



SPEECH ROLES IN THE SHORT STORY “THE BROTHERS” AS SEEN FROM INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTION IN SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Nguyen Thanh Tin*

Department of Foreign Languages, Thanh Dong University, Vietnam
64/2/2 Tăng Bạt Hổ Street, Quy Nhon Ward, Gia Lai Province

Le Nhan Thanh

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Quy Nhon University, Vietnam

* Correspondence to **Nguyen Thanh Tin** < andrewnguyentin@gmail.com >

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Abstract: This study analyzes the speech roles in Louisa May Alcott’s short story “*The Brothers*” using the interpersonal metafunction framework in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Martin and Rose (2007). The research addresses the question: What are the speech roles in the story’s conversations? The qualitative analysis of eight conversations in the short story reveals that *Statement* dominates, followed by *Question*, *Command*, *Offer*, and *Exclamation*. Unique cases such as *intertwined speech acts*, *far-apart complementarity*, and *complex moves* highlight the challenges of applying this framework to prose. The findings demonstrate the framework’s utility in analyzing literary dialogues, emphasizing the relationship between speech roles and their linguistic expressions. This study contributes to SFL-based discourse analysis and provides a reference for future research on speech roles in literary texts.

Keywords. SFL, speech roles, speech act, short story, interpersonal metafunction

1. Introduction

It is commonly known that language is the material shell of thought. As a result, people can express their intentions, desires, and emotions through language. A specific language is created by a particular community, serving the communication purposes of that community and affected by the community. This is why Halliday (1961) developed the Systemic Functional

Linguistics (SFL) theory to search for the interconnectedness of a language and its social functions [19].

Speech act theory was established by Austin more than five decades ago. In this theory, Austin (1962) assumes that “to say something is to do something” [1, 15]. In other words, through utterances, a person can perform various actions, such as requesting, promising, thanking, and apologizing. Up to now, the theory of speech acts has been developed and influenced discourse analysis by some researchers like Searle (1969), Searle (1979), Grice (1975), Norrick (1978), and Yule (1996).

Recently, Martin and Rose (2007) developed the framework of speech roles from interpersonal metafunction in SFL, which was initiated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and regarded as another way to analyze speech acts in conversations [2]. However, almost no study has applied Martin and Rose’s (2007) framework to research speech act analysis. This is why this study is conducted to bridge the gap with the data collected from the short story “The Brothers” by Louisa May Alcott, aiming to answer the following question: What are the speech role types in the conversations of the short story?

This study is carried out in the hope of applying the classification framework of Martin and Rose (2007) and providing suggestions for this framework, if any.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Interpersonal metafunction

Language is said to be systemic by SFL’s followers, so Thompson (2014) believes that the “language system has evolved (and is constantly evolving) to serve the functions that we need it for [communication process]” [3, 45]. In SFL, a language is studied through four aspects: in contexts, in texts, in heads, and in groups, which is shown in Figure 1 below:

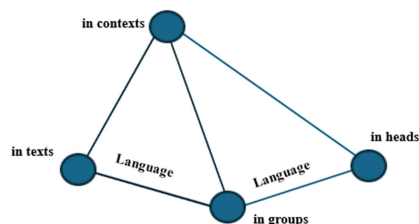


Figure 1. Points of departure for the systemic study of language, languages, texts, and their users [4]

As seen from Figure 1, language can be analyzed through different perspectives: by examining the features of texts, observing interactions among speakers, exploring the cognitive processes of individual speakers, and considering the social contexts in which language is used.

SFL researchers focus on three metafunctions or meanings in language expression: ideational (representing experiences of the world), interpersonal (facilitating social interaction and managing relationships through language), and textual (ensuring coherence and cohesion in messages within the context).

Regarding interpersonal metafunction, Butt et al. (2003) comment that this meaning “[covers] two main areas: one concerns the type of interaction taking place and the kind of commodity being exchanged, and the other concerns the way speakers take a position in their messages” [5, 86]. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), there are three aspects of interpersonal function: *speech roles* (exchanges of speakers in a conversation, including two types: *giving* and *demanding*), *mood system* (consisting of Subject and Finite), and *modality* (dealing with a speaker’s judgment or attitude).

2.2. Speech acts and speech roles

As mentioned in Section 1, Martin and Rose (2007) regarded speech roles as speech acts when classifying their types under interpersonal metafunction in SFL [2]. Therefore, this section presents the knowledge of speech acts and roles, and the two terms can be used interchangeably in this study.

2.2.1. Definitions of speech acts and speech roles

Austin (1962) introduced the concept of speech acts as the way to perform actions via language. He believed that while a person is saying something, she is simultaneously indicating three primary actions: a locutionary act involves the verbal expression of a message; an illocutionary act conveys a speaker’s intended meaning beyond the literal interpretation; and a perlocutionary act focuses on the effects that the speech act has on a hearer. In agreement with Austin (1962), Grice (1975) articulated that speech acts “are in a function of the meaning of the sentence” and “beyond their literal interpretation” [8, 25]. There is an illustration of a teacher coming into a boisterous class; if she says, “Is there a market here?”, this could implicitly ask the class to keep silent and not to make any noise rather than asking for a market.

In terms of speech roles, Martin and Rose (2007) suggested that they can be viewed as negotiations, where speakers assign and recognize roles for one another, with each turn (or move) structured in relation to the others.

Austin (1962) and Searle (1979) defined speech acts based on their functions, categorizing speech by its role in utterances. Martin and Rose (2007) also aimed to classify roles functionally, focusing on negotiation and conversational turns. Both frameworks emphasize that speech acts

execute actions; words embody actions, including Austin's three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Thus, speech functions/roles in Martin and Rose's framework are speech acts within negotiation dynamics. In their classification, they referred to these roles as speech acts, noting that "the relevant network of choices is consolidated in Figure 7.4, allowing for the 13 basic speech acts presented above" [2, 251].

2.2.2. Classifications of speech acts and speech roles

There are two ways to classify speech acts. On one hand, some researchers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1976), Bach and Harnish (1979), and Yule (1996) classified types of speech acts based on their functions. The first classification provided by Austin (1962) divided speech acts into five types: verdictives (e.g., appraising, ...), exercitives (e.g., appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning ...), commissives (e.g., promise, propose,...), behabitives (e.g., apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing and challenging), and expositives (e.g., conceding, assuming,...) [1].

One of the most influential classifications of speech acts was then proposed by Searle (1979), focusing on listeners' intentions through their utterances. This categorization includes five broad types: *commissives* (committing the speaker to do something), *declarations* (changing the state of affairs in the world), *directives* (getting a listener to do something), *expressives* (expressing feelings and attitudes), and *representatives* (describing states or events in the world) [9]. Following Searle (1979), Yule (1996) classified speech acts into five categories, presenting Table 1 [10]:

Table 1. Functions of speech acts

Speech act types	Direction of fit	Speaker
		Situation
Declarations	words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	make words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissives	make the world fit words	S intends X

Bach and Harnish (1979) divided illocutionary acts into *conventional* and *communicative*. However, four types of communicative illocutionary acts were deeply discussed in Table 2 [11]:

Table 2. Types of communicative illocutionary acts

Communicative illocutionary acts			
Constatives	Constatives	Constatives	Constatives
Assertives	Requestives	Promises	Apologize
Predictives	Questions	Offers	Condole
Retrodictives	Requirements		Congratulate
Descriptives	Prohibitives		Greet
Ascriptives	Permissives		Thank
Informatives	Advisories		Bid
Confirmatives			Accept
Concessives			Reject
Retractives			
Assentives			
Dissentives			
Responsives			
Suggestives			
Supportives			

On the other hand, speech act types are also divided into *direct* and *indirect* speech acts. Troike (1982) argues that “as defined in speech act theory, direct acts are those where surface form matches interactional function, as ‘Be quiet!’ used as a command, versus an indirect ‘It’s getting noisy here’ or ‘I can’t hear myself think’ [12, 36].”

For speech roles, Martin and Roles (2007) might develop the theoretical framework of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), in which they developed four initial types of speech roles, which included two main categories in interpersonal metafunction: *giving* and *demanding* (illustrated in Table 3), into thirteen types divided into two main branches: *express self* and *address other* [2], which is shown in Figure 2 below.

Table 3 . Giving or demanding goods-&-services or information

Commodity exchanged		
role in exchange	(a) goods-&-services	(b) information
(i) giving	‘offer’ would you like this teapot	‘statement’ he’s giving her the teapot
(ii) demanding	‘command’ give me that teapot!	‘question’ what is he giving her?

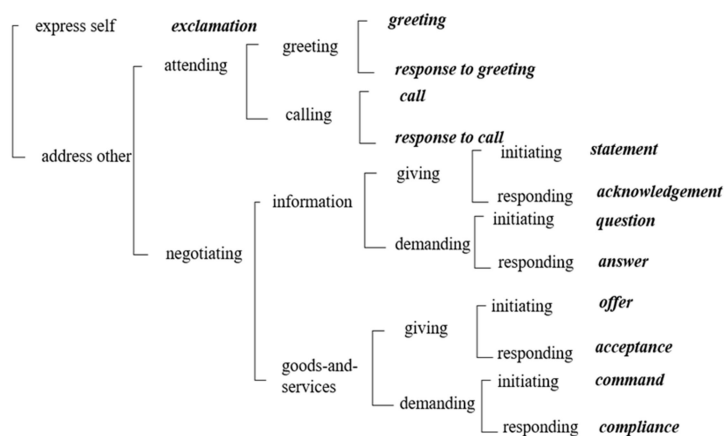


Figure 2 . An outline of speech functions

2.2.3. Moves, boundaries of speech roles

Because it is based on SFL’s knowledge, it is essential to reference the model of speech roles from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) in this research. As illustrated in Figure 3 below, *move* serves as an umbrella terminology encompassing the system of speech functions, including speech roles and speech acts. In their research, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) examined moves “in the dialogic interaction” [13] but did not elaborate further on this terminology. What is a *move*?

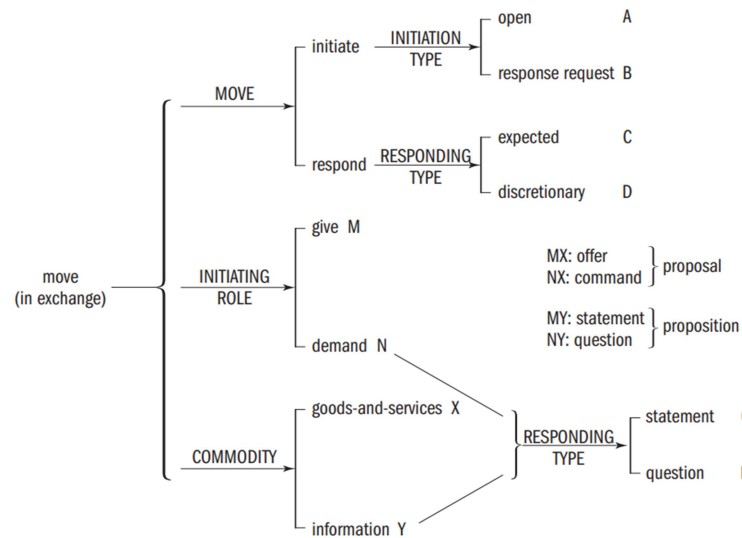


Figure 3 . The semantic system of speech function

This is not the first time when the term “*move*” has been used in a study. Dating back to the 1980s, it was referenced in *Geneva’s hierarchical-functional model*, which was used to analyze the speech acts of the entire conversation. This model includes three concepts: *exchange* (made of units of type *move*), *moves* (made of units of type *Act*), and *acts* (illocutionary acts) [14]. This model is demonstrated in the dialogue below:

E	M1-A	Can I ask you a few questions?
	M2-A	Certainly.

With the development of SFL theory, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) provide a profound insight into conversation components, categorizing commodity exchange into two types: *goods and services* and *information*, as detailed in Table 3. Furthermore, a move can now be made for an act (A) or a knowledge (K), which will be explored in depth in the next section. Therefore, to identify a boundary of a speech role or a speech act, the boundary of a move should be examined first.

Take some examples from Martin and Rose (2007) to see the various boundaries of moves in the conversations [2].

- (1) **Luke:** *You know I missed you two fuckers.*
 Llewelyn: *Sorry, I can’t say the same, Luke.*
 Zuko: *Yeah, me too.*
 Luke: *Well fuck you, man. Fuck both of you.*

All: (laughter as Luke realizes his mates were teasing) (p.225)

(2) **Ernest:** *Call the Ahoy B&B*

and tell him not to come.

Go.

Sannie: *I won't go.*

Let's examine the two examples above. It can be seen that an exchange can include one move with one clause, as in (1) **Luke:** *"Well fuck you, man. Fuck both of you."*; one turn with three moves, as in (2) **Ernest:** *"Call the Ahoy B&B (move 1) and tell him not to come (move 2). Go (move 3)."* The examples can cause confusion because Luke says two sentences, but there is only one move and one speech act. In contrast, Earnest also says two sentences, but the first sentence has two moves and two speech acts. Why does this happen?

The understanding of speech roles has been cultivated through the framework of SFL, allowing for manipulating related elements such as speech roles, speech acts, and conversational moves. The existence of conversations indicates that a language serves its functional purpose and is characterized by the features of Field, Tenor, and Mode, which collectively illustrate *"how the context of situation influences the types of meanings expressed"* [15]. Tenor pertains to the relationships among participants within a conversation, while Mode delineates the methods of expression, whether spoken or written. Consequently, these aspects may not significantly influence the identification of the boundaries of moves and speech acts. However, Field delineates *"the purposive activity of the speaker or writer"* [15], suggesting that the boundaries can be discerned based on the Field.

Let's use this idea to answer the question above. The example (1) *"Well fuck you, man. Fuck both of you"* consists of two sentences but represents a single move and speech act. This happens because the sentences are functionally unified; they serve one communicative purpose. Earnest's example, *"Call the Ahoy B&B and tell him not to come. "Go"* contains multiple moves within a single turn, and each move corresponds to a distinct speech act, which shows different purposive activities of the speaker.

2.2.4. The conventions of some elements related to speech roles

When identifying moves and speech act types in conversations, Martin and Rose's (2007) framework provides a structured approach based on negotiation and the complementarity of initiating and responding to exchanges. Moves are identified as functional units of communication, each serving a role in the exchange of goods, services, or information. For instance, the nucleus of a conversation is marked as 1, representing the initiating move, while subsequent responses are marked numerically in order (e.g., K2, A2). Among the speech act types, Statements are typically identified as moves that provide information (K1), while

Commands involve the demand for action (A1) and Offers invite cooperation or propose an action (A2). Though less frequently discussed in the framework, exclamations are categorized as A moves, given their function of expressing strong emotion. Additionally, moves can exhibit delays (d), follow-ups (f), track (tr), response to track (rtr), or challenges (ch) when the exchange is extended or complicated. Take a conversation extracted from a film in a study by Martin and Rose (2007) mentioned above as an example. This conversation probably happened at a restaurant, starting with the waitress's line and then that of Sannie and Hendrik in order:

- Waitress:** A1 – Your wine, sir (pouring). (*Offer*)
- Sannie:** K1 – Coetzee's here. (*Statement*)
- Hendrik:** A2 – Could I have a bottle of your best dry red? (*Command*)
- Waitress:** A1 – Yes (*Compliance*)

Moreover, some conventions are also mentioned. First, (↙) is used to identify tr and rtr. (()) is used for a complex move, which is two moves in one turn; they have the same content, and the same semantic triplet or next turn requires H to fill in the missing space to match S's intention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research approach

This study utilized qualitative method to analyze speech acts in the short story "The Brothers" under the interpersonal metafunction in SFL. The qualitative aspect involved discussing the identified speech roles in the context of conversational moves and determining the linguistic means of those speech roles.

3.2. Research design

The study adopted a descriptive design to identify speech role types following Martin and Rose's (2007) framework and to explore their linguistic means. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research systematically describes a situation or population [16]. The study involved collecting, classifying, analyzing, and interpreting data to draw conclusions. Additionally, it employed qualitative methods since the data were textual rather than numerical, making detailed statistical analysis unnecessary [17].

3.3. Data collection

The data were gathered from eight conversations in Louisa May Alcott's "The Brothers". Key characters involved are Dr. Franck, Miss Dane, Mr. Robert (a contraband/mulatto), Marster Ned (Captain Fairfax), a white captain, and a fellow soldier of Robert.

3.4. Data analysis

In analyzing data, the study employed a qualitative approach to identify speech act types suggested by Martin and Rose (2007). Moreover, how those types and their linguistic means were identified was clarified.

The research used the framework outlined in the thesis, which focused on classifying speech act types under SFL theory.

- In the first step, the conversations in the short story “The Brothers” were collected and coded.

- In the second step, the boundaries of each speech role were identified based on the knowledge in section 2.2.3 above, and then these boundaries were coded for discussion. The structure of the code is **[C_number_B_number]**. C stands for a conversation, the first number is the order of the conversation, L stands for the boundary of a speech act, and the second number is the order of the boundary. For example:

Dr. Franck **[C1B1]** *Miss Dane, I’m in a quandary.*

Dane **[C1B2]** *Can I help you out of it?*

Dr. Franck **[C1B3]** *Faith!*

[C1B4] *I don’t like to propose it, but you certainly can, if you please.*

Dane **[C1B5]** *Then give it a name, I beg.*

- In the third step, the framework of Martin and Rose (2007) was applied to classify the speech roles/speech acts in the conversations in the story, in which some conventions mentioned in section 2.2.2 were performed in conversation analysis.

- The linguistic means of those speech roles/speech acts under Martin and Rose’s (2007) framework were also identified in the fourth step.

- In the fifth step, the gathered data were meticulously analyzed, then systematically organized and stored in Word and Excel for statistical analysis.

- In the last step, the analysis results were carefully compiled and presented in Chapter 4, where they were thoroughly discussed to convey the research findings effectively.

4. Findings

4.1. Speech role types in the conversations

The findings, which are shown in the table in the Appendix, illustrate the results of identified speech roles in the short story “The Brothers” under the framework of Martin and Rose (2007) [2].

In the 29 moves of Conversation 1, Statements made up 37.93% with 11 occurrences, mainly conveying the patient’s condition, the hospital’s status, Dane’s responsibilities, and Dr. Franck’s thoughts. These Statements were interspersed with Offers, which comprised 13.79% and likely aimed to reassure H. Questions and Answers also accounted for 13.79%. Exclamations and Acknowledgements comprised 6.9%, and Commands and Compliances each represented 3.45%. No speech acts were noted from the attending group.

In Conversation 2, Statement speech roles are the most frequent at 30.77%. Question, Answer, and Offer each make up 15.38%. Command and Marker account for 7.69%, while Acknowledgement and Acceptance are the least common at 11.54% and 3.85%, respectively. No *express self* or *attending* groups were found. In Conversation 3, a few speech role types exist, as shown in the table in the Appendix.

Conversation 4 includes twelve roles across seven types: Exclamation, Call, Response to call, Statement, Question, Answer, and Offer, with frequencies of 25%, 8.33%, 8.33%, 25%, 16.67%, 8.33%, and 8.33%.

The fifth conversation contains 100 moves, with speech role frequencies: 32% (Statement), 27% (Command), 11% (Question), 7% (Exclamation, Answer, Offer), 4% (Compliance), 2.27% (Acceptance), and 1% (Greeting, Call, Acknowledgement). Few attending and self-express groups appear.

The sixth conversation centers on Robert and Dane’s breakup, with Statements at 40% and Responses to greetings at 20%. Other roles — Greeting, Call, Acknowledgement, Question, and Answer — are evenly distributed at 10%.

The seventh conversation features Master Ned confessing to Dane about Lucy’s death, with two main roles: Question (60%) and Answer (40%).

Conversation 8, the last, has 41 moves corresponding to 41 speech act roles; Statements lead at 51.22%, followed by Question (17.07%), Answer (14.63%), and Exclamation (7.32%). Command and Compliance are the least frequent at 4.88%.

This section presents the occurrences of speech role types in eight conversations from the short story. The following sections will discuss situations where Martin and Role’s (2007) framework is used to identify speech roles and speech acts.

5. Discussion

5.1. Identifying speech roles

At the beginning of the first conversation, Dr. Franck informs Dane of his difficult situation with a Statement, “Miss Dane, I’m in a quandary.” Since he initiates the conversation, he is the nucleus of this conversation and is therefore marked number 1. According to Martin and Rose (2007), the speech act of the next character should be an Acknowledgement in response to a Statement [2]. However, Dane responds with a question that functions as an *Offer*, “Can I help you out of it?” Nevertheless, this question can also be seen as an implicit *Acknowledgement*, as Dane implicitly acknowledges Dr. Franck’s current predicament within the context of the Civil War. Therefore, in this case, Dane’s speech role can be considered a blend of both *Offer* and (implicit) *Acknowledgement*. In this condition, the move of Dane can be A2 if it is an *Offer* or K2 if it is an *Acknowledgement*.

Subsequently, Dr. Franck responds with an *Exclamation*. The move of the *Exclamation* should be an A move because the speaker is expressing their emotion about specific information, although Martin and Rose’s (2007) framework does not address this [2]. Following the *Exclamation*, Dr. Franck says, “I don’t like to propose it, but you certainly can, if you please.” In this move, he does mention what he wants Dane to do. Thus, this speech role is regarded as a *Command*.

Dane responds, “Then give it a name, I beg.” When considering the *Command* mentioned above, this response would be *Compliance*. Regarding the *Compliance*, it is implicit, as Dane’s statement implies her agreement to assist Dr. Franck with a patient whose name he will mention. Those lines are presented below:

Character	Move	Line	Speech Role Types
Dr. Franck	K1	[C1B1] Miss Dane, I’m in a quandary.	Statement
Dane	K2/A2	[C1B2] Can I help you out of it?	Acknowledgement/Offer
Dr. Franck	A1	[C1B3] Faith!	Exclamation
	A1	[C1B4] I don’t like to propose it, but you certainly can, if you please.	Command
Dane	A2f	[C1B5] Then give it a name, I beg.	Compliance

5.2. Some suggestions for Martin and Rose's (2007) framework in speech role/ speech act analysis

5.2.1. Case of intertwined speech act types

In the process of defining and classifying speech acts, there are some situations where some speech acts are interleaved; that is, they can be considered as one type but also as another. Let's go back to the first part of the conversation:

Character	Move	Line	Speech Act Types
Dr. Franck	K1	[C1B1] <i>Miss Dane, I'm in a quandary.</i>	Statement
Dane	K2/A2	[C1B2] <i>Can I help you out of it?</i>	Acknowledgement/Offer
Dr. Franck	A1	[C1B3] <i>Faith!</i>	Exclamation
	A1	[C1B4] <i>I don't like to propose it, but you certainly can, if you please.</i>	Command
Dane	A2f	[C1B5] <i>Then give it a name, I beg.</i>	Compliance

Martin and Rose (2007) suggest that the next character's speech act should serve as an Acknowledgement in response to a Statement. However, Dane replies with a question that acts as an Offer, asking [C1B2]. This question can be interpreted as an implicit Acknowledgement, as it acknowledges Dr. Franck's situation during the Civil War. Thus, Dane's speech act embodies a combination of both an Offer and implicit Acknowledgement. In this case, Dane's move may be categorized as A2 if viewed as an Offer or K2 if seen as an Acknowledgement.

5.2.2. Case of far-apart complementarity

We use this term to describe complementary conditions that occur in moves belonging to Question - Answer or Statement - Acknowledgement categories. This did not occur in Martin and Rose's (2007) study because they studied turns occurring directly in films or classrooms, which developed linearly. The turns we studied occurred in a prose story, so turns could be overlapped by one character until the next character responded to them. Therefore, we recommend using an elbow arrow () to connect "far-apart complementarity" in those cases. For instance,

Character	Move	Line	Speech Act Types
Robert	Ch	[C2B12] <i>It doesn't matter, Ma'am.</i>	Acceptance

	K2f	[C2B14] <i>I'd rather be up here with the fever than down with those niggers; and there isn't no other place for me.</i>	Statement
Dane	A1	[C2B15] <i>You shall stay, then; for I would far rather have you than my lazy Jack.</i>	Offer
	dK1	[C2B16] <i>But are you well and strong enough?</i>	Question
Robert	A2f	[C2B17] <i>I guess I'll do, Ma'am.</i>	Answer
Dane	K1f	[C2B18] <i>Yes, I think you will.</i>	Acknowledgement

Or:

Character	Move	Line	Speech Act Types
Dane	tr	[C2B21] <i>What is your other name?</i>	Question
	K1	[C2B22] <i>I like to call my attendants by their last names rather than by their first.</i>	Statement
Robert	rtr	[C2B23] <i>I've got no other, Ma'am; we have our master's names, or do without.</i>	Answer

5.2.3. Case of consecutive turns

In our survey, we also found cases where the same speech acts, presented by a character, followed each other and led to the same response. In this case, we suggest that two questions should be connected with an elbow mark () and an elbow arrow down to the Answer; for example:

Character	Move	Line	Speech Act Types
Dane	dK2	[C4B10] <i>Do you know him, Robert?</i>	Question
	dK2	[C4B11] <i>Does he mean you?</i>	Question
Robert	K3f	[C4B12] <i>Lord, no, Ma'am; they all own half a dozen Bobs, but hearing my name woke me; that's all.</i>	Answer

5.2.4. Case of complex moves

As defined before, complex moves are semantic triplets or two turns that mention the same event, marked by (). In the short story, it can be seen in some situations:

They both mention Robert's condition:

Character	Move	Line	Speech Act Types
Dr. Franck	K1	[C1B25] <i>He must have been a handsome fellow before he got his face slashed; not much darker than myself; his master's son, I dare say, and the white blood makes him rather high and haughty about some things.</i>	Statement
	=K1	[C1B26] <i>He was in a bad way when he came in, but vowed he'd die in the street rather than turn in with the black fellows below;</i>	Statement

When Robert commands Dane:

Robert	A3	[C5B12] <i>Don't you be frightened, Ma'am.</i>	Command
	=A3	[C5B13] <i>Don't try to run away, for the door's locked and the key in my pocket.</i>	Command
	=A3	[C5B14] <i>Don't you cry out, for you'd have to scream a long while, with my hand on your mouth, before you were heard.</i>	Command

5.2.5. Move identification for exclamation

The framework provided by Martin and Rose (2007) includes specific conventions for identifying and naming moves within conversations, such as A1, A2, K1, K2, dA1, A2f, etc... These conventions are particularly useful for pinpointing speech act types. For instance, when analyzing the moves, it becomes evident that most moves categorized under A (Actor) correspond to speech acts like Offer, Acceptance, Command, or Compliance. Similarly, moves under K (Knower) tend to align with speech act types such as Exclamation, Statement, or Acknowledgement. This systematic approach significantly narrows down the scope of identifying speech act types, making the analysis more precise and manageable. Therefore, the situation below will be changed from

Dane	X	[C5B59] <i>Oh!</i>	Exclamation
	tr	[C5B60] <i>What did you do?</i>	Question
into			
Dane	K	[C5B59] <i>Oh!</i>	Exclamation
	tr	[C5B60] <i>What did you do?</i>	Question

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the speech roles in the short story “The Brothers” by Louisa May Alcott through the lens of interpersonal metafunction in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). By applying Martin and Rose’s (2007) framework for speech roles, the research identifies the diverse types of speech acts and their linguistic means within the story’s conversations. The findings reveal that Statements are the most dominant speech role throughout the dialogues, followed by Questions, Commands, Offers, and Exclamations.

This study also highlights several unique cases during the analysis, such as intertwined speech act types, far-apart complementarity, and complex moves, which required adaptations of the existing framework to account for the nuances in literary prose. These findings were not reported in Martin and Rose (2007); therefore, the aforementioned terms were proposed by the authors ourselves.

Overall, this study contributes to bridging the gap in applying Martin and Rose’s (2007) framework to literary texts, offering a systematic approach for analyzing speech roles or speech acts in prose. It also underscores the potential of the framework in discourse analysis, particularly in contexts where speech acts are not presented linearly as they are in film or classroom interactions. Future research could explore other literary works to further validate and refine the approach.

Statement of authorship

This research is conducted within the framework of K26A Master Project in English Linguistics at Quy Nhon University with the same title: **SPEECH ROLES IN THE SHORT STORY “THE BROTHERS” AS SEEN FROM INTERPERSONAL METAFUNCTION IN SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS** under the supervision of Dr. Le Nhan Thanh. We confirm that this study has not been submitted elsewhere in any other form for any purpose.

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Appendix

The frequencies of speech role types in the conversations

No.	Speech Role Types	Con. 1		Con. 2		Con. 3		Con. 4		Con. 5		Con. 6		Con. 7		Con. 8	
		Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
1	Exclamation	2	6.9	0	0	0	0	3	25	7	7	0	0	0	0	3	7.32
2	Greeting	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	0	1	1	1	10	0	0	0	0
3	Response to greeting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	20	0	0	0	0
4	Call	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8.33	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Response to call	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Statement	11	37.93	8	30.77	1	20	3	25	32	32	4	40	0	0	21	51.22
7	Acknowledgement	2	6.9	3	11.54	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	10	0	0	0	0
8	Question	4	13.79	4	15.38	0	0	2	16.67	11	11.00	1	10.00	3	60	7	17.07
9	Answer	4	13.79	4	15.38	0	0	1	8.33	7	7	1	10	2	40	6	14.63
10	Offer	4	13.79	4	15.38	1	20	1	8.33	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Acceptance	0	0	1	3.85	1	20	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Command	1	3.45	2	7.69	1	20	0	0	27	27	0	0	0	0	2	4.88
13	Compliance	1	3.45	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	2	4.88
Total Moves		29	100	26	100	5	100	12	100	100	100	10	100	5	100	41	100