

# **The Illocutionary Acts Found in the Lyrics of Niall Horan “*Flicker*”**

## **Album**

### Chapter 1

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covered the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objective, the assumption, the scope and limitation of the study, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, and the definition of the keyterms used in this study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Language, as a universal form of communication can be divided into two big parts: spoken and written languages. People usually use these forms of language to communicate with others. Since communication is one of the important parts from the human’s life, the absence of communication will make their social-life be vacuous and people cannot do their things properly. When we receive the spoken message from the speaker, often we not only pay attention for the intonation of the speaker while saying the message, but also the accent and their words. Discourse is used to consider that the message intends to achieve from the sender to the receiver and try to understand its function (Cook 1989). The main focus of written discourse is more

about the written language while the main focus of the spoken discourse is oral language.

While discourse itself is a big range to talk about, the writer tried to make it more specific. The writer wanted to explain about a part of discourse called “Speech Acts” which appeared in a communication between people. Speech Acts itself are the actions which are being performed via utterances (Yule, 1996). There are three kinds of speech act in communication: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Each act has different purpose and function. Saeed (1997) stated that locutionary act is the act of saying something that makes sense in language while illocutionary act is the intention of the spoken language from the speaker. In communicating with each other, people not only used direct communication such as talking (oral) and sending a message through their phone or even email, in this era, people also used something to communicate what they cannot directly said, for example people sometimes use songs or poems to communicate their feeling and deep desire to other people. Songs are one of the spoken discourse type that has elements in common with speech and also poetry/poem. Songs also have their own identity and function that make them different from both poetry and speech. In the lyrics writing of a song, it was somehow acceptable that a writer can compose the lyrics either by following or ignoring the presence of grammatical rules. Asher Stephenson (2018) said that one cannot really put blame on the writer when grammatical errors are found since there are no rules for this matter. He assumed that songwriting is a creative process driven by emotion,

and that it is mostly non-technical. Hence, from this matter it can be assumed that a writer can express their creativity and also their feelings freely, without any boundaries and rules. Griffie (1992) said that songs can acquire strong emotional associations with people, places or events. He also stated that songs reflect the feelings that happen at that time. The emotions and feelings which contain in the songs can have various interpretations of the meaning. For example, a love song may illustrate delight or happiness of the writer towards their partner or lover, while a mellow song tends to represent sadness or “blue” feelings to certain things that has an impact to the writer. It goes the same as how a happy song allows the listeners to gain the happiness or excitement to certain things or even certain events from the writer’s personal life.

In songs, people could also find a lot of different meanings and interpretations from the lyrics. For example, the lyric of the song “*all the kids are depressed*” from Jeremy Zucker “*How long have you been smiling? It seems like it’s been too long*” was probably thought by the majority of people that the lyrics were about a kid who felt blue and could not even smile again, while some people can also think straightaway that the lyrics already told us the meaning itself. From the lyrics, we can also tell the writer’s feeling when he wrote the song itself. The writer felt sad about the phenomena of the “nowadays” kids. He thought that nowadays, people could get stressed easily and feel depressed.

In order to support the study itself, the writer investigated three songs by the singer Niall Horan from his “*Flicker*” album. They are “*Flicker*”, “*Paper Houses*” and “*This Town*”. The writer has chosen the songs because the writer found the lyrics were deep and meaningful and there were some hidden messages that Niall tried to deliver to his fans or to people who listened to his songs. The writer also chose Niall Horan because his first solo album debut “*Flicker*” got a Gold certification from the UK (Wikipedia) not long after he released the album and simply because he sang them very deeply and wholeheartedly, so when the writer listened to his songs, especially these three (“*Flicker*”, “*Paper Houses*”, and “*This Town*”) the writer felt the emotion that Niall tried to deliver through his songs. Niall Horan is a famous singer from Ireland. He got famous because he had joined a group called “*One Direction*” that was famous since 2011, although the group itself is currently on a hiatus. The songs that are going to be investigated are about a love story (his love for his hometown and his old friends) from Niall himself and based on the Niall’s experiences.

The writer has decided to analyze the lyrics of certain songs using the classification of the Illocutionary Acts by Searle (1969, 1979) and Grice (1975) as a parameter in which the classifications are *representative commissive*, *directive*, *expressive*, and *declarative*. Furthermore, the study was intended to support the writer’s intention to find out the illocutionary acts that can be found from the lyrics.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problems**

This study analyzed the lyrics of Niall Horan “*Flicker*” album. By analyzing the lyrics, the writer can investigate what kind of illocutionary acts that can be found in the lyrics of the “*Flicker*” album by Niall Horan. Thus the statement of the problems are follows:

1. What illocutionary acts can be found from the three songs (“*Flicker*”, “*Paper Houses*”, and “*This Town*”) of “*Flicker*” album by Niall Horan?
2. What are the functions of the illocutionary acts found from the three songs of “*Flicker*” album?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Studies**

In accordance to the statement of problem, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the illocutionary acts from the three songs (“*Flicker*”, “*Paper Houses*”, and “*This Town*”) of “*Flicker*” album by Niall Horan.
2. To find out the functions of the illocutionary acts which are found from the three songs of “*Flicker*” album

## **1.4 The Scope and the Limitation of the Study**

There were some limitations that have been set by the writer for this study, so that the study was not diverged from the writer's purposes and expectations about finding the Illocutionary Acts and Verbs from the chosen songs.

Thus, the scopes and the limitations are as follows:

1. Related to the chosen lyrics from "*Flicker*" album by Niall Horan.
2. The lyrics are taken from the internet and the album itself.
3. Related to the study, the writer will only be focusing on the illocutionary act types from Searle (1969, 1979) and Grice (1975) parameter.
4. Focusing on a verbal (the song itself) and non-verbal communication (the lyrics) and not focusing to the other aspects such as the instrumental, the duration of the song and also the singer's intonation when he sang the songs.
5. Focusing on the findings of illocutionary acts and verbs from the chosen song lyrics.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

This study can be beneficial for those who are interested in Discourse Analysis, especially the study about the Illocutionary acts in the basis of songs. Moreover, ones are able not only to know the hidden meanings from a verbal or non-verbal communication, but also to identify which type of illocutionary acts that are used in a verbal or non-verbal communication. This study may also be beneficial for

lecturers who teach Discourse Analysis, the students who study the Discourse Analysis.

#### 1.5.1 For the lecturers who teach Discourse Analysis

This study can be a good media for teaching Illocutionary Acts especially in the basis of song analysis by using Geoffrey Leech (1983) parameter as the standard rule (the parameter are about the findings of illocutionary acts and verbs from the chosen literature such as songs, poems, novel, or movie). Instead of giving an oral explanation, the lecturer can use this study to show how to analyze the illocutionary act types.

#### 1.5.2 For the students who study Discourse Analysis

This study can be beneficial for the students who are studying the Discourse Analysis and the students who want to deepen their knowledge about Discourse Analysis, especially about the illocutionary acts in the basis of songs. They can also conduct their own analysis using a song as their instrument based on this study.

### **1.6 The Theoretical Framework**

Basically, this study was conducted using the Illocutionary Acts by Searle (1969, 1979) and Grice (1975). However, there are some theories that also support the study. The theories that supported the study can be briefly explained as follow as:

Cook (1989) stated that although Discourse may be composed of one or more grammatical sentences, it does have grammatical mistakes yet the most important thing is that the listeners can get the meaning of what the speaker was trying to deliver.

The characteristics of Discourse stated by Cook (1989) are that the sentences should be meaningful and unified. In making the unified sentences, there are rules in discourse to limit the sentence thus it can follow one another. The next characteristic is that the sentences should achieve meaning. The sentences should be recognized by the listener(s). Other characteristic is that the sentences should be in the context. The context has to be a knowledge in which people use to interpret it. The last characteristic is that the sentences can be observed. The listener can interpret or observe the speaker's speech although they mispronounce the word or make grammatical errors. Despite the mistakes, the listener can still understand what is being said by the speaker.

### **1.7 The Definition of the Keyterms**

To avoid the misunderstandings between readers and the writer, here are some of the keyterms used in this study:

1. *Illocutionary acts*: This kind of speech act is known as the act performed in saying something. It is the act which has the intentions of the speaker to the listener. According to Leech (1983), there are six types of illocutionary acts.

They are *Representative, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, Rogative and Declaration*.

2. *Song*: Based on Oxford dictionary, song is a short poem or other set of words set to music or meant to be sung. Griffiee (1992) said that songs can acquire strong emotional associations with people, places or events.
3. *Lyrics*: Lyrics are a short poem that expresses the personal thoughts and feelings of the person who wrote it, based on Cambridge Dictionary. There are no boundaries and rules on the process of lyrics making so the writer can express their creativity and also their feelings freely.
4. *Flicker*: "*Flicker*" is a debut studio album by Irish singer and songwriter, Niall Horan. It was released on 20 October 2017. From his interview with *Radio1 UK*, Niall told the MC that "*Flicker*" means the most to him so that's why he named his album "*Flicker*" (Wikipedia).
5. *Niall Horan*: Niall Horan is a famous singer from Ireland. He got famous because he had joined a group called "*One Direction*" that was famous since 2011, although the group itself is currently on a hiatus (Wikipedia).

## **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized in five chapters. Chapter One deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, limitation and scope, significance of the study, theoretical framework, and definition of key terms. Chapter Two discusses the review of related literature which consists of

related literatures and previous studies. Chapter Three is Research methodology. Chapter Four deals with the data analysis, findings and discussion. The last chapter Chapter Five is conclusion and suggestion.