

## **Assertive Act Found in Desmond Doss's Conversation on "Hacksaw Ridge" Movie by Mel Gibson**

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Received: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022| Revised: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022| Accepted: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
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### **Abstract**

This research discussed the use of assertive illocutionary acts uttered by the main characters in Hacksaw Ridge movie by Mel Gibson. The data was taken from the utterances of the main character Dessmond Doss which contained assertive acts. The utterances were analyzed with the theory proposed by Searle to identify the types of assertive acts. This research was descriptive qualitative. To collect the data, the observational and non-participatory method was applied. The data collected was analyzed with pragmatic identity method and pragmatic competence- in equalizing technique proposed by Sudaryanto. In the research result, It showed that there were 28 utterances of assertive acts uttered by Dessmond Doss in Hacksaw Ridge movie. The data were found 1 data for asserting, 11 data for reporting, 4 data for complaining, 1 data for suggesting, 2 data for boasting, 2 data for explaining, and 7 data for denying. The type of reporting became the most uttered by the main character to the other character in the Hacksaw Ridge movie. It because the main character was a soldier and the event took in the battlefield where the war happened.

**Keywords:** assertive act, movie, pragmatics.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Humans are a social creature in this world, which means that they can not live without someone else. They need to cooperate with each other. To cooperate with each other, they need to form communication for their daily lives. To make a communication they need a way which use language. Every human in this world have their own variety of language to communicate depends on their culture or where they lived. They used it to reveal what their think or their own opinion. Language has the advantage of delivering all things the speaker desire to convey (Virginia & Ambalegin, 2021). In short, language is a medium to share ideas, thoughts, etc.

The communication between speakers must be well-communicated to make the conversation understandable. To make it well-communicated, the speakers require to analyze the context when they do the conversation. Pragmatic is one of aspect study to discuss about context meaning in utterances (Sembiring & Ambalegin, 2019). This includes the place where the thing is said and who says it. According to Yule (2014), pragmatics is a study of speakers' meaning of words in an utterance, and Levinson (1983) said pragmatics is the study of language use which is the study of the relation between language and context. It means that communication is not just depending on the literal meaning of words, but also to recognize the context and the words' meaning in conversation.

According to Yule (2014), a speech act is action via utterance. It means that people can perform an action from the utterance they said. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985) the speech act is categorized into five categories: Assertive, Declarative, Commissive, Directive, and Expressive. In this paper, the researcher only focused on the Assertive speech act. In illocutionary act, assertive speech act is included. Leech (1983) said that assertive is the sentence with purpose to show or express the truth about information what speaker want to express or tell. In this speech act, speaker utterance is bounded by truth when uttered. In addition, According to Yule (2014), assertive speech act is speech act that show or express the speaker's beliefs about information. So the sentence uttered by speakers in conversation, the speakers are believed the sentence they uttered are true or truth. According to Searle's theory (cited in Levinson 1983), assertive acts are categorized into some types, which are asserting, reporting, explaining, suggesting, boasting, complaining, and denying.

First type is asserting, it is the way to convey the truth or the factual information to the hearer or listener. Assertive can be found in different forms, which are claiming, stating, affirming, and else.

Example: "I'm important too, Mom. I'm important too" ( Indraswuri et al., 2015)

Reporting is the second type of assertive illocutionary act. The purpose is to inform the hearer about something that already happened by the speaker. The speaker tries to tell the hearer something that has already been done by the speaker.

Example: "Ok, here we go, I've found photos of two of them" (Rohmah, 2020)

Explaining is the way to describe something in long sentences or utterances in detailed form. The speaker utters long sentences to make what something clear enough to be understood by the hearer.

Example: "Forget about the fact that the operation is dangerous, or that it would hurt, or that I might not want to have something cut out of me. But if I only have one kidney, than what happens to me? What if I need it? And am I really never allowed to play sports or be a cheer leader or get pregnant?" (Indrawasuri et al., 2015)

Another type is suggesting. Suggesting is the way to convey an information can be chosen for the hearer as an option. In this type, the speaker conveys an idea to the hearer that can be considered as an option or choice for the hearer.

Example: : “The legal age or emancipation of a minor is 14 in the state of California. It’s the law, you might want to check it. Anna’s 11, you’re three years early” (Indrawasuri et al., 2015)

Boasting is usually used by speaker to express their pride. This type is not considered as neutral category in politeness, It because boasting usually informal or rude.

Example: “Because I recognised it and you did not.” (Suyono & Widiastuti, 2021)

Complaining is sixth assertive category that has assertive and expressive function. It is usually used by the speaker to express dissatisfaction or annoyance with something difficult.

Example: “He still treats me like I'm his assistant. He'll always treat me like I'm his assistant.” (Rohmah, 2020)

The last type is Denying, it to refuse to admit the truth. This assertive category is usually used by the speaker to negate or oppose the proportion.

Example: “No, I wasn’t go out” (Dewi & Qomariana, 2021)

Assertive acts phenomenon occurs in everyday life as it is bound to language and society. However, this phenomenon can also happen in a movie as it is a reflection of real life experience. In the movie, the character needs language to convey about their thoughts and to do their role. By saying the utterances, the assertive acts phenomenon also can be happened.

The researcher took “Hacksaw Ridge” movie as the data source. It is because the assertive acts phenomenon can be found in the main character Desmond Doss’s utterances. Hacksaw Ridge is a biographical movie about war. The movie was made in 2016. The movie was directed by Mel Gibson and the writers for this movie were Andrew Knight and Robert Schenkkan. The movie focuses on the story of Desmond Doss about his experiences in World War II. Desmond Doss was an American soldier combat medic and religious Christian who refused to use a gun or any kind of weapon. For service during the Battle of Okinawa, Desmond Doss was awarded the Medal of Honor and became a conscientious objector to be awarded.

In the Hacksaw Ridge movie by Mel Gibson. The writer will analyze utterance from main character Desmond Doss which contain Assertive speech act. For example:

Sgt.Howell: “*Where the hell are you going Doss?*”

Desmond: “*Still more wounded out there, Sarge*”

The conversation above involves Sgt.Howell and Desmond Doss. Sgt.Howell saw Desmond still hesitated to retreat from battlefield eventough all the troops were ordered to retreat from there.

Sgt.Howell asked “Where the hell are you going Doss?” Then Desmond replied “Still more wounded out there, Sarge”. This utterance is Assertive act especially report utterance. It is showed in Desmond’s utterance that he informed Sgt.Howell about war victim in battlefield.

In this research, the researchers found two research related to assertive acts. First, the research by (Izar, Nasution, & Ratnasari, 2020). They found out the type of assertive acts that appeared in “Mata Najwa” program on episode “Gara-Gara Corona”. This research also used theory proposed by Searle (1970) to identify the type of assertive acts. The result revealed reporting that occurred mostly. In contrast, this research used TV program as the data source when the researcher used movie.

Next, the research was done by (Ramadhani, Indrayani, & Soemantri, 2019). Their research also the same to analyze the type or categories of assertive acts found in Donald Trump’s political speech. Also, the researcher used Searle (1970) theory to classified the type of assertive acts. In this research also used descriptive qualitative method. The result of this research revealed asserting as the most type of assertive acts that occurred in the speech.

In this research, the researchers had similar objectives with the two previous research, to find and analyze the type of assertive act. However, this research used movie as the data source. The movie that researchers used as the data source was “Hacksaw Ridge” movie directed by Mel Gibson. This movie were published in 2016. In this movie, the researchers found the assertive acts which was occurred in Desmond Doss’s utterances. Therefore, the researcher was interested to find out the type of assertive act that occurred in this movie.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

Descriptive qualitative was used in this research. Creswell (2018) said that, qualitative research is a research for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem in the society. Also, the assertive speech acts by the main character is the data sources which categorized as the common phenomena in the society.

For collecting data of the research, the observational method by Sudaryanto (2015) was used. He stated that the method is done by observing the data. The researcher will use non-participatory technique which was done without researcher involvement in the data source. There are some steps which the researchers did in collecting the data. First, the video was watched from streaming platform. Second, the researcher watched the video until finish in order to get all the data. Third, transcribing all Desmond

Doss's utterance in the video which contains assertive acts. The last is classifying the data which type of assertive acts found in the data source based on Searle's theory.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data with pragmatic identity method by Sudaryanto (2015). Because the data source was utterance, this method implemented. Also from the same expert, the researchers applied Pragmatic competence- in equalizing technique by Sudaryanto (2015). There are few steps to analyze the data. First, the researcher would identify the highlighted sentences. Second, the data would be analyzed based on the type of assertive acts by using Searle (1970) theory. Finally, the finding revealed what type of assertive acts used in Dessmond Doss's utterance in "Hacksaw Ridge" movie and the data were presented descriptively by showed the highest and lowest type of assertive acts found in data source.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Findings

The result of this research consist of 32 utterances of assertive act. The assertive act used in 28 utterances are: asserting, reporting, complaining, suggesting, boasting, explaining, and denying. The data findings are listed in the table below.

**Table 1.** Data Findings of Types of Assertive Acts

No	Types of Assertive Acts	Total Amount
1	Assertive	1
2	Reporting	11
3	Complaining	4
4	Suggesting	1
5	Boasting	2
6	Explaining	2
7	Denying	7
	Total Number of Data	28

#### 3.2 Discussion

##### a. Assertive

###### DATA 1

Smitty: What'cha got here, "Dessie?"

Dessmond: "**You know what that is**"

In soldier barrack at night time. Smitty saw Desmond reading a bible and took it from Desmond suddenly. Smitty asked Dessmond what was this, then Desmond replied Smitty that he already knew that was a

bible This conversation has assertive act especially, asserting category. It was because Desmond told Smitty that he should already know that was a bible.

**b. Reporting**

**DATA 1**

Sgt.Howell: "Where the hell are you going Doss?"  
Desmond: "**Still more wounded out there, Sarge**"

On the battlefield, Sgt.Howell saw Desmond still hesitated to retreat from the battlefield even though all the troops were ordered to retreat from there. Sgt.Howell asked, "Where the hell are you going Doss?" Then Desmond replied "Still more wounded out there, Sarge". This utterance is Assertive act especially report utterance. It was showed in Desmond's utterance that he informed Sgt.Howell about war victim in battlefield.

**DATA 2**

Desmond: "**Look! I found a dime!**"  
Mark: "That's mine!"

Inside the garage, the boys were cleaning up the old farm equipment. The young Desmond found something and cleaned it, It's a dime. In this conversation, assertive act can be found. Young Desmond utterance can be considered as reporting category of assertive act because Desmond shouted to his brother about the dime.

**DATA 3**

Desmond: "**Daddy, I already signed up**"  
Tom: "What?"

When his father was grieving in front of his friend's grave, Desmond came to him. Tom explained to Desmond about his friend that died in the warzone, then suddenly Desmond informed him that he already signed up for the upcoming war. Desmond utterance was considered as assertive act, reporting category because Desmond reported to his father about joining for war.

**DATA 4**

Captain Glover: "You're a conscientious objective, and you join the army?"  
Desmond: "**No, sir, I am a conscientious cooperator.**"

Desmond got called by Captain Grover to his office. Because Desmond didn't want to touch a gun, Captain Glover asked Desmond if he was a conscientious objector, people that opposed to bearing arms

on the ground of religious principle. Then, Desmond told him that he was conscientious cooperater and voluntered as medic. Desmond utterance is reporting, because he informed Captain Glover about himself.

#### **DATA 5**

Sgt.Howell: "What problem Private Corn Starch? Is it the one not in your size? Or Is it the color that the issue?"

Desmond: "**No, Sergeant. I was told I don't have to carry a weapon.**"

The conversation happened in the training field. Sgt.Howell told all cadet to take the gun for shooting practice. Every cadet hurried to take the gun except for Desmond, then Sgt.Howell ask if Desmond couldn't take the gun because nothing fit his size. Desmond reported that he couldn't touch a gun. Desmond utterance was reporting utterance.

#### **c. Complaining**

##### **DATA 1**

Captain Glover: "What is exactly your problem?"

Desmond: "**No problem, just a mistake. I already told the army when I join..**"

Desmond and Captain Glover in Captain office. Captain Grover asked what exactly his problem was that he couldn't touch a gun. Desmond replied that he already told the army when he was signed up, he couldn't touch a gun. The conversation can be found that assertive act occured in Desmond utterance. It was considered as complaining category of assertive act. It was because Desmond complained to the captain that he had already told the army he can't touch a gun, even so he was forced to carry a gun.

##### **DATA 2**

Captain Glover: "Because the United States Army does not make mistakes. If there is a problem, you must be that problem."

Desmond: "**Sir, I was not supposed to be sent to a rifle company** "

The conversation above still happened between Desmond and Captain Grover in the Captain office. The Captain told Desmond that there was no mistake in the army that make him touch a gun even though he had already told them about his situation. Captain told Desmond that if there was a problem or mistake, he must be the problem or mistake. Then, Desmond replied that he didn't sign up for rifle company but for the medical unit. The assertive act can be found on Desmond utterance. It complaining category. It was because Desmond complained to the Captain that he signed up for a medical unit in the army, not a rifle unit.

### DATA 3

Desmond: “**You don’t know what I am about to ask**”  
Dorothy: “Yes i do, and the answer is yes i do”

The complaining type of assertive act happened in Desmond utterance above. When Desmond want to ask about something to Dorothy, Dorothy suddenly replied “Yes” even though Desmond had still not finished his word. This made Desmond complain that Dorothy still don’t know what he was about to ask but already replied “yes”

### DATA 4

Sgt.Howell: “This isn’t good for everybody”  
Desmond: “**I am sure this is not i join up for**”

In the morning inside soldier barrack, Sgt.Howell saw Desmond in bruises because of bullying. He tried to inform Desmond that his behavior was not good for all his comrades because he could not touch a gun. Then Desmond covered in bruises complained to Sgt.Howell that this was not the reason he joined the army. In Desmond's utterance above, a complaining type of assertive act appeared. It was because Desmond complained that he joined the army not to become a bullied person in the army.

#### d. Suggesting

### DATA 1

Desmond: “**Respectfully, sir, I have. I put this furlough three weeks ago nd I’m getting married this afternoon.**”  
Colonel Cunningham: “In this said, you’re not rifle qualified.”

Inside the office, Colonel Cunningham refused to accept Desmond’s furlough because he still did not want to hold a rifle, so he was not rifle qualified to take the furlough. Desmond tried to suggest Colonel Cunningham accept his furlough because he’s getting married this afternoon, so this furlough was important to him. But, Colonel Cunningham doesn’t care about it. The act of Desmond in this conversation is suggesting. He tried to suggest Colonel Cunningham accept his furlough because of married reason.

#### e. Boasting

### DATA 1

Dorothy: “That’s a way”  
Desmond: “**Just five or six miles. But I cut through the woods. It’s seven that way!**”

Inside the hospital, Desmond had a conversation with Dorothy. Dorothy was amazed how Desmond come to the hospital by walk which was far from his home. Then, Desmond replied how long the distance from his house to the hospital and boast like it didn't matter at all to him. Desmond act in the conversation is considered as boasting by showing his ability to Dorothy.

#### **DATA 2**

Tom: "Do you ever even into a spoke with a woman which not from our family?"

Desmond: "**I spoke to her.**"

In the front yard of Desmond's house, Desmond's family saw Desmond in a neat and handsome appearance. This made his family wonder where he want to go. Desmond reply that he wanted to propose Dorothy. This made his dad, Tom did not believe Desmond, because Desmond never talk to a woman except his mother. After that, Desmond boasted to his family that he had already talked to Dorothy that make his family shocked.

#### **f. Explaining**

##### **DATA 1**

Captain Glover: "Are you screwing with me Doss?"

Desmond: "**No, sir. I am a volunteer. I got no problem with wear my uniform, saluting flag and doing my duty, It just can't carry a gun and take a human life.**"

Desmond was called to Captain office. Captain Glover asked Desmond if he screwed with him because Desmond doesn't want to take a gun. Then, Desmond explained that he didn't have any problem doing his duty by wearing a uniform, saluting the flag but he just couldn't take a gun because he didn't want to take human life by his hand.

##### **DATA 2**

Judge: "Then why you contesting at it? Why is it so important to you, given your refusal to even touch a gun, to serve in a combat unit?"

Desmond: "**It because when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, I took it personal. Everyone I knew was on fire to join up including me. There two men in my hometown who were declared failed four straight killed themselves because they couldn't serve. I had a job in a defense plant and could've taken a deferment but that aren't right. It didn't right to me when other men should fight and die, when i just be sitting in the house safe, I need to serve. All I have is the passion to serve as a medic while in the middle with the other guys, no less danger, just when everybody taking life, I'll be saving it. With the world so set on tearing itself apart, it doesn't seem such a bad thing to me to want to put a little bit of it back together.**"

Inside the courtroom, The Judge asked Desmond why this combat unit was important to him for joining even though he can't touch a gun. Then, Desmond explained to the Judge that he wanted to serve his country by his ability as a medic, even just a tiny bit of his ability could be useful in the war. Desmond statement is explaining type of assertive act.

**g. Denying**

**DATA 1**

Colonel Stelzer: "But I understand that God talks to you. Is that right?"

Desmond: "**Sir, I am not a crazy person**"

Denying could be found in the conversation above. Colonel Stelzer called Desmond to his office. Colonel Stelzer asked him why he still didn't want to carry a gun and questioned if this was related to his faith. Colonel Stelzer sarcasm Desmond as a crazy person because he heard the voice of God. Then, Desmond denied that he was not a crazy person, but only a faithful person with his religion and he knew that he was a bit different from others but this was what he meant to be.

**DATA 2**

Colonel Stelzer: "So you don't hear voices?"

Desmond: "**No sir, I am pray to god and feel like he hear me but not a conversation, not like the pretend conversation we have right now**"

In conselling office, Colonel Stelzer tried to check Desmond mentality by asking him if he heard any voices. Then Desmond denied Colonel Stelzer question because he only prayed to the god and he was not a crazy person. The conversation above in Desmond utterances could be found Denying type of assertive act. It showed that Desmond complained he was not a crazy person but just a faithful person that always pray.

**DATA 3**

Sgt.Howell: "Are you saying you don't know who attack you?"

Desmond: "**I never said that I was attacked Sergeant**"

In the conversation above, Sgt.Howell saw Desmond covered in bruises, he asked him who was the attacker. Desmond deny Sgt.Howell statement and told him that he was not attacked by anybody. The denying types of assertive act occured in Desmond statement when he deny that he was attacked.

**DATA 4**

Medic: "A priority? He will dead before he get down from the cliff"

Desmond: **“You don’t know that! Get him alright!”**

Desmond utterance above was denying type of assertive act. Desmond tried to help a wounded soldier and told the medic that this soldier was the top priority. The medic said that this wounded soldier would be already dead before he could get down from the cliff. Desmond denied his statement and told the medic he was still not sure that the wounded soldier could not be saved.

#### **DATA 5**

Sgt.Howell: “You’re kidding right?”  
Desmond: **“No, I will drag you”**

The denying type in the Desmond utterance happened in the conversation above. The situation was Sgt.Howell in a wounded state asked Desmond if he was kidding for telling him to sit on a long cloth made by Desmond. Desmond denied and told Sgt.Howell that he was not kidding because he would drag him from the battlefield with the long cloth

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The research result showed that there were 7 types of assertive act performed by character Desmond Doss in the Hacksaw Ridge movie. The data found in the movie were 32 utterances, which showed 1 data of asserting, 11 data of reporting, 4 data of complaining, 1 data of suggesting, 2 data of boasting, 2 data of explaining, and 7 data of denying. The frequently type of assertive act performed by the main character was reporting, with 11 data out of 28 data in total, referred to inform something that has been done. In the movie, the character named Desmond Doss was known as kind, faithful, and sincere to his family and his comrade in war. In the movie, Desmond was a soldier in world war 2, the act of reporting was used frequently by him because, as a soldier, he must maintain his position when he spoke to his superior or captain in the warzone or barrack.

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