

THE SPEECH ACT ANALYSIS IN *THE MONKEY'S PAW* BY W.W. JACOBS

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore speech acts through both discourse and pragmatic perspectives. In terms of the discourse-focused mode, turn-taking is one of the key components in speech analysis as it helps to understand the structure of a conversation and reveals how speech acts are used in context. From a pragmatic perspective, speech acts are crucial for understanding speakers' intentions and desires, which are difficult to identify because they are embedded in context. Specifically, this paper attempts to analyse various types of speech acts found in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*. The first part of the research is based on Bennison's (1998) framework on discourse analysis, which includes turn allocation and turn-taking, topic shift/control, and turn length in order to investigate how the characters interact and manage their conversational roles. It also builds on Toolan's (1998) "give and take" model, which analyses dialogue based on speech functions such as offers, requests, informs and questions. In the second part, Searle's (1976) speech act theory is applied to examine how the use of illocutionary acts in characters' utterances reflects their personalities in the horror story. It is found that the dominant pattern of turn-taking is "current speaker selects next", which shows that speakers control the flow of conversation. In particular, Mr. White leads the conversation and allocates turns which indicate his dominance in the interaction. Moreover, most characters prefer discussing a particular topic rather than shifting to another; this reveals their strong interest in the mysterious power of the paw. Regarding turn length, Morris's turns are the longest as he provides detailed explanations about the monkey's paw and its effects. It is also found that the most frequent type of speech act is representatives followed by directives and expressives, while the least frequent type is commissives. No declaration is found in the horror story. The dominant use of representative speech acts in Mr. White's utterances reveals that he is rational and disbelieves in supernatural power. In addition, more directive speech acts are found in Mrs. White's utterances in Part III, where she commands her husband to make a second wish. This highlights the protective nature of a mother and her emotional instability. Moreover, the two main characters lead the conversation by taking more turns, and the majority of spoken exchanges occur among family members.

Keywords: turn-taking, turn shift/control, turn length, speech act, representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations

Introduction

Effective communication is one of the unique characteristics of human society, and we use different forms of communication to convey our ideas, feelings and attitudes. In real conversations, communication is not just about saying words, because the same words can have different meanings. It involves what speakers say, how they say it and why they say it in conversations. If speakers understand the content, delivery and intention, they can participate in conversations effectively.

Discourse competence raises awareness of how people manage interaction, take turns, and use language. Speakers need to notice when to speak, when to take a turn, and when to switch turns. Moreover, to become competent speakers, pragmatic knowledge is required to interpret speakers' intentions correctly. It is crucial that people have strong discourse competence

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and pragmatic competence as both skills are of vital importance in maintaining the flow of conversation and building relationships between speakers.

Discourse analysis concentrates on describing the “structure” of spoken and written discourse above the level of the sentence including, for example, the unwritten “rules” by which people take turns in conversation (Short, 1995, p. 46). Short (1995) also states that discourse analysis and pragmatics overlap to some extent, as they both study how language is used in conversation although their basic aims are different. For example, turn-taking patterns in a particular conversation are interpreted as significant. Turn-taking is more than simply taking turns to talk; it requires cooperation. A turn might be a single word such as “wish” or a longer phrase or sentence.

In the turn-taking process, participants alternate their roles as speakers and listeners, and they manage when to speak and for how long. If A always speaks first and always interrupts B, while B never interrupts A, this behaviour tells us something about the relationship between A and B (Short, 1995, p. 47). In other words, frequent interruptions can lead to an asymmetrical relationship between speakers: A dominates the conversation and B accepts a subordinate role. Bennisson (1998, p. 67) claims that words in texts reveal characters’ personalities by analysing their conversational behaviour and by using the powerful interpretative apparatus of discourse analysis and pragmatics. Conversational patterns reveal what speakers think, how they feel and how they relate to others.

Speech acts are considered part of pragmatics as they focus on how language is used in context, including the functions and underlying meanings of utterances. Yule (1996) claimed that pragmatics is the study of contextual meanings. Pragmatics explores how utterances are interpreted in context, which gives meanings to utterances that differ from the meanings of the individual sentences that comprise them (Short, 1995, p. 47).

In real-life communication, context largely influences the choice of language; therefore, speakers must be aware of whom they are talking to and where the interaction takes place. If linguistic competence is the ability to perform and understand illocutionary acts, then competent speakers and hearers must possess certain mental states and abilities which are, in general, traditionally related to the faculty of reason (Vanderveken, 2001). It is crucial to understand a wide range of speech functions or acts which help speakers communicate effectively in different contexts; speakers need to be flexible and skillful enough to vary their techniques. In other words, speakers should understand both the basic functions and the deep structure of language and they need to vary speech functions in different social situations to achieve specific goals.

Linguists have become increasingly interested in different types of texts (conversations, articles, speeches, etc.) and how texts function in specific contexts. This shift in emphasis has given rise to a relatively new discipline of discourse analysis, which regards all types of spoken and written texts—for example, conversations, interviews, leaflets, poems and novels—as discourses, that is, as interpersonal communicative activities performed for a specific social purpose and situated in a particular context (Verdonk, 1995, p. 45).

It is found that EFL learners can develop both discourse and pragmatic competence through reading fiction, which exposes readers to vocabulary, dialogue and social and cultural contexts. By reading fictional conversations, language learners raise their awareness of turn-taking patterns because, in the society, a person is considered impolite and less respectful if a

listener or speaker does not give others opportunities to take turns. As learning a new language involves more than memorising words and rules, learners can improve their language proficiency and communication style, practise functional language (making requests, apologising, inviting and so on) and learn how to respond appropriately in real-life situations.

In particular, the utterances spoken by characters in novels and short stories are not different from those which are used in daily conversations. Generally, authors create dialogues, plots and characters in fiction, based on their experiences; moreover, readers engage with literary texts to understand human behaviour and the complex nature of life.

This research paper applies Bennison's framework, which includes turn-taking, turn shift/control and turn length, to investigate how participants interact and how they manage conversational roles. Moreover, Toolan's "Give and Take" model and Searle's speech act theory are applied to identify different types of speech acts in the horror story *The Monkey's Paw*. A horror story is a narrative in which the focus is on creating a feeling of fear. Such stories may feature supernatural elements—ghosts, witches, vampires—or they may address more realistic psychological fears (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

This study examines how turn-taking patterns influence character development. For example, shorter responses indicate shock or uncertainty whereas longer turns reveal characters' control over the conversation or their detailed explanations of topics. Speech act analysis across different genres also helps learners gain a better understanding of the pragmatic nature of utterances and their social functions. For instance, speech functions such as warnings, wishes and representatives are commonly found in horror stories whereas speech functions such as promising, apologising, requesting and giving compliments are more abundant in romance.

The aim of the research paper is to explore different types of speech acts used by the characters in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*. It involves three objectives: to identify different turn-taking patterns used by the characters, to examine different types of speech acts employed by the characters and to investigate how dominant types of speech acts depict the characters' personalities, desires and emotions. This research paper also helps learners appreciate how characters' utterances convey their emotions, personalities and desires.

Research Questions

The research paper addresses the following questions:

1. What types of turn-taking tools are used by the characters in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*?
2. What types of speech acts are found in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*?
3. What are the dominant types of turn-taking patterns and speech acts that indicate the personalities of the two main characters in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*?

Literature Review

A turn is the basic unit of conversation analysis and it is the process of alternating between speakers. A turn refers to when someone speaks; they take a turn at speech and when speech alternates, turns alternate as well (Herman, 1998, p. 19). A turn is the time when a speaker

is talking and turn-taking is the skill of knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation (British Council, 2024).

In both formal and informal conversation settings, people exchange their thoughts, opinions and emotions. And sometimes they wait for their turns to speak while listening to others. Failing to wait for one's turn or frequent interruptions can cause misunderstandings and are considered impolite in some contexts. Competent speakers have the ability to keep things on track or keep things moving smoothly and to manage conflicting ideas, emotions and the flow and pace of conversations. A conversation is regulated by how people take turns. Turn change proceeds smoothly: one participant talks, stops, the next participant talks, stops and so on; however, there can also be a conflict at the changeover point, termed the Transition Relevance Place (Herman, 1998, p. 19). It helps to understand how people organize turns to maintain the flow of conversations.

Bennion (1998) illustrated how discourse analysis frameworks can be applied in "Assessing Character through Conversation in Tom Stoppard's *Professional Foul*." In the analysis, he applied ideas from discourse analysis (including turn-taking and allocation, turn-taking and topic control/shift, and turn length). He adopted turn-taking and allocation tools proposed by Sack et al. (1974): (a) those in which the next turn is allocated by the current speaker and (b) those in which the next turn is self-selected. Topic control is the strategy that limits the coverage of a discussion or conversation to things that are acceptable to the people involved in the communication process. It is disrespectful if the topic that a speaker introduces is ignored as effective communication requires active listening and engagement. There are some occasions to shift topics in order to avoid potential conflicts or maintain interest. Topic shifting is a strategy that requires listening intently to the person or people you are conversing with. Good speakers know which topics to avoid, when to respond and when to give other speakers their turns. Turn-taking is useful for building rapport and maintaining social connections between speakers.

Speaker turns may vary in length ranging from a minimal one-word utterance to extended talk lasting many minutes (Carter and Simpson, 1989). Long turns can also block access to the floor for other potential speakers and can function as a ploy for dominance, exclusion or coercion, depending on whether resistance, challenge or counter-measures are undertaken in response. Short turns, too, are dependent on the responsive dimension for their interactive value and could be used to signify indifference, urgency or the need for extra detail if questions are relayed in succession on the same topic (Herman, 1998, p. 21). In other words, longer turns may lead to dominance, authority or strong interest while shorter turns may indicate lower status or disinterest.

In the 'give and take' model, Toolan classifies the four core conversational acts: offers, requests, informs, and questions. Since offers and requests both concern future-proposed action by one interactant or the other, they are called Proposals; since informs and questions provide or seek information, they are called Propositions (Toolan, 1998, p. 144).

In an offer act, the speaker is cast as subordinate and incurs cost and the addressee is cast as superior and beneficiary; in a request act, the speaker is cast as superior and beneficiary and the addressee is cast as subordinate and incurs cost; in an inform act, the speaker is cast as superior (the knower) but incurs cost and the addressee is cast as subordinate but beneficiary; in a

question act, the speaker is cast as subordinate but beneficiary and the addressee is cast as superior (the knower) but incurs cost (Toolan, 1998, p. 151).

	PROPOSALS <i>Goods and services</i>	PROPOSITIONS <i>Information</i>
Giving	Offer	Inform
Seeking	request	Question

Moreover, he specifies responses based on four acts: Offer—Acceptance, Request—(Acknowledgement +) Non-verbal Performance, Inform—Acknowledgement, and Question—Inform.

Pragmatics focuses on contextual meaning or unspoken meaning that is beyond literal meaning. It emphasizes the underlying meaning of what the speaker says rather than the literal meaning of words and phrases. To interpret the speakers' intended meaning, listeners need to make inferences and understand what is unsaid.

Speech act theory is one of the key concepts in the field of pragmatics. It suggests that utterances are composed of both the communicative form and their function to “act” on the listener (Bottema-Beutel & Kim, 2021; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). A speech act is an utterance that is expressed by an individual to perform actions; it also reveals the intention of the speaker. Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise or request (Yule, 1996, p. 47). A speech act is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance. It can be in the form of an offer, request, order, etc. (SIL International, 2024). In general, a speech act is a kind of communication that shows the attitude of the speaker.

John Austin, a renowned British philosopher, developed a Speech Act Theory which studies how words are used to carry out actions. Austin categorizes three types of acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Searle (1976) proposed the basic categories of speech acts: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.

Representatives. The point or purpose of the members of the representative class is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition (Searle, 1976, p. 10).

Directives. They are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something (Searle, 1976, p. 11).

Commissives. Commissives then are those acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again, in varying degrees) to some future course of action (Searle, 1976, p. 11).

Expressives. Their function is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content (Searle, 1976, p. 12).

Declarations. Characteristic of this class is that the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality;

successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world (Searle, 1976, p. 13).

Based on their functions, speech acts can be divided into five types: (1) assertive or representative functions to strengthen, suspect, confirm and announce; (2) commissives which have the function of committing to do something, for example swearing or promising; (3) directives which have the function of encouraging listeners to do something, for example ordering, asking, or advising; (4) expressives which are speech acts involving feelings and attitudes, such as apologizing, thanking and so on, and (5) declarations which function to decide something such as punishing, firing, naming and so on (Stevani & Tarigan, 2023).

Leech (1993), as quoted by Ainurorhman (2011, p. 28), gives some examples of speech act verbs for each speech act, such as: (1) representative speech act verbs: assert, predict, insist, etc.; (2) directive speech act verbs: ask, beg, request, etc.; (3) commissive speech act verbs: promise, swear, offer, etc.; (4) expressive speech act verbs: apologize, congratulate, thank, etc.; and lastly (5) declarative speech act verbs: declare, bless, curse, baptize, etc.

Many research papers related to speech act analysis have been published for decades. The research paper titled “Speech Act Analysis of Anger in the Film Entitled *Something the Lord Made*,” written by Istiqomash (2013) was submitted for the Sarjana Sastra Degree. This paper focused on investigating the types of speech acts used to deliver anger by applying Searle’s theory of speech acts. It was found that directives were used most frequently in the film while declarations were less frequently used; moreover, the characters used commands, questions and requests to express their anger.

Another research paper “Speech Acts Analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, a novel by Jane Austen,” was written by Mardiani and Leviani and published in 2022. This paper analyzed speech act utterances by the main character of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* written by Jane Austen. Searle’s speech act theory was employed in the paper: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. It was found that there were only four types of speech acts: 253 utterances of representatives, 96 utterances of directives, four utterances of commissives and 122 utterances of expressives. The researchers claimed that representative speech acts, the most dominant type, could be seen as “things that stand for something else”; the speech acts determined the force and the content of the utterances. The researchers also claimed that Elizabeth, the main character, uttered facts that could be confirmed as either true or false.

“An Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in *Sherlock Holmes* Movies” was written by Nugroho (2011). Its aim was to find out the types of illocutionary acts that portrayed the main character in the movie. By applying Searle’s speech act theory, five types of speech acts (representatives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declarations) were identified; among them, the most dominant type of speech act was directives. The research claimed that Holmes had a great influence on Watson.

Hanifa conducted a research paper titled “Turn-Taking Patterns in the Characters’ Dialogue in *The Help* (2011) Movie” in 2019. She used a turn-taking theory by Sacks et al., (1974). It was found that self-selection (SS) was the most common pattern that emerged in M1, meanwhile the current speaker selects the next speaker (CS2TNS) who was dominantly used in M2. The use of the CS2TNS pattern is mostly influenced by social status.

The current research paper explores the turn-taking patterns used by the characters and the different types of speech acts that reveal the personalities of the main characters in the horror story *The Monkey's Paw*.

Synopsis of the Short Story *The Money's Paw*

The Monkey's Paw is set in Laburnam Villa, in rural England, during the early 20th century. On a dark and stormy night, Mr. White was playing chess with his son, Herbert, while Mrs. White was knitting by the fireplace. Sergeant-Major Morris visited their house and told them about a mummified monkey's paw, its magical power to fulfill three wishes and the terrifying consequences of the wishes.

Despite Morris's warning, Mr. White wished for £200; the next day, the family received £200 as compensation for their son's death at work. The old couple wept for the great loss; a week after the funeral, Mrs. White sobbed her heart out by the window and refused to go to sleep. Instead, she urged Mr. White to make another wish which was to bring her son back to life. Mrs. White ordered him to make the wish. At first, Mr. White was hesitant to agree with his wife's words. Finally, he wished upon the monkey's paw in fear.

As soon as he heard a knock on the front door, he was numb and ran to his room. When Mrs. White heard the knock, she assumed that it was Herbert although there was no evidence to prove who was at the door. Mr. White grasped her and begged her not to open the door. When the noise of the continuous knocks sounded louder and louder, Mr. White was terrified to face the consequence since he believed that the sudden knocks were connected to his second wish. Finally, he searched for the mysterious monkey's paw immediately and made the last wish. The frightening sound of the knocks suddenly faded away. When the old lady opened the door, no one was there; she burst into a long wail.

Research Methodology

The research focuses on studying speech acts from both discourse and pragmatic perspectives. In discourse analysis, the turn-taking patterns of the characters are examined while speech act theory is applied to discover the subtle aspects of the characters in the short story. *The Monkey's Paw* by Jacobs, a horror story, is composed of three parts: in Part 1, the story behind the monkey's paw and the first wish are introduced; in Part 2, the consequence of the first wish is depicted; in Part 3, the second and third wishes are mentioned. This horror story highlights the three wishes and the impacts of ignoring the terrible consequences caused by human desire and greed.

Firstly, the utterances of each character from the short story are collected and categorized into turn allocation and turn-taking, topic shift/control, and turn length based on Bennisson's (1998) work on discourse analysis to discover how the characters manage turns in conversation. Next, by applying Michael Toolan's (1998) 'give and take' model, the dialogues are analysed in terms of offers, requests, informs and questions. After that, Searle's (1975) speech act theory is applied to examine the utterances from the horror story. These utterances are classified into five types of speech acts: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. The most and least frequent speech acts are identified. The ways in which the characters reveal their desires and emotions are also discovered in terms of the speech acts that they utter.

Findings

The short story *The Monkey's Paw* is about a family who owns a mysterious object that grants three wishes and the fatal consequences that follow. The characters mainly use **representative** speech acts to convey facts and emotions and they employ **directive** speech acts to give commands or ask for information. **Searle's speech act theory** is applied to categorize the utterances into five types of speech acts.

Example

"As I wished, it twisted in my hand like a snake."

The above utterance is considered a **representative speech act**; Mr. White utters it after he has made the first wish. As soon as he wishes for \$200 while holding the monkey's paw, it moves like a snake. He is asserting the truth and describing the movement of the paw which actually happens in his hand.

Example

"The other two wishes," she replied, rapidly.

The above utterance is regarded as a **representative speech act**. Mrs. White gives the information that two wishes are left. She struggles to overcome her grief after her son died in the accident. She believes that the monkey's paw is the hope to bring her son back to life.

Example

"For God's sake don't let it in," cried the old man, trembling.

The above utterance is a **directive speech act**. Mr. White tells his wife not to allow the creature into the house. In other words, he commands her not to open the door.

Example

"Go and get it and wish," cried his wife, quivering with excitement.

The above utterance includes **directive speech acts** because the use of imperative forms ("go," "get," and "wish") is found in the utterance. Mrs. White commands her husband to perform two actions; the first action is to go and get the monkey's paw and the second one is to make a wish.

Example

"I won't," said his friend, doggedly.

The utterance is **commissive**. Morris declines Mr. White's request for the monkey's paw.

Example

"I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

The utterance involves two **commissive speech acts**. In the first part of the sentence, the speaker commits that the outcome (a person will turn into a greedy man) will happen after using the paw. The word "*shall*" indicates that the speaker will do something in the future.

Example

“Good God, you are mad!” he cried, aghast.

The utterance shows the emotional reaction of Mr. White and it is **expressive**. He is shocked as soon as he is asked to make a second wish by his wife. He is aware of the terrible consequences of the wish and he reveals his emotions by saying, “Good God.”

Example

“The idea of our listening to such nonsense!”

The above utterance is an **expressive speech act**. Mrs. White shows her doubts about the magical power of the monkey’s paw.

All in all, the characters—Mr. White, Mrs. White, Herbert, Morris and the stranger (the man from Maw and Meggins)—in *The Monkey’s Paw* use four types of speech acts to show their intentions. No **declaration** speech act is found in the story. They use **representatives** to describe the situation and their beliefs; **directives** to order, request and ask for information; **commissives** to swear or commit to future actions; and **expressives** to show their attitudes.

Discussion

In this research paper, the utterances of five characters are collected. It has two parts: discourse analysis and pragmatics. In the first part, it applies Bennison’s work on discourse analysis which includes turn taking tools (turn allocation, topic control/ shift and turn length) to find out the turn taking patterns of the characters. The utterances are identified in terms of Toolan’s ‘Give and Take’ model and Searle’s speech act theory. The collected data are shown in the tables and the personalities of two main characters, Mr. and Mrs. White, are discussed in this section.

Table 1: Turn-taking Patterns Found in the Short Story *The Monkey’s Paw*

Sr. No	Characters	Total no. of utterances	Turn allocation		Topic control/ shift		Turn Length		
			Current speaker selects next A	Self-selection B	Topic control	Topic shift	Word count	Total number of turns	Word/ turn
1	Mr. White	60	14	7	22	20	465	33	14.09
2	Mrs. White	61	18	14	17	18	312	36	8.67
3	Herbet	16	4	5	5	8	169	11	15.36
4	Morris	28	2	2	14	0	238	14	17.00
5	Visitor	10	0	3	5	1	96	7	13.71
Total		175	38	31	63	47	1280	101	12.67

Table 1 shows different turn-taking patterns found in the story. The current speaker selects *next* (38 times), which is the primary turn allocation in the whole story. Especially, Mrs. White allocates the highest number of turns (18 times) to other speakers followed by Mr. White with 14 turns. This indicates that Mr. White is considerate, controlled and authoritative in conversations.

In terms of self-selection, Mrs. White self-selects the turn 14 times. This shows her independence and confidence. Mrs. White does not wait for the current speaker to allocate the turn before she starts speaking and this reveals a close relationship between the participants. In other words, she is more engaged with her family members but she does not actively participate in interactions with Morris and the visitor. On the other hand, the visitor self-selects his turn three times followed by Morris with two turns.

Moreover, most characters constantly discuss a particular topic rather than shift to a new topic; hence, they can convey the message clearly. According to Table 1, Mr. White seeks to control the conversations more because he is interested in the monkey's paw, its impacts and the solutions to fix the problem. He is a responsible and rational decision-maker. In contrast, his wife, who is emotionally overwhelmed by grief, does not stay on one topic for long but shifts topics more frequently. This shows that she is emotional and loses common sense when she faces the conflict.

The other character, Herbert, shifts the focus more frequently; this reflects his lack of interest in the mysterious power of the paw. He is a rational and responsible man. In terms of turn length, Morris makes the longest turn; he is the storyteller who gives information about the monkey's paw. He extends his speech by giving background details and explaining the dangers of the paw. Herbert makes the second longest turn as his dialogue includes jokes and critical remarks that require elaboration. Mr. White's average turn length is longer compared to his wife's. He is patient and analytical so he takes time for his explanation. Mrs. White's turn length is the shortest; it indicates that she is emotionally expressive and impatient.

Table 2: Giving and Seeking Found in the Short Story *The Monkey's Paw* (Based on Toolan's Model)

Sr. No	Characters	Giving	Seeking	Giving	Seeking	Responses				Total
		Offer	Request	Inform	Question	Offer—Acceptance	Request— (Acknowledgement +) Non-verbal Performance	Inform— Acknowledgement	Question—Inform	
1	Mr. White	0	10	25	14	0	5	8	8	70
2	Mrs. White	0	18	22	18	0	0	2	9	69
3	Herbert	0	5	8	1	0	1	2	3	20
4	Morris	0	3	5	0	0	4	0	18	30
5	Visitor	0	1	7	0	0	1	0	3	12
Total		0	37	67	33	0	11	12	41	201

Table 2 shows different types of speech acts using Toolan's model found in the story. No offer–acceptance pair is found. Regarding **Request—(Acknowledgement +) Non-verbal Performance** pairs, the characters make 37 requests but give only 11 responses. In the story, the characters use non-verbal responses to show their hesitation to give immediate responses due to fear or they choose to ignore the requests. In the research, only utterances are counted while non-verbal clues (silence, gestures, etc.) are excluded.

Likewise, **inform** speech acts outnumber responses (acknowledgements). One possible reason is that the information may be absorbed silently, or the listeners acknowledge/ignore the information non-verbally. Another reason is that the characters sometimes repeat a speech act twice or thrice, which requires only one response.

In terms of **Question—Inform**, there are 33 questions and 41 responses. In fact, the characters give more answers when they are being asked. In conversation, the number of speech acts and responses does not always match. In real-life conversation, no strict match is required as people do not feel compelled to acknowledge every statement; in addition, they sometimes shift to another topic rather than giving responses.

Regarding **giving and seeking**, Mr. White gives more information as he uses more inform acts than the others; this reflects that he is knowledgeable and communicative. Mrs. White seeks information or something as she makes more requests and questions than the others. This shows that she is curious and inquisitive and she focuses on her desires.

Table 3: Types of Speech Acts Found in the Short Story *The Monkey's Paw* (Based on Searle's Model)

Sr. No	Characters	Speech Acts					Total frequency of speech acts
		Representative	Directive	Expressive	Commissive	Declarative	
1	Mr. White	38	24	8	0	0	70
2	His Wife	37	21	11	0	0	69
3	Herbet	12	6	1	1	0	20
4	Morris	19	8	2	1	0	30
5	Visitor	9	1	2	0	0	12
Total		(115) 57.21%	(60) 29.85%	(24) 11.94%	(2) 1%	(0) 0%	201

Table 3 shows the frequencies and percentages of different types of speech acts – representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations – in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*. A total of 201 speech acts are found in the utterances of five characters: Mr. and Mrs. White, Herbert White, Sergeant-Major Morris and the visitor (the man from Maw and Meggins). Half of the total frequency of speech acts used by the different characters are representatives (115 times). It is the dominant type of speech act which accounts for 57.21%. The second most common category is directives which account for 29.85%. The frequency of

expressive speech acts is 24 (11.94%) which is followed by commissives (1%). No declarative speech acts (0%) are found in the short story. Mr. White produces more speech acts than the others; more speech acts such as representatives (38 times), directives (24 times), and expressives (8 times) are found. Likewise, Mrs. White is the second most dominant speaker who produces more representatives (37 times), directives (21 times) and expressives (11 times).

Table 4: Types of Speech Acts found in Mr. White's Utterances

Sr. No	Types of Speech Acts	Part I	Part II	Part III	Total
1	Representatives	17	10	11	38
2	Directives	9	3	12	24
3	Commissives	0	0	0	0
4	Expressives	6	1	1	8
5	Declarations	0	0	0	0
	Total	32	14	24	70

Table 4 shows the different types of speech acts performed by Mr. White. Out of five types of speech acts, three are found: representatives, directives and expressives. No declarative or commissive speech acts are found in his utterances. Representative speech acts are the dominant type. It is found that 38 out of 70 speech acts are representatives; in other words, he uses representative speech acts frequently. He frequently uses representatives when he explains the fatal consequences of using the monkey's paw. In addition, he feels guilty for his wife's mental trauma and he has no desire to deny her wishes directly. He uses representatives more than the other types of speech acts in the story. It shows that Mr. White is a curious and skeptical man who doubts the magical power of the monkey's paw. Through representative speech acts, he shows that he deeply understands the fatal consequences of the paw. He has a rational mindset and he is in control. However, in Part 3, more directive speech acts (12 times) are found in his utterances; this shows his desire to prevent the terrible outcome. Mr. White uses directives when he makes minor requests to get favors from them. When Mr. White interacts with his wife and his son with whom he shares close intimacy, he produces more speech acts. He is cautious but fears the potential consequences of the paw's power after his son's death. His wife's insistence and his son's death force him to rely more on directives than on descriptions. He rarely uses expressives; perhaps he is more concerned with controlling the situation and focuses on practical matters.

Table 5: Types of Speech Acts found in Mrs. White's Utterances

Sr. No	Types of Speech Acts	Part I	Part II	Part III	Total
1	Representatives	8	10	19	37
2	Directives	1	1	19	21
3	Commissives	0	0	0	0
4	Expressives	2	4	5	11
5	Declarations	0	0	0	0
	Total	11	15	43	69

Table 5 illustrates the types of speech acts by Mrs. White. Only three types of speech acts—representatives, directives and expressives—are found whereas no commissives or declarations are found in her utterances. It is found that 37 out of 69 utterances are representative speech acts which is the dominant type found in Mrs. White's utterances. In Part 3, she asserts her beliefs and reveals her desires and emotions more through directive speech acts (19 times). After her son's death, she loses emotional control. She uses more direct requests or commands (19) to her husband in order to wish her son back when she realizes the magical power of the monkey's paw. In other words, she is asking for supernatural things. These utterances reveal her emotional and psychological state. Her grief and maternal love turn her into a strong woman who protects her son. Nothing can stop her from bringing her son back. Like Mr. White, she utters neither commissive nor declarative forms of speech acts; she is too emotional to control herself and lacks the authority to control the supernatural power. What she can do is command her husband to make a second wish.

Table 6: Types of Speech Acts found in Herbert White's Utterances

Sr. No	Types of Speech Acts	Part I	Part II	Part III	Total
1	Representatives	11	1	0	12
2	Directives	5	1	0	6
3	Commissives	0	1	0	1
4	Expressives	0	1	0	1
5	Declarations	0	0	0	0
	Total	16	4	0	20

Table 6 reveals the total number of speech acts found in Herbert's conversation. Most of his utterances occur in Part 1 whereas there is no description of him including flashback narration, after his death, especially in Part 3. Herbert mainly uses representatives the most; their frequency (12) is twice that of directives (6). In contrast, no declarations are found. It reflects his skepticism about the supernatural event which he mocks without expecting any consequences for his future. moreover, it highlights his character as a cheerful and carefree young man with no hesitation in expressing his logical views against his parents' opinions.

Table 7: Types of Speech Acts found in Morris's Utterances

Sr. No	Types of Speech Acts	Part I	Part II	Part III	Total
1	Representatives	19	0	0	19
2	Directives	8	0	0	8
3	Commissives	1	0	0	1
4	Expressives	2	0	0	2
5	Declarations	0	0	0	0
	Total	30	0	0	30

In the above table, Morris's speech acts appear only in Part 1. Approximately two thirds of the speech acts are representatives which account for 19 instances, followed by directives (8), expressives (2), commissives (1) and declarations (0). He is a sensible man who has experienced the powerful effects of the paw; therefore, he utters representative speech acts more often than any other type. Due to his former experience, he is reluctant to discuss the paw in depth and throws it into the fire; however, he seriously warns the White family about the terrible consequences since they show strong interest in the magical paw and want to test it.

Table 8: Types of Speech Acts found in the stranger's Utterances

Sr. No	Types of Speech Acts	Part I	Part II	Part III	Total
1	Representatives	0	9	0	9
2	Directives	0	1	0	1
3	Commissives	0	0	0	0
4	Expressives	0	2	0	2
5	Declarations	0	0	0	0
	Total	0	12	0	12

The data from the above table show the total number of speech acts found in the stranger's conversation. Only 12 speech acts are found in Part II; compared with the other characters, he utters the least number of speech acts (12). He also employs representative speech acts the most like the other characters. As his intention is to inform Mr. and Mrs. White about the death of Herbert who faced a terrible accident at the factory, more representatives are found in his utterances. He is an outsider who lacks knowledge about the paw and its ramifications; his duty is to transfer a certain amount (two hundred pounds) to the remaining family members as compensation.

Conclusion

Language is an essential tool for social interaction; people use it to share information, exchange ideas and express emotions through verbal and non-verbal communication. To achieve communicative competence, it is crucial to decode both the literal meaning of an utterance and the intention of the speaker. In the short story *The Monkey's Paw*, analysing turn-taking and speech acts helps readers understand the character development and their intentions. Both Mr. White and Mrs. White are the main characters and they take more turns in the conversation. The most popular turn-taking pattern is that the current speaker selects the next speaker. In the short story, Mr. White allocates the turns; it shows his dominance in the conversation. Furthermore, most characters show great interest in the mysterious monkey's paw; however, Herbert shifts the topic frequently as he doubts its power and wants to discuss other topics. Morris takes the longest turns because he is the main storyteller who explains the paw's history, its power and its impacts in detail. In terms of the 'Give and Take' model, the characters use the inform act frequently to convey information or to share facts.

In the research paper, by applying Searle's speech act theory, the characters' the utterances are classified into five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives

and declarations. Representative speech acts are mostly used to convey the facts, wishes and desires of the characters. The characters never utter the declarative form of speech act. In terms of imposition, Mr. White uses directives to make minor requests while Mrs. White produces directives when she asks her husband to do something important. In Part I and Part II, Mr. White is portrayed as a sensible man who disbelieves in mysterious things. There is a sudden change in Mr. White's personality. In Part III, he accepts the invisible connection between the uncontrollable power of the paw and his son's death. He is overwhelmed by deep sorrow and grief. More directive speech acts are found in his utterances; he asks many questions to his wife when she is eagerly looking for the paw. Overall, he frequently uses representatives; it reflects that he is more interested in reality. He is portrayed as an analytical and thoughtful character. He sees the terrible consequences, finds a way to end the conflict and brings peace. Furthermore, Mrs. White is depicted as a mother who is emotionally fragile after Herbert's death. She mainly uses more directives to command her husband to make another wish because she hopes that the magical power of the paw can bring her son alive again. She attempts to control the uncontrollable; this leads to the major conflict in the story. The other minor characters employ representatives the most; they are all sensible men who believe more in information and no dramatic changes in their personalities or emotions can be found. These different types of speech functions found in the utterances are of vital importance in portraying the characters' personalities and emotions in the short story *The Monkey's Paw*.

Future studies should examine speech acts in reality TV shows as this will contribute to a better understanding of cultural differences in communication styles. Moreover, future research should focus on exploring the use of speech acts and language functions in English language textbooks; this will help to develop learners' pragmatic competence. More research into the types of speech acts employed in teaching and learning processes could increase teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

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