

ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN NARRATIVE DISCOURSE: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF YELLOWFACE BY R. F. KUANG

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Abstract

This thesis presents a systematic pragmatic analysis of illocutionary acts in Yellowface (2023) by R. F. Kuang, a satirical novel set within the contemporary American literary publishing industry. Grounded in Speech Act Theory as initially proposed by J. L. Austin and subsequently systematized by John R. Searle, the study investigates how the five categories of illocutionary acts — representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations — operate across the novel's narrative and dialogic discourse to construct meaning, characterize the unreliable narrator, expose interpersonal power dynamics, and develop the novel's central thematic concerns with racial appropriation, cultural identity, and institutional complicity in the publishing world. The study further draws on Jacob L. Mey's framework of literary pragmatics to situate illocutionary analysis within the broader narrative and ideological context of the text. The analysis demonstrates that June Hayward's first-person narration constitutes an elaborate and systematically infelicitous illocutionary performance: her representative acts of self-assertion are revealed as strategic self-deception; her expressive acts of apology and contrition are exposed as hollow performances lacking the sincerity conditions that authentic expressives require; and the competing declarative acts of the publishing industry and social media communities dramatize the fragility and contestability of authorial identity in contemporary cultural production. The study argues that Kuang's deployment of illocutionary acts is not merely a stylistic feature of the novel but its central critical instrument, through which the mechanisms of racial privilege, self-justification, and institutional bad faith are exposed with satirical precision. As the first full pragmatic analysis of Yellowface, the thesis makes an original contribution to the emerging scholarship on Kuang's work and to the broader field of literary pragmatics.

Keywords: illocutionary acts, Speech Act Theory, literary pragmatics, Yellowface, R. F. Kuang, Searle, Austin, representatives, directives, expressives, declarations, unreliable narrator, racial appropriation, publishing industry

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Never before has language been used solely as a medium for the conveyance of notions that have already been established. There are three purposes that each and every word that is spoken serves: representing the speaker, performing for an audience, and communicating the speaker's ideas. The twentieth-century philosophy of language had a revolutionary effect on the humanities because it acknowledged that language is active in the world and that speaking is an act in and of itself. This realisation revolutionised the field of humanities. A comprehensive

philosophical investigation into the nature of speech action was initiated by the posthumously published Harvard lectures of J. L. Austin, titled *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). These lectures marked the beginning of the investigation. Using Austin's central insight that utterances are not simply true or false descriptions of states of affairs but rather performances that succeed or fail under specific contextual conditions, John R. Searle established a rigorous taxonomy of illocutionary acts in his seminal 1976 paper and 1969 essay *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Searle's taxonomy was based on Austin's central insight. For the conceptual vocabulary that is required to investigate the performative features of language, linguists, philosophers, sociologists, and literary scholars have all looked to Austin and Searle as possible sources of information.

In the field of study known as literary pragmatics, which applies Speech Act Theory to literary discourse, there is a growing and active body of research. Because literary writings incorporate speech actions into elaborate narrative frameworks, fictional characters, and rhetorical techniques that modify the circumstances of their performance and interpretation, illocutionary study presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges. This is owing to the fact that literary texts contain speech activities. An interpretive engagement with the narrative context, character power relations, textual conventions, and ideological formations is required in order to identify the illocutionary force of an utterance in a literary work. This is in addition to the grammatical competence that is required to do so. The field of literary pragmatics is more complex than the pragmatics that are used in regular discourse, which makes it more challenging and providing more opportunities for interpretation.

In this study, the frameworks of Speech Act Theory and literary pragmatics are utilised in order to make an analysis of *Yellowface* (2023), which is the fourth novel written by R. F. Kuang. Chinese author Kuang hails from the United States. *Yellowface* is a satirical novel written by June Hayward, a white American author with a moderate amount of talent and a good dose of envy. Hayward tells the story from the first person within the novel. Hayward watches as her literary rival and friend, Athena Liu, who is of Chinese-American descent, passes away for no apparent reason. In the aftermath of Athena's demise, June acquires ownership of her unfinished novel, which delves into the experiences of Chinese labourers during World War I. After that, she publishes it under a name that is somewhat different from the original, incorporates a photograph of herself on the back cover, and makes it appear as though it was her own creation. As June fights for her stolen achievement in the face of mounting evidence, accusations posted online, and the unrelenting criticism from her own conscience, the story follows her as she goes through the process of fighting for her success.

The illocutionary analytical goldmine that is *Yellowface* can be attributed to a number of different explanations. To begin, the novel is distinguished by its unreliable first-person narrator, whose entire speech is structured as an ongoing process of justifying himself. This is the defining characteristic of the book. As a consequence of this, the pragmatic features of language, particularly the connection between the material that is spoken and the actual intent of the speaker, are constantly seen to be of secondary importance. The narrative of June is a lengthy illocutionary performance in which she employs expressive, commissive, and representative speech acts in an effort to portray herself as a person who is innocent, has good intentions, and is deserving. Second, in contrast to face-to-face interactions, institutional speech acts (such as declarations, directives, and collective illocutionary events) operate in a different manner. The novel's interaction with the contemporary publishing industry and the environment of social media provides a one-of-a-kind context for analysing these speech acts. Thirdly, literary pragmatic analysis is a good fit for the work because of its satirical nature. This allows the reader to critically evaluate the narrator's illocutionary performances, which presents an opportunity for the reader to engage in the analysis. There are two levels of

discourse in which these acts take place: the level of the characters and the level of the author. Despite the fact that *Yellowface* has received a great deal of attention from media and the general public ever since it was published in 2023, there has been no comprehensive academic pragmatic assessment of the book. Through the provision of the first full illocutionary analysis of the book, this study contributes to the expanding body of research that has been conducted on Kuang's output. In addition to this, it demonstrates how Speech Act Theory may be utilised to analyse a contemporary literature that addresses questions of cultural power, representation, and language politics.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Yellowface has not yet been examined via the prism of Speech Act Theory or literary pragmatics, despite its importance as a literary and cultural intervention in current discussions about racial representation, cultural appropriation, and the politics of the publishing industry. The novel's thematic and sociological aspects, such as its satirical depiction of racial dynamics in publishing, its psychological portrait of the appropriator, and its interaction with social media culture, have been the main focus of existing commentary. However, the illocutionary mechanisms through which these themes are constructed and communicated have not received systematic attention. As a result, there is a substantial gap in the academic literature about the pragmatic study of *Yellowface* in particular as well as the general application of Speech Act Theory to modern satirical fiction. By undertaking a methodical illocutionary analysis of the book, using Searle's (1969, 1976) taxonomy to its narrative and dialogic discourse, and investigating how illocutionary acts contribute to characterisation, interpersonal dynamics, and thematic development, the current work fills this vacuum.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of illocutionary acts used in *Yellowface*.
2. To analyze how illocutionary force is realized in the novel's discourse.
3. To examine the role of illocutionary acts in character and theme development.

Research Questions

1. What types of illocutionary acts are used in *Yellowface*?
2. How is illocutionary force realized in the novel's discourse?
3. How do illocutionary acts contribute to character and theme development in the novel?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study is both theoretical and literary-critical. Theoretically, it contributes to the field of literary pragmatics by demonstrating the productive application of Speech Act Theory to a contemporary satirical novel whose primary critical mechanism is the deployment of systematically infelicitous illocutionary acts. The analysis extends existing accounts of unreliable narration by showing how the concept of illocutionary infelicity provides a precise analytical vocabulary for describing what goes wrong in the narrator's speech acts — and why that wrongness is both diagnostically and satirically significant. The study also contributes to the analysis of institutional speech acts by attending to the novel's representation of collective illocutionary events in social media and publishing contexts that have not previously been analyzed within a speech act framework.

In literary-critical terms, the study makes an original contribution to the emerging scholarship on Kuang's work by providing the first systematic pragmatic analysis of *Yellowface*. It demonstrates that the novel's satire operates not only at the level of plot and theme but at the level of illocutionary structure — that Kuang's critique of racial appropriation and institutional bad faith is built into the very speech act architecture of her narrator's discourse. This finding enriches existing readings of the novel and opens new directions for critical engagement with Kuang's work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Context

The following chapter provides a four-part summary of the theoretical and critical works that are pertinent to this inquiry. The initial section examines the foundational works of J. L. Austin, the originator of speech act theory. The second section investigates the taxonomy of illocutionary acts developed by John R. Searle and the substantial theoretical contributions of subsequent scholars. The third section delves into literary pragmatics, with a particular emphasis on the pioneering work of Jacob L. Mey. In the fourth section, an overview of the literature on Yellowface is provided, which also places the current study within the expanding corpus of knowledge.

Section 2.2: The Foundation of Austin's Speech Act Theory

J. L. Austin distinguished between constative and performative utterances in his *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), which was reconstructed from lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955. All ensuing theories of speech acts would be fundamentally influenced by this distinction. According to Austin, first-person, present-tense statements such as "I promise," "I bet," "I hereby pronounce you man and wife," and "I apologise" perform actions at the instant of utterance rather than describing states of affairs. The success or failure of these "performative" claims is contingent upon the presence or absence of specific contextual factors, rather than any intrinsic truth or untruth. Austin classified these circumstances into three categories and referred to them as "felicity conditions." The first group addressed conventional methods and their repercussions, the second group addressed the proper and comprehensive execution of the procedure, and the third group addressed the speaker's possession of the necessary thoughts, emotions, and intentions, as well as their subsequent behaviour.

Austin ultimately recognised that his initial performative/constative dichotomy was inaccurate, as constative utterances also execute actions (such as declaring), rendering them performatives in a broad sense. This realisation served as the impetus for Austin's three-pronged critique of the speech act. The locutionary act is the act of expressing a meaningful statement or speaking something with a clear context and meaning. Every time a statement is made, whether it is a warning, an assertion, an apology, an order, or any other form of communication, the illocutionary act is invoked. The term "perlocutionary act" refers to the impact of discourse on the audience, which may be persuading, frightening, entertaining, or discouraging. Speech act theory primarily focuses on the illocutionary act among these three elements, as it most effectively conveys the speaker's communication objective.

Austin suggested a provisional taxonomy of illocutionary acts that encompassed expositives, behabitives, exercitives, commissives, and jurisdictions. The first type of expression is the delivery of a verdict or judgement, the second is the exercise of power or authority, the third is the commitment of the speaker to a course of action, and the fourth is expositives, which involve the expression of a viewpoint or argument. This taxonomy was subjected to severe criticism due to its disjointed nature and the excessive number of overlapping categories, despite its influence. Searle's reformulation resulted in a classification that was more precise and widely recognised.

2.3 Searle's Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts

In his 1969 publication *Speech Acts*, John R. Searle's work in the Philosophy of Language offers the most comprehensive philosophical explanation of the nature and circumstances of speech acts. The preparatory conditions, which define the contextual assumptions necessary for the act to make sense, the sincerity condition, which describes the speaker's mental state as they carry out the act, and the essential condition, which defines what the act essentially amounts to doing, are some of the constitutive rules that Searle outlined in his study of illocutionary acts. The propositional content condition specifies the subject of the utterance.

This rule-based approach enabled a more precise classification of illocutionary actions than Austin's taxonomy had previously enabled.

In his 1976 essay "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts," Searle introduced a novel taxonomy that revolved around the illocutionary point, the orientation of fit between words and the world, and the sincerity condition. Searle categorised illocutionary behaviours into five main categories in accordance with these standards. Representatives are obligated to uphold the veracity of a statement due to their sincere conviction and the direction of suit between words and reality. Terms such as reporting, describing, expressing, asserting, and claiming are included as representatives. A directive is an attempt to persuade another individual to take a particular action. It requires both the world-to-words direction of suit, in which the speaker desires the world—and, more specifically, the behaviour of the hearer—to align with the words, and the sincerity condition of desire or desiring. Asking, directing, ordering, interrogating, and advising are all examples of directives.

A command is a binding agreement between the speaker and a future course of action. It is characterised by the sincerity condition of intention and the world-to-words direction of suit, which is the speaker's dedication to ensuring that the world aligns with the substance of the utterance. These verbs are examples of commandives: promise, threaten, propose, vow, and pledge. Rather than attempting to alter the world as it is or depict it, sincere expressives transmit the speaker's emotional state (regret, thankfulness, delight, grief, etc.) in relation to a scenario stated in the propositional content. They lack directionality. The following verbs are considered expressive: "thank you," "sorry," "welcome," "congratulations," "deploring," and "lamenting." The institutional reality that declarations describe is altered if the speaker possesses the requisite institutional authority to implement them. A simultaneous two-way fit is achieved when the speaker makes it so by stating it, and the world is subsequently brought to conform to the words. Appointing, pronouncing, declaring, dismissing, and designating are all examples of declarations.

Searle introduced the notion of indirect speech acts, in which the illocutionary force of an expression is distinct from the immediate meaning it conveys in its grammatical form. The listener's abilities are not truly tested by the courteous request, "Could you please be a little quieter?" Pragmatic inference, which is predicated on context and presumes rational communication behaviour, is indispensable for the identification of indirect speech acts. This concept is particularly significant for literary analysis, as the identification of indirect speaking acts in literature necessitates a comprehensive examination of the narrative and rhetorical context.

2.4 Speech Act Theory Revised

Other prominent theorists have refined and expanded upon Searle's paradigm. Despite praising the systematic treatment of illocutionary force and felicity conditions, among other strengths, Levinson's (1983) critical overview of speech act theory noted significant limitations, such as the theory's tendency to examine speech acts independently from the sequential dynamics of conversational interaction. Levinson's criticism is beneficial to literary pragmatics because it underscores the significance of examining illocutionary acts as elements of broader discursive contexts rather than as isolated utterances.

The identification of the illocutionary force of a remark is a matter of inferential recognition rather than rule-following, as per an influential account of illocutionary acts as communicative intentions proposed by Bach and Harnish (1979). The speaker executes a speech act by expressing an intention to communicate, while the recipient determines the illocutionary force by inferring the most probable intention to communicate, which provides context for the utterance. This inferentialist perspective is especially beneficial to literary pragmatics because it emphasises the reader's active inferential activity in the determination of illocutionary power.

Recanati (1987) investigated the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts from the standpoint of the relationship between the literal meaning of the phrase and the meaning of the speaker. He argued that the pragmatic enrichment of literal meaning through contextual inference occurs in all speech acts, not just those that are conventionally classified as indirect. A more comprehensive pragmatic theory of linguistic adaptation was developed by Verschueren (1999) within the context of how language users strategically select linguistic structures at all levels in response to their social circumstances and communicative objectives. Verbal acts are included in this narrative, according to this perspective.

2.5 Jacob L. Mey and Literary Pragmatics

By employing pragmatic frameworks and concepts, literary pragmatics endeavours to elucidate the processes of meaning formation within literary texts. The academic discipline of literary criticism has recognised the significant distinction between literary language and ordinary conversational discourse. The traditional speaker-hearer dynamic is further complicated by the development of literary speech activities within a fictional framework. The speakers in literary works are fictitious characters whose utterances are contained within narrative structures that direct the reader to them. The communication objectives of both the author and the characters are influenced by generic standards, aesthetic expectations, and interpretive norms that are not present in daily discourse. As a reader, you engage in inferential interaction with both levels of illocutionary activity.

Jacob L. Mey's 2001 book *Pragmatics: An Introduction* is considered a classic in the field of literary pragmatics. Pragmatic meaning is determined by the communicative objective of the speaker and is subsequently influenced by the social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which language is produced and comprehended, according to Mey. His concept of "pragmatic acts" broadens speech act theory to include the manner in which actors co-create meaning in specific social and historical contexts, as opposed to regard meaning as intrinsic to specific utterances. Mey's account is particularly beneficial for literary pragmatics because it underscores the impact of the social conditions of literary creation and reception on the pragmatic meanings that are accessible in literary texts.

In literary pragmatics, Mey expanded the concept of "echoing" to encompass the activation and reverberation of literary expressions with broader cultural, historical, and intertextual connotations, in addition to the immediate communicative context. In *Yellowface*, this theory is particularly pertinent because June's narrative frequently references and, more importantly, circumvents the broader cultural contexts of colonial history, contemporary identity politics, and racial representation. Narrative context and aesthetic convention have an impact on literary illocutionary acts in a manner that distinguishes them from their ordinary conversational counterparts, as MacMahon (2009) applies speech act theory to literary analysis.

2.6 Previous Research on *Yellowface* and R. F. Kuang

R. F. Kuang, a Chinese-American author, is renowned for his grim fantasy trilogy *Poppy War* (2018–2020). *Babel* (2022), her historical fantasy, is situated in Oxford and explores themes of colonialism, race politics, and translation. *Yellowface* (2023), a novel that is both realistic and humorous and is set in the modern literary world, is a remarkable general departure that directly draws from Kuang's experience as a writer of colour in the American publishing industry. The book has garnered numerous accolades for its psychological sensitivity in depicting the narrator's self-deceptions and its willingness to confront the complex dynamics of cultural appropriation from the appropriator's perspective.

The majority of *Yellowface*'s criticism has been critical or journalistic in nature, emphasising the work's cultural and political importance rather than its literary value. Some have criticised the novel's satirical depiction of social media culture, its use of an unreliable first-person narrator to critique society, and its engagement with the racial politics of the publishing

industry. As reviewers have observed, the unpleasant impact of being placed within June's consciousness while being required to recognise the bad faith of her self-representations is exacerbated by the unreliable narrator.

The novel's recent publication has resulted in a lack of academic research on *Yellowface*. The book has been contextualised within the expanding field of Asian-American literary representation studies and publishing industry satire through scholarly evaluations. No study has yet been conducted to analyse the book using a methodical, practical approach. This thesis contributes a novel perspective to the growing body of critical writing on Kuang's work by providing the first such analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current study employs a qualitative research design based on in-depth textual analysis. This design is appropriate for studying the pragmatic features of literary discourse, which require a persistent attention to the link between form and meaning, narrative structure, and contextual complexity that cannot be sufficiently captured by quantitative methods. The study takes an interpretive epistemological stance, recognising that rather than applying rules mechanically, identifying and categorising illocutionary acts in a literary work requires educated pragmatic inference. The analyst's theoretical framework, contextual information, and interaction with previous research necessarily impact this inferential process.

A level of textual involvement that would not be possible in a more thorough comparison study is made possible by the study's exclusive focus on *Yellowface*. This depth is particularly appropriate given the novel's complex illocutionary architecture, which is typified by June's narration's multi-layered unreliability, the prevalence of indirect speech acts, and the importance of contextual knowledge (such as the publishing industry, social media dynamics, and the history of racial representation in American culture) in identifying illocutionary force. Because of the single-text emphasis, the analysis can address these issues with the necessary attention.

3.2 Rationale for Text Selection

The selection of *Yellowface* as the major text was based on three primary aspects that were taken into careful consideration. The entire narrative discourse is, in and of itself, an intricate illocutionary performance, and its relationship to the speaker's genuine intention is systemically problematic. This is due to the fact that it is told in the first person, which is not reliable. This is the first reason why it provides an exceptionally rich and complicated illocutionary situation. This makes it a great text for doing study on the circumstances of illocutionary felicity and infelicity in literary discourse on the subject. As a result of this, it is an outstanding text. Second, the novel's engagement with the contemporary publishing industry and social media provides a distinctive context for analysing institutional speech acts — declarations, collective directives, and performed expressives — that have received relatively little attention in existing literary pragmatics scholarship. In addition, *Yellowface* is a publication that has not been subjected to rigorous academic pragmatic evaluation in the past because it is a relatively new publication. In this way, the current study is guaranteed to offer a contribution to the existing body of scholarly information that is one of a kind.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The taxonomy of illocutionary acts that Searle (1969, 1976) defined is the primary theoretical framework that is utilised in this study. It is possible to identify and classify the illocutionary acts that are performed in the narrative and dialogic discourse of the novel by making use of the analytical language that is offered by the five categories, which are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. This is a process that can be accomplished by using the analytical language. The explanation of felicity conditions that

Austin (1962) provides is employed in order to conduct an analysis of the contextual requirements that must be met in order for illocutionary acts to be successfully performed in the book. Instances of illocutionary infelicity, which are situations in which the criteria for successful performance are either not present or are broken, are given special attention. This is because these situations are considered problematic. Searle's (1969) study of indirect speech actions is utilised in the process of identifying situations in which illocutionary force is communicated through contextually mediated inference rather than through direct grammatical representation. This is performed in order to determine the occasions in which this occurs. The framework that Mey's (2001) literary pragmatics provides allows for the positioning of particular illocutionary acts within the larger narrative and ideological context of the novel. The method in which it accomplishes this is by paying attention to the ways in which the social conditions of literary production and reception determine the pragmatic meanings that are available in the text.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

There were numerous occasions on which *Yellowface* was read in its entirety, with each reading being targeted toward a certain analytical goal with the intention of achieving that goal. A complete knowledge with the narrative structure, storyline, characters, and thematic concerns of the work was created during the initial reading of the book. The subsequent readings focused on discovering crucial sections in which illocutionary acts are particularly apparent, functionally relevant, or analytically fascinating. This was done in order to better understand the situation. These sections are passages in which the pragmatic characteristics of language are directly relevant to the development of the story, the thematic themes, and the characterisation of the novel portrayed in the novel. Searle's taxonomy was utilised in order to classify the various types of illocutionary actions that were carried out, Austin's felicity conditions were utilised in order to evaluate the contextual conditions of their execution, and Mey's literary pragmatics was utilised in order to position the selected passages within the larger narrative and ideological context.

Two separate steps were comprised of the analysis that was carried out. During the first step of the approach, several illocutionary acts from each of the five Searlean categories were selected and analysed in a separate manner. Particular attention was paid to the manner in which each category functions within the narrative discourse of the novel, as well as to the ways in which it contributes to the development of the novel's characters and themes. This includes the methods in which the novel's themes and characters are developed. During the second step, the findings from the category-specific analyses were synthesised into a more comprehensive account of the illocutionary architecture of the novel as a whole. This was done in order to provide a more complete picture of the novel's entirety. This includes paying attention to the relationships between categories, the patterns of infelicity that are pervasive throughout the narrator's discourse, and the consequences of the illocutionary analysis with the purpose of acquiring a grasp of the satirical and critical goal that the novel is attempting to accomplish.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analysis of *Yellowface* from the point of view of illocutionary analysis. One can divide it into six distinct sections to better understand it. This study is broken down into parts 4.2 through 4.6, and each of the five Searlean types of illocutionary acts—representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations—is broken down in turn. In the following section, 4.7, a synthesis of the findings is presented. This section provides an overview of the general illocutionary architecture of the novel, as well as the relationship between the illocutionary design of the novel and its satirical and critical goal.

4.2 Representatives in Yellowface: The Architecture of Self-Deception

4.2.1 *The Narrator as Assertive Agent*

Representative illocutionary acts — assertions, claims, reports, predictions, and descriptions — constitute the dominant illocutionary mode of Yellowface. June Hayward's entire first-person narrative is structured around a sustained series of representative acts: she asserts who she is, claims what she did and why, reports what happened between herself and Athena, predicts the consequences of various courses of action, and describes the people, places, and events that constitute her world. As the narrator, June is the novel's primary illocutionary agent, and the representative act is her primary instrument for constructing and maintaining the self-image she presents to the reader.

The speaker's belief in the truth of the claim that is being asserted is the sincerity that is required for representational acts, as stated by Searle's (1969) interpretation of the concept. When a claim is made with the speaker's real belief that it is true, that claim is said to be sincere. June's representative discourse is so illocutionarily complicated because Kuang's story design creates a systematic uncertainty surrounding the relationship between June's asserted ideas and her actual epistemic and psychological states. This ambiguity is what makes June's discourse so difficult to understand. It is precisely because of this ambiguity that June's speech is so challenging to comprehend. The novel positions the reader — through the accumulation of narrative detail, through the implausibility of June's justifications, and through the gaps and inconsistencies in her account — to recognise that many of June's representative acts are not sincere assertions of genuinely held beliefs but strategic performances designed to manage her self-presentation to an imagined audience.

This systematic mistrust of June's representational actions is the core mechanism of the novel, and it serves as the key mechanism of the novel's satire. The novel that Kuang writes is one in which the reader is continually involved in the pragmatic labour of evaluating the sincerity conditions of the narrator's assertions. This is a novel that stands out as a work of fiction. The utilisation of a narrator whose representative discourse is inherently unreliable is the means by which this objective is realised. This is not in the plain sense that she is just lying; rather, it is in the more complex and worrisome sense that she may herself be unclear about the boundary between her real convictions and her strategic self-presentations. This is a more sophisticated and disturbing interpretation of the situation. As a result, the reader essentially transforms into a sceptical listener who is tasked with recreating the true state of circumstances based on the evidence that is obvious behind June's story, which is primarily motivated by her own self-interest.

4.2.2 *Self-Justification as Representative Performance*

June's speech contains a significant amount of self-justificatory assertions, which is the most prominent subcategory of representational act. The claim that is intended to demonstrate her innocence, her good intentions, or the propriety of her behaviour is the assertion that is being called for here. As a result of the disparity that they include, June's self-justifications are not only complicated and inherently inconsistent, but they also shed light on the circumstances that led to their creation. She asserts, at different points in the novel, that she has genuinely transformed Athena's manuscript into something new and distinctively her own; that the manuscript was insufficiently developed and needed her improvements to achieve its potential; that Athena would have wanted her to complete and publish the work; that the racial authenticity demanded by critics is itself a form of racial essentialism; and that she is, in any case, no more complicit in the racial politics of the publishing industry than anyone else. It is impossible for all of these contradictory ideas to be true at the same time, and any reader who pays careful attention will see that they are in direct opposition to one another.

The contradictions that are contained within June's representative language are significant for

the purpose of illocutionary analysis. This is due to the fact that they indicate the strategic character of June's remarks rather than the truthful nature of her statements. According to Mey (2001), the significance of literary pragmatic meaning is not only defined by the claims that speakers make directly, but also by the omissions, contradictions, and evasions that are interwoven into the structure of their speech. Mey's argument is that these elements are equally important in determining the significance of practical meaning. There are inconsistencies in June's self-justifications, which serve as pragmatic signals that lead beyond her stated affirmations to the implicit truth that she is attempting to conceal. Her elaborately constructed self-image as a writer who is misunderstood but has good intentions is a fiction that she maintains at an increasing cost to her moral integrity. These signals indicate that she is aware that she has stolen the work of another individual, that she is aware that the racial politics of her appropriation are indefensible, and that she is aware that she has stolen the work of another individual.

4.2.3 Representatives and the Construction of Athena Liu

June's representational behaviours toward Athena Liu constitute a particularly significant component of the novel's illocutionary analysis. This component is comprised of a particular aspect that is quite important. The character of Athena is developed by June during the course of the narrative by means of a series of utterances that simultaneously demonstrate affection and contempt, dedication and rivalry. She asserts Athena's intelligence while simultaneously proclaiming her privilege; she asserts Athena's friendship while simultaneously asserting Athena's condescension; she explains Athena's talent while simultaneously asserting that talent was, in various ways, unearned or obtained in an accidental manner. She does all of these things simultaneously. June utilises these representational acts concerning Athena to both position herself as a witness who is generous and fair-minded while also revealing the extent of her jealousy and animosity. These acts are not simply descriptions of a person who is not there; rather, they are acts of character development that June employs to accomplish both of these goals.

The fact that June's comments regarding Athena serve a dual purpose is one of the factors that contributes to the illocutionary complexity of her statements. These assertions are ostensibly representative acts (descriptions of Athena's character and behaviour), but they simultaneously perform an expressive function (expressing June's complex emotional relationship to Athena) and a commissive function (implicitly committing June to a particular account of her own behaviour that depends on the picture of Athena she is constructing). In other words, they perform both functions simultaneously. In literary speech, single utterances typically perform numerous illocutionary functions concurrently, and in order to understand the entire pragmatic meaning of an utterance, it is required to pay attention to all of the illocutionary actions that it performs. One of the most important insights in literary pragmatics is illustrated by the fact that these utterances serve several purposes..

4.3 Directives in Yellowface: Power and Compliance

4.3.1 The Directives of the Publishing Industry

Within the context of the novel, the publishing industry is portrayed as a social institution that wields authority by placing behavioural limits on its players. In the context of this picture of the publishing industry, directive illocutionary acts, which include demands, requests, directions, and prohibitions, play a significant role. The editors, agents, and publicists that June works with communicate with her on a consistent basis and supply her with directives that define her behaviour. Instructions on how to show her work to a variety of audiences, how to manage her presence on social media, how to respond to criticism, how to position herself in interviews, what issues to discuss and which to avoid, and how to manage her presence on social media are included in these directives. These instructions provide an understanding of

the institutional structure of the publishing industry, which can be viewed as a system of behavioural control that operates on writers, particularly writers who have been the subject of controversy. This understanding is provided through the consistent employment of directive speech actions.

Noting that the conditions of felicity for these institutional instructions are the only ones of their kind is an important point to keep in mind. According to Searle's (1969) point of view, the preliminary criteria for a directive include the fact that the hearer is capable of executing the needed action and that it is not clear that the hearer would undertake the action without being told to do so. In other words, the hearer must be able to perform the action. Editors and publicists are the ones who issue directives, and it is expected that they will be followed not only as a matter of courtesy but also as a professional obligation. The institutional authority of the directing agency is the preliminary condition that is considered to be the most significant in the context of the publishing industry. This compliance with these orders, which includes June's willingness to perform whatever public face her publishers require, is itself illustrative of the institutional dynamics that exist within the publishing industry, as well as the extent to which agents of the institution manage and construct the public personas of writers. June's public personas are managed and constructed by agents of the institution.

4.3.2 Social Media as a Collective Directive Force

It is the social media mob, which is a collection of online critics who finally turn against June when her copying becomes a subject of public accusation, that is responsible for carrying out an act of distributed collective directiveness with great force. The demands that June makes to the online community to confess, apologise, acknowledge her privilege, step back from her public platform, and accept accountability constitute a collectively performed directive that is unlike any individual speech act that takes place face-to-face in terms of its scale, its anonymity, and the mechanism through which it exerts pressure. June's demands are a collectively performed directive. It is not the social media mob that issues a single direction through a single authorised agent; rather, it is the social media mob that builds a collective directive force through the accumulation of thousands of individual remarks, each of which contributes its weight to the collective demand. This enables the social media mob to develop a collective directional force, which is a significant contribution.

For the purpose of illocutionary analysis, this collective directive event is particularly interesting since it undermines Searle's assumption that directive acts are carried out by individual agents who have communicative intentions that can be detected. Nevertheless, the collective directional power of the social media mob is real and consequential, and it is accountable for influencing June's actions and ultimately contributing to the unravelling of her public persona. June's public persona has collapsed as a result of this influence. The social media mob does not have a single aim, does not have a single voice, and does not have a clear institutional authority. All of these things are true. It is one of the novel's most original contributions to the investigation of how speech acts operate in the contemporary social media environment that Kuang's representation of this communal illocutionary event contributes to the novel. This is one of the novel's most important contributions.

4.4 Commissives in Yellowface: Promises, Threats, and Intentions

4.4.1 June's Self-Imposed Commissives

Commissive illocutionary behaviours, which include promises, threats, pledges, and commitments, are mostly manifested in Yellowface in the form of self-imposed commitments on the part of the individual. By making these commitments, June is making an effort to control her own actions and to establish herself as a person of integrity. She imposes obligations on herself, some of which are implicit and others of which include explicit obligations. These promises include the following: to finish Athena's work in a responsible manner; to

commemorate Athena's legacy through her own writing; to confront the problematic aspects of her circumstance when the time is suitable; and to make reparations at some point in the future that is not indicated. These self-directed commissive activities are significant because they reflect June's need to establish herself as a person of good intention. June's need to perform, even in the privacy of her own narration, the part of someone who has made sincere vows to do the right thing is shown by these acts. June's need to perform this role is shown by the fact that she takes the initiative to execute it.

It is important to note that the sincerity criterion of intention is incorporated within the context of the felicity standards for commissives. If the person who is making the commissive has the genuine intention of carrying out the deed that was committed, then the commissive is deemed to be serious. As a particularly noteworthy form of illocutionary infelicity, Austin (1962) identifies the "breach" of a commissive as a particularly noteworthy example. Despite the fact that the pledge was made with the purpose of honouring it at the time it was made, this refers to the circumstance in which a speaker makes a commitment that they either do not intend to honour or are unable to honour. The commitments that June makes to herself throughout the course of her narrative are not honoured, and the question of whether or not they were ever sincere — whether or not she ever genuinely intended to acknowledge Athena's contribution or address her own bad faith — is one that the novel purposefully leaves open. June's commitments are not honoured. The commissives that June personally put on herself are broken in a methodical fashion.

4.4.2 Threats and the Commissive Logic of Exposure

However, it is not a threat that is explicitly delivered by any particular character in the book; rather, it is an implicit act of commissiveness that is carried out by the social and institutional setting in which June functions. There is a constant presence of commissiveness throughout the entirety of the story, which is the threat of exposure. The presence of individuals who are either aware of the truth about Athena's book or who have suspicions about it is a persistent threat to the integrity of the book. It is a commitment on the side of the truth to eventually establish itself against June's representational frameworks, and this danger is a manifestation of that commitment. They engage in explicit threatening commissives as they begin their inquiry into June's plagiarism, committing themselves to reveal her fraud in the case that she does not recognise it. This occurs as the online accusers begin their investigation. They are commissives whose sincerity conditions are demonstrably met (the individuals who threaten you have a genuine intention to pursue their investigations) and whose preparatory conditions are satisfied (they have the means to carry out their threat or are in the process of developing those means). These threats have a distinctive illocutionary quality that distinguishes them from other threats.

The contrast between June's self-imposed commissives that are not being fulfilled and the increasingly credible and threatening commissives that her accusers are making is one of the most crucial dynamics that takes place in the second part of the novel. This difference allows for a number of important dynamics to take place. The fact that June's promises to herself are not genuine is becoming more and more obvious, and as a consequence, the threats made by those who intend to expose her are gaining more and more credibility. This disparity in commissive felicity, which is between June's infelicitous self-commitments and her accusers' felicitous threats, provides light on the greater asymmetry that exists inside the illocutionary universe of the novel. That asymmetry is between June's self-commitments and her accusers' threats. On a constant basis, June's attempts to establish her identity through speech acts are fruitless, whereas the speech acts of those who dispute her viewpoint are successful on a consistent basis.

4.5 Expressives in Yellowface: Hollow Performance and the Politics of Apology

4.5.1 *The Infelicity of June's Expressive Acts*

Within the context of Yellowface, the expressive illocutionary behaviours that are a part of Yellowface, such as apologies, admissions of regret, acknowledgements of wrongdoing, displays of melancholy, and pledges of appreciation, hold a central and analytically useful role. Yellowface is a group of people who express themselves via the use of facial expressions. Among the types of expressive acts that June is required to make in order to satisfy the requirements of the social media environment are apologies for her racial insensitivity, acknowledgements of her privilege, demonstrations of grief for Athena's death, and affirmations of respect for Athena's cultural heritage. June does all of these things in order to fulfil the requirements of the social media environment. There is a possibility that the examination of these expressive actions is the area in which the humorous criticism of the novel provides the most pointed criticism. There are many different kinds of expressive acts that June engages in throughout the course of the story, and each of these acts symbolises a different form of expressive act. One of the variables that contributes to the illocutionary significance of these phrases is the systematic gap that exists between their surface form and the settings under which they are stated. The differences between them are one of the factors that contribute to their prominence.

According to Searle's (1969) perspective, sincerity is a requirement for expressive acts. In order for the expressive to be regarded sincere, the speaker must possess the psychological state that the expressive is intended to convey. Sincerity is a precondition for expressive acts. For the purpose of assessing whether or not an apology is genuine, it is feasible to ascertain whether or not the individual who is offering the apology really regrets the manner in which they acted. When it comes to expressing sorrow, sincerity is evaluated based on whether or not the person doing the expressing is genuinely under the influence of grief itself. In this sense, June's expressive acts are systematically infelicitous: they have the surface form of authentic expressives, which includes the appropriate linguistic structure, the appropriate performative vocabulary, and the appropriate contextual positioning; however, the novel's first-person narration reveals, through the accumulation of contextual detail, that the psychological states that these expressives presuppose are either absent or present only in a superficial, self-interested form. This is how June's expressive acts are systematically infelicitous. June's expressive behaviours are infelicitous in this sense because of the way she expresses herself.

By reference to what he referred to as the "hollow" or "void" performance, Austin (1962) investigated this type of expressive infelicity. This was done by him in order to gain a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon. The situation in which a speaker executes the customary form of an illocutionary act without demonstrating the necessary internal conditions is referred to as a "performance," and the term "performance" is used to describe this predicament. The hollow expressive is a particularly harmful form of illocutionary bad faith since it is intended to create the perlocutionary results of the honest act. This makes it a particularly poisonous form of evil faith. This indicates that the speaker is attempting to convey to the listener the sense that they are really sorry, grieving, or acknowledging the circumstance that they are in. This is done with the intention of inducing these effects without necessitating the psychological commitment that would be required for such effects to be appropriate. The reason for its effectiveness is because of this. June uses empty expressives as the major tool that she employs in her efforts to manage her public image. She relies heavily on these expressives as the primary tool that she employs. For the purpose of achieving this goal, she avoids engaging in the genuine moral involvement that would be a necessary component of authentic expressives.

4.5.2 The Social Media Apology as Illocutionary Genre

The novel contains Yellowface's description of the social media apology as a distinct illocutionary genre. This representation is considered to be one of the author's most inventive and sociologically astute contributions. The social media apology, which is a public statement of acknowledgement and regret issued in response to online criticism, frequently through a public platform such as Twitter or Instagram, has become a distinctive feature of contemporary public culture. This apology is issued in response to criticism that has been posted on the internet. There is a consistent lack of clarity on the connection between the apologies on social media and genuine expressive illocutionary behaviours. There are a few surface qualities that are required for the social media apology standards. These characteristics include the recognition of wrongdoing, the expression of regret, and the resolve to do better in the future. However, the social setting in which social media apologies are made — under public pressure, with the primary objective of managing reputational injury — is one in which the sincerity conditions for authentic expressives are continually undermined. This is because the public is under pressure to manage reputational harm. This is due to the fact that the public is placed under pressure to manage damage to their reputation.

As a result of Kuang's representation of June's social media apologies, this ambiguity is depicted with a great level of clarity. However, June's private narration demonstrates the mismatch between her public expressive performance and her true psychological states. June's public statements feature all of the superficial traits that are distinctive of the social media apology genre. It is not enough to suggest that this disparity is due to hypocrisy, which is defined as the act of claiming one thing while actually believing something else. Rather, it is a reflection of the structural conditions that exist inside the contemporary social media environment. These conditions offer incentives for the execution of expressive acts without the psychological emotions that would make those performances honest. Rather than being instances of particular moral failings, the hollow apologies that June has delivered are examples of a more common social phenomenon. June's apology is not the only example of this phenomenon. Within the context of the contemporary attention economy, this phenomena might be seen as the inflation and depreciation of expressive illocutionary acts.

In this particular setting, the concept that Mey (2001) refers to as the pragmatic act is present and applicable. Mey contends in his argument that the pragmatic meaning of an utterance is not solely determined by the intention of the speaker, but rather is co-constructed within a specific social and institutional environment that shapes the kinds of illocutionary performances that are required, anticipated, and attainable. Mey's argument is based on the idea that the speaker's intention is not the only factor that determines the pragmatic meaning of an utterance. June operates in a pragmatic environment that necessitates the performance of specific expressive acts, such as apologies, acknowledgements, and statements of solidarity. However, at the same time, it is difficult or even impossible to carry out these acts in a sincere manner. This is because the setting of social media provides a pragmatic environment. The novel's investigation of this environment is one of the most significant contributions it makes to contemporary cultural criticism. It is also one of the novel's most substantial accomplishments.

4.6 Declarations in Yellowface: Authorial Identity and Institutional Power

4.6.1 Publishing as Declarative Institution

Declarations, which are the illocutionary actions through which speakers with adequate institutional power bring about changes in institutional reality through utterance, are possibly the most illuminating form of illocutionary act described in Yellowface. Yellowface is a collection of illocutionary acts. This is because the novel is primarily concerned with the institutional mechanisms through which authorial identity is established, challenged, and

revoked. This is the reason why this is the case. Kuang's interpretation suggests that the publishing industry is, at its core, an institution that is characterised by affirmative statements. The performance of the statements that constitute persons as authors is the principal social function that it serves. The publication of works under names, the assignment of copyright, the examination and awarding of prizes, and the establishment of a literary reputation are all examples of these declarations. When a publisher decides to publish a manuscript under a certain name, they are making a statement that establishes that person as the author of the work within the context of the institutional reality of the literary market. This is because the publisher is establishing the authorship of the work.

In his explanation of declarations, Searle (1969, 1976) makes it abundantly apparent that the speaker must be in possession of true institutional authority to carry out the required activity in order for the pronouncements to be regarded happy. This is an essential requirement. The person who owns the institutional authority to make this declaration is the publisher who makes the declaration that June is the author of the text that Athena has written. Publishing houses have the customary right to publish works under the names of the authors with whom they have contracted. This is the reason why this is the case. Furthermore, the proclamation would be seen as formally felicitous as a consequence of this. The novel written by Kuang, on the other hand, throws light on the conflict that exists between formal and moral felicity. It is conceivable for a proclamation to be morally infelicitous, which means that it is founded on a fraudulent misrepresentation of the true state of affairs, but it is also possible for it to be formally valid, which means that it is carried out by an actor who holds the conventional power to carry it out. The publishing house's declaratory act of naming June as author is founded on June's fraud and the industry's failure to scrutinise what it makes from publishing. Although it is legally permissible, the company's decision is unethical since it violates the principles of ethics. The dishonesty committed by June is the main reason for this conflict.

4.6.2 Counter-Declarations and the Contestation of Authorial Identity

The online critics of the work engage in counter-declarative acts with the purpose of attempting to establish June as something entirely else, such as a plagiarist, a racial appropriator, or a cultural thief. The formal claims of June's authorial identity that are made by the publishing business are challenged by these activities, which are conducted in opposition to those declarations. The formal institutional authority that is linked with the act of publication carried out by a publisher is not possessed by these counter-declarations since they are carried out by anonymous individuals who do not have any acknowledged institutional position in the world of literature. This distinguishes them from the act of publication carried out by a publisher. The official assertions that have been made by the publishing business are in danger of being displaced by an alternate institutional reality in which June's authorial identity is not that of a respectable writer but rather that of a fraud. It is important to note that their combined force is not only real and significant, but it also presents a challenge to the official pronouncements made by the industry.

It is the conflict that occurs between the formal assertions made by the publishing industry and the counter-declarations made by the community of social media users that becomes the essence of the illocutionary drama that is *Yellowface*. With a great deal of precision, it demonstrates the realisation that declarations are not merely performatives that are produced by isolated agents, but rather that they are embedded within institutional structures that determine whose declarations have force and under what circumstances competing declarations can challenge established institutional realities. This realisation is demonstrated by the fact that it demonstrates the realisation that declarations are embedded within institutional structures. The novel presents the argument that in the contemporary media environment, the declarative authority of traditional literary institutions, such as publishing houses, prize committees, and

established critics, is becoming increasingly contestable by the collective declarative force of social media communities. This is the argument that is presented in the novel. In terms of the construction of cultural identity and value, this has the potential to generate implications that are both unclear and unstable.

4.6.3 Self-Declaration and the Performance of Authorial Identity

In addition, sentiments that are made on a more intimate level are included into the story of June. The pronouncements that she makes are the mechanism by which she establishes her own identity, not only to herself but also to the reader that she imagines herself to be thinking about. There are a number of implied self-declarations that June makes throughout the course of the narrative. As a writer, a friend to Athena, a victim of racial politics, and a person of integrity, she uses these activities to reinforce who she is in a performative way rather than a just descriptive sense. She does this by virtue of the fact that she is a person of integrity. Because they occupy an equivocal position between the representational (saying something about oneself) and the declarative (constituting oneself through the act of claiming), these self-declarations are among the most illocutionarily difficult acts in the novel. This is due to the fact that they are described as representative statements. Because of this, they are among the activities that are the most challenging to explain. Through the use of self-declarations, June is making an effort to bring about a shift in her own identity by asserting that she is the thing in question. By merely asserting that she is the author that she claims to be, she is making an effort to establish herself as the author that she claims to be.

It is the infelicity of these self-declarations that forms the most profound degree of illocutionary criticism that appears in the novel. It is not possible for June to successfully establish herself as a legitimate author by employing the technique of declarative self-assertion inside her writing. It is because the prerequisites of declarative felicity, which include the institutional recognition of her power to carry out the required act, are not present. This is the reason why this is the case. There is no amount of self-declaration that can make her the author of Athena's work; the institutional reality of authorship cannot be produced by the unilateral will of an individual who does not have a genuine claim to the identity that she is expressing. As a result, she cannot be considered the author of the novel. June's self-declarations and her representational deeds of self-justification are both attempts to build a self through speech; yet, both of these endeavours are undermined by the gap that exists between her generated identity and the moral truth that she is unable to acknowledge. The fact that June's self-declarations were unsuccessful is a reflection of the fact that her representative acts of offering self-justification were also unsuccessful.

4.7 The Illocutionary Architecture of Yellowface: Synthesis

The investigation of illocutionary acts that span all five Searlean categories reveals that hiding beneath the surface of Yellowface's first-person narrative is a coherent and complex illocutionary architecture. This is revealed by the fact that the illocutionary acts cover all five categories. The novel is structured around a systematic pattern of illocutionary infelicity: June's representative acts of self-assertion are unreliable; her expressive acts of apology and contrition are hollow; her commissive acts of self-commitment are unfulfilled; her declarative self-constitutions are ineffective. This pattern of infelicity that appears repeatedly throughout the novel is not a coincidence; rather, it functions as the primary mechanism via which the novel's satirical critique is presented and executed. Kuang creates a novel that, at the level of its narrative architecture, performs the same critique that it develops at the level of theme and story. This critique is performed by Kuang. The creation of a narrator who deliberately violates each and every major illocutionary category is the means by which this objective is realised.

The pervasive illocutionary infelicity of June's discourse is juxtaposed, throughout the novel, with illocutionary acts that are fully felicitous in their respective contexts: the institutional

declarations of the publishing industry, which formally constitute June as an author even as they enable her fraud; the collective directives of the social media mob, which exercise real force on June's behaviour even without formal institutional authority; and the threatening commissives of June's accusers, which are backed by genuine investigative intention and growing evidence. It is the contrast between June's infelicitous actions and the felicitous actions of the institutional and social forces that surround her that sheds light on the core concept of the novel. Illocutionary success, which is defined as the ability to perform speech acts that genuinely change institutional reality, genuinely express psychological states, or genuinely commit oneself to future action, requires not only the performance of the appropriate linguistic form, but also the possession of the social, institutional, and moral conditions that make such performance genuine. This contrast sheds light on the fact that illocutionary success requires not only the performance of the appropriate linguistic form, but also the possession of the conditions that make such performance genuine.

This investigation validates and expands upon the description of literary pragmatics that Mey (2001) presents. Mey's argument is supported by this examination. There are a number of components that come together to generate the illocutionary acts in *Yellowface*. These components include June's narrative discourse, the social and institutional circumstances within which she acts, and the reader's inferential engagement with the gap between her performed identity and her actual identity. These illocutionary acts not only consist of June's unique communicative goals, but they also include other elements. The novel's pragmatic meaning is co-constructed across all these levels, and it is the reader's recognition of the systematic infelicity of June's illocutionary performances — the recognition that what she performs and what she is are irreconcilably different — that constitutes the satirical and critical power of Kuang's achievement.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study has been conducted with the purpose of doing a systematic pragmatic analysis of illocutionary acts that are found in *Yellowface* (2023) by R. F. Kuang. It has been applied that Searle's (1969, 1976) taxonomy of representatives, directions, commissives, expressives, and declarations has been utilised. Additionally, Austin's (1962) description of felicity conditions and Mey's (2001) literary pragmatics have been brought into the analysis. Following the completion of the inquiry, a total of five results that are specific to a certain category as well as one finding that is synthetic in nature have been discovered.

According to the findings of the study, June's narrative language is characterised by self-justificatory statements, which meet the requirements for sincerity in a consistent manner. When it came to the category of representatives, this was discovered to be the condition. In the story, the author constructs a dual structure consisting of assertion and sardonic disconfirmation, which puts the reader in a position to evaluate June's representative actions with a healthy dose of cynicism. The novel's satirical critique is produced solely through the utilisation of this twofold structure as the primary method. According to the findings of the study, the novel's portrayal of the publishing industry and the atmosphere of social media makes use of directive acts as tools of institutional power. This sheds light on the mechanisms that are responsible for the management and control of the behaviour of writers by institutional actors and collective social forces. The novel's depiction of these two places can be classified as directions because of the characteristics they exhibit. As far as commissives are concerned, the investigation revealed that June's self-imposed obligations are routinely infelicitous. This means that they are never completed, and it is possible that they are dishonest. On the other hand, the threatening commissives of her accusers are becoming more and more significant; they are

becoming more important. According to the findings of the research, the novel's most acute satire is directed at the fake expressive performances, notably the social media apologies, that June creates in response to public pressure. This is the case when it comes to expressives. Furthermore, the research found that Kuang's description of the social media apology as a distinct illocutionary genre throws light on a more widespread problem of expressive devaluation in modern public culture. This was observed as a result of the study. A struggle between opposing declaratory acts was found to be the primary source of drama in the novel, according to the findings of the research conducted when it came to the category of declarations. Two of these opposing acts are the formal constitution of June's authorial identity by the publishing industry and the counter-constitution of her as a plagiarist by the community of people who use social media. The nature of declarative power, which is contested and relies on institutions, is brought to light by this internal debate.

The most significant conclusion that can be drawn from the synthesis is that the novel is structured around a systematic pattern of illocutionary infelicity in June's language. In addition to serving as the foundation for the structure of the novel, this pattern is the primary method that Kuang employs in his satirical commentary. The inability of June's speech acts to achieve genuine illocutionary success — to establish an authentic authorial identity, to convey genuine regret, and to commit herself genuinely to responsible action — serves as a reflection and a source of illumination of the moral failure that lies at the core of her character. The illocutionary architecture of the book is not just a formal characteristic of its narrative structure, but it is also an important component of the novel's critical and ethical purpose. In this respect, the novel's illocutionary architecture is different from the narrative structure.

An exhaustive pragmatic analysis of illocutionary acts that can be found in *Yellowface* (2023) by R. F. Kuang has been the objective of this study, which has been carried out with the intention of attaining that objective. This study has been carried out with the intention of achieving that objective. The taxonomy of representatives, instructions, commissives, expressives, and declarations that was developed by Searle (1969, 1976) has been put into practice. Utilisation of this taxonomy has taken place. The conversation has also been broadened to include Mey's (2001) literary pragmatics and Austin's (1962) formulation of the conditions under which one can obtain happiness. Both of these contributions have been incorporated into the discussion. Following the conclusion of the inquiry, a total of five discoveries that are exclusive to a certain category as well as one discovery that is synthetic in nature have been revealed. In addition, one of the results is something that was uncovered.

According to the findings of the research, June's narrative language is characterised by self-justificatory remarks, which correspond to the criteria for sincerity in a manner that is consistent. The narrative language that June uses is characterised by statements like these. After conducting additional research, it was discovered that this was the condition that was applicable to the category of representatives. An assertion and a sardonic disconfirmation are the two components that make up the dual structure that the author crafts in the narrative. The reader is able to evaluate June's representative behaviours with a healthy dose of cynicism, which is a positive outcome. This is a positive outcome. The utilisation of this framework is the sole means by which the sarcastic commentary throughout the narrative is produced. This double structure acts as the principal mechanism by which this commentary is produced. According to the results of the research, the novel's portrayal of the publishing industry and the environment of social media makes use of directive acts as instruments of institutional authority. This is shown by the findings of the literature review. Due to the fact that the novel contains both of these elements, this assertion is correct. This brings into foreground the mechanisms that are responsible for the management and control of the behaviour of authors by institutional actors and collective social forces. These mechanisms are responsible for the management and

control of the behaviour of writers. These two locations in the book are depicted in a manner that can be classified as directions according to the characteristics that they display. The findings of the inquiry, which were examined in reference to commissives, revealed that June's self-imposed conditions were deemed to be routinely infelicitous. This was the conclusion reached through the investigation. In addition to the fact that they are never finished, it is quite likely that they are dishonest. This suggests that they are never completed in their entirety. On the other hand, the threatening letters that her accusers have been sending her are becoming more and more solid; you could say that they are becoming more significant. The findings of the research reveal that the novel's most pointed satire is directed at the false expressive performances, most notably the social media apologies, that June produces as a response to the pressure that she receives from the public. This is the most pointed satire that the novel contains. As far as expressives are concerned, this is the circumstance that is currently taking place. A more general issue of expressive devaluation in contemporary public culture is brought to light by Kuang's classification of the social media apology as a distinct illocutionary genre. This is in accordance with the findings of the research that was described before. This conclusion was reached as a result of the findings that were obtained from the investigation. It was determined that the primary source of drama in the book was a conflict between two declaring acts that were in opposition to one another. This was the conclusion that was reached as a result of the research that was conducted in respect to the category of declarations. Two examples of these hostile activities are the formal constitution of June's authorial identity by the publishing business and the counter-constitution of her as a plagiarist by the community of individuals who utilise social media. Both of these acts are examples of the publishing industry's formal constitution. These two actions are diametrically opposed to one another in every possible way. This disagreement within the organization throws light on the nature of declaratory authority, which is a disputed concept that is based on institutions. Both parties are involved in the conflict. The most significant conclusion that can be drawn from the synthesis is that the novel is structured around a systematic pattern of illocutionary infelicity in June's vocabulary. This is the most important conclusion that can be taken from the synthesis. Taking this into consideration would be the most important conclusion that could be reached. This pattern is not only the foundation upon which the structure of the novel is built, but it is also the primary method that Kuang employs in his scathing criticism. Additionally, it is the basis upon which the structure of the novel is built. The inability of June's speech acts to achieve genuine illocutionary success — to establish an authentic authorial identity, to convey genuine regret, and to commit herself genuinely to responsible action — serves as a reflection and a source of illumination of the moral failure that lies at the core of her character. Not only is the illocutionary architecture of the book a formal characteristic of its narrative structure, but it is also an integral component of the novel's critical and ethical objective. In other words, the book's illocutionary architecture is in the book. An integral component of the narrative structure of the novel is the illocutionary architecture within the book. When viewed from this perspective, the illocutionary architecture of the novel is distinct from the narrative structure of the book.

The theoretical implications of this work could potentially be beneficial to the field of literary pragmatics, which is a field of study. This indicates that it is possible to successfully carry out a thorough illocutionary study of literary texts by categorising them in a sequential manner. A more thorough and synthetic explanation of the illocutionary architecture of a novel is produced as a result of paying attention to all five Searlean categories, as opposed to selecting focusing on the ones that are most obviously important. This is demonstrated by the fact that it is a more comprehensive and synthetic account. It also demonstrates the productivity of Austin's (1962) account of felicity conditions for literary analysis, showing how the identification of

infelicitous speech acts — acts that fail the sincerity, preparatory, or essential conditions — can serve as a primary analytical tool for the interpretation of character, irony, and satirical critique in literary fiction.

Not only does the study offer a framework for analysing *Yellowface*, but it also offers a framework for analysing Kuang's larger literary project, which is consistently concerned with the politics of representation, the ethics of cultural appropriation, and the institutional mechanisms through which cultural authority is constituted and contested. *Yellowface* is a piece of literature that Kuang has written. The study has repercussions for academic research, particularly with regard to Kuang's body of work. Future applications of illocutionary analysis to Kuang's earlier novels, in particular *Babel* (2022), which has a large obsession with translation and colonial language politics, makes it a rich site for speech act analysis, are a fertile route for further research. *Babel* makes a significant contribution to the field of speech act analysis.

5.4 Limitations

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has uncovered a number of possible directions that could be pursued in the future for additional investigation. The first potential is that the illocutionary analysis of *Yellowface* could be enlarged and reinforced by means of corpus-linguistic methodologies. This would be the first possibility. The purposes of these strategies are to identify and quantify patterns of illocutionary act distribution throughout the course of the novel. These methods require the utilisation of computer tools. Second, the analysis of social media as an illocutionary environment, which was started in the current study, ought to be developed as a separate topic of research within the subject of literary pragmatics. This is something that should be done. It is important that this research concentrate on the manner in which contemporary novels engage with and reflect the particular illocutionary conditions of social media discourse. Lastly, a comparative analysis of *Yellowface* with other novels that employ unreliable narrators as vehicles of ideological critique, particularly those that belong to the tradition of literary satire of the publishing industry, would shed light on the distinctive contributions that Kuang's illocutionary strategies have made. Fourth, the distinction between narrative unreliability and illocutionary infelicity, which is the theoretical contribution of the current work, ought to be developed as a conceptual tool that can be applied to unreliable narration in a more broad sense. This is the fourth point.

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