

# ***The Railway Children and Their Acts of Heroism***

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**Abstract.** *The Railway Children* is a classic children book that has captured the attention of millions of readers of all ages. The book presents the story of three siblings, Roberta, Peter and Phyllis, whose wealthy and happy life is overturned after their father is imprisoned due to a false accusation of spying. They continue to keep up their spirits and do good for others, and it is through these children protagonists' adventures and heroic acts. The children's courages acts are the reasons we are interested in investigating the novel more deeply. Nevertheless, we are particularly interested in figuring out their heroism as communicated through their use of commissives. Commissive speech acts are produced when the children express their commitments to do something in the future. Their commissive acts would be studied with reference to Searle's (1980) categorization of commissives so that we can discover the types of commissives Roberta, Peter and Phyllis utter, and we can deduce which of those acts of commissives that communicate hero functions. The theoretical framework of heroism and hero functions that we use in this study is that of Kinsella, Ritchie, and Igou (2015), whom we consider to be providing a clear model of hero functions.

## **1 Introduction**

E. Nesbit or Edith Nesbit is a British children's author and poet who began her journey in writing for children in the early 1890s and eventually wrote over 60 children's fiction books. Her reputation as an Edwardian children's author is progressively significant due to her concerns about the welfare issues of childhood, which marked the inception of modern children's fiction. She was also credited for inventing the children's adventure and travel story with realistic contemporary real-world settings. In the Edwardian period, especially for Nesbit's works, adults and their grown-up power became less powerful and reduced. *The Railway Children* is one of her works that emphasizes the power and capacities of children.

*The Railway Children* is the E. Nesbit's classic children's novel containing collections of the adventurous stories from a family who moved from London to the tiny house, 'The Three Chimneys,' near a railway station after the father was accused of spying by his office. The Railway Children was initially serialized in *The London Magazine* in 1905 and first published in 1906 as a book form. This book attracted public interest and became famous as it had been adapted for the screen several times, including television series, a television film, and a feature film. The Railway Children has many characters to support and deliver each chapter's story. The main characters of the story are three siblings: Roberta (Bobbie) as the first child, Peter as the second child, and Phyllis as the last child. These siblings face the roller coaster of daily life in the new society in their new house, which influences their actions

and reaction toward the kinds of stuff they are involved in particular situation and purpose. They have numerous adventures along the local railway line and find life-changing incidents related to their father's case mystery.

*The Railway Children* novel was chosen as the object of this research since the novel depicts the commissive speech acts delivered by the character's utterances in the story. The main characters in the book, the three siblings, tend to commit to a specific action and express an intention when in a particularly challenging situation in the story of their adventures. Commissive speech acts mainly focus on an activity that makes the speaker do something or, in other words, commit themselves to something they would like to do in the future. People tend to do something by saying words to express what the speaker intends, such as promise, refusal, warning, pledges, and threat which can be performed alone or as members of a group (Yule, 1996) [7].

Speaking about commissive speech acts, we can not disregard the action taken by the speaker's words. Commissive speech acts are linked to acquiring efficient ways of making personal commitments. In this novel, commissive speech acts are produced purposively by the main characters to reinforce their existence as the leads in the story. They deliver their speech with performative verbs as an obligation to do something related to their activities where they are involved, which leads to heroic actions. In *The Railway Children* novel, commissive speech acts are primarily performed when they are about to rescue or solve some cases. It emphasizes that children can do the action that has the power to protect their society and sacrifice their lives to each other. The speakers will say utterances that imply their commitment, motivation, will, and ability to present their capacity to influence the society around them, especially those who need help.

Thus, this research decided to analyze the types of commissive speech acts performed by the three children: Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis, in *The Railway Children* and analyze those commissive speech acts that tend to show heroism as implied in their utterances. Searle and Yule's theory of speech acts are applied to explore the types of commissive speech acts appearing in the children's utterances in the novel. Searle classifies commissive speech acts into promise, volunteer, refusal, threat, warning, offer, and guarantee. Furthermore, Kinsella, Ritchie, and Igou's categorization of hero functions is applied to determine commissive speech acts implying heroism. They divide three core functions of heroes: enhancing function (enhancing and uplifting others), moral modelling (modelling morals), and protecting function (protecting the safety and welfare of others). This study aims to reveal the heroism in the story by identifying the hero functions from analyzing commissive speech acts by Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis' utterances in the novel.

As mentioned previously, commissive speech acts according to Searle consist of seven types classifications:

1. Promise

Promise is a verbal commitment said by the speakers to the interlocutors about the action they believe they can do in the future as they predict a future action on themselves. Promise always makes the interlocutors do something for their benefit, and if it involves a special commitment can be called an obligation. Searle (2011) [23] stated that promise is an action that must be done; the interlocutors would prefer done or not be done. The following is the example of promise: "I promise that I will be there."

2. Guarantee

Guarantee is a firm promise that the speaker will confidently do something or make the interlocutors believe something will happen. It is such an agreement that something will happen in the future or that something is true. Searle (1975) [23] argues that the levels of affirmation can be a tool to distinguish guarantee from promise. The following is the example of guarantee: "I am sure my parents will come."

### 3. Threat

Threat expresses the speaker's intention to punish people, which means intimidating the interlocutors if they do not want to do as the speaker wants. It is usually encouraged by loathing and curiosity toward the interlocutors. The speaker feels higher and more superior so they can intimidate the interlocutors. Threat can be a powerful statement that has the intention to punish people. According to Searle (1980) [24], the threat is that the future course of action represented by the propositional content tends to be bad for the interlocutors. The following is the example of threat: "If you do not do what I told you before, I will kill you."

### 4. Volunteer

Volunteer is described as a suggestion to do something without being pressured to do it in order to perform a service of someone's own free will. Volunteer means choosing to offer without any force and to give without being asked. The following is the example of volunteer: "I will take it for you."

### 5. Warning

Warning is an utterance that aims to warn someone to be careful, which is expressed in advice or a suggestion. It is said when the speaker wants to tell the other of possible danger or any unpleasant situation that might happen in the future. The following is the example of warning: "Watch out, he is dangerous."

### 6. Refusal

Refusal performs the act of refusing something, denying anything as requested, or offered for acceptance. It is a denegation of acceptance as being such an option. Refusal is the option besides approval that someone can choose by someone whether the interlocutor wants to obey and agree to command or refuse it. It is a form of a firm statement that is a negative response to an invitation, warning, suggestion, answer, or offer in certain situations. The speaker and interlocutor must understand the context as the form and function of this kind of statement. The following is the example of refusal: "I do not want to come to her house."

### 7. Offer

Offer is a willingness to do something that concerns acceptance from the interlocutor. A speech commits the speaker to perform a certain action if the interlocutor accepts. Offer happens when the action is done to each other by two parties, the speaker and interlocutor. The following is the example of offer: "May I help you to finish your assignment?"

Concerning an action occurred in consequence of a speech leads the understanding to the concept of heroic action and heroism whose performed by people who is considered as a hero. As cited from Green, van Tongeren, Cairo, and Hagiwara (2017) [20] "heroes are likely to affirm meaning via their own actions". Zimbardo (as cited in Kohen, Langdon, and Riches: 2017) [20] defines a hero as someone who acts intentionally and willingly for the sake of one or more people at great risk to themselves, without being driven by reward. Heroes are called to action and become aware of a challenge or issue they must handle. Furthermore, Allison, Goethals, and Kramer (2016) [14] also argued that heroism represents the peak of human behavior as a human being who can perform heroic acts and lead a heroic life.

In what follows, core functions of heroes identified by Kinsella, Ritchie, and Igou (2015) [15] are mapped into three categories:

#### 1. Enhancing function (uplifting and enriching the lives of others)

Heroes were described as making people "feel better about the world", "more positive about humanity," and reminding people of "the good in the world". This function is about heroes who instigate periods of transcendence, induce a perspective shift, increase the positive emotions experienced by others, and increase social connectedness. Although they

experience the threat of uncertainty, heroes still appear to produce motivational assimilation effects.

## 2. Moral modeling function (promoting morals and virtues)

Moral modeling is an abstract and symbolic function of heroes. Heroes are described as "moral symbols to protect everyday innocent people," "providing moral goals for society," and "personify the things that other people cannot articulate". In other words, heroes are perceived to act as agents of social justice, striving to improve the situations of the disadvantaged". Indeed, social movements require sufficient moral and emotional force to give clarity and inspiration to others.

## 3. Protecting function (protecting individuals from physical or psychological threats)

Heroes provide protecting function when they save, help, guide, protect, act against danger, and do what no one else will do to other people. They also help people restore positive feelings about others, buffer negative feelings about themselves, and assist people in getting through tough times. Heroes proactively take action to combat evil or danger and may feel safeguarded and more particular about the future, primarily related to the sense of security. They offer guidance and leadership through the complexity of daily life.

Many researchers have studied the study of *The Railway Children* novel. These studies focused on analyzing the main children characters: Roberta (Bobbie), Peter, and Phyllis. Each study tried to analyze the children's characters from various perspectives. The interpretation of the children's empowerment was studied by Anshori (2016) [1]. He tried to describe the children's empowerment in the novel based on the main characters' thoughts, actions, and feelings that displayed other characters' good comments towards the main characters. Nugraheni (2017) [3], using Lewin and Hurlock's theories of personality, found that the children are influenced by their current life issues of lower socio-economic conditions to experience personality development in each of their characters by adjusting, embracing their circumstances, and being grateful. Based on these studies, it was found that the children characters who grow up with socio-economic issues that lead to dealing with personality development are significant and able to show empowerment through their behavior, creativity, and imagination to face the adventures in their lives.

Meanwhile, the study of commissive speech acts in literary work, especially a novel, has been done by many researchers. Austin, Searle, and Yule's theory of speech acts were applied in these studies. However, the other studies also discussed another topic instead of focusing on the commissive speech acts. Dewi, Rajeg, and Netra (2016) [9] also analyzed expressive speech acts in their studies. Radhi (2017) [10] examined whether speech acts are utilized directly or indirectly and which politeness approach is most frequently used to accomplish them. Meanwhile, Nugraheni, Ariatmi, and Fatimah (2014) [8] discussed the violation of maxim cooperative principles and showed the findings of three pragmalinguistic forms of commissive utterance. In discovering the violation of maxim, she applied Grice's theory of cooperative principles. Based on these studies, the commissive speech acts on the main character as the dominating character in the story found different results in each study due to various literary works and used additional theories such as cooperative principles, expressive speech acts, and politeness strategy.

Moreover, two previous studies had been found related to the heroism reflected in a novel. These studies discussed the heroism reflected in the novel by linking it with the main characters in the story. However, they use different theories and approaches in their study. Selian, Suhadi, and Manugreen (2017) [12] applied the modern theory of heroism proposed by Gibbon and analyzed three points about heroism: giving protection, defending rights, and gratitude. The study found that the main characters highlighted heroism and did heroic deeds presented by the three points about heroism. Meanwhile, Khusna (2018) [11] used Marxist approach to describe heroism issues in the novel. Her study found Old Fisherman's character was measured as a tragic hero and Hemingway's writing styles in the novel. Different from

those previous studies, this research focuses on classifications of commissive speech acts types by Searle (1976) uttered by the main characters and the categorization of hero functions by Kinsella et al. (2015) expressed by commissive utterances that implies heroism.

This research applies a qualitative descriptive research method. The material object and source of data of this research is a children's novel entitled *The Railway Children* written by Edith Nesbit in 1906. In this research, the data are the utterances of the children main characters' in the novel: Roberta (Bobbie), Peter, and Phyllis. The data were taken from the utterances by those three children. The utterances may identified as promise, guarantee, warning, volunteer, threat, refusal, or offer. The data were collected through purposive sampling. The utterances are chosen because they show commissive speech acts indicate the classification of hero functions performed in their characters' actions. The method of analyzing data is referential method. The data analyzing method is referential to get the meaning from the specific reference as the results parameter. Analysis of the data will not discuss further each type of commissive utterances. Commissive utterances are used for analyze of the hero functions expressed by the three main characters.

## 2 Result and Discussion

Commissive Types	Total of Number	Percentage
Promise	18	13%
Guarantee	41	29%
Warning	16	12%
Volunteer	32	23%
Refusal	21	15%
Offer	12	7%
Threat	1	1%

**Table 1.** The total of commissive utterances.

From 139 commissives discovered in the novel, guarantee is the most frequently uttered by the children. Bobbie, Peter, and Phyllis articulated forty-one (41) guarantees (29%). Guarantees are the most frequently uttered because the children often reassure others that something will happen in the future. Their innocence and optimism as children drive them to make the interlocutors believe in them. The second most frequently uttered commissives is volunteer with thirty-two utterances (32) (23%). Volunteer is used by the children to help the interlocutors do something without any force or being asked. Refusal with twenty-one (21) utterances (15%) is used to refuse and deny anything the interlocutors demanded or suggested. Promise with eighteen (18) utterances (13%) is produced by the children to commit to the interlocutors about the action they will do in the future. Warning with sixteen (16) utterances (12%) is used by the children to warn the interlocutors to be careful of the possible danger coming to them or bad things that will happen to them. Offer with eleven (11) utterances (8%) is produced by the children to offer help for the interlocutors and they will do the action after they get acceptance. Meanwhile, threat is the least commissive uttered by the children with one (1) utterance (1%) because the children rarely have intention to intimidate the

interlocutors. As children, they do not have superior feelings and very influential power to the older people.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the types of commissive speech acts found in Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis' utterances above, this research found that 95 utterances among them contain hero functions. The findings of commissive speech acts types lead to the analysis of this result. The classification of commissive speech acts types found in three children's utterances shows that those types perform hero functions. There are three categories of hero functions found in this research: enhancing, moral modelling, and protecting function.

Commissive Types	Enhancing Function	Moral Modelling Function	Protecting Function	Total
Promise	3	3	6	12
Guarantee	12	3	9	24
Warning	0	1	15	16
Volunteer	10	2	17	28
Offer	3	0	3	7
Refusal	0	2	6	8
Threat	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	28	11	56	95

**Table 2.** The total of commissive utterances contain hero functions.

The children show hero functions when they perform heroic actions that their utterances can identify. According to the findings above, the most frequent category of hero functions is the protecting function, mainly performed by volunteer with seventeen (17) utterances. Volunteer is the most frequently found in the protecting function because the children tend to help the others without being asked. They volunteer to do actions that intend to help, save, protect, and assist the interlocutors or the others to against danger or in getting through tough times. Protecting function is mostly performed by volunteer utterances showing that heroes are the protectors voluntarily, with their sincerity coming from themselves to save others. Some others include enhancing function is mostly performed by guarantee with twelve (12) utterances, while the moral modelling function is mostly performed by guarantee with three (3) utterances. Guarantee is the most frequently found in enhancing function because the children use it to guarantee something that will happen in the future. Their intention to make others believe something will happen is in line with the enhancing functions to motivate, instill hope, and guide others. Furthermore, guarantee is most frequently found in moral modelling function because through promise that the children will confidently do and their faith to reassure people about something that will happen, they modeling the values and help people to understand the social norms. The children's optimism and positiveness are expressed by guarantee and they disclose heroes who are moral exemplars. However, there is no threat expressing hero function found in the novel because the children do not intimidate the others and feel superior when performing the heroic actions.

## 2.1 Enhancing Function (Uplifting and Enriching the Lives of Others)

According to Kinsella et al. (2015) [15], this function shows that heroes act in ways that advantage others, sometimes at a considerable personal danger that has been described as increasing positive effect in others and reminding people of a better world. The enhancing functions of heroes include motivating, being a role model, inspiring, instilling hope, improving morale, and to guide others. Heroes also boost and energize others with positive emotions such as awe, gratitude, and admiration. The total commissive utterances perform enhancing function is twenty-eight (28).

#### Datum 1

Now, though he flung her on to the edge of the hold, so that her knee and her elbow were grazed and bruised, she only cried: —

**"No—not you—ME,"** and struggled up again. But not quickly enough.

Peter had already gone down two of the cabin steps into the cloud of thick smoke. He stopped, remembered all he had ever heard of fires, pulled his soaked handkerchief out of his breast pocket and tied it over his mouth. (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 100)

Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis are on their way to save a baby from a fire but they have to cross the canal to get to the cabin, where the baby is there. Roberta decided to come first, so she got wet first. The datum above is an utterance from Roberta in her conversation between her siblings after they noticed a fire in the cabin and they try to rescue a baby inside the cabin who is alone. The parents are not with the baby because they go outside. Roberta says this utterance in the canal, where they must get into the water to pass it. The utterance shows an argument between her and her siblings.

Roberta and her siblings argued about who will get into the cabin and save the baby. Peter, who sees the fire at first, feels responsible for the accident and wants to take the baby out of the cabin. However, in her utterance above, Bobbie insists on saving the baby voluntarily. By saying “no, not you” to the others and emphasizing “ME”, she clearly wants herself to save the baby and she does not want the others to do it. Her utterance “*no-not you-ME*” is classified as a volunteer because she means to voluntarily get into the cabin and rescue the baby. In that situation, she wants to rescue the baby without being asked by her siblings to do such action.

The hero function performed by Roberta’s action, which is shown through her utterance, is enhancing function. Not everyone can always be selfless and prioritize others in this chaotic situation. However, Roberta shows that she can. A hero is people who can survive in any unpleasant situation that might happen in the future and take a risk to sacrifice their life to other people. In that case, Roberta shows enhancing function since she firmly decides to let herself into the cabin. She sincerely thinks about the safety of the others first and enriches their lives as the heroic characters should be. Eventhough in a difficult situation, Roberta still manages to prioritize other people and let herself in danger. Through her action, she inspires her siblings to be responsible and can be her siblings’s role model. Her struggle to volunteer in helping the baby boost Peter’s energy and enthusiasm to be responsible helping the baby, so that it finally moves Peter first. Thus, Bobbie has successfully demonstrated enhancing function, where she also motivates Peter to act heroic in rescuing the baby.

#### Datum 2

“Here’s a go,” said the Station Master; “no ticket—doesn’t even know where he wants to go. I’m not sure now but what I ought to send for the police.”

“Oh, DON'T!” all the children pleaded at once. And suddenly Bobbie got between the others and the stranger, for she had seen that he was crying.

By a most unusual piece of good fortune she had a handkerchief in her pocket. By a still more uncommon accident the handkerchief was moderately clean. Standing in front of the stranger, she got out the handkerchief and passed it to him so that the others did not see.

**“Wait till Mother comes,”** Phyllis was saying; **“she does speak French beautifully. You'd just love to hear her.”** (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 63)

After meeting the stranger in the railway station, Roberta, Peter, and Phyllis bring him to the Station Master to wait for their mother. However, the Station Master still wants to send the stranger to the police. The children forbid the Station Master to send the stranger to the police because they are sure that the stranger is not guilty and must be protected instead. They do not know the truth from the stranger, so they will not the Station Master immediately send the stranger to the police without knowing his story.

Phyllis, in her utterance, *“wait till Mother comes, she does speak French beautifully. You'd just love to hear her”* is tries to reassure the Station Master to wait for that her mother will speak to the stranger and will tell the stranger's story to them. She wants the Station Master to believe that her mother will speak to him in his language. Through her mother, they able to know the truth of the stranger's story and background. Phyllis is sure that her mother can talk to the stranger because she knows her mother can speak French. She guarantees the Station Master that her mother will speak French beautifully and the Station Master will like her mother. Her utterance also means that her mother will help them and they will get information about the stranger from her mother. Thus, her utterance is classified as guarantee.

The hero function performed by Phyllis' utterance is enhancing function. In this situation, Phyllis says the utterance to persuade the Station Master to believe that her mother can speak French beautifully. Her utterance has an intention to do heroic action helping the stranger to be send to the police. She utters the guarantee to help the stranger and show her admiration and positiveness towards his mother. She tries to instill hope to the Station Master that her mother can help them to talk to the stranger. By saying the utterance, she also means uplifting the stranger's life by not easily judging him and intends to hear the truth from him. Her positive reaction through trying to listen to people tell their life stories can give them hope and boost them with positive emotions and she manages the Station Master to do that too.

## 2.2 Moral Modelling Function (Promoting Morals and Virtues)

According to Kinsella et al. (2015) [15], this function demonstrates that heroes model morals for others by reminding individuals of societal morals, ethics, values, norms, or guiding people away from behaviors that may endanger others and prompting others to do what they can to support those in need. Heroes also prompt the others to do what they can for those who need help and be moral exemplars. The total commissive utterances perform enhancing function is eleven (11).

Datum 3

**"Oh, don't!"** said Bobbie; **"don't you see how frightened he is? He thinks you're going to shut him up. I know he does—look at his eyes!"** (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 62)

In the middle of the crowd at the railway station, the Station Master took the arm of the stranger harshly. Then the stranger man wrenched his arm away and cowered back, coughing and trembling and trying to push the Station Master away, so Bobbie warned the Station Master. Bobbie knows that the stranger is afraid of the Station Master because of his physical treatment of him. The Station Master pulls the stranger by force and treat him unkindly. Seeing that, Bobbie immediately tries to defend the stranger and stop the Station Master.

In her utterance, Bobbie says, “*oh, don't! Don't you see how frightened he is?*” to warn the Station Master and remind him that his treatment of the stranger is wrong because it makes the stranger scared to him and tries to escape from that situation. Bobbie's empathy and sensitivity towards other people's feelings stand out as a child. Through her life experience and learning from his parents and siblings, she is aware that feelings and thoughts should understand other people. In this context, she knows that the stranger man is frightened by his looks, especially his face. Bobbie can feel his emotion just by looking at him and she decides to look after him carefully. Her utterance shows her commitment to warning someone to do something bad for the stranger because it can worsen the situation and the stranger's condition. Her utterance is categorized as a warning as she commits to help him because she sympathizes with him. The way she firmly says “don't!” to the Station Master after he takes the stranger's arm shows her attitude towards the stranger because she understands that the stranger is afraid of that kind of treatment.

Through her utterance, the hero function showed is moral modelling type. It is because she tries to give some learn for the Station Master to treat everyone and behave to them well regardless of their status and conditions. She emphasizes societal morals and values and helps the stranger avoid possible endangerment. The stranger feels threatened by the Station Master, who grabs his arm suddenly. Bobbie tries to change the Station Master and society's minds so that they can treat everyone gently no matter who they are. Hero functions as the moral exemplars showed by Bobbie in her action. Her action to warn the Station Master not to do something that can danger the others is a reminder for the crowd in the station as a part of society as well to treat everyone equally regardless of their appearance. When the others in the crowd look down on that stranger and think he is a criminal, Bobbie sticks up for him and does not judge him easily. Bobbie's action also shows her courage to defend small people who are negatively viewed by the crowd there. She shows that children as heroes can also bring changes to society's behavior for the better.

#### Datum 4

“The canal may belong to him,” he said, “though I don't believe it does. **But the bridge is everybody's. Doctor Forrest told me it's public property. I'm not going to be bounced off the bridge by him or anyone else, so I tell you.**” (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 98)

When the children went to the Canal bridge to discuss about Perks' birthday plan, they met a man who asked them to get away from there. The man rudely caught Peter because he thought that they went to catch fish there. After the man let Peter go, Peter argued with her sisters about to leave or not from there. In this situation, Peter is angry toward the rude man who asked him and her sisters to get out of there. The man hurts Peter's feelings because Peter insists that the bridge is public property and no one can prohibit them from using that intentionally made for everyone. Moreover, the man accuses him of going fishing there.

In his utterance, Peter bravely argued with the man about his rights and the man feel challenged by him. The way he said “*I'm not going to be bounced off the bridge by him or anyone else, so I tell you*” to her sister, is a form of his belief that he will not be defeated by

the man. He also tries to convince her about a bridge everyone can use and that he dares to go against everyone, including that rude man, to defend the right thing. He believes Doctor Forrest told him that the bridge is public property. He has the right to be there as he pleases, and the man has no right to throw him out. He convinces her sister to come to believe in his belief and something that he guarantees will happen in the future. Through his utterance, he also commits to guarding the rights of people because that bridge is everybody's, and they can always use it. Thus, his utterance is classified as guarantee.

Through Peter's utterance, the hero function showed is moral modelling function. Through his utterance, Peter shows confidence in his belief and courageousness. His commitment to guarding everyone's rights of public property usage is also shown in that utterance. In his utterance, he shows the value that everyone can follow. As individuals, people should firmly defend their rights and be confident in good things that we believe are right. Peter's confidence about thing that will happen in the future also shows the function as heroes as moral exemplars. Heroes are brave to stand alone and not easily defeated by the others, especially to defend everyone's rights for using that bridge as public property that is made to everyone, not only people that lives there near the canal like the man who attacks him and his siblings there.

### 2.3 Protecting Function (Protecting Individuals from Physical or Psychological Threats)

According to Kinsella et al. (2015) [15], this function showed when the heroes deal with overwhelming life challenges, threats to uncertainty, meaning, or other existential dilemmas and help others cope with their own difficulties. Heroes either protect themselves or others. Heroes are protectors who protect, help, save, guide, and act against evil or danger. The total commissive utterances perform enhancing function is fifty-six (56).

Datum 5

“The 11.29 down hasn't gone by yet. **We must let them know at the station, or there'll be a most frightful accident.**” (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 74)

On their way to pick up cherries, Bobbie, Peter, and Phyllis heard noise from the trees and woods that turned out to be a mound. They saw a landslide there. The area will be passed by train, so they must tell the station about this to save the train. The utterance happens at the top of the steps near the tunnel gate. Peter says this utterance after he sees a great mound there. Along with her siblings, he stunned at the views at first because he did not ever see such a disaster before.

Peter's utterance is classified as a guarantee. After realizing the chaos of the trees, rocks, and grass, which is like moving and making a rumbling-noisy sound, he noticed that something was not right and dangerous. He is aware that it could endanger the train that will pass the tunnel, and there will be an accident. In his utterance, he firmly says that “*we must let them know at the station, or there'll be a most frightful accident*”. He means that he invites his siblings to immediately go to the station to avoid any possible accident because it will endanger many people in the train. Through his utterance, he guarantees that something bad will happen in the future, and he, together with his siblings, will try to stop that. When he says, “*the 11.29 down hasn't gone by yet*”, he shows his knowledge about the train lead to the tendency of obsession. His obsession with the train indirectly encourages him to show his empathy deeply, ultimately leading to his commitment. His commitment shows in his utterance as he exactly knows what to do now and how it will affect the future. It is not only about his urgency in trying to save, but he thinks about the train, the station, the tunnel, and

the people there. As a kid of a family going through a big transformation in life and living with two siblings leading their various adventures, he is used to thinking about himself and others.

Through Peter's utterance, a hero function contained is the protecting function because it shows his commitment to save other people. His utterance shows his empathy towards the accident that might come and endanger everyone on the train. His empathy encourages him to do something that can protect and prevent the accident that could be happened. As heroes, to risk and sacrifice themselves for other people is common. Peter shows the heroic action by his commitment initiated to act as soon as possible to stop the train because he does not want an accident to happen and people on the train to get hurt. In his utterance, he also shows the main point of protecting function: to save the train and the passengers as best he can, no matter what happens, even though it might harm him. Peter prioritizes the other's safety in the train rather than himself. His action is against the danger that will happen in the future and he will not let that happen. He wants to save people in the train by preventing the accident.

Datum 6

**“And what we want more than anything in the world is to find his wife and children for him,”** said Bobbie, “but we don't know how. But you must be most horribly clever, or you wouldn't be a Direction of the Railway. And if YOU knew how—and would? **We'd rather have that than anything else in the world. We'd go without the watches, even, if you could sell them and find his wife with the money.**” (Nesbit, *The Railway Children*, p. 88)

Bobbie came to the story of the Russian stranger who previously causes a fuss there. After her mother talk to him in the previous day, she got the truth about him. He actually had written the beautiful book about poor people and had been sent to prison in Siberia for that. She told this story to the old gentleman at the station.

Bobbie's utterance “*and what we want more than anything in the world is to find his wife and children for him*” means that she genuinely wants to help the Russian stranger find his wife and children. Bobbie also says “*and if YOU knew how—and would? We'd rather have that than anything else in the world. We'd go without the watches, even, if you could sell them and find his wife with the money*”, that means she and her siblings will effortfully look for a way to find the Russian's wife and children however it is. She even sacrifices to go without the watches because she can get money from the watches by selling them, so she can help the Russian. Her utterance is classified as a volunteer because she sincerely volunteers herself to help the Russian in finding his wife and children even though the Russian does not ask her and the siblings to do that. In her utterance, Bobbie firmly commits that she will help the Russian until she can find them in anyways. Bobbie wants to do that because she feels that the Russian is mistreated as a poor writer who writes a beautiful book about poor people, which is actually the Russian social class in the society in his origin country. He should be sent to prison in Siberia for something that does not make any sense for Bobbie because the Russian writes the representation and story of his class he had experienced, and he just tells the truth in his book. Bobbie feels sorry for the unfairness, so she wants to help him. Saying it all, she was trying to convince the old gentleman to help her for the sake of the Russian.

Bobbie's utterance shows her action performing protecting function because, through her commitment, she shows her firmness to help the Russian find his wife and children. The function is also shown by how Bobbie feels difficult to see the Russian's condition as a

Siberian prisoner who did not make a mistake by writing a book about poor people. Bobbie feels sorry because the Russian can not meet his family, unlike Bobbie, who lives his adventurous life accompanied by the love of his family. She can not bear the Russian pain and sincerely wants to help him. In this case, she copes with her difficulties by helping others. She wants the Russian to meet his family soon because she knows that as a child who is being left mysteriously suddenly by his own father will surely miss her father's presence. She also saw his mother, who secretly missed his father, so he wanted to help the Russian meet his family soon. She reflects on what happened to him to others. Bobbie's action shows heroes as protectors who help, guide, and save others' lives. She wants the Russian to relieve the pain a little.

### 3 Conclusion

Based on the research above, it can be concluded that the inference of this research refers to the types of commissive speech acts used by Roberta (Bobbie), Peter, and Phyllis as the main character in the novel entitled *The Railway Children* which also shows the heroism through hero functions. This research discovered that those three main children characters utter seven types of commissive speech acts: promise, guarantee, warning, volunteer, refusal, offer, and threat. Children most frequently utter guarantee because they often reassure other people that something will happen in the future. They produce commissive utterances with various intentions but mostly to make personal commitments and show that themselves are worth believing in. As many as ninety-five (95) commissive utterances are uttered by them with the intention of performing actions that show three categories of hero functions: enhancing, moral modelling, and protecting. The most frequently hero function expressed in their commissive utterances is the protecting function, performed mainly by volunteer utterances. Through volunteer, the children tend to have intention to perform as protectors who voluntarily save, help, protect, and guide others. However, there is no threat expressing hero function found in the novel because the children do not intimidate the others and feel superior when performing the heroic actions. In the end, hero functions performing heroism are determined by commissive utterance types and the intention of each utterance by the children characters.

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