# Speech Acts on Thomas Shelby in Peaky Blinders Season 1: A Character Analysis

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**Abstract**

*This research aims to conduct a speech acts analysis performed by the character of Thomas Shelby in Peaky Blinders Series Season 1. The study seeks to explore the different types of speech acts used by Thomas Shelby and their corresponding meanings. A descriptive qualitative method is employed for this research. Data collection involves the following steps: (1) Carefully and repeatedly watching Peaky Blinders Season 1 on Netflix, (2) Reading the script of Peaky Blinders Series Season 1, (3) Identifying and extracting data from the series' movie scenes and script, (4) Analysing the collected data. The data analysis process includes displaying, defining, classifying, discussing, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. The analysis of Thomas Shelby's speech acts in Peaky Blinders Series Season 1 reveals intriguing patterns in his communication style. Primarily employing assertive speech acts, Thomas displays confidence and strategic leadership in managing the family's illicit activities. Additionally, commissive speech acts demonstrate his sense of responsibility and loyalty through promises and commitments. Expressive speech acts provide insight into his emotions, wit, and humour, contributing to his multifaceted personality. Explicit declarations, however, appear to be absent, which could be attributed to the specific dialogues examined. This analysis sheds light on Thomas Shelby's communication style and its influence on the dynamics within his family and criminal endeavours. Further research could explore the evolution of his speech acts and character in subsequent seasons, providing more in-depth insights into his development as a character.*

**Keywords:** Character, *Peaky Blinders*, Speech Acts, Thomas Shelby.

## 1.    INTRODUCTION

In the realm of television drama, *Peaky Blinders*, a British gangster series, has captured the attention of audiences since its debut on September 12, 2013. Set in the

post-World War I era in Birmingham, England, and the show delves into the criminal activities of the notorious Peaky Blinders gang. Rooted in a genuine urban youth group of the same name that operated in the city during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the series fictionalizes their exploits against the backdrop of a densely populated and poverty-stricken community.

This research centres on a comprehensive analysis of the speech acts expressed by the main character, Thomas Shelby, during the first season of *Peaky Blinders*. The choice of Thomas Shelby stems from his multifaceted personality and linguistic prowess, which offer a unique avenue for examining character development and interaction dynamics. By applying speech act theory proposed by Searle (1969), this study aims to shed light on the intricate linguistic devices, rhetorical strategies, and persuasive techniques employed by Thomas Shelby.

The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, drawing information from *Peaky Blinders Season 1* scenes, movie scripts, and relevant literature. A speech acts analysis is utilized, enabled by Searle's speech act theory (1969), to explore the interplay between language forms and real-life language usage. Additionally, the examination of pragmatic theory helps uncover hidden meanings and social intricacies present in communication exchanges.

The statement of the problems focuses on two primary inquiries concerning Thomas Shelby's communication in *Peaky Blinders Season 1*. The first query aims to identify and understand the various speech acts exhibited by Thomas Shelby throughout the season, delving into the intentions and illocutionary forces behind his verbal expressions. The second question delves into the principles of politeness employed by Thomas Shelby in his interactions, investigating how he navigates social norms and utilizes politeness strategies to effectively manage interpersonal relationships. Building upon this, the objectives of the study are to provide descriptions of the speech acts expressed by Thomas Shelby and the principles of politeness he employs in Season 1 of the Peaky Blinders Series.

To ensure focused and manageable research, the study narrows its scope to the main character, Thomas Shelby, within the confines of *Peaky Blinders Season 1*. The analysis encompasses six selected episodes from the series. This strategic limitation allows for an in-depth exploration of Shelby's speech acts and the principles of politeness he employs within the specified timeframe.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of the previous studies reveals commonalities in employing speech act and politeness theories to dissect communication dynamics in film dialogues. These studies serve as valuable references for the proposed research on Thomas Shelby's speech acts and politeness strategies in *Peaky Blinders Season 1*, enhancing the understanding of his character through a pragmatic lens.

Pragmatics, the study of how language is used in context, has been applied to the analysis of various media forms, including films, to unveil the intricacies of communication (Fathul Maujud & Sultan, 2019). This literature review aims to

examine and compare several previous studies that have employed pragmatic theories to analyse speech acts and politeness strategies in different movie contexts. The review will then establish connections between these studies and this research which employs the speech act theory by Searle and the politeness principles by Leech.

The first research titled, *An Analysis of Illocutionary Act in Incredible 2 Movie* by Partohap Saut Raja Sihombing et al. (Sihombing et al., 2021). This study investigates illocutionary acts in the *Incredible 2* movie, focusing on how characters' speech conveys intentions and functions. The researchers utilize Austin's speech act theory to identify and classify illocutionary acts in the movie's dialogue.

The second study titled, *National Cultures and Politeness Strategies in Intercultural Communication Among Japanese and American Characters in The Last Samurai Movie* by Eka Nurilaila et al. (Nurilaila et al., 2020). This study explores politeness strategies in intercultural communication between Japanese and American characters in *The Last Samurai*. The authors employ a cross-cultural pragmatic analysis, influenced by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, to uncover cultural nuances in the characters' interactions.

The third literature titled, *Pragmatics Analysis of Commit Expression Acted by Characters in Fractured Movie* by Rintauli Sihotang et al. (Sihotang & Ambalegin, 2022). Focusing on the movie *Fractured*, this study applies speech act theory to analyse characters' commitment expressions. The researchers aim to elucidate the pragmatic functions and intentions behind the characters' commitments.

The fourth research titled, *Illocutionary Acts and Contextual Utterances in the Movie Raya and the Last Dragon* by Ayu Ratri and Barli Bram. (Ratri & Bram, 2022). Investigating *Raya and the Last Dragon*, this study examines illocutionary acts and contextual utterances. Drawing from speech act theory, the researchers delve into how characters' utterances serve communicative purposes within the context of the movie.

The fifth study titled, *A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in Mulan Movie* by Ziaul Fitri. (Fitri, 2022). Focused on the movie *Mulan*, this study employs Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to analyse politeness strategies used by characters. The researcher explores how characters' politeness behaviours relate to their roles and relationships.

The studies collectively draw on the speech act theory and politeness theories to analyse different aspects of communication in film dialogue. The speech act theory, inspired by Searle (1969), is prominent in analysing illocutionary acts, commitment expressions, and contextual utterances. Levinson's politeness theory (1983) is applied to unravel cultural and contextual politeness strategies in intercultural communication and character interactions.

The goals of these studies revolve around identifying and understanding the underlying pragmatic functions, intentions, and cultural nuances of speech acts and politeness strategies in film dialogue. The results demonstrate the applicability of speech act and politeness theories to diverse movie contexts, providing insights into characters' intentions, cultural differences, and communication dynamics.

The intended research aims to analyse Thomas Shelby's speech acts and politeness strategies in *Peaky Blinders Season 1* using Searle's speech act theory and Leech's politeness principles. By referencing the previous studies, which also utilize

similar theories to analyse film dialogues, the researcher can establish a framework for analysing Thomas Shelby's communication patterns. This comparative approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how speech acts and politeness strategies are utilized in character analysis within the context of a television series.

## 2.1. Pragmatics

In his book titled *Pragmatics*, Levinson (1983) provides several definitions of pragmatics. Some of the definitions put forward by Levinson state that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between language and the context that underlies the explanation of language understanding. With this definition, it implies that understanding language usage requires an understanding of the contextual patterns that facilitate its use. Another definition provided by Levinson states that pragmatics is the study of language users' ability to connect sentences with the appropriate context for those sentences. (Levinson, 1983). This second definition is not significantly different from the first one.

## 2.2. Speech Acts

The speech acts theory developed by Searle is seen as more concrete by various experts. Searle builds upon Austin's ideas as the foundation for developing his own speech acts theory. (Fathul Maujud & Sultan, 2019). According to Searle, all language communication involves an action. The units of language communication are not just supported by symbols, words, or sentences, but the production of symbols, words, or sentences in realizing speech acts. (Searle, 1969). In its development, Searle further develops his speech acts theory based on the implied intentions of the speaker's utterance. Broadly speaking, Searle divides speech acts as follows.

### 2.2.1 Assertives

Assertives are speech acts that bind the speaker to the truth of what is being said. In this illocution, the speaker is bound to the truth of the proposition expressed. Examples include stating, suggesting, making, complaining, expressing opinions, and reporting.

### 2.2.2 Directives

Directives aim to elicit an effect in the form of an action performed by the hearer. Examples include ordering, commanding, requesting, demanding, and giving advice.

### 2.2.3 Commissives

In this illocution, the speaker is somewhat bound to a future action. Examples include promising and offering. Commissive illocutions tend to serve pleasurable

purposes and are less competitive because they do not focus on the speaker's interests but rather on the hearer's interests.

### 2.2.4 Expressives

The function of expressives is to express the speaker's psychological attitude towards an implied state of affairs in the illocution. Examples include expressing thanks, congratulations, apologies, condemnation, praise, condolences, and so on.

### 2.2.5 Declarations

Declarations result in a correspondence between the propositional content and reality. Examples include resigning, firing, naming, imposing punishment, excommunicating or expelling, appointing (personnel), and so on.

## 2.3. The Principles of Politeness

The principles of politeness must also be observed in a conversation. The use of politeness principles is intended to ensure that no one is harmed in a conversation. Both parties show mutual respect for each other. The use of politeness principles is also intended to consider the meaning of a speech acts or a conversation. (Leech, 2016). Leech also criticizes the speech acts proposed by Austin. However, in classifying types of speech acts, Leech focuses more on the study of applying the principles of politeness in a speech acts. Based on the form and presence of the principles of politeness. (Fathul Maujud & Sultan, 2019). Leech classifies types of speech acts as follows.

### 2.3.1 Competitive Speech Acts

Competitive illocutionary acts involve competing with social goals, such as commanding, requesting, demanding, or begging. In competitive illocutionary acts, politeness has a negative quality, and its goal is to reduce the implicit disharmony in the competition between what the speaker wants to achieve and what politeness demands. The so-called competitive goals are essentially discourteous goals, such as demanding a loan with an imperative tone. Here, politeness is distinguished from courtesy. Courtesy refers to goals, while politeness refers to linguistic behaviour or other behaviours aimed at achieving those goals. Therefore, the principle of politeness is necessary to soften the inherent impoliteness contained in those goals.

### 2.3.2 Convivial Speech Acts

This illocutionary acts goal is aligns with social purposes, such as offering, inviting, greeting, expressing gratitude, or congratulating. In contrast with the first one, the second type of illocutionary acts (namely convivial) has the functions that fundamentally polite and aims to create a friendly atmosphere. In positive politeness,

it means adhering to the principles of politeness, such as seizing the opportunity to offer birthday greetings.

### 2.3.3 Collaborative Speech Acts

The illocutionary acts goal that disregards social purposes, such as stating, reporting, announcing, or teaching. The third type, collaborative illocutionary function, does not involve politeness because politeness is not relevant in this function. This is because the priority in this speech acts is the truth and accuracy of the information conveyed. The use of politeness principles in this action will actually affect the meaning of the utterance.

### 2.3.4 Conflictive Speech Acts

The illocutionary goal contradicts social purposes, such as threatening, accusing, cursing, or scolding. The fourth function, namely conflictive illocutionary function, lacks any element of politeness because its purpose is to provoke anger. Threatening or cursing someone, for example, cannot be done politely, unless the speaker uses irony.

## 3. METHODS

According to Phillips and Burbules, research involves formulating assertions and subsequently refining or discarding some of them in favour of better-supported claims. Research designs encompass the entire spectrum of decisions, from fundamental assumptions to the specific methodologies employed for gathering and analysing data. (Creswell & Poth, 2016)

To address the research inquiries, the study is grounded in the theory of pragmatics. Specifically, the analysis draws on Searle's theory of speech acts to address the initial research question and Leech's politeness theory to tackle the second research problem. Both speech acts and politeness theories are integral components of pragmatics, constituting the foundational framework for this study.

The primary data source for this investigation is the television drama series *Peaky Blinders Season 1*, comprising a total of six episodes. The focus of analysis centres on the speech acts according to Searle and the principle of politeness by Leech, enacted by the character Thomas Shelby within the series. The raw material for analysis was extracted from the original episodes of the series. Transcribed dialogues and scenes involving Thomas Shelby were utilized as the fundamental dataset.

In conjunction with the primary data, secondary sources such as academic articles, books, and scholarly publications were consulted to enhance the theoretical foundation and literature review. These supplementary sources contributed valuable insights to the theories of speech acts, pragmatics, and prior research involving speech acts within the context of television series.

Data collection pertains to the organized acquisition, measurement, and scrutiny of dependable information, achieved through established and validated methodologies. The following steps were undertaken for meticulous data collection. First, thorough and repetitive viewing of *Peaky Blinders Season 1* on the Netflix platform. Second, scrutinizing the script of *Peaky Blinders Series Season 1* for relevant data. Third, extracting pertinent data from scenes and dialogues within *Peaky Blinders Series Season 1*. Fourth, identifying and cataloguing the data sourced from *Peaky Blinders Series Season 1*.

Following data collection, the subsequent phase involves data analysis, a critical method in qualitative research for addressing the research questions. Data analysis encompasses the examination of diverse human communication forms, including media like books, newspapers, and movies, to discern patterns, themes, and potential biases. Unlike inference generation, data analysis emphasizes the interpretation of intended messages conveyed by the analysed entities. The data analysis process consists of comprehensive analysis of each utterance, dialogue, and scene involving Thomas Shelby using Searle's speech acts theory and Leech's principle of politeness theory. Then, categorization of the utterances, dialogues, and scenes into a structured table based on the respective theoretical frameworks, distinguishing between speech acts by Searle and the principle of politeness by Leech. Lastly, drawing coherent conclusions from the analysed data, interpreting the implications within the context of the research objectives.

## 4.  RESULTS

### 4.1  The Speech Acts Expressed by Thomas Shelby

*4.1.1 Assertives*

**Table 4.1.1**. Assertives

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---------|-----------|---|-----------|
| **Episode 1** | Arthur | : | You think we can take on the Chinese and Billy Kimber? Billy's got a bloody army! |
| | **Thomas** | : | **I think...Arthur. That's what I do. I think... so that you don't have to.** |
| **Episode 2** | Arthur | : | You are not swapping the family car for a bloody horse. |
| | Johnny Dogs | : | Of course, we're not swapping it. Huh? That would be mad. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **We're going to play two-up.** |
| **Episode 3** | Grace | : | And what did my countrymen want? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **They're nobodies. They drink in The Black Swan in Sparkbrook.** |

|  | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | | | **They're only rebels because they like the songs.** |
|  | Grace | : | You have sympathies with them? |
|  | **Thomas** | : | **I have no sympathies of any description.** |
| **Episode 4** | Polly | : | Now, what's your point? |
|  | John | : | What the kids need is a mother. So, that's why I'm getting married. |
|  | Polly | : | Does this poor girl know you're going to marry her or are you going to spring it on her all of a sudden? |
|  | John | : | I've already proposed and she said "yes". |
|  | **Thomas** | : | **I think there's a shell about to land and go bang.** |
| **Episode 5** | Arthur | : | He's our dad. |
|  | **Thomas** | : | **He's a selfish bastard.** |
|  | Arthur | : | You calling someone a selfish bastard? That's a bit rich, Tommy. I mean, thanks to you... we're already down a bloody sister. |
| **Episode 6** | Campbell | : | I am unarmed. |
|  | **Thomas** | : | **It's curious, Inspector. I thought you came here to clean up the city. Not to sleep with its wh\*res. You're no different from any other copper that came before you.** |

In assertives speech acts, Thomas Shelby makes statements or assertions. Examples include discussing plans, expressing opinions, and sharing information. For instance, in Episode 1, he discusses taking on the Chinese and Billy Kimber.

*4.1.2 Directives*

**Table 4.1.2**. Directives

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1** | **Thomas** | : | **The horse's name is Monaghan Boy. Kempton 3 o'clock Monday. You ladies have a bet yourselves but don't tell anybody.** |
| **Episode 2** | Polly | : | Will you talk to him? |
|  | **Thomas** | : | **No... you don't parley when you're on the back foot. We'll strike a blow back first.** |

| Episode 3 | Thomas | : | **Give me a bottle of whiskey and three glasses please.** |
| | Grace | : | Scotch or Irish? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Irish.** |
| Episode 4 | Thomas | : | **Jeremiah, Jeremiah... What do you see?** |
| | Jeremiah | : | Your sister and Freddie got back this morning. I tried following them... but Freddie's so good at getting away. He's like a fish. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Right, well, keep fishing, eh?** |
| Episode 5 | Shelby Sr. | : | Ah. Well. Speak of the devil. How are you, son? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Get out!** |
| | Shelby Sr. | : | Come on, son. I'm a changed man. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **This family needed you ten years ago when you walked out on it. Not now. Get out of this house!** |
| Episode 6 | Thomas | : | **Arthur? Arthur, wake up. Get home, get bathed. Check your kit, check your weapons.** |
| | Arthur | : | Why? What's going on? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **We're doing it today.** |

In directive speech acts, Thomas gives commands or instructions to others. This could involve requesting actions or information from other characters. For instance, in Episode 2, he instructs someone not to swap the family car for a horse.

*4.1.3 Commissives*

**Table 4.1.3**. Commissives

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| Episode 1 | Thomas | : | **Bring the bill to the Peaky Blinders. We'll take care of this.** |
| Episode 2 | Polly | : | Freddie Thorne is at the very top of my list. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **So cross him off. He won't be returning to the city. I'll make him part of our deal.** |
| Episode 3 | Thomas | : | **All right, boys. If I hear anything about who knows what about what, I'll let you know.** |

| Episode 4 | Thomas | : | **I came here with a proposition (handing out Billy Kimber's name on a bullet).** |
| | Zilpha Lee | : | I thought he was your ally. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **I plan to betray him.** |
| | Zilpha Lee | : | No wonder you won't touch a Bible. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **I have ambitions.** |
| Episode 5 | **Thomas** | : | **When the trouble dies down, I'll go.** |
| | Grace | : | When will it die down, do you think? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Late, I would say.** |
| | Grace | : | So, not until the morning then. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Yes. I'd say I'll be here till morning.** |
| Episode 6 | Polly | : | I used to do that every morning during the war. I hoped I'd done it for the last time. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Today will be the last time, Poll. After today, there'll be no need for prayers. We'll be set.** |

Commissive speech acts involve commitments or promises made by Thomas Shelby. This could include commitments to taking specific actions or making guarantees. For instance, in Episode 4, he commits to getting married.

*4.1.4 Expressives*

**Table 4.1.4**. Expressives

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1** | **Thomas** | : | **You were a good man and a good soldier.** |
| | Danny | : | Yes, Sergeant Major. |
| **Episode 2** | **Thomas** | : | **I need an answer. Right now.** |
| | Campbell | : | Very well. But I'd prefer if we don't shake hands on it. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Now why would I shake the hand of a man who didn't even fight for his country?** |
| **Episode 3** | **Thomas** | : | **You're collecting your suit for Cheltenham - it's very nice.** |
| | Billy Kimber | : | How the bloody hell do you know? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **I know a lot of things, Mr Kimber.** |

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 4** | **Thomas** | : | **No. No, but you have something I need. Class. I need someone who looks right at the big meetings. Epsom, Ascot...** |
| | Grace | : | Is a job interview? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Arthur says you're good with numbers.** |
| | Grace | : | Well, that's relative. He is quite poor. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **You keep the books in order.** |
| | Grace | : | They were chaotic. |
| **Episode 5** | Arthur | : | Polly told you? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Yep. You should have used a gun.** |
| | Arthur | : | Are you laughing at me, Tommy? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Yeah. Just when things are starting to go right, Arthur... you try and do this.** |
| **Episode 6** | **Thomas** | : | **All right. Jeremiah. I know you vowed to God to never pick up a weapon again. But can you ask him from me if you can help us today?** |
| | Jeremiah | : | God says he don't deal with Small Heath, sir. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Good man.** |

Expressive speech acts involve expressing emotions, feelings, or attitudes. Thomas Shelby might express approval, disapproval, or other emotions. For example, in Episode 1, he expresses sympathy to a character named Danny.

### 4.1.5 Declarations

The reason why there were no findings of declarations speech acts in this research is because Searle states that declarations speech acts belong to a very specific category, as these actions are typically carried out by someone who is in an institutional framework and authorized to do so. They are considered institutional acts rather than personal acts.

## 4.2 The Principles of Politeness that Expressed by Thomas Shelby

### 4.2.1 Competitive Speech Acts

**Table 4.2.1**. Competitive Speech Acts

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1** | **Thomas** | : | **Got to stop doing this, man. It's all right.** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Danny | : | Oh, God, Mr Shelby, I'm sorry... |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **It's all right. You go home to your wife now, Danny. Try and get all that smoke and mud out of your head, eh.** |
| | Danny | : | Yes, Mr Shelby. I'm sorry. |
| **Episode 2** | Arthur | : | I thought you said we were going to the fair. |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **We have business first. Come on. Bring your wits.** |
| | Arthur | : | What business? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **That's the Lee family.** |
| **Episode 3** | **Thomas** | **:** | **OK, you do the talking.** |
| | Grace | : | What? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **Tell security you are Lady Sarah Duggan... Excuse us, excuse us... Lady Sarah Duggan of Connemara. You got lost when you went to look for the boy riding your horse - Dandy Flower. If they ask about me, say I'm Prussian and don't speak a word of English. Come on, posh girl. Earn your three quid.** |
| **Episode 4** | **Thomas** | **:** | **Right, your first job for the company. I want you to get that to my sister.** |
| | Grace | : | I don't see her? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **No-one does. She is hiding from me. I am told she goes to a bathhouse on Montague Street on woman-only days. She goes in disguise, so I need to get someone inside.** |
| | Grace | : | What am I delivering? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **It's an invitation to a family occasion. I want her there. So, tell her there will be a truce.** |
| **Episode 5** | Grace | : | What the hell is going on? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **When the St Andrew's bell strikes midnight, two IRA men are going to come through that door. When they have what they want, they plan to kill me. It's your job to stop that happening.** |

| Episode 6 | Thomas | : | **(Banging at door) John, I've told you to keep the doors locked. It could've been anyone. Get dressed. We're doing it today.** |
| | Esme Lee | : | As a matter of fact, he's doing me today. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Make sure he's done you by nine.** |
| | Esme Lee | : | You should learn to knock! |
| | **Thomas** | : | **It's not a day for knocking.** |

Thomas engages in competitive speech acts where he interacts with others, often involving a level of competition or challenge. For example, in Episode 1, he discusses betting with someone named Danny.

*4.2.2 Convivial Speech Acts*

Table 4.2.2. Convivial Speech Acts

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---------|-----------|---|-----------|
| **Episode 1** | John | : | Tommy. Tommy! Tommy, look at the book. Just look. Tommy! All on Monaghan Boy. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Good work, John.** |
| **Episode 2** | Johnny Dogs | : | Tommy! |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Johnny Dogs!** |
| | Johnny Dogs | : | Tommy, how the hell are you? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **All the better for getting the city smoke out of me lungs.** |
| | Johnny Dogs | : | I thought you became a bit too grand for us. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **I've been busy.** |
| **Episode 3** | IRA Representatives | : | It takes a lot for a man from Sparkbrook to step inside this pub. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Anyone with money and good intentions is welcome in the Garrison.** |
| **Episode 4** | **Thomas** | : | **Now your boys should know this, we now get the winner in one of every three races before the race even starts. No need for chalkers or rafflers. I'm talking certainties.** |
| | | : | |

| | Zilpha Lee | : | You come in here boasting you're going to do someone down and in the same breath you ask me to trust you. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Thomas** | | **On my mother's side, we are kin. Let us talk family business.** |
| **Episode 5** | Bryne | : | I wondered if he had made any enemies in here. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **None that I know of.** |
| | Bryne | : | It's not the kind of place to make enemies. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **All are welcome here, Mr Byrne...** |
| | Bryne | : | Including Irish? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Especially Irish.** |
| | Bryne | : | Ryan told you he was a member of the Irish Republican Army. Was he still welcome? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Like I say, any man that buys beer is welcome.** |
| **Episode 6** | Polly | : | I'd like to introduce the newest member of the Shelby clan (Ada and her new born enter the family meeting). |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Welcome home, Ada.** |
| | Ada | : | We named him Karl. After Karl Marx. (Laughter) |
| | Arthur | : | Karl bloody Marx? |

Convivial speech acts involve friendly and sociable interactions. In Episode 2, Thomas has a convivial conversation with Johnny Dogs.

*4.2.3 Collaborative Speech Acts*

**Table 4.2.3**. Collaborative Speech Acts

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1** | **Thomas** | : | **Finn?** |
| | Finn | : | Arthur's mad as hell. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **What does a ten-year-old know about hell, eh?** |
| | Finn | : | I'm 11 Sunday. |
| **Episode 2** | **Thomas** | : | **No. I'll tell you what he sees. He sees machine guns, and rifles, and ammunition, and some glorious revolution.** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Polly | : | What is it you really don't like about Freddie? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **She'll have no life with a man on the run. If you can't see that, you can't see much.** |
| | Polly | : | Damn them for what they did to you in France. |
| **Episode 3** | John | : | The police had just raided a rally at the factory. You thinking Freddie Thorne's back? |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **I know he is. And he's with Ada. How hard can it be to find the only girl in Birmingham with four-inch heels, eh?** |
| **Episode 4** | **Thomas** | **:** | **Gentlemen... And lady. I have in my hand a legal betting license. Issued by the board of control. The Shelby family has its first legal racetrack pitch. (Cheering)** |
| **Episode 5** | Bryne | : | My cousin came to buy guns. |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **And I told him I had none.** |
| | Bryne | : | Your man Danny Owen talks a lot when he's drunk. He says the Peaky Blinders do have the guns. Robbed from the factory down the road. He boasts about a stack of Lewis machine guns. And enough belts of ammunition to hold up God's trousers. |
| | **Thomas** | **:** | **Yep. That sounds like our Danny. He has an imagination. Like I said, sometimes it's the whisky that does the talking.** |
| **Episode 6** | **Thomas** | **:** | **All right, men... you were mostly in the war, so you know that battle plans always change and get f\*cked up. Well, here it is. Things have changed. We fight them here. Today. Alone.** |

Thomas collaborates with others and discusses joint actions or plans. In Episode 6, he gathers his men for a collaborative effort.

*4.2.4 Conflictive Speech Acts*

**Table 4.2.4**. Conflictive Speech Acts

| Episode | Characters | | Dialogues |
|---------|-----------|---|-----------|
| **Episode 1** | Freddie | : | What kind of a list would have the name of a Communist and the name of a bookmaker side-by-side? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Perhaps it's a list of men who give false hope to the poor. The only difference between you and me, Freddie, is that sometimes... my horses stand a chance of winning.** |
| **Episode 2** | Johnny Dogs | : | I'm riding with the Lee family now. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Thomas: I heard. Myself, I'd rather live among pigs.** |
| | Johnny Dogs | : | Come on, Tommy. No disputing. So, your first fair since France...? |
| | **Thomas** | : | **What do you know about France, you war-shy Gypsy bastard?** |
| **Episode 3** | **Thomas** | : | **You loaded Ada with your bastard because she's a Shelby. You thought it'd mean you'd be somebody. I won't let you fuck up my sister's life for your cause.** |
| | Freddie | : | My God. You actually believe that. |
| **Episode 4** | John | : | I WON'T hear the word. Understand? Do not use that word. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **What word is that, John?** |
| | John | : | You know what word that is. |
| | Arthur | : | Everybody bloody knows... |
| | John | : | Everybody can go to hell... |
| | **Thomas** | : | **"Wh\*re"? That word? Or "prost¡tute"? How about that one?** |
| | John | : | Right, I want it known... if anyone calls her a "wh\*re" again, I will push the barrel of my revolver down their throats and blow the word back down into their hearts. |
| **Episode 5** | Bryne | : | He says only the brothers know where the guns are kept. |
| | **Thomas** | : | **Well, Danny also says he sees German infantrymen on the backs** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Bryne | : | **of milk carts. And he shoots them with his broomstick.** |
| | | | We have men in the BSA factory. They say it's you who has them. And we have men who work in the police station. Every finger, Mr Shelby, every finger in this city, points in one direction. Please don't mistake me for a fool. Let me get to the point. I don't care what kind of half-arsed tinker operation you have going here. But I can assure you, I represent a very different category of organization. My cousin was shot. I am judge, jury and executioner. I find you guilty and I pass sentence. You deliver the guns to me or I deliver death and hell's fury to you and your little tribe of heathens. Am I making myself clear? |
| Episode 6 | Thomas | : | **It doesn't have to be like this, Kimber.** |
| | Billy Kimber | : | Too late for all that. You've bit off more than you can chew, you little toerag. And now I'm going to take over this shithole. |
| | Thomas | : | **Oh? We have to use guns... let's use proper guns.** |
| | Thorne | : | (Entering the battlefield) Sergeant Thorne reporting for duty, sir. |
| | Thomas | : | **You were saying something about being out-gunned?** |

Conflictive speech acts involve confrontations or disagreements. In Episode 4, there is a confrontation between Thomas and John regarding the use of a derogatory term.

Analysing Thomas Shelby's speech acts in *Peaky Blinders Season 1*, a noticeable pattern emerges. Assertive speech occurs consistently five times in every episode, alongside an equal frequency of authoritative directives. Commisive speech acts appear three times in the first episode and rise to five in the following ones. Expressive speech acts exhibit variability, starting at three instances, increasing to four, peaking at five, then fluctuating slightly. Remarkably, declaration speech acts are entirely absent, aligning with Searle's view that they pertain to institutional rather than personal contexts. Shifting to politeness principles, competitive speech acts recur five times per episode, while convivial acts vary: four in the first episode, rising, sustaining, dipping

to two, then rebounding to five in the last. Collaborative speech acts, reflecting Shelby's cooperation, appear five times. Conflictive acts fluctuate, with the initial four instances followed by alternating frequencies of five, three, three, one, and two across subsequent episodes.

## 5.    DISCUSSION

In this comprehensive study, the author delves into a thorough analysis of the speech acts and the principle of politeness demonstrated by Thomas Shelby in the *Peaky Blinders Season 1*. The author also compares this study with the intriguing study of *The Analysis of Conversational Implicature in Onward Movie* by Shindy Faulia Sithiayuki. (Sithiayuki, 2022). The author then draws a parallels and contrasts between these studies to shed light on how language and communication theories are applied in analysing fictional dialogues and characters. The comparison in both studies reveals interesting insights into the communication style and strategies of Thomas Shelby in the context of the *Peaky Blinders Season 1* and the conversational implicature of the *Onward Movie*.

In this study, the analysis of speech acts expressed by Thomas Shelby in *Peaky Blinders Season 1* provides a comprehensive overview of his communication patterns. It is notable that assertive speech acts and collaborative speech acts are consistently present in every episode, showcasing Thomas's confidence and determination in his dialogues. It also shows that Thomas' effectiveness when seeking cooperation and forming alliances, revealing his ability to forge mutually beneficial relationships. His persuasive language and cunning nature enable him to sway others to his side, weaving a complex web of relationships and alliances. This aligns with his character as a leader and strategist within the Peaky Blinders gang. The presence of directives speech acts also highlights his role as someone who issues commands and instructions to others. His dominance and strategic planning are evident through competitive speech acts, allowing him to manipulate others and assert his authority. In contrast, convivial speech acts showcase his camaraderie and loyalty when interacting with family and allies. Yet, conflictive speech acts come into play during confrontations with rivals, highlighting his assertive and power-driven nature. This study also identifies commissive speech acts, which demonstrate Thomas's commitment to various actions and plans. This suggests that he is willing to make promises and commitments to achieve his goals. The presence of expressive speech acts reflects the emotional dimension of his character, showcasing moments of humour, sarcasm, and even vulnerability. Interestingly, the absence of declaration speech acts aligns with Searle's categorization, emphasizing that such acts belong to institutional contexts rather than personal interactions. This absence may signify that Thomas Shelby operates primarily in a personal and familial sphere rather than in formal institutions.

Moving on to the second study, the analysis of conversational implicature based on Grice's theory reveals the nuanced communication dynamics between Ian and his mother. Ian's responses reflect his reluctance to accept certain situations or express his true feelings, often using conversational implicature to convey his thoughts indirectly.

For instance, when Ian's mother comments on him growing up, he indirectly conveys his acceptance of maturity by stating that the sweatshirt finally fits. This implicature aligns with Grice's maxim of relation, as Ian's response is directly related to his mother's observation about his growth. In another example, when Ian's mother suggests inviting friends to his party, Ian indirectly communicates his shyness and lack of familiarity with his classmates. He uses conversational implicature to convey that he did not say his classmates were "pretty rock," and he does not even know them. This implicature relates to Grice's maxim of quality, as Ian provides truthful information about his feelings.

Overall, these two studies shed light on the complex communication strategies and dynamics at play in different contexts. Thomas Shelby's speech acts in *Peaky Blinders Season 1* highlight his assertiveness and leadership, while Ian's use of conversational implicature with his mother reflects his shyness and reluctance to express certain thoughts directly. Both studies offer valuable insights into the world of fictional and real-life communication.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Thomas Shelby's speech acts in the *Peaky Blinders series Season 1* uncovers intriguing patterns in his communication style. Thomas predominantly uses assertive speech acts, reflecting his confident and strategic nature as he leads and manages the family's illicit activities. His directives showcase his authority in decision-making and guiding others. Occasionally, he employs commissive speech acts, displaying his sense of responsibility and loyalty through promises and commitments. Expressive speech acts reveal Thomas's emotions, wit, and humor, providing a glimpse into his multifaceted personality. While declarations speech acts were absent in the analysis, the explanation of why there are no declarations found is because Searle states that declarations speech acts belong to a very specific category, as these actions are typically carried out by someone who is in an institutional framework and authorized to do so. They are considered institutional acts rather than personal acts. This analysis yields valuable insights into how Thomas Shelby communicates and influences the dynamics within his family and criminal endeavors. It illustrates his complex character, strategic approach, and leadership skills. However, the study primarily focuses on Season 1, leaving room for further research to explore the evolution of his speech acts and character throughout subsequent seasons.

Throughout Season 1, Thomas Shelby's speech acts exhibit a multifaceted character, as he skilfully employs various types of speech acts to achieve his objectives and navigate challenging situations. His dominance and strategic planning are evident through competitive speech acts, allowing him to manipulate others and assert his authority. In contrast, convivial speech acts showcase his camaraderie and loyalty when interacting with family and allies. Yet, conflictive speech acts come into play during confrontations with rivals, highlighting his assertive and power-driven nature. Moreover, Thomas effectively utilizes collaborative speech acts when seeking cooperation and forming alliances, revealing his ability to forge mutually beneficial

relationships. His persuasive language and cunning nature enable him to sway others to his side, weaving a complex web of relationships and alliances. Despite facing numerous challenges, Thomas remains determined in his pursuit of success, both in legal and illegal ventures. This comprehensive analysis sheds light on the intricacies of Thomas Shelby's character and the skilful manner in which he navigates Birmingham's criminal underworld. Further exploration in subsequent seasons could provide additional valuable insights into his character's development and communication strategies.

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