

Perlocutionary Acts in The Film Bidaah Cinta: A Pragmatic Analysis of Walids Character and Its Educational Implications

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Abstract

This study explores the perlocutionary acts performed by Walid, a pivotal character in the Indonesian film *Bid'ah Cinta*, with the aim of understanding how language functions beyond literal meaning to exert influence and convey ideology. The research is grounded in a pragmatic framework, drawing specifically on J. L. Austin's Speech Act Theory, with a focus on the concept of perlocutionary acts. A qualitative analysis was conducted on selected scenes and dialogues involving Walid, examining how his utterances affect other characters psychologically and morally. The findings reveal that Walid's language is not merely directive, but also plays a central role in constructing his ideological and moral authority within the narrative. His speech acts often trigger changes in attitude, evoke emotions, and reinforce sociocultural values. These results offer significant implications for the teaching of language and literature. Incorporating pragmatic analysis of film dialogues into educational settings can help students develop critical awareness of language use, enhance their interpretive skills, and foster deeper understanding of the relationship between language, power, and social context. Such practices encourage students to engage more critically with multimedia texts and understand the ethical dimensions of communication. Educators can use these insights to design interdisciplinary learning experiences that link language, literature, and civic education.

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Introduction

In the field of pragmatics, perlocutionary acts are central to understanding how utterances affect listeners beyond their literal meaning. As introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969), perlocution refers to the effects a speaker's utterance has on the thoughts, emotions, or behaviors of the hearer. Rather than focusing solely on speaker intention, perlocution emphasizes the real and often unpredictable consequences of language in social interaction. In cinematic contexts, perlocutionary speech serves as a powerful narrative device that shapes plot progression, constructs character dynamics, and generates emotional resonance. Film characters do not simply exchange information they persuade, provoke, and influence. These speech acts play a vital role in screenwriting, particularly in dialogues where ideological conflict, emotional manipulation, or moral tension is present. From a critical pragmatic perspective (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008), filmic dialogue can be seen as a site where language, power, and ideology intersect offering viewers more than entertainment, but also a discourse that shapes public consciousness.

A compelling example of cinematic perlocution can be found in *Bidaah Cinta*, a religious-themed Indonesian film that dramatizes social and spiritual tensions through expressive and ideologically charged dialogue. One of its central figures, Walid, frequently delivers utterances that evoke strong emotional and psychological responses from other characters. Through concise yet piercing speech, Walid acts persuasively and confrontationally triggering resistance, shifting behaviors, and reinforcing particular ideological stances. These perlocutionary acts not only influence interpersonal relationships within the story but also drive the narrative's ideological arc and emotional intensity.

While scholarly interest in perlocutionary acts has emerged across disciplines, research has tended to cluster around three main areas: comparative linguistics (Gustafsson, 2020; Lorenzini, 2020; Reiland, 2024; Yoon, 2019), speech act effects (Cull, 2019; McDonald, 2025; Ouma & Chai, 2024), and institutional applications in media, politics, law, and education (Cheng, Shaoxin, & Peng, 2024; Kurzon, 2020; Medina, 2021; Obasi, 2024). Some studies focus on the purpose of perlocution (Laugier, 2020), narrative functions (Miller, 2020), emotional consequences (Bäckström, 2020), or its philosophical dimensions (Laugier & Lorenzini, 2021). Yet, there is a noticeable gap in exploring perlocutionary acts within cinematic discourse, particularly in the context of Indonesian religious films, a domain rich in ideological, emotional, and pedagogical meaning.

This gap forms the basis of the present study. Walid's utterances in *Bidaah Cinta* offer a rich empirical site for investigating how cinematic language can shape perceptions, incite emotional reactions, and mediate character interactions. Moreover, the public response to Walid's controversial statements underscores the social and rhetorical power of cinematic dialogue to evoke ideological reflection and emotional involvement. In light of this, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What forms of perlocutionary acts are used by Walid in *Bid'ah Cinta*?; (2) How do other characters respond to Walid's perlocutionary utterances? (3) What are the pedagogical implications of Walid's speech acts for the teaching of Indonesian language and literature?

Theoretically, this research contributes to the ongoing development of Speech Act Theory by extending its application into the realm of filmic discourse, thereby highlighting the interplay between language, ideology, and affect in fictional narratives. Practically, this study responds to calls for more critical, context-sensitive approaches in language education by demonstrating how film dialogue particularly perlocutionary speech can serve as a pedagogical tool to enhance students' pragmatic competence and critical discourse awareness.

To ensure pedagogical relevance, this study advocates for the integration of perlocution-based film analysis into language and literature instruction through classroom strategies such as: excerpt analysis to identify and classify speech act types, structured group discussion on emotional and ideological impacts of utterances, performance-based simulations to reconstruct dialogues with reflective commentary, and assessment methods that combine linguistic analysis with interpretive insight. Such strategies align with the goals of critical language pedagogy: to cultivate learners who are not only communicatively competent but also critically aware of how language operates within social and ideological contexts.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which is appropriate for exploring the meanings, intentions, and effects embedded in language use. This method allows for an in-depth interpretation of dialogue and perlocutionary force within a specific social and narrative context. The selection of *Bid'ah Cinta* as the object of analysis is grounded in its rich portrayal of religious and ideological discourse, particularly through the character Walid, whose speech frequently provokes emotional and behavioral reactions in others. The research uses two types of data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data consist of verbal utterances by Walid in *Bid'ah Cinta*. These utterances were collected through purposive sampling, focusing on emotionally intense scenes or situations where Walid's dialogue directly elicited reactions from other characters, such as changes in emotion, behavior, or perspective. To ensure the accuracy of data collection, the film was viewed repeatedly and systematically. Dialogues were transcribed manually with timestamped notes to mark their context and sequence. The secondary data were obtained from academic journal articles, scholarly books, and credible online sources relevant to the study of perlocutionary acts, pragmatics, and discourse in film. These sources provided the theoretical foundation and contextual support for the analysis. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model (Miles & Huberman, 1994), as applied in Wafi et al. (2025), which consists of three main stages: (1) Data Reduction: Relevant utterances were selected and categorized based on their perlocutionary features and their effects on interlocutors. This stage involved filtering and organizing the data according to thematic relevance. (2) Data Display: The categorized data were presented in tabular form, showing the utterance, its context, the perlocutionary force, and the observed reaction or effect. (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Patterns and themes were interpreted to draw conclusions about the nature and function of Walid's perlocutionary acts. Verification was done through repeated cross-checking of data and consistency of interpretation. This structured analysis helped uncover how perlocutionary acts function in religious film dialogue and provided insights into their educational and ideological implications.

Results and Discussion

Results

The strategic use of perlocutionary speech in film narratives serves to produce tangible effects on other characters, often prompting emotional shifts, behavioral responses, or ideological alignment. Rather than merely delivering information, these utterances function to persuade, provoke, or influence within the diegetic world of the film. As van Niekerk (2020) notes, perlocutionary acts are defined by their impact on the hearer; in advertising, they may provoke action, while in cinematic discourse, they frequently induce changes in attitude, perception, or emotional state. In *Bid'ah Cinta*, Walid's character exemplifies this function through lines that stir tension, evoke resistance, or compel compliance. The diversity and intensity of these utterances illustrate how perlocution operates not only at the narrative level but also at the ideological core of the film.

The narrative of *Bid'ah Cinta* revolves around two young lovers, Khalida and Kamal, whose relationship is challenged by deep-rooted religious and social divisions within their families and community. Walid, Khalida's father, represents a fundamentalist figure who uses religious language to exert control over others, particularly his daughter. His speech is marked by a mixture of religious authority, paternal dominance, and ideological rigidity. One key scene, for instance, shows Walid forbidding Khalida from marrying Kamal because of differences in religious interpretation. This moment triggers a series of emotional and social consequences, ranging from familial conflict to community division showcasing how a single utterance functions as both a perlocutionary act and a narrative catalyst.

The following table categorizes a selection of Walid's utterances based on their perlocutionary force:

Table 1. Forms of Perlocutionary Speech by Walid

Statement	Character	Code
"Buka purdah kamu semua"	Walid	Directive/Instructional
"Duduk, baiduri"		
"Persiapkan saja Malam Bahtera Melayu dengan penuh gilang-gemilang!"		
"Siapkan juga pakaian Melayu tradisional bagi mereka yang akan ditabal"		
"Beritahu semua orang, semua para jemaah"		
"Pergi bersiap pakai wangian"		
"Pejamkan mata awak"		
"Mia, pergi belakang sana di atas batu"		
"Keluar dari sini, Habibah!"		
"Antar dia ke seberang sungai sekarang!"		
"Awak boleh mula berzikir sekarang"		
"Fokus dan bayangkan muka Walid"		
"Walid nak awak pandang pada mata Walid"		

“Walid harap Baiduri paham maksud ayat ini” “Sudah tiba masanya untuk kita adakan Malam Bahtera Melayu”	Walid	Persuasive/Awareness-inducing
“Untuk permulaan setiap orang akan dapat dzikir yang sama” “Walid akan bawa awak semua ke sana” “Walid nak anak-anak Walid bayangkan muka Walid dan jangan berhenti berdzikir selagi Walid tak suruh berhenti, boleh?” “Jangan berhenti berdzikir selagi Walid tak suruh”	Walid	Emotionally/Spiritually Arousing
“Dewi, Walid nak Dewi, boleh?” “Putri Gunung Ledang akan menjadi permaisuri beta” “Kita nikah batin dan menghalalkan semuanya”	Walid	Flirtation/Personal or Romantic Invitation
“Penyerahan ini adalah penyatuan bangsa”	Walid	Symbolic/Nationalist/Unification

Source: *Bidaah* Film

Drawing on Lopes et al. (2022), narrative utterances are not solely representational; they also function pragmatically aiming to provoke specific reactions, attitudes, or behaviors from the audience. This dual function is reflected in Walid’s speech, which often combines normative religious messages with emotionally charged delivery, leading to significant shifts in the attitudes of other characters. These utterances also function as literary devices generating conflict (e.g., when Walid expels Habibah from the community), conveying irony (e.g., his invocation of spiritual authority to justify personal desire), and reinforcing symbolism (e.g., the “nikah batin” as a metaphor for power and submission).

The first group of utterances consists of directive or instructional statements. In these cases, Walid’s interlocutors respond with immediate compliance, indicating the strong persuasive or commanding force of his speech. The second set includes persuasive and awareness-raising statements, where the hearers are not ordered but guided, often leading to a moment of realization or acknowledgment. The third category encompasses emotionally or spiritually evocative speech. These utterances result in affective responses, such as silence, tears, or spiritual contemplation, revealing how perlocution can resonate on a deeper level.

The fourth group introduces romantic or seductive language, a controversial shift in Walid’s discourse that blurs spiritual guidance with personal desire. These moments, such as his proposition to Dewi, carry symbolic and ironic undertones, illustrating how power can be masked by religious language. The fifth and final category contains symbolic or nationalistic expressions, utterances framed as moral or religious obligations that unify or rally others into a collective sense of duty. These often trigger not just individual responses but also social alignment, reinforcing Walid’s ideological control.

These findings indicate that Walid's perlocutionary acts can be largely grouped into two macro categories: commands and requests. While both are directive in nature, commands dominate the data, which aligns with Walid's authoritative role in the narrative. The perlocutionary effect in each case is measured through observable reactions, such as changes in speech, facial expression, or behavior, all of which reflect the success or failure of the utterance in influencing others. As Shiferaw (2023) explains, perlocutionary acts are speech-driven effects on listeners, such as inducing calm, conflict, or compliance. In cinematic dialogue, these effects manifest as immediate obedience, passive agreement, emotional withdrawal, or subtle gestures like nodding. Such nuanced responses are visual indicators of perlocution's function in narrative and ideological construction.

Table 2. Reactions of Other Characters to Walid's Perlocution

Statement	Character	Type of Response
"Buka purdah kamu semua" "Duduk, baiduri" "Pergi bersiap pakai wangian" "Pejamkan mata awak" "Mia, pergi belakang sana di atas batu" "Antar dia ke seberang sungai sekarang!" "Awak boleh mula berzikir sekarang" "Fokus dan bayangkan muka Walid" "Walid nak awak pandang pada mata Walid"	Walid	Immediate compliance
"Walid harap awak paham maksud ayat ini" "Penyerahan ini adalah penyatuan bangsa" "Sudah tiba masanya untuk kita adakan Malam Bahtera Melayu" "Untuk permulaan setiap orang akan dapat dzikir yang sama" "Walid akan bawa awak semua ke sana"	Walid	Passive acceptance
"Keluar dari sini, Habibah!" "Putri Gunung Ledang akan menjadi permaisuri beta"	Walid	Rejection
"Persiapkan saja Malam Bahtera Melayu dengan penuh gilang-gemilang!"	Walid	Nodding and Agreeing

“Siapkan juga pakaian Melayu
tradisional bagi mereka yang akan
ditabal”
“Beritahu semua orang, semua para
jemaah”
“Dewi, Walid nak awak, boleh?”
“Kita nikah batin dan menghalalkan
semuanya”
“Walid nak anak-anak Walid
bayangkan muka Walid dan jangan
berhenti berdzikir selagi Walid tak
suruh berhenti, boleh?”
“Jangan berhenti berdzikir selagi
Walid tak suruh”

Source: *Bidaah* Film

The dialogues delivered by Walid, as previously illustrated, generated a wide spectrum of responses from other characters in *Bid'ah Cinta*. These reactions reveal the perlocutionary force embedded in his speech. Some characters exhibit immediate compliance, directly carrying out Walid's instructions as a reflection of submission and deference to his authority. Others respond with passive acceptance, agreeing with his words without taking any direct or immediate action signaling alignment, but not necessarily full conviction or urgency.

In more confrontational scenes, Walid's utterances provoke rejection and resistance. For instance, his command “Get out of here, Habibah!” is met with emotional defiance, as the character refuses to abandon the religious commune he leads. Similarly, when Walid asserts “Putri Gunung Ledang will become my queen,” the response is one of public outrage, highlighting a breakdown in persuasive force and a rejection of his implied authority. These moments generate core narrative conflict, propelling the story forward and dramatizing the ideological divisions at stake.

There are also instances of symbolic agreement, where characters nod or express verbal concurrence without following through in action. These nuanced reactions, though subtle, still mark acknowledgment of Walid's dominance or influence, often out of social pressure or reverence. Together, these varied responses demonstrate the perlocutionary range of Walid's speech acts from effective persuasion to overt failure. More importantly, they contribute to the dramatic tension and emotional depth of the narrative. By embedding speech with both psychological and ideological resonance, *Bid'ah Cinta* succeeds in delivering its themes in a way that is not only narratively cohesive but also emotionally compelling for its viewers. The analysis of Walid's perlocution thus reveals a rich intersection between pragmatic linguistics and literary analysis, where language becomes both action and symbol.

Discussion

According to Heidari et al. (2020), understanding perlocution is crucial not only in language learning (pragmatics) but also in recognizing how speech contributes to “consciousness rising, knowledge building, and productive development.” In *Bid'ah Cinta*, the utterances of Walid an authoritative, conservative father can be analyzed as perlocutionary acts

that not only command or request but also shape the ideological and moral landscape of the narrative. These utterances exemplify what Austin (1962) described as perlocutionary force: the success of the act hinges on the hearer's uptake. Thus, beyond literal meaning, Walid's words generate influence, provoke resistance, and induce obedience dynamics that form the film's narrative architecture and ideological tension.

In language learning, particularly within the framework of critical pragmatics (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008), the function of language should be understood beyond syntax and semantics. It must be approached as a socially embedded tool for meaning-making, power negotiation, and ideological positioning. Speech act theory especially perlocution expands students' perspectives on how language acts not only as a vehicle for intent but also as a force capable of shifting beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. This reflects Searle's (1969) emphasis on the social conventions of speech and the significance of speaker-hearer relations in constructing meaning.

Bid'ah Cinta presents a compelling pedagogical site for this exploration. Walid's authoritative role positions him as a linguistic agent whose utterances trigger psychological effects such as fear, defiance, submission, or transformation. In this way, the film operates as a pragmatic text: a site where language-in-use constructs ideologies and emotional realities. In the classroom, such instances can be dissected to demonstrate to students how speech operates dynamically what is said, what is meant, and what it does.

Educators can design lesson activities that unpack Walid's speech acts using the classical triad: locution (form), illocution (function), and perlocution (effect). For example, the line "Love without religion is lust" functions not only as didactic advice but also decisively alters a character's life trajectory. Classroom activities might include role-playing dialogues, mapping speech effects, or debating the ethical dimensions of utterances—thereby promoting both pragmatic awareness and moral reasoning. In alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum, which stresses contextual and reflective learning, these activities cultivate critical literacy while also encouraging student engagement with issues of identity, faith, and authority.

As Shiferaw (2023) notes, perlocutionary acts often lead to subtle but profound psychological effects peace, guilt, resistance which traditional language pedagogy frequently overlooks. Integrating these acts into Indonesian language instruction strengthens pragmatic competence: students learn to interpret not just words, but the relational and contextual dynamics that shape communicative outcomes. This builds communicative skills that are ethical, context-sensitive, and emotionally intelligent.

Empirical research reinforces the pedagogical value of perlocution. Wismarini's (2021) study on classroom interaction in English learning demonstrated that directive perlocutionary prompts enhance student engagement and responsiveness. Similarly, Insani (2016) found that Indonesian language teachers use directive-perlocutionary acts to foster focus and competitiveness among students. These findings validate the transferability of cinematic perlocution like Walid's speech into classroom discourse, framing it as a living resource for instruction.

Walid's utterances also hold significance from a critical discourse analysis perspective. His speech enacts control, legitimizes ideology, and reflects deeper struggles over gender,

power, and religious orthodoxy, making it an entry point into critical language pedagogy. In this light, students can examine how speech constructs hierarchical relationships and reproduces social norms, echoing Fairclough's (1992) position that discourse is inherently ideological. Thus, Walid's perlocutionary acts become moments of ideological transmission ripe for critique. Practically, teachers might assign students to transcribe and analyze Walid's speech in terms of intention and impact, link utterances to character decisions, or rewrite dialogues from the perspective of resisting characters. These activities promote close reading, social awareness, and reflection. For example, when Walid commands "Get out, Habibah," the line operates at the intersection of narrative conflict and symbolic exile tying language to power, exclusion, and gender. Similarly, his metaphorical expression "The surrender is the unification of the nation" can be examined as a symbolic perlocution, reflecting nationalist ideology embedded in speech.

Such speech acts also evoke literary devices conflict, irony, and symbolism. The irony of Walid's spiritual rhetoric masking personal control, the symbolic invocation of *Melayu* traditions, and the ongoing conflicts over love, obedience, and dogma all serve to deepen the literary and ideological analysis. Thus, integrating pragmatic and literary readings reinforces students' interpretive and evaluative skills.

Ultimately, literature learning is not only about interpreting text but about reflecting on human interaction, conflict, and transformation. Walid's speech demonstrates that language in literary film is not passive but performative it constructs reality. Students learn that words can reconcile or divide, affirm or oppress, enlighten or mislead. Assignments may include comparative analyses between speech and action, explorations of internal monologue versus spoken command, or reflection papers on moral dilemmas triggered by language. By incorporating perlocutionary analysis into Indonesian literature and language education, teachers create space for ethical inquiry, rhetorical sensitivity, and critical engagement with language as a force in both narrative and social life. Through *Bid'ah Cinta*, students not only witness language in action but are empowered to interrogate its meanings, motives, and effects transforming language learning into an act of social literacy.

Conclusion

The findings confirm that Walid's speech frequently carries strong perlocutionary force, shaping not only interpersonal interactions but also the direction and emotional depth of the film's narrative. The analysis reveals that Walid's utterances serve as deliberate linguistic strategies to assert control, express ideology, and influence decisions. These acts prompt diverse reactions ranging from obedience and compliance to emotional resistance which reflect the characters' distinct social, cultural, and psychological positions. Such responses are not merely dramatic but serve to illustrate the role of perlocution in the construction of narrative conflict and resolution. These findings underscore a critical insight: language in film is not passive but performative. Walid's speech acts function ideologically, aligning with Fairclough's (1992) view of language as a site of power. While illocutionary force reflects speaker intent, perlocutionary force as emphasized by Austin (1962) depends on how the utterance is received and interpreted. This dynamic is clearly demonstrated in *Bid'ah Cinta*, where language becomes a medium of moral pressure and psychological influence. In the context of Indonesian language education,

such analysis helps foster students' pragmatic competence, enabling them to see how meaning emerges from interaction, power relations, and context not just grammar or vocabulary. In literature education, the study offers tools for deeper engagement with character development, narrative tension, and ideological critique. Teachers can incorporate speech act analysis to help students explore the impact of language choices in both fiction and real life. Future research could expand this framework to other characters, genres, or cultural contexts, exploring how perlocutionary acts manifest across different narrative traditions. By applying linguistic theory to cinematic texts, this study bridges pragmatics and pedagogy, showing how fictional dialogue can serve as a rich resource for critical literacy and social reflection.

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Authors' Note

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