

# THE ILLOCUTIONARY ACT PRODUCED BY KATE REDDY TO JACK ABELHAMER AND CLARK IN “ I DON’T KNOW HOW SHE DOES IT”

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to discuss the illocutionary acts produced by Kate Reddy in “I don’t Know How She Does It” movie, in the business communication with her business partner (Jack Abelhammer) and her boss (Clark). To support this study, the writer uses the theory of speech act by Austin (1962) and Paltridge (2006), illocutionary keywords by Searle (1969,1975), and the theory of context by Gee (2005). This research is a descriptive qualitative research because it is used to form a descriptive qualitative conclusion to describe the illocutionary act occurs in the conversation in this movie. From the findings, the writer finds out that in order to make a successful business conversation, Kate produced four types of illocutionary acts to both her partner and her boss: representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. Based on the findings, there are three similarities that the writer found: 1) the illocutionary act which is not used by Kate to her interlocutors is declarative, 2) the stage of illocutionary act produced by Kate to her interlocutors is the same to each other, and 3) there are the illocutionary act that is rejected by her interlocutors. Besides, the differences are also related to the use of various subtypes of Illocutionary act used by Kate to her partner and to her boss. Finally, the writer concludes that Illocutionary act plays an important role in Kate’s utterances since it helps Kate to state her intended meaning behind her utterances; to make a statement to convince, to give suggestions, to make request and many more, to her interlocutors in their business conversation

**Key words:** Illocutionary acts, movie, business communication, intended meaning.

## **INTRODUCTION**

When we talk about communication, we can easily find the very basic unit of it which is “language”. In communication, language allows people in maintaining their relationship or their social relation with their surrounding. For example, in workplace communication people use language to communicate with each other such as giving suggestion, giving order, and making promise. However, people do not directly speak or say what they mean but sometimes, what they want to say or mean is more than what their words actually say.

In order to express themselves in workplace, people do not only produce utterance containing grammatical structure and words but they also perform action via those utterance. As we know that workplace communication or business English communication, which is the main ground for this research, is becoming increasingly important as English emerges as the language of international business (Gimenez, 2006). Here, the writer would like to see the importance of business communication occurred in the movie. In workplace communication showing in the movie like in a meeting scene for example, the main characters might produce speech act. For example, people use representative to make a statement, directive to ask questions and give a direct command if they want something done. Actually, it is not only about the utterances itself but it also performs the intentions of the speaker behind those utterance. Austin (1962) pointed out that when people use language, they are performing such a kind of actions. He called it “speech acts”. These ideas were further developed by another philosopher, John Searle (1969, 1975) who added to them and presented them more systematically.

The writer chooses to analyze the movie entitled “I Don’t Know How She Does It” is chosen by the writer to be analyzed because its story contains a business context. This movie is about Kate Reddy (Sarah Jessica Parker) who is torn between her love for her kids and her shining dream of making a fortune in the financial sector. Kate has promised to make a snowman at Thanksgiving with her family. On the other, she keeps being called down for power point presentations in New York, where she is close to cutting a deal with her partner Jack Abelhammer (Pierce Brosnan). In

the end, Kate can take it no more. She, then, talks to her boss Clark (Kelsey Grammer) so she does not take work trip and has more time to spend with her family.

The analysis is focussed more on the illocutionary act because this act is very important in making the conversation to become successful. It is also important because if the hearer fails to understand it well, he or she will lose the intended meaning of the speaker. Illocutionary act is concerned with the intended meaning behind the utterance. According to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), they stated that every time a speaker utters a sentence, they are attempting to accomplish something with the words. It means that there must be a purpose of uttering words. Also, Hurford and Heasley (1983) stated that the illocutionary acts carried out by a speaker making out an utterance is the act viewed in the utterance's significance within a conventional system of social interaction.

Furthermore, Searle (1969) who developed an extensive formulation of speech acts arranged illocutionary act into five types. They are representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. Each of these are very important in communication because each function in the acts is the response to the utterance that they make. For example, when a speaker utters "Can you hold this for me?", the speaker is actually asking the hearer to help her instead of asking the hearer's ability of hearer of holding something.

To find out the illocutionary acts occurs in this movie, the writer will answer some question; the illocutionary acts produced by Kate to her peer (Jack) and her boss (Clark), the intended meanings of Kate when she utters sentences contained illocutionary act, and the similarities and differences found in the use of illocutionary acts produced by Kate to her interlocutors (her peer and her boss).

Austin (1962) has pointed out that when people use language, they are performing such a kind of actions. He called it speech acts. These ideas were further developed by another philosopher, John Searle (1969, 1975) who added to them and presented them more systematically.

According to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), they stated that every time a speaker utters a sentence, they are attempting to accomplish something with the words. It means that there must be a purpose of uttering words. Also, Hurford and Heasley (1983) stated that the illocutionary acts carried out by a speaker making out an utterance is the act viewed in the utterance's significance within a conventional system of social interaction. Yule (2006) said that we perform *Illocutionary acts* such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, for example, utterances which have certain (conventional) force. Here, the speaker's motives go beyond from just simply saying something (Yule, 2006, p.188). Furthermore, Searle (1969) who developed an extensive formulation of speech acts arranged illocutionary act into five types. They are representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative.

## **METHODS**

This research is done using a descriptive qualitative in discourse analysis. In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative approach in discourse analysis. The writer focussed more on the process than a result, and it was an interpretation of the text. Description analysis is the exploration of existing of certain phenomenon. Therefore, even when certain statistics were calculated, the writer used it to form a descriptive qualitative conclusion to describe the illocutionary acts occurred on the business conversation.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The data which is "I don't Know How She Does It" movie is taken from the website: [www.cinemaindo.net](http://www.cinemaindo.net). The source of the data is business conversations done by the main characters which are Kate Reddy, Jack Abelhammer and Clark in some selected scenes from the movie that indicates the illocutionary acts. The unit of analysis is utterance by utterance. The subjects of this research are the three main characters in "I don't Know How She Does it" that the writer have mentioned before. They are Kate Reddy, Jack Abelhammer and Clark.

There were several steps that I used to collect the data. First, I searched and downloaded the movie from that she would like to use is this research from [www.cinemaindo.net](http://www.cinemaindo.net). Second, I downloaded the subtitle from <http://subscene.com> watched the movie in order to get fully understanding about its story. Third, I downloaded the transcript from [www.imbd.com](http://www.imbd.com) to see the conversation but unfortunately the transcript only covered the first eight scenes from the total 42

scenes. So, I decided to watch and type the transcript of the business conversations between the main character ( Kate), her business partner (Jack) and her boss (Clark) from some selected scenes in the movie into the notes. Then, she collected all the utterances that utters by Kate to Jack and Kate to Clark. After that, she put the data which is the conversations in two different tables. In naming the uttrances, the writer used two digits. The first digit “K” represented the initial name of Kate while the second digit was the number of utterance that Kate uttered. Finally, the writer started to analyze the data.

The data of the study were analyzed using the speech act theory focussed on the classification of illocutionary act proposed by Searle (1969, 1975). The analysis was also based on the context of conversation (business context) and based on the keywords that indicated the types of illocutionary acts.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings related to the illocutionary act produced by Kate to her iterlocutors can be summarized in the following tables on each section. First of all, I will discuss the illocutionary acts produced by Kate to Jack, and the next one is the illocutionary acts produced by Kate to Clark.

### The Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to Jack

Below is the findings of the use of illocutionary acts produced by Kate to Jack.

Table 4.1 Number of Findings of Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to Jack

Illocutionary Acts Kate's Interlocutor	Rep		Dir		Exp		Com		Dec	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Jack	36	62%	11	19%	8	14%	1	5%	0	0%

According to the findings shown above, Kate uses four of five types of illocutionary acts in her business conversation with Jack which are Representative, Directive, Commissive, and Expressive. The illocutionary act she uses the most is Representative (62%). First of all, she uses Representative when she does stating, concluding, assertingg, suggesting, describing and reporting. Then, the second rank of illocutionary act used by Kate is directive(19%). Kate uses directive in the form of **question**. For example, she asks question to Jack *K.27 Um, anyway, What's up?*. The third position is expressive with (14%). Expressive used by Kate to say apologize to her partner, to greet her partner, and to thank her partner. Finally, the least illocutionary acts used by Kate is commissive (5%) in which she uses to make promise to her partner.

### The Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to Clark

Below is the findings of the use of illocutionary acts produced by Kate to Jack.

Table 4.2 Number of Findings of Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to Clark

Illocutionary Acts Kate's Interlocutor	Rep		Dir		Exp		Com		Dec	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Clark	9	53%	3	18%	3	18%	2	12%	0	0%

From the table above, it is clear that Kate also uses four types out of five types of Illocutionary acts in her business communication with her boss. First of all, the writer finds that Representative is the most dominant type of illocutionary act produced by Kate to her boss in their business communication with the total percentage 52%. Representative is used as she does stating and telling. The second is directive with total 18%. It is used by Kate to Clark as questioning and requesting. The third position is expressive with 18%. For expressive, Kate produces thanking and greeting. The last one is commissive with 12% and it is used by Kate to make promise.

After discussing the illocutionary act used by Kate to Jack and Clark in business communication, there are also some similarities and differences found in Kate's utterances with her interlocutors.

### The Similarities of Kate's Illocutionary Act to Her Business Partner and Her Boss.

This section is the discussion about the similarities and differences of Illocutionary act produced by Kate to her business partner (Jack) and her boss (Clark) that is summarized in the following table.

Table 4.3.1 Summary of Kate's Illocutionary acts Produced to Her Interlocutors

Based on the findings, there are three similarities that I found related to the illocutionary act which is not used by Kate to her interlocutors, the stage of illocutionary act produced by Kate to her interlocutors, and the illocutionary act that is rejected by her interlocutors. First, Kate does not produce "**declarative**" in her business conversation with her boss and her partner. This means that there are no appropriate situations that requires Kate to produce declarative types. For example, the situation related to the wedding or baptizing in Church.

Second, Kate produces four types of illocutionary act to both of her interlocutors such as **representatives, expressive, directive, and commissive** in which the stage/ the rank of each

Illocutionary Acts Kate's Interlocutor	Rep		Dir		Exp		Com		Dec	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Jack	36	62 %	11	19%	8	14%	3	5%	0	0%
Clark	9	52%	3	18%	3	18%	2	12%	0	0%

illocutionary act is the same:

#### 4.3.2 The Rank of Kate's Illocutionary Acts to Her Interlocutors

Illocutionary Acts	Jack	Clark
1) Representative	62%	52%
2) Directive	19%	18%
3) Expressive	14%	18%
4) Commissive	5%	12%

In general, she uses **representative; stating, telling, directive; questioning, expressive; greeting, thanking** and **apologizing**, and **commissive; promising** to both of her interlocutors.

Third, there are the illocutionary acts uttered by Kate that is rejected by her interlocutors. For example when Kate wants talk to her boss about her work trip, her boss rejects her request. When the respond from her boss is a rejection, perhaps because at the time her boss has been talking with another coworkers and her boss only wants Kate to take the worktrip. Another example when Kate proposes her idea about their presentation, Jack tells Kate to stop talking about their project. So, the intended meaning from Kate cannot be fulfilled by her interlocutors. In short, the intended meaning she wants from her interlocutors could have been influenced by the time and place of their conversation which determines Kate's intention behind her illocutionary acts fails or not.

### The Differences of Subtypes of Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to her Interlocutor

Besides its similarities, I also found the differences between Kate's illocutionary act produced to her partner and to her boss. In this section, I will discuss about the differences of Kate's Illocutionary Act to Her Business Partner and Her Boss.

Table 4.3.2 The Differences of Subtypes of Illocutionary Acts Produced by Kate to her Interlocutor

Types of Illocutionary Acts	Subtypes Of Illocutionary Acts	Kate's Interlocutor				Kate's Interlocutor	
		Jack		Clark		Jack	Clark
		F	%	f	%		
Representatives	Stating	16	27%	5	29%	✓	✓
	Telling	9	15%	3	17%	✓	✓
	Answering	1	2%	1	6%	✓	✓
	Describing	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X

	Informing	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
	Asserting	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
	Concluding	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
	Suggesting	4	6%	0	0%	✓	X
	Affirming	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
	Reporting	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
<b>Expressives</b>	Greeting	1	2%	2	12%	✓	✓
	Thanking	2	3%	1	6%	✓	✓
	Apologizing	4	7%	0	0%	✓	X
	Welcoming	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
<b>Directives</b>	Questioning	10	17%	2	12%	✓	✓
	Commanding	1	2%	0	0%	✓	X
	Requesting	0	0%	1	6%	X	✓
<b>Commissives</b>	Promising	3	5%	2	12%	✓	✓
	<b>TOTAL</b>	58	100%	17	101%	✓	✓

It can be seen from the table above that Kate produces more illocutionary act to her partner than to her boss. From the findings, the illocutionary act representatives become the most various act that used by Kate during her business conversation with Jack with the total percentage 62%. We can say that Kate uses almost all of the subtypes of representative like *stating, telling, answering, describing, asserting, reporting, concluding* to her partner. While only three subtypes of representative that she uses when she communicate with her boss such as *stating, telling, and answering*. The writer interprets that Kate produces almost all types of representative because she does a lots of conversations with her business partner than her boss. In the scenes appear on the movie, Kate does the meeting, the video conference and small talk mostly with her business partner. For example, they do some meetings to discuss about their project in Jack's office and via video conference. Kate actually does a meetings with her boss also but only once. This also means Kate has more intended meaning to be said to her partner. Besides, she only has some casual conversations and phone call conversations with her boss. So, she produces less types of illocutionary act to her boss.

Second, the illocutionary act “**directives**” that she produces when she communicates with her partner are only the “*questioning*” and “*commanding*”. The writer interprets that she produces the act of “questioning” and “commanding” because both of them (Kate and her business partner) are coworker who have the same level or position. However, Kate produces the illocutionary act of *commanding* but it also very rare. She uses the act of *commanding* only on their first meeting when she wants to clear the misunderstanding about the email. Kate uses the directive types of *questioning* and *requesting* to her boss when she wants to talk about her work trip that she thinks she cannot make it. The writer interprets that Kate uses “*request*” because her position is an employee who talks to her superior so she does not use “commanding”. It is also related to the definition of illocutionary act directive that the speaker who gives command must be in the higher position and the hearer is in the low position like boss-employee. According to the position, Kate is not the boss but the employee so she does not use command but request to her boss.

Third, for the illocutionary act “**expressive**”, Kate uses “*thanking*” and “*greeting*” to both of her interlocutors. However, she does not produce “*apologizing*” and “*welcoming*” to her boss. The writer thinks that Kate does not produce “*apologizing*” and “*welcoming*” to her boss because there is no situations when Kate feels regret to her boss during their conversation and there is no such a long period of time that Kate does not meet her boss. She produces the act “welcoming” to Jack when he comes to Boston to visit her.

Fourth, the commissives; Kate uses the act *promissing* but the frequency of the promissing to her boss is less than her partner. It is because her boss only gives a command to come the meeting so she promises him that she will come to the meeting and she also makes a promise to convince her boss that she will not quit from her job because she loves it. Then, to her business partner, Kate does

the act of promising to confirm the meetings, to be ready for the presentation and to not saying thank you all the time.

## CONCLUSION

This research aims to find out the illocutionary act and the intended meaning produced by Kate Reddy to Jack Abelhammer and Clark in their business communication.

The findings in this research show that almost all the illocutionary act produced by Kate is successful. This means that the intended meaning behind the utterances said by Kate to her interlocutors are understood and responded well by her interlocutors.

The writer also concludes the similarities of Kate's utterances in purpose she uses the illocutionary act. First, Kate uses representative to her interlocutors when she wants to assure and convince her peer or her boss about her ideas related to their project. Furthermore, she uses representative when she wants to make a statement to convince her boss and her peer about her passion in working. The writer thinks that representatives is very important since it is used in business talk such as making suggestions, statements and so on.

Second, she uses directive types of **questioning** to both of her interlocutors. She uses the questioning to her peer and her boss to ask the information related to her project. It means that she is when she communicates her project with her boss and her peer, the use of question is very important for her so she can know the information that she has not gained from her peer or her boss related to the project they are working.

Third, Kate uses expressives (**greeting** and **thanking**) to her interlocutors. The writer concludes that in business conversation, Kate shows the importance of building relationship, showing respect, saying an apology if she makes mistakes and saying thank-you to both of her peer or her business partner.

Fourth, she uses the act **promising** to both of her interlocutors. It means that she gives future promise to her interlocutors. Through the act of promising, she shows her commitment in doing her business. The writer thinks that in business communication, it is a must for business people to show their confidence and commitment to do their job.

Last but not least, the difference found is Kate produces all types of illocutionary act to her peer and only some illocutionary types to her boss. This means that Kate does the meeting, the video conference, and small talk mostly with her business partner. It also can show that Kate has more intended meaning to be said to Jack than to her boss.

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