

**SHOWCASING THE DIRECTIVE ILLOCUTIONARY ACT FOUND IN THE MOVIE  
MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the concept of illocutionary force in John Searles' speech act theory, with a particular focus on the directive aspect of illocutionary acts. The research seeks to completely examine directive illocutionary actions in the film's language using the film "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children (Burton, 2016)" as the data source. Instances of directed illocutionary acts are recorded using targeted sampling, repeated viewings, meticulous observations, and note-taking. Using Searle's theory, a descriptive qualitative analysis categorizes and interprets the evidence. The results show that among the five investigated directed speech actions, questions are the most often (40%), followed by command, request, and prohibition (20% each). This work advances knowledge of speech acts in communication and media art by contributing to a thorough understanding of directed illocutionary actions in the cinema environment. It gives insights into communication dynamics by throwing light on the prevalence and categorization of directed speech actions. The findings of the study, as provided in tables, narrative descriptions, and illustrative examples, emphasize the importance of inquiries and other directing speech actions in both verbal and nonverbal communication. The ramifications of this work extend to a larger knowledge of speech actions, expanding our understanding of communication in many circumstances.

**Keywords:** *directive illocutionary acts; film analysis; miss peregrine's home for peculiar children; speech act theory*

**INTRODUCTION**

Austin made a distinction between three distinct characteristics or degrees of meaning in speech actions in his book *How to Do Things with Words*. (1) Locutionary act: This is the act of saying something that can be examined in terms of its propositional content and grammatical structure. It refers to the literal or surface meaning of an utterance. (2) Illocutionary act: This is the act of executing a speech act or delivering a certain message via the use of language. It refers to the intended or implicit meaning of an utterance. (3) Perlocutionary act: This term refers to a statement's effect or influence on the listener, i.e., influencing or persuading the listener to follow a specific path or adopt a certain attitude. To fully comprehend the illocutionary and perlocutionary features of speech actions, Austin's idea of locutionary acts underlines the significance of the literal meaning of utterances. The illocutionary act, which is the cornerstone of Austin's theory of speech actions, can be seen as the locutionary act's basis. Nevertheless, Searle expanded on his hypothesis. Therefore, in pragmatics, the phrase "speech act theory" should be replaced by the term "illocutionary acts." It happens through the utterance's capacity for

communication. The speaker intends for the listener to comprehend something other than the literal meaning of the speech, offer, remark, or communication (Austin, 1955).

Searle proposed several definitions within the speech acts. In John Searles' speech act theory, the concept of illocutionary force is central to understanding an utterance's intended meaning and effect. Illocutionary power refers to the communicative intent behind a speech act, capturing the speaker's intent and the social effects they are trying to achieve with their words. Searle identifies several types of illocutionary acts, each associated with a specific illocutionary force. These illocutionary acts represent various speech act functions or purposes that speakers can achieve through their utterances. Among the most significant illocutionary behaviors noted by Searle are: (1) Assertive speech act intended to assert beliefs or make generalizations about the world. An assertive's illocutionary power comes from the speaker's commitment to the proposition's veracity or truth. For instance, asserting that "The sun rises in the east" is a truth about the natural world uses forceful speech. (2) Directives are spoken actions that are meant to change the listener's behavior. The purpose of directions is to persuade the hearer to do a certain action or act in a specific way. Commands, requests, or directions such as "Close the door" or "Could you pass me the salt?" are examples of directive speech acts. (3) Commissive are speech expressions that bind the speaker to further deeds or duties. Commitment or promise-making is the illocutionary force of a commissive. Commissives contain phrases like "I will attend the meeting" and "I promise to help you with your project." (4) Expressives are speech acts that communicate the attitudes, feelings, or mental states of the speaker. The illocutionary function of expressives is to convey the speaker's state of mind or personal experience. Expressions like "I apologize for the inconvenience" or "Congratulations on your success" are examples of expressives (5) Declarations are spoken acts that alter the course of events simply by being said. The illocutionary power of pronouncements is their ability to construct brand-new institutional or social realities. In a wedding ceremony, examples of proclamations are "I now pronounce you husband and wife" and "I declare this meeting adjourned." (Searle, 1969)

Understanding the illocutionary force of an utterance is crucial for interpreting its intended meaning, implications, and the social effects it aims to achieve (Tursunovich, 2022). It helps to recognize that language is not merely used for conveying information but also for performing actions, influencing others, and shaping social reality through speech acts but since this study will only focus on the directive aspect of the illocutionary act, it is necessary to give more explanation regarding this concept. In Searle's framework, these four types of directive speech acts represent different illocutionary forces and serve distinct functions in communication. The brief explanation of each type was noted as follows: (1) Command, a directive speech act that aims to exert authority or power over the hearer, compelling them to perform a particular action. It is an attempt to influence behavior through an explicit order or directive. (2) Request, a directive speech act that seeks cooperation or assistance from the hearer. It is a polite and less forceful way of expressing a desire or need, inviting the hearer to act voluntarily. (3) Prohibition, a directive speech act that forbids or prohibits the hearer from engaging in a specific action. It is a way of expressing a rule or restriction to prevent or discourage a particular behavior. (4) Question. While not traditionally seen as a directive speech act, Searle includes questions as a type of directive. Questions can be used to elicit information or request an action from the hearer, such as "Can you pass me the salt?" or "Could you please tell me the time?" Within Searle's framework, these four types represent distinct illocutionary forces within the broader category of directive speech acts.

About the directive speech act, such interactions not only take place in everyday life, but people can also experience other interactions through media art (Rosyidi et al., 2019). Art in this context is meant as a film that contains not only human conversations but also literary works. A film, also called a film, is a visual art form designed to simulate experiences that convey ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere through the use of moving images (Thompson et al., 2003). These experiences are conveyed through special modes of representation such as camera settings, editing, montage as well as slow motion, and time-lapse, often with literary

accents in the text or described in a textual framework. In addition, speech acts also describe or tell the audience what the characters are doing in the film. Several conversations, are condensed into a selection of two-dimensional images that you can see, hear or, all know from films. In addition, a film entitled *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (Burton, 2016) is analyzed as a data source for this study. The film is chosen as the data source for this study because it contains many illocutionary plots within the dialogue about this film. In the conversations of the characters in this film, for example, directive, illocutionary actions are often shown. This is because the events can be seen through visual movements that allow for a clear description of the situation that occurs when the instructional illocutionary act is uttered. Therefore, these directive illocutionary acts will certainly have contextual meaning. In addition, the question that needs to be solved in this study is what type of directive speech act that were found in the selected data in this study?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To validate and reference this study, similar topics were presented as related literature to provide an overview of both studies. The selected preliminary studies must cover memes as the main data for all submitted preliminary studies to have clear parameters and fair comparative analysis. These shared similarities between this study and previous studies would also provide consistency within the review. Five references were presented in this study. To put things in order, it would be much better to sort these previous studies by species. In this case, this literature research should begin with articles, which are then followed by the further thesis (Geurts, 2019).

The first article on the list was entitled *An Analysis of Illocutionary Act in Incredible 2 Movie*. This preliminary study aims to analyze the types of illocutionary actions in the movie *The Incredibles 2* and to interpret the predominant types of illocutionary actions using Searles' theory in qualitative research. From here it is obvious that there are similarities in both studies. First, both studies used Searles's theory to understand and analyze the illocutionary act. Not only the theory but also the nature of the two types of research used qualitative research. Not to mention that both studies contained only one theory from Searle. The differences between the two studies can also be determined in comparison to this study. The previous study focuses on every aspect of the illocutionary act, such as directive, assertive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. Meanwhile, this current study will only focus on the directive aspect to be more specific and different. The other distinction is the film source. In the previous study, the movie *Incredible 2* was used, while in the current study, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Special Children* is used (Sihombing et al., 2021).

The second is an article entitled *An Analysis of Directive Speech Acts in the Fault in Our Stars Movie Script*. This study aims to identify the directive speech acts performed in the script of the film *The Fault in Our Stars*. This study used qualitative research methods to examine how often the direct speech acts were performed and what type of directive speech acts are most commonly used in the screenplay by collecting data from the screenplay based on each character's dialogue. As for the comparison, the theories used in the previous study are different. This is the combination of Searle (1976), Austin (1960), and Yule (1996) consisting of three different theories combined into one theory underlying the previous study. Meanwhile, the current study is based only on the theory of Searle (1979). The idea of using a film script for the previous study is also implemented in the current study. However, this is also considered as a distinction between the previous study and the current study, since in the current study the procedure also includes watching the film and checking the script, while the previous study only relied on the script of the film. In terms of similarities, the analysis methods based on the qualitative method were similar. Furthermore, the focus of the study is actually on the directive part of the illocutionary act found in a film (Wijaya & Helmie, 2019).

The third article was titled *Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts on The Video of Prabowo Vs Jokowi-Epic Rap Battles Of Presidency*. This previous study attempts to analyze speech acts that follow Searle's (1979) theory using a descriptive qualitative method and a note-taking method. Some similarities between the current and the previous study were noted. First, the theory in both studies included the Searles theory, although the current study offered another theory to work with. Second, the method of analyzing the data is similar, using the qualitative method and the note-taking method. Differentiation was found where the previous study's focus was divided on each aspect of the illocutionary act, while the current study focuses

only on the directive illocutionary act (Rais & Triyono, 2019).

The particular innovation of this research comes in its detailed examination of directive illocutionary actions in the film *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* utilizing John Searle's speech act theory. While earlier research has looked at illocutionary actions and speech act theory, this study adds to the subject by focusing on directed speech acts in a cinema environment. This study provides a comprehensive assessment of the prevalence and classification of directive speech actions, such as command, request, prohibition, and question, by evaluating a varied variety of scenarios and applying a targeted sampling strategy. Furthermore, the study provides a thorough comprehension of how these directive illocutionary actions are employed in the film's dialogue, so expanding our understanding of speech acts in communication (Wijaya & Helmie, 2019b). This study's consequences go beyond the cinema environment, providing insights into the importance of directing speech actions in both verbal and nonverbal communication. Overall, the research is unusual in that it uses speech act theory to evaluate directed illocutionary acts inside a specific film, offering useful insights into communication dynamics and adding to a greater knowledge of speech acts in varied situations.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative research approach, with targeted sampling used to choose key moments from the film *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. The observation approach is used to attentively examine the film, noting instances of directed illocutionary acts, while the note-taking method is used to collect contextual information, conversation, nonverbal clues, and observations. Multiple viewings of the film are carried out, with a focus on the chosen sequences, while thorough observations and note-taking record important nuances. The information gathered is submitted to descriptive qualitative analysis, which entails a systematic evaluation and categorization of directed illocutionary acts based on form, function, and contextual elements. The data is interpreted using applicable theories, such as John Searle's speech act theory, to uncover the identity within the directive illocutionary acts. To represent the distribution and features of directive illocutionary acts, the study includes both formal tools such as tables, graphs, and charts, as well as informal approaches such as narrative descriptions and illustrative examples.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

As the core of this study, the results and discussion of the study are presented in this chapter. This article differs from the previous one in that it includes a full analysis and classification of directed illocutionary actions in the language of the film *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. The findings emphasize the use of Searle's theory to categorize the nature of directed speech activities in the film, and each data point contains an overview of the scene, the minute in which the conversation occurs, the line itself, and an accompanying image from the film. This method gives a more thorough and precise comprehension of the directive illocutionary acts within the selected scenes, resulting in a richer data analysis and presentation. The finding ranged from the general statistics of the data analyzed as an overview while the discussion would be the detailed classification of directive illocutionary acts discovered from five selected data based on the dialogues between characters from *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. Searle's (1969) theory provided four classifications to determine the nature of the directional speech action in the film as a result of the study. Overall, all data should be made up of at least one or more types of directive speech acts chosen to descriptively explain the data. In addition, the analysis for individual data proceeds as follows. First, the selected dialogue was added, which was taken from *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. Then the dialogue must include the minute that the dialogue took place during the film. Finally, contemporary images from the film have been added to help the reader visualize the scene even better. In short, each data will start with a general overview of the scene followed by the minute detail, then the dialogue of the scene

should be included, a picture of the scene should be added afterward, lastly, the analysis and classification of the directives speech act within the dialogue should be explained. In addition, the types of directive speech acts from the selected dialogues are tabulated to illustrate the results of the study:

*Table 1. Extracted Directive Acts*

| No    | Directive Act Type | Percentage | Quantity |
|-------|--------------------|------------|----------|
| 1     | Command            | 20%        | 1        |
| 2     | Request            | 20%        | 1        |
| 3     | Prohibition        | 20%        | 1        |
| 4     | Question           | 40%        | 2        |
| Total |                    | 100%       | 5        |

Table 1 shows that the data found contain five selected directives speech acts that construct five data. Based on the table above, the question has the largest amount, which is 2 or 40% of the total data. Meanwhile, the other aspects like command, request, and prohibition share the same contribution amount which is 1% or 20% respectively.

**Datum 1**

The first data was taken from the scene at minute 00:04:34. This scene featured two characters who were having a conversation on a car that run through the highway in the afternoon. The black-haired male character who wears a black shirt with a cream outer is Jake, who is the main character of this movie while the brown-haired female character who wears purple while driving is his co-worker named Shelly. In this setting, the following conversation was portrayed:

Shelly: What’s his deal? *Alheimers?*  
 Jake: *Dementia.*



Figure 1. Scenes from Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

In this context, both characters talked about Abe who is Jake’s grandfather. This scene happened after Abe talked nonsense to Jake through a phone call. The nonsense conversation between them made Shelly feel concerned while also curious about Abe’s condition. This led to a question from her that said “What’s his deal?”. Now, since the sentence had a question mark at the end, it is safe to say that in terms of the type of directive speech act for this data is Question. To be honest, the word “deal” itself is problematic. This is because even though the question alone is valid it did not feel complete and specific. Fortunately, the following utterance was uttered by Shelly to specify her question by giving an assumption about Jake. This is when she continued

her question by stating “*Alzheimers?*” which is a terminology of a certain disease. After the question was complete the fact that Question is the directive aspect of this data is finally clear. Later, Jake answers her question in short by clearing her misconception toward Abe’s condition by saying “*Dementia*” which is a medical condition that is kinda similar to alzheimers but not the same.

### **Datum 2**

The second data was taken from the scene at minute 00:04:03. This scene also featured two characters who were having a conversation. The two characters are Jake, who is the main character of this movie and Abe who is Jake’s grandfather. The differentiation from the previous data is, this data had two different settings which are on a car that runs through high way and Abe’s house both in the afternoon. In these settings, the following conversation was portrayed:

Jake: Hey, it's Jake.

Abe: No, don't come here. Listen to me it's not safe, stay away!



Figure 2. Scenes from Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

Here, the grandchild who wanted a check-up on his grandfather was confused by how he responded to Jake. Right after Jake answers Abe’s response to his calls, Abe suddenly rises his tone and started to talk nonsense toward Jake. This was indicated by on hJake’s dialogue started with him, politely confirming himself to Abe by saying “Hey, it's Jake.” which was cut off directly by the sudden explosive response of Abe that said, “ No, don't come here. Listen to me it's not safe, stay away!”. Abe’s response was followed by his gestures of searching for something on his table in a rush which made even his movement feel odd and nonsense to the viewer. Even though as a plot the dialogue is still confusing as it will be revealed later on, the directive speech act is right below the nose. In terms of the directive speech act type in this dialogue, prohibition was the main motive for Abe’s utterance. His anger can be focused on the word “stay away!” which was uttered at last. The whole context of his anger can be concluded as Abe’s prohibition of Jake from coming into his house. Moreover, the exclamation mark provides the sole justification for how people would express something that was prohibited compared to other directive speech acts. Therefore, the second data is classified as a Prohibition.

### **Datum 3**

The third data was taken from the scene at minute 00:05:56. This scene also featured Jake and Shelly. Another noticeable detail is that the settings change in terms of time from afternoon to night. The scene happened when both characters arrived at Abe’s house. Abe’s house turned in horror as soon as Jake witnessed the messy living room h broken glasses everywhere but not his grandfather. Jake who got confused and decided to call Shelly who stayed in her car. As the tension rises, the following conversation was portrayed:

Jake: Shelly!  
Shelly: What's going on?  
Jake: Someone broke in!

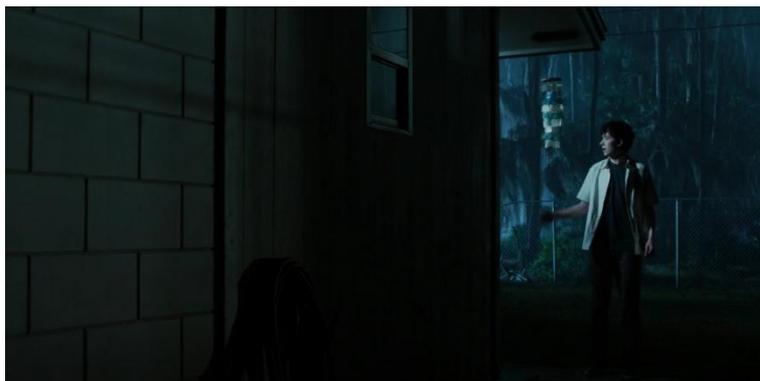


Figure 3. Scenes from Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

To determine the correct directive speech acts in this data, a breakdown of the dialogue need to be crystal clear. First, one may assume that Jake yelling at Shelly's name as a command for Shelly to respond to Jake. While that is an interesting thought, it is not quite dominant to be concluded as so. This is because the core of the conversation focused on what came next which is Shelly's question on why Jake yells at her. The reason why it became the main focus of this dialogue is that Jake's yell became irrelevant as the conversation moved forward which was indicated by Jack's response that said "Someone broke in!" to confront Shelly's question which left his yell as the main focus completely gone. Since first, it is obvious that the word "What's going on?" from Shelly is the true focus of the utterances plus it is constructed by a question mark, the classification became easy. This concludes that Data 3 is Question in terms of the directive speech acts.

#### **Datum 4**

The fourth data was taken from the scene at minute 00:07:45. This scene finally featured Jake and Abe while the overall context of the scene is fairly similar to the previous data. As Jake finally found Abe, the unfortunate thing happened. He found his grandfather lying on the ground without eyes. Jake immediately called an ambulance for help but as he do that, Abe tried to tell Jake something. In that setting, the following conversation was portrayed:

Jake: Will you do this, Tygrysko? Promise me?  
Abe: I promise, yes...



Figure 4. Scenes from Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

As anyone can see, in this scene Abe even called Jake by a weird name "Tygrysko" which

emphasized his nonsense throughout the entire scene. Here, as Abe kept mumbling nonsense words to Jake, it came some point where Abe wanted Jake to do something. This was indicated in his dialogue when he said “Will you do this, Tygrisco? Promise me?” which was followed by Jake agreeing on whatever his grandfather wanted him to do. In terms of the directive speech act within Data 4, this dialogue brings fresh air to the table. Finally, Request was featured in terms of the directive speech act for this context. The determiner for the Request is simple, it is the typical polite utterance to the hearer so they do something that the speaker wants the hearer to do. This makes Data 4 a Request directive speech act (Levinson, 1983).

### Datum 5

The fifth data was taken from the scene at minute 00:08:28. This scene once again featured Jake and Shelly. The overall context of the scene is fairly similar to Data 3 and Data 4 because both data happened in the same setting which still focused on Jake’s missing grandfather. This time as Shelly found Jake, a mysterious entity appeared right behind Shelly and this is the following conversation that was portrayed:

Jake: Shelly, behind you!

Shelly: There was no one there.



Figure 5. Scenes from *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*

As Jake yells “Shelly, behind you!”, he directly commanded Shelly to do what he wants her to do which is to command Shelly to look back. The exclamation mark justifies this claim. This is also what makes Command and Request in terms of the directive speech act different. It is the tone. Both of the terms wanted the hearer to do certain things but Command is direct and sometimes felt like forcing the speaker’s intention while Request is indirect and sometimes felt more calming to the hearer. Since the context of the scene was set in a serious and tense situation, even if commanding seems rude, it is acceptable. This claim was supported by Shelly’s reaction that straightly follow the command without complaining while also answering Jake’s command with her relevant response “There was no one there”.

### CONCLUSIONS

Finally, this study has successfully identified each directive speech act using John Searle's speech act theory in the film *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. Based on the findings, questions were the most common form of directed speech act, accounting for 40% of the investigated data, followed by restriction, request, and order, each accounting for 20%. This study adds to our understanding of communication dynamics and media art by investigating speech acts in the context of cinema, as directions impact behavior and build social connections. The work contributes to pragmatics, discourse analysis, and cinema studies by stressing the complex link between language, action, and the portrayal of social reality in media speech actions. When it comes to the study's limitations, future research might broaden the scope of the study to cover a

larger selection of films and investigate additional sorts of illocutionary activities. This would improve the generalizability and breadth of knowledge in this domain. Overall, this research makes an important contribution to the area by throwing light on the role and relevance of directed speech actions in cinema.

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