

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the opening section, titled Introduction. It is composed of several parts, namely: background of the problem, statement of problem, research objectives, research significance, and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of Problem

Bridgerton, a Netflix series adapted from Julia Quinn's novels, has gained international attention for its portrayal of Regency-era (1811-1820) aristocratic life. Beyond its romantic storyline and social intrigue, the series presents dialogue that reflects various pragmatic features. From a linguistic perspective, *Bridgerton* offers relevant data because interactions among its characters frequently demonstrate indirect strategies for expressing emotions and intentions. This makes the series an appropriate object of study for examining pragmatic phenomena within popular culture and understanding how language contributes to the construction and representation of social relations.

A key concept in pragmatics is the speech act, introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle and Yule. Searle (1979) identifies five types of speech acts; assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Expressive speech acts, such as gratitude, apology, or sympathy, are often conveyed indirectly, making their interpretation dependent not only on the spoken form but also on contextual and social factors that shape indirect meaning. In *Bridgerton*, conversations frequently reflect Regency-era (1811-1820) norms that value politeness and emotional restraint. The preference for indirect expressive speech acts in *Bridgerton* can be understood within the social norms of the Regency era. According to Grace (2013), a young woman's reputation was closely tied to her adherence to etiquette, and even seemingly minor acts of impropriety could jeopardize her social standing and marriage prospects. Under such conditions, careful and restrained communication became socially desirable, particularly in interactions between men and women. Examining this tendency allows for a deeper understanding of how language operates within structured social hierarchies.

This study focuses on the exchanges between Daphne Bridgerton and Simon Basset, whose relationship in Season 1 is characterized by romantic tension and

emotional development. Daphne and Simon were selected because their interactions constitute the central narrative of Season 1 and contain a high frequency of emotionally significant exchanges that are shaped by Regency courtship conventions. Daphne, portrayed as an inexperienced debutante, and Simon, shaped by past trauma, often express their feelings indirectly within their dialogue. Conduct manuals of the Regency period (1811-1820) required unmarried and married couples to communicate discreetly. As Holloway explains, young men and women were encouraged to avoid gossip, scandal, religious debate, or overt emotional disclosure, and to prioritize listening over speaking. Because courtship norms demanded politeness and discouraged explicit expressions of emotion, feelings such as affection, rejection, or commitment were largely conveyed implicitly (Holloway, n.d.).

This study focuses on indirect expressive speech acts of affection, as affection plays a significant role in the development of Daphne and Simon's relationship and is often communicated indirectly due to Regency courtship norms. Although speech acts have been widely examined in pragmatic studies, limited research has explored indirect expressive speech acts within Regency-era narratives. Previous studies generally focus on expressive speech acts in broader contexts, paying less attention to the indirect expression of emotions. To address this gap, the study applies Searle's (1979) classification of expressive speech acts and Yule's (1996) concepts of indirectness and pragmatic inference to reveal how affection is conveyed implicitly. The findings are expected to enrich pragmatic studies by providing insights into emotional expression and interpersonal communication in socially regulated contexts expression and interpersonal communication in contemporary audiovisual media.

Within the field of pragmatics, particularly in speech act research, numerous studies have explored the use of expressive speech acts in films, scripts, and other audiovisual narratives. Most of these studies draw on Searle's speech act theory to identify and classify expressive functions in characters' utterances. This body of research is closely related to the present study, as *Bridgerton* Season 1 features complex interactions between Daphne and Simon in which expressive speech acts are central to the representation of romantic emotions, social conventions, and inner conflicts within Regency society. Accordingly, the following review highlights previous studies that apply speech act theory to cinematic and narrative contexts.

In “*An Analysis of Expressive Speech Acts Used in the Crazy Rich Asian Movie*,” Rahmawati (2021) classified expressive acts reflecting characters' emotions

and social status, providing a basic framework useful for identifying similar emotional expressions in *Bridgerton*. In “*The Expressive Speech Act in the Lovely Bones Movie*,” Tanjung (2021) showed that expressive acts convey deep psychological emotions, offering relevance for analyzing the emotional tension between Daphne and Simon.

Widyowati’s (2019) “*Expressive Speech Acts Used by John and Savannah as the Main Characters in Dear John*” demonstrated the role of expressive in romantic conflict, aligning with this study’s focus on indirect emotion. Similarly, “*Analyzing Expressive Speech Acts of the Main Character in The Joker Movie*” by Selsibilla et al. (2022) highlighted expressive acts shaped by psychological conditions, supporting the analysis of hidden emotions in *Bridgerton*.

In “*Expressive Speech Acts in the Film Kukira Kau Rumah*,” Nugraheni et al. (2022) examined expressives related to relational support, offering insight into how emotional bonds are built or strained key to Daphne and Simon’s dynamics. Aritonang & Ambalegin (2023), through “*An Analysis of the Expressive Speech Acts in The Willoughbys Movie*,” emphasized how family expectations shape expressive, paralleling the influence of Regency norms. Royanti (2019), in “*Expressive Speech Acts as Found in La La Land*,” showed their role in romantic storytelling, relevant to analyzing *Bridgerton*’s courtship narrative.

In “*Expressive Speech Acts Analysis of Percy Jackson’s Movie*,” Mareta & Afriana (2024) confirmed that expressives function consistently across genres, supporting their classification in this study. Nareswara & Suseno (2019), through “*A Pragmatic Analysis of Expressive Speech Acts in the Movie Venom*,” showed that expressive acts reveal internal conflict, an important parallel to Daphne and Simon’s misunderstandings.

Damayanti (2022), in “*An Analysis of Expressive Acts in Zootopia: Pragmatics Approach*,” highlighted how expressives carry contextual moral meaning, reinforcing the need for contextual interpretation in Regency society. The study “*An Analysis of the Expressive Speech Acts in Avatar: Way of the Water*” by Aritonang & Ambalegin (2023) further showed the adaptability of Searle’s framework across fictional narratives. Lastly, Siregar (2018), through “*A Study of Expressive Speech Acts Used by the Characters in the Orphan Movie Script*,” demonstrated systematic classification methods that this thesis adopts while extending the analysis to indirect meanings.

Previous studies have contributed significantly to the analysis of expressive

speech acts in films and audiovisual narratives. However, most of these studies primarily focus on identifying and classifying expressive speech acts in general, particularly explicit emotional expressions such as thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and complaining. As a result, relatively little attention has been paid to how expressive meanings are conveyed indirectly through contextual inference, implied illocutionary force, and socially constrained interaction. In addition, studies examining expressive speech acts within historical settings shaped by strict social conventions, such as the Regency era, remain limited. Consequently, the relationship between indirect emotional expression and the social norms governing interpersonal communication has not been sufficiently explored.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the dialogues between Daphne and Simon in *Bridgerton* Season 1, focusing on how affection is expressed through indirect expressive speech acts. Particular attention is given to the linguistic forms, pragmatic inference processes, and contextual factors that contribute to the interpretation of implied emotional meanings. By applying Searle's (1979) classification of expressive speech acts alongside Yule's (1996) concepts of indirectness and pragmatic inference, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how emotional meanings are communicated indirectly within the socially regulated context of Regency society and represented in audiovisual narratives.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How are indirect expressive speech acts of affection used in Daphne and Simon's conversations in *Bridgerton* Season 1?
2. How do social and cultural contexts influence the use of indirect expressive speech acts of affection?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the realization of indirect expressive speech acts of affection in Daphne and Simon's conversations in *Bridgerton* Season 1.
2. To analyze how social and cultural contexts influence the use of indirect expressive speech acts of affection.

1.4 Research Significances

This study contributes to Pragmatics by examining language as social action through the analysis of indirect expressive speech acts from a theoretical perspective. By exploring how affection is communicated indirectly in the interactions between Daphne and Simon in *Bridgerton* Season 1, this research applies Searle's (1979) and Yule's (1996) frameworks to reveal the influence of social and cultural constraints on emotional expression. The findings provide empirical evidence that indirectness functions as a deliberate communicative strategy, offering deeper insight into the relationship between linguistic expression, social norms, and interpersonal relationships in audiovisual narratives.

This study enhances understanding of how emotions and interpersonal meanings are communicated through indirect language use from a practical perspective. The findings may serve as a valuable reference for future studies on speech acts, pragmatic inference, and language use in audiovisual media. In addition, this research can help language learners recognize that emotional meanings are often conveyed implicitly rather than through direct expressions. Such understanding may improve their ability to interpret implied meanings and develop greater communicative competence in real-life interactions.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Speech Acts:** Speech acts refer to actions performed through language, where each utterance carries an illocutionary force that reflects the speaker's intended communicative function (Searle, 1979).
2. **Expressive Speech Acts:** Expressive speech acts denote utterances used to convey the speaker's psychological state or emotional response, such as gratitude, disappointment, admiration, or frustration.
3. **Indirect Expressive Speech Acts:** Indirect Expressive Speech Acts refer to utterances whose expressive illocutionary force is not explicitly stated but must be inferred through contextual cues, indirect linguistic forms, and pragmatic interpretation.
4. **Pragmatic Inference:** Pragmatic inference refers to the listener's process of deriving unstated meaning by interpreting context, conversational implicature, shared knowledge, and utterance structure (Yule, 1996).

5. **Indirectness:** Indirectness is the strategy of expressing meaning through non-literal or softened forms such as hints, mitigated statements, or rhetorical questions to avoid explicit emotional expression.
6. **Bridgerton Season 1 (Data Source):** *Bridgerton* Season 1 serves as the primary data source, with the conversations between Daphne Bridgerton and Simon Basset providing rich examples of emotional tension and indirect communication essential for analyzing indirect expressive speech acts

