

Speech Act Analysis of Amador Daguio's The Wedding Dance

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ABSTRACT

The study of meaning behind word and sentence levels is the core of discourse analysis. It burrows beneath the surface of conversation exchanges between characters in a literary piece. Doing so draws the readers to the context of the story. Hence, this paper attempted to exhaustively analyze a short story titled *Wedding Dance* written by a Filipino poet and novelist, Amador Daguio. To comprehensively scrutinize the meat of the utterances as the linguistic data in the analysis process, the researcher utilized Searle's five (5) speech act categories. The findings of the study showed that the conversation exchanges between the main characters, Awiyao and Lumnay, are abundant in terms of directives, commissives, representatives, declarations or performatives, and expressives.

Keywords: Commissives, Declaratives, Directives, Expressives, Representatives, Speech Act Analysis, Wedding Dance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The statement that language plays a pivotal role in the fulfillment of man's existence and survival remains an invariable datum more so now that technological breakthroughs are felt in every corner of the world (Motteram, 2013). Incontestably, language has been and is still the most powerful weapon that humans utilize for innumerable reasons.

It is through language that cultures and traditions were handed from generation to generation. Relics from the oldest of human civilizations endure the test of time chiefly because of language. And literature, serving as a time travel engine, provides us a glimpse of the past. These reasons solidify how supreme the role of language to humanity is.

Thus, it is not surprising that through time, theories, approaches, and philosophies aiming to study language were given premium. One of those is the so-called Discourse Analysis (DA). Oxford English Dictionary defines DA as a method of analyzing the structure of texts or utterances longer than one sentence, taking into account both their linguistic content and their sociolinguistic context. According to Widdowson (1979), the aforementioned term refers to an investigation into the way sentences are put to communicative use in the performance of social actions.

In addition, Stubbs (1983) defined it as an attempt to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, hence, opening windows for scrutinizing larger linguistic units in conversational exchanges or written texts. With that, DA is one of the most important means by which a language is analyzed objectively and comprehensively. It is an avenue in which a series of utterances is given meaning.

In the field of research, DA is a method for studying

written or spoken language in relation to its social context (Renz *et al.*, 2018). It intends to understand how language is used in conversation situations, specifically: identifying the purposes and effects of different types of language, cultural rules, and conventions in communication, how values, beliefs, and assumptions are communicated, and how language use relates to its social, political and historical context (Shamsiddinovna, 2021).

One of the most common approaches to DA is the Speech Act Theory. This is essentially concerned with the ways in which language can be used for communication. Proposed by Austin (1955) (*as cited in* Petrey, 2016) and Searle (1969) (*as cited in* Allwood, 1977), this originated as a theory within the philosophy of language to explain ways that humans can use language. It is a logico-philosophic perspective on conversational organization focusing on interpretation rather than the production of utterances in discourse.

Moreover, this grows from the basic belief that language is used to perform actions. The theory looks at the roles of utterances in relation to behavior or attitudes of the interlocutors in communicative discourse (Ekor & Gunn, 2021). Based on the theory, every utterance can be analyzed as the realization of the speaker's intent (illocutionary force) to achieve a particular purpose (Gordon, 2021). In this study, the focus of the analysis is speech act (SA) or illocutionary force (IF).

DA and its approaches are not confined to dissecting meanings behind word and sentence levels based on conversation exchanges that transpire in real-life situations. Speech act analysis, for instance, can provide us with a means of burrowing beneath the surface of discourse and establishing the function of what is said (Altikriti, 2011) by a particular character in a fiction e.g., a novel or short story.

One cannot deny that there is an inextricable linkage between linguistics and literature. It is through the former that linguists and scholars are able to dig deeper in order to arrive at a clearer and more comprehensive inquiry of characters with diverse characterizations in a literary piece taking into consideration the conversation exchanges as the principal linguistic data for discourse analysis (Dash & Arulmozi, 2018).

In this paper, the researcher attempted to provide a speech act analysis of Amador Daguio's renowned short story masterpiece titled "Wedding Dance". According to Ray and Baudinet (2019), it is a powerhouse of raw emotion for such a short story. The story revolves around love and cultural reality, and it contradicts our current worldview.

Amador Daguio's "The Wedding Dance" is a short story about a husband and a wife, Awiyao and Lumnay, who had been married for seven years. Despite being together for a long time, Lumnay fails to give her husband a child. The tribe where they belong has an unwritten law: that for a man to be a man, there must be a child that would come after him. Awiyao feels the need to marry another woman to have a son. The latter was despondent over the former's marriage. Lumnay could not stand the idea of her husband marrying another woman in the tribe because she is incapable of bearing a child.

The Wedding Dance mirrors tradition. In most Filipino ethnic festivities and celebrations like that of a wedding, a dance is indispensable (Alcantara, 1972). It stands for a tradition being sacred and essential, something that should never be defied nor questioned (Leo, 2011). The story Wedding Dance more specifically displays how personal love and interest are defeated by culture.

Few studies attempted to analyze the story such as Dolar (n.d.), who analyzed the phallic logic through a comparative ecofeminist reading, and the use of functional stylistics in analyzing a portion of the story (Paras, 2021).

Although Amador Daguio's The Wedding Dance has been a subject for analysis and classroom instruction (Ray & Baudinet, 2019; A Critical Analysis of Amador Daguio's Wedding Dance, 2018; Wedding Dance by Amador Daguio, 2013), the story was not analyzed using DA, particularly, on the use of Speech Act Theory.

In this study, the analysis centered on the conversation exchanges between the main characters, Awiyao and Lumnay. Select portions of the story were taken as units of analysis. Additionally, the data were scrutinized in terms of *directives*, *commissives*, *representatives*, *declaratives* or *performatives*, and *expressives*.

The goal of this paper was to analyze select portions of the short story titled Wedding Dance written by Amador Daguio. Speech Act theory was utilized in order to derive a comprehensive discourse analysis. Specifically, the linguistic data was examined in terms of, directives, commissives, representatives, declarative or performatives, and expressives.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper applied Speech Act theory in general and the nature of the subjects was analyzed and interpreted using Searle's five (5) categories of speech act sentences

(Grewendorf & Meggle, 2012; Searle, 1976). Since this paper is application-oriented, the short story The Wedding Dance of Amador Daguio was chosen for this purpose. Having a good grasp of the lines being uttered by the characters in short stories is important for it bridges the readers' connection to the story. Hence, Searle's categories of speech acts are highly beneficial in an effort to come up with good discourse analysis.

The select conversation exchanges of the main characters, Awiyao and Lumnay were analyzed within the structure of the five major speech acts developed by Searle as follows:

- 1) Directives. This refers to attempts of the speaker to get the hearer to do something (i.e., ordering, commending, requesting, begging) (Searle, 1976).
- 2) Commissives. These are statements that function as promises or refusals for action. The different kinds are promising, planning, vowing, betting, and opposing (Chasanah, 2017).
- 3) Representatives (Assertives). These are statements that commit the speaker to the truth of something (i.e., asserting, claiming, reporting) (Searle, 1976).
- 4) Declarative or performatives. These are statements uttered to bring out the correspondence between the propositional content and reality (i.e., appointing a chairman, nominating a candidate, marrying a person, christening) (Searle, 1976).
- 5) Expressives. These are statements that express a psychological state (i.e., thanking, apologizing, complimenting) (Searle, 1976).

The abovementioned speech act categories proposed by Searle contribute to untying the underlying meanings of utterances. The lines spoken by the characters become more evocative and meaningful when clearly understood by the readers.

Awiyao and Lumnay's conversation exchanges were motivated mainly by the predicament they were in. Aided by the speech act categories, in-depth analysis will be achieved, and lines uttered will be colored with meaning.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Searle's theory, speech acts are functions that are assigned and taken on sentences (Grewendorf & Meggle, 2012; Searle, 1976). So, each utterance is assigned to one of the five categories: directives, commissives, representatives, declaratives or performatives, and expressive.

Utilizing the structure of the aforesaid speech act categories, the select utterances in "Wedding Dance" are indeed worth scrutinizing.

A. Analysis of Directive Speech

This category emerges when the speaker expects the addressee to do something as a response. For instance, the speaker may ask a question, create a request, or issue an invitation. A lot of directive sentences are stated as questions. However, some directives are not posed as questions but as a request for assistance while others may be framed as questions but are rhetorical in nature which includes commands, suggestions, and orders.

TABLE I: DIRECTIVE STATEMENTS FROM THE WEDDING DANCE

Paragraph Number	Speaker	Utterance
5	Awiyo	"Why don't you go out," he said. "and join the dancing women?" You should join the dancers," he said, "as if—as if nothing happened."
7	Awiyo	"Go out—go out and dance. If you really don't hate me for this separation, go out and dance."
26	Awiyo	"This house is yours," he said. "I built it for you. Make it your own, live in it as long as you wish. I will build another house for Madulimay."
31	Lumnay	"Go back to the dance," she said finally. "It is not right for you to be here. They will wonder where you are, and Madulimay will not feel good. Go back to the dance."
51	Lumnay	"I'll keep my beads. She said. "Awiyo, let me keep my beads."
52	Awiyo	"You will keep the beads," They come from far-off times. My grandmother said they come from up North, from the slant-eyed people across the sea. You keep them, Lumnay. They are worth twenty fields."
56	Lumnay	"The elders will scold you. You had better go."

Awiyo's repetitive insistence that Lumnay, his wife, should "go out and join the dancing women" in celebration of his wedding with Madulimay manifests his insensitivity towards the feelings of Lumnay who was obviously grief-stricken at that moment. Demanding Lumnay to go out and join the dancers "as if nothing happened" likewise marks Awiyo's authority, hence, his utterances can be labeled as commands to his wife.

As can be observed in Table I, out of seven (7) directive statements, five (4) were utterances of Awiyo. Also, his utterances were imperative, giving commands, permission, and issuing an invitation. On the other hand, only three (3) directives were uttered by Lumnay and when examined thoroughly, her utterances are embedded with imperative and permission directives.

TABLE II: PRESENTS COMMISSIVES DOTTED BY THE RESEARCHER FROM THE SHORT STORY

Paragraph Number	Speaker	Utterance
35	Lumnay	"I know it," she said. "I will pray that Kabunyan will bless you and Madulimay."
42	Lumnay	"I'll have no other man."
44	Lumnay	"I'll go back to my father. I'll die."
49	Awiyo	"If I fail, I'll come back to you. Then both of us will die together. Both of us will vanish from the life of our tribe."
57	Awiyo	"Not until you tell me that it is all right with you."
58	Lumnay	"It is all right with me."

B. Analysis of Commissive Speech Act

The fundamental theme of this category is to commit the speaker to perform some future action. In conversation exchanges, the most common commissives are promises and

refusals. Utterances under this category, however, vary according to social relationships. It is said that the form of commissive that a speaker uses will differ depending upon the social role of the person asking to do something.

Out of six (6) utterances that are labeled as commissives, five (5) are promises and one (1) is a statement of refusal. Here, the love that Awiyo and Lumnay have for each other can be clearly felt via their conversation exchanges. For Lumnay, though it is glaringly painful on her part, she promised she would pray for her husband and Madulimay and swore she would have no other man. In the case of Awiyo, he promised that if he fails to have a child for the second time, he would come back to Lumnay. Awiyo's statement that "he would not go back to the dance not until Lumnay tells him that it is all right with her" is classified as refusal.

C. Analysis of Expressive Speech Act

The illocutionary aim of this category is to express the psychological state of the speaker about something or someone. Typical cases are when the speaker expresses the feeling of joy, sadness, or sorrow to the listener.

In the short story, the main characters, Awiyo and Lumnay, exchanged a series of expressives towards each other.

TABLE III: PRESENTS IDENTIFIED EXPRESSIVE STATEMENTS FROM THE WEDDING DANCE

Paragraph Number	Speaker	Utterance
2	Awiyo	"I'm sorry this had to be done. I am really sorry. But neither of us can help it."
32	Awiyo	"I would feel better if you could come, and dance—for the last time. The gangsas are playing."
40	Lumnay	"Awiyo, Awiyo, my husband," she cried.
53	Lumnay	"I'll keep them because they stand for the love you have for me. I love you. I love you and have nothing to give."
54	Lumnay	"Awiyo! Awiyo! O Awiyo! They are looking for you at the dance!"
65	Lumnay	"Awiyo! Awiyo, it is hard!"
69	Lumnay	"It is not right. It is not right!" she cried. "How does she know? How can anybody know? It is not right," she said.

The state of being apologetic is the dominant emotion that can be extracted from the lines of Awiyo. In paragraph 2, the word "sorry" was repeated twice in his attempt to explain the situation to Lumnay. While in paragraph 32, his invitation for Lumnay to come to the dance basically feeds his "personal happiness" as he spoke, "I would feel better".

On the other hand, extreme sadness is the foremost emotion that can be educed from the utterances of Lumnay. Calling the name of Awiyo seven (7) times, dauntlessly saying "I love you" two (2) times in paragraph 53, and adding the phrase "my husband" accentuated the emotion present in the conversation.

The expressives "It is hard" and "It is not right" justify her pain and sort of "rebellion" towards the tradition of the tribe that "for a man to be a man, there must be a child that should come after him".

TABLE IV: PRESENTS SPOTTED STATEMENTS THAT ARE CLASSIFIED UNDER REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSERTIVES

Paragraph Number	Speaker	Utterance
8	Lumnay	<i>"I don't want any man," she said sharply. "I don't want any other man."</i>
8	Awiyo	<i>"You know very well that I won't want any woman either. You know that, don't you? Lumnay, you know it, don't you?"</i>
13	Awiyo	<i>"It is not my fault," he said, feeling relieved. "You cannot blame me; I have been a good husband to you."</i>
15	Awiyo	<i>"No, you have been very good to me. You have been a good wife. I have nothing to say against you."</i>
17	Lumnay	<i>"You know that I have done my best," she said. "I have prayed to Kabunyan much. I have sacrificed many chickens in my prayers."</i>
23	Awiyo	<i>I came home," he said. "Because I did not find you among the dancers. Of course, I am not forcing you to come if you don't want to join my wedding ceremony. I came to tell you that Madulimay, although I am marrying her, can never become as good as you are. She is not as strong in planting beans, not as fast in cleaning water jars, not as good keeping the house clean. You are one of the best wives in the whole village."</i>
24	Lumnay	<i>"That has not done me any good, has it?"</i>
27	Lumnay	<i>"I have no need for a house," she said slowly. "I'll go to my own house. My parents are old. They will need help in the planting of the beans, in the pounding of the rice."</i>
40	Lumnay	<i>"I did everything to have a child," she said passionately in a hoarse whisper. "Look at me. Look at my body. Then it was full of promise. It could dance; it could work fast in the fields; it could climb the mountains fast. Even now it is firm, But, Awiyo, I am useless. I must die."</i>
42	Lumnay	<i>"I don't care about the fields," she said. "I don't care about the house. I don't care for anything but you."</i>
59	Awiyo	<i>"I do this for the sake of the tribe."</i>

D. Analysis of Representative Speech Act

This category is also known as assertives. According to Searle, the purpose of this kind of speech act is to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed utterance. In other words, the speaker wants to make the listener believe the truth of what he or she is saying.

Chosen statements are classified under representatives or assertives in Table IV. Both characters voiced assertions on the matter. For several times, Awiyo claimed he had been a good husband to Lumnay and that he could not do otherwise but follow the tribe's tradition. Lumnay likewise defended her side and said she had been a good wife to Awiyo and that she had done her best to bear a child, even sacrificing many chickens as an offering to Kabunyan.

If the lines are examined closely, the assertions used by both speakers are claims in defense of their predicament. In other words, they did not cause their "separation" rather it was the unwritten rule in their tribe that caused their parting.

E. Analysis of Declarative or Performative Speech Act

Searle describes this category as statements that bring about a change in status or condition to an object by virtue of the statement itself. Usually, the speaker who utters a statement under this category is someone who has a holding power or authority.

TABLE V: PRESENTS STATEMENTS THAT ARE DECLARATIVES OR PERFORMATIVES IN THE SHORT STORY

Paragraph Number	Speaker	Utterance
15	Awiyo	<i>"It's only that a man must have a child. Seven harvest is just too long to wait. Yes, we have waited too long. We should have another chance before it is too late for both of us."</i>
20	Awiyo	<i>"Kabunyan does not see fit for us to have a child."</i>
43	Awiyo	<i>"Then you'll always be fruitless."</i>
45	Awiyo	<i>"Then you hate me," he said. "If you die it means you hate me. You do not want me to have a child. You do not want my name to live in our tribe."</i>
47	Awiyo	<i>"If I do not try a second time," he explained, "it means I'll die."</i>

Immediately after a word is articulated, the very word that was said brings about a change in the listener's world. Interestingly, there is the existence of declarative or performatives in the short story. They are presented in Table V.

The utterances made under this speech act category were all spoken by Awiyo. Noticeably, the five (5) declaratives or performatives noted in the story centered on the tradition or unwritten law of the tribe. This confirms that the decision of Awiyo to leave Lumnay and marry Madulimay in the hope to have a child was stirred by the dictate of society.

The line "It's only that a man must have a child" appears to be a universal declarative inculcated in the entire tribe in which a man's worth of existence is gauged on his capability to have a child. In this case, Awiyo is a depiction of the so-called machismo which is defined as a man possessing a strong sense of masculinity and pride. It did not matter to him if he would lose Lumnay. What mattered was that he could stand with his ego intact and that his name could continue through his child.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has exhaustively scrutinized Amador Daguio's Wedding Dance using the speech act theory to apply discourse analysis in general and short stories in particular. The researcher focused his analysis on the five (5) categories of speech acts developed by Searle. With an intent to unravel the implications behind utterances in the conversation exchanges between Awiyo and Lumnay, the main characters of the story, the researcher was able to deduce the following salient conclusions:

- 1) The directives identified in the conversation exchanges were dominated by Awiyo's utterances fortifying the fact that men in their tribe had more authority than women.
- 2) The statements under commissives centered on the exchange of promises indirectly manifesting the love shared by Awiyo and Lumnay.
- 3) The spotted expressives in the story were mostly statements of Lumnay's sadness over the separation.

Thus, concludes that women are more expressive than men.

- 4) The representative statements presented assertions of Awiayao and Lumnay. They both asserted that they did their part in the marriage only that they could not defy the stringent unwritten law of the tribe.
- 5) All declaratives or performatives were spoken by Awiayao again proving the superiority of men over women in the tribe.

Furthermore, the story shows that the enduring beliefs and values of culture dampen people from doing things because they are constrained by the norms of society. It likewise demonstrates how traditions may corrode the choices that a person can choose from, as well as take away a person's happiness and right to decide and act freely.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he does not have any conflict of interest.

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