

An Analysis of Perlocutionary Acts in The Movie "Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings"

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the types of perlocutionary acts found in the movie Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. The objective of the study is to identify and describe how utterances spoken by the characters produce observable effects on hearers. This research applies to a descriptive qualitative method because the data are in the form of words, scenes, contexts, and hearer responses rather than numerical measurement. The primary data consist of selected utterances from the movie, while the supporting data are taken from books and previous studies on pragmatic and speech acts. The data were collected through observation, transcription, note-taking, and purposive selection. The analysis was conducted by identifying the context, classifying the perlocutionary effect, and interpreting the hearer response. The findings show 26 perlocutionary data points from 25 dialogic contexts. Five types are identified: persuading, convincing, inspiring, intimidating, and insulting. Persuading appears as the dominant type because the movie contains many urgent action scenes, commands, warnings, and emotional appeals that directly influence the hearers.

Keywords: *Perlocutionary Acts, Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Movie Dialogue, Shang-Chi*

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the main tools used by human beings to communicate meaning, exchange ideas, build relationships, and influence the actions of others. Communication is not limited to the literal meaning of words because utterances often carry intentions and produce certain effects on listeners. In pragmatics, meaning is understood by considering the speaker, the hearer, and the situation in which the utterance is produced. This makes pragmatic analysis important for understanding how people use language in real interaction, especially when the effect of an utterance cannot be explained only through its grammatical form (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983).

Speech act theory explains that speaking is also a form of action. Austin (1962) divides speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary

act refers to the production of meaningful linguistic expressions, while an illocutionary act refers to the speaker's communicative intention, such as ordering, promising, warning, or requesting. A perlocutionary act focuses on the effect of an utterance on the hearer, such as persuading, frightening, encouraging, insulting, or making someone act. This distinction is useful because the success of a perlocutionary act is seen from the hearer's response rather than from the speaker's intention alone (Austin, 1962; Yule, 2010).

Perlocutionary acts are especially relevant for analyzing movie dialogue because films present verbal expressions together with visible reactions. Characters do not only speak to exchange information; they also use utterances to influence decisions, create fear, build trust, provoke anger, and encourage action. In cinematic discourse, the effect of an utterance can often be observed through changes in facial expression, body movement, emotional state, and subsequent behavior. Therefore, movie dialogue provides rich data for studying how utterances function pragmatically in a specific context (Krisnadiari et al., 2018; Santia & Kurniawan, 2019).

Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings is a suitable object for perlocutionary analysis because its narrative combines action, family conflict, authority, identity, and emotional struggle. The characters frequently speak in urgent situations, such as battles, escapes, training scenes, and confrontations between family members. In these situations, short utterances such as commands, warnings, and emotional appeals can produce immediate responses from the hearers. The movie therefore allows the researcher to observe how utterances affect characters' thoughts, emotions, and actions within a strong narrative context (Marvel, 2021; Setiadi & Simatupang, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that perlocutionary acts can be found in various forms of discourse, including movies, web series, reading texts, and public debates. Krisnadiari et al. (2018) analyzed perlocutionary acts in *Freaky Friday* and showed how character utterances influenced hearer behavior. Santia and Kurniawan (2019) examined speech acts in *Aladdin* and demonstrated how dialogue could shape decisions among characters. Setiadi and Simatupang (2022) investigated *The Adam Project* and found that perlocutionary acts appeared in situations where characters responded to instructions, warnings, and emotional expressions. These studies prove that film dialogue can be analyzed as meaningful pragmatic data.

Other studies also provide useful classifications of perlocutionary effects. Cri Sandi (2021) identified persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, and inspiring in *Annabelle: Creation*. Karim et al. (2020) found perlocutionary patterns such as persuading, impressing, encouraging, and distracting attention in the web series *Di Balik Hati*. Ardiyani Musriyono and Saptono (2018) identified pragmatic functions such as persuade, convince, deceive, encourage, amuse, and frighten in leveled reading books. These classifications show that perlocutionary effects may vary depending on context, genre, relationship between speakers, and the observable responses produced by hearers.

Although previous studies have analyzed perlocutionary acts in several films and discourse contexts, an action-superhero movie such as *Shang-Chi* offers a different pragmatic environment. The film contains rapid physical movements, hierarchical authority,

emotional trauma, family loyalty, and moments of life-threatening danger. These elements make hearer responses more intense and visually observable. For that reason, this article focuses on five dominant types of perlocutionary acts found in the movie: persuading, convincing, inspiring, intimidating, and insulting. The study aims to identify and describe the types of perlocutionary acts used by the characters and to explain how the utterances produce effects on the hearers (Austin, 1962; Levinson, 1983).

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative method because the data were taken from spoken utterances, contexts, and observable responses in the movie rather than from numerical measurement. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring meaning, interpreting social phenomena, and understanding how participants or characters respond within specific contexts. In this article, the researcher interpreted the selected dialogues by relating the utterance, the speaker, the hearer, and the response that appeared after the utterance was produced (Creswell, 2009).

The object of this research was the movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. The primary data were utterances spoken by the characters in the movie that produced clear perlocutionary effects on the hearers. The unit of analysis was not only the utterance itself, but also the context of the scene and the response shown by the hearer. The supporting data were taken from selected books, articles, and previous studies related to pragmatics, speech act theory, and perlocutionary acts (Austin, 1962; Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983).

The data were collected through observation and note-taking. The researcher repeatedly watched the movie to understand the storyline, the relationship among characters, and the context of each utterance. After that, the researcher transcribed and cross-checked selected dialogues with the movie scenes to ensure the accuracy of the utterances and timestamps. Only utterances that produced observable psychological, emotional, cognitive, or behavioral effects were selected as data. This procedure is in line with qualitative pragmatic research that emphasizes context and hearer response as the basis of interpretation (Sudaryanto, 2015; Saputra et al., 2026).

The selected data were analyzed using the pragmatic identity method because the determinant of the analysis was the hearer's reaction. In this method, the meaning of the utterance is interpreted by observing the external response caused by the utterance. The researcher first organized the data chronologically, then identified the context, the speaker, the hearer, and the effect. After that, each datum was classified into one of five perlocutionary act types: persuading, convincing, inspiring, intimidating, and insulting. Finally, the frequency of each type was calculated to support the descriptive explanation (Sudaryanto, 2015; Austin, 1962).

The classification was adapted from the concept of perlocutionary effects in Austin's speech act theory and from categories used in previous studies. Persuading refers to an utterance that makes the hearer do something or follow a certain direction. Convincing refers to an utterance that makes the hearer believe or accept something.

Inspiring refers to an utterance that motivates or strengthens the hearer's confidence. Intimidating refers to an utterance that creates fear, pressure, or obedience. Insulting refers to an utterance that hurts, humiliates, or challenges the hearer's pride (Cri Sandi, 2021; Karim et al., 2020; Ardiyani Musriyono & Saptono, 2018).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

The analysis found 26 perlocutionary data points from 25 dialogic contexts in Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. The number of data points is 26 because one dialogic context produces two different perlocutionary effects. The findings show five types of perlocutionary acts: persuading, convincing, inspiring, intimidating, and insulting. The classification was made by observing the actual effect that appeared after the utterance was spoken, in accordance with the principle that perlocutionary acts are determined by the hearer's response (Austin, 1962; Levinson, 1983).

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage of each type. Persuading is the most dominant type with 16 data points or 61.54 percent. Convincing appears 5 times or 19.23 percent. Intimidating and insulting each appear 2 times or 7.69 percent. Inspiring appears once or 3.85 percent. The dominance of persuading indicates that the film relies heavily on utterances that make other characters move, obey, escape, fight, or make immediate decisions (Yule, 2010; Setiadi & Simatupang, 2022).

Table 1: Distribution of Perlocutionary Acts

No.	Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Persuading	16	61.54%
2	Convincing	5	19.23%
3	Inspiring	1	3.85%
4	Intimidating	2	7.69%
5	Insulting	2	7.69%
	Total	26	100%

Source: Researcher analysis based on selected utterances in Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings.

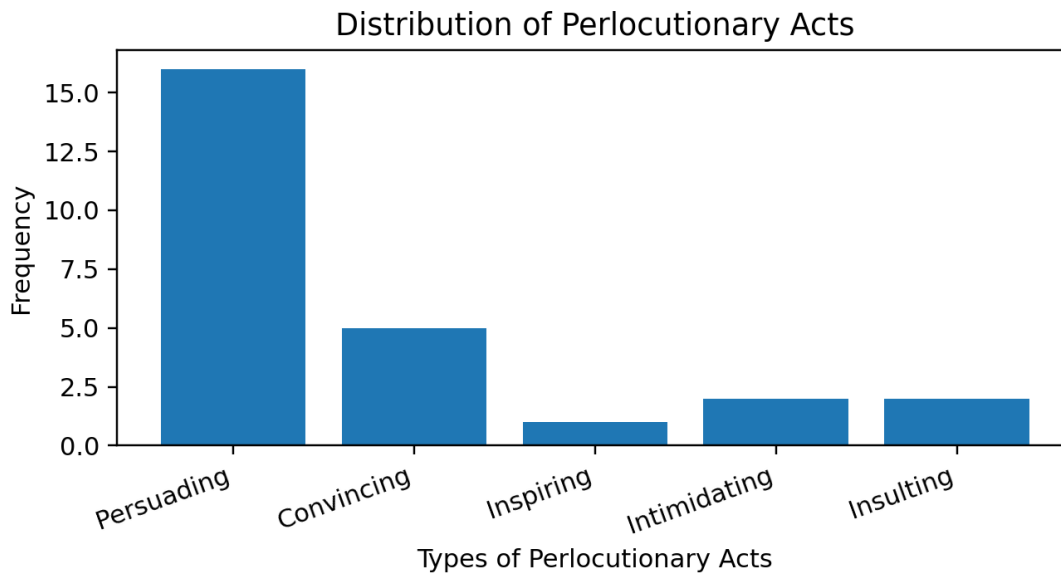


Figure 1: Distribution of Perlocutionary Acts

Table 2 presents representative data from each category. The table is not intended to replace the qualitative interpretation; rather, it shows how the utterance, timestamp, type, and effect are connected. The complete classification shows that the same grammatical form may produce different effects depending on the scene, the relationship between characters, and the hearer's visible response (Austin, 1962; Krisnadiari et al., 2018).

Table 2: Representative Data of Perlocutionary Acts

Datum	Type	Timestamp	Utterance	Perlocutionary Effect
DATA 1	Persuading	00:03:51	Wenwu: "I want to go now."	The subordinates obey and prepare for the journey to Ta Lo.
DATA 2 Part One	Intimidating	00:05:25	Jiang Li: "Turn around now, and I won't have to hurt you."	Wenwu refuses to retreat and prepares to attack with the ten rings.
DATA 2 Part Two	Insulting	00:05:40	Jiang Li: "Is that all?"	Wenwu becomes provoked and intensifies the fight.
DATA 3	Persuading	00:11:17	Katy: "Please, get in. I'll go slow."	Shaun accepts the request and enters the car.

DATA 13	Convincing	00:46:35	Wenwu: "If you want them to be yours one day, you have to show me you're strong enough to carry them."	Young Shang-Chi believes that strength is necessary to gain paternal validation.
DATA 19	Inspiring	01:15:58	Ying Nan: "You've been in the shadows long enough, my child."	Xialing becomes motivated and begins training confidently.
DATA 21	Intimidating	01:32:05	Wenwu: "Burn it down!"	The henchmen obey ruthlessly and attack the village.
DATA 23	Convincing	01:37:05	The Evil Spirit: "Save me."	Wenwu believes his wife is alive and tears down the gate.
DATA 25	Persuading	01:49:59	Shang-Chi: "IT'S HEADED FOR THE VILLAGE!!!"	The guardian dragon returns to intercept the threat.

Source: Researcher analysis based on selected utterances in Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings.

Persuading appears most frequently in the data. This type occurs when an utterance makes the hearer perform an action or follow a certain direction. For example, Wenwu's utterance, "I want to go now," makes his subordinates abandon the idea of sending a scout and immediately prepare for the journey. Katy's utterance, "Please, get in. I'll go slow," persuades Shaun to enter the car even though he initially asks her to get out. These data show that persuading does not always appear in long explanations; in urgent situations, short utterances can produce immediate behavioral effects (Austin, 1962; Yule, 2010).

Convincing appears when the hearer accepts the speaker's statement as believable or true. One strong example is Wenwu's statement to young Shang-Chi: "If you want them to be yours one day, you have to show me you're strong enough to carry them." The effect is not merely physical obedience, but a cognitive change in Shang-Chi's understanding of strength, worthiness, and paternal approval. Another example is the evil spirit's utterance "Save me," which convinces Wenwu that his wife is still alive. These examples show convincing works by reshaping belief and perception (Levinson, 1983; Cri Sandi, 2021).

Inspiring is found in Ying Nan's utterance to Xialing: "You've been in the shadows long enough, my child." This utterance produces an emotional and motivational effect. Xialing, who previously feels ignored and marginalized, receives verbal recognition from Ying Nan and becomes motivated to train as an equal in Ta Lo. This data shows that inspiring utterances are not only about giving instructions; they also restore confidence and create

positive emotional movement in the hearer (Ardiyani Musriyono & Saptono, 2018; Karim et al., 2020).

Intimidating and insulting appear less frequently, but both are important because they show negative psychological effects. Jiang Li's warning, "Turn around now, and I won't have to hurt you," is framed as intimidation, although the actual response is not fear but resistance. Meanwhile, Jiang Li's mocking question, "Is that all?" attacks Wenwu's pride and provokes greater aggression. Wenwu's command, "Burn it down," also functions as intimidation because it creates pressure and forces his followers into violent obedience. These findings support the idea that perlocutionary effects may be emotional, cognitive, or behavioral (Austin, 1962; Setiadi & Simatupang, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The findings show that perlocutionary acts in *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* are closely shaped by the action-superhero genre. The movie frequently places characters in dangerous situations where the hearer must respond quickly. Because of this context, many utterances are direct, brief, and action-oriented. Commands such as "Stop him," "Go, go, go," and "Burn it down" become powerful because they are spoken in moments where delay may cause harm. In Austin's terms, the importance of these utterances lies not in the words alone, but in the consequences produced after the words are spoken (Austin, 1962; Yule, 2010).

The dominance of persuading is also connected to the relationships among the characters. When a speaker has authority, emotional closeness, or strategic importance, the hearer is more likely to respond immediately. Wenwu's commands influence his subordinates because he holds power over them. Katy's words affect Shaun because they have a long friendship and mutual trust. Xialing's command affects Shang-Chi because of their sibling relationship and shared danger. These examples show that perlocutionary acts depend on the social and emotional relationship between speaker and hearer (Levinson, 1983; Krisnadiari et al., 2018).

Compared with previous studies, the findings of this article show both similarities and differences. Similar to Krisnadiari et al. (2018), this study finds that movie dialogue can influence the hearer's behavior. Similar to Santia and Kurniawan (2019), the data also show that utterances can guide character decisions. However, the context of *Shang-Chi* produces more urgent and physical effects because the movie contains battles, escapes, and confrontations. This makes the perlocutionary effects more visible through immediate actions such as running, fighting, moving, obeying, or protecting another character (Santia & Kurniawan, 2019; Setiadi & Simatupang, 2022).

The category of convincing is significant because it proves that perlocutionary effects are not limited to visible physical movement. In some scenes, the effect appears as a change in belief or perception. Wenwu's belief that his wife is alive is created by the evil spirit's deceptive utterance, while young Shang-Chi's belief about strength is shaped by his father's words. These examples support Levinson's explanation that utterances can influence the thoughts and assumptions of the hearer. Therefore, perlocutionary analysis

must consider not only what the hearer does, but also what the hearer comes to believe (Levinson, 1983; Cri Sandi, 2021).

The inspiring data also strengthens the emotional dimension of perlocutionary acts. Ying Nan's utterance to Xialing is not an order, threat, or logical explanation. Instead, it provides emotional recognition and encourages Xialing to claim her place as an equal. This finding is consistent with previous studies that identify encouraging and inspiring as possible perlocutionary effects. It demonstrates that language in film can support character development by changing the hearer's confidence, motivation, and self-perception (Ardiyani Musriyono & Saptono, 2018; Karim et al., 2020).

The negative effects of intimidating and insulting reveal that perlocutionary acts can also create tension, pressure, resistance, or emotional injury. Jiang Li's insult does not make Wenwu submit; instead, it provokes him to intensify his attack. This shows that perlocutionary effects are not always identical with the speaker's intended result. A threatening utterance may cause fear, but it may also trigger anger or resistance depending on the hearer's personality and the situation. This unpredictability is one of the important characteristics of perlocutionary acts (Austin, 1962; Levinson, 1983).

Another important point is that movie dialogue is multimodal. The hearer response is often supported by facial expression, tone of voice, body movement, camera focus, and the physical setting of the scene. For example, an utterance such as "Hurry up" becomes more powerful because it is spoken during pursuit and danger. A scream such as "Shaun!" becomes persuasive because it is supported by fear and a visible threat to life. Thus, the analysis of movie dialogue should consider both verbal and non-verbal elements because the perlocutionary effect is produced through the entire scene, not only through the written script (Krisnadiari et al., 2018; Saputra et al., 2026).

The limitation of this study is that the analysis focuses only on perlocutionary acts and does not deeply compare them with locutionary or illocutionary acts. The study also uses one movie as the object, so the findings are strongly connected to the genre, storyline, and character relationships in *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. However, this limitation also makes the analysis focused because the study can describe the effect of utterances in detail within one complete narrative context (Creswell, 2009; Austin, 1962).

The implication of this study is that pragmatic analysis can help students understand language as action. By examining how utterances affect hearers, students can see that meaning is not only found in vocabulary or grammar, but also in context, intention, reaction, and social relationship. For future researchers, similar studies can be conducted on other genres such as courtroom drama, romance, horror, or political film to compare how genre influences the distribution of perlocutionary effects (Yule, 1996; Setiadi & Simatupang, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* contain five types of perlocutionary acts: persuading, convincing, inspiring, intimidating, and insulting. The analysis identifies 26 perlocutionary data points from 25 dialogic contexts. Persuading

is the dominant type with 16 data points or 61.54 percent, followed by convincing with 5 data points or 19.23 percent. Intimidating and insulting appear 2 times each or 7.69 percent, while inspiring appears once or 3.85 percent. These findings show that the movie mainly uses utterances to make characters act, respond, obey, escape, fight, or accept certain decisions.

The dominance of persuading reflects the action-adventure nature of the movie. Many scenes require immediate responses because the characters face danger, conflict, or emotional pressure. However, the findings also show that perlocutionary effects are not limited to physical action. Some utterances shape belief, restore confidence, create fear, provoke anger, or pressure the hearer psychologically. Therefore, the identity of a perlocutionary act must be determined by observing the actual response of the hearer in context.

Future researchers are suggested to analyze perlocutionary acts in different movie genres in order to compare how genre affects the types and frequency of perlocutionary effects. Students of linguistics are also encouraged to use movie dialogue as learning material because it provides clear examples of how language functions in real interaction. Through this kind of analysis, learners can understand that utterances do not only express meaning, but also influence thoughts, emotions, and actions.

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