

**ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINT SPEECH ACT  
IN THE HELP MOVIE BY TATE TAYLOR**



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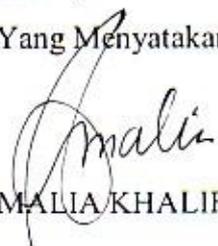
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# ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINT SPEECH ACT IN THE HELP MOVIE BY TATE TAYLOR

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## Abstract

This research aims to describe the speech act of complaint strategy which are used in *The Help* Movie. The type of this research is descriptive qualitative research while the writer uses documentation and observation method as the method of collecting data. The data of this research are expressive utterances which are found in *The Help* Movie. The result of the research shows the speech act of complaint strategy mostly uses is Direct Accusation strategy. The intention which is regularly used of the characters in the movie is to warn, the complainer warn the complaine. The complaine's responses frequently used are verbal response strategy and explicit denial responsibility complaine response.

Keywords: Complaint, Verbal - Non Verbal Complaint Response, Speech Act

## A. Introduction

Language is the one of important thing in the world. People say their expression, opinion and intention with their language. Speech act is the way to deliver our intention to other people. In Austin's book *Do Things with the Words* (Austin, 1962) speech act is the device used by people to get through the goal. In the classification of speech acts, Searle (in Trosborg, 1994:14-16) divides illocutionary acts into five kinds, namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Expressive are those kinds of speech acts which states what the speaker feels. They express psychological circumstances and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, and complaint. Whenever people to do with other people, they do not always agree or like. They sometimes disagree or they sometimes do not like. In

order to show their disagreement or their disapproval people make a complaint.

Complaint is actually a part of communication, it is the information which tells about unappropriatenes condition that accepted by second party who receive an utterance, a product, service and etc. Complaint has a couple of variations of linguistic forms. Complaint is frequently appeared through statement form, question form and imperative form. In complaining, people show their disapproval by those utterances. The power of the speaker's complaint depend on the capacity and the context. The purpose of the complaint can not be predicted by looking the linguistic form since it is hauled clearly. Complaint is spoken by a couple of complaint strategy. Because of complaint is the utterance which is spoken to offend other people so that the complainer mostly uses the direct accustaion strategy of complaint.

Research in analysing complaint in the movie is very limited. In this study, the writer presents ten of the previous studies that correlated with this study. Some of them are Tank (2004) studied speech act complaint in comparison of native and non-native EneGLISH speaker production; Moon (2002) analysed complaint strategies between native and non-native. Trench (1995) the title of the research is *Complaining in Catalan, complaining in English: A Comparative Study of native and EFL Spekaers*. The fourth is Bettina Kraft and Ronald Geluykens (2002). *Complaining in French L1 and L2: A Cross-linguistic investigation*. Nonetheless, theses studies did not mainly observed speech act of complaint in the movie. They mostly investigate complaint act int he daily interaction. Such as the previous studies this research also investigates the forms and the intention of the using of complaint strategy. But it is different from the previous study that this research uses a movie as the data source, it observes the complaint strategy which is used by the characters of the movie.

## **B. Literary Review**

### **1. Complaint**

Complaint is the one of function belonging expressive act category. Complaint is a part of communication which is used to show the dissatisfaction of the someone's treatment way. It is an utterance which have a function to show someone's displeasure or disapproval. The speech act of complaint happens whenever the speaker reacts with displeasure or annoyance for an action which has exaggerated the speaker unfavorably. Complaint can naturally cause offence and highly threaten the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Therefore, it is very important for people to be able to use appropriate strategy to perform complaint in order to avoid or minimize personal conflicts in communication. There are eight strategies related to making a complaint. They are: Hints strategy, Annoyance strategy, Ill consequence, Indirect Accusation, Direct Accusation, Modified Blame, Explicit Blame condition and Explicit blame person.

### **2. Verbal – Non Verbal Strategy**

Whenever people make an interaction with others, there must be something that is not worthed with yours so you complain someone sometimes, or you do an inappropriate action to others so you are complained by someone. Since there are many ways for someone to complaint, so that there must be a couple of strategies to respond the complaint. They are divided into two categories, namely Verbal and Non – Verbal categories. The verbal strategy of complaint response has twenty two sub strategies, they are explicit denial responsibility, implicit denial responsibility, justification, blaming someone else, attacking the complainer, minimizing the degree of offence, querying preconditions, blaming someone else, Implicit Acknowledgement, Explicit Acknowledgement, expression of

lack of intent, expression of self deficiency, expression of embarrassment, explicit acceptance of the blame, implicit explanation, explicit explanation, expression of regret, offer of apology, request for forgiveness, Expressing Concern for Hearer, Promise of Forbearance and offer of repair strategies.

In order to respond a complaint, the complainees do not just do verbal complaint response strategy, but sometimes, the complainees use the non-verbal complaint response to respond the complainer. The non-verbal complaint response which is found in the study, namely: sighing, head-shaking, laughing, freezing, nodding, receding, walking away, smirking and standing.

### 3. Previous Study

There are some previous studies that analyze the complaint act utterance. For instance, The first researcher is Tank (2004) entitled *Speech Act Sets of Refusal and Complaint: A Comparison of Native and Non-Native English Speaker's Production*. He examined the dissimilarity between native and non-native English speaker's production of refusals and complaints. The finding of his study is speech act could lead to greater pragmatic competence for non-natives speaker.

The second research is Moon (2001) entitled *Differences between Native and Non-native Speaker Complaint Strategies*. The intention of his study is to show that non-native speakers are not always successful in complaint and in communication in general. The failures of nonnative speakers in complaint by the primarily caused by their knowledge and linguistic limitations.

The third belongs to Trench (1995) the title of the research is *Complaining in Catalan, complaining in English: A Comparative Study of native and EFL Spekaers*. This research is aimed to find out how EFL Catalan speakers transfer pragmatic knowledge from their native language into English when performing the speech act complaining. The study pick on the semantic discourse components used by Catalan speakers and how they

correspond to and differ from the speakers of American. The data was collected by instruments of a Discourse Completion questionnaire administered to native and EFL participants in Barcelona and New York City. The study of this research is to disclose that, though both groups of native speakers made use of similar semantic formulas, learners still showed instances of pragmatic transfer.

The fourth is Bettina Kraft and Ronald Geluykens (2002). *Complaining in French L1 and L2: A Cross-linguistic investigation*. This study aims to reveal the addresses of linguistic realization of the face-threatening act of 'complaints' in native and non-native French discourse. Data were acquired through written Discourse Completion Tasks with German learners of French and native speaker to examine the extent to which L1 complaint strategies differ from L2 one, the extent to which differences can be thought about transferring from L1, and the extent to which complaint behaviour is gender specific. Then no direct proof of pragmatic transfer from the L1 was found, significantly differences were found between L1 and L2 in utterances lengths, use of supportive moves and appearance of downgraders and degree of directness. Some gender specific features were also found.

The fifth is Marty Laforest (1997) the title is *Complaining in front of a witness: Aspects of blaming others for their behaviour in multi-party family interactions*. This study is about direct complaint in the presence of a witness in family interactions which involved for more than two participants. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of the witness's presence on the way the sequence plays out. The outcome shows that of all the witness's possible reactions, affiliation with the complaine is the most regularly. This complaint is more fierce confront the complaine since the complaint is thereby "collectivized". Thus the witness dispense on two task simultaneously: they both contribute to controlling behaviours and to flowing a manageable level of tension between the participant.

The sixth is Derek Edwards (2005) the title is *Moaning, whinging and laughing: the subjective side of complaints*. This study shows the indirect

complaint sequences are examined in a course of everyday domestic telephone conversations. The analysis focuses on how a speaker/complainer displays and manages their subjective instrument in the complaint. Laughter and irony provide complaint recipients with response cues and are used in ways which can strengthen as well as undermine a complaint's factual basis and seriousness.

The seventh is Veronique Traverso (2008) the study is entitled *The dilemmas of third-party complaints in conversation between friends*. This study deals with third-party complaints in ordinary conversation. It is based on recording of visits amongs friends, which are analyzed in an interacttional persperctive. The overall aim is to describe tha way in which the co-conversationalists intouduce, accepts or refuse, develop, and close the activity of complaining in the course of their exchanges. Beyond this general purpose, two main issues underlie the analysis of the stuctural features of the activity type and discussing thorough data analysis some of th analytcal problems raised by the description of long sequences.

### **C. Research Method**

This study is descriptive method of which purposes to describe the form, complaint act, and the intention of the speech act complaint especially expressive utterance uttered by *The Help Movie*, by using Trosborg, Yule, Searle, and Brown and Levinson theory. The data of this research are written conervsation data in *The Help Movie* 2012 entitled *The Help*.

### **D. Result and Discussion**

#### **1. Result and Discussion**

This subchapter discusses the writer's finding of the analysis. It specifically relates to the research issues namely: What are the types of complaint strategy used by the character of *The Help Movie*, What are the intentions of complaint act by the characters of *The Help Movie* and what

are the types of complainees response strategy used by the character of The Help Movie. From the 700 data of The Help Movie provided, the writer finds that there are (1) 110 utterances used complaint strategies according to Trosborg they are; 1. Hints strategy (10,89%), 2. Annoyance Strategy (27,25%), 3. Direct Accusation strategy (34,57%), 4. Indirect Accusation strategy (13,63%), 5. Modified Blame strategy (3,62%), 6. Explicit Blame Behavior strategy (2,71%), 7. Explicit Blame Person (7,25%). The writer may conclude that mostly the character of The Help Movie use the Direct Accusation Strategy to complain and Explicit Blame Behavior strategy is less to use here.

The doers of complaint here are dominated by women, particularly, American white ladies and American colored maids. This caused by mostly, people who make complaint are dominated by women. It shows on previous chapter that then, the usage of direct accusation complaint strategy which appear customarily is caused by the background knowledge of the complainer. The complainer here is commonly less educated so that their way to complain seems impolite. The social class of the complainer here is influential too. The selection of the Direct Accusation strategy here is conquered complainers have a high-social status. Gender also takes effect in the way to do complaint, in the movie, man complain is softer than does woman. The culture of the complainer also influences in someone's way to complain. The doers of the complaint here are American, so that their western culture is influential to the way to complain. Mostly, the complaint here is open and disrespectful. It is because the culture of America allows white-people to oppress colored-people particularly, colored maid. This is influenced by the American culture in the late 1960. The writer also found many intentions of using complaint, for example to warn, to ask, to command, to protest, to show disagreement and to show disapproval.

The writer also found two categories of complainees response: Verbal and Non-Verbal strategy. The Verbal categorize has twenty two

strategies, then the complaint responses here include in: (1). The Explicit Denial Responsibility (8,18%), (2). The Implicit Category strategy (7,27%), (3). The Justification strategy (0%), (4). The Blaming Someone Else (0%), (5). The Attacking Complainer (3,63%), (6). The Minimizing the Degree of Offence (4,54%), (7). The Querying Preconditions (3,63%), (8). The Blaming Someone Else (0%), (9). The Implicit Acknowledgement (7,27%), (10). The Explicit Acknowledgement (7,27%), (11). The Expression of Lack of Intent (1,81%), (12). The Expression of Self Deficiency (0%), (13). The Expression of Embarrassment (0%), (14). The Explicit Acceptance of the Blame (3,63%), (15). The Implicit Explanation (4,54%), (16). The Explicit Explanation (7,27%), (17). Expression of Regret (6,36%), (18). The Offer of Apology (6,36%), (19). The Request for Forgiveness (0%), (20). The Expressing Concern for Hearer(5, 45%), (21). The .Promise of Forbearance (5, 45%), (22). The Offer of Repair (5, 45%). For Verbal strategy, the writer may conclude that the characters of The Help Movie mostly use the strategy of Explicit Denial Responsibility to respond the complaint. There are no characters use The Request for Forgiveness strategy here. It shows that the characters of the complainer here dominated by rude person.

The writer also finds The Non-Verbal strategy categorized as 1. Sighing (1,81%), 2. Laughing (0,90%), 3. Freezing (1,81%), Nodding (2,72%), 4. Smirking (1,81%), 5. Receding (0,90%), 6. Walking (0,90%), 7. Shaking Head (0,90%). From the data the writer finds that mostly, the characters of The Help Movie use Nodding strategy to respond the complaint or to show her agreement of the complainer's complaint or opinion.

Complaint is mostly answered by verbal-strategy but in this research, the writer found that there are some complaint which answered by the non-verbal strategy. The strategy of non-verbal strategy of the complaine response here namely: Sighing, Laughing, Freezing, Nodding,

Smirking, Receding, Walking and Shaking head. The reason why the complaine using the non-verbal strategy of complaine response just because the complaine doesn't has any power to respond so that they accept the response.

The relation between non-verbal strategy and speech act is while the complaine here be quiet, they still doing speech act as they doing something in their silence. The references of the complaint mostly used speaker oriented: "I, We". It caused by the complaint utterances are occured by women and they have a high-social status so their chosen of speaker oriented shows their selfishness as woman and also as a boss. The using of swear-word is about 9.09% from the 110 data. The writer found that complaint utterance in the movie is dominated by rude way. Complaint utterances regularly dominated by impolite utterances. It's related to Culpeper theory which said that Complaint is one way to offense people or we are able to say that complaint is a complainer's way to complaint the complaine. The complaint utterances here recurrently using the strategy of HA-SM ( Head Act-Supportive Moves). It shows that the complainer in *The Help* Movie says the complaint directly and to the point.

## **E. Conclusion**

The using of complaint strategy in this movie is dominated by the direct accusation strategy. Since the complaine in the movie is dominated by rude American characters. This study also found that complaint is not always be responded by verbal strategy, sometimes, complaint is responded by non-verbal strategy.



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