

## EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS ANALYSIS OF “LOOKING FOR ALASKA” NOVEL BY JOHN GREEN

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### ABSTRACT

This descriptive qualitative research discovered the expressive acts in John Green's novel "Looking for Alaska.". Martinez's (2013) theory was used to analyze the types of expressive acts that found in the data source. The data for this research was collected by using an observational method and a non-participation technique. Then, the data was analyzed using the pragmatic identity method and pragmatic competence in equalizing. The researchers identified in 20 utterances that uttered by the characters in the novel. The utterances consisted of 5 types of commissive acts. Those types were four data of the expression of thanking, five data of the expression of apologizing, two data of the expression of boasting, and three data of the expression of condoling. Additionally, among those types of expressive acts, boasting became into the most prominent types that appeared in the data source.

**Keywords:** Expressive acts, pragmatics, speech act

### 1. Introduction

As one of the branches of Pragmatic, speech acts is an action that projected by someone through their utterance. As stated by Yule (1985) speech act is a way to describe a verbal activity such as "requesting," "commanding," "questioning," or "informing.". In this research, researchers focused on exploring

Expressive Speech Act that included on one Speech Act's classification. Expressive Speech Act used to express the psychological state in sincerity condition about a state of affair in specified in the propositional content. Including the expressive speech act are welcoming, praising, blaming, etc.

There is one phenomenon that can be used as the conflict of this research. A song by Taylor Swift - Back

to December, *“So this is me swallowing my pride, standing in front of you saying I’m sorry for that night.”* As an example of Expressive Speech Act in a type Apologizing. In this song, Taylor Swift as the speaker tried to show her feelings and being sorry about what happened between her and the hearer. As the speaker used the word **“I’m sorry for that night”** showed an **Expressive Speech act**.

Not only showing in a mentioned song, written in a book by John Green, *“Looking for Alaska”* talked about the disappearance of a girl named Alaska:

Will (Hearer) : *“Well, we just dropped by to say good-bye. I’ve got to get Marie home by six. Have fun at boarding school, Miles.”*

Miles (Speaker): **“Thanks”**.

The way Miles as the speaker informally saying *“Thanks”*, is an act of Expressive Speech Act in Thankful. The speech act of thanking, as pointed out Yule (1985) is an act that may involve parties related to both positive and bad feelings on the side of the speaker and listener.

There are researches discussed Expressive speech act, as in *The Use of Expressive Speech Acts In Hannah Montana Session 1* by Handayani (2015). Using *Hannah Montana’s* dialogue as the data source and using Yule (1996) as the theory research, the research found ten kinds of expressive speech act on *Hannah Montana Session 1* as the data source.

Another research conducted *Types of Expressive Acts in Bohemian*

*Rhapsody Movie 2018”* by Piscesco & Afriana (2022), using *Bohemian Rhapsody Movie 2018* as the data source and using Martinez (2013) the research found five types of expressive speech act on the *Bohemian Rhapsody Movie 2018*.

In this research, the researchers used a novel by John Green *“Looking for Alaska”* for the data source that could be differentiate this research from other previous researches. Though many researches have discussed Expressive Speech Act, the data sources could be different. In the research the researchers highlighted and point out the expressive speech act that exist on the novel by using the theory by Martínez (2013).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Expressive in Speech Act

Proposed by Searle (1970), Speech act presented as a branch of pragmatics that studies about the human word that not only being used as a way to convey an information, it too can be referred and used to initiate of implying an action. The action that expressed by words can be recognize as Expressive Acts, which conflicted to human physic and psych. As mentioned by Martínez (2013) there are five types of speech acts that can be recognize and complied as Expressive type. There are, Apologizing, Thanking, Congratulating, Condoling and Boasting.

#### a. Apologizing

An English expression used for saying sorry. This apology is generally

used when we do something (mistake) that makes someone uncomfortable or unhappy. This first type can be used as way for someone acknowledging their mistake (Martínez, 2013). Example: **“I really apologize for that”** (Siregar, 2018).

#### **b. Thanking**

The second type that being called as Thanking act is a part of speech act as a complex act, potentially involving both positive as well as negative feelings on the part of the giver and receiver. To convey the feeling of grateful that being received by one person (Martínez, 2013). Example: **“Oh! Thank you, thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”** (Handayani, 2015).

#### **c. Congratulating**

Congratulating expression can be used in order to appreciate someone’s doing and showing care of them. The third type is Congratulating that can be used as an act to show an excitement for others achievement or particular special event (Martínez, 2013). Example: **“Nah, no plus one. Congratulations”** (Ricca & Ambalegin, 2022).

#### **d. Condoling**

As mentioned on An Analysis of Condolences Speech Act by Indonesian Adolescents, “According to the classification of speech act, condolence falls into expressive category Searle (1970). The main purposes of condolences expression are to share sympathy and encouragement with those who have experienced the death of a loved one.

(Martínez, 2013). Example: **“Fred, I’m so sorry”** (Piscesco & Afriana, 2022).

#### **e. Boasting**

Boasting often consists in claims about future. Boasting impress other with one’s past accomplishments, impressing others to inspire their confidence or admiration, this can be used to point self-consciousness of their greatness (Martínez, 2013). Example: **“I’m definitely faster when I’m blue”** (Aritonang & Ambalegin, 2023)

### **3. Research Method**

This paper is applying descriptive qualitative research. As recited by (Creswell, 2013) Qualitative research concern on the study and understanding the implied meaning on one or group of society relying on the human or social issue. The data source that needed to look out for is a novel by one famous author John Green, “Looking for Alaska.” The novel narrates about the disappearance of one girl named Alaska. And by this novel, the writer highlights about the Expressive Speech Act that exist on the characters dialogue. The data that being collected in this research is using the method introduced by Sudaryanto (2015), consisting of detailed on analysis and or observation under observational method. By not inducing any communication, discussion, or any exchanges to any individual discourse this article is using non participatory technique. Using the pragmatic identity and competence in equalizing as engaged on Sudaryanto (2015), the article is researched and analyzed the

data applying the method recited by Martínez (2013)

#### 4. Finding and Discussion

##### 4.1 Finding

The John Green novel "Looking for Alaska" employed 20 data to illustrate the expressive acts. First, there were four data that illustrated the expression of thanking. Second, there were five data that illustrated the expression of apologizing. Next, there were two data that illustrated the expression of boasting. The last, there were three data that illustrated the expression of condoling. As the result, there were five types of expressive acts that existed in "Looking for Alaska" Novel by John Green. The data of the analysis are presented below.

NO	Types of Expressive Acts	Frequency
1	Thanking	4
2	Apologizing	5
3	Congratulating	2
4	Boasting	6
5	Condoling	3
	Total	20

**Table 4.1** Frequency of Expressive Acts Found in Looking for Alaska" Novel by John Green.

##### 4.2 Discussion

###### Data 1

As the context, the statement below happened when Colonel and Miles were firstly met. They met each other in the bathroom after they had shower. After that, they had a small

conversation where the speaker was introducing himself to Miles.

Colonel: "Yeah, everybody's got a talent. **I can memorize things. And you can ...?**"(Page 16)

The speaker asked Miles some questions and started to mention some countries to proof that the speaker has a good memory. Then, based on the statement '**I can memorize things...**' followed with question '**And you can ... ?**' above, was to show-off that the speaker has an ability to remembering something. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the speaker tried to make someone impressed his ability.

###### Data 2

As the context, the statement below happened when Alaska was giving some advices to her friend in order to live the high school life of him. Alaska: "**I got rid of that problem quickly.**"(Page 23)

The way the advices were delivered by the speaker was to show how smarts the speaker is by solving every issue. Then, the adjective '**...quickly**' above was admitting that every problem could be easily solved by the speaker. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the speaker tried to make someone impressed her.

###### Data 3

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles questioning the Alaska's name. Miles

had also suggested some names like Mary or Harmony instead of Alaska.

Alaska: "So **congratulations.**" (Pae 51)

At the end, Miles finally knew the meaning of the speaker's name. The name has a meaning of 'which the sea breaks against,' which taken from the word *Alyeska*. Then, the speaker congratulated Miles by said the word **congratulations** for his achievement that knowing the meaning of the speaker's name after questioning her name. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **congratulating** type where the speaker's felt happy with someone's achievement.

#### Data 4

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles was having Thanksgiving at the Colonel's trailer. The speaker questioning how Colonel can grew up in a small place like that. After that, the speaker lay a joke that the turkey which eaten by them was as big as Colonel's kitchen.

Miles: "I'm sorry if it makes you **uncomfortable,**" (Page 85)

The joke indirectly quipped the size of Colonel's living place. Then, the statement '**I'm sorry...**' above showed the speaker's regret for making the situation uncomfortable '**uncomfortable**' where it offends the Colonel's feeling. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **apologizing** type where the speaker's regret was illustrated after the man did something that uncomfortable to someone.

#### Data 5

As the context, the statement below happened when Alaska was having the Thanksgiving with all her friends. After that, the speaker expressed her gratefulness while they are enjoying their Thanksgiving because the speaker hasn't had a Thanksgiving for a decade.

Alaska: "I'm **grateful** for having just had my best Thanksgiving in a decade." (Page 86)

Then, by looking the word '**grateful**' which has been said by the speaker, it proves the act of gratitude after receiving something good where the speaker could enjoy the Thanksgiving moment again. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **thanking** type where the speaker's gratefulness was illustrated after receiving something good or beneficial.

#### Data 6

As the context, the statement above happened when Takumi and his friends were running from Eagle. They run avoiding Eagle because they would not come to the classroom.

Takumi: "**I can rhyme while I run; I'm that slick.**" (Page 98)

Then, the speaker said that the fox (which is refers to Takumi) is too quick so Eagle cannot stop him. Then, the statement '**I'm that slick**' above showed the admiration that the speaker was so slick even can rhyme while running '**I can rhyme while I run...**'. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the

speaker tried to make someone impressed him.

#### Data 7

As the context, the statement below happened when Colonel and his friends were having dinner after freestyle contest. The speaker and others were celebrating their victory with cheddar cheese and warm pink wine.

Colonel: **"I'm sorry, Pudge. I wasn't aware** that someone was holding open your throat and pouring wine down it," (Page 104)

After that, when the speaker was not paying attention to Miles, Alaska was pouring the wine to Miles over and over until he almost puke. Then, the speaker sowed his regret **'I'm sorry, Pudge. I wasn't aware..'** for not aware by letting Miles drank wine so much which is a mistake that did by the speaker. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **apologizing** type where the speaker's regret was illustrated after the man did some mistake.

#### Data 8

As the context, the statement below happened when Takumi and his friends were having dinner after freestyle contest. The speaker and others were celebrating their victory with cheddar cheese and warm pink wine.

Takumi: **"Two nights in a row is maybe pushing our luck,"** (Page 104)

Then, the speaker described the statement above for expressing the excitement for winning the contest with a celebration. Thus, the

statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **congratulating** type where the speaker's excitement was illustrated after winning the contest.

#### Data 9

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles and his friends were hangout for drinking. At the moment Alaska was too drunk that forced her to puke the wine out. After that, Alaska went to go to sleep at her sleeping bag while the speaker and Lara was laying down beside the speaker.

Miles: **"I am clearly the greatest kisser** in the history of the universe." (Page 111)

Then, Lara was suddenly rolled over the speaker and didn't notice that they were accidentally kissing. The speaker suddenly said that **'I am clearly the greatest kisser..'** while Lara was laughing after heard the statement. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the speaker tried to make someone impressed him.

#### Data 10

As the context, the statement below happened in the morning specifically before eight a.m. Colonel said that it might be a bufriedos for today's lunch and made Miles thought that the speaker was hungry.

Colonel: **"I finished memorizing the capitals,"** (Page 128)

The speaker explained that his utterance before was not means that

the speaker is starving but the terms of people called the fried burritos with *bufriedos* after Alaska called it first. Then, the speaker told Miles with the statement above, where the speaker wants to show-off to Miles because the speaker suddenly said it where the topic which being discussed was about the name of a food. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the speaker tried to make someone impressed his ability.

#### Data 11

As the context, the statement below happened at Alaska's funeral. The story told that the car accident was the cause of Alaska's death. Colonel and his friends were not at the place when the tragedy was happened.

Colonel: "I am sorry, Alaska. **You deserved a better friend.**" (Page 135)

Then, the speaker showed his regret for the mistake of not being a good friend that always on Alaska's side by looking the statement '**..You deserved a better friend**'. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **apologizing** type where the speaker's regret was illustrated after the man did something that uncomfortable towards someone.

#### Data 12

As the context, the statement below happened at Alaska's funeral. The story told that the car accident was the cause of Alaska's death. At the moment, Miles seems very upset and cannot accept that Alaska had died.

Colonel: "**I'm so sorry, Pudge. I know you did,**" (Page 135)

Then, when Miles gave some farewell words, the speaker expressed his sympathy by uttering the statement '**I'm sorry..**' followed with '**..I know you did**' to encourage Miles' feeling. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **condoling** type where the speaker illustrated his sympathy to encourage someone.

#### Data 13

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles was having lunch with Takumi at *McInedible*. After that, while they were enjoying their lunch, the speaker told Takumi that his feeling starts to feel that Alaska was already gone from this world. Because of that, it made Takumi cannot enjoy his meal where it brought the memory with Alaska and said that Takumi was missing her '**I miss her**'.

Miles: "**Yeah. I do, too. I'm sorry, Takumi,**" (Page 155)

Then, the speaker realized about his mistake that triggered Takumi's memory, the speaker uttered the statement '**Yeah. I do, too. I'm sorry, Takumi**' to show his regret after making a mistake. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **apologizing** type where the speaker's regret was illustrated after the man did a mistake.

#### Data 14

As the context, the statement below happened when Eagle was having a conversation with Miles. The speaker offered Miles an egg sandwich and asking why Colonel didn't come to the class. After that, Miles explained that Colonel cannot accept about

Alaska death and made him stay up all night.

Eagle: **“I’m sympathetic to Chip’s troubles.** But school is important. Alaska would have wanted, I’m sure, for Chip’s studies to continue unimpeded.” (Page 158)

Then speaker showed his sympathy towards Colonel who still grief by stating the statement **‘I’m sympathetic to Chip’s troubles...’**. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **condoling** type where the speaker expressed his sympathy towards someone.

#### **Data 15**

As the context, the statement below happened when Colonel and Miles were being interrogate by Eagle for smoking in their room. Eagle thought that they were not asleep yet because they had smoke for a tough night after they lost one of their friends. After that, Miles lied to Eagle that the speaker cannot fell asleep and Miles tried to stay awake as well.

Colonel: **“No, sir. I’m just glad I have Miles.”** (Page 160)

Then, Eagle asked the speaker for any favor and the speaker rejected by giving the statement above. The statement **‘..glad I have Miles’** above was showing the speaker’s gratefulness for having friend like Miles that can help him including in this situation. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **thanking** type where the speaker’s gratefulness was illustrated after receiving something good or beneficial.

#### **Data 16**

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles and Colonel were being interrogate by Eagle for smoking in their room. Eagle thought that they were not asleep yet because they had smoke for a tough night after they lost one of their friends. After that, Miles lied to Eagle that the speaker cannot fell asleep and Miles tried to stay awake as well. From the context it told that the speaker and Colonel had made a mistake where they should fell asleep four hours ago. Miles: **“I’m sorry, sir.** I’m just trying to stay awake with him.” (Page 160)

Then, the speaker realized his mistake by uttering the statement **‘I’m sorry, sir’** to admit his regret. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **apologizing** type where the speaker’s regret was illustrated after the man did a mistake.

#### **Data 17**

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles was buying a cigarette. The woman behind the counter welcomed Miles with a smile. After that, Miles asked about Marlboro Lights and the speaker gave it without asking any ID even though Miles was still not legal to buy a cigarette. The speaker had a small talk and asking about a news of death person from Miles’ school.

The woman behind the counter: **“I’s awful sorry t’ hear it.”** (Page 170)

Then, knowing that news was true, the speaker expressed her sympathy towards Miles by uttering the statement **‘I’s awful..’** followed with



'..sorry t' hear it'. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **condoling** type where the speaker illustrated her sympathy.

#### **Data 18**

As the context, the statement below happened when Miles was preparing for pop quizzes in religion class. After that, Miles read the guy named Banzan was walking to the market for looking the best piece of meat.

The butcher: "**Everything in my shop is the best.** You cannot find a piece of meat that is not the best." (Page 175)

Then, the butcher met Banzan and admitted that his meat was the best by looking the statement '**Everything in my shop is the best..**'. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **boasting** where the speaker tried to make someone impressed to his admiration.

#### **Data 19**

As the context, the statement below happened when Dr. William Morse was coming to the gym. Miles was already sitting at the bleachers that located in the middle of the front row with Dr. William Morse. Some seniors were sitting at behind Miles but there were still some bleachers that already saved for the speaker and Lara.

Colonel: "**Thanks for holding our seats,**" (Page 185)

Then, after a moment when Colonel and Lara came, the speaker uttered a word '**Thanks..**' followed with '**..for holding our seats**' to show

the speaker thankfulness for keeping their seats. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **thanking** type where the speaker's thankfulness was illustrated after receiving something good or beneficial.

#### **Data 20**

As the context, the statement below happened when Dr. William Morse was visiting the gym. After that, the senior class speaker named Eagle came and formally shook the speaker's hand. While Eagle was shaking the speaker's hand, Eagle showed his trust by looking the statement '**..glad to have you**' that uttered to the speaker.

Dr. William Morse: "**Thank you. I hope I don't disappoint.**" (Page 185)

Then, the statement '**I hope I don't disappoint**' after '**Thank you**' was showed the speaker's thankfulness for receiving something good where Eagle put some trust to the speaker. Thus, the statement above is suitable to be categorized as the expressive acts of **thanking** type where the speaker's thankfulness was illustrated after receiving something good or beneficial.

### **5. Conclusion**

In the "Looking for Alaska" Novel by John Green, The Martinez theory had an impact on how well speakers could communicate without being emotionally restricted. Based on Martinez's theory, there are five types of expressive acts. Those are thanking, apologizing, congratulating, boasting, and condoling. The act of boasting was the most prominent type of expressive

act, while the act of congratulating was the smallest. Moreover, those five types had been discovered in 20 utterances from the data source. Those types were four data of the expression of thanking, five data of the expression of apologizing, two data of the expression of boasting, and three data of the expression of condoling. After examining the results and conclusions of the research, it is crucial to understand the expressive acts. Thus, it is advantageous for speakers and listeners to possess this knowledge in order to provide exact information, particularly when it comes to progress, so that people who are not understand can avoid the conflict

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