

Complaining Expression Used by the Character King Triton in the Movie “The Little Mermaid (Live Action 2023)” Directed by Rob Marshall

Syafina Maulidya¹, Priscila Apriliana², Yanti Rosalinah³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika

e-mail : syafinamaulidya@gmail.com¹, priscilaapriliana2904@gmail.com²,
yanti.yaa@bsi.ac.id³

Abstrak

Studi ini menyelidiki penggunaan ekspresi gerutuan oleh Raja Triton dalam versi live-action The Little Mermaid yang dirilis pada tahun 2023, disutradarai oleh Rob Marshall. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, studi ini menemukan strategi pengaduan yang berbeda yang digunakan oleh Raja Triton dan mengkategorikannya menggunakan kerangka kerja Anna Trosborg (1995) tentang pengaduan dalam pragmatik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kritik Raja Triton berkisar dari petunjuk halus hingga tuduhan dan kutukan yang jelas, yang menunjukkan hubungannya yang rumit dengan putrinya, Ariel, serta posisinya yang anti-manusia yang dimotivasi oleh masalah pribadi dan lingkungan. Pemeriksaan ini berfokus pada bagaimana metode pengaduan dapat digunakan untuk menciptakan karakter dan mengekspresikan ketegangan interpersonal dalam alur cerita film.

Kata kunci : *Raja Triton, Ungkapan Keluhan, Pragmatik*

Abstract

This study investigates King Triton's usage of grumbling expressions in the 2023 live-action rendition of The Little Mermaid, directed by Rob Marshall. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study finds distinct complaint strategies used by King Triton and categorizes them using Anna Trosborg's (1995) framework on complaints in pragmatics. The findings show that King Triton's criticisms span from subtle hints to clear accusations and condemnations, indicating his complex relationship with his daughter, Ariel, as well as his anti-human position motivated by personal and environmental concerns. This examination focuses on how complaint methods can be used to create characters and express interpersonal tension in film storylines.

Keywords : *King Triton, Complaint Expressions, Pragmatics*

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, we definitely have conversations, discussions, and so on. In conversation, there are differences in language towards each other. Language is used as a communication medium to convey intentions or messages to other people. Language can also be used to convey expressions. In general, to learn a language, we have to study linguistics pragmatics. The word "linguistic" comes from the Latin word "lingua" which means "language". Linguistics studies the relationship between language and the context in which it is spoken and how meaning is built in the context of the conversation. while pragmatics is the ability of speakers and interlocutors (listeners) to connect language with the context being discussed. The word 'pragma' is Greek and refers to activity, deed, or affair.

In linguistics pragmatics, language is connected with meaning and actions are called speech acts. Speech is the act of two or more persons expressing themselves through words. Vowel and consonant sounds are combined to form the stated words. The words that are said also vary. Speech acts include things like asking or stating something, offering instructions or demands, declining, praising, or expressing regret, among other things. Yule (Yule George, 1996) recognized that when people engage in speech actions, they are not just uttering words randomly. Rather, they speak with purpose and conviction, and their words have the power to influence the hearer's

actions. Austin's (1962) famous work "How to do things with words" gave rise to a new outlook on language. His important realization that "in saying something a speaker also does something" has been widely accepted, and his division of acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (Austin 1962: 108) has formed the basis for the development of communicative functions defined by illocutionary force.

According to Searl (1969:24), language is a part of theory of action, and speech acts are those verbal acts, or more precisely illocutionary acts, such as promising, threatening and requesting, that one, performs in speaking. Illocutionary acts are speech acts that function to state or do something. Nowadays, the speech act that is often used by humans, both in the real world and in films, is the speech act of complaining. Complaining is our way of conveying feelings of discomfort, dissatisfaction, and dislike towards other people. according to Anna Trosborg (1995:311), says that The speech act complaint belongs to the category of expressive functions.

Types of Complaints

in Anna Trosborg's book entitled "Interlanguage Pragmatics Request, Complaints and Apologies" wrote that the types of complaints are divided into 4, namely the complaint as an abusive act, the complaint as a face-threatening act, and the non-politeness of complaints, and mitigating devices.

a. The Complaint as an Abusive Act

Complaints here can be interpreted as a place where the speaker (reporter) expresses his disapproval and negative feelings to the listener. and the listener must be responsible either directly or indirectly for what the speaker complains about.

b. The Complaint as a Face-Threatening Act

The act of threatening face is an act in which the speaker threatens an action related to the speech intended for the listener. According to Place (1986:28) the face-threatening act is the act of moral censure or blame is an act of social rejection - an act whereby the accuser breaks ties of affection, mutual support and co-operation.

c. The Non-Politeness of Complaints

Non-politeness of complaints is a complaint expressed by the speaker without reviewing the polite words to convey it. The language used is usually rude and impolite, and the tone in which it is delivered is aggressive and unfriendly to listen to. As noted by Leech (1983:105), "to threaten or curse someone in a polite manner is virtually a contradiction in terms" and "politeness is out of the question".

d. Mitigating Devices

Mitigating devices are language used to reduce the impact of a speaker's criticism or complaint. The goal is to not offend, appear more polite, and not be too forward in conveying something. for the speaker, when complaining, a supporting statement is needed to justify the complaint he is explaining.

Complaint Strategies

According to Anna Trosborg (1995:315-318), explains that complaints are divided into 4 categories and 8 strategies.

a. No Explicit Reproach (Cat I)

In this category explains that the speaker only gives signals or instructions so that the listener will know his mistake and will be responsible for the speaker's complaints. This category is a weak category. However, stronger strategies are usually used to support this category.

Hints (Str I)

Example : "You haven't forgotten my birthday tomorrow, right?" (explains that the person may have forgotten the speaker's birthday but was reminded indirectly)

b. Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval (Cat II)

An expression of annoyance or disapproval is a person or speaker's expression of disapproval, dissatisfaction, feeling disturbed by something that happened or was said by someone. This expression can be expressed directly in front of the listener.

a) Annoyance (Str II)

Example : (219) "You know I don't like dust, I'm allergic to dust, didn't you know it?" (expresses a slight dislike for dust or allergies to the listener)

"it's so noisy, can it be a bit quieter?" (an expression of annoyance because the atmosphere is too noisy)

b) Consequence (Str III)

Example : "get good grades, otherwise I will confiscate your cellphone" (This expression shows that he (the parent) doesn't like it if his child gets bad grades; therefore, his child must get good grades or his cellphone will be confiscated.)

c. Accusations (Cat III)

Accusations are accusations made by the complainant without any clear evidence or explanation. The complainer can ask the hearer questions about the situation or assert that he/she was in some way connected with the offence and thereby try to establish the hearer as a potential agent of the complainable (indirect accusation).

a) Indirect accusation (Str IV)

Example : "where is my food? why is it finished? someone must have eaten it". (I didn't mention who finished his food, but this sentence can indirectly be an accusation to his family at home.)

b) Direct accusation (Str V)

Example : "You keep asking for my food, I'm hungry now".

d. Blaming (Cat IV)

In the speech act, blaming is an action where the person who is blamed is responsible for a problem or mistake, either directly or indirectly.

a) Modified blame (Str VI)

Modified blaming is a way in which the speaker delivers a warning in a subtle way without offending the feelings of the person he/she is talking to.

Example : "It looks like this bookshelf is broken. Maybe next time you can not put too many books here."

b) Explicit condemnation of the accused's action (Str VII)

Explicit condemnation of the accused action is an accusatory action carried out directly by the speaker without elaborating on his words to the person he/ is speaking to.

Example : "You always get bad grades, I'm tired of telling you to study hard."

c) Explicit condemnation of the accused as a person (Str VIII)

Is where the speaker blames the accused not only to convey his annoyance or dislike but also to relate it to the person's personal nature or character.

Example : "You are a liar, always lying to others for your own interests."

In the explanation of speech act complaints above, the authors choose the article title "COMPLAINING EXPRESSION USED BY THE CHARACTER KING TRITON IN THE MOVIE THE LITTLE MERMAID (LIVE ACTION 2023)" DIRECTED BY ROB MARSHALL" because the author wants to analyze what complaints are contained in the film scene. Nowadays, in our daily lives, we often watch film using mobile phones, televisions, computers, and cinemas. Films are created to convey a message of feelings that cannot be expressed directly to the audience. The scenes in the film are also varied. There are scenes that can make us afraid, excited, laugh, cry, and so on.

In David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, Jeff Smith's book entitled "Film Art" it is explained that "Film is a very satisfying way for us to see and feel. Films take us through a variety of experiences. These experiences are often driven by stories centered on characters we care about, but films can also develop ideas or explore visual qualities or sound textures." in the film The Little Mermaid (Live Action 2023) tells the story of King Triton (Ariel's father), the ruler of the Atlantic underwater kingdom who has an anti-human attitude. The reason he is anti-human is because humans often damage the sea and endanger marine life. His anti-human attitude often becomes a personal conflict with his daughter Ariel. His fear of humans is exacerbated by his daughter Ariel's desire to interact with the human world, which he views as something dangerous and worrying.

METHOD

In this study, the author uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the utterance of complaining words spoken by King Triton (Ariel's father) in the film The Little Mermaid (live action). According to Creswell, J. W. (2009), qualitative research is exploratory, where researchers usually

use it to explore a topic when the variables and theoretical basis are unknown. The author's steps in conducting his research are watching the film he wants to analyze, collecting data, analyzing data, and making conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

NO	COMPLAINTS STRATEGIES		FREQUENCY
1	No Explicit Repoarch	Hints	1
2	Annoyance Or Disapproval	Consequence	1
3	Accusation	Indirect Accusation	1
		Direct Accusation	1
4	Blaming	Modified Blame	1
		Explicit Condemnation Of The Accused's Action	1
		Explicit Condemnation Of The Accused As a Person	0
TOTAL			6

In this study, the author focuses on the complaint strategy expressed by King Triton in the film *The Little Mermaid* (Live Action 2023). The following is a complaint utterance expressed by King Triton along with a group of categories and strategies based on the strategy proposed by Anna Trosborg (1995).

No Explicit Repoarch

a. Hints

Scene 06.30 – 06.39



Picture 1

King Triton : “Sebastian? **You were supposed to see to it that Ariel was here**”

Sebastian : “I tried. Your Majesty, but that child, she is impossible.”

(In the conversation between King Triton and Sebastian, King Triton indirectly warns Sebastian that he should have made sure that Ariel came to the meeting this time.)

Expression Of Annoyance Or Disapproval

b. Consequence

Scene 14.41 – 14.51



Picture 2

King Triton : **"it is irresponsible.** Your sisters are only here for one phase of the Coral Moon.
Can you imagine any one of them missing the gathering?"

Ariel : "no, you're right. I' sorry"

(In this conversation, King Triton reveals to Ariel that he doesn't like it when Ariel doesn't come to the Coral Moon event. Meanwhile, Ariel's sisters can only gather at this event.)

Accusations

c. Indirect Accusation

Scene 45.41 – 46.31



Picture 3

King Triton : "Sebastian, **have you noticed that Ariel has been acting peculiar lately?"**

Sebastian : "Peculiar, sir?"

King Triton : "Mm-hmm. **Distracted, day dreaming, disappearing for hours. You haven't noticed?"**

Sebastian : "Oh...we, I, um...uh, I actually haven't you know, um...that is to say, I didn't um..."

King Triton : "Sebastian...**I know you've been keeping something from me.**

Sebastian : "Keepin something?"

King Triton : "Mm-hmm. About Ariel. **Is my little one in love?"**

(In this conversation, King Triton asks Sebastian about Ariel's change in attitude and speculates whether Ariel is falling in love with someone? And in this conversation, it shows that accusatory speech or guessing is included in the Indirect accusation strategy according to Anna Trosborg's theory.)

Direct Accusation

Scene 46.56 – 47.40



Picture 4

King Triton : **"So...you broke the rules?. You went to the above world"**

Ariel : "There was a shipwreck. A man was drowning. I had to save him"

King Triton : "You should have let him drown. They're savages"

Ariel : "You don't know that"

King Triton : "They killed your mother"

Ariel : "I know. But...one man did. Why blame every human? Mother wouldn't.

King Triton : "No!. Enough. That's enough"

Ariel : "And Eric had nothing to do with it"

King Triton : **"Eric? Eric? Have you lost you senses completely"**

(The conversation between King Triton and Ariel above shows that King Triton immediately conveyed his accusations to Ariel, along with evidence that King Triton found Ariel's collection, which contained human objects. And when Ariel explained about Eric, King Triton explained directly that he didn't like Ariel's explanation about Eric. According to Anna Trosborg, this direct accusation is part of the direct accusation strategy)

Blaming

a. Modified Blame

Scene 1.55.35 –1.55.52



Picture 5

Ariel : “I didn’t fight alone, Father. Eric was with me”

King Triton : “**All that matters now is that you’re safe and home. Where you belong**”

(In this conversation, King Triton indirectly indicates in his speech that he does not agree if Ariel is with Eric. Where King Triton's speech 'where you belong' emphasizes that Ariel should still feel in her place (in the ocean as a mermaid) not as a human with Eric. According to Anna Trosborg, this speech of disagreement and where the defendant must be responsible for the perpetrator's speech is part of the modified blame strategy)

b. Explicit Condemnation Of The Accused's Action

Scene 15.19 – 15.31



Picture 6

King Triton : “yes, foolish enough to be taken with the human world.”

Ariel : “if you would just try to understand...”

King Triton : “well, **I have tried. I have tried to understand you long enough. But as you long as you live in my ocean, you’ll obey my rules.** Do you understand that?.”

(In this conversation, King Triton directly emphasized to Ariel that he understood Ariel very well, but as long as Ariel was in the ocean area led by him, Ariel still had to obey his rules).

c. Explicit Condemnation Of The Accused As a Person

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that King Triton's complaint expressions in “The Little Mermaid (Live Action 2023)” help to communicate his protective yet conflicted character, which is motivated by a deep suspicion of mankind. Using Anna Trosborg's paradigm, the research shows how Triton's many complaint techniques, ranging from oblique criticism to outright charges, successfully reflect his battle with Ariel's obsession with the human world. His criticisms serve not just as assertions of authority and concern, but also as reflections of underlying concerns like as familial strain and cultural struggle. Through these tactics, Triton's character is both humanized and complexified, revealing how his fear and rage stem from personal sorrow and a desire to preserve his country. This study emphasizes the efficacy of complaint expressions as narrative tools for adding character depth and thematic relevance to film conversations.

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