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Decoding the Language of a Racing Driver: A Speech Act Analysis of Charles Leclerc's Formula 1 Team Radio Communications

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Abstract

This study analysed speech acts in selected Charles Leclerc's Formula 1 team radio communications during the 2022 season. The study sets out to identify the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects of the Formula 1 driver's selected speech by employing Searle's speech act theory (1969). The design of the study was contextual content analysis where four selected excerpts were extracted from four different videos from the official Formula 1 YouTube channel. It was found that Leclerc frequently used speech acts such as directives (e.g., *do something, please!*), expressives (e.g., *Well done, guys!*), and assertives (e.g., *I can go faster, guys!*) in his radio communications with his race engineer. It was revealed that Leclerc's speech mainly functions to ask questions (e.g., *Did everybody complete a lap on slicks?*), give commands (e.g., *stop talking to me in the corners, please*), express emotions (e.g., *Amazing!*) among others. Moreover, this research highlights the influential role of the situational context on Leclerc's speech acts, particularly that which is related to the Formula 1 sports discourse. The study suggests for analyses on perlocutionary effect of these speech acts on the audience at home as well as looking at how effective communication through speech acts can be utilised for teamwork, team cohesion, and overall performance and success of a Formula 1 team.

Keywords: *Speech acts, sports discourse, sports communication, Formula 1*

Introduction

Actions performed via utterances are generally called speech acts and in English, they are commonly given more specific labels, such as an apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request (Yule, 1996). In the context of Formula 1, speech acts are commonly used in team radios to give instructions, feedback, and information to drivers. Speech acts play a crucial role in Formula 1 communication since they can significantly affect the performance of the driver and the outcome of the race.

Effective communication within a motorsports team determines how the drivers and their team cooperate, develop a strong sense of teamwork, and respond to the changing circumstances of the sport. Drivers are able to communicate with their team using a microphone and earpiece in their helmet by pressing a button on the steering wheel to activate their radio. Each driver has a designated race engineer as his main contact during racing (Smith, 2022). Through radio communications or also dubbed as team radios, drivers are able to rely on their teams for guidance and support during practice sessions as well as the main race. These

radio communications are crucial to both teams and drivers to achieve their goals, such as gaining a competitive advantage, avoiding mistakes, and managing risk.

However, team radios can be difficult to interpret and understand and they can also be ambiguous. This can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunications, and communication breakdowns mainly between direct and indirect speeches (Yin & Kuo, 2013), not to mention the language of motorsports is highly particular and necessitates precise comprehension and interpretation. Due to the popularisation of motorsports via television and the Internet, the level of understanding of these terms would also be significant among fans and enthusiasts (Porubay, 2023). In Formula 1 racing, it is common for everyone, including those in the pit wall and garage, to have the global feed open on their screens. This means they receive the same broadcast as those watching at home (Youson, 2020). Radio communication is an integral part of Formula 1 races and they are usually broadcasted for the audience at home to listen and stay updated with what is happening on track as well. It is where the drivers and their race engineers communicate, and exchange information and strategies in order to maximise the outcome of a certain race (The New York Times, 2022). These utterances spoken by either drivers or their engineers are not easily intelligible to the untrained ear which can leave them in confusion. This is where examining speech acts and the linguistic expressions of the interlocutors would benefit in providing relevant information of the Formula 1 radio communication that in turn could promote for more appreciation of the races.

This study thus aims to examine the Formula 1 racer, Charles Leclerc's speech acts from selected recordings made public on the web. More specifically, the current study sets out to identify the illocutionary (force) behind the utterances spoken by Charles Leclerc and examine the perlocutionary effect of the utterances on Leclerc's racing engineer, Xavi Marcos Padros from a pragmatic approach. By analysing the speech acts found in the Formula 1 team radios, the utterances as spoken by the drivers or engineers can be understood by the viewers. In fact, there have not been many studies that cover the topic of speech acts in Formula 1 team radios (Ishak, 2007) although Wilson (2021) notes that there has been an increasing interest in the topic of sports and communication. This study in turn, contributes to the understanding of the usage of speech acts as spoken by the drivers and their race engineers when communicating through radio, ultimately enhancing viewers' appreciation of the motorsport racing overall.

Literature review

Speech Act

The speech act theory was first presented in John Langshaw Austin's 1962 book *How to Do Things with Words*, emphasising language's dual function in conveying information and performing actions. According to Austin, "to say something is to do something; or in which by saying or in saying something we are doing

something" (Austin, 1962, p. 12). Austin's theory emphasised the performative nature of language as it doesn't only describe the world but also a way of acting upon it. For instance, when someone says *I promise to…*, they are not only conveying information about their future actions but also performing an act of making a promise that they intend to carry out.

The speech act theory was further developed by John Searle in 1969 upon Austin's past foundational work to provide a more thorough framework for understanding how language is utilised to perform actions. While there are similarities between Searle's and Austin's speech act theory, there are also some differences. Searle, in contrast to Austin, used the term "speech act" instead of "performative". Austin's categorisation of these "performatives" consists of five types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. In comparison, Searle categorised the five illocutionary points of speech acts namely as assertives (e.g., *I predict he will come*), directives (e.g., *Don't do that*), commissives (e.g., *I promise to tell the truth*), expressives (e.g., *I apologise for my bad behavior*), and declaratives (e.g., *You're fired!*). Austin's classification demonstrates a lack of coherence in delineating characteristics and differentiating between the various fundamental types of performatives. According to Mabaquiao (2018), Austin's categorisation of performatives relies on seemingly unrelated or incongruent criteria, ultimately failing to offer a precise comprehension of the distinct categories of speech acts (see Oishi, 2006 for further explanation). Nonetheless, both linguists were looking to understand the extent to which language is said to perform locutionary acts (make an utterance), illocutionary acts (say something with an objective), and perlocutionary effects (to say something that induces others to act).

Speech Acts

As mentioned earlier, speech acts in the English language range from specific terms, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request, that is frequently employed to characterise actions conveyed through verbal communication (Yule, 1996). Generally, when someone speaks, they expect the listener to understand their message (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979). The context in which the message is delivered or speech events, including previous conversations, affects how the message is interpreted.

The components that make up a speech act are locutionary act, illocutionary force, and perlocutionary effect. A locutionary act is defined as the basic act of utterance and when the utterance is spoken with a communicative purpose, it is referred to as the illocutionary force (also referred to as the speech act). When the utterance is intended to have an effect on the hearer, it is called the perlocutionary effect (Yule, 1996). These acts are intimately related to each other. In uttering something, the speaker says something to the hearer and in saying something to the hearer, the speaker is doing something that will affect the hearer (Harnish & Bach, 1979). For instance, when the speaker utters the phrase "Pass me the salt", it is firstly assumed that the hearer understands the linguistic utterance (locutionary) in order for it to be identified as a request

(illocutionary force). The intended outcome is for the hearer to hand over the salt to the speaker (perlocutionary effect).

Despite the widespread appeal of motorsports, Ishak (2017) argues that there is a noticeable shortage of research into sports discourse in terms of communication or how they (people or actors in motorsports) operate or work using language. In this study, Searle's classification of speech acts is used during the analysis of Leclerc's selected speech acts, which is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Searle's classification of speech acts

Type	Description	Example
Assertive	Assertives involve the speaker expressing their beliefs about what is true or false. They can take the form of stating facts, making assertions, drawing conclusions, and describing things. Essentially, the speaker is making statements that they feel to be true or want others to believe to be true (Yule, 1996).	*I believe that social media contributes to body image issues* - expresses a personal opinion through use of the word 'believe'
Declarative	According to Searle (1969), declaratives are a type of speech act that has the power to alter the state of the world through the act of uttering them. To make a declaration correctly, the speaker must have a particular institutional position and be in a specific context.	In a wedding ceremony, an officiant might say, *I now pronounce you husband and wife* that would formally declare the couple as married.
Expressive	Expressives refer to speech acts in which the speaker expresses their emotional state or psychological experience. Expressives emphasise on the speaker's feelings, attitudes, and perspectives in a particular situation (Yule, 1996).	These speech acts can involve statements of pleasure (e.g., *This is great!*), pain (e.g., *That hurts, ouch!*), likes (e.g., *This tastes so good*), dislikes (e.g., *I don't like this*), joy (e.g., *This is the best day ever!*), or sorrow (e.g., *I am sorry to hear that*).
Directive	Directives refer to speech acts used by speakers to instruct the hearer to perform a certain action (Searle, 1969). These speech acts communicate	*Please stop talking!* - a request to have someone be quiet

	the speaker's desires and can take the form of commands, orders, requests, and suggestions. Directives can be either positive or negative.	
Commisive	Searle (1969) explains that commissives refer to speech acts in which the speaker commits to taking a future action. These speech acts reveal the speaker's intentions and can take the form of promises, threats, refusals, and pledges. Commissives can be made by an individual or by a group of speakers.	*I promise I will be there by 9 a.m. - expresses a commitment to be punctual.*

Speech Act and Discourse in Sports

Motorsport refers to a group of competitive sporting events that primarily involve the use of motorised vehicles, such as cars, motorcycles, and motorboats ("motorsport," 2023). Unlike traditional sports that rely solely on human physical ability, motorsports require both human skill and the performance of the motorised vehicle to ensure a successful race. Under the umbrella of motorsports, Formula 1 falls under the category of auto racing. Other examples of auto racing include MotoGP, Formula E, rally racing, drag racing, IndyCar, and NASCAR.

Managing perceptions of various actors involved in sports such as athletes, coaches, managers, family members, doctors, physiotherapists, and journalists, heavily relies on communication and the relationships it fosters. Additionally, one of the key aspects that must be considered is the relationship between communication and performance (Cunningham et al., 2018). As Ishak (2017) rightfully points out, communication forms a critical component in sports where the communication between the driver and their race engineer allows the team to make informed decisions and optimize the car's performance throughout the race. During a race, a team's radio channels may have as many as 80 individuals, including the pit crew, strategists making crucial race decisions, and engineers responsible for the car's performance. The race engineer is normally the only person to speak directly to a driver during a race, preventing a distracting overload of information. The race engineer plays a critical role in managing this influx of information by filtering out the relevant details and conveying them to the driver (New York Times, 2022). Coaching, teaching, evaluating, and decision-making are essential activities, particularly when helping players learn new skills, compete with others, and feel a sense of achievement (Athanasios, 2005) and as a result, communication plays a crucial role in the effectiveness and efficiency of any sports team by providing information, motivation, and evaluation. In order for a team to be successful, the team members must communicate well.

Findings from Wegener's (2018) research, which investigated language usage in sports coaching, revealed that coaches typically use assertive, directive, and expressive types of speech acts for roughly 90% of the time and when they do so, the coaches usually prioritised conveying their message urgently, overriding politeness strategies. Consequently, the study revealed that the coaches did not typically employ indirect communication strategies while coaching. Similarly, it is found that the most common speech acts applied by both football players and coaches were assertive, expressive, and directive, while the least common were commissive and declarative (Hassan et al., 2020). The findings show that employing certain speech acts between the players and coaches in various contexts and situations could also indicate close relations between them. Kefas et al. (2021) found the language used by Nigerian football supporters is often understood and interpreted based on the context of the conversation. It is also highlighted that the meanings of the words and expressions used by these football supporters would have been vague if they were not contextually interpreted.

According to McKelvie (2017), speech and sports are directly related. The findings of his study revealed that there are utterances made by players, coaches, journalists and even commentators that may not accurately depict the sports event they are watching. This, he argues is due to factors such as a lack of articulation, narrative fallacy, capturing audience and interest or simply just filling in time. He further contends that this may be because we do not have access to the processes that determine human behaviour. As expressed in Kefas et al. (2021), the language and terms used by the speakers (football supporters) were exclusively related to soccer (football), reflecting their interest and involvement in the sport. Each line of the conversation contained soccer-specific vocabulary and phrases, indicating a strong association with the sport. In terms of motorsports, Porubay (2023) reveals that this may also be the case as utterances spoken by racing drivers, engineers, commentators and journalists in the field of motorsports are not easily understandable to non-fans or casual viewers of the sport. Their verbal expressions might not precisely mirror the sports event they intend to portray, primarily because of the specialized terminology used exclusively within the domain of motorsports, including the utilization of jargon specific to the sport and engineering terminology. Due to the involvement of various institutions, the language of motorsports has become such a diverse phenomenon. Porubay (2023) further notes that presupposition is one of the key points prevalent in the language of sports. This prior knowledge is crucial for effective communication and understanding within the context of sports-related discourse. It is expected that the participants of the conversation are familiar with the subject and in the case of Formula 1, this familiarity could encompass various aspects such as the drivers having a solid understanding of the sports rules or a comprehensive knowledge of the motorsport's terminology used in their speech.

Methodology

The present study investigates speech acts found in selected Charles Leclerc's team radios and employs a qualitative approach, specifically conceptual content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique used to assess the existence of specific words, topics, or concepts in qualitative data (Columbia University, n.d.). The present study incorporates conceptual analysis as its methodological approach, mainly to examine textual data. Through use of the conceptual content analysis, the research focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or conceptual meaning of the text (McTavish & Pirro, 1990). Content analysis is usually applied in communication research where it aims to analyse data in a particular context in view of the meanings that people assign to them (Krippendorrff, 1989, as cited in Ansari & Kant., 2017) as opposed to using quantitative methods that may not pay the same amount of attention to the level of detail and depth that qualitative methods provide (Savela, 2017). Having said that, the present study adopts the conceptual content analysis approach by examining the speech acts found in selected Leclerc's Formula 1 team radios through identifying underlying patterns in the communication content and analysing the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect of his utterances.

The study begins with the identification of specific speech acts or communication patterns to investigate as concepts. It investigates the links between these speech acts, recognising that the meaning of a driver's utterances can frequently be determined from their interactions and connections with other statements or environmental elements. To begin the analysis, specific research questions were determined to ensure that the chosen speech act kinds are properly defined and not subject to alternative interpretations. In the words of Elo et al. (2014), content analysis serves as a systematic and objective means for describing and quantifying phenomena. It requires reducing data to concepts that describe the research phenomenon. To effectively conduct a conceptual content analysis, it is essential that data can be condensed into descriptive concepts representing the research subject. This involves the creation of categories, concepts, a model, a conceptual system, or a conceptual map, as suggested by various scholars (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990). The emphasis would not only be on recognising the presence of certain speech acts but also involving the investigation of how these speech acts relate to one another in the context of Formula 1 (Columbia University, n.d.). This technique of relational analysis provides a more detailed view of the driver's communication patterns and the context in which they are used.

Formula 1 Teams' Discourse: Transcripts between Drivers and Race Engineers

In the context of Formula 1, team discourse involves a lot of technical jargon and its own unique lingo that is very specific to the sport. Some examples of these jargons are *oversteer*, *DRS*, *pole position*, *undercut* and many other technical terms commonly used in the sport. Communication is extremely time-sensitive and important information needs to be relayed immediately in order to assist the drivers in decision-making dur-

ing the race. Formula 1 teams' discourse not only happens between the race engineers and drivers but extends to other members of the pit wall, strategists, engineers and mechanics in the garage (Noble & Hughes, 2003, p.87). Each member of the team has their own separate responsibility during a Grand Prix throughout the season, especially during the races where communication is most vital to ensure the team's goals can be achieved such as winning a race or even the championships themselves. However, the driver will only interact with his race engineer throughout the race with the interaction being listened to by other members of the team (Noble & Hughes, 2003, ibid).

In the present study, the recordings of radio communication between the Formula 1 race engineers and Charles Leclerc during the 2022 season race were analysed. To select texts to be analysed, transcripts available on the official Formula 1's official YouTube channel were explored and video highlights were selected at random for analysis (see here for the channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB_qr75-ydFVKSF9Dmo6izg). Based on these transcripts, the speech acts were analysed and categorised accordingly. A thorough analysis of these chosen transcripts was conducted, with an emphasis on the identification and categorisation of the speech acts. In the context of the driver-engineer communication, this analytical approach aimed to identify the numerous illocutionary acts and their related perlocutionary effects as per functioning within the relevant Formula 1 context (i.e., speech event).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The data in the present study is gathered and selected from Charles Leclerc's team radios throughout the 2022 season which ran from March until November 2022. Transcripts of the team radios were taken from the official Formula 1 YouTube channel (@Formula 1) as mentioned earlier. A total of four excerpts were taken from four different team radio highlights provided by the Formula 1 official YouTube account (@Formula1). The excerpts were chosen for analysis as they contain specific linguistic indicators (e.g., *do, please, and thank you*) that reflect specific speech acts. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that not every speech act must inherently contain distinct linguistic markers, as speech acts can manifest even in the absence of verb-based indicators (Qadir & Riloff, 2011). In excerpts where a specific linguistic indicator or verb is not present, the context of the utterance is analysed especially the intention behind the utterance in order to classify the speech act accordingly (ibid, 2011).

Prior to starting the data collection (as shown in Figure 1), it was relevant to follow the 2022 Formula 1 season closely and watch the highlights of the team radios on the official YouTube page (see sample in Figure 2). The study used a randomised selection approach to select highlight videos from four different Grands Prix: The British Grand Prix, the Brazilian Grand Prix, the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, and the Australian Grand Prix. The selected highlight videos were studied with a particular focus on the interactions between Formula 1 driver Charles Leclerc and his race engineer, Xavi Marcos Padros. The videos included

transcripts of the team radios where the accuracy of the transcripts was manually checked while listening to the video's audio and reading the transcript simultaneously. Then, selected excerpts from the transcript were classified in accordance with Searle's classification of the five speech acts, namely assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. This was followed by an analysis of illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effect for each speech act identified in the excerpts.

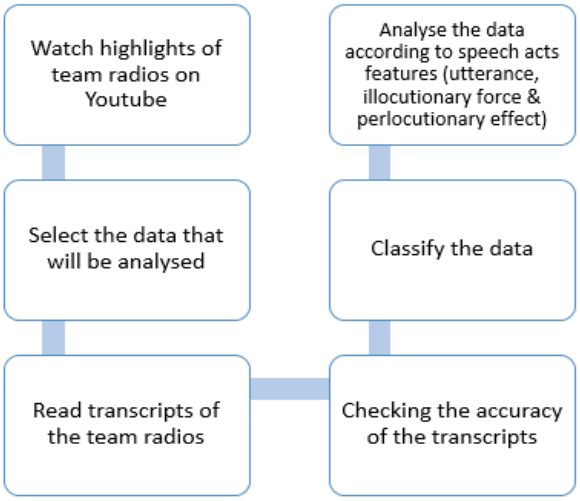

Figure 1: Flow chart of the data collection procedure

Figure 2: A screenshot of a Youtube video with highlights of the team radio communications during the 2022 Australian Grand Prix taken from the Formula 1 official Youtube channel

Findings

In this section, the findings are presented which include excerpts from radio communications between Charles Leclerc and his race engineer, Xavi Marcos Padros. To reiterate, these excerpts are analysed based on the types of speech acts, i.e., the illocutionary force as well as their perlocutionary effects. Four excerpts were selected from four different team radio highlights videos posted by the Formula 1 official YouTube

channel (@Formula1). For each excerpt, the YouTube links are included together with the timestamps for ease of reference. As proposed by Searle, the excerpts are chosen to be analysed as they contain specific linguistic markers (e.g., *do, please, thank you*) that reveal certain speech acts. As a reminder, it should also be noted that not all speech acts must have any specific linguistic indicators for it to be classified as they can take place even in the absence of verb-based cues and thus, in these cases, the context of the utterance (especially the intention behind the utterance) is given prominence in order to classify the speech act accordingly (Qadir & Riloff, 2011). To reiterate, the research aims to address the following inquiries:

1. What is the illocutionary force behind the utterances spoken by the speaker?
2. What is the perlocutionary effect the utterances have on the listener?

Excerpt 1

[00:04:00 - 00:04:15]

Xavi Marcos Padros: Sainz is being told that lap time target is 32.9. **[perlocutionary effect]**

Charles Leclerc: Yeah, but then do something, please! **[directive]** I'm not….I'm not trying to influence my result. I can go faster, guys! **[assertive]**

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWqJUHJJdnM

After a strategy went wrong where Leclerc found himself losing the lead of the race, he was exasperated and communicated with his race engineer on how he could get back in front. In the exchange above, Marcos Padros (Leclerc's racing engineer,) communicated to Leclerc that his fellow Ferrari teammate was aiming for a lap time that was much faster than his to which Leclerc responded *….do something, please!* as an act of pleading (illocutionary force), which is considered a directive speech act (signalled by the action verb 'do'). A direct request is indicated in the utterance by grammatical, lexical, or semantic items (Taguchi, 2006) and in this case, it is amplified with the usage of the word *please*. Leclerc's directive speech act is a type of request strategy known as the mood derivable in which the grammatical mood of the verb *do* in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

Desire or volition is expressed through requests, orders, commands, askings, prayers, pleadings, beggings and entreaties (Searle, 1979). Leclerc claims *I can go faster guys!* which can be considered an assertive speech act. They are intended to convey facts, beliefs, or thoughts without necessarily demanding a specific action (illocutionary force). Assertive speech acts provide the necessary context or background information to support the directives (Moessner, 2010). This helps the listener understand the reasons behind the instructions or requests, making them more likely to comply. Leclerc believes he can achieve a faster lap

time therefore the objective of both the directive and assertive speech act is to have Marcos Padros and the team's race strategists devise a strategic plan to propel Leclerc ahead of his teammate (perlocutionary effect); Carlos Sainz who's setting a slower lap time than he is. The audience might experience a feeling of anticipation as they expect the team to strategise a move to allow Leclerc to be at the front of the race once again (perlocutionary effect).

Excerpt 2

[00:00:13 - 00:00:19]

Charles Leclerc:	Did everybody complete a lap on slicks? **[directive]**
Xavi Marcos Padros:	Yes, they did. **[perlocutionary effect]**
Charles Leclerc:	Nice. Beautiful. F****** beautiful. **[expressive]**

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L_VWhJmOlM

In the exchange above, Charles Leclerc posed a question (illocutionary force) to his race engineer, Xavi Marcos Padros regarding tyre strategies of other teams: *Did everybody complete a lap on slicks?* which according to Borge (2013), are a subclass of directives. Many directives are posed as questions, so they are easily identified by the presence of a question mark (Qadir & Riloff, 2011). The perlocutionary effect here is to prompt Marcos Padros to provide an answer and share any necessary information with Leclerc. Due to changing weather conditions during the qualifying session of the Brazilian Grand Prix, choosing the right tyre compound is crucial. Leclerc was then told by Marcos Padros that every other driver had completed a lap on the slicks, which are specific tyre compounds usually used in dry conditions. Although the track was drying up, Lecler's car was still on inters (a tyre compound usually used in wet weather conditions) that meant he was setting a poorer lap time in comparison to other drivers due to having the wrong tyre compound on a track that was no longer wet. Due to a strategy mistake done by the team, this could potentially lead him to claim a poorer starting position than expected for the race. Searle (1979) stated, in order for the speech act of asking questions to be successful, two felicity conditions must be fulfilled: 1) the speaker does not know the answer and 2) the speaker wants this information.

The engineer's reply to his question prompted him to respond very sarcastically by saying: *Nice. Beautiful. F****** beautiful.* This can be considered an expressive speech act where the speaker expressed their emotions and attitudes through speech, particularly flouting the Gricean maxim of quality to achieve sarcasm. Sarcastic comments, whether encountered in literature or real-life situations, tend to be concise, pointed, and usually serves as a means of swiftly and effectively passing judgment on someone and putting

them in their place (Amante, 1981). The usage of words such as *Nice* and *Beautiful* implied that Leclerc was being sarcastic as a reaction of disbelief to the team's poor tyre strategy. It can be argued that Leclerc's intention was to make Marcos Padros and the team aware of the mistake they had made, but also asserting his authority (as the Formula 1 car driver) in the situation (illocutionary force). As Amante (1981) points out, sarcasm can be used as a veiled form of expressing anger, frustration, or annoyance without directly confronting the issue. The perlocutionary effect is to convey Leclerc's passive aggressiveness and feelings of frustration indirectly to Marcos Padros and his team. As a result, it can be said that this also leaves an impact on the audience as they may agree with Leclerc and understand the frustration on Leclerc's behalf as his team failed to make a good tyre strategy during his qualifying which led him to start at the 10th position for the race.

Excerpt 3

[00:03:02 - 00:03;16]

Charles Leclerc:	Xavi, stop talking to me in the corners, please. I know what to do now, leave me alone, please! **[directive]**
Xavi Marcos Padros:	And we need to increase tyre saving at Turn 3.
Charles Leclerc:	Yeah, leave me alone, please. Thank you. **[expressive]**
Xavi Marcos Padros:	Copy. **[perlocutionary effect]**

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZqUw-Bw8SY

In Excerpt 3, Leclerc orders Marcos Padros not to speak to him when he is driving through the corners. Driving through corners at a high speed requires much focus — and of course, the driver has to know how to approach and exit a corner to make their cornering efficient — therefore, Leclerc might be having trouble focusing while Marcos Padros is feeding him information through the radios. *Stop talking to me in the corners, please* is a directive speech act of request or command that could also be used to act as a strategy of decreasing directness when making a request (Moessner, 2010). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989), "the most direct, explicit level, realized by requests syntactically marked as such, such as imperatives". The request is intended to have Marcos Padros stop talking to him even though the engineer did not comply with Leclerc's request (perlocutionary effect). A possible effect of a request is that the listener can be persuaded (or not) to do the action requested (Ruytenbeek, 2017) and in this exchange, Marcos Padros did not initially comply with Leclerc's request. He can also be heard repeating the same request – repe-

tition is seen here as a repair strategy, which occurs when the communicator produces the same message as produced in the original message (Gallagher, 1977; as cited in Meadan & Halle, 2014).

The act of thanking is an expressive speech act as the speaker is offering gratitude for what the hearer has done (Jung, 1994). The phrase *Thank you* signalled Leclerc's hurriedness in stopping the ongoing radio communication with his race engineer (Jung, 1994). Jung further elaborated that expressions of gratitude, such as 'thank you' also serve the purpose of conversational stoppings (illocutionary force). Based on the context, this is an example where the time pressure-induced urgency of the message can restrict or eliminate the speaker's use of polite communication strategies. (Wegener, 2018). This corresponds with Leclerc's reply towards Marcos Padros where Leclerc's use of 'thank you' functions as a means to halt or conclude the conversation (to which Marcos responded with 'copy'). The perlocutionary effect of the speech act could also provide listeners to view Leclerc as a racer that has a strong personality, i.e., direct communication style in making requests.

Excerpt 4

[00:04:24 - 00:04:36]

Xavi Marcos Padros: And fastest lap.

Charles Leclerc: I wanted to do it. **[commissive]**

Xavi Marcos Padros: I know. **[perlocutionary effect]**

Charles Leclerc: Ah, what a……Amazing! The car was incredible today, really. Well done guys! **[expressive]**

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4fvLB2NuPc

In the exchange above, Marcos Padros informed that Leclerc had set the fastest lap for the Australian Grand Prix. It can be seen that Leclerc responded: *I wanted to do it* that appears to be a statement functioning as a commissive (Searle, 1979) because in this context, Leclerc is expressing his intention or desire to carry out a specific action (which was to finish the race with the fastest lap although Marcos Padros did not expect him to do so). Marcos Padros' response can be interpreted as an acknowledgement in which he is affirming Leclerc's statement (perlocutionary effect). Leclerc won the race and took his first ever career Grand

Chelem,[1] prompting him to say *Amazing! The car was incredible today, really. Well done guys!* which can be identified as expressives.

It is not surprising for him to feel a profound sense of happiness and optimism upon winning the race and therefore expressing his feelings through radio communication. Expressives are speech acts that involve expressing the speaker's emotions or psychological states. They can include statements about feelings of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow (Yule, 1996). Emotion is often conveyed by longer units of text or by phrases (Aman & Szpakowicz, 2007) such as in the expressions 'Amazing' and 'incredible' in the exchange above. The phrase *Well done* is used as a way of acknowledgement and praise (illocutionary force) for the hard work and effort Leclerc's team had put in which enabled him to clinch the win. Leclerc's speech acts might resonate with the audience who are supporting and cheering for him during the race as a show of their enthusiasm and pride as he was able to achieve his first ever Grand Chelem in his Formula1 career (perlocutionary effect).

Discussion

This study aimed to analyse Leclerc's Formula 1 team radio communications during highlights of the 2022 season. To be more precise, an analysis of his speech acts taken from the official Formula 1 YouTube channel was carried out to gain insights into his speeches and use of language as well as their purpose and the intended effect they would have on the listeners. It is plausible to suggest that the communication between Charles Leclerc and his race engineer over the team radio was mostly composed of four different speech acts: directives (examples like instructions or asking questions to elicit a specific response from the team), expressives (to acknowledge and share feelings with the team as well as supporters), and assertives (expressing his opinions or beliefs) as well as commissives (referring to his ability or intention to commit to an action).

In terms of types of speech acts, the analysis revealed that Leclerc predominantly employed speech acts such as directives (e.g., *do something, please!*), expressives (e.g., *Well done, guys!*), and assertives (e.g., *I can go faster, guys!*) in his team radio communications. In the analysis, it is indicated that Leclerc's speech acts carry the functions of asking questions (e.g., *Did everybody complete a lap on slicks?*), giving commands (e.g., *stop talking to me in the corners, please*), acknowledgement (e.g., *The car was incredible to-*

[1] A career Grand Chelem in motorsports refers to an achievement where a driver accomplishes the following in a single race: 1) Race Win; 2) Pole Position; and 3) Fastest Lap. Achieving a career Grand Chelem is a notable accomplishment in motorsports, as it demonstrates not only a driver's ability to win a race but also their excellence in qualifying and setting the fastest lap during the race, showcasing overall dominance in a single event.

day, really.) expression of emotions (e.g., *Amazing!*) and expressing his opinions (e.g., *I'm not trying to influence my result*). The findings from the speech act analysis shed light on the types of speech acts and their illocutionary forces as applied by Leclerc during Formula 1 races. Declaratives are less frequently employed in team radio conversations during Formula 1 racing. In the high-stress racing environment, where precision and clarity in communication are vital, directives and assertives are the preferred means of ensuring swift and unambiguous instructions. Moreover, given the time constraints in team radio communication, directives, assertives, and expressives are favoured for their efficiency in swiftly conveying information and intentions.

In terms of the perlocutionary effect of his utterances on hearer(s), it can be found that Leclerc's speech acts mainly are directed to his team radio communication such as in the instruction to develop a winning strategy (e.g., *do something, please!*) and other purposes related to the race (e.g., *stop talking to me in the corners, please*). Consequently, these speech acts could also be argued to have relevant perlocutionary effects to the viewers as this may enhance audience's understanding of what is going on in the race and increase empathy with the racer. This research contributes to the existing literature on the topic of speech acts, more importantly on the usage of speech acts of a Formula 1 driver. While previous studies (Porubay, 2013; McKelvie, 2017) have explored the specialised vocabulary in motorsports and communication in a motorsports team, this research offers an overview of the usage of speech acts in the context of Formula 1 communication that may have significant impact on the hearers of these acts (i.e., perlocutionary acts). It was also discovered that out of the five types of speech acts, Leclerc's utterances comprised mostly of directives, expressives, and assertives, which concurs with Wegener's (2018) and Hassan et al.'s (2020) findings. Sports require athletes and team members to communicate clearly and quickly. In order to ensure that players understand their roles and responsibilities throughout a game therefore directives, expressives, and assertives can all efficiently communicate information without ambiguity.

Furthermore, this research highlights the influential role of the situational context on Leclerc's speech acts. Given the strong relationship between speech act and context, the setting of a speech act – also known as the 'speech event', contributes to what the speech act is supposed to be (Sbisa, 2002). It has been argued that context is a set of thoughts, beliefs or intentions held by the people engaged in the speech acts (Searle, 1969,1979) and that in turn, assists us in better comprehending the meaning and effectiveness of our utterances in various settings (Sbisa, 2002). The variety of speech acts used in these transcripts of Leclerc's team radio communications carries the functions of communicating race strategies, on-track performance and personal motivations such as found in Leclerc's utterances: *I'm not….I'm not trying to influence my result* or *I can go faster, guys!* On the other hand, post-race team radios focused more on conveying Leclerc's feelings of appreciation, and updates on race results and overall track performance such as in *The car was incredible today, really* or *Well done guys!*.

It should be noted that this study also comes with a few limitations. Firstly, this analysis focuses solely on the analysis of Charles Leclerc's speech acts therefore findings are only representative of his utterances and therefore, a comparative analysis between different Formula 1 drivers may reveal differences in how drivers communicate with their radio team to achieve specific goals. Moreover, this study is confined to the 2022 season and does not cover any previous Formula 1 season as well as the current 2023 season so findings represent only a snapshot of a single point in time - other suggestions would be to analyse Formula 1 drivers' communication with their radio team over a span of different seasons (diachronic study) and evaluate how their sports discourse has changed over time. In addition, as would be any other content analysis type of study, the interpretation of speech acts discussed in this paper would arguably be bound by subjectivity. This would then be useful to employ quantitative techniques like ones in corpus linguistics in order to minimise subjectivity through carefully determining the selection of linguistic items via frequency lists and annotations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to analyse and examine the speech acts found in selected Charles Leclerc Formula 1 team radios throughout the 2022 season. The objectives of this study were to investigate team radio communications by distinguishing the various speech acts and understanding the speaker's illocutionary force behind their utterances as well as the perlocutionary effects the utterances may have on the listener. This study employed conceptual content analysis to gather and analyse data. Four excerpts were extracted from four different team radio video highlights made available by the Formula 1 official YouTube account (@Formula1).

Analysis of the findings demonstrated that Charles Leclerc employed directives, expressives, and assertives when communicating with his racing engineer over the team radio. Furthermore, Leclerc's speech acts were generally directive and expressive, with the goal of giving commands or orders, asking questions, conveying his emotions and expressing his gratitude or acknowledgement. Implications of this study include enhancing the understanding of communication in motorsports specifically through analysing a racing driver's speech acts in terms of live radio transmissions intended for his race engineer. As research on the topic of speech acts in motorsports discourse has been sparse, the present study offers a modest contribution to the existing body of knowledge. By conducting an analysis of speech acts in the context of motorsports, this research extends our understanding of the topic by providing insights into the (pragmatic) communicative strategies used by athletes in motorsports. However, it should be noted that this study only focused on a specific driver therefore caution should be exercised when generalising the findings of this study.

In response to the research findings, future researchers could further explore the perlocutionary effects of Formula 1 racing drivers' speech acts on home viewers and analyse how these speech acts shape au-

dience engagement, emotional response and their own perceptions of the drivers or their teams when watching the races live on their television screen or watching the highlight videos on YouTube. Another recommendation for future research is to investigate how effective communication through speech acts contributes to teamwork, team cohesion, and overall performance and success of a Formula 1 team.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on Formula 1's official YouTube channel (Link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB_qr75-ydFVKSF9Dmo6izg).

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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