



A Pragmatic Study of Directive Speech Acts Used by Characters in *War for the Planet of the Apes* Movie Script

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the use of directive speech acts in the movie script “War for the Planet of the Apes”, analyze their frequency, and identify the contextual factors that influence the speakers’ use of these acts. Using a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, this study has found 57 data containing directive speech acts to be categorized into seven different types based on Searle (1979), including command, suggestion, request, invitation, begging, forbidding, and warning. The type of directive speech act that appears the most is command (49.1%), which shows that the script of “War for the Planet of the Apes” is very thick with military style and authority. The least frequent type is forbidding (3.5%), reflecting that this movie script focuses more on positive directives than negative ones. This research contributes to pragmatic studies by showing that directive speech acts play a significant role in creating screenplays and offer scriptwriters insight into how to create inviting narratives through linguistic strategies.

Keywords: directive speech act; command; War for the Planet of the Apes; script; movie

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan tindak tutur direktif dalam naskah film “War for the Planet of the Apes”, menganalisis frekuensinya, dan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor kontekstual yang memengaruhi penggunaan tindak tutur direktif oleh para penutur. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dan pendekatan deskriptif, penelitian ini menemukan 57 data yang mengandung tindak tutur direktif, yang dikategorikan ke dalam tujuh jenis berbeda berdasarkan Searle (1979), yaitu perintah, saran, permintaan, undangan, permohonan, larangan, dan peringatan. Jenis tindak tutur direktif yang paling sering muncul adalah perintah (49,1%), yang menunjukkan bahwa naskah film “War for the Planet of the Apes” sangat kental dengan gaya militer dan otoritas. Jenis yang paling jarang adalah larangan (3,5%), mencerminkan bahwa naskah film ini lebih fokus pada perintah positif daripada negatif. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada studi pragmatik dengan menunjukkan bahwa tindakan ucapan direktif memainkan peran penting dalam penulisan naskah dan memberikan wawasan kepada penulis naskah tentang cara menciptakan narasi yang menarik melalui strategi linguistik.

Kata kunci: tindak tutur direktif, perintah, War for the Planet of the Apes, naskah, film



INTRODUCTION

Language is a bridge that can connect ideas from one speaker to another used daily by all human beings to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Language has many variations, depending on the place of the language user, cultural aspects, and social factors, thus makes language quite complex and complicated to understand. Therefore, language can be studied through linguistics to understand how it works better. Linguistics is a study that examine language structure, exploring the construction of meaning from language (Suryanti & Afriana, 2017). Linguistics encompasses several branches of knowledge about how language works and divides science into several parts, such as syntax, phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and others (Kracht, 2018). Each branch of linguistics has its role in examining the nature of language or speech.

Pragmatics is a field that discusses the relationship between context and the language spoken by speakers. As stated by Leech (1983), Pragmatics, as a part of linguistics studies, is the study of how the context of utterances affects the meaning of language during communication. Meanwhile Searle (1979) also said, "Pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed." In this case, pragmatics can explain why an utterance uttered in a different language can be understood depending on the cultural context, the situation, and the location of the particular language used in communication. Pragmatic also has a concept where, in communication, utterances are grouped into several purposes, such as giving orders, offering help, or even declaring something, rather than just conveying information, namely speech acts.

In daily communication, language users certainly have a goal that refers to the occurrence of an action. This has been explained in the speech act, which studies the illocution in an utterance in a language such as assertive, declarative, commissive, expressive, and directives (Searle, 1979). Based on Austin (1962), speech acts divided into three types: locution, illocution, and perlocution. One of the speech acts, namely illocutionary acts, contains several types of ways speakers say it: assertive, declarative, commissive, expressive, and directive.

Directives are utterances that aim to make the listener perform an action the speaker wants (Cutting, 2002). Thus, Searle (1979) argues that when performing or applying speech acts in communication, the speaker must have an idea that makes the hearer assume that the speaker holds a hope or belief. In accordance to Searle (1979), directive speech act is a form of the speaker's desire to make the hearer do a particular action



sincerely, such as ask, request, order, beg, command, entreat, invite, advice, and many more. Not only does it make the interlocutor do something, but directive speech acts also occur where the speaker intends to make the hearer refrain from doing something (Kreidler, 1998). Moreover, Bach and Harnish (1979), as cited in Flor (2005), also define that the listener's action is derived from the speaker's intention or attitude that requires the listener to act. Cutting (2002) argues that the category of directive speech acts varies in invite, command, forbid, request, and suggest. This category of directive speech acts intends to show the speaker's desire to ask for cooperation, give advice, prohibit the listener from doing an action, and provide a guide to follow. Kreidler (1998) classifies directive speech acts into various types, starting from requests, commands, and also suggestions; in order for the speaker's command to be carried out as desired, for requests, the hearer must accept the speaker's authority, while commands the wish, and suggestions the judgment. Communication using directive speech acts not only aims to make the hearer act but also to show the power dynamics and the context of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

In order to identify the specific function of a statement, Searle (1969) introduced the concept of Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), which is a tool used to mark the action intended by the speaker. IFID can be a performative verb, an imperative construction, a modal auxiliary verb, or even a contextual clue that reveals the speaker's directive intention. In the context of the *War for the Planet of the Apes* movie, the use of IFID plays an important role in expressing power, authority, and control among the characters. Therefore, this study applies IFID theory to help determine how directive actions are linguistically realized in film scenarios and to understand the contextual factors that influence their use.

Moreover, this research is important because it explores the use of directive speech acts in a movie script, which has not been studied much compared to spoken dialog in a movie or the real world. Using a movie script from the movie *War for the Planet of the Apes*, this research shows how a character's utterance can give rise to an action that reflects social relations, the world of power, and how context affects a fictional narrative.

Moreover, this research can provide a broader theoretical study in narrative, movie scripts. In addition, this research can also help movie script writers and movie makers to make their movie dialogues more contextual and powerful by using pragmatic concepts,



especially directive speech acts. This research will have a more significant role for movie script writers, especially for movies with an atmosphere of war and apocalypse.

Previous studies have examined the directive speech acts used in various contexts, and the researchers used three previous studies to identify research gaps. The first study by Biatrik, Natsir, and Kuncara (2020), examined five types of directive speech acts, namely command, invitation, forbidding, request, and suggestion, with the command being the most commonly used directive speech act. The research is based on Searle's theory (1979) and Jakobson's linguistic functions (1960). Unlike that study, which focuses solely on Searle's classification, the data used comes from the spoken dialogue of *Maleficent*. In contrast, this study uses the written dialogue of the screenplay for the film *War for the Planet of the Apes*. The second study by Saddhono & Kasim (2016), analyzes the imperative, interrogative, and declarative in directive speech acts using Leech's (1993) framework. The research focuses on directive speech acts in a real-life academic environment, which is different from the fictional context of this article. Finally, the study by Euis Meinawati et al. (2020) explored humanistic values in *War for the Planet of the Apes*. This study uses the film's script as a data source, focusing on textual elements rather than cinematic interpretation.

This study aimed at find and analyze the contextual factors of the use of directive speech acts by the characters, which are divided into seven types ranging from command, request, suggest, beg, forbid, warn, and invite based on J. R. Searle (1979) theory uttered by the characters in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes*. This research focuses on how the characters' utterances in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes* can form directive speech acts to make the hearer act. In addition, this research also wants to explore more deeply how the context of an utterance by the speaker can influence an action that the listener will take in a fictional dialogue. In order to achieve this goal, the researcher formulated three research questions to focus on the main research problem, including the following: 1. Identifies the types of directive speech acts used by the characters in the *War for the Planet of the Apes* movie script, 2. Analyzes the frequency of each type of directive speech act found in the movie script, 3. Examines the contextual factors that lead the characters to employ directive speech acts throughout the script.



LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper, therefore, aims to explore the use of directive speech acts in different contexts, as categorized by Searle's (1979) classification. Searle's framework provides a basis for understanding the illocutionary nature of directive speech acts, which aim to influence listeners' actions: ask, request, entreat, order, command, beg, invite, advice, and many more. Cutting (2002) further develops this thread by focusing on functional variation within the realm of directive speech acts and how such variation reflects social hierarchy and interpersonal relationships. Kreidler (1998) supplements this point by dividing the directive acts into requests, commands, and suggestions, which shows pragmatic implications and the relation between speaker authority and listener compliance.

Moreover, this study also refers to the existing studies to show the gaps and contextualize the contributions. For instance, Muhartoyo & Kristani (2013) found 20 kinds of directive speech acts in *Sleeping Beauty*, while Fitria (2019) founds that commands were the most dominant type in *Koi Mil Gaya* movie. Then, Trihanto et al. (2022) examined *Jumanji: The Next Level* and covering the three forms of directive speech acts: declarative, imperative, and interrogative by Searle (1979). In addition, Wijaya & Helmie (2019) investigated *The Fault In Our Stars* script using Yule (1996) and Searle (1976) theoretical frameworks, identifying four kinds of directive speech acts. Lastly Ladita & Jazadi (2024) identifies the directive speech acts within *The Blind Side* movie and found five types of directive speech acts used by the characters in the movie.

However, most of the previous studies focused on types of directive speech acts other than those used in this study, namely command, suggestion, request, invitation, begging, forbidding, and warning, and also focused more on using films as data sources, where the data tended to come from transcripts rather than specifically from the movie script. Furthermore, there has been no research examining the directive speech acts found in the script of the movie *War for the Planet of the Apes*, which contains many interactions that reflect the dynamics of power, leadership, and authority in the military world. Therefore, this paper will integrate theoretical perspectives from these various pieces of literature to further existing frameworks in new ways on how directive speech acts function in fiction texts to shape narratives, power dynamics, and character relations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to analyze the data in *the War for the Planet of the Apes* movie script. The researcher chose this method and approach because it was most suitable for understanding language phenomena derived from the utterances in the movie dialog in detail. The main focus of this method was the systematic description and analysis of data, and it was expected to produce meaningful analyses and findings. Then, the subjects used in this study were the characters in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes*. The researcher does not only choose to use the main character because almost all characters in this movie script presented various types of directive speech acts to be analyzed. In addition, the data form used for analysis was in the form of utterances spoken by the characters in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes*. This data was obtained by downloading the movie script from Google, which was online, and then processing it by changing its format from .pdf to .doc to make it easier to filter the data.

When getting the data source, the researcher filtered the data by focusing on the utterances that contained directive speech acts. Then, after getting the data in the form of directive speech acts, the data was grouped into seven types of directive speech acts, namely command, request, suggestion, invitation, forbidding, warning, and begging; according to Searle's theory, a table to make it easier to analyze. Then, the frequency of each type of directive speech act was calculated and converted into percentage form to determine which type is the most dominant. After that, the data was searched for context by rereading the movie script to understand the situation and the correlation between the speaker and the listener. Then, the data that has been analyzed was interpreted to get answers to the research questions, and conclusions were drawn.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Command

Table 1. Command data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
THE COLONEL	<i>"Send him up to the quarry. Alone."</i>	86

In this scene, the colonel's utterance is classified as a directive speech act in the **command** category because The Colonel, who has the highest position of authority in the human army, uses a direct statement to order Red and his men to bring Caesar to the

“quarry”. The colonel uses the imperative verb “*send*” which lack of subject, absence of politeness markers, which reflects The Colonel's intention without accepting any negotiation. The context further reinforces the significance of the command, as Caesar is held captive until he is physically weak, making The Colonel even more dominant due to the inequality in power.

Suggest

Table 2. Suggest data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
BAD APE	<i>“Look! More snow! Can not go, must stay here.”</i>	42

In this scene, the speech uttered by Bad Ape can be classified into the directive speech act **suggest**, as discussed by Searle (1979), is a directive speech act that shows how the speaker wants to make the hearer do or not do something without any sense of authority. The position of Bad Ape and Caesar is equal because Caesar wants help from Bad Ape without any sense of authority. Therefore, the Bad Ape's utterance above is categorized as a suggestion because it emphasizes caring for others more. The modal verb “*must*” emphasizes his urgency and gravity of advice. And the exclamative “*Look! More snow!*” function as a contextual justification that strengthens the suggestion.

Warn

Table 3. Warn Data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
CAESAR	<i>“If this battle is coming... you should leave, while you still can.”</i>	71

In this scene, the directive speech act of **warning** can be seen through Caesar's words in Table 3 above. A warning directive speech act happens when the speaker wants to protect or warn the listener. If the listener does not follow the warning mentioned by the speaker, the speaker will face consequences. In the context of Caesar's speech, the factor here refers to a dangerous battle in the conditional clause “*If this battle is coming...*” which depends on a future event. In addition, the use of the modal verb “*should,*” expresses polite but urgent directive. Then the subordinate clause “*while you still can,*” signals the limited opportunity to act, strengthening his urgency.

Beg

Table 4. Beg data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
CAESAR	<i>"Please. You must take us."</i>	42

In this scene, Caesar's words in bold above, ***"Please. You must take us."*** can be categorized as a type of directive speech act **beg** because the nature of begging is an emotional plea that makes the hearer act. Caesar's utterance, preceded by the politeness marker ***"please,"*** strongly indicates how Caesar shows his desperation in asking for help from the Bad Ape. This is followed by the order ***"you must take us,"*** which involves the modal verb ***"must,"*** further reinforcing the urgency of the situation. Then the pronoun ***"us"*** highlights collective need and shared vulnerability, which strengthens the plea.

Invite

Table 5. Invite data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
KOBA	<i>"Yes... Join me."</i>	79

In this number 79 scene, Koba's utterance can be categorized into the directive speech act type of **invite**, which can be seen in the bolded phrase ***"... Join me."*** Invitation is a type of directive speech act that aims to persuade the listener to participate in an action together with the speaker. In the context of Koba's speech, the use of imperative verb ***"join"*** indicates Koba's intention to urge Caesar to perform an action together with him (***"me"***). Although Koba is just a figment of Caesar's imagination in this scene, it does not take away from the fact that Koba's words are included in the invite.

Request

Table 6. Request data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
CAESAR	<i>"Is it far? Can you take us?"</i>	41

The utterance above, ***"... Can you take us?"*** can be categorized into directive speech acts of **request** type because of how the speaker asks the listener for something in a polite tone and does not seem to be commanding or demanding with a specific purpose. In this scene, Caesar uses an interrogative structure with an intonation that reflects his attitude of trying to be polite and not seem pushy or demanding. With the opening question, ***"Is it***

far?" Caesar carefully measures whether his request is worthy of being fulfilled by the Bad Ape as the hearer. The use of modal verb *"can"* combine with the pronoun *"you"* indicating that Caesar is asking politely rather than to command.

Forbid

Table 7. Forbid data

The Speaker	Utterance	Scene No.
BAD APE	<i>"No... No touch."</i>	40

In scene number 40, *"No... No touch."*, is classified into the directive speech act type forbid. Forbid is a type of directive speech act that makes the hearer not to do an action that the speaker thinks should not be done. It because of his use of the negative marker *"no,"* which in line with the nature of forbid, which is also negative. In this conversation, the Bad Ape shows his authority when he forbids the Girl, as the hearer, from touching an object that belongs to him. The repetition of the word *"no"* reinforces the sense of prohibition issued by the Bad Ape to the Girl.

In this study, 57 data of directive speech act utterances from the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes* have been found, which are categorized into seven types, with the number of frequencies including command (49.1%), suggestion (12.3%), warn (10.5%), beg (8.8%), invitation (8.8%), request (7.0%), and forbid (3.5%).

Table 8. Overall data findings frequency

Directive Speech Acts Classes	Quantity	Frequency (%)
Command	28 data	49.1%
Suggestion	7 data	12.3%
Warn	6 data	10.5%
Beg	5 data	8.8%
Invitation	5 data	8.8%
Request	4 data	7.0%
Forbid	2 data	3.5%
Total	57 data	100%



The results listed in Table 8 show various ways in which the movie script characters influence each other's actions. With command being the most dominant directive speech act, it highlights the militaristic and authoritative context of the movie script. It reflects how power plays an important role in influencing others' actions. On the other hand, the use of directive speech acts, suggestions, requests, invitations, warnings, and begging is more focused on cooperative or caring relationships between each other without involving the aspect of authority. In addition, the types of directive speech acts, which are the least frequent, forbid showing a touch of authority with little emotionality. Thus, this study highlights that directive speech acts play an essential role in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes*. Not only does it help build the plot in a story, but directive speech act also adds depth to the characters. Also, it adds to the study of pragmatics in how language works in scripts.

CONCLUSION(S)

Overall, this research reveals how directive speech acts play an essential role in the movie script *War for the Planet of the Apes*. Command, which dominates up to 49.1%, strongly reflects this movie script's militaristic and authoritative concept. While other types of directive speech acts such as request, suggest, invite, warn, forbid, and beg are more reflective of how cooperation and care between characters. This research increases the understanding of how a context in a plot can influence characters to use directive speech acts. All things considered, the findings of this research highlight how language and narration work hand in hand, particularly in portraying the struggles of characters dealing with power dynamics, emotional connections, and moral conflicts. Through the analysis of command speech acts, this study shows how scriptwriters strategically use commands to assert authority and control, while contrasting them with softer directives that foster empathy and strengthen personal relationships. These results not only deepen our understanding of the storytelling in *War for the Planet of the Apes* but also encourage further exploration of how language choices in movie scripts can shape intricate character dynamics and drive the narrative forward.

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