

# The Directive Illocutionary Acts in *The Help* Movie

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## ABSTRAK

Komunikasi merupakan proses penyampaian informasi dari pembicara ke pendengar. Agar penyampaian informasi berjalan baik, dibutuhkan pemahaman yang sama mengenai informasi tersebut antara pembicara dan pendengar. Dalam penyampaian informasi, terdapat banyak alat untuk menyampaikannya, salah satunya adalah melalui film. Film merupakan salah satu alat penyampaian pesan kepada penonton. Agar informasi dari film ini tersampaikan dengan baik, alur cerita dan peran pemain harus berjalan dengan baik. Salah satu film yang menarik perhatian penulis adalah film *The Help*. *The Help* merupakan film terkenal yang berasal dari Amerika Serikat yang berisi percakapan bernada rasisme.

Tujuan penulisan skripsi ini tidak hanya sekedar untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis *directive illocutionary act* yang terkandung dalam beberapa ujaran si pemain, namun juga untuk mengetahui faktor apa saja yang mempengaruhi pemain film tersebut dalam menggunakan *indirect speech act* dalam film tersebut.

Data yang digunakan merupakan kalimat yang mengandung *directive illocutionary act*. Metode pengambilan data menggunakan *purposive sampling* dari teori Sudaryanto, metode simak bebas libat cakap, yaitu teknik rekam dan teknik catat. Dalam menganalisis data, penulis menggunakan teori dari Vanderveken.

Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 5 jenis *directive illocutionary act* yang ditemukan dalam film *The Help* yaitu *request, command, prohibit, warn, dan pray*. Dalam analisis juga terdapat *direct* dan *indirect speech act*. Faktor yang mempengaruhi pembicara dalam menggunakan *indirect speech act* yaitu sebagai upaya dalam mendapatkan sesuatu dari lawan bicara yang mempunyai kekuasaan lebih tinggi.

Keywords: directive illocutionary act, indirect speech act, Vanderveken theory.

## 1. Introduction

Communication is the process of delivering information from speakers to hearers. There are a lot of instruments to deliver the information. One kind of the media of communication is a movie. Movie is one of the instruments to send messages to the viewers. Speech act is an action performed which is produced by speaker via his/ her utterances (Yule, 1996: 47). Speech act is divided into three:

locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary acts. The focus in this thesis is directive illocutionary act. One of the movies that has a lot of directive illocutionary act in the utterances is *The help*. In *The Help* movie, there are a lot of utterances containing directive which the speaker uses directive to get the hearer to do something. *The help* is one of the famous movies from the US. This movie shows racism that occur in the 1960s.

## 2. Review of Literatures

Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language (Levinson, 1983: 9). In pragmatics, one of the study is about speech acts. Speech act is an action performed which is produced by speaker via his/ her utterances (Yule, 1996: 47). In Yule's theory, the action that serves to express something or inform something and can be used to do something is illocutionary act (Yule, 1996:48).

In speech acts, the utterance is differentiated into direct and indirect speech act. Direct speech act is uttered in a simple way. Indirect speech act is uttered in a different way. For example, the speaker uses interrogative when giving command in order to dilate the command. **Directives** are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They express what the speaker wants. The kinds of directive verb are *request, ask, tell, command, order, prohibit, permit, suggest, insist, warn, advise, recommend, beg, and pray*. In using a directive, the speaker attempts to make the world fit the words. (Vanderveken 1990:189).

According to Vanderveken (1990:103) in illocutionary logic, the notion of illocutionary force is not taken as a primitive notion, but it is derived from more primitive notions. Vanderveken divided each illocutionary forces into six components. These six components serve to prove whether an illocutionary force is felicitous or not. The six components are: Illocutionary point, mode of

achievement, propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and degree of strength

### 3. Data Collection and Analysis Method

In this research, the writer collected the data by using non participant observation, recording technique, and note taking technique. According to Sudaryanto (1993:134), Non participant observation is a method where the researcher is not an addresser or speaker in the dialogue or the conversation, the writer is only the observer of the dialogue or the conversation. In this research, the writer used Identity methods to analyze the data because the determinant device of this research is an outside factor of the language itself (Sudaryanto, 1993:13). The data are analyzed in accordance with the following steps: After collecting the data, the writer classified the data according to the function. Then, the writer divided the data into direct and indirect directive speech act. After that, the writer tried to make the context in each utterances which contained directive speech act based on the setting in movie. Last, the writer made conclusion of the analysis.

### 4. Analysis

First, the writer found that in *The Help*, there are five kinds of directive illocutionary act that are used by the actors in this movie. Second, there are some reasons behind the use of directive illocutionary acts.

Table 1. The Directives Illocutionary Act Classification

Types of Directive Speech Act	Illocutionary Force	The number and frequency of Illocutionary Force
Direct Directive Speech Act	Request	17 (34%)
	Command	14 (28%)
	Prohibit	6 (12%)
	Warn	2 (4%)
	Pray	3 (6%)
Total		42 (84%)
Indirect Directive Speech Act	Request	2 (4%)

	Command	5 (10%)
	Prohibit	1 (2%)
	Warn	-
	Pray	-

Based on table 1, there are fifty utterances in *The Help* containing directive speech act. 84% of utterances are direct speech act, while 16% are indirect speech act. These amount explains that much of the utterances are conventional. The common speech is the suitability between mood and it's function such as declarative speech to express information, interrogative speech to ask for something, and imperative speech to order the hearer to do something.

#### 4.1 Direct Directive Speech Act

##### 4.1.1 Direct Request

In *The Help*, direct directive request happened when the speakers are white people or have high position and the hearers are black people or have low position. The request is delivered directly because the speaker seemed straight to the point when they talk. As found in the following utterance is :

Celia Foote : Hello. Is Elizabeth in? [107]

Aibileen : She having bridge club right now. May I take a message? [108]

Celia Foote : Yes, **please tell her Celia Foote called again.** I'll call back tomorrow. [109]

Aibileen : Yes, ma'am. [110]

Based on the sentence, the utterance of the speaker (Celia Foote) shows that she wants the hearer (Aibileen) to tell Elizabeth that Celia Foote called again. The context of this utterance is on the phone. Based on social background, the utterance does not invoke the power of position between the white people (Celia Foote) and the black people (Aibileen) because it was the first time Celia Foote spoke with Aibileen. Celia Foote is a friend of Aibileen's master. Actually, Celia Foote can use her power because she is a white people, but she did not know that the person who

was speaking on the phone is a black people. Because the speaker did not know that she has higher power than the hearer, the speaker spoke formally.

#### 4.1.2 Direct Command

In The Help movie, direct command happened when the speakers are white people or have high position and the hearers are black people or have low position. The command is delivered directly because the speaker seemed straight to the point when they order something to the hearer. There is data analysis example of direct command. Based on mood, imperative sentence is commonly used to make a command such as in [259] functioned as a command. As found in the following utterance is :

Hilly : Minny? Minny, are you in there? [257]

Minny : Yes, ma'am. [258]

Hilly : And just what are you doing? **Get off my toilet!** You are fired, Minny Jackson! Go on! [259]

Based on the sentence, the utterance of the speaker shows that she wants the hearer to get off her toilet. The speaker do the command in utterance [259] directly because the speaker has higher power than the hearer. The context of this utterances is in the Hilly's house. Based on the social background, the speaker's utterance invokes the power of position between the master (Hilly) and her black slave (Minny). In the story, Hilly is always angry with Minny without reason. Hilly thought that black slave was in the different level with white people. One of the social gaps that Hilly did to Minny was prohibition to use toilet that inside the house. Just because her toilet is used by her slave, she looked cruel to her black slave and her cruelty is as marked of her power.

#### 4.1.3 Direct Warning

Direct warning happened when the speakers have same or high position and the hearers have same or low position. The warning is

delivered directly because the speaker seemed straight to the point when they warned to the hearer. Based on mood, imperative sentence is commonly used to make a warning such as in [219] functioned as a warning. As found in the following utterance is :

Stein : Look. **No maid in her right mind is ever gonna tell you the truth.** That's a hell of a risk to take in a place like Jackson, Mississippi. [219]

Sketter : I already have a maid. [220]

Stein : Really? A Negro maid has already agreed to speak with you? [221]

Sketter : Yes, ma'am. [222]

Based on the utterance [219], the speaker shows warning because the speaker warns the hearer [220] that there was no maid will tell the truth about the racism that they got. The speaker does the warning in utterance [219] because the hearer has lower power when she speaks with her boss. The context of this utterances is on the phone. Based on social background, the utterance invokes the power of position between the boss (Stein) and the employee (Sketter). In the story, Sketter wanted to interview the black-slave for her book, but her boss, Stein, gave a warning because the interview tend to contain taboo things.

#### 4.1.4 Direct prohibition

Direct prohibiton happened when the speakers are white people or have high position and the hearers are black people or white people that have low position. Prohibition is delivered directly because the speaker seemed straight to the point when they prohibit. The imperative-negative sentences are commonly used to make a prohibition. As found in the following utterance is :

Mিনny : No, ma'am. Hold on a minute. We gots to talk about some things first. I work Sunday through Friday. [356]

Celia Foote : **No, you can't work at all on the weekends.** [357]

Minnie : OK. What time you want me here? [358]

Celia Foote : After 9:00, and you gotta leave before 4:00. [359]

Based on the utterance [357], the speaker's utterance shows that she prohibits the hearer to work at all on the weekends. The speaker does the prohibition in utterance [357] directly to the hearer to not work at all on the weekends, because the speaker has more power than the hearer. This sentence functions as a direct prohibit. Based on social background, the utterance invokes the power of position between the master (Celia Foote) and her black slave (Minnie). In the conversation, Minnie was the new Celia Foote's black slave. Minnie told about her work hour Sunday until Friday, but Celia Foote told that Minnie only work on weekdays.

#### 4.1.5 Direct Pray

In The Help movie, Direct pray happened without any social class between the speaker and the hearer because the pray delivered is directly to the God. There is analysis example of imperative sentence such as in [391] functioned as a pray :

Aibileen : I reckon I'm ready to talk about Miss Leefolt now. Baby Girl still gotta wear a diaper when she sleep at night. And it don't get changed till I get there in the morning. That about ten hours she gotta sleep in her mess. Now Miss Leefolt pregnant with her second baby. Lord... **I pray this child turn out good.** It's a lonely road if a mama don't think their child is pretty. [391]

Sketter : That's very true. [392]

Based on the utterance [391], the speaker's utterance shows that she pray to her God that Mrs. Leefolt child turn out good. The utterance of direct pray is not influenced by the power. Based on social background, the utterance is not influenced by the power of position between the white people (Sketter) and the God. In that time, Aibileen was telling a story about her master (Mrs leefolt). Because Aibileen loves Mrs. Leefolt's child, she prays that Mrs. Leefolt child will turn out good.

## 4.2 Indirect Directive Speech Act

### 4.2.1 Indirect Prohibition

Indirect prohibition happened when the speakers are white people and have high position and the hearers are black people and have low position. The prohibition is delivered indirectly because the speaker seemed to mock the hearer when they talk. This analysis is an example of declarative-positive sentence such as in [839] functioned as a prohibition:

Mae Mobley : Aibee, my throat hurts. [837]  
Aibileen : I'll go get some syrup, Miss Leefolt. [838]  
Hilly : **Elizabeth can take care of her own children.** [839]  
Mrs. Leefolt : I'll go get the cough syrup. [840]

Based on the utterance [839], the speaker's utterance shows that she prohibits the hearer [838] to do something. The speaker's utterance in [264] shows the speaker indirectly prohibit the hearer to take care Mae Mobley. This sentence functions as indirect prohibit. Hence, the utterance can be explained as: (I prohibit you to) take care Mae Mobley. Based on social background, the utterance invokes the power of position between the master (Hilly) and black slave (Aibileen). In that time, Hilly accused Aibileen of stealing two spoon and a fork from Mrs. Leefolt. After that, Mae Mobley came and told Aibileen that her throat hurts. When Aibileen would get some syrup, Hilly prohibits Aibileen to take care mae Mobley.

### 4.2.2 Indirect Request

Indirect request happened when the speakers are black people or have same position and the hearers are white people or have same position. The request is delivered indirectly because the speakers have less power than the hearers, so they seemed to talk in another way such as giving information in order to fulfill their will. This analysis is an example of declarative sentence such as in [329] functioned as a request:



Yule Mae : Miss Hilly, I would like to ask you and Mr. William something. My twin boys graduated from high school, both on the honor roll. Me and my husband, we been saving for years to send them to Tougaloo. **We're short about \$75 on one of the tuitions.** [329]

William : Whoo! I am late. I gotta get going. See you tonight, honey. [330]

Hilly : Ok. Go on. [331]

Based on the utterance [329] of the speaker, it shows a request, because the speaker asks the hearer to do something. In the utterance [329] the speaker request the hearer to give her a loan. Hence, the utterance can be explained as: (I request you to ) give me a loan. Based on social background, the utterance invokes the power of position between the boss (Mr.William) and his black slave (Yule Mae). When Black slave tried to get a loan from her master, she told her story and her purpose instead of her request. She chose telling her story instead of requesting because she wanted to get a sympathy from her master.

#### 4.2.3 Indirect Command

Indirect command happened when the speakers are white people and have high position and the hearers are black people and have low position. The command is delivered indirectly because the speaker wants to be seen as a good master, so she was not told directly and only provide information that will be immediately understood by the hearer to be implemented immediately. The imperative sentences are commonly used to make a command, but not as follows :

Aibileen : I'll give you two cookies if you go. Mae Mobley, you're going! [57]

Mrs. Leefolt : **Aibileen, the girls are pulling up, and the table isn't set.** [58]

Based on the sentence, the utterance of the speaker shows that she wants the hearer to set the table because the girls are pulling up. Based on social background, the utterance invokes the power of position between the master (Mrs. Leefolt) and her slave (Aibileen). She was not just to tell

that the table was not set, but she commanded to set the table. She chose her utterance to tell her black slave because she had a good characteristic, so she showed her kind utterance.

## 5. Conclusion

In the analysis, the writer found that there are five kinds of directive speech act used by the actors in this movie. They are request, command, warn, prohibition, and pray. Request is one of the directive speech act that allows for the possibility of refusal. There are 19 utterances functioning as requests. Command is one of the directive speech act that invokes the position of power or authority over the hearer. Commanding has a bigger degree of strength than requesting, and this bigger degree of strength is from the fact that a command invokes the position of power or authority over the hearer. There are also 19 utterances functioning as commands. Warn is one of the directive speech act that gives advice about what will happen. There are 2 utterances functioning as a warning. Prohibition is one of the directive speech act that is the propositional negation of command. There are 7 utterances functioning as a prohibition. Pray is one of the directive speech act that has degree of strength bigger than request, but where the degree of strength does not derive from any power or authority. There are 3 utterances functioning as a pray.

After analysing some kinds of directive speech act, the writer found that there are some reasons behind the use of directive speech acts both directly and indirectly. The speakers use direct utterance to get something because they have higher power than the hearer. However, sometimes the speakers use indirect utterance to get something because they do not have higher power or they use indirect utterance in order to fulfill their will. The speakers also used indirect utterance even though they have more power because they want to be seen as a respectful master to their slave.

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