



Speech Acts and Personal Narrative: Analysing Meghan Markle's Use of Speech Acts

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the types and functions of speech acts performed by Meghan Markle during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021. The script of the interview constitutes the data. The data analysis is based on five classifications of Searl and Austin's speech act theory: declarative, assertive, expressive, directive and commissive. The data was analysed via MAXQDA through coding. The results indicate that mostly four types of speech acts were performed in her 364 utterances consisting of 318 utterances of representative, 26 utterances of directive, 15 utterances of expressive, and 5 utterances of commissive. Based on this finding, it was concluded that Meghan Markle used representative speech act most and that she mainly gave statements of fact or described things that she believed to be true. Additionally, the authors analyse the significance of Meghan Markle's use of 'I' in her statements and draw conclusions based on these observations.

Keywords: Speech acts, representative, declarative, commissive, expressive, directive



1. Introduction

The interview of Meghan Markle with Oprah Winfrey caught the extensive attention of the media. As it is known, Meghan Markle is an American actress, and upon her marriage with Prince Harry in 2018, she became the Duchess of Sussex. The couple, Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, announced that they would step down as senior working members of the British royal family in January 2021. The couple decided to move to Canada. The couple took part in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021. The interview included the discussion of their wedding, Royal family issues about the skin colour of her unborn baby, Meghan Markle's mental health struggles including the thoughts of committing suicide, a sense of being alienated of the security provided for Royal family members and financial support. Meghan Markle had a critical stance on the British monarchy and the institution.

In this study, the utterances of Meghan Markle in the interview constituted the source of the data and the utterances are analysed considering Speech Act Theories via MAXQDA by coding system. The transcripts were obtained from online media and had already been spread worldwide.

2. Theoretical background

Language is a unique tool in human communication. It comprises a set of sound symbols that convert the thoughts in the mind into words (Yule, 1996).

Words are accepted as one of the smallest units of any language and through them people can perform many things, such as expressing feelings and experiences and describing things. However, the literal meaning of words may not convey the whole intention of the speaker or the hearer may misinterpret the utterances of a speaker during the communication. As to communicate verbally through a language, the meaning the speaker intends to address and the hearer understands takes place between interlocutors is the subject matter of pragmatics. Horn and Ward (2004) defined pragmatics as "the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content logical form" (p.316). Pragmatics can be described as the study of language that concerns the contextual meaning of the utterance and the speaker's intention. Pragmatics falls into many aspects such as context, deixis, implicatures and speech acts. Speech acts theory is the focal point of pragmatics as a general function of the meaning performed in an utterance constitutes the performance of one of the speech acts (John et. Al., 2019), i.e., the speech acts are the core units of communication. In this manner, speech act is not just portraying the word yet in addition expecting to convey just as to give and share the data or considerations from the speaker to the audience (Azhari, 2018; Goodwin, 2014; Handayani, 2015; Hashim, 2016).

Speech act theory originated from Austin's works (1962) and is classified as a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. The locutionary act is "roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the traditional sense" (Austin, 1962, p. 108), namely it can be said that the locutionary act is the facial meaning of the utterance. Austin (1962) described the illocutionary

act as the force of the speaker of certain utterances such as informing, ordering, warning, and undertaking (p. 14), and Brown and Yule (1983) give a definition of Austin's theory on the illocutionary act as "can be described in terms of the effect which the illocutionary act, on the particular occasion of use, has on the hearer" (p. 232). Therefore, although the words seem to be as a string of letters, they have incredible power on the hearer and require actions accordingly. Additionally, any descriptive meaning carries thinking, responding as well as action. Any action taken according to utterances is the subject matter of the illocutionary act.

Searle (1976) states, "The basic unit of human linguistic communication is the illocutionary act" (p. 1). This act is classified into five categories: representative/assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. While Austin (1962) had previously defined three types of speech acts, the illocutionary act has garnered significant attention from researchers.

Austin's classification of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts provides a foundational understanding of how language functions beyond the transmission of information. Searle's classification of illocutionary acts is widely considered one of the most outstanding among others. This framework has proved to be an essential tool in helping researchers understand the different ways in which individuals use language to convey their intentions and influence the behaviour of others. By identifying these different speech acts, we can better appreciate the complexities of human communication and develop a deeper understanding of how language works.

Speech acts are a fundamental aspect of human communication that are used to express various intentions and functions. Searle (1976) expanded on this by categorising speech acts into representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts, which serve different communicative intentions.

Representative speech acts involve the speaker recognising the world and expressing their beliefs about a particular situation through stating facts, making claims, complaining, informing, reporting, and suggesting. Directive speech acts are closely associated with the speaker's intention to influence the behaviour of the listener through ordering, recommending, demanding, and begging. Commissive speech acts focus on the speaker's commitment to a future action or situation and include promising, offering, guaranteeing, and so on. Expressive speech acts focus on the speaker's feelings, such as thanking, regretting, and congratulating. Declarative speech acts have the power to change the situation, with examples including confirming, approving, and naming. Understanding these different speech acts can enhance our understanding of how we communicate with others and the impact our words can have.

Building on this foundation, recent studies emphasise the intersection of speech acts with media discourse. For example, Levinson (2017) discusses how public figures manipulate speech acts to talk on sensitive topics, particularly in important interviews. Markle's use of representative speech acts demonstrates how she constructs a persuasive argument regarding her experiences with the Royal Family, echoing findings from similar analyses of political and media discourse (Okoro, 2017; Witek, 2015).

A similar study on the analysis of illocutionary speech acts performed by Tom Cruise in an interview for promoting his movie was conducted by Haucsa et. al (2020), and the study revealed that the representative speech acts is the most common with the percentage of 48.7. Another study conducted by Kiuk and Ghazali (2018) aimed to explore the most frequent speech acts performed by the main character in the film 'Hacksaw Ridge'. The findings of this study indicate that besides other type of speech acts, the representative act is used by the main character the most. Hashempour (2016) investigated the sorts of discourse demonstrations of 50 credible writings of memorial service banners in Iran. Hashempour did not just examine types of speech acts, but also presented the recurrence just as the level of its utilisation. The consequence of the examination uncovered that of five sorts of speech acts, just four of them are used. The study also found the most frequently used speech acts in funeral service banners, ranking them from the most common to the least common: declarative, directive, expressive, and representative.

Muhartoyo and Kristani (2013) explores the directive speech acts performed in the film 'Sleeping Beauty'. The findings of the study show that ordering categorised under directive speech acts is the most frequently performed in the film. This reveals that directive speech acts play a crucial role in constructing hierarchical relationships and shows how speakers establish control over the narratives to influence the audience. This can be done either through language choice or speech act. In language choice, the speaker may use assertive language, focus on specific facts, and explain things in a very particular way, (Fairclough, 2003; Beard, 2000; Wodak & Meyer, 2015,). In speech acts, the speaker can use representative acts to state facts from their own point of view or use directive speech acts to influence others, (Searle, 1976; Levinson, 2017; Fetzer & Bull, 2012).

Recent studies further expand on the role of speech acts in public narratives. For example, Culpeper and Haugh (2014) examined how impoliteness strategies are employed in media discourse, highlighting the intersection between pragmatics and social positioning. Their findings showed that interviewees often used negative politeness strategies to soften face-threatening acts. This pattern appears in Markle's responses when discussing sensitive topics such as mental health and discrimination. Based on this fact, Meghan Markle's interview with Oprah Winfrey attracted global attention, addressing sensitive issues such as race, mental health, and institutional structures. By analysing Markle's speech acts, this study provides insights into how language is strategically employed in media discourse to construct narratives and persuade audiences. Understanding the pragmatic functions of speech acts in such a widely discussed interview deepens our understanding of how public figures navigate controversial topics and maintain their social and political stances through linguistic choices, (Blommaert, 2005; Chilton, 2004; Culpeper & Haugh, 2014).

3. Aim and Significance of the study

The aim of this study is to identify the types and functions of speech acts performed by Meghan Markle in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021. This study aims to contribute to the existing pool of research in the fields of pragmatics, speech act theory, media discourse analysis and sociolinguistics by examining unscripted interviews through the lenses of speech act theory. Meghan Markle is a high-profile media figure, widely followed due to her diverse ethnic background, being a well-known actress and marriage into the British royal family.

The significance of this study lies in its examination of how language, particularly speech acts, is strategically used in public discourse to shape narratives, construct identities, and influence audiences. Considering the widespread impact of Markle's interview, which drew global attention to discussions on race, mental health, and the British monarchy, analysing her speech acts highlights the power of language in media and persuasion. Furthermore, this study extends existing research on speech act theory by applying it to real-life, unscripted discourse rather than controlled fictional works. This study shows how public figures navigate sensitive topics through language and how their language is perceived by audiences.

4. Research Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative approach emphasises the distinctive aspects of human experience, (Dörnyei, 2007). Discourse analysis was employed as discourse concerns with the purpose of the language use in the social context, that is, the actual intended meaning behind the literal meaning. The aim of this study is to describe the types and functions of speech acts performed by Meghan Markle in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021 by finding the answers to the questions stated below:

1. What kinds of illocutionary speech acts were performed by Meghan Markle in her interview with Oprah Winfrey?
2. What are some lexical items frequently used by Meghan Markle during the interview with Oprah Winfrey?
3. What is the interpretation of the mostly used first-person singular pronoun 'I' during the interview?

The script of the interview constitutes the data of this study. The data was analysed via MAXQDA with the help of coding system. MAXQDA is a software specifically designed to analyse several qualitative data such as video, text, tables, transcripts, pdf, and other documents. As the initial step of the analysis, the interview was transcribed by the researchers, and then the transcript of the utterances was analysed with the help of the coding tags in MAXQDA. The utterances of Meghan Markle are labelled in accordance with the codes attained in MAXQDA. There were five main code tags: representative, directive, expressive and commissive. These main codes had subcodes shown in

Table 1. The Codes and Subcodes Employed in the Study

Representative	Directive	Expressive	Commissive	Declarative
Stating	Questioning	Thanking	Refusing	Confirming
Reporting	Asking	Wishing	Warrant	Declaring
Claiming	Challenging	Praising	Regretting	Approving
Affirming	Suggesting	Ashamed	Vowing	Dismissing
Concluding	Inviting	Apologising	Swearing	Naming
Complaining	Insisting	Like	Undertaking	Blessing
Believing	Ordering	Blaming	Promising	
Alerting	Daring	Welcoming	Offering	
Denying	Commanding	Detesting		
Forecasting	Commanding	Deploring		
Insisting	Begging	Appreciating		
	Requesting	Apologising		
	Ordering	Congratulating		

The subcodes of the representative speech act are stating, reporting, claiming, affirming, concluding, complaining, believing, alerting, denying, forecasting, and insisting. questioning, asking, challenging, suggesting, inviting, insisting, daring, commanding, begging, requesting, and ordering are the subcodes belonging to the directive speech act. The subcodes of the expressive speech act are thanking, wishing, praising, ashamed, apologising, liking, blaming, welcoming, detesting, deploring, appreciating, apologising, and congratulating. Commissive speech acts consist of refusing, warranting, regretting, vowing, swearing, undertaking, promising, and offering. Confirming, declaring, approving, dismissing, naming, and blessing are the subcodes of the declarative speech act.

In the pursuit of exploring the second research question, the corpus of the script of Meghan Markle's speech was compiled through Sketch Engine, which is an online software developed by Lexical Computing (n.d.) for corpus analysis. Following this step, word lists based on range and frequency and part of speech were formed using the Sketch Engine.

5. Findings

Drawing upon the 364 utterances performed by Meghan Markle through the interview with Oprah Winfrey, the result of this research indicates that five types of speech acts with different percentages were performed by Meghan Markle in her 364 utterances. These 364 utterances comprised 281 utterances of representative, 37 utterances of declarative, 26 utterances of directive, 16 utterances of expressive, and 5 utterances of commissive speech acts. Chart 1 presents the percentages of speech acts performed by Meghan Markle in the interview.

Based on chart 1, representative acts dominate Meghan Markle's interview responses at 77.0%, indicating that she most frequently uses statements that convey information, describe experiences,

or assert beliefs. The second most common category is declaratives at 10.1%, suggesting that she occasionally employs speech acts that serve to make formal announcements or change the contextual situation. Directives appeared next at 7.1%, reflecting few instances of requesting or instructing. Expressive acts make up 4.4%, indicating some emotional or attitudinal expressions, while commissive are the least common at 1.4%, signifying very few promises or commitments.

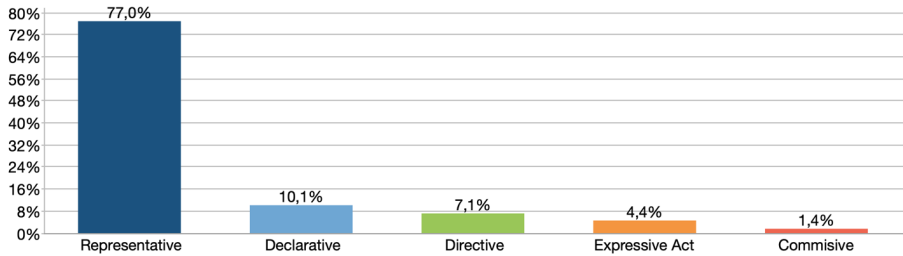


Chart 1. The Percentages of the Speech Acts Performed by Meghan Markle in the Interview

5.1. Representative Speech Acts

According to Yule (1996), a representative speech act tells about the truthfulness of the utterance. This type of act includes stating, reporting, claiming, affirming, concluding, complaining, believing, alerting, denying, forecasting, and insisting. In the interview, the discourse analysis of Meghan Markle indicates that she performed representative speech acts most during the interview with a percentage of 77. This finding is consistent with the studies of Rafli, 2018; Ramayanti and Marlina, 2018; Okoro, 2017, and Witek, 2015 who also found the representative act to be the most uttered speech act by Meghan Markle. The functions of the representative speech act are various and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Representative Speech Acts	
	Number of the Segments
Stating	108
Reporting	63
Claiming	62
Concluding	15
Complaining	14
Believing	7
Denying	4
Alerting	4
Forecasting	3
Insist	1
TOTAL	281

The percentages of the functions of representative speech acts presented in Chart 1 are various stating, reporting, claiming, affirming, concluding, complaining, believing, alerting, denying, forecasting, and insisting. The highest function is stating, the second is reporting, and the lowest one is insist.

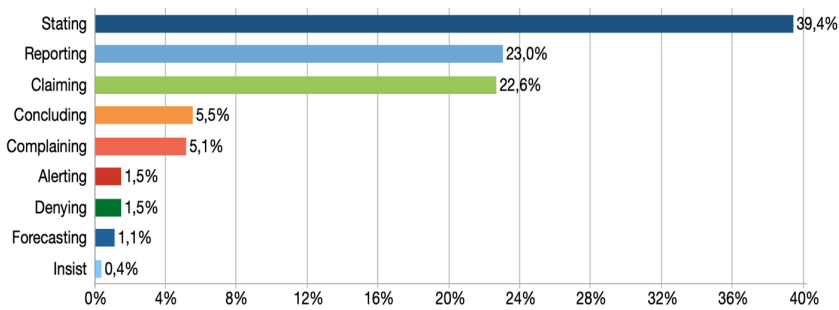


Chart 2. The Functions of Representative Speech Act

According to Chart 2, stating function representative speech act with the percentage of 39.4 was performed most by Meghan Markle. The second most performed function was reporting (23.0%). The third most preferred one was claiming function (22.6%). Insisting (0.4%), forecasting (1.1%), alerting (1.5), and denying (1.5%) were the functions of the representative speech act used least by Meghan Markle during the interview with Oprah Winfrey. The examples of the functions of the utterances are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Utterances and Functions of Representative Speech Acts		
No	Utterance	Function
24	...we were in the car. Deeply, to show respect, I learned it very quickly right in front of the house. We practised and walked in.	Stating
25	Fergie ran out and said, 'Are you ready?' Do you know how to curtsy?	Reporting
147	Everyone from ... everyone in my world was given very clear directive, from the moment the world knew Harry and I were dating, to always say, 'No comment'. That's my friends, my mom and dad.	Claiming
104	I'm not sharing that piece about Kate in any way to disparege her. I think it is really important for people to understand the truth.	Concluding
300	...it's disproportionately terrible what we see out there to anyone else'. But nothing was ever done, so we had to find a solution.	Complaining
108	They wouldn't let her because I believe she's a good person.	Believing
62	No, no I hadn't heard that.	Denying
80	What was shocking was ... what was that, six, seven months after our wedding?	Alerting
106	...maybe in the same way that the Palace wouldn't let anybody else.	Forecasting
272-274	It was really difficult to see those as compartmentalised conversations. I wasn't able to follow up with why, but that	Insisting

5.2. Declarative Speech Acts

Thirty seven of the utterances of Megan Markle performed in the interview can be categorised into functions of the declarative speech act. Among the functions of the declarative speech acts, affirming was used the most. This constitutes 10.1% of the total utterances of Meghan Markle. Table 4 shows examples of this function.

Table 4. Utterances and Functions of Declarative Speech Acts		
No	Utterance	Function
4	All of that is correct.	Affirming
59	Harry: Just the three of us. Meghan: Just the three of us.	Affirming

5.3. Directive Speech Acts

Directive shows itself in the forms of commanding, asking, begging, ordering, requesting, inviting, suggesting, daring, forbidding and many more (Barron, 2017; Norrick, 2015; Sobola, 2018). The functions of the directive speech act can be found in the utterances of Meghan Markle in the interview. The percentage of 5 of 12 functions of the directive speech act is presented in Chart 3.

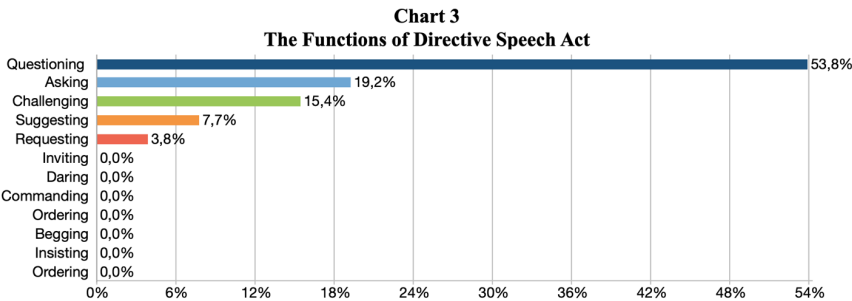


Chart 3. The Functions of Directive Speech Act

Considering the information presented in Chart 3, the questioning function (53.8%) of the directive speech act was performed by Meghan Markle among other functions of the directive speech act. The asking function (19.2%) comes the second of the directive speech act used by Meghan Markle. The request function (3.8%) was performed least. Table 5 illustrates the examples of the functions of the directive speech act employed by Meghan Markle during the course of the interview.

Table 5. The Utterances and Functions of Directive Speech Acts		
No	Utterance	Function
200	And I thought, well, if they're not going to kill things like that, then what are we going to do?	Questioning
116	...have I done it since we've been sitting down?	Asking
360	But I think, to answer your question, I don't know how they could expect that after all of this time, we would still just be silent if there is an active role that The Firm is playing in perpetuating falsehoods about us.	Challenging
348	I bring solutions. To admit that you need help...	Suggesting
2	We do this time. I'll wait for my husband to join us and we can share that with you.	Requesting

5.4. Expressive Speech Acts

Fifteen of the utterances of Megan Markle performed in the interview can be categorised into functions of the expressive speech act. This utterance consists of the expression of thanking, wishing, welcoming, apologising, praising, congratulating and many more (Cutting, 2002; Mey, 2001, Levinson, 2017; Peneva, 2018). Among the functions of the expressive speech acts, thanking, wishing, praising, ashamed, blaming and apologising were used by Meghan Markle during the interview. This constitutes 4.4% of the total utterances of Meghan Markle. Chart 4 shows the percentage of these functions.

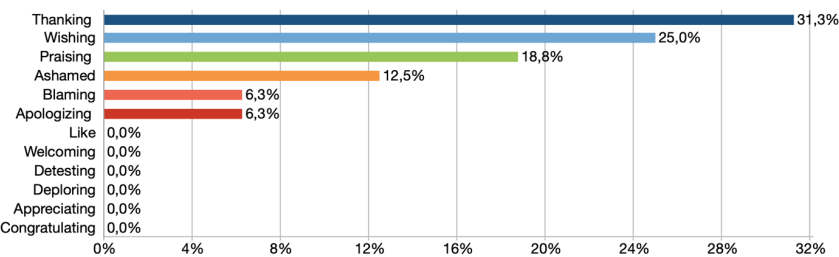


Chart 4. The Functions of Expressive Speech Acts

Based on the information presented in Chart 4, the thanking function (31.3%) of the expressive speech act was performed by Meghan Markle most among other functions of the expressive speech act. The wishing function (25%) comes second in the expressive speech act. Blaming and apologising functions (6.3 %) were performed least by Meghan Markle during the interview. Table 5 illustrates the functions of the expressive speech act with examples employed by Meghan Markle during the course of the interview.

Table 6. Utterances and Functions of Expressive Speech Acts		
No	Utterance	Function
5	Thanks for inviting me.	Thanking
243	...I, again, wouldn't wish pain on my child, but that is their birthright to then make a choice about.	Wishing
102	That's a good question.	Praising
290	I was really ashamed to say it at the time and now I am ashamed to have to admit....	Ashamed
551	Oh, my gosh. It's amazing how they can use Meg for everything.	Blaming
354	I'm sorry if it's shocked you! It's been a lot.	Apologising

5.5. Commissive Speech Acts

5 of the utterances performed by Megan Markle in the interview can be categorised into functions of the commissive speech act. Among the functions of the commissive speech acts, refusing and warrant were used by Meghan Markle during the interview. This constitutes 1.4 % of the total utterances of Meghan Markle. Chart 5 shows the percentage of these functions.

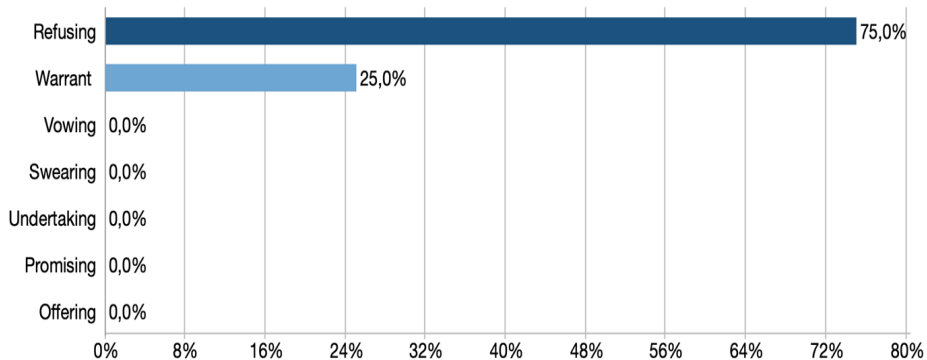


Chart 5. The Functions of Commissive Speech Act

Table 7 illustrates examples of the commissive speech act functions employed by Meghan Markle during the interview.

Table 7. The Utterances and Functions of Commissive Speech Acts		
No	Utterance	Function
348	I don't want to bring that to him	Refusing
59	Harry: Just the three of us. Meghan: Just the three of us.	Affirming

5.6. Research Question 2

The second research question investigated the lexical items frequently used by Meghan Markle during her interview with Oprah Winfrey.

Table 8. Corpus Analysis of Meghan Markle's Speech									
Noun	<i>f</i>	Verb	<i>f</i>	Adjectives	<i>f</i>	Pronoun	<i>f</i>	3-4-gram	<i>f</i>
people	23	be	514	a lot of	17	I	317	I didn't	12
family	19	have	114	hard	11	It	166	I don't	11
time	17	do	96	safe	10	you	108	going to be	9
thing	15	go	72	clear	9	we	105	I wasn't	9
conversation	15	know	67	much	7	my	50	I think that	8

Table 8 presents the ten most frequent items for different parts of speech along with 3-gram and 4-gram items with their frequency within 6325 words. Accordingly, the noun 'people' has the highest frequency, which is slightly higher than the second item 'family' in that list. Another part of the speech item is the verb. The verb 'be' has the highest frequency, which is almost five times higher than the second item 'have' in that list. 'A lot of' which is the highest-frequency adjective, with a frequency slightly higher than the next item 'hard' on the list. The most common pronoun used by Meghan Markle is 'I' which occurred 317 times in the interview. Finally, the highest frequency item in n-gramme list is 'I didn't', indicating the frequent use of the past tense in the interview.

5.7. Research Question 3

Table 9. The First-Person Singular Pronoun of Meghan Markle	
1.	I 've thought about this a lot. It was like having an out-of- body experience for which I was very present. The night before, I slept through the night entirely...(Sentence 5)
2.	I would say I went into it naively because I didn't grow up knowing much about the Royal Family...(Sentence 9)
3.	I didn't feel any need to, because everything I needed to know he was sharing with me. Everything we thought I needed to know, he was telling me. (Sentence 15)
4.	I practised very quickly and went in, and apparently, I did a very deep curtsey, and we just sat there and we chatted and it was lovely and easy and I think, thank God, I hadn't known a lot about the family. Thank God, I hadn't researched. I would have been so in my head about all of it. (Sentence 46)
5.	I don't know why. I can see now what layers were at play (Sentence 92)
6.	I 've always worked. I have always valued independence. I 've always been outspoken, especially about women's rights. I mean, that's the sad irony of the last four years . . . is I 've advocated for so long for women to use their voice, and then I was silent. (sentence 147)

Research results pertaining to the use of self-referenced subjects reveal that the frequent use of pronouns in the first-person singular, such as “I,” can be linked to a number of issues, including cultural beliefs, mental health concerns, and self-focused attention (Baker, 2011, Yu et al, 2015, Zimmermann et al., 2013). Yu et al. (2015) investigated the use of first-person pronouns in nine languages on the basis of cultural values. They found that British English speakers use first-person singular use more than most other languages speakers. This finding may indicate the rising sense of individualism. The consistently expressive nature of speech has led some to conclude that linguistic styles identify personalities (Goldberg, 1990). According to Baker (2011), using pronouns poses enormous importance in their speech, and there is a positive correlation between psychological health and the choice of pronouns. An invasive interpersonal style and higher levels of interpersonal distress were linked with the use of first-person singular pronouns (Zimmermann et al., 2013). Weintraub (1981) points out that the use of pronouns is a sign of egocentrism and reflects the extent to which the self has extended. Highly egocentric individuals tend to use more first-person singular pronouns like “I” and less first-person plural pronouns like “us.” In a similar sense, Bello (2013) puts forward that the use of *I* to show pledge is to gain confidence. Moreover, Beard (2000) argues that the use of the personal pronoun *I* clearly conveys a sense of personal engagement, particularly when discussing positive news. Table 9 illustrates some of the first-person singular use by Meghan Markle.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Drawing upon the 364 utterances made by Meghan Markle, this study presents the distribution of five types of speech acts, highlighting both the most and the least frequently used. These 364 utterances consist of 318 utterances of representative 26 utterances of directive, 15 utterances of expressive and 5 utterances of commissive speech acts. Here, Meghan Markle employed the functions of representative speech acts higher than the other functions of speech acts. In this regard, Meghan Markle tended to express her condition and share things with the interviewer. The consequence of the current examination showed that Meghan Markle would in general pass on her expression to give articulations of truth or to depict things that she accepted as true. Based on the most employed representative speech acts by Meghan Markle, the findings demonstrated that Meghan Markle showed a tendency to convey her utterances to give statements of fact or to describe things that she believed to be true.

In her speech, Meghan Markle uses a range of speech acts to share her feelings, affirm her sense of agency, and reflect on the difficulties she has encountered. Her words convey not only moments of frustration but also a desire to foster dialogue, propose constructive perspectives, and articulate her viewpoint in response to perceived misrepresentations. While the explicit purpose of representative speech acts is to convey information, the hidden meaning behind these types of speech can involve complex social, psychological, and communicative dynamics of the interconnected. Her speech acts (representative speech act) about her criticising the media for invading her privacy may be showing her concerns. It is noteworthy that during the

interview, Meghan Markle did not employ speech act functions such as welcoming, detesting, deploring, appreciating, or congratulating.

Regarding 'I', which is the most used word by Meghan Markle, may refer to her way of perceiving the world in that particular use. Zimmermann et al., (2013) maintained that the use of the first-person singular pronoun refers to the interpersonal style of a person and the way they interact with the world (Bello, 2013). Interpersonal style and higher levels of interpersonal distress were linked with the use of the first-person singular pronouns (Zimmermann et al., 2013). Weintraub (1981) points out that the use of pronouns is a sign of egocentrism and reflects the extent to which the self has extended. Highly egocentric individuals tend to use more first-person singular pronouns like "I" and less first-person plural pronouns like "us." In a similar sense, Bello (2013) maintains that the use of 'I' is a commitment to gain confidence. To Beard (2000) the use 'I' conveys a sense of personal involvement, particularly during the discussion of glad tidings. All in all, there are different perspectives about the use of the personal pronoun *I*, and it is obvious that the purpose of this interview is somehow self-explanation after their exit from the royal family and to explain themselves better.

It is important to realise how Meghan Markle's statements reflect personal agency and introspection. She uses 'I' as a powerful tool to convey personal experiences and a range of emotions and self-reflection, which shapes her narrative and connects with the audience on a personal level but in an emotional depth.

We can see self-awareness in her statement of "*I would say I went into it naively because I didn't grow up knowing much about the Royal Family*" (Sentence 9). This reflects her self-awareness and indicates that she is aware of her lack of preparation and knowledge prior to joining the Royal Family, which brings a sense of modesty to her story. Her statement "*I didn't feel any need to, because everything I needed to know he was sharing with me. Everything we thought I needed to know, he was telling me*" (Sentence 15), Markle underlines her trust and dependency on Prince Harry. Her statement "'I practised very quickly and went in, and apparently, I did a very deep curtsy...thank God, I hadn't known a lot about the family. Thank God, I hadn't researched. I would have been so in my head about all of it'" (Sentence 46). She expresses relief for not knowing much about the Royal Family; however, the statement also reflects her hidden panic at the time. Markle expressed her concern for silence after being advocated for women to use their voice. "*I've advocated for so long for women to use their voice, and then I was silent*" (Sentence 147). She criticises herself and it can be interpreted as a self-complaint and a form of self-protest.

This study, however, does not include non-verbal elements such as intonation and facial expressions, which could offer additional layers to the analysis. Future research could explore these aspects to further enrich our understanding of Markle's narrative style and its impact.

It is believed that such studies analysing Meghan Markle's and other public figures' interviews and speech bring a unique perspective on language use, conversational strategies and the social impact of high-profile figures' speech in shaping public discourse. Specifically,

these analyses provide insights into how Markle navigates sensitive topics and the rhetorical tools she employs, such as speech acts and adherence. By focusing on her use of the first-person pronoun “I,” for example, researchers explore the balance between personal narrative and public persona. This approach also sheds light on the ways Markle frames her experiences and reflects on sensitive aspects of her identity and familial relationships.

Meghan Markle’s interviews are valuable for two main reasons. First, they are “linguistically enriching” because they analyse the specific words and expressions she uses, helping us understand how language is used in sensitive, high-stakes conversations. Second, these studies are socially significant because they highlight the impact of her statements on the public and the media. Through discourse and pragmatic analyses, researchers contribute to an understanding of how language functions as a powerful medium for shaping perceptions, sparking conversations, and influencing social attitudes. By examining her interview, this study explores how Meghan Markle gently questions traditional views and expectations associated with being a member of the Royal Family, particularly through her openness in discussing sensitive topics such as mental health. This perspective provides meaningful insight into how public figures use language to shape narratives, influence social attitudes, and connect with audiences on significant issues, as reflected in Meghan Markle’s discourse.

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