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I am an Avenger! Speech act analysis of Revenge Utterances in Naruto

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the linguistic performance of revenge in long-form serial anime from a pragmatic perspective using Naruto (Episodes 1-220) as a case study. It focuses on revenge utterances as rule-governed illocutionary acts whose force is built, sustained, and redefined through dialogue, rather than the psychological theme or story-line of revenge. The study uses a Diachronic Speech Act Matrix synthesizing the taxonomy of Searle (1979), Austin's (1962) perlocutionary framework with telepragmatics to trace the speech acts under conditions of deferred felicity across serial temporality. Analysis of purposively sampled utterance blocks shows that revenge discourse in Naruto is a hybrid pragmatic genre, which includes a core part (speaker commitment to future punitive action), an assertive part (epistemic authorization of grievance) and an expressive part (affective intensification). The study shows that classical felicity conditions are not immediately assessable in the narrative serialisation, but are postponed, scalar, and regulated by systematic discursive repair strategies such as modality strengthening, propositional hedging and retroactive immunization. Perlocutionary effects are demonstrated to be non-consumable and double-directed. The results enrich classical speech act theory by developing theories of narrative felicity and staggered perlocutionary trajectories, and provide a replicable analytical tool for studying mediated discourse with performative closure deferred. The study contributes to the field of media pragmatics by rethinking avenger identity as a performative construction that is continuously built and maintained in the process of iterations of speech acts.



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1. Background

1.1 Fictional Discourse and Media Pragmatics

This philosophical study of how utterances are actions that began with Austin's (1962) 'How to Do Things with Words' and developed into Searle's (1969) speech act theory has spread from everyday conversation to fictional and mediated discourse. Ohmann (1971) maintained that literature is a quasi-speech act, a kind of speech act that is encapsulated in conventions that temporarily suspend the normal illocutionary commitments and yet retain the act's intelligibility. Pratt (1977) showed that the literary speech situation is structurally related to natural discourse through shared inferential norms. These gestures paved the way for the modern media pragmatics, which sees screen dialogue as a social interaction that enables the discursive construction of power, identity and relational work (Culpeper & McIntyre, 2010; Dynel, 2011).

1.2 The Pragmatic and Sociological Dimension of Revenge

Revenge is often misunderstood as a primal and a pre-social emotion. In the last few decades, sociological and anthropological research has shown that vengeance is a very formalized, communicative, and rule-governed social institution. Black-Michaud (1975) envisioned vengeance as a "cohesive force" that is governed by defined rules of reciprocity, timing, and public declaration. Boehm (1984) recorded the blood revenge as a grammar of intentional, socially visible action, and the performative aspect is as important as the physical one. This institutional perspective highlights the linguistic nature of revenge: revenge is not just a feeling, but a word. It has to be negotiated, declared, explained, and told before it is physically enacted. Gollwitzer and Denzler (2009) gave experimental evidence that revenge is psychologically sweet because it conveys a message: the victim's need to communicate symbolic condemnation and rebalance status. Revenge is thus a perlocutionary and illocutionary phenomenon: it must be enacted in a way that makes it 'socially real' through the appropriate speech acts and it must be

understood by an appropriate audience.

1.3 The Limits of Thematic Anime Scholarship

The story of Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto* has been a focus of scholarly interest due to its themes of vengeance, trauma, and ideological struggle. Religious and mythological foundations were analyzed by Thomas (2012), structural aspects of revenge as a story-telling device by Morris (2015), and emotional and ideological structures by Hogan (2016). A common problem with these contributions is that they use the *Naruto* script as a means of thematic content. Dialogue is not analysed for its illocutionary acts in the construction of characters' revenge in narrative, but is mined for its propositional meaning. Existing scholarship can tell us that Sasuke Uchiha wants revenge, but it cannot explain how utterances perform the functions of directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations and help to alter the social fabric of the story world. There is no serious pragma-stylistic research and the mechanism of enacting revenge as social action is not theorized.

1.4 Theoretical Mismatch: Standard vs. Fictional Felicity

Theory of classical speech acts has a theoretical shortcoming in long-form serial fiction, which is evident in this gap. The Searlean model is based on single, face-to-face, contextually stable utterances, with immediate evaluable felicity conditions and synchronous perlocutionary uptake (Searle, 1969). In serialised narrative like *Naruto*, vengeful speech (oaths, declarations, threats) is a frequent occurrence in situations of suspended, deferred, or contested felicity. A commissive vow in Episode 50 can be linguistically valid, but pragmatically incomplete: its uptake, ratification, and perlocutionary consequences can be spread across hundreds of episodes. The toolkit of fictional pragmatics is not yet complete in terms of a systematic model of how illocutionary acts operate in the face of the destabilization of the felicity conditions by serial temporality. This blind spot is a major impetus for the present inquiry.

1.5 The Present Study

This study will fill these gaps by applying the taxonomy of Searle (1979), the perlocutionary framework of Austin (1962), and the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) in a pragmatic way to the analysis of revenge speech acts in *Naruto* (Episodes 1-220). It traces the changes in illocutionary force and perlocutionary uptake that are effected by serial temporality.

1.6 Significance

The study makes two contributions. For pragmatics, it builds on the classical framework, theorising narrative felicity and staggered perlocution, and offering vocabulary for analysing speech acts in serialised media in which performative closure is deferred. In media studies, it provides a repeatable approach that considers fictional dialogue as simulated social action, and moves the analytical focus from the character's representation to the character's action within the storyworlds.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foundational Speech Act Theory: Austin and Searle

Austin (1962) questioned the notion that statements are basically factual and he distinguished between constatives (true or false) and performatives (felicitous or infelicitous). Austin (1962) states that each speech act is simultaneously a locutionary act (producing sense and reference), an illocutionary act (the force: request, warning, promise), and a perlocutionary act (effect on the audience).

Searle (1969) systematised this into a rigorous framework. Speaking is a rule-governed behavior, every speech act has success conditions and satisfaction conditions (Vanderveken, 1990). The felicity conditions include the propositional content, preparatory conditions (contextual prerequisites), sincerity conditions (speaker's psychological state) and essential conditions (constitutive rules) (Yule, 1996). There are five types of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations (Cruse, 2000). Physical and social environment (Putnam,

1975) is the basis for reference and meaning, which makes illocutionary acts publicly accessible and empirically analysable. This framework offers the analytical toolkit: revenge utterances will be analyzed as rule-governed illocutionary acts whose success will rely on identifiable felicity conditions.

2.2 Extending Speech Act Theory to Fictional and Media Discourse

Theoretical extension (Piazza et al., 2011) is needed for the application of this framework to scripted anime. The bridge is offered by the mimetic speech act hypothesis (Pratt, 1977): literary texts are speech acts in which the writer simulates illocutions, encouraging the reader to imagine a world in which the illocutions are real (Searle, 1975; Ohmann, 1971). Fictional utterances are speech acts performed in a special speech situation (Pratt, 1977), with appropriateness conditions that are systemically related to, but different from, ordinary conversation (Oatley, 1999). The sincerity condition is redefined: the author's guarantee of truth is in the storyworld, not in the actual world (Ryan, 1991). In the fictional world, a character's speech is a promise if it has the constitutive and felicity conditions that it has in reality (Lamarque, 1994).

Dramatic dialogue is communicatively complex (Kozloff, 2000). Characters act with words in relation to the dramatic goals and plot (Culpeper & McIntyre, 2010); dialogue initiates, escalates and resolves matters with illocutionary weight calibrated by narrative (Elam, 1980). The viewer is not a ratified participant in characters' communicative layer but a ratified listener to the film's collective sender (Dynel, 2011). Character utterances are double-directed (Bakhtin, 1984): the hearer on screen can misread (Desilla, 2019), resist (Bousfield, 2008), or react emotionally (Bednarek, 2015); the audience receives utterances that have full narrative knowledge and a long-term interpretive horizon (Mittell, 2015).

For serialised media (Dynel, 2018), which have hundreds of episodes, this dual layering is essential. Single episode closure (Austin, 1962;

Brooks, 1984; Mittell, 2015) cannot be used as a measure of the success of a commissive act. Temporally suspended felicity conditions: less decisive immediate hearer uptake than long-term narrative confirmation (Ohmann, 1971). *Naruto*, for example, with its first arc of 220 episodes, and intergenerational revenge plots is a prime example of this deferral. A Searlean analysis requires a pragmatic model that allows for both suspended felicity and double audience judgment over the serial arc.

2.3 The Pragmatics of Revenge: Threats, Vows, and Commissive Acts

According to Blanco Salgueiro (2010), the key of revenge declarations is the commissive class, in which the speaker promises future action, that is, harming a designated target. The key element of a threat is that the threatening speaker makes a promise to do something bad to the hearer (Green, 1997). The preparatory conditions are speaker competence, hearer belief in capacity and avoidability of the future event (Fraser, 1998).

Revenge expressions are rarely found in their full form. Threats are often combined with other illocutionary forces: threats are frequently part of an expressive or assertive speech act, and they are given their power by the explicit expression of anger, hatred or moral condemnation (Fraser, 1998). A revenge utterance usually has a commissive core with assertive backing that provides justification, and is filled with expressive elements of grief or rage (Salgueiro, 2010). These mixed acts fall somewhere between pure promises and pure threats (Salgueiro, 2010). The revenge speech act is located in a complex middle ground, in which the speaker commits himself to destructive future acts while at the same time enacting the emotional grounds which make this commitment socially intelligible.

The serialised narrative promotes a wider range of speech act genres of vengeance, including structural features such as public naming of target, explicit reference to known injustice, solemn self-binding in front of witnesses, and reiterative performances to reaffirm commitment in the face of competing demands (Krifka, 2014; Butler,

1997). The revenge in *Naruto* is not a single illocutionary act, but rather a discursive practice that is sustained and governed by the genre.

2.4 Dialogue and Character Construction in Shōnen Anime

Revenge speech acts are influenced by the conventions of Shōnen anime in ways that general pragmatics would not necessarily explain. The emotional register is raised, formulaic statements of intent abound, and spoken pledges are used as a key device to drive character arcs in anime dialogue (Thomas, 2012). Characters enact transformations vocally, committing themselves to action in the ritualized, public speech. Identity is not an existing essence that dialogue represents, but dialogue that is continually being created (Hall, 1990). Thomas (2012) suggests that the avenger is a performative identity category that is maintained through repeated speech acts of vow-making, threat issuing, and public remembrance of past trauma. Sasuke Uchiha's path is not a steady one of inner calm, but of commissive statements: promises to kill Itachi, threats to the Leaf Village, and a reorientation to new targets at each turn, positioning him in the moral economy of the story.

Thematic scholarship focuses on revenge as a psychological burden or story topic. Morris (2015) interprets Sasuke's revenge as an unprocessed grief that leads to moral isolation, while Hogan (2016) sees revenge arcs as the externalization of internal struggles. These highlight emotional aspects but not linguistic mechanics. In the performative-pragmatic approach, it is the other way around: revenge is not just a reflection of speech acts but the very way revenge is realized in social being (Felman, 2002). Sasuke states, 'I am going to restore my clan, and destroy a certain someone,' and he commits an act that is a binding act for future actions and reconfigures relationships. According to Bauman (1986), the speech itself, which is heard and confirmed by the audience, makes the avenger real.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gap

Speech act theory offers a way to recognize the

illocutionary force of an act, the doing of it through the felicity conditions, and the uptake effects it produces (perlocutionary). Extensions to fictional discourse show that scripted dialogue is subject to modified but coherent felicity conditions, and that perlocutionary effects occur in a structurally deferred manner in serial narrative time. The pragmatics of threatening acts indicates that revenge declarations are a hybrid genre in which commissive, assertive, and expressive forces are combined and must be continually discursively repaired. However, current Naruto scholarship focuses primarily on revenge as a psychological or thematic issue.

No study has yet approached the revenge dialogue in Naruto as a structured commissive genre that has its own rules of felicity and perlocutionary paths. This chasm has left unanswered the question of how the series' central conflict, the cycle of revenge, is actually carried out through language. The present study aims to tackle this by using Searle's taxonomy for a corpus of episodes 1-220 and four research questions:

1. In Naruto, what are the types of speech acts that are used for revenge?
2. What are the felicity conditions for a revenge utterance to be obligatory in the storyworld?
3. How do these speech acts do avenger identity rather than just mental state?
4. What is the relationship between intended and actual perlocutionary effects and the course of a narrative?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design: The Diachronic Speech Act Matrix

In classical speech act theory, the speech act is considered to be an immediately evaluable unit. Long-form episodic anime needs to be analysed in terms of "staggered perlocutionary trajectories", in which the uptake and execution of the illocutionary is structurally suspended in the vast narrative space and time.

The present study attempts to develop a Diachronic Speech Act Matrix by combining

Searle's (1979) taxonomy and felicity conditions with telecinematic pragmatics. The design sees utterances as ongoing social acts that are in a constant process of enacting, challenging, and reconstructing character identities and narrative realities over a long-term interpretive horizon.

3.2 Corpus Construction and Sampling Strategy

Using purposive sampling, data was gathered from hyper-dense areas of ideological conflict in Episodes 1--220. The Utterance Block is the unit of analysis, a continuous stretch of dialogue, space, framing and aural track transitions where a character explicitly takes or takes up a position on revenge.

Inclusion criteria:

- i. First-person direct reference to future punishment.
- ii. Diagnosing another's vengeful motivation in third person assertive claim.
- iii. Interlocutor directly challenging or addressing an avenger's ideological path.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Each utterance block is scored on a six column matrix:

- i. Locutionary Mapping: Verbatim dialogue, timestamp, episode marker.
- ii. Illocutionary Classification: Coding into Searle's five classes.
- iii. IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices): Lexical items, performative verbs, grammatical moods that indicate the intensity of the intent.
- iv. Analysis of conditions that become defective or are held in abeyance in the context of Felicity/Satisfaction Testing against Searle's four constitutive rules.
- v. Diachronic Iteration Track: Measurement of iterative repetition and repair over episodes.
- vi. Perlocutionary Realization (Footing): Following the downstream effects of the narrative, mapping double-directed discourse: intra-diegetic hearer response and extra-diegetic viewer's long-term realization.

3.4 Methodological Rigor

Each localized English statement was cross-referenced with the original Japanese recording, paying attention to the use of honorifics, high modality verbs, and culture-specific grievance idioms to ensure that the statement is structurally equivalent to the author's intended design of the story world.

The typological profile and illocutionary hybridity are examined. The typological profile and illocutionary hybridity are discussed.

The revenge discourse in *Naruto* (Episodes 1-220) cannot be easily categorised into distinct boxes. Illocutionary hybridity is a structural fusion in which commissive, assertive and expressive forces co-occur in single events, resulting in a unified revenge genre, which is displayed in utterance blocks.

4.1.1 The Commissive Core

The center is a high density of speech acts that are called commissives (Searle, 1969) because they are speech acts that involve the speaker's commitment to future action. The difference between revenge commissive and other commissives is its irreversibility index, which refers to the extent to which the speaker considers the act he is promising to be non-negotiable and identity-constitutive.

In episode 4 (05:32), Sasuke says, "I am going to restore my clan, and destroy a certain someone. This meets preparatory and sincerity conditions but the commissive force is doubled by two IFIDs. First, "I am going to" is a performative that brings near the distance between declaration and execution. Second, the grammatically ambiguous object "a certain someone" paradoxically enhances the force: the ambiguity points to the fact that the identity of the target is less important than the necessity of the action itself. Clan restoration and destruction are not coordinated, but instead occur in parallel, indicating that vengeance is integral to the restoration of clan identity.

This is the next step in Episode 34 (13:51): "I am an avenger. I need power, at any cost, even if it

means being consumed by evil, to follow my path. The commissive is deepened for felicity. The preparatory condition grows with the speaker's recognition of the possibility of his own corruption. The sincerity condition is reinforced: Sasuke agrees to ontological change. "At any price" is an extreme scalar IFID which eliminates escape routes. The commissive turns into a full commitment, even when there are conditions which would otherwise cancel the obligation.

4.1.2 Assertive Backing

The assertive layer provides epistemic scaffolding. Assertives are the evidentiary substrate of the narrative, which assert that revenge is inevitable and that there is a causal structure to explain this.

Episode 51 (08:41): "Sasuke is motivated by revenge, and he's hell bent on getting his older brother Itachi's revenge for what he did to his family. He won't stop until he does. It serves double assertive purpose: psychological state (revenge) is asserted as the cause of the other state (burning), and the progressive aspect (is burning) makes the vengeful state an ongoing and irreversible state. The assertive is not neutral description, but narrative authorization: diagnosing motivation as structurally determined (for what he did), the speaker takes the commissive out of the sphere of choice and moves it into the sphere of necessity.

In hybrid formations, assertive backing is powerful. Episode 108 (18:01): "In the end, I have decided on revenge." The framing phrase "In the end" is assertive, suggesting that there is a narrative teleology leading to this decision, in which the previous events are leading to this decision. The assertive layer reconstructs biography in a retrospective way, always oriented towards this commissive endpoint. It is over-satisfied, the speaker's decision is presented as being driven by the narrative need and not by choice.

4.1.3 Expressive Saturation

The expressive layer expresses the attitude or psychological state. The corpus reveals expressives are not supplementary but saturating:

they suffuse the revenge utterance with affective intensity, transforming Structural commitment to an emotionally charged existential commitment.

Episode 75 (07:39): "Eyes that seek revenge, who made you so lonely? It is grammatically a question, but is used expressively to make the avenger's condition sound lonely. The metonymic exchange of person for eyes implies that vengeance is now somatized, that is, physical rather than selected orientation. The expressive layer is the structure of the question, which is not dialogic, but it leaves the avenger in a solipsistic grievance.

Episode 131 (11:33): If you wish to kill me one day, enhance and revenge! The conditional frame maintains agency, but the imperative calls hatred and revenge into being as objects to be developed. Lexical items for emotional states become channels of expressive force, transforming affect into programmatic directive. The speaker is not a speaker of a reportative sentence, but a speaker of a commissive-directive hybrid, and the sincerity condition is suspended, because the speaker prescribes, not reports emotion. The outcome is a forecasted expressivity, or mapping of emotional architecture onto the addressee they are structurally forced to occupy.

Temporal longing is another way of expressing saturation. Episode 147 (06:00): "I have been wanting to do this since the day I met you to take my revenge! The present perfect progressive extends the expressive state over the course of the relationship, while the infinitive re-cements the relationship in the commissive core. The yearning is the revenge in its unactualized, durative form, the expressive and commissive are temporally integrated. This results in a psychological state and future commitment that are indistinguishable in this expressive commissive.

The affective intensification of the diachronic trajectory is not accompanied by cathartic release. Early utterances (Episode

Expressives are used sparingly with 6: "I am an avenger") In the middle of the corpus (Episodes 34, 147), expressives are lexicalized. But the perlocutionary course is structurally blocked: the

more saturated the expression, the less fulfilled the commissive. The genre of revenge creates a pragmatic paradox: The more expressively saturated the utterance, the more its felicity conditions rely on future perlocutionary realization that serial narrative continually postpones.

4.2. Diachronic Iteration and Discursive Repair

Telecinematic temporality does not simply postpone the perlocutionary realization of the act, but it is an active reconstitution of illocutionary force. An analysis of Sasuke's utterances from baseline to reiterated versions shows a systematic linguistic protocol building, strengthening and, at times, destabilizing avenger identity.

4.2.1 Linguistic Escalation Protocols

The baseline is in Episode 6 (10:38): "I am an avenger. The indefinite article makes avenger identity one of the possible instantiations of the identity, the stative verb "am" makes the claim present-continuous, implying that the identity is present but does not necessarily persist. Preparatory conditions are not fully specified. This is a pragmatic seed: initial illocutionary force is intentionally limited, thus setting the stage for subsequent escalatory force.

The first escalation is in episode 34 (13:51): "I am an avenger. To follow my path, I must have power; at any price even if it means being consumed by evil. The first sentence is a double-voiced sentence because it reproduces the baseline. The crucial change is in the appended clause, where the stative copula is augmented by modal commissive (must have) and explicit cost calculus (at any price).

There are three ways of escalation:

Modality strengthening: Bare identity claim becomes necessity modal (must), eliminating optionality. A stronger condition replaces the preparatory condition: the speaker thinks that the act is necessary.

Scalar amplification: "At any price" eliminates upper limits on cost. The sincerity condition

becomes stronger: the speaker will want revenge even if they are hurt. This results in felicity deepening, making conditions more and more demanding, thus strengthening the performative bond.

Ontological contamination: "Consumed by evil" brings in metaphysical stakes that are not part of the baseline. The avenger becomes a perverted entity that is contaminating the speaker's moral fiber. The expressive layer imbues the commissive with existential dread.

In Episode 131 (11:33), an interlocutory escalation is shown. The mentor's command "If you wish to kill me one day, enhance and revenge!" is repeated by Sasuke: "From this point on, I am an avenger. The conditional future is a time form that is filled with emotional content that is programmed into it. Sasuke's reiteration rephrases the baseline: "from this point on" places the claim in time as a threshold crossing, a moment of irreversible commitment. The indefinite article remains grammatically but it becomes semantically non-optional, serving as a ritual marker.

The trajectory is a ladder, with the following steps: (1) ascription of identity, (2) modality of necessity and cost calculations, (3) interlocutory prescription and temporalization of threshold. Each rung maintains the grammatical envelope and adds modal, scalar, and narrative layers to the illocutionary force.

4.2.2 Discursive Repair Mechanisms

The illocutionary force is heightened in the process of escalation, while structural risks are controlled by repair mechanisms. The perlocutionary trajectory is staggered: the propositional content can be undermined by plot revelations, making the commissive conditions defective. From the corpus, two main strategies can be identified: propositional hedging and felicity-condition renegotiation.

Episode 4 - Episode 147: In Episode 4, Sasuke says "destroy a certain someone. The object is grammatically hidden, and maintains the integrity of preparatory condition without being specific

enough for plot to contradict. This is propositional hedging, guarding against epistemic vulnerability of the commissive.

By Episode 147, the object is known (Itachi), and the utterance is rephrased: "I have been waiting for this since the day I first laid eyes on you, I want to take my revenge. The repair is a temporary re-anchoring. Instead of the commissive of Episode 4 with specified target, the speaker moves to the expressive frame (yearning) that spans the course of the relationship. The preparatory condition is generalized, meaning that the speaker promises to act out a long-standing emotional pattern, not eliminate a particular person. The commissive is left intact by transforming content into an expressive state whose object is irrefutable in the narrative because it is emotional and not physical.

Episode 196 (03:52): "When he died we, his sons, promised one another that we would never sleep until we had our revenge. This demonstrates collective felicity renegotiation. The commissive is spread out between plural subject (we, his sons) and diffused across kinship unit, rendering sincerity plural. The temporal anchor (on the very day he died) places the commissive in the past, so that the subsequent events cannot invalidate it. This is "retroactive immunization": the past is treated as if it had already happened, so that it cannot be destabilized in the future. The perlocutionary trajectory is archived, that is, it is taken out of the ongoing narrative contingency.

Episode 197 (05:55): "I just wish I'd lived long enough to see the end of the hidden leaf village with my own eyes. The modal construction is used to indicate that the commissive is in the counterfactual mood, that preparatory condition is now permanently unsatisfied because of death. But the saying is repeated three times, as if there is a compulsion to fix what is not fixable semantically by repeating it over and over again. The illocutionary force moves into pragmatic necrosis: the speech act continues even after the felicity conditions of the speech act have died, and the speech act becomes systematically infelicitous, but at the same time it still has the power to act narratively. The failed commissive becomes,

paradoxically, a more potent expressive i.e. a monument to the structural impossibility of vengeful closure.

Illocutionary force is dialectically modified by serial temporality, which is a process of escalation and repair. The avenger identity is not enacted one time, but is continually refashioned in this iterative-reparative process. The Matrix does this by representing utterances as nodes in a pragmatic network, and connecting them with edges that are drawn by the narrative time.

4.3 Suspended Felicity and Staggered Perlocutionary Trajectories

Classical speech act theory fails to explain how revenge utterances are pragmatically binding over hundreds of episodes of suspended realization. Searle's felicity conditions presuppose immediate interactional frame. The Naruto corpus systematically violates these presuppositions. The Matrix does this by showing that telecinematic discourse is performed in terms of suspended felicity and staggered perlocutionary trajectories, which are i.e. Constitutive properties of long-form serial pragmatics.

4.3.1 Deferral of Felicity Conditions

Preparatory and sincerity conditions are assessed in classical theory in the immediate context of interaction. These conditions are structurally postponed in serialized discourse.

The transition from Episode 4 to Episode 147 is paradigmatic. In Episode 4, Sasuke says, "I am going to restore my clan, and destroy a certain someone. Sincerity is not verifiable in the immediate diegetic frame; the preparatory condition is partially satisfied. The propositional content is intentionally non-specific, making the object-component structurally incomplete. The speech act is felicitous enough to start the story but not so felicitous as to be rigid.

By Episode 34, sincerity is somewhat justified by the action of the story, in which Sasuke abandoned his village, joined with enemies, and sought forbidden power. The speech act has a retroactively strengthened sincerity condition. But the preparatory condition is more difficult:

"consumed by evil" adds possibility that the drive for power can ruin the self that would do revenge, thus creating paradox where capacity to do threatens to void motivating identity. The Felicity conditions are not only postponed, but dialectically complicated.

In Episode 131, extreme deferral is presented. The conditional frame (If you wish) explicitly suspends preparatory condition; sincerity is distributed between two speakers, mentor prescribes hatred, Sasuke accepts, creating distributed felicity. Both speakers are not enough to meet the conditions; felicity is shared and postponed to the indefinite future. It is the speech act that is binding because the conditions are not yet satisfied.

In the third person diagnostic (Episode 51) the preparatory condition is claimed as met, though sincerity is shifted to the epistemic authority of the observer. The audience needs to believe the diagnostic capacity, that is, the belief that the narrative may be true or false. The Felicity conditions are threefold deferred: from Sasuke, to observer, to viewer.

Deferral does not bring about infelicity. In telecinematic discourse, the conditions in which the speech act is suspended create binding indeterminacy, that is, the speech act continues to function by virtue of its suspended conditions. Narrative tension comes from the audience's lack of ability to confirm sincerity, the level of preparatory skills, and if the propositional content will remain after the plot is revealed. The Matrix does not consider felicity as a binary value, but as a scalar value that changes along the narrative's path, and that can change the felicity index of previous utterances in each episode.

4.3.2 Double-Directed Footing Realization

According to classical theory, perlocutionary effects are one-way. The discourse of telecinematic is double directed, each speech is directed both to the intra-diegetic hearer and to the extra-diegetic viewer. These layers are temporal and epistemic in scale and privilege and produce a staggered perlocutionary trajectory that produces binding force across suspended episodes.

The intra-diegetic layer is characterised by resistant or unratified uptake. Episode 75: "Eyes that seek revenge---who made you so lonely? Sasuke does not say anything – the perlocutionary effect is resisted, absorbed into silent characterization. This unratified uptake is normal; Sasuke's commissives are challenged, silenced, or redirected in a tactical way. Classically speaking, this is perlocutionary failure, but in telecinematic discourse, intra-diegetic resistance has a critical sustaining function. Narrative does not allow the closure to happen too soon because it does not validate in the diegetic frame. The speech act is never closed; its actualization is continually postponed.

The extra-diegetic layer works using long-term social position tracking. The viewer watches the avenger's path through hundreds of episodes, where he enjoys epistemic privileges that the characters within the diegesis lack. The viewer is aware that Sasuke's target is more complicated than what Episode 4 implies; sees that witnesses of sincerity condition tested through action; sees that preparatory condition is complicated by the corruption of power. This results in an accumulation of interpretations, not instantaneously, but over time.

Double directed structure is seen where layers are brought into tension. Episode 108: "I've decided; I'm going to get revenge. This is a present-tense statement of completed action to the intra-diegetic hearer. The extra-diegetic viewer sees "In the end" as retrospective construction, which presupposes a completed narrative arc. The perlocutionary effect on the viewer is analeptic; the speech evokes a retroactive reinterpretation of the previous episodes as teleologically oriented towards this moment. In face-to-face situations, past cannot be changed because it is fixed, but it can be rewritten in the performative wake of the speech act.

The macrostructural layer is maintained by periodic realignment. All previous utterances may have a perlocutionary effect and felicity conditions that are modified by each new episode. The viewer's "I am an avenger" is adjusted when

Episode 147 reveals that Sasuke has "been yearning for this ever since the day I first met you. The baseline, which was first heard as a statement of identity in the present tense, is now understood as a tip of a long submerged emotional trajectory. Perlocutionary effect is not exhausted at first use but is re-activated with a new force with each disclosure.

This is how text continues to keep speech acts discursively alive across the episodes of suspension. Classical model sees perlocutionary effects as consumable: the hearer is persuaded, and the act is over. In serial discourse, effects are non-consumable, they build upon one another and change. Episode 34's escalated version of Episode 4 does not replace the viewer's relationship to the commissive of Episode 4 but is layered on top of it. Each iteration introduces new illocutionary level, but does not remove previous levels. The result is a pragmatic palimpsest: a series of early utterances that are continually reinterpreted, so that they are always relevant.

The counterfactuals keep repeating in episode 197: "I just wish I had lived long enough to see the end of the hidden leaf village with my own eyes. Intra-diegetically, this is perlocutionarily void i.e. speaker dead, hearer absent, act impossible. Extra-diegetically, the speech has a tremendous impact: the audience understands the systematic failure of a vengeful closure, the structural impossibility of the genre's promised satisfaction. The less binding the speech act is intra-diegetically, the more binding it is to the viewer, and the more it is repeated, the more binding it is to the viewer, the less binding it is intra-diegetically. The double-directed structure produces compensatory mechanism: if one footing layer fails, the other layer becomes more intense; pragmatic relevance is maintained throughout the suspension of the narrative.

The classical theory of speech acts does not support the concept of a staggered perlocutionary trajectory as it assumes the one interactional frame with co-present participants. The Matrix is a case study of the need for a temporally distributed, socially bifurcated, and

hermeneutically recursive model of telecinematic discourse. The binding force is not to be found in the satisfaction of the felicity conditions in the immediate present but in the systematic management of their suspension in multi-layered interpretive horizon.

5. Discussion

5.1 Synthesizing the Matrix: Redefining Classical Theory for Serialized Fiction

The empirical analysis provides results which cannot be explained in the classical Searlean framework without basic modifications. The classical model sees the speech act as an immediately evaluable unit, whose felicity conditions are synchronously assessable and whose effects are consumable. The Naruto corpus systematically contradicts these presuppositions, but it is a systematic violation, not a random or faulty one.

This will involve a shift in the theoretical direction from singledirected uptake to bifurcated realization. The Matrix presents a new concept of perlocutionary trajectories: effects are not consumed when they are taken in, but are added to the viewing experience, each subsequent iteration adding a layer of illocutionary force without eradicating the previous. Ultimately, it is a pragmatic palimpsest in which early utterances are still binding because continually reinterpreted. In serial discourse, the trajectory is temporally two-way: utterances rewrite the past in their performative wake and commit to the future action.

This is not rejection of Searle; it is dimensional expansion. The temporal geometry of assessment and the social topology of participants change, while the constitutive rules remain analytical primitives. The Matrix is a preservation of classical rigor and an extension of applicability to mediated discourse in which performative closure is radically deferred.

5.2 Theoretical Implications for Telecinematic Pragmatics

Previous research has applied existing scholarship on speech act theory to fictional discourse,

extending the theory to fictional discourse with the mimetic hypothesis (Ohmann, 1971; Pratt, 1977; Searle, 1975), and with the dramatic dialogue analysis (Culpeper & McIntyre, 2010; Dynel, 2011). These treated these mediated discourse as a special case of face to face discourse, where normal illocutionary responsibilities were suspended but the underlying structure remained intact. This is not enough for serialised media (such as a novel). The mismatch is not only the length of the story (long stories need to be patient) but the nature of the story (serialized stories have different pragmatic principles).

Satisfying the mismatch is provided by staggered perlocutionary trajectories. Perlocutionary effects are consumable in face-to-face interaction, that is, the hearer is persuaded and the act ends. In serial discourse, effects are non-consumable, they accumulate, compound, and transform. Episode 34 does not supplant the viewer's relationship to Episode 4's commissive, but rather accumulates it in an interpretive manner.

An important corollary of this non-consumability is indeterminacy of binding. According to classical theory, infelicitous speech acts are void, that is, conditions do not hold and they fail. In telecinematic discourse, the suspended conditions produce different pragmatic state in which the speech acts are suspended by indeterminacy. Narrative tension comes from the inability of the audience to verify sincerity, preparatory adequacy, or propositional survival. The speech act is not faulty, but productively deferred, with an established binding force through systematic management of the lack of verifiability.

Suspended felicity resolves the problem of fictional utterances which are neither true nor sincere in the actual world but are still performative. In the quasi-speech act model of Ohmann fictional utterances were considered as pretended illocutions, in the literary speech situation model of Pratt they were seen as subject to specific appropriateness conditions. Both preserved classical framework by adding fictional modifier. The Matrix provides a more radical

answer: it considers suspension not as a modifier but as a characteristic component of the discourse type. Medium but through medium is not the suspension of felicity conditions, but rather the condition of serial narrative engagement; and the enabling condition of serial narrative engagement is not staggered trajectory, but rather the condition of felicity.

This has methodological implications. Current telecinematic pragmatics research tends to consider each scene as an isolated entity (Dyner, 2011; Bednarek, 2015). The Matrix shows that this atomization fails to capture the illocutionary force modification that is a characteristic of serial discourse. Longitudinal protocols must be used for rigorous telecinematic pragmatics that follow the pragmatic network of each episode within the narrative arc as a node in a temporally extended pragmatic network. The viewer's ratification is, at the same time, temporally differentiated and hermeneutically recursive: the viewer who sees Episode 4 on first broadcast has epistemic privileges different from a viewer who sees Episode 4 after seeing the first 219 episodes, or a viewer who sees Episode 4 after being told about later revelations. The perlocutionary effect is different for each viewing position. Positionality in viewing must be considered variable as a modifier of realization in telecinematic pragmatics.

Last but not least, the framework can be applied to things other than anime. If you have a long-form serialized story, novel sequences, a podcast drama, transmedia storyworld, then you are operating under deferred felicity and staggered perlocution. The Matrix is part of a general theory of serial performativity: the binding force of speech acts in temporal dispersion and social bifurcation.

5.3 Breakdown of the Avenger Archetype: Pragmatic Construction Vs Thematic Psychology

Revenge is discussed as a psychological burden, as a narrative engine or as a symbolic construction in existing scholarship. As for the revenge, Morris (2015) sees it as a form of unresolved grief, Hogan (2016) as an externalization of inner conflicts, and

Thomas (2012) as a cultural archetype. They highlight emotional and symbolic aspects, but have a common weakness: they assume that dialogue is a clear means of conveying content. The avenger identity is an attribute of characters that is communicated through dialogue.

The pragmatic analysis is the opposite of this. The avenger identity is not a given, but an ongoing construction, modification and repair of utterances. The identity of an avenger is not something that Sasuke explains in Episode 6 "I am an avenger", but rather the act of saying it creates it. The identity is not fixed in the individual's mind but is reiterated through repeated speech acts: (Episode 6, 34, 131, 147) each act of commitment is restated with a different force. The identity is lost when the chain is broken (Episode 197: "I just wish I'd lived long enough..."), and it moves into pragmatic necrosis: performed but felicity-grounding lost, it becomes monument to structural impossibility.

This clears up some of the long-standing conflicts in the current scholarship. Morris and Hogan point out the irony of Sasuke being both motivated by the past and able to choose. Thematic scholarship is hard pressed to balance determinism and agency. Pragmatic analysis corrects this by revealing that the concept of determination is not psychological state, but discursive structure: repeated performance of commissive utterances with increasing force builds up narrative momentum which, performatively overdetermined, seems to be deterministic. Every repetition reduces the number of futures available, not because the psychology has changed, but because earlier speech acts have 'performative weight' that reduces the number of futures available. Staying "agency"---that is, redirecting vengeance, giving up alliances---itself is done through new commissives repairing or redirecting previous trajectory. Determinism and agency are not antagonistic but rather part of the same performative process: a body of accumulated weight of previous iterations, and the capacity to add new iterations that change the trajectory.

Furthermore, assertive backing demonstrates that avenger identity must be epistemic-authorized to have binding force. In Episode 51 ("Sasuke is driven by revenge..."), the third-party diagnostic not only explains the motive but also validates it, taking it out of the individual pathology and moving it to structural necessity. The avenger's identity is not just enacted by the avenger, but the narrative's discursive economy certifies it. This has consequences for the political role of the avenger in shōnen anime, not only as the empowerment fantasy of youth, but as a technology of managing the relation between individual action and collective authorization.

This is not an excuse for Morris, Hogan and Thomas. Their analyses continue to be useful in relation to symbolic and affective resonance. However, the resonances shown by pragmatic analysis are effects of previous discursive construction. The loss Morris finds is not the cause of the commissives, but rather their affective saturation i.e. their affective layer that renders structural commitment psychologically intelligible. The narrative engine Hogan talks about is not the structure that is external to dialogue but the diachronic iteration track which is systematic reiteration propelling the speech act across episodes. The cultural archetype that Thomas deconstructs is not the pre-existing type but pragmatic compound, created by means of certain illocutionary combinations.

The deconstruction is pragmatic, by excavating the archetype, one by one, from a series of commissive cores, assertive backings, and expressive saturations, to show that the archetype is constructed at the level of linguistic practice. The avenger is not a natural psychological type or cultural universal, but an assembled performative formation that is bound by certain felicity conditions and perlocutionary trajectories of the discourse environment.

The shared thematic preoccupation of the avenger archetype in shōnen narratives is not the same, but rather the shared pragmatic technology—the commissive-assertive-expressive compound is a re-usable discursive template that sustains

character identity for extended arcs. The power of friendship trope in shōnen revenge arcs is not only thematic counterweight, but also pragmatic counter-performance: competing commissives (loyalty to comrades) destabilizing the felicity conditions of the revenge commissive, thus creating conditions for discursive repair and identity transformation.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of the Key Findings

The three related goals of this study were: The study focused on three related goals: First, it outlined the illocutionary architecture of revenge discourse in *Naruto* (Episodes 1 - 220) and showed that it is a pragmatic genre that is uniquely illocutionary hybrid in that it features an illocutionary core with assertive illocutionary backing and is highly illocutionary expressive. Second, it was an analysis of systematic instability of the felicity conditions of narratives, which showed that the telecinematic discourse is based on the suspension of felicity and discursive repair. Felicity is not binary, but is a scalar property that changes throughout the narrative, regulated by escalation protocols (modality strengthening, scalar amplification, ontological contamination) and repair mechanisms (propositional hedging, re-anchoring in the past, collective renegotiation, retroactive immunization). Third, it analysed perlocutionary dimension, showing that the telecinematic discourse is realized by the staggered perlocutionary trajectory sustained by double directed footing. Perlocutionary effects are non-consumable: they accumulate, compound and transform, and produce pragmatic palimpsest, in which the early utterances remain as binding because they are continuously reinterpreted.

The results confirm the theoretical framework of the Diachronic Speech Act Matrix which is used to redefine the classical speech act theory for serialized fiction: the replacement of the taxonomic classification of speech acts with the compositional analysis of speech acts, the synchronous evaluation of speech acts with the temporal distribution of speech acts, and the

single-directed uptake of speech acts with the bifurcated realization of speech acts.

6.2 Methodological Contributions and Replicability

The methodological contributions and replicability are considered. The methodological contributions and replicability are taken into account.

The Matrix provides a repeatable model for analysing the speech act of closure in a situation of structural deferral. The six-column analytical procedure can be applied to other serial media: Western serial dramas (Breaking Bad, The Sopranos, Succession) to the analysis of criminal or dynastic commitments; long-form manga (Berserk, Vinland Saga, One Piece) to the analysis of vows across hundreds of chapters; podcast dramas to the analysis of change of the felicity condition of the acoustic framing of speech acts; transmedia storyworlds (Star Wars, The Witcher) to the analysis of speech acts, changing their felicity condition from one platform to the other.

The main takeaway from the Matrix is that utterances are not isolated events but nodes in a pragmatic network whose edges are created by the movement of narrative time. This makes it suitable for any medium of discourse that has extended serial arcs.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The study had three limitations that suggest fruitful future research.

Corpus boundaries. Only the episodes 1-220 (excluding Shippuden and Boruto) are analyzed. This was required for analytical depth but it does not show the entire story of Sasuke - particularly Itachi's real motivations and Sasuke's shift towards Leaf Village destruction. Future application to Shippuden would see if repair mechanisms are scalable to longer arcs, and if the "power of friendship" resolution is achieved through pragmatic counter-performance.

Character arc asymmetry. The corpus focuses on Sasuke's path, with Nagato/Pain's counter-discourse being given secondary attention and

Naruto's counter-discourse barely being discussed. The Matrix should be applied to other difficult utterances made by Naruto, such as "bring Sasuke back" and "stop the cycle of hatred," in order to see if they form a competing "reconciliation genre" and how it interacts with the other genre to create narrative resolution.

Cross-media comparison. The study is limited to the anime and particular conventions (heightened emotional register, formulaic declarations, visual-metaphorical underscoring). Further studies are needed to compare the illocutionary profile of the revenge genre in prose fiction (where the visual channel is absent), live-action television (where the modifiable force is the actor's performance), and video games (where the contingent perlocutionary effects are introduced by the player). Such comparative studies would provide evidence either for the existence of medium-specific or transmedia-universal properties of serial performativity in the Matrix.

These are restrictions that define the scope, but also provide for extension. The Matrix has been proven to work, the task is to prove where else it works, under which conditions and with which modifications. This study is a contribution to the rigor of media pragmatics and the depth of anime scholarship, as it is based on a fine-grained textual analysis that grounds theoretical innovation.

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