psychological development and strengthen the emotional

dimension of the narrative. Similarly, expressive utterances produced by the ghost children contribute to emotional resolution and reinforce moral values such as empathy and cooperation. Declarative acts appear least frequently but hold significant narrative importance. The Other Mother uses declarative utterances to establish authority and create binding agreements that construct a new social reality in the alternative world. These findings demonstrate how language can function as a tool for constructing institutional and symbolic power within literary narratives. Overall, this study indicates that children's literature, particularly *Coraline*, contains complex pragmatic features that reflect realistic communicative interactions. The use of illocutionary acts contributes significantly to character development, narrative conflict, and thematic construction. The dominance of assertive and directive acts reflects themes of awareness, authority, and resistance, while commissive and expressive acts highlight responsibility, emotional growth, and moral values. However, this study is limited to the analysis of selected utterances produced by the main characters. The study also focuses only on textual dialogue without analyzing multimodal elements such as visual representation or narrative description, which may influence pragmatic interpretation. Future research may examine illocutionary acts used by minor characters, compare pragmatic features across different literary genres, or analyze speech acts using multimodal approaches. This study is expected to contribute to pragmatic studies by demonstrating the relevance of speech act theory in literary discourse analysis. Furthermore, the findings may provide pedagogical implications for language learning, particularly in enhancing students' pragmatic competence through literary texts.

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