

# **DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACT IN LOUISA MAY ALCOTT'S NOVEL *LITTLE MEN***

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## **Abstract**

Speech acts are central entities in pragmatics. The research aims to describe kinds and functions of directive speech act in the novel *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott. This research uses descriptive research. The steps of data analysis were carried out by; 1) collecting data (reading novels repeatedly and marking data including directive speech acts), (2) reducing data (identifying and classifying the types and functions of directive speech acts, 3) presenting data, 4) drawing conclusions and verifying data. The result of this research shows that there are 301 directive speech acts. There are seven kinds of directive speech acts that are found in this novel. Those are questioning (41,8%), ordering (24,5%), commanding (7,3%), advising (5,3%), begging (6,6%), inviting (4,9%), and prohibition (8,3%). With this research, it is hoped that the reader will be able to understand the meaning of speech through the actions of the speaker in the novel *Little Men*.

**Keywords:** speech act, pragmatic, directive speech act

## **1. Introduction**

The use of good language will result in good communication as well. However, on the contrary, if the language used is not good, it will have a negative impact on the continuity of communication between individuals. The impact that appears is not only related to the failure of a speech event, but also has an impact on social relations in society. Language also related with culture in multiple and complex ways (Kramsch, 2011).

Rahardi (2009) has the same point with Kramsch, he states that language is a tool of social communication between humans. In every communication, humans convey information to each other which can be in the form of thoughts, intentions, feelings, and emotions directly or indirectly. Levinson (1983) states that the study of language usage is pragmatics.

Language always appears in speech acts or individual actions. Therefore, every study of language structure must start from the study of speech acts, including study about a novel. Novel is a work of fiction that has the nature of fictionality, namely fiction and fantasy. According to Muhardi and Hasanuddin (2006), the word fiction means fantasy, not based on reality or can also mean a statement based on imagination or mere thought.

Speech acts in novels are linguistic problems that are important to study. The speech act in the novel is an oral utterance that is written down. In this research, the

writer focuses the research on directive speech acts. As Searle (in Rahardi, 2009) states that a directive speech act is a form of speech intended by the speaker to influence the speech partner to take the desired actions.

Speech acts are a concrete manifestation of language functions, which are the basis of pragmatic analysis (Rahardi, 2005). Speech acts are central entities in pragmatics. Speech acts in speech events are a communication process. In human life cannot be separated from speech events, because with human speech can convey information to the interlocutor and can be understood by each other. Chaer (2010) states that speech acts are individual symptoms, psychological in nature and their continuity is determined by the speaker's language ability in dealing with certain situations. In speech acts, it is seen in the meaning or meaning of actions in dealing with certain situations. Searle (2011) divides speech acts based on their function, namely assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative speech acts.

The conversation in the novel must be corresponded with the context of its use, so that the conversation is similar to the real situation of using language, thus the form of conversation in literature is pragmatic. It is pragmatic because, in interacting, a person is required not only to understand the elements of language, but also to understand the elements outside the language, namely the context of speech. This understanding reflects that language is pragmatic.

The importance of a pragmatic approach in reviewing novels because the novel is a portrait of people's lives contained in the form of a story that is beautiful, entertaining, and educational. There needs to be an understanding of the meaning that must be mastered by the reader in order to respond to the contents of the novel. The study of pragmatics is used in the novel in order to examine more deeply the language and meaning contained in the literary work.

By studying pragmatics, we can understand the people's intended meanings, their assumptions, their goals, and the kinds of action (request, refusal, agreement, disagreement, thanking, apologizing, etc). Moreover, to achieve the success in communication, a speaker from one language should understand the meaning and effects of utterances in relationship to the context and the speaker's intention (Fitriyah, 2021).

This study will focus on the types of directive speech acts used in the novel "Little Man" (English version). *Little Man* is a novel by Louisa May Alcott, which was first published in 1871 and republished in 2018 by Virago Press, London.

## 2. Literature Review

Levinson (in Leech, 1983) defines pragmatics as the relationship between language and context that is fundamental to the understanding of language. Understanding or use of language refers to the fact that language is used to understand an expression or utterance of language that requires knowledge beyond the meaning of the word or its grammatical relationship, namely the relationship with the context in which it is used. Searle (in Leech, 2014) divides illocutionary acts into *assertive*, *directive*, *commissive*, *expressive*, and *declarative*.

Searle (2011) explained that directive speech acts are speech acts performed by the speaker with the intention that the listener (speaker) performs the actions mentioned in the speech, for example: ordering, pleading, and challenging. In directive speech acts, there are speech events and speech acts. A speech event is a speech act that functions in verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Ibrahim (1993) explains that directive speech acts are not only an expression of the speaker's attitude towards the actions to be taken by the addressee, but the directive can also be an expression of the speaker's intentions (wishes and hopes) so that the speech or attitude expressed is used as a reason to act by the speaker.

An utterance spoken by speakers has various functions. According to Bach and Harnis (in Ibrahim, 1993) that the directive speech act of ordering or asking has the function of asking, begging, pleading, pressing, inviting, praying, inviting, and encouraging. The directive speech act is commanding. has the function of commanding, willing, commanding, demanding, dictating, directing, instructing, regulating, and requiring. The directive speech act of requesting has the function of asking, begging, pleading, pressing, inviting, praying, inviting, and encouraging. The directive speech act of asking (questions) has the functions of asking, inquiring, and interrogating. The directive speech act of recommending or recommending has the function of suggesting and asking. The directive prohibition speech act is a speech act that is intended so that the speech partner does not do things that are prohibited by the speaker. The directive speech act of advising has the function of advising, warning, counseling, proposing, suggesting and encouraging.

Previous studies about directive speech act can also found in Fitriah (2017), it indicates directive speech acts of ordering, advising, begging, and recommending. Putri, et al., (2019) found eight kinds of directive speech acts. While Sulistyani (2018) found directive speech acts as pedagogical function.

From the five categories of speech acts, the researcher wants to analyze one type of speech act as stated in the title of this study, namely directive speech acts. The directive speech act is a speech act study chosen by the researcher. The number of intentions to be conveyed from the speaker to the speech partner in an utterance is one of the reasons for researchers to choose directive speech acts as the focus of research.

### 3. Research Method

This research uses descriptive research. Bogdan, Robert and Bikien (2007) state that the design used in the research refers to the researcher's plan of how to proceed. The source of the data in this study is the speech acts contained in the novel *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott (Alcott, 2018). The data in this study are directive speech acts of questioning, ordering, commanding, advising, begging, inviting, and prohibition.

Data collection techniques in this study used documentation techniques. The steps of data analysis were carried out by; 1) collecting data (reading novels repeatedly and marking data including directive speech acts), (2) reducing data (identifying and classifying the types and functions of directive speech acts, 3) presenting data, 4) drawing conclusions and verifying data.

### 4. Discussion

The directive speech acts performed by the speaker with the intention that the listener (speaker partner) performs the actions mentioned in the speech, for example: questioning, commanding, requesting, advising, begging, inviting, prohibition. The occurrence of directive speech acts in "Little Men" can be seen in the table below.

No	Kinds of Directive Speech Acts	Amount	Percentage
1	Questioning	126	41,8%
2	Commanding	74	24,5 %
3	Requesting	22	7,3%

4	Advising	16	5,3%
5	Begging	20	6,6%
6	Inviting	15	4,9%
7	Prohibition	28	8,3%
	Total Amount	301	100 %

Table 1: The Frequency of Occurrence of Directive Speech Acts in novel "Little Men" by Louisa May Alcott

Based on the table 1 above, it is found that there are seven kinds of directive speech acts in novel "Little Men" by Louisa M. Alcott. There are 301 utterances of directive speech acts. They are questioning (41,8%), commanding (24,5%), requesting (7,3%), advising (5,3%), begging (6,6%), inviting (4,9%), and prohibition (8,3%). The examples of directive speech acts can be seen in the following data.

#### 4.1. Questioning

The directive speech act of asking is a speech act intended by the speaker so that the interlocutor provides the answer. A detailed description of directive speech acts of the type of questioning can be observed in one of the following data:

##### Example 1: Data 005 (page 4)

"Have you seen Aunt Jo?" (a)

"I haven't seen anybody yet but you boys; I'm waiting." (b)

##### Context:

The boy (a), who found something very attractive in the pleasant face of this slender, mild-eyed boy, asked to Nat (b) as if that was some sort of important ceremony.

##### Example 2: Data 111 (page 322)

"What did they say?" (a)

##### Context:

In the evening, as the Plumfield boys sat on the steps, as usual, in the mild September moonlight, they naturally fell to talking of the event of the day. Jack, who had been much impressed by the scenes of the day, asked to the Plumfield boys what have they talked.

The utterances (a) in data 005 and data 111 are directive questioning speech acts. Utterance (a) in data 005 requires a "yes" or "no" answer. In questioning utterance, the speaker directly asks the speech partner. The utterance (b) answered the speaker's question that he hasn't sees anyone yet. In data 111 (a), Jack asked to the Plumfield boys what have they talked.

#### 4.2. Commanding

Commanding directive speech acts are speech acts that are conveyed by speakers to their interlocutors, so that they do something according to what is expected by the speaker. A detailed description of directive speech acts of the type of command can be observed in one of the following data:

**Example 1: Data 001 (page 1)**

“Mr. Lawrence, I have got a letter for the lady.” (a)

“All right; go up to the house, and give it to her; she’ll see to you, little chap” (b)

Context:

A ragged boy asked to the man (Mr. Lawrence) who opened the great gate at which omnibus left him.

**Example 2: Data 023 (page 74)**

“Oh, what next? asked Sally, all impatience to begin. (a)

“Shut the lower draught of the stove, so that the oven may heat. Then wash your hands and get out the flour, sugar, salt, butter, and cinnamon. See if the pie-board is clean, and pare your apple ready to put in (b)

Context:

Sally (a) helped Mrs. Jo (b) cooked some pies in the kitchen. She asked to Mrs. Jo what next to do. Then Mrs. Jo answered and ordered to her to shut the stove.

The utterances (b) in data 001 and 023 are directive commanding speech acts which are represented without using the word request because, the speaker asks directly for the speech partner. This can be seen from the context behind the speech. This utterance is a requesting directive, because in this utterance, there is a requesting intonation.

**4.3. Requesting**

The directive speech act of requesting type is an utterance that is conveyed to the interlocutor so that the speaker gets something or a speech act that is put forward to ask the speech partner to convey a message to others. A detailed description of the directive speech act of the type of ordering or asking can be observed in one of the following data:

**Example 1: Data 010 (page 88)**

“I told him to come because I thought you’d like it, but if there isn’t room he can go away again, “(a)

“Tell me about this Dan.” (b)

Context:

The boy (a) told to Mrs. Bhaer (b) that he had confidence in her hospitality. It was touched Mrs. Bhaer, and she could not find the heart to disappoint his hope, and spoil his kind little plan, so she asked about Dan.

**Example 2: Data 016 (page 126)**

“My dear dollies, how can I let them go?” (a)

“Let me keep one, the dear blue thing, she is so sweet,” (b)

Context:

The children (a) played the dolls and they didn’t want to let them go. Mrs. Bhaer tried to calm them with saying that she wanted to keep them.

The utterances (b) in data 010 and data 016 are directive requesting speech acts, because there is a requesting intonation in the speech. Utterances (b) are directive speech acts of

asking which is represented without using the word request because, the speaker asks directly for the interlocutor to tell about his friend named Dan to the speaker (010) and requesting keep the doll (016). These can be seen from the context behind the utterances. This utterance is a requesting directive, because in this utterance, there is a requesting intonation.

#### 4.4. Advising

The directive speech act of advising is a speech act that is intended so that the speech partner can be influenced by what is conveyed by the speaker. A detailed description of the directive speech act of advising can be observed in one of the following data:

##### Example 1: Data 003 (page 14)

"You are all so kind – and it's so beautiful – I can't help it" (a)

"My child, you have got a father and a mother now, and this is home. Don't think of those sad time any more, but get well and happy; and be sure you shall never suffer again, if we can help it." (b)

##### Context:

Mrs. Bhaer (b) took Nat (a) away to her own parlour, where she let him cry himself quiet. Then she won him to tell her all his troubles, and listened to the little story with tears in her own eyes, though it was not one to her.

##### Example 2: Data 015 (page 300)

"Well, Daisy and I both think that if there are any angels, their wings look like that butterfly's as we see it through the glass, only more soft and gold." (a)

"Believe it if you like, and keep your own little wings as bright and beautiful, only don't fly away for a long time yet." (b)

##### Context:

Mrs. Jo (b) showed the children a microscope. Every one took a look, and then Dan showed them the lovely plumage on a moth's wing, the four feathery corners to hair, the veins on a leaf, hardly visible to the naked eye. The boys (a) amazed what they saw.

The utterances (b) in data 003 and 015 are advisory directive speech acts, because in the speech there is an advising intonation. Utterance b (003) is a directive speech act advising the interlocutor to be happy and not suffer anymore. Utterance b (015) is a directive advising speech act which is expressed directly because the speaker hopes that his interlocutor believes in what he likes. The use of diction "*Don't*" give the impression that the speech is in the form of warning advice. The utterance is represented by the speaker directly by using a speech act of advising and not using greeting words.

#### 4.5. Begging

Begging refers to a speech act whose function is to beg. This type of speech act includes all utterances whose function is to ask the interlocutor to do something. This form of begging is used by speakers whose position is lower or younger than their interlocutor. Usually a slightly subtle tone. The following is an example of the data:

**Example 1: Data 007 (page 66)**

“Oh Aunty! Please could I go and make gingersnaps and things? Asia isn’t cross, and she say I may, and it would be such fun, please do,” (a)

Context:

In five minutes, Daisy (a) was back again, with a wide-awake face, a bit of dough in her hand and a dab of flour on her little nose. She asked to Mrs. Bhaer to make gingersnaps and things.

**Example 2: Data 020 (page 330)**

“Please, ma’am, could you lend us the girls for a little while? We’ll be very careful of them” said Tommy. (a)

Context:

With the October frosts came the cheery fires in the great fireplaces. Mrs. Jo and the children sat around the fireplace and do some happy and fun activities. Tommy begged to Mrs. Jo to ask the girls to help him.

The utterances (a) in data 007 and 020 are begging directive speech acts. In data 007, the speaker (Daisy) asked permission to Mrs. Jo to make a pie by herself. She use the words politely (*Please..?*). While in data 020 (a), Tommy begged to Mrs. Jo to lend him the girls (his friends) to help him. From these data, it can be said that the type of speech acts includes all utterances whose function is to ask the interlocutor to do something. This form of begging is used by speakers whose position is lower or younger than their interlocutor. Usually a slightly subtle tone.

**4.6. Inviting**

The directive speech act of advising is a speech act that is intended so that the speech partner can be influenced by what is conveyed by the speaker. From its function, this form includes all forms of speech that invite the interlocutor to do something. A detailed description of the directive speech act of advising can be observed in one of the following data:

**Example 1: Data 006 (page 97)**

“Let’s go down to the river, and cut a lot of news fish-poles”

Context:

One Saturday afternoon as a party of the boys went out to play, Tommy asked his friends to go down to the river.

**Example 2: Data 013 (page 329)**

“Uncle forbids our playing for money. Dan, what do you want?” (a)

“Let’s have a battle between the Greeks and Romans,” (b)

Context:

The children wanted to play the commerce, a good round game, and have cents for the pool. But because uncle forbids the commerce games, Dan asked and invited his friends to play a battle between the Greeks and Romans.

The examples of the dialogue above are inviting directive speech acts because the speaker intends to invite his interlocutor. In data 006, the speaker (a) asked and invited his friend to go down to the river. He tried to convince them to follow his ideas to go down the river, and his friends agreed with his invitation. In data 013, the speaker (a) asked what Dan wants to play, and Dan answered (b) with asking his friend to play a battle between the Greeks and Romans.

#### 4.7. Prohibition

The directive prohibition speech act is a speech act that is intended so that the speech partner does not do things that are prohibited by the speaker. A detailed description of the type of prohibiting directive speech act can be observed in one of the following data:

##### Example 1: Data 002 (page 51)

"Don't work so hard, my boy, you will tire yourself out, and there is time enough" (a)

##### Context:

When Nat went to school on Monday morning, he quaked inwardly, for now he thought he should have to display his ignorance before them all. Mr. Bhaer watched his hot face, inked fingers and said that Nat should not work so hard.

##### Example 2: Data 011 (page 11)

"Don't do it.." (a)

##### Context:

The Stuffy determined to get a cry out of Nan. Nat (a), who hated cruelty, forbids his friend from doing something bad.

The utterances (a) in data 002 and 011 are included in directive speech act of prohibiting. In data 002, it shows that it is prohibition directly so that the interlocutor does not work too hard, because it will result in fatigue. While in data 011 (a) is a directive forbidding speech act that is expressed directly because the speaker forbids him not to take actions that make people cry. The utterances are represented by the speaker directly by using speech acts forbidding and not using greeting words.

Regarding the directive forms used in this novel, along with their functions, the findings of this study reveal that questioning utterances are very dominant (41,8%). It means that the dialogues in the novel *Little Men* used direct questions in their communication. It can be seen from the speakers who are based on the age or the closeness. When the speakers are older than the speaker partner or because of their closeness, then they used direct questions. The directive speech act of ordering or requesting which is obtained in the novel *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott is characterized by linguistic markers such as; *go up, sit there, look here, come now, obeys him, tell now, put on, clear up*, etc. Pragmatic markers are characterized by the context of speech.

Research on the types of directive speech acts contained in the novel *Little Men* by Louisa May Alcott is supported by relevant research found in Putri's (Putri et al., 2019). They said that the function of the directive speech act of ordering or asking are



permitting, suggesting, joking, asking, inviting, and persuading. According to Bach and Harnish in Ibrahim (1993), the directive speech act of ordering or asking has the function of asking, begging, pleading, pressing, inviting, praying, inviting, and encouraging. In other words, based on the context, the directives speech acts in the novel "Little Men" have also functions as asking, giving advices, giving instruction, inviting, pleading, pressing, and encouraging.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion, the directive speech acts obtained in the novel "Little Men" by Louisa May Alcott are 301 directive utterances. They are questioning (41,8%), commanding (24,5%), requesting (7,3%), advising (5,3%), begging (6,6%), inviting (4,9%), and prohibition (8,3%). The most dominant directive speech acts types used in the novel "Little Men" is questioning, and the least is inviting. Knowing the directives acts in the novel can help the reader understand the content of the novel.

Furthermore, for the researchers who are interested in pragmatic studies language, especially speech acts, it is expected to explore and learn more about directive acts classification with various ideas or point of views.

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