

An analysis of directive speech acts in the text of Jumanji: the next level movie directed by Jake Kasdan

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Email: putriizzabella@gmail.com

Received:
28 May 2025

Revised:
20 June 2025

Accepted:
20 July 2025

Published:
29 August 2025

How to cite (APA 7th style): Zabella, P. Z. Z., Susanto, D. A., & Setyaji, A. (2025). An analysis of directive speech acts in the text of *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie directed by Jake Kasdan. *Indonesian Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 2(2), 81-91. <https://doi.org/10.61251/ijoeep.v2i2.183>

Abstract

Directive speech acts are crucial in effective communication, particularly in educational and cinematic contexts, where language functions are dynamically expressed. However, limited research still explores directive speech acts in movie scripts as authentic materials for language learning. This study aims to analyze directive speech acts in the movie Jumanji: The Next Level by identifying their types, describing how they are actualized, and explaining the meanings behind their use. Searle's theory of speech acts served as the theoretical foundation. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through documentation techniques, carried out in the following steps: (1) downloading the movie, (2) watching and understanding it carefully, (3) focusing on the characters' dialogues, (4) reading and selecting relevant utterances while numbering them, and (5) identifying and classifying the selected dialogues based on the types of directive speech acts. The results show that there are five types of directive speech acts in the movie. From a total of 506 utterances, the researcher identified the following distribution: 247 questioning utterances (48.8%), 192 commanding utterances (38.0%), 35 forbidding utterances (6.9%), 24 requesting utterances (4.7%), and 8 permitting utterances (1.6%). Among these, questioning is the most dominant type. Moreover, the meaning of directive speech acts in Jumanji: The Next Level is strongly influenced by the situational context. The presence of numerous missions to be completed plays a significant role in the frequent use of questioning speech acts, as these situations require information to be obtained. Throughout the dialogues, characters rely on questioning to guide conversations and solve the problems that arise.

Keywords: directive; movie; speech act

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the principal medium of communication. It functions as an essential instrument for fostering interaction and is crucial for enabling individuals to connect and comprehend one another (Hutajulu & Herman, 2019). To attain effective communication, individuals must grasp the appropriate use of language when articulating or conveying ideas. With a more profound understanding of language, one can study linguistics.

Pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is conveyed and interpreted in context. According to (Duniary et al., 2024), pragmatics focuses on the speaker's intended meaning



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and the listener's interpretation. [Arsyad and Hisni \(2024\)](#) emphasize that pragmatics examines not only the literal meaning of utterances but also the implied or hidden meanings behind them. Thus, it helps individuals understand what is meant beyond what is explicitly stated and respond accordingly. As Malmkjar (1991, as cited in [Al-Duleimi & Hammoodi, 2015](#)) puts it, pragmatics is the study of guidelines and values controlling language use. It investigates how language operates in real-life situations, emphasizing that meaning is shaped by context. The study of speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how more is transmitted than is uttered, and the expression of relative distance are some of the definitions of pragmatics given by [Yule \(1996\)](#).

Speech acts refer to any utterance with certain aims and objectives ([Tarigan in Cahyani & Tustiawati, 2024](#)). To make clear what the speaker means to do, such as asking for something, offering help, or giving directions, a speech act is a remark that triggers a reaction or action that is carried out in regular contact. [Yule \(1996\)](#) explains that speech acts are more than just words; they are actions carried out through speaking or writing. According to [Izar et al. \(2022, p. 30-31\)](#) The core of a speech act lies in the speaker's intended meaning and the action that the utterance is meant to accomplish. [Leech \(1983, p. 199\)](#) explains that speech acts consist of three main components. The first component, known as the locutionary act, refers to the act of delivering a particular utterance. Next, the illocutionary act represents the speaker's intended purpose or meaning behind that utterance. Lastly, the perlocutionary act relates to the impact the utterance has on the listener, including the reaction or response it provokes. Similarly, ([Austin, 1962, p. 108](#)) In his book *How to Do Things with Words*, he also classifies speech acts into these three categories. He defines a locutionary act as the act of expressing something meaningful, essentially, using language to convey a particular message; illocutionary acts, on the other hand, focus on the intended function of an utterance, the message that the speaker intends to convey, or the action that must be carried out; meanwhile, perlocutionary acts deal with the actual effects or responses an utterance generates in the listener, which depend on the context and delivery of the message. Illocutionary acts are further divided into five categories by [Searle \(1976, p. 1\)](#): declaratives, commissives, expressives, directives, and assertives. By identifying these components, one can better understand how language influences both intention and interpretation in communication.

Directive speech acts are used when a speaker intends for the listener to perform a specific action, often by highlighting or referring to a particular rule, suggestion, or command. According to [Fitrie et al. \(2021\)](#) These statements might vary from courteous pleas to harsh commands or demands. They are usually expressed using imperative or interrogative forms, depending on the speaker's intention and degree of civility. Directives are an example of an illocutionary act that serves to persuade or inspire the listener to take action. [Yule \(1996, p. 54\)](#) states that a directive expresses what the speaker wants, intending to align reality through the listener's action concerning their words. The speaker's intention is clearly reflected in the directive utterance.

Directive speech acts divided into five types ([Searle, 1979](#)). First is commanding is used to give direct orders or instructions, often between individuals of equal social status such as friends, where authority is not necessarily formal but may rely on mutual understanding or urgency ([Trihanto, 2022](#)). This type of directive commonly uses imperative structures like "Go now" or "Take cover!", and typically leaves little room for negotiation, especially in situations requiring immediate action. The second type is requesting involves attempts to persuade the listener to do something that they may not do voluntarily. It generally uses more polite or indirect forms ([Bricker, 2021](#)), such as

"Could you help me?" or "Would you mind closing the door?". Requests tend to reflect the speaker's desire while showing respect for the listener's autonomy. Besides that, questioning though often overlooked, is a form of directive aimed at obtaining a response or gathering information. It can be expressed through interrogative or even declarative sentences, such as "Where are you going?" or "I wonder if you know the answer." Rather than directing an action, it elicits information that the speaker needs. The other type is prohibiting refers to utterances that prevent or forbid the listener from performing an undesired action. This type of directive is often expressed through negative imperatives like "Don't touch that!" or modal constructions such as "You must not do this." It reflects the speaker's authority to restrict certain behaviors and maintain boundaries (Indrayani et al., 2022). And the last is permitting involves granting consent or approval to someone to carry out an action. Phrases such as "You may go now" or "It's okay to speak" are typical of this type. Although it allows action rather than demands it, permitting still functions as a directive because it guides the listener's behavior by signaling what is allowed.

Directive speech acts appear not only in daily conversation but are also widely discovered in movie dialogues. Movies not only entertain but also reflect real-life language use in various contexts. As noted by (Anggraeni et al., 2019), Movies are widely favored as literary works because they come in diverse genres, convey moral values, feature captivating animations and effects, are accessible and affordable, and frequently present rich linguistic and cultural content. The speech patterns used by movie characters often resemble those in real life, making film dialogues an effective tool for understanding how language functions in social interaction. Movies are a widely recognized form of entertainment that serves as both a creative expression and a commercial industry. Through elements like narrative, topic, storyline, and setting, movies, as a visual storytelling medium, integrate culture, history, and society, enabling viewers to investigate various experiences and viewpoints (Rabiger & Hurbis-cherrier, 2013). Movies are also frequently divided into genres, which aid in defining their aesthetic and attracting and focusing on particular audiences. Comedy, action, drama, fantasy, and thriller are among the genres that have their conventions and are crucial for marketing and drawing in viewers (Humaira, 2018, p. 17). One of the movies that has the adventure-comedy genre is "Jumanji: The Next Level." It is a 2019 American movie that is a follow-up to the 2017 movie "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," directed by Jake Kasdan. The movie was also co-written with Jeff Pinkner and Scott Rosenberg.

Directive speech acts are essential to achieve effective communication. However, the utilization of different types of directive speech acts, each carrying a distinct meaning, can sometimes cause miscommunication between the speaker and the listener. This emphasizes how important it is to comprehend how these acts function and are interpreted across different contexts. Gaining knowledge of directive speech acts is essential for improving pragmatic awareness and communication skills. Considering these points, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on directive speech acts using the movie Jumanji: The Next Level as the object of research.

Previous studies have explored various speech act phenomena in political, digital, and fictional contexts. Qutsy et al. (2024) analyzed illocutionary acts in Joe Biden's UN speech, emphasizing the power of language in influencing audiences, relevant to directive acts in film dialogue. Similarly, Ayuningtyas et al. (2023) examined illocutionary acts in a Webtoon, showing how speech acts drive character interaction. Devita et al. (2024) studied code-switching in a talk show, revealing how language shifts serve pragmatic purposes. Rohmadi et al. (2023) offered sociopragmatic insights from Javanese oral

discourse, which parallels how context affects directive speech. Meanwhile, [Nabila et al. \(2023\)](#) investigated presuppositions in tweets, highlighting implied meanings that often accompany directives. These studies collectively inform the analysis of directive speech acts in *Jumanji*, particularly regarding intention, power, and context in cinematic discourse.

Other relevant studies emphasize the function of speech acts and deixis in diverse communicative settings. [Hartono et al. \(2022\)](#) identified representative illocutionary acts in *The Minimalists* documentary, illustrating how statements reflect belief and intention, concepts also present in directives. [Marlinda and Susanto \(2022\)](#) explored deixis in Joe Biden's inauguration speech, showing how spatial and temporal references guide listener interpretation. [Pitaloka et al. \(2021\)](#) analyzed deixis in song lyrics, offering insight into how context anchors meaning, essential in understanding directive expressions in film. Earlier, [Susanto and Rahayu \(2014\)](#) examined pragmatic strategies in advertising, showing persuasive language use, similar to commands or requests in cinematic dialogue. Furthermore, [Susanto et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasized illocutionary meaning in religious sermons, highlighting the role of speech in influencing audience behavior. Together, these studies deepen the understanding of directive acts within narrative discourse like *Jumanji*. According to the mentioned introduction, the problem statement is as follows: (1) What types of directive speech acts are found in *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie? (2) How are directive speech acts actualized in *Jumanji: The Next Level*? (3) Why are the directive speech acts actualized as they are in *Jumanji: The Next Level*?

METHOD

This study is qualitative research with a descriptive qualitative research method. [Creswell \(2013, p. 183\)](#) defines a qualitative study as the process of analyzing data by reading it several times, with each reading process suggesting the growth of understanding about the data obtained. The researcher examined and assessed the character's dialogue in the *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie. The data were collected by downloading the *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie, then closely observing and comprehending the character's speech in the movie, focusing on the characters' dialogues, reading and selecting relevant dialogue in the script by numbering each utterance, identify and classify the selected dialogues according to the character's directive speech types. Following data collection, the following procedures are used to analyze the data: Identify which directive speech acts such as, commanding, requesting, questioning, prohibiting, and permitting, are present in the dialogue by [Searle \(1979\)](#). Then analyze how each type is actualized in the movie, focusing on the dominant type, and explain the reasons behind their actualization in terms of meaning.

Data analysis

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. Data analysis was based on the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which comprises three simultaneous tasks: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Data reduction

In this stage, the researcher selected and categorized relevant data from the *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie script, focusing on utterances that contain directive speech acts. By identifying utterances that matched Searle's classification of directive speech acts, the researcher narrowed the data to only those relevant to the research objectives.

Data display

The reduced data were organized in tabular form to clearly show the types and frequencies of directive speech acts. The frequency and percentage of each type were calculated using a simple formula ($P = \frac{f_q}{N} \times 100\%$). Additionally, narrative explanations were provided to describe how the utterances functioned contextually in the movie.

Conclusion and verification

The final stage involved interpreting the meanings and roles of each directive speech act type, identifying the most dominant type, and reflecting on their use in the characters' communication. The conclusions were verified by cross-checking with the script and ensuring alignment with Searle's theoretical framework. A descriptive explanation was then provided to summarize the research findings comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher presents the classification of directive speech acts through Table 1, highlights the most frequently occurring type using percentages and a pie chart in Figure 1, and reports a total of 506 utterances categorized into five types of directive speech acts.

Table 1. The types of directive speech acts found in Jumanji: The Next Level Movie

| Types of Directive Speech Act | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Questioning | 247 | 48.8% |
| Commanding | 192 | 38.0% |
| Forbidding | 35 | 6.9% |
| Requesting | 24 | 4.7% |
| Permitting | 8 | 1.6% |
| Total | 506 | 100.0% |

The information reveals that the film Jumanji: The Next Level used five different kinds of directed speech acts. These included questioning, commanding, forbidding, requesting, and permitting. There were 247 (48.8%) questioning, 192 (38.0%) commanding, 35 (6.9%) forbidding, 24 (4.7%) requesting, and 8 (1.6%) permitting statements out of the 506 that were discovered. In Figure 1, the researcher uses a pie chart to illustrate the highest percentage.

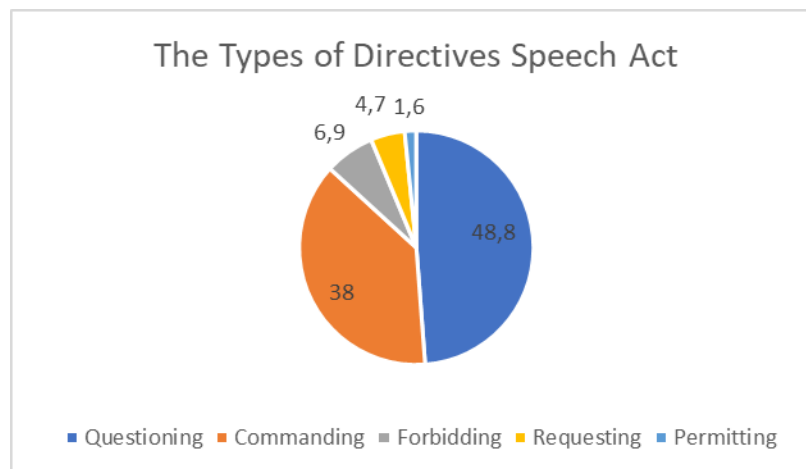


Figure 1. Types of Directive Speech Act Diagram

Figure 1 illustrates that the blue-colored components that stand in for questioning have the largest pieces, so it is evident that questioning is a type of directive speech act that is often used by the character in *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie. The types of directive speech acts in the form of questioning mean that the speakers direct their listeners to respond, clarify something, or share information. By posing questions, speakers not only encourage the listener to provide specific details but also facilitate communication.

Table 2. Sample of Questioning

| Datum | Character | Utterance | Meaning |
|-------|------------|--|---|
| 144 | Bravestone | Excuse me. Who is Jumanji? | The utterance occurs when Nigel is giving the characters a mission inside the game world. In response, Bravestone asks, "Excuse me. Who is Jumanji?" In pragmatic terms, it serves as a directive speech act of the questioning type. Bravestone's question is more than just a reaction to confusion; it functions to elicit specific information needed to understand and fulfill the mission. Though the form is interrogative, the intent behind it is directive, as it urges the hearer to give a clarifying response. |
| 232 | Ruby | Datum 232 Ruby: What she's say? | The utterance takes place shortly after Bravestone finishes a brief and emotional exchange with his ex. Ruby, who doesn't hear the conversation clearly, asks, "What she's say?" to find out what was said. Although the form is interrogative, pragmatically it functions as a directive speech act of the questioning type, as Ruby is not merely expressing curiosity but actively requesting Bravestone to provide specific information. |

Commanding is to attempt to get the hearer to carry out a specific action or something. In this case, the speaker expects the listener to comply with the instruction, often without offering an option to refuse.

Table 3. Sample of Commanding

| Datum | Character | Utterance | Meaning |
|-------|-----------|--|---|
| 57 | Eddie | Anthony! How are you? Come on in. Come on in. | The utterance involves Grandpa Eddie and Anthony as participants. The utterance "Come in. Come in." functions as a clear example of a commanding directive speech act. The imperative structure of the sentence reflects Eddie's intent to direct Fridge to enter the room without delay or hesitation. The use of repetition ("Come on in" said twice) further emphasizes the insistence of the command. |
| 102 | Oberon | Get away from there! | The utterance occurs when Mouse unknowingly approaches a dangerous hippopotamus by the river, and Oberon says, "Get away from there!". The imperative form explicitly instructs Mouse to move away from a potentially dangerous situation near the water. Oberon's command exemplifies this function by seeking to prevent a risky action through a direct order, without refusal. |

Forbidding is a type of directive speech act that expresses an attempt by the speaker to prevent the hearer from performing a certain action. It is an expression to order someone not to do something or not to allow something to be done.

Table 4. Sample of Forbidding

| Datum | Character | Utterance | Meaning |
|-------|-----------|--|---|
| 171 | Ruby | Don't get so close. | In this context, the characters are in a potentially dangerous situation. Ruby, sensing possible danger, immediately warns him by saying, "Don't get so close." The utterance reflects a clear attempt to prevent Bravestone from taking a particular action and telling him not to get too close. The use of the negative imperative "don't" signals the speaker's authority and urgency in trying to ensure the hearer avoids a risky behavior. |
| 506 | Janice | Well, it looks like it's broken. Maybe you shouldn't touch it. | The utterance occurs during a conversation between Janice and the Heater Repair Man at Eddie's house. The utterance "Maybe you shouldn't touch it," Janice's wants to prevent the Heater Repair Man from interacting with the video game console. The use of "maybe" and the modal verb "shouldn't" serves to soften the forbidding, making the utterance less forceful but still directive in nature. |

Requesting is a form of directive speech act where the speaker politely or indirectly asks the listener to perform a certain action.

Table 5. Sample of Requesting

| Datum | Character | Utterance | Meaning |
|-------|------------|--|--|
| 16 | Janice | Dad. He's been called five times. Would you just call him back? | The utterance occurs in Eddie's house during a conversation between Janice and Eddie. In this situation, Janice addresses Grandpa Eddie regarding his friend Milo, who has repeatedly attempted to contact him but received no response. When Janice says, "Would you just call him back?", she is not simply asking a yes/no question, but rather performing a polite and indirect request. |
| 396 | Bravestone | Martha, will you come with me? | The utterance occurs during a crucial moment near the end of the game. In this situation, Bravestone (Spencer) addresses Martha (Ruby) by saying, "Martha, will you come with me?" This expression functions as a requesting directive speech act in the form of an indirect request. Bravestone uses an interrogative structure with <i>Will you</i> , which softens the tone and conveys politeness. It invites Martha's cooperation while respecting her autonomy to accept or decline. |

Permitting is a type of directive speech act in which the speaker grants the listener the right or approval to perform a certain action. Through permission, the speaker removes barriers and allows the listener to act freely within a given context.

Table 6. Sample of Permitting

| Datum | Character | Utterance | Meaning |
|-------|------------|---|--|
| 45 | Eddie | Do whatever you want. I don't care. Just hurry up. I don't have all day. | The utterance above occurs at Eddie's house during a conversation between Milo and Eddie. In the dialogue, Eddie's expression "Do whatever you want. I don't care" functions that Eddie fully grants Milo permission to act according to his wishes without any obstacles, namely, to make eggs. Thus, the sentence is not merely an expression of indifference but a form of approval that pragmatically grants freedom to act. |
| 276 | Bravestone | Sure thing. | The utterance occurs during a conversation between Ming and Bravestone while planning a strategy in Jumanji. In this situation, Bravestone's response, "Sure thing," functions as a signal of approval and readiness to comply. By responding in this way to Ming's instructions, Bravestone implicitly agrees with the plan and demonstrates his willingness to take on the assigned role of staying behind and keeping watch. |

Discussion

The findings are separated into three sections by the researcher: the first part identifies types of directive speech acts in the movie *Jumanji: The Next Level*, the second part describes how they are actualized, and the third part explains the reasons behind their actualization in terms of meaning. Table 1 displays the data results from the first part. The directive speech actions contain 506 utterances, including specifics about questioning up to 248 utterances, commanding up to 192 utterances, forbidding up to 35 utterances, requesting up to 24 utterances, and permitting up to 8 utterances. Figure 1 displays the findings from the second part. This section reveals that 248 utterances, or 48.8% of the total amount of utterances included in the illocutionary acts, are the form of questioning

that is frequently employed in the character. And the result in the third part explains the reasons behind their actualization in terms of meaning. Questioning is often used to seek information, express uncertainty, or encourage problem-solving, reflecting the characters' efforts to comprehend urgent and complex situations. Commanding conveys authority, urgency, or control, highlighting the power dynamics and critical moments in the narrative. Requesting shows politeness, cooperation, or appeals for help, emphasizing interpersonal relationships and mutual support. Forbidding serves to warn or restrict actions that could endanger the group, conveying protective and cautionary meanings. Permitting indicates consent or approval, facilitating agreement and trust among characters. These findings support the idea that directive speech acts serve both functional and interpersonal roles in shaping dialogue.

These results also reflect patterns observed in previous studies. For instance, [Quttsy et al. \(2024\)](#) highlighted how illocutionary acts can influence audience interpretation, which parallels how directives in the movie guide the characters' decisions. [Ayuningtyas et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized the role of speech acts in shaping character interaction in fictional narratives, a dynamic also present in this film. Meanwhile, [Nabila et al. \(2023\)](#) examined how presuppositions contribute to implied meanings in digital contexts, which is relevant to the indirect and context-dependent nature of many directive utterances in *Jumanji: The Next Level*. The detailed explanations for each type of directive speech act are presented in Tables 2 through 6.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the analysis directive speech acts used by the *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie, there are 506 utterances including directive speech acts and dispersed throughout five types of directive speech acts, namely questioning, commanding, forbidding, requesting, and permitting. The types of directive speech acts that are frequently employed by the character *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie are questioning, with 247 utterances or 48.8% of all the utterances that are contained in directive speech acts. The meaning of directive speech acts in the movie is strongly shaped by the situational context within the movie. The presence of numerous missions to be solved plays a significant role in the frequent use of questioning speech acts, as these conflicts demand information to be resolved. Throughout the dialogues, the characters rely on question speech acts to obtain the necessary information, which helps guide the conversation and support the progression toward solving problems within the storyline.

After obtaining the results of the analysis on directive speech acts in the *Jumanji: The Next Level* movie, the researcher would like to offer several important suggestions for readers and future researchers. Firstly, it is expected that readers will gain a better understanding of the characters' utterances in the movie, which in turn will help them comprehend the storyline more clearly. Moreover, in daily communication, being able to understand an interlocutor's words can contribute to building effective and harmonious interactions. Secondly, the researcher hopes that this study may serve as a useful reference for other researchers who are interested in the field of pragmatics, particularly

those focusing on the types of directive speech acts, and may inspire further research in this area.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: collected the data, analyzed the results, and drafted the manuscript. Author 2: theoretical guidance and input on data interpretation. Author 3: Review and Supervision.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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