

“A poem is a communicative act”: Exploring how speech acts in poetry convey writer intention

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Bachelor’s Thesis

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University of Turku

April 2025

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Number of pages: 26

This thesis analyses the illocutionary acts in Frank O'Hara's and Langston Hughes' poetry. The purpose of the analysis is to examine how the complexities of speech acts present in natural dialogue can also be found in poetry, and to make an early case for pragmatically annotated, specific type of corpora of poetry that can partially fill the gap of the small number of pragmatically annotated corpora currently available for the study of speech acts.

The analysis is conducted using speech act theory and the DART speech-act taxonomy. The three poems were analysed four times using the traditional speech act theory and once using the DART taxonomy. The analyses were done on paper and the illocutionary acts marked next to the poems.

The results indicate that many of the speech acts used in everyday speech can also be found in poetry, having the same purpose and intention. Moreover, the results show that multiple speech acts can be in use simultaneously in an utterance. Finally, the analysis suggests that there exist many speech acts that are used by speakers but are yet to be named and categorized, and that poetry could potentially help with the exploration, categorization and naming of new speech acts for further research.

Key words: speech act theory, DART speech-act taxonomy, poetry analysis.

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1 Introduction

In communicative situations, speakers and hearers often employ speech acts for various strategic purposes. These purposes may include the intention to continue an ongoing conversation, or ask for clarification on an earlier statement. Likewise, when communication is regarded as: “[...] a process of rational and reasoned interpretation” (Feruza 2024, 25), the poetic text can also be regarded as a medium through which the writer and reader can be thought to be in an interaction. From a linguopragmatic perspective, when writing a piece of poetry, the writer takes into consideration communicative-pragmatic aspects that surround the act of writing the poem (Feruza 2024, 25). These include the poem’s subject matter and who the intended audience of readers are (ibid.). On the other hand, the reader then analyses the poem for its meaning and purpose.

This implies that poems entail speech acts, specifically illocutionary acts, of various sorts. Therefore, in this study, my aim is to analyse the illocutionary acts in the selected poems of American poets Frank O’Hara and Langston Hughes, and discuss how their intentions in the poems are revealed and the possible implications on how speech acts are understood and categorized. The analysis is conducted using Speech Act Theory (SAT) first developed by philosophers John Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969, 1979), and Martin Weisser’s DART Speech-Act taxonomy. My objective is to examine what types of illocutionary acts the writers have used in their poems to express their thoughts and to what extent the findings exemplify the complex speaking strategies employed by speakers and hearers in natural conversations and other communicative situations. The current research topic is of significance particularly to the field of corpus pragmatics because it demonstrates the potentiality of poetry to contribute to our understanding of the complexities of speech acts. According to Weisser: “[...] openly available corpora for pragmatics research are still relatively rare.” (Weisser 2016b, 1). Therefore, in conjunction with the analysis, the possibility of poems to be pragmatically annotated will be examined.

However, there is some criticism about interpreting literary works from philosophical perspectives as opposed to keeping to the idea that literary interpretation should first and foremost be concerned with its own fictional world and the surrounding themes governing it (Lamarque 2023, 10). But the notion of communication can be applied to poetry if it is seen as “a communicative act with a communicative goal” (Elkommos 2018, 1025), therefore transforming into: “an illocutionary act that has a perlocutionary goal” (ibid.), where

perlocutionary effect on the reader can range from feelings to actions (Elkommos 2018, 1027).

To support this idea, a psychophysiological study on the emotional power of poetry found that speech acts in poems that were addressed to someone elicited chills in the participants which the researches attributed to: “[the] passages [emphasising] a communicative function that is characteristic of direct personal communication and social interaction” (Wassiliwizky et.al 2017, 1236, 1238). This study gives further credence to the idea of poetry serving also as communication, in addition to providing aesthetic pleasure when one reads poetry (Wassiliwizky et.al 2017, 1229), and thus undoubtedly consisting of illocutionary acts because of the presence of writer intention behind the meaning of the written words.

2 Background

The background section begins in 2.1 with the introduction of Speech Act Theory and the categories for speech acts originally proposed by Austin and Searle. It then covers the DART taxonomy and its sub-categories of speech acts briefly in 2.2. Lastly, in 2.3, the communicative functions of language and the concept of pragmatics are introduced, and the communicative aspects of poetry are explained using a recent study and its findings on the matter.

2.1 Speech Act Theory

To introduce SAT, the development of its concept can be attributed to philosophers John Austin and John Searle (Feruzza 2024, 27). Austin began theorising about the functions of language in the early 1960s by proposing that language is primarily used to perform actions, and not, as had been the dominant ideology in linguistics up until then, for the mere transformation of information. Additionally, he proposed that each utterance a person makes can be divided into three acts: the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary act. The locutionary act refers to the words uttered whereas the illocutionary act refers to the intention of the speaker while producing the utterance, and finally, the perlocutionary act to the effect that the words have on the hearer. Based on his concept of the function of language and utterances, Austin developed five categories for speech acts: verdictives (to state a verdict), exercitives (to exert power through speech), commissives (to make a commitment), expositives (to state an intention), and behabitives (to express attitudes) (Weisser 2020, 3). His ideas were later compiled in the book “How to Do Things with Words” (1962) (Feruzza 2024, 27). John Searle continued on Austin’s ideas in “Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language” (1969) (Feruzza 2024, 27), and again in 1976 in “A classification of illocutionary acts” (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010, 7). In “A classification of illocutionary acts” Searle developed five categories that are purely based on speaker intention: assertives (to express a belief or an opinion), directives (to get the hearer to do something), commissives (to commit to a future action), expressives (similar to “behabitives”), and declarations (to affect physical change through speech) (Weisser 2020, 5).

What is clear from these categorizations is that they are not broad enough to account for all speech acts employed in communicative situations. They have been criticised for making communication between participants seem less mutually impactful and social —more

involving only the transferring of information — (Reich 2011, 1350), and being too abstract to fully capture the myriad nuances of discourse (Weisser 2020, 25). Consequently, one addition to speech act categorizations comes in the form of the DART (Dialogue Annotation and Research Tool) speech-act taxonomy developed by Martin Weisser that offers more comprehensive and specific categorizations for speech acts. However, because of Austin’s critical and influential understanding of the function of language, SAT has ultimately been of great influence in linguistics. For example, SAT bolstered the development of pragmatics as its own discipline (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan 2010, 4).

2.2 DART Speech-Act Taxonomy

As mentioned in 2.1, the Dart Speech Act-Taxonomy was developed by researcher Martin Weisser to remedy some of the issues mentioned earlier when using the traditional speech act theory for pragmatic analyses. Weisser outlines its usage in the following:

“The DART methodology goes beyond the function-to-form approach [...] It tries to extend existing speech act taxonomies to make them applicable to the annotation and analysis of any type of naturally occurring dialogue. This makes it possible to create profiles of the communicative strategies employed by individual speakers, speaker groups, or even whole corpora.” (Weisser 2020, 6).

The speech act categories in the taxonomy have been developed and used in the DART research tool in corpus pragmatics to create and analyse pragmatically annotated dialogue in corpora (Weisser 2018, 62). Pragmatically annotated corpora refer to corpora that are annotated for speech acts (Weisser 2016, 37). According to Weisser, these types of corpora are still somewhat uncommon (*ibid.*).

Currently, there are four versions of the DART speech-act taxonomy:

DART_taxonomy_v1.0., DART_taxonomy_v1.1., DART_taxonomy_v2.0., and DART_taxonomy_v3.0., that can be accessed on martinweisser.org. In “Speech Acts in Corpus Pragmatics: Making the case for an extended taxonomy”, Weisser gives a brief overview of the sub-categories of these speech acts. Some of them include “Information- or Option-Seeking Acts”, “Suggesting or Commitment-Indicating Acts”, “Negotiative Acts”, and “Residual Acts” (Weisser 2020,7). To give examples, these sub-categories would include speech acts such as requesting, describing or providing information, offering, as well as

speech acts whose function in dialogues cannot be readily identified (ibid.).

2.3 Communication

Communication is an essential part of human interaction and it usually includes a variety of speech acts including asking, congratulating, thanking, or describing something such as an event or a feeling. According to Searle: “the basic unit of human linguistic communication is the illocutionary act” (Searle 1976, 1). The implication is that the interpretation of meanings in communicative events begins by first evaluating the speaker’s intention.

Pragmatics shifted the focus in linguistics towards the idea that language functions primarily for communicative purposes, and that meanings conveyed through language should be examined against the backdrop of varying contexts together with speaker intention (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010, 3). Pragmatics involves qualities like: “the context of utterance, whether physical, social, or linguistic” (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010, 6), and: “[...] non-verbal cues, cultural norms, shared expectations [...]” (Feruza 2020, 25).

In Elkommos’ analysis of English and American poetry from the 18th to 20th centuries, she states...: “[...] they [the poems] are all speech acts: illocutionary acts, of miscellaneous categories [...] affecting the reader’s mind, heart or possibly causing a future action [...]” (Elkommos 2018, 1027). She gives an example of a poem by W.S Landor called “To Robert Browning” of a perlocutionary effect where Landor wrote a response to Browning’s poetry (ibid.), a poem she describes as: “a *representative* speech act that is *indirect directive* calling for the writing of poetry” (ibid.). The premise of this study rests on the notion that poems always communicate a message to a reader, and that that message is affected by the poet’s intention, i.e., what the poet is trying to get across (Elkommos 2018, 1025-1026). Moreover, Elkommos particularises that: “The speech act performed by the poet [...] is a message delivered and has an effect: another speech act and/or a perlocutionary effect/act” (ibid.).

The study additionally found that the poems fall under three separate discourse levels: one-level discourse, two-level discourse, and four-level discourse (Elkommos 2018, 1026-1027), of which four-level discourse will not be discussed here for its lack of applicability in my own analysis. Below, Figure 1 illustrates the context of discourse while Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the discourse levels I and II. These discourse levels indicate the number of addressers and

addressees. Most of the analysed poems on level I discourse were those where the poet addresses the message directly to the reader. The implication is that the “addresser in the poem” is the author and the addressed is a reader, regardless of who it is at any given time. Therefore, in these poems, there are no specific subjects inside the poem’s world that are addressed. The communication present in level I discourse implies a dialogic interaction between the poet and reader which is demonstrated in Figure 2. The style of these poems resembles personal letters. Therefore, some of the poems belonging to level I discourse were descriptive or narrative poems like William Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud” (ibid.). Analysing the poem, she states that: “The poet [Wordsworth] is making a *representative* speech act, describing a situation and also an *expressive*, expressing **his** loneliness, ‘solitude’ and the ‘pleasure’ **he** experiences from nature [...]” (Elkommos 2018, 1027, emphasis added). In the analysis of “I wandered lonely as a cloud”, based on the categorizations of Searle’s illocutionary acts, Wordsworth’s representative and expressive speech acts indicate what his intentions were in writing the poem.

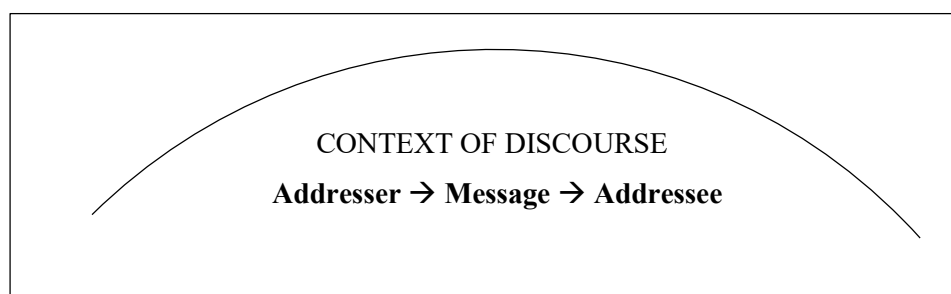


Figure 1. Situational context of discourse (Elkommos 2018, 1026)

In poems on level II discourse there is a subject addressed inside the poem. Therefore, the overall message of the poem is communicated from the poet to the reader as an interaction between an implied author (hereafter IA) and the implied reader (hereafter IR) inside the poem. The IA can therefore be someone other than the poet himself.

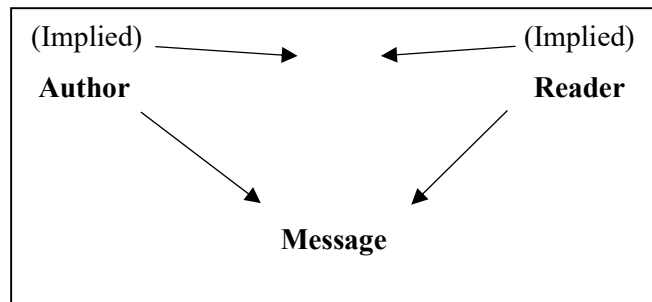


Figure 2. Level I discourse (Elkommos 2018, 1026)

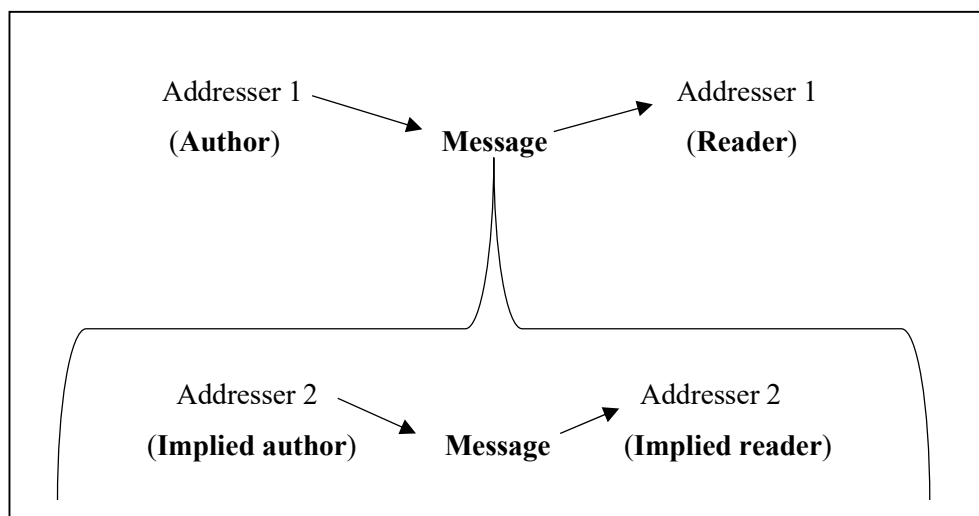


Figure 3. Level II discourse (Elkommos 2018, 1026)

Examples of these types of poems include Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To a skylark" where the IA is talking to nature (Elkommos 2018, 1026). Furthermore, she illustrates how speech acts inside the levels can be interpreted differently and thus have different functions. In "O captain! My captain!" by Walt Whitman, the directive addressed to the dead captain is separate discourse on the level of the IA and IR whereas the same directive is discourse on another level, on the level of the poet and the reader (Elkommos 2018, 1028). On the level of IA and IR, the speech act fits the traditional speech act category of directive (ibid.) whereas on the level of the poet and reader, its categorization becomes more complicated. As Elkommos explains: "This is a clear directive, one that will not cause a powerful action on the part of the dead captain, **but just have an effect on the reader.**" (ibid. emphasis added)

3 Materials and Methods

3.1 Materials

For this study, I chose three poems to study as my primary sources: “To a Dead Friend” and “After Many Springs” by Langston Hughes, and “Lana Turner Has Collapsed!” by Frank O’Hara. For a brief overview of the poets, Hughes was a 20th century poet whose works were especially influential during the Harlem Renaissance. Frank O’Hara was also a 20th century poet who was the leader of a renowned group of artists called “New York School of Poets”. The first two poems are taken from poets.org and the last from poetryfoundation.org. For this study, I decided to analyse American poets mainly because of my own familiarity with many of them. I chose to study O’Hara and Hughes specifically because though they have been influential in the literary landscape, their works have not been much studied from a linguistic perspective, especially using approaches such as speech act theory. Additionally, I chose these particular poems because it is relatively straightforward to attribute the speaker intention in these poems to either the poet or the IA which make them optimal choices for this type of study.

3.2 Methods

The poems were analysed using speech act theory and the DART Speech-Act Taxonomy. The SAT used is based on Searle’s 1976 “A classification of illocutionary acts” (Searle [1976] 2008). The illocutionary acts categorised by Searle and used in this study are representatives, directives, and expressives. Each of the acts have an accompanying set of symbols that illustrate their characteristics. The explanation for each of the symbols can be found in Table 1 and Table 2. Representatives: “commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something’s being the case” (Searle 1976, 10). The symbol for representatives is $\uparrow\downarrow B(p)$. Directives: “are attempts (of varying degrees [...]) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (Searle 1976, 11). They have the symbol $!\uparrow W(H \text{ does } A)$. Finally, expressives: “express the psychological state [...] about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (Searle 1976, 12). Their symbol is $E \emptyset (P) (S/H + \text{property})$.

The contents inside the parentheses correspond to the propositional content of the act, i.e., the content of the utterance (Searle 1976, 2). In representatives, the speaker (S) believes (B) that the propositional content (p) is true (\uparrow), therefore what is said has to match reality (\downarrow). In

expressives, there is no direction of fit (\emptyset) because the truth of the statement is already presupposed (Searle 1976, 13), and the psychological state of the speaker varies (P), depending on the situation. Additionally, the utterance has to refer to either speaker or hearer (S/H + property), not somebody else. Commissives and Declarations were not used in this analysis since commissive speech acts were not found and declarations are applicable only when: “[t]here must exist an extra-linguistic institution and the speaker and hearer must occupy special places within this institution [for the declaration to go through]” (Searle 1976, 14)

Table 1. Searle’s symbols for illocutionary acts

Symbol	(of the speaker)
w	Want
i	Intention
b	Belief
P	Psychological state

Table 2. Additional symbols used by Searle

Symbol	Meaning	Usage
⊢	Gottlob Frege’s assertion sign	Indicates truthfulness of statement
↓ / ↑	Direction of fit of illocutionary point	Indicates the relationship between statement and world
↓	Direction of fit: words to world	Statement must fit to the existing world
↑	Direction of fit: world to words	Statement must affect change in the existing world
\emptyset	No direction of fit	Statement’s primary function is neither to fit to the existing world nor affect change in it
p	Propositional content	The content of the utterance, i.e. what is said
!	Illocutionary point indicating device	Indicates the speaker’s attitude in uttering a statement

A second analysis was done using version 3.0 (updated in 2019) of the Dart Taxonomy to evaluate if the same speech act could be further specified by fitting it in one of the categories in the DART taxonomy. The categories used in this study will be represented in Table 3. All of Weisser's DART Speech Act Taxonomies can be accessed on martinweisser.org in full.

The pre-analysis was done to six poems of which three were excluded because of overt use of personification where non-human subjects or objects were used to deliver the message. For this study, my purpose was to analyse poems where the speaker intention can be clearly attributed to either the poet or the IA inside the poem. The next step was to use Searle's classifications of illocutionary acts to find possible speech acts and categorize them rudimentarily.

Table 3. Weisser's speech act categories utilized in this study (version 3.0.)

Speech Act	Meaning
ExpressAssumption	expressing an assumption
ExpressAwareness	expressing awareness, possibly knowledge of something
RegInfoExclaim	registering surprise or incredulity in the form of a question
ReferTime	referring to a specific point in time
SelfTalk	speaking to oneself (the speaker)
ThirdParty	speaking to someone who is not involved in the dialogue
Unclassifiable	a speech-act not classifiable according to the current scheme (version)
Uninterpretable	uninterpretable, due to missing or incoherent information

In the actual analysis, each of the three chosen poems were analysed four times using the categories of illocutionary acts, and once using the taxonomy. The speech acts found and analysed in the poems had to match each of the symbols put forth by Searle to be considered to belong to a certain speech act category. The analysis was done line by line, or up to the point where the illocutionary point in the poem changes. Additionally, the different discourse levels I, and II were utilised in this study (Elkommos 2018, 1027). Both the SAT and the

DART analysis were done physically on paper and the number and type of Searle's illocutionary acts and the speech acts in the taxonomy were marked next to the poems.

4 Analysis

4.1 Analysis of Langston Hughes' "To a Dead Friend"

"To a dead Friend" consists of four stanzas. The first stanza consists of four lines, and the rest of the three stanzas each have three lines. Each stanza was analysed separately because there were no enjambments, or lines that continue beyond the end of a line or a stanza. Therefore, using Searle's categories of illocutionary acts, each stanza was categorized as a representative speech act with the symbolism $\vdash \downarrow B(p)$. However, since each stanza was categorized as being a representative speech act, the whole poem was also categorized as a representative speech act since the illocutionary point of the poem does not change. The analysis shows that the speaker intention can be attributed to the poet himself, and to the IA. The intended addressees are therefore both the reader and the dead friend. Thus, this poem belongs to level II discourse. To reiterate, the poet is addressing the message to the actual reader by way of using an IA that is addressing his message to the IR. Additionally, it is a descriptive poem; the narrator is describing what he sees around him:

The moon still sends it mellow light
 through the purple blackness of the night;
 the morning star is palely bright
 before the dawn.

The sun shines just as before;
 the rose still grows beside my door
 but you have gone (Hughes, lines 1-7).

The last line reveals that he is talking about somebody who has died. The title of the poem offers the linguistic context for this line to be understood as the passing away of a friend. The poet can be assumed to believe that what he is telling the reader is true because he is describing the natural world, in his own embellished and poetic way, and the changes that can be seen in the sky during dusk and dawn. In other words, he is not inventing the scene in his imagination, thus the fit is words to world \downarrow .

Since the illocutionary point of the representative $\vdash\downarrow B(p)$ remains the same throughout the poem, the overall intention of the speaker in this poem can be attributed to his desire of expressing or relating his sorrow to the reader, juxtaposing the positives of the world to the negatives of his heart:

“The sky is blue and the robin sings; / the butterflies dance on rainbow wings / though I am sad” (Hughes, lines 8-10).

The poet’s intention is to try to get the reader to understand his inner turmoil and the depression he feels about his friend’s passing. The previous lines before the last stanza create the context for a tumultuous ending, a feeling of the poet of never being able to move on from his sadness:

“In all the earth no joy can be; / happiness comes no more to me, / for you are dead” (Langston, lines 11-13).

The context that the previous lines offer the ending is what makes the reader understand his intention being the expression of deep sorrow. Here, Hughes explains his feelings directly while using expressive language to create an aesthetic feeling that the reader can potentially relate to.

The analysis using the DART taxonomy shows that some lines in the poem can be categorised differently, even if the categorisation does not deviate much from the overall meaning of the poem. This can be seen especially in the line:

“though I am sad” (Hughes, line 10)

where a shift occurs from one level to another. The pronoun “I” takes the reader out of the level of the IA and IR, indicating that the feeling of sadness described belongs to the poet. This shift changes the level momentarily to level I discourse before the IR is introduced again in lines 11-13. This line could be further categorized as an expressive, to take it back to another traditional speech act category, but it would make the statement more abstract rather than defined. However, since there does not yet seem to be a category for expressing sadness or sorrow under the DART taxonomy, I decided to categorize it as Unclassifiable.

4.2 Analysis of Langston Hughes' "After Many Springs"

"After Many Springs" consists entirely of one stanza with eight lines. This poem, using Searle's categories of illocutionary acts, was also classified as a representative speech act with the symbolism $\vdash \downarrow B(p)$. Here, the speaker intention is attributed to the poet, Langston Hughes, and he is addressing the meaning directly to the reader. Since this poem does not have an addressee inside the poem, it is categorized as level I discourse. This poem is also nature-oriented:

Now
 In June,
 When the night is a vast softness
 filled with blue stars,
 and broken shafts of moon glimmer
 fall upon the earth, (Hughes, lines 1-6).

Though it cannot be confirmed, from the analysis of this poem, it is safe to assume that the poet most likely believes that what he is describing is true since it is directly concerned with the natural world that everybody shares. Hughes uses figurative language to describe what he is seeing to allow the reader to experience the setting in their imagination but it does not take away from what he is describing. Therefore, the conditions for the representative speech act are fulfilled because what he is describing matches reality. When analysed beyond the figurative language, it is clear that Hughes is depicting the physical night sky and the surrounding area that the moon glimmer illuminates.

The title, which offers the linguistic context for the poem, along with the last two lines, reveal that the poet's intention is to suggest that time is moving along and that he is getting older:

"Am I too old to see the fairies dance? / I cannot find them anymore" (Hughes, lines 7-8).

The previous lines already established the context; a nature-setting at night. Since we know that it is a representative speech act, we understand that the poet, at least to some degree, believes what he is suggesting. Interestingly, the last line provides the context for the line:

“Am I too old to see the fairies dance?” (Hughes, line 7). The last line: “I cannot find them anymore” (Hughes, line 8) confirms the poet’s intention; his suggestion of him getting older and time moving along.

However, the DART analysis gives some clarifications to the intentions of the poet. Line 7 is a rhetorical question that the poet uses, together with line 8, to create inquisitive feelings in the reader about the state of the poet’s health and possibly his future. However, since there is no category in the taxonomy that perfectly fits the intention in line 7, I categorized it as Unclassifiable. Some speech acts such as ExpressAssumption, ExpressAwareness, and RegInfoExclaim entail some characteristics that illustrate the idea present in line 7, however without being the perfect descriptors to fully encapsulate it.

4.3 Analysis of Frank O’Hara’s “Lana Turner has collapsed!”

“Lana Turner has collapsed!” is a one-stanza poem with 16 lines. It has enjambments in line 1, and through lines 4-7 but since it is a one-stanza poem, it has less of an effect on the overall meaning of the poem. Using Searle’s categories of illocutionary acts, the poem as a whole can be categorized as a representative speech act with the symbolism $\vdash \downarrow B(p)$, but the last two words of the last line: “oh Lana Turner we love you **get up**” (O’Hara, line 17 [emphasis added]) establish it as a representative speech act that ends in a directive $!\uparrow W(H \text{ does } A)$. The speaker intention can be attributed to the poet, O’Hara, and the IA. O’Hara is indirectly describing to the reader what was happening around him before he saw a sign informing him of Lana’s fainting, by having the IA describe it to the IR in the poem:

I was trotting along and suddenly
it started raining and snowing
and you said it was hailing
but hailing hits you on the head
hard so it was really snowing and
raining and I was in such a hurry
to meet you but the traffic
was acting exactly like the sky (O’Hara, lines 1-8).

Thus, this poem is categorized as level II discourse. Again, the reader can assume that O'Hara believes what he is saying; he is describing an event that had actually occurred. Though figurative language is used, his words match reality in that he is describing the fact that the weather was terrible and that the traffic that day was as rough and chaotic as the weather. Again, as with Hughes's "After Many Springs", O'Hara uses some figurative language but it is used to illuminate the setting and make it easier for the reader to imagine the situation described.

When analysed using the DART taxonomy, lines 11-15 show a different way to interpret the speech act from a representative:

There is no snow in Hollywood
 There is no rain in California
 I have been to lots of parties
 and acted perfectly disgraceful
 but I never actually collapsed (O'Hara, 11-15)

Under the traditional speech act categorization, in this section, the intention of the poet and subsequently the message of the poem do not come across as clearly. It could be additionally categorized as an expressive, but it would not be sufficient enough to clarify the mental state of the poet. Since it is untrue that rain and snow never fall in California, and that the sudden shift to the poet's earlier life-experiences seem out-of-place, the logical conclusion is that there has to be other speech acts employed. Again, some categories in the taxonomy, such as ReferTime and SelfTalk illustrate the qualities of these lines slightly but cannot explain them satisfactorily. Therefore, I categorized these lines collectively as Uninterpretable and Unclassifiable.

Also, the change in illocutionary force, hence in the poet's intention, at the end of the poem can be seen in the directive "get up" directed at Lana Turner. Accordingly, a shift occurs, but it seems that it occurs inside one level rather than from one level to another. This is evident in how the IA changes the addressee from the initial IR to another. However, it is also possible that a shift occurs to level I discourse if the directive is assumed to be coming directly from O'Hara to Lana herself, hence "bypassing" the reader.

The pragmatic knowledge here is established by the previous lines and it is the shared expectation of the understanding that the words of the IA cannot really wake her though it is directly said; the IA and the initial IR in the poem are not near Lana though the directive is addressed to her. Thus, the reader understands that it is said out of desperation, that this person really cares for Lana. The reader understands that the poet's intention is the expression of hope or a wish that it happens.

This analysis revealed that the illocutionary force of a directive speech act can change if the person addressed is not near the speaker. However, the act or the intention does not readily fall under the categories of representatives or expressives. This can be compared to situations in communicative events where a directive is addressed to a person that is not there to hear it. The point of the directive then is to reveal the psychological mindset of the speaker at the time of the utterance. Therefore, the degree of the directive is minimized since the intention is not to actually get the addressed to act on the utterance at that moment. It is more indirectly addressed to self or somebody else who is a part of the conversation but to whom the directive is not addressed. Therefore, under the DART taxonomy, this directive is more appropriately categorized as a simultaneous speech act: SelfTalk and ThirdParty.

5 Discussion

The analysis of these poems has revealed some important findings with interesting implications. Firstly, the SAT analysis suggests that the traditional speech act theory and the categories proposed by Searle are still relatively appropriate to examine the speaker intentions found in poems on a more general level. However, as more studies are being done in pragmatics, and consequently more categories developed, it has become clear that they however cannot fully demonstrate the nuances of language use. The DART analysis has shown in multiple sections in the analysis that the speaker intention comes across more clearly when a speech act is categorised more appropriately under the taxonomy, thus assigning poetry an important role in capturing the nuances of discourse.

Secondly, the analysis has the same finding as Elkommos in her study that more than one speech act can be utilized or employed simultaneously, regardless of the fact that her categories are Searle's representatives and expressives. The simultaneousness is evident for example in O'Hara's directive "get up", categorized as SelfTalk and ThirdParty, that is contemporaneously addressed to self (IA or O'Hara) and Lana. Rather than these two speech acts contradicting one another, together they illustrate how speakers use language to say what they actually mean. Here, the directive "get up" is clearly an illustration of the writer's mental state. In short, the directive, in actuality, is an example of a way of using language where a want, that relates to some absent person, is expressed vocally but inwardly, an act that can perhaps be interpreted as self-soothing gesture on the part of the speaker.

Lastly, the analysis implies that there are still many speech acts employed by speakers that are yet to be identified and categorised. This is evidenced in the categorizations of some of the speech acts as Uninterpretable and Unclassifiable. For example, Hughes' line "though I am sad" clearly illustrates the mental state of the poet, but since there is no category that it fits in, similar speech acts that show a speaker's sadness or sorrow cannot be classified. A more appropriate speech act category that I am suggesting (for the purposes of this study) based on this analysis could be along the lines of ExpressSadness or ExpressSorrow.

Additionally, O'Hara's lines 11-15 show that the writer is employing some sorts of speech acts but because the categorization for them do not exist, the meaning of the poem becomes vague, at least when examined from a linguistic perspective. But close inspection into the subject matter and the context of the poem shows that the speech acts employed are most

likely related to some type of intention on the behalf of the writer to make sense of the situation in his mind. The lines could imply that the writer is brooding over how the incident could have happened, even if somewhat illogically. The lines:

There is no snow in Hollywood
 There is no rain in California
 I have been to lots of parties
 and acted perfectly disgraceful
 but I never actually collapsed (O'Hara, 11-15)

seem to give a glimpse in to the thought-process of the writer while contemplating on the incident. In fact, since Frank O'Hara did write the poem while on the Staten Island Ferry immediately after having read the story in the New York Post (Epstein 2014), it further shows that the speech act is most likely related to a thought-process. Perhaps the implication is that he was thinking of the possibility of her slipping due to bad weather and consequently fainting, or that she could have collapsed while partying. Again, my suggestions would be along the lines of Indicating a Thought Process.

Terry Eagleton, in "How to Read a Poem" states that: "More than any other discourse, it [poetry] deals with the finer nuances of meaning, and thus pays its due to the values of reasoning and vigilant awareness." (Eagleton 2007, 21-22) He expands that meanings in poetry often relate to our inner feelings or "subterranean life" rather than the logical or rational parts of our lives (ibid.) There is the implication that poetry does not have to be rational, or that the authenticity of its subject matter does not have to be feasible in order to be understood. Indeed, many renowned poets like T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Edgar Allan Poe are known for writing poems heavy with symbolisms, personifications, and hyperbole that are nevertheless widely studied and enjoyed by many poetry enthusiasts. However, for this type of study, the characteristics of overly-symbolic poetry can obscure writer intentions and make linguistic analysis difficult, though perhaps not impossible.

Regardless, as has become clear through Elkommos' study, poetry does have communicative qualities. I have tried to demonstrate in my study that these qualities can be compared to actual communicative events. This is mainly due to the fact that the writer is always thought

to be saying something when writing poetry, and that they are always considering the reader while doing this, as is often the case with the speaker in communicative events as well. Therefore, the speech acts found in the poems that were analysed in this study can be said to be somewhat realistic representations of speech acts employed in actual discourse. The implication of this study is that poetry can offer novel perspectives on speech acts for corpus pragmatics.

However, there are limitations. Because poetry is not natural dialogue, there may be some hesitancy towards the idea of implementing a literary genre for pragmatic study on speech acts. But, at the very least, it can act as a guide for what types of speech acts researchers may encounter when analysing natural language. In my study, I have tried a few tentative suggestions for the categorizations of speech acts that were not satisfactorily categorized under Searle's illocutionary acts or that did not exist in Weisser's taxonomy. If the pragmatic annotation of poetry is possible, it could have the potential to significantly contribute to corpus pragmatics and thus partially fill the gap currently present in this field of study. As Weisser also states: "Many of them [pragmatically annotated corpora] [...] deal with relatively limited topics and domains, so that they're often not very representative of general spoken interaction. However, despite this limitation, they can already provide us with valuable insights into some of the general mechanisms involved in natural spoken language exchanges." (Weisser 2016a, 37). Though the implications of this study are promising, in order to fully examine the appropriateness of poetry application for corpus pragmatics and its other possible limitations, this topic would need to be significantly researched and studied on in the future.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, poetry can be seen as communication when it is examined from a linguistic perspective. The speech act analysis of poetry shows that they contain illocutionary acts of various categories because of the presence of writer intention. This implies that the function of poetry is to always communicate something to the reader, in addition to functioning as a source and foundation for aesthetic and creative pleasures. Moreover, Omnia Elkommos has described poetry as consisting of discourse levels which can range from Level I to Level IV, the levels indicating the way the message is addressed. In Level I discourse, the poet and reader are seen as being in direct communication via the poem. In Level II discourse, the poet is employing an implied author and implied reader inside the poem as mediums through which the poet communicates the message to the reader. In my analysis, the poems of O'Hara and Hughes were categorized as either belonging to Level I or Level II discourse.

The concluding idea of the analysis itself is that more specific categorizations for speech acts are needed for further pragmatic studies in order to thoroughly capture the variations and subtleties of speaker's language use. For example, the use of the more precise DART speech-act taxonomy showed that many speech acts that were originally classified under Searle's categories of illocutionary acts were ultimately more abstract in their descriptions when compared to the description of those same speech acts when they were further categorized under the DART taxonomy. Most importantly, the implication from the DART analysis is that speech acts, that are actively used by writers and speakers, exists but are not yet formally identified and classified. My suggestion includes incorporating poetry into corpus pragmatics as a possible aid in identifying, and classifying speech acts, which, if further study deems it applicable, could ultimately lead to the wide-scale pragmatic annotation of poetry.

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