



Directive Spechs Acts Short Story Who Ate the Bread by Ana sakinah

Iis istikomah Sanuri

(Center, Times New Roman 11, bold)

¹⁾ English Education, Nahdlatul Ulama University of Lampung

e-mail: iisistikomah163@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates directive speech acts in the short story “Who Ate the Bread?” by Ana Sakinah using a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in Searle’s speech act theory. While previous studies on directive speech acts have predominantly focused on conversational or real-life discourse, this study offers a novel perspective by examining how directive speech acts operate within a literary narrative to construct meaning and characterize interpersonal relationships. Directive speech acts, defined as utterances intended to influence the actions or behavior of the hearer, include commands, requests, advice, and warnings. The objectives of this study are to identify the types of directive speech acts and to analyze their pragmatic functions in the context of the story. The findings reveal that four types of directive speech acts are employed, with commands emerging as the most dominant form, particularly in interactions involving Han’s father. These speech acts are realized through both direct and indirect strategies and are significantly shaped by contextual factors such as authority, emotional proximity, and social roles. Importantly, this study demonstrates that directive speech acts in literary texts are not merely communicative tools but also serve as narrative devices that contribute to character development, plot progression, and the articulation of moral values, including parental love, obedience, belief, and human vulnerability. This study contributes to the field of literary pragmatics by highlighting the functional role of directive speech acts in shaping narrative meaning and offering a deeper understanding of how language as action operates within fictional discourse. It also expands the application of speech act theory beyond everyday communication into the analysis of literary texts.

Keywords: *directive speech act, pragmatics, literary pragmatics, short story, discourse analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in literary works, not only as a medium of narration but also as a means of social interaction between characters. In pragmatics, language is understood as a form of action rather than merely a tool for conveying information. This concept is explained through speech act theory, which emphasizes that every utterance carries an intention and performs a certain function (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979).

One important category of speech acts is directive speech acts. Directive speech acts are used by speakers to influence the behavior of listeners by asking them to do something. In

everyday communication, directives appear in various forms such as commands, requests, advice, warnings, and suggestions (Searle, 1979; Yule, 1996). These forms may be expressed directly or indirectly depending on contextual factors such as power relations, social distance, and situational context.

The short story "*Who Ate the Bread?*" by Ana Sakinah contains many dialogues and narrative utterances that reflect directive speech acts. The interactions between Han and his father, as well as other characters, show how language is used to express authority, affection, concern, and moral control. These directive expressions significantly contribute to the development of the story's conflict and tragic ending. Therefore, analyzing directive speech acts in this short story is important to understand how language functions not only as communication but also as a narrative device.

Several previous studies have examined speech acts in literary works to explore how language functions within fictional discourse. Leech (1983) emphasizes the role of pragmatics in interpreting implied meanings and politeness strategies in literary texts. Culpeper (2001) further shows that language in literary dialogue reflects character relationships, power dynamics, and emotional expression. In addition, studies by Rahardi (2005) and Nadar (2009) demonstrate that directive speech acts in discourse are closely related to social hierarchy, politeness, and communicative goals. However, these studies tend to focus primarily on the classification and forms of speech acts rather than their broader narrative and moral functions.

However, previous studies have paid limited attention to the pragmatic functions of directive speech acts in shaping moral values, emotional relationships, and parental authority within short stories. Moreover, the role of directive speech acts in contributing simultaneously to character development, plot progression, and the construction of moral meaning remains underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the types of directive speech acts used in the short story "*Who Ate the Bread?*" by Ana Sakinah, to analyze how these speech acts are pragmatically realized in character interactions, and to explain their functions in developing characters, advancing the plot, and conveying moral values. By doing so, this study offers a novel contribution to literary pragmatics by demonstrating that directive speech acts function not only as linguistic expressions but also as essential narrative devices that shape meaning in literary discourse.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method to analyze directive speech acts in the short story "*Who Ate the Bread?*" by Ana Sakinah. This approach is appropriate as it aims to describe and interpret linguistic phenomena within their natural context, particularly in literary discourse.

The data of this study consist of 18 utterances produced by the characters that contain directive speech acts. These utterances were selected because they reflect the use of language to influence the actions or behavior of other characters within the narrative.

The data were collected through several steps. First, the researcher carefully read the short story to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. Second, relevant utterances containing directive speech acts were identified and selected. Third, the identified data were classified based on John Searle's (1979) classification of directive speech acts, including commands, requests, advice, warnings, and suggestions.

The data were then analyzed by examining their contextual meanings, the relationships between speakers and hearers, and their pragmatic functions in relation to character development, plot progression, and moral messages in the story.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies theory triangulation by using multiple theoretical perspectives in pragmatics, particularly speech act theory and supporting concepts from pragmatic analysis. This technique helps strengthen the interpretation of data and ensures that the findings are reliable and academically sound.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings and discussion of directive speech acts identified in the short story “*Who Ate the Bread?*” by Ana Sakinah. The analysis shows that directive speech acts are systematically employed throughout the narrative and function not only as communicative tools but also as strategic devices for constructing power relations, emotional intensity, and moral meaning. Based on John Searle’s (1979) classification, four major types of directive speech acts are identified: commands, requests, advice, and warnings.

Importantly, these directives are realized through both **direct and indirect illocutionary forms**, reflecting variations in authority, intimacy, and situational context. This finding supports the view that speech acts in literary discourse are pragmatically dynamic and context-dependent (Leech, 1983; Culpeper, 2001).

Commands

Commands emerge as the most dominant type of directive speech acts in the story. Linguistically, they are predominantly realized through imperative sentence structures, indicating high illocutionary force and minimal mitigation.

For example:

“Don’t go outside!”

“Stay in your room!”

These utterances reflect an asymmetrical power relationship in which Han’s father occupies a dominant position. From a pragmatic perspective, commands function as face-threatening acts (FTAs) that prioritize authority over the hearer’s autonomy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, within the narrative context, these commands are not merely expressions of control but also manifestations of parental anxiety and protective intention.

This dual function indicates that directive speech acts can simultaneously encode power and care, creating a complex emotional dynamic. The excessive use of commands ultimately restricts Han’s agency, reinforcing his dependence and contributing to the tragic resolution of the story. This finding extends previous studies by showing that commands in literary texts can function as both control mechanisms and emotional expressions, rather than purely authoritative acts.

Requests

Requests are realized as less imposing directive speech acts and are typically expressed through interrogative or polite declarative forms, often accompanied by mitigation strategies.

For example:

“Please eat your bread.”

“Can you stay with me for a while?”

Unlike commands, requests reflect a lower degree of imposition and allow the hearer greater interpretive space. Pragmatically, they function as politeness strategies that reduce social distance and maintain interpersonal harmony (Yule, 1996).

In the narrative, the father’s use of requests signals moments of emotional vulnerability and affection. This indicates a shift from authority to intimacy, suggesting that directive speech acts are sensitive to emotional context and relational dynamics. The coexistence of commands and requests illustrates a fluctuation between dominance and care, thereby humanizing the father’s character.

This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of directives in expressing politeness and social relationships, but it further demonstrates how such strategies contribute to character depth and emotional realism in literary discourse.

Advice

Advice represents an indirect form of directive speech act that is linguistically marked by modal expressions such as *should*, *better*, or *ought to*. These forms reduce coerciveness while still guiding the hearer’s behavior.

For example:

“You should listen to your father.”

“It is better for you to stay inside.”

From a pragmatic standpoint, advice functions as a mitigated directive that combines guidance with moral evaluation. Unlike commands, advice does not enforce compliance but encourages voluntary acceptance, making it a subtler form of influence.

In this story, advice plays a significant role in conveying didactic and ideological meanings, particularly regarding obedience, responsibility, and belief. Through advisory utterances, the father assumes the role of a moral instructor, reinforcing social and familial norms. This supports the argument that directive speech acts in literary texts can function as vehicles of moral discourse, extending beyond interpersonal communication to ideological transmission.

Warnings

Warnings are directive speech acts that anticipate negative consequences and are often constructed using conditional structures or cautionary expressions.

For example:

“If you go out, something bad will happen.”

“Be careful, it is dangerous outside.”

Pragmatically, warnings function as preventive directives that combine instruction with prediction. They are closely associated with emotional states such as fear, concern, and anticipation.

In the narrative, warnings serve as foreshadowing devices, signaling impending danger and contributing to the story’s tragic tension. When these warnings are ignored or misunderstood, they highlight the limitations of human judgment and the inevitability of consequences.

This finding demonstrates that directive speech acts can operate at both micro (interactional) and macro (narrative) levels, shaping not only character behavior but also the structural development of the plot.

Table 1. Types and Pragmatic Functions of Directive Speech Acts

No	Type	Linguistic Form	Pragmatic Function	Narrative Role
1	Commands	Imperatives	Authority, control, protection	Establish conflict, dominance
2	Requests	Interrogatives, polite forms	Politeness, affection	Humanize character
3	Advice	Modal expressions	Moral guidance	Convey values
4	Warnings	Conditional/cautionary	Prevention, fear	Foreshadow tragedy

Table 1 summarizes the types of directive speech acts identified in the short story along with their linguistic realizations, pragmatic functions, and narrative roles. The table demonstrates that each category of directive is not only distinguished by its structural form but also by its function as a discursive strategy in constructing meaning within the narrative.

Commands are predominantly realized through imperative structures, reflecting a high degree of imposition and functioning as face-threatening acts that reinforce authority and control (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Within the narrative, they operate as a mechanism for establishing hierarchical relationships and generating conflict. In contrast, requests are typically expressed through interrogative and mitigated forms, functioning as politeness strategies that reduce social distance and maintain interpersonal harmony (Leech, 1983). These forms contribute to the representation of emotional intimacy and relational negotiation between characters.

Advice is commonly marked by modal constructions such as *should* and *better*, positioning it as a mitigated directive that conveys moral evaluation while preserving the hearer’s autonomy. As a discursive strategy, advice plays a crucial role in transmitting ideological and didactic meanings, particularly in relation to social norms and parental guidance. Meanwhile, warnings are frequently realized through conditional and cautionary structures, functioning as preventive directives that anticipate negative consequences. At the narrative level, warnings serve as a form of

foreshadowing, reinforcing suspense and contributing to the construction of the story's tragic trajectory.

Overall, the table highlights that directive speech acts function beyond their immediate communicative purposes, operating as pragmatic and narrative instruments that shape character relationships, encode power dynamics, and construct moral meaning. This finding supports the view that language in literary discourse is inherently multifunctional, simultaneously performing interactional, ideological, and structural roles.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that directive speech acts in the short story "*Who Ate the Bread?*" are not merely communicative acts but function as complex discursive strategies that construct power relations, emotional tension, and moral meaning. This challenges the traditional view of directive speech acts as primarily action-oriented utterances (Searle, 1979), suggesting instead that in literary discourse, directives operate simultaneously at interactional, psychological, and narrative levels.

One of the most significant findings is the dominance of commands, which are primarily produced by the father. From the perspective of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), commands represent strong face-threatening acts (FTAs) that limit the hearer's autonomy. However, unlike findings in previous studies that associate commands mainly with authority and coercion, this study reveals that commands also function as expressions of parental anxiety and emotional protection. This indicates that power in literary discourse is not always oppressive but can be ambivalent, combining control with care. Such a finding complicates existing assumptions about directive speech acts by showing that their pragmatic force is deeply shaped by emotional and relational contexts.

Furthermore, the alternation between commands and requests reflects a dynamic negotiation of power and intimacy. While previous studies (e.g., Leech, 1983; Culpeper, 2001) emphasize politeness as a strategy for maintaining social harmony, the present study shows that in literary narratives, politeness strategies also serve to humanize authority figures and create emotional depth. The father's use of requests does not eliminate his dominance but rather softens it, producing a more nuanced representation of parental authority. This suggests that directive speech acts contribute to character complexity, rather than simply reflecting fixed social roles. Another critical finding concerns the role of advice as a vehicle of ideological transmission. Unlike commands, which impose action, advice subtly guides behavior through moral reasoning. This supports previous arguments that language in literary texts carries ideological meaning; however, this study extends that view by demonstrating that directive speech acts specifically function as carriers of moral discourse. The father's advisory utterances reinforce values such as obedience, belief, and responsibility, positioning him as both an authority figure and a moral agent. This highlights the role of pragmatics in uncovering how ideology is embedded in everyday language within fiction.

Warnings, on the other hand, operate beyond the level of interpersonal communication and take on a structural narrative function. While Searle (1979) categorizes warnings as directives aimed at preventing harm, this study shows that in literary discourse, warnings also function as foreshadowing devices. This dual role indicates that directive speech acts can bridge micro-level interaction and macro-level narrative structure. The failure of characters to respond appropriately to warnings underscores a broader theme of human limitation, reinforcing the tragic dimension of the story.

Taken together, these findings suggest that directive speech acts in literary texts cannot be fully understood through traditional classifications alone. Instead, they must be analyzed within a broader framework that integrates pragmatics, narrative theory, and discourse analysis. This study therefore contributes to the development of literary pragmatics by demonstrating that speech acts are not only tools of communication but also mechanisms for constructing meaning, ideology, and emotional experience in narrative texts.

However, this study is limited to a single short story, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research could examine directive speech acts across

different genres or cultural contexts to explore whether similar patterns of power, emotion, and moral construction emerge. Additionally, incorporating more recent pragmatic frameworks or corpus-based approaches may provide further insights into the multifunctional nature of directive speech acts in literary discourse.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that several types of directive speech acts are used in the short story *“Who Ate the Bread?”* by Ana Sakinah, namely commands, requests, advice, and warnings. Among these types, commands appear as the most dominant directive speech act, particularly in the interactions between Han and his father.

From a pragmatic perspective, directive speech acts in the story are realized through both direct and indirect forms. Their use is strongly influenced by contextual factors such as the speaker–hearer relationship, social roles, emotional closeness, and situational background. The father’s authority and emotional attachment to Han play a significant role in shaping how directives are expressed and interpreted.

Furthermore, directive speech acts serve important functions within the narrative. They contribute to character development by revealing authority, affection, fear, and moral responsibility. In addition, directives help advance the plot and reinforce the moral values of the story, particularly those related to obedience, parental love, belief, and human vulnerability.

In conclusion, the analysis confirms that directive speech acts are not merely linguistic commands but function as meaningful pragmatic tools that shape interactions, narrative structure, and moral messages in literary storytelling. This study demonstrates that pragmatic analysis, especially directive speech act theory, is effective in uncovering deeper meanings and social relationships in short stories.

The findings of this study also imply that the analysis of directive speech acts can be applied in literary pragmatics and language learning to enhance students’ understanding of how language functions contextually, socially, and ideologically in both real and fictional communication.

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