Expressive Speech Acts in the Comments Section of One Direction's Youtube Channel

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Abstract: This study examines expressive speech acts in the comments section of One Direction's YouTube video titled "10 Years of One Direction." It aims to identify the types of expressive acts used, explore their communicative purposes, and determine which type is most frequently employed. The research uses Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) classification—which includes acts such as thanking, apologizing, congratulating, praising, sorrowing, boasting, blaming, and greeting—and Leech's (2014) categorization of speech act functions (competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive). Using a descriptive qualitative approach supported by basic quantitative analysis, the study analyzes 70 selected comments from the video. Results show eight types of expressive speech acts: thanking, congratulating, praising, sorrowing, blaming, happiness, boasting, and regretting. These acts mostly serve convivial, collaborative, and conflictive functions. Notably, sorrowing was the most frequent, appearing in 28.57% of the comments, indicating a strong nostalgic and emotional response among fans. The findings highlight how digital fan communities use expressive language to share emotions and build collective memories.

Keywords: Expressive Speech Acts, Communicative Functions, Comments Section, One Direction

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in human life, functioning not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium to convey thoughts and emotions (Chomsky, 2006). Through language, people exchange information and express feelings depending on the context, such as the speaker, listener, time, and setting. The way language is used in communication is explored through the study of pragmatics, which focuses on meaning influenced by context (Mey, 1993; Yule, 1996). One key aspect of pragmatics is speech acts, which are utterances that perform actions like requesting, promising, or apologizing (Yule, 1996). Austin (1962) introduced three types: locutionary (the act of saying something), illocutionary (the intended function), and perlocutionary (the effect on the listener). Among these, illocutionary acts especially expressive acts are central to how speakers show psychological states or emotions (Searle, 1976; 1979). Expressive speech acts include thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and expressing joy or sorrow (Yule, 1996).

With the rise of social media, expressive acts have extended beyond face-to-face interaction into digital spaces like YouTube, where users comment on videos to share emotional reactions. YouTube's comment sections offer rich data for observing how language is used to express feelings in a public, online setting. This phenomenon motivates the current study. While previous research has examined expressive speech acts in films, novels, and traditional conversation (e.g., Faturrohman, 2020; Heriwati, 2018), less attention has been paid to their

use in social media, especially YouTube. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing expressive speech acts found in comments on the *"10 Years of One Direction"* video.

One Direction, as a globally popular band with a loyal digital fanbase, provides a valuable case study. Their YouTube comments reflect various emotions joy, nostalgia, sorrow, and admiration which show how fans connect and communicate in digital spaces. Prior research (e.g., Bariansyah, 2021) has shown that expressive acts such as gratitude, praise, and regret are common in YouTube comments. This study aims to deepen the understanding of how fans use expressive language to engage with content and with each other, creating a sense of shared emotional experience and community online.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section outlines five previous studies relevant to the current research. Two undergraduate theses and three international journal articles were reviewed. Bariansyah (2021) examined expressive illocutionary acts in YouTube comments related to mental health. Using a qualitative method and Searle & Vanderveken's theory, he identified ten types of expressive acts, with condolences being the most frequent. This study shares a similar method and data source with the current research, although it applies an additional theory (Hymes, 1974). Faturrohman (2020) analyzed expressive speech acts in the film *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw*. Using a qualitative method based on Searle (1976), he categorized expressions like agreement, attitude, gratitude, apology, and others. The study is methodologically similar to the current research but differs in its data source film dialogues versus YouTube comments.

Heriwati (2018) explored expressive acts in a traditional puppet play narrative (Dewaruci). Using Kredler's theory and a qualitative approach, she found that expressive acts carried moral and educational values. The study aligns with the current one in method but differs in its cultural and artistic data source. Indriyana et al. (2021) studied Instagram comments on Joe Biden's account during the U.S. presidential campaign. Using Searle's theory and qualitative analysis, they found that gratitude was the most dominant expressive act. The main difference lies in the platform Instagram versus YouTube. Syafitri (2020) examined Facebook status updates for expressive acts, using theories from Ronan and Alwi et al. The study revealed 14 expressive categories such as pride, sarcasm, annoyance, and disappointment. While similar in method and purpose, this study differs in platform and theoretical framework.

3. CONCEPTS

This section defines the key concepts used in the study: speech acts, illocutionary acts, and expressive acts.

Speech Acts

Speech acts are utterances used to perform actions in communication. According to Yule (1996), speech acts are not just about saying something, but doing something with words. Austin (1962) emphasized that utterances often aim to produce an effect, like apologizing, promising, or warning.

Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary acts reflect the speaker's intention behind the utterance. These include acts like requesting, asserting, and commanding. Yule (1996) explains that the structure of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative) often aligns with the function of the act. Austin (1962) described illocutionary acts as the essence of what a speaker aims to do through speech.

Expressive Acts

Expressive acts convey the speaker's feelings or psychological state toward a situation. Searle (1979) and Leech (1983) emphasize that these acts foster social harmony and emotional connection. Examples include thanking, congratulating, blaming, or expressing sorrow.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Theoretical Frameworks

This section outlines the main theories used in the research.

Classification of Speech Acts

Austin (1962) divides speech acts into three types: Locutionary: the act of saying something. Illocutionary: the intended function of the utterance. Perlocutionary: the listener's reaction to the utterance.

Types of Expressive Acts

Searle & Vanderveken (1985) categorize expressive acts into: Thanking expressing gratitude. Apologizing expressing regret for wrongdoing. Congratulating showing happiness for others' success. Boasting expressing pride. Praising expressing approval or admiration. Sorrowing/Condoling expressing sympathy or sadness. Blaming assigning fault or disapproval. Greeting/ Welcoming recognizing and expressing pleasure at someone's presence. Each act reflects the speaker's emotional or psychological state, and often relies on specific phrases or cues to express those feelings.

Functions of Expressive Acts

Leech (2014) outlines four functions of illocutionary acts based on their social intent: Competitive prioritizes personal goals, potentially at the expense of politeness (e.g., complaints). Convivial fosters goodwill and harmony (e.g., thanking, congratulating). Collaborative shares feelings or experiences neutrally, aiming to connect (e.g., sorrowing, praising). Conflictive disrupts social harmony and may express discontent (e.g., blaming, criticizing).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section analyzes expressive speech acts found in viewer comments under the *"10 Years of One Direction"* YouTube video. Out of approximately 179,000 comments, 70 were selected for detailed examination. Eight expressive acts were identified: thanking, congratulating, praising, sorrowing, blaming, happiness, boasting, and regretting. However, apologizing and greeting/welcoming were not present in the selected data. The analysis is divided into two parts: the types and functions of expressive speech acts found in the comments, and the frequency of each type of expressive act.

Types and Functions of Expressive Speech Acts

Thanking

Thanking expresses gratitude or appreciation for something received or experienced. Example 1: A commenter (@amyabdulah1167) thanked Liam Payne for everything he had done. The gratitude expressed is emotional and reflective, showing a deep connection rather than seeking a response. Function: *Collaborative*, as it expresses personal sentiment without seeking interaction. Example 2: Another user (@vpaulina) expressed how One Direction changed their life and offered thanks. The emotional tone shows admiration and appreciation. Function: *Convivial*, promoting positivity and emotional connection.

Congratulating

Congratulating acknowledges and celebrates an achievement or special occasion. Example 1: A fan (@aimeeellis7877) celebrated One Direction's 12th anniversary, expressing ongoing support. Function: *Convivial*, as it reinforces celebration and loyalty within the fan community. Example 2: Another user (@louist91tomlinson) congratulated the fanbase by recognizing "Directioners' Day," emphasizing shared celebration. Function: *Convivial*, strengthening community ties and shared identity.

Praising

Praising conveys admiration or approval for someone's qualities or actions. Example 1: A commenter (@JohnNoahcclidoro) called One Direction "super idols," highlighting their high regard for the group. Function: *Convivial*, fostering a positive environment through admiration. Example 2: Another fan (@ムジカ-t8h) admired Harry Styles by calling him "cool," showing appreciation for his persona. Function: *Convivial*, reinforcing a positive perception and encouraging unity in admiration.

Sorrowing

Sorrowing expresses sadness, nostalgia, or emotional pain, often in relation to loss or separation. Example 1: A comment from @ishadugar9810 reflected on the group's 15-year journey, noting the absence of a member. This comment blends nostalgia with sadness. Function: *Conflictive*, as it introduces emotional pain and contrasts with the celebratory tone. Example 2: Another user (@tarulatasarkar_1087) lamented the 10-year hiatus of the band, conveying a sense of longing and disappointment. Function: *Conflictive*, highlighting emotional tension and dissatisfaction with the group's prolonged break.

Blaming

Blaming involves assigning fault or expressing disapproval. Example 1: A user (@fayherculus8875) harshly criticized the Directioners fandom, accusing them of causing division and even contributing to Liam's downfall. Function: *Conflictive*, due to the aggressive and hostile tone intended to provoke. Example 2: Another commenter (@swarapandey180) expressed mixed feelings—love and blame—towards the band, claiming they've let down their fans. Function: *Conflictive*, as it conveys emotional disappointment and criticism.

Happiness

Happiness reflects feelings of joy, nostalgia, and emotional fulfillment. Example 1: A fan (@sakana_uu) fondly recalled memories with One Direction, expressing lasting love and gratitude. Function: *Convivial*, promoting warmth and appreciation. Example 2: Another comment (@Noel-Ameeq) highlighted how One Direction made their childhood joyful and memorable. Function: *Convivial*, sharing joy and nostalgia in a positive, communal tone.

Boasting

Boasting is expressing pride, either in oneself or in association with achievements. Example 1: A user (@karimtaha1455) shared a personal moment of pride connected to the video. Function: *Collaborative*, as it shares individual pride without engaging others directly. Example 2: Another fan (@shamsshapte5515) expressed pride in both the band and being part of the fandom since the beginning. Function: *Convivial*, fostering a sense of belonging and shared pride.

Regretting

Regretting involves expressing remorse or sadness over past situations. Example 1: A commenter (@vibi116) reflected on the regret of the band's hiatus but paired it with hope for a reunion. Function: *Collaborative*, introspective and emotionally reflective. Example 2: Another user (@r3yy.l0vr) regretted discovering the band late and missing their early years. Function: *Collaborative*, focusing on personal reflection and emotional realization.

Discussion

The findings reveal that sorrowing is the most frequent expressive act, making up 28.57% of the analyzed comments. This is closely tied to the emotional context of the video, which commemorates 10 years of One Direction a milestone filled with nostalgia, longing, and personal memories for many fans. These sorrowful expressions are not just about sadness but represent deep emotional connections, reflections on the past, and shared experiences of loss or separation. Within the digital fan community, sorrowing helps build empathy, solidarity, and emotional bonds, encouraging fans to interact, support, and reminisce with one another. Moreover, this shows how language in online spaces serves as a means of expressing identity, collective memory, and emotional loyalty. In this case, sorrow acts as a symbolic expression of continued connection and devotion, keeping the community united even years after the band's hiatus. This highlights how expressive speech, especially sorrowing, is not only emotional but also socially powerful preserving shared histories and reinforcing group identity over time.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of 70 viewer comments on One Direction's "10 Years of One Direction" video and drawing from the theories of Searle & Vanderveken (1978) and Leech (2014), the following conclusions were reached:

1) There are eight types of expressive speech acts found in the data based on Searle & Vanderveken's (1978) theory, which are: thanking, congratulating, praising, sorrowing, blaming, happiness, boasting, and regretting. These were all present within the comments, indicating that the commenters employed a wide range of emotional expressions in responding to the video of One Direction.

2) According to Leech (2014) about functional categorization, the expressive speech acts found in the data served various functions, which are: convivial (such as thanking, congratulating, boasting, and expressing happiness), collaborative (such as praising and regretting, which helps maintain group harmony and shared feelings), and conflictive (such as blaming and sorrowing, which may indicate disagreement or emotional tension). The majority of expressions were collaborative in nature, showing a strong emotional bond among fans.

3) The most commonly found type of expressive speech act in the data is sorrowing expression, with a total of 20 out of 70 expressions (28,57%). This reflects the emotional tone of the fan community, who express nostalgia, loss, and longing in response to One Direction's hiatus and the memories associated with their music.

Suggestions

For Future Researchers

Future studies should consider broader data sources beyond a single YouTube video, such as other social media platforms like Twitter, TikTok, or Instagram, where fan communication may differ. Researchers could also compare multiple videos or analyze fan comments on other artists' commemorative content. Since YouTube comment sections remain underexplored in linguistics, further investigation into aspects such as politeness, discourse markers, or emoji use would be valuable. Using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) could also deepen the research outcomes.

For Readers

This study aims to increase awareness of how emotional language functions in online fan communities. Readers are encouraged to reflect on how expressive speech acts not only convey

emotions but also shape identity, build connections, and strengthen digital communities. Recognizing these functions can enhance empathy and communication sensitivity in virtual interactions.

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