

## An Analysis of Perlocutionary Acts in the Dialogue of Mufasa: The Lion King (2024)

<sup>1</sup>Alyza Salsabila Firdausy, <sup>2</sup>Marwa Alifa Khanza, <sup>3</sup>Tatu Siti Rohbiah

<sup>123</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>alyzafirdausy@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>marwaalifak@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>tatu.siti.rohbiah@uinbanten.ac.id

### ABSTRACT

This study discusses perlocutionary speech acts as a type of speech effect on the behavior or psychology of the interlocutor in the dialogue of the animated film *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024). Finding various types of perlocutionary speech acts and explaining how speech in the film affects the reactions of other characters is the purpose of this study. Descriptive qualitative methodology based on Austin and Searle’s speech act theory was used. To collect data, scenes showing perlocutionary effects including convincing, calming, inspiring, and rejecting were observed and recorded. The findings of this study indicate that because perlocutionary speech acts can elicit emotional responses and behaviors from other characters, they are important for character development and storyline. The findings of this study indicate that language in film has the ability to influence and shape meaning in addition to functioning as a medium of communication. It is hoped that this study will advance pragmatics research and serve as a guide for learning and analyzing language in audiovisual materials.

**Keywords:** *Pragmatics; Animated film; Perlocutionary speech-acts.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a medium of communication, but also a powerful tool to shape thought, evoke emotion, and influence behavior (Amin, 2024). In pragmatics, this communicative function is conceptualized through Speech Act Theory. J.L. Austin, in *How to Do Things with Words*, classified speech acts into three types: locutionary acts (producing meaningful utterances), illocutionary acts (speaker’s intent such as requesting or commanding), and perlocutionary acts, which refer to the actual psychological or behavioral effects on the hearer (Austin, 1996).

Perlocutionary acts are particularly compelling because they reveal how language can directly impact listeners. Sudryat identified three main categories of perlocutionary effects: behavioral (e.g., compliance or avoidance), cognitive (e.g., realization or understanding), and emotional (e.g., relief or fear) (Sudryat, 2008). Building on this, Leech expanded the typology by identifying 16 verbs that indicate perlocutionary effects, such as convince, inspire, amuse, annoy, and cause to act. These classifications allow for deeper analysis of how utterances affect receivers in both real and fictional contexts (Leech, 2011).

Even though speech act theory is frequently used to explain real-world communication, fictional texts—especially movies—can also exhibit perlocutionary

acts (Dongalemba, 2016). Despite being scripted, movie dialogue often mimics real social interaction, including its emotional and psychological effects. Film is a mass communication medium that has the power to influence the attitudes and feelings of viewers, as Tan Wright suggests. According to Cangara dialogue is a calculated tactic used to sway both characters and audiences, and the film blends spoken and visual components to convey nuanced ideas (Cangara, 2020).

Speech act theory has been applied to cinematic discourse in earlier research. When Anggraeni et al. examined perlocutionary acts in the Story of Kale, they discovered that contextual cues and emotional intensity increased the speech’s persuasive power (Nabila Anggraeni et al., 2022). Similar effects were examined by Fadilah et al., Tindak Tutar Ekspresif dalam Film Pendek “Kembali Pulang” Karya Klamby, emphasizing the close connection between character action and emotion (Fadilah et al., 2025). Salsabila et al. investigated the ways in which Imperfect’s perlocutionary acts aided in the development of both interpersonal relationships and character (Salsabila et al., 2021).

By analyzing perlocutionary acts in the animated film *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024), this study expands on those works. It examines Mufasa’s emotional development and metamorphosis as a prequel to the original *Lion King* tale. The film’s emotionally charged and dramatic dialogue, which includes examples of inspiration, encouragement, reassurance, and persuasion, offers a wealth of material for perlocutionary analysis. This study integrates both traditional and modern theoretical viewpoints to bolster this analysis. Along with Austin’s fundamental theory, it makes reference to Sbisà’s (2022) focus on social justice and Kornmesser’s (2023) frame-based interpretation of speech acts.

The aim of this research is to identify and analyze perlocutionary speech acts in selected scenes from the film, examining how they provoke emotional, cognitive, or behavioral reactions in other characters. The study seeks to demonstrate how perlocutionary acts contribute to character interaction and narrative progression, and how film dialogue can serve as a rich source for pragmatic analysis and language learning.

## **METHODS**

### **Subjects of Research**

The subject of this research is the perlocutionary speech acts found within the animated film *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024). The data for the study consists of selected dialogues from the movie, specifically those utterances that clearly lead to a change in the interlocutor’s conduct or psychology. The primary source of information is the film video itself, supported by transcripts of particular scenes that contain the identified perlocutionary speech acts. The research employs a

descriptive qualitative method combined with a content analysis approach to systematically and accurately describe the characteristics and meaning behind these speech acts within their contextual settings.

**Instruments**

The researchers themselves served as the main instruments for data collection and analysis. Their role involved using a classification table based on established speech act theories by Austin (2020) and Searle (2019). The researchers were responsible for watching the film, transcribing relevant dialogues, identifying perlocutionary effects, and interpreting the data. To guarantee the validity and depth of the analysis, this study also utilized theory triangulation by consulting supporting frameworks from Yule (2020) and Cutting (2002) to ensure analytical consistency and credibility in the interpretation of psychological and behavioral effects.

**Data Collection**

Data were collected through a systematic multi-step process. First, the researchers engaged in repeated viewing of the film (*Mufasa: The Lion King*) to gain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline, character development, and contextual setting. Second, they proceeded to transcribe dialogues specifically from selected scenes that clearly exhibited perlocutionary speech acts. Finally, the researchers focused on identifying and recording only those utterances that produced noticeable emotional, attitudinal, or behavioral effects on the hearer to ensure the data strictly aligned with the research focus on perlocutionary acts.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The dialogues in *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024) contained a number of perlocutionary acts, which can be categorized into various types based on the resulting psychological effects or actions on the hearer. The classification is presented in the following table:

**Table. 1** Classification and Analysis of Perlocutionary Acts in *Mufasa: The Lion King* Dialogue

No	Speaker & Scene Context	Utterance (Locutionary Act)	Timestamp	Perlocutionary Effect (Impact)
1	Simba entrusts Kiara to Timon and Pumbaa before departing for an assignment.	"Guys! This is serious. I need you to stay with Kiara until I get back."	00:03:00	Persuading Timon and Pumbaa to take the situation seriously and immediately protect Kiara, resulting in a clear behavioral action.
2	Simba calms Kiara as a storm approaches.	"Don't be scared, my love. Be brave now, Kiara."	00:03:40	Calming and providing comfort, successfully reducing Kiara's anxiety and achieving emotional stabilization.

3	Rafiki offers comfort to Kiara after she loses her parents.	"The roots of those trees are very strong, like your family."	00:05:20	Reassuring and comforting Kiara by providing a symbolic connection between her family's enduring strength and nature.
4	Obasi banishes Taka following a grave error.	"You will leave and start a new life, a new beginning."	00:10:10	Giving an order that creates a profound sense of emotional rejection and forces Taka to comply behaviorally (leaving the territory).
5	Eshe encourages Mufasa when he is feeling adrift and silent.	"To be lost is to learn the way."	00:11:00	Providing motivation and encouragement by inspiring Mufasa to reflect and reframe his internal state.
6	Obasi assigns Mufasa a critical mission regarding pride loyalty.	"I need you to go with him, Mufasa, to pledge your loyalty."	00:14:00	Imposing responsibility and emotional pressure on Mufasa, leading to immediate, respectful obedience.
7	Sarabi expresses gratitude to Mufasa after he saves her from harm.	"You saved me."	00:18:00	Building emotional intimacy and strengthening the relational bond between Sarabi and Mufasa through acknowledgment.
8	Mufasa gives a speech to rally the animal kingdom during uncertainty.	"My breath is your breath. Your fight is my fight."	00:22:00	Persuading and encouraging the animals to unite, successfully transforming anxiety into collective determination and solidarity.

The systematic tabulation of perlocutionary acts highlights the complexity and strategic intent behind the character dialogues in *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024). The data clearly demonstrate that the perlocutionary function—the effect achieved upon the hearer—is highly dependent on the interplay between the speaker's social authority (e.g., Simba as King, Obasi as Elder) and the emotional context of the scene (e.g., fear, grief, ceremony). These acts, ranging from Persuading and Calming to Inspiring Unity, serve as crucial narrative mechanisms that drive plot progression, resolve emotional conflicts, and articulate themes of responsibility and leadership, thereby affirming the necessity of pragmatic analysis for a comprehensive understanding of cinematic discourse and character motivation.

### **Perlocutionary Acts in *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024)**

The perlocutionary acts identified in the character dialogues of the film *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024) demonstrate how utterances go beyond literal meaning to exert significant emotional, cognitive, and practical effects on the interlocutors, contributing fundamentally to character dynamics and narrative development.

**Table 2.** Summary of Perlocutionary Acts in *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024)

No	Perlocutionary Act Category	Characters	Timestamp	Perlocutionary Effect (Impact)
1	<b>Persuading</b>	Simba to Timon and Pumbaa	00:03:00	Behavioral shift from dismissiveness to seriousness and acceptance of responsibility.
2	<b>Calming</b>	Simba to Kiara	00:03:40	Emotional transition from fear and panic to noticeable quietness and composure.
3	<b>Giving Hope</b>	Rafiki to Kiara	00:05:20	Psychological shift from grief to introspective reflection and emotional fortitude.
4	<b>Emotionally Pressuring</b>	Obasi to Taka	00:10:10	Behavioral compliance (walking away) induced by feelings of rejection and emotional distress.
5	<b>Inspiring Introspection</b>	Eshe to Mufasa	00:11:00	Cognitive change from bewilderment to focused acceptance and self-reflection.
6	<b>Assigning Responsibility</b>	Obasi to Mufasa	00:14:00	Prompt, respectful behavioral obedience to a ceremonial and authoritative directive.
7	<b>Creating Emotional Closeness</b>	Sarabi to Mufasa	00:18:00	Deepening of the relational bond, resulting in an intimate and affectionate atmosphere.
8	<b>Inspiring Unity</b>	Mufasa to Animal Kingdom	00:22:00	Collective shift from anxiety and dispersal to renewed determination and group solidarity.

The analysis reveals that utterances categorized as Persuading and Assigning Responsibility successfully trigger measurable behavioral responses. In the interaction between Simba and Timon/Pumbaa (Persuading), Simba's serious tone and relational authority override the hearer's initial dismissal, compelling them to accept responsibility—an effect consistent with Searle's (2019) assertion that perlocutionary force is amplified by social context and urgency. Similarly, Obasi's ceremonial power in Assigning Responsibility ensures Mufasa's prompt obedience, illustrating the tangible behavioral effects described by Austin (1962).

This category highlights the use of language to manage and stabilize the hearer's internal state. The act of Calming (Simba to Kiara) utilizes emotional delivery and loving language to facilitate a transition from fear to composure, aligning with studies noting soothing functions in emotionally charged scenes (Salsabila et al., 2021). Giving Hope (Rafiki to Kiara) and Inspiring Introspection (Eshe to Mufasa) both rely on metaphorical or symbolic language (e.g., "roots of those trees," "To be lost is to learn the way") to induce cognitive reframing. The success of these acts is contextually determined, as Searle (2019) argues, with the

speaker's role as a mentor or guardian bolstering the message's acceptance.

These acts focus on enhancing existing ties, both personal and collective. Sarabi's utterance (Creating Emotional Closeness) acknowledges Mufasa's sacrifice, indirectly triggering an emotional response that deepens their personal intimacy, illustrating how perlocutionary acts in personal contexts often rely on emotionally charged acknowledgment to foster trust (Searle, 2025). Finally, Mufasa's use of inclusive, poetic language (Inspiring Unity) successfully rallies the entire animal kingdom, transforming widespread anxiety into collective determination. This outcome supports Cangara's (2020) view that symbolic language from a leader possesses the capacity to strongly evoke group action and solidarity, demonstrating a powerful perlocutionary effect on a mass scale.

## CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of *Mufasa: The Lion King* (2024), a number of different types of perlocutionary acts were identified, such as persuading, calming, reassuring, emotionally pressuring, motivating, assigning responsibility, fostering emotional closeness, and inspiring unity. These types appeared through specific dialogues that elicited distinct emotional, cognitive, or behavioral responses from other characters. The analyzed utterances show how speech in the film goes beyond literal meaning and instead serves as a potent tool for influencing actions and forming internal character developments. Each perlocutionary act, in accordance with Austin's and Searle's frameworks, is contextually driven and relationally embedded, highlighting the various functions of language in fictional narratives.

Through modifying their emotional states, inspiring behavioral changes, fortifying interpersonal ties, and even rerouting life decisions, these perlocutionary acts have a profound impact on the interlocutors in the film's plot. For example, Rafiki's symbolic confidence helps Kiara deal with bereavement, while Mufasa's motivational remarks inspire solidarity throughout the animal world. Perlocutionary speaking acts are crucial narrative strategies for character development and emotional resonance, as these responses confirm. The assumption that movie dialogue, albeit being fictional, represents genuine pragmatic functions with significant social and psychological influence is reinforced by the fact that they not only direct the plot but also reflect real-life communication dynamics.

## REFERENCES

- Amin, R. B. (2024). Pragmatic Analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. *American Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education* (2993-2769), 2(6), 187-195.  
<https://grnjournal.us/index.php/STEM/article/view/5132>
- Austin, J. L. (1996). *How to Do Things with Words*. Clarendon Press.

- Cangara, H. (2020). *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi* (4th ed.). Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Dongalemba, R. M. (2016). Aspek-Aspek Perlokusi Dalam Film Spy Karya Paul Feig. *Jurnal Elektronik Fakultas Sastra Universitas Sam Ratulangi*, 4(2), 1–23.
- Fadilah, M. R., Husna, G. N., Khaerunisa, A., Aqilla, M. R., Utomo, A. P. Y., Putro, K. E., Setiawan, S., & Muhajir, M. (2025). Tindak Tutur Ekspresif dalam Film Pendek “Kembali Pulang” Karya Klamby. *Pragmatik: Jurnal Rumpun Ilmu Bahasa Dan Pendidikan*, 3(4), 108–137. <https://doi.org/10.61132/pragmatik.v3i4.2269>
- Leech, G. N. (2011). *Principles of Pragmatics*. Routledge.
- Nabila Anggraeni, Esti Istiqomah, Annisa Dwi Nur Fitriana, Ryan Hidayat, & Asep Purwo Yudi Utomo. (2022). Analisis Tindak Tutur Perlokusi pada Dialog Film Story of Kale: When Someone’s in Love. *PUSTAKA: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Pendidikan*, 2(4), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.56910/pustaka.v2i4.130>
- Salsabila, N., Siagian, I., & Yulianto, E. (2021). Tindak Tutur Perlokusi dalam Dialog Film Imperfect Karya Ernest Prakasa dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *ALEGORI*, 1(2), 1–9.
- Searle, J. R. (2025). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sudryat, Y. (2008). *Makna dalam Wacana: Prinsip-prinsip Semantik dan Pragmatik*. Yrama Widya.

