

## A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF COMMANDS IN ROBERT WISE'S *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to identify the types of commands occurring in Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music*. This is descriptive qualitative study. The data were in the forms words, phrases, clauses, and sentences proposed by the characters in the film which indicate commands. The source of the data was the transcript of the film. In collecting the data, the transcript was re-read and re-transcribed comprehensively and interpretatively. After gaining the data, the researcher classified them based on their types. The result of the study can be concluded that there are five types of commands which occur in *The Sound of Music*. They are base form of verb, you + imperatives, verb ellipsis, imperative + modifier, and Let + first person pronoun. The most frequent use of commands is base form of verb.

### A. INTRODUCTION

People in their social life communicate each other in certain ways. Communication can be in the spoken or written form. One example of the spoken forms is conversation between speakers and hearers while those of written form are letters, email, and post card. To realize communication, people need language as its effective tool. It means that language has some functions to facilitate people to achieve their purpose in communication. It is very useful for human being since it plays important roles in expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings toward something.

In communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, the speaker (or the author) normally expects the listener (or the reader) to understand what his or her purpose in saying something. Both speaker and listener are usually assisted in understanding utterances by the conditions around them. This condition is one social phenomenon related to speech acts. The different kinds of speech acts convey the speaker's different intention in producing an utterance. The speakers are transferring information through language to achieve the listeners' understanding.

Yule (1996: 53-54) classifies five types of general functions performed by speech acts. They are declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives. Directives commonly occur in communication between speakers and listeners which is used to get someone else to do something. They include commands, orders, requests, and suggestions. They can be positive or negative.

As a piece of literary works such as drama and novel, film consists of dialogues among its characters. The dialogues are one kind of communication. It is a spoken discourse consisting of various kinds of speech acts. They have roles to show the information delivered by each character. One character in the film can perform many acts while he or she is delivering some utterances.

Concerning commands, there is a phenomenon in the film *The Sound of Music* regarding how speech acts of commands are commonly used. It is chosen since firstly, it has many dialogues in the form of utterances which can be analyzed on the aspects of speech acts, especially commands. Secondly, it is a well-known film which has already won some Academy Awards.

This study deals with speech acts, specifically commands in the film *The Sound of Music*. The formulation of the problems in this study can be formulated as follows 'What are the types of commands occurring in Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music*?' Related to the formulation

of the problem, the objective of this study is to identify the types of commands occurring in Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music*.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHOD

### Pragmatics

There are some points of view on pragmatics. According to Yule (1996: 3), firstly, pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning. It is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). Secondly, pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning which involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say appropriately to whom they are talking to, where, when, and in what situation. Thirdly, pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said. It explores how listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning. Lastly, pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. It is regarded as the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms.

Leech (1983: 6) states that pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situations. It means that we are dealing with pragmatics if one or more of aspects of speech situation are fulfilled. Further, he defines pragmatics as problem-solving both from the speaker's and the hearer's point of view. From the speaker's, the problem is one planning about how to produce one utterance which will make the result most likely, whereas from the hearer's point of view, the problem is an interpretive one, where the hearer should interpret what the most likely reason for the speaker in saying the utterance. In conclusion, pragmatics is the study of meaning of utterances in relation to the contexts which involves how speakers produce an utterance to deliver their intention and how the listeners interpret it.

### Speech acts

According to Nunan (1993:65), speech acts are simply things people do through language, for example, apologizing, complaining, instructing, agreeing, and warning. Searle (1969:16) defines that the production or issuance of a sentence taken under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication. Speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as making statements, giving command, asking questions, making promises, and etc.

Furthermore, Austin (1962: 98-101) states that speech acts consist of three related acts as follows. Locutionary act is the act of saying something. It is concerned with meaning. He notes meaning as the use of language with a certain sense and reference. Illocutionary act is the act performed in saying something. The act is identified by the explicit performative. Perlocutionary **act** is the act performed by or as a result of saying. In saying something, we produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience or the speaker.

### Commands

Holmes (2001: 290) states that order and commands are generally expressed in imperative form. Furthermore, he says that polite attempts to get people to do something tend to uses interrogative or declaratives.

According to Holmes in Richards and Schmidt (1983), there are six structural variants of directive speech acts in the form of imperative, which include commands as the imperative form. The first is **base form of verb**. It is the first form of verb. Some examples are 'Speak up' and 'Put your hands down.' The words 'speak' and 'put' are verb.

The second is **you + imperatives**. Imperatives are the form of a verb that expresses commands. Some examples are 'You look here.' and 'You go with you work.'

The third is **present participle form of verb**. Present participle is the form of verb that ends in *-ing*. Some examples are 'Listening' and 'Looking at me.' The words 'listen' and 'look' are verb.

The fourth is **verb ellipsis**. It is the leaving out of a word or word form of verb. Some examples are 'Hands up' and 'Blackboards'.

The fifth is **imperative + modifier**. Imperatives are the form of a verb that expresses commands. Modifier is a word or phrase that modifies another word or phrase such as 'please'. Some examples are 'Children looks this way, please' and 'Please, turn around.'

The last is **Let + first person pronoun**. A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or noun phrase, e.g. I, me, she, her, he, his, we, us, you, they, them, it, there. Some examples are 'Let's finish there', 'Let's try it', and 'Let's find her.'

### **The Sound of Music**

*The Sound of Music* is a musical film directed by Robert Wise in 1965. The setting of place in this film is in Salzburg, Austria. The setting of time is in the last Golden Days of the Thirties. This film is based on the book *The von Trapp Family Singers* which is written by Maria von Trapp. *The Sound of Music* tells about a young nun named Maria who becomes a new governess of Captain von Trapp's family to take care his seven children. Maria and the Captain von Trapp have a different way in handling the children. Captain von Trapp, who is a widower ex-naval officer, raises his children as in his military ship. On the other hand, Maria wants them to be free and able to enjoy life as children.

### **Method of the Study**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative design refers to a research procedure which produces descriptive data. The main data of this study were dialogue transcript of the film. The data were in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The source of the data was the film entitled *The Sound of Music*. The process of data analysis began since the researcher started to collect the data. She collected the data again and again until the data were saturated.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

There are five types of commands occur in *The Sound of Music*'s script. They include base form of verb, you + imperatives, verb ellipsis, imperative + modifier, and Let + first person pronoun. The total number of the data is 193 utterances.

The highest frequency of the occurrence on the types of commands in *The Sound of Music* is base form of verb. There are 101 out of 193 utterances. It means that base form of verb is the most common type used by the characters in *The Sound of Music* to show commands. Moreover, people in their daily life also use this type of commands because it is the simplest form of imperative to command someone to do something.

The second level of occurrence is imperative + modifier. This type is used 37 times by the characters in this film out of 193 data. It makes commands more polite because the imperative forms are followed by modifier, such as please or address forms.

The third frequency of the occurrence is you + imperatives. In *The Sound of Music*'s script, there are 26 out of 193 utterances. This type of commands also makes commands which are delivered by the characters more polite. It adds 'you' as personal pronoun before the imperative form.

The next level is Let + first person pronoun. This type of commands is used 15 times out of 193 utterances. The fifth frequency of the occurrence is verb ellipsis. It is used by the characters in this film for 14 times out of 193 data. The last type of commands is present participle of verb. It does not occur in *The Sound of Music*'s script.

### **Discussion**

#### **Base form of verb**

Base form of verb is the simplest form of imperatives. It is the first form of verb which can be positive or negative. Positive form is used for constituting command. Negative is used

for constituting prohibition which is also commands that not to do something. Base form of verb in this study is dominant. It appears since the influence of the character's background. One of the main characters in this film has a military background. In military, a command is always said directly because it is an instruction to do something. Here are some examples of base form of verb.

Captain : **Turn. Hat off.** The dress... **put on another one** before meet the children.

Maria : But I don't have another one, when we enter the abbey, our worldly clothes go to the poor.

The dialogue between Captain von Trapp and Maria above is the example of base form of verb in the positive form. Based on the dialogue above, there are three utterances proposed by Captain von Trapp which indicate base form of verb as the first type of commands. Firstly, he says '**Turn**', meaning that he orders Maria to turn her body. Secondly, he says '**Hat off**'. He also orders her to put her hat off. Lastly, '*The dress... **put on another one before meeting the children***', he wants her to change her dress before she meets his children because he thinks that her dress is ugly.

Rolfe : Well, let's see. I could come here by mistake. With a telegram for Colonel Schneider! He's here from Berlin staying with no one knows he's here. **Don't tell your father.**

Liesl : Why not?

Rolfe : Your father's so Austrian.

The dialogue above is the example of base form of verb in negative form. It indicates command that forbids someone to do something. In this dialogue, Rolfe says to Liesl, '**Don't tell your father**', meaning that he orders her not tell her father, Captain von Trapp, when Colonel Schneider from Berlin came to Austria.

#### **You + imperatives**

Imperatives are the form of a verb that expresses commands. This type of commands adds 'you' as a personal pronoun before the imperative form. Here is the example.

Captain: Now, this is your new governess, Fräulein Maria. As I sound your signal, **you step on**, give your name. You, Fräulein, listen carefully. Learn their signals so you can call anyone of them.

The dialogue above is the example of you + imperatives. In dialogue above, Captain von Trapp says '**you step on**' to his children. He orders them to step on when he blows the whistle as signal.

#### **Verb ellipsis**

Verb ellipsis is the leaving out of a word or word form of verb. Here is the example.

Captain : **Straight line!** This is Baroness Schraeder. And these are my children.

Baroness : How do you do?

Based on the dialogue above, Captain von Trapp commands his children by saying '**Straight line!**' He orders his children to make a line.

#### **Imperative + modifier**

Imperative + modifier are an imperative modified by some forms such as please, address form, modal tags, and ok. This type makes a command more polite because it is followed by modifier. Here is the example.

Captain: I'm afraid you don't look very much like a governess. **Turn around, please.**

Based on the dialogue above, Captain von Trapp says '**Turn around, please**'. He orders that Maria to turn her body because he wants to know more about her appearance.

#### **Let + first person pronoun**

Here is the example of Let + first person pronoun found in *The Sound of Music*'s script.

Captain : It's Gretl. Now, **let's see how well you listened.**  
 Maria : I won't need to whistle for them, Reverend Captain. I mean, I'll use their names, such lovely names.

Based on the dialogue above, Captain von Trapp orders Maria to use the whistle by saying '**let's see how well you listened**'. He wants her call upon his children with the whistle as their signal.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that there are five types of commands which occur in *The Sound of Music*. They include base form of verb, you + imperatives, verb ellipsis, imperative + modifier, and Let + first person pronoun. Base form of verb shows the highest percentage of the occurrence. It is happened since it is the common type. It is also the simplest one which is used by people to command someone to do something.

From the analysis of the study above, it is suggested to the linguistics students to learn more pragmatics study. It is expected that the students can get more knowledge about language reflected by their language.

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