

**COMMANDING ACTS PERFORMED BY THE MAIN  
CHARACTERS IN “LITTLE WOMEN” MOVIE**

**THESIS**



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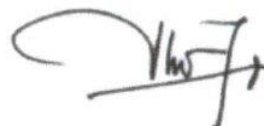
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Furthermore, Austin (1962, p. 150) divided illocutionary acts into five categories; verdictives, commissives, exercitives, behabitives, and expositives. On the other hand, Searle (1979, p. 12) has evaluated and improved the classification of illocutionary acts into five types. They are declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives. Then, after the illocutionary act is performed by the speaker, there will be the result or response that is given by the hearer which is known as the perlocutionary act. The response of the hearer can be in the form of utterances or behavioral responses.

A command is a kind of speech act that belongs to directive acts. Commands can be performed directly or indirectly by the speaker to the hearer. The direct command can be performed by using imperative sentences such as "*Wait! I am coming*" and negative imperative such as "*Do not move*". While indirect command can be performed by using declarative or question forms. In giving a command, the speaker does not only command the hearer but also expects positive results from the hearer in the form of fulfilling what the speaker wants (Mey, 1993, p. 164). Therefore, the speaker has to consider several factors in conducting commands, such as when and where the conversation is performed, and to whom the speaker speaks.

In receiving or hearing a command from the speaker, the listener can directly recognize an utterance as a command if the structure is in the form of an imperative sentence. However, there is also the possibility that the listener may not recognize or misinterpret a command when it is performed in the form of declarative or interrogative. For example, when the speaker said "Do you have to stand in front of the door?" she or he intends to make the listener not to stand in front of the door, but

the listener might misinterpret the speaker's intention where the listener only answers without moving from the front of the door because the listener thinks that the utterance is only a question. Therefore, the study of direct and indirect speech acts can help the researcher to know how direct and indirect commanding acts are performed and how to interpret and respond to the utterance or intention produced by the speaker.

There has been growing interest in speech acts theory. Numerous studies have been conducted on the research of various speech acts like speech acts in political speeches (Dylgjeri, 2017; Hashim, 2015), speech acts in a movie (Putri, Ramendra, & Swandana, 2019), speech acts in an interview (Shopia, Sabila, & Sulistyningrum, 2019). There are also several studies that have examined illocutionary acts in a variety of subjects, such as illocutionary acts in campaign speech (Ismail, 2013), audio file (Risdianto, 2015), video (Rais & Triyono, 2019). Those research studies focused on five types of illocutionary acts, and the data sources of those research were taken from YouTube. Other studies also focused on illocutionary acts in movies (Kiuk & Ghozali, 2018; Praditya, Putra, & Artini, 2014; Rahayu, Arifin, & Ariani, 2018; Ramayanti & Marlina, 2018; Wonata, Natsir, & Ariani, 2018). Those research also focused on five types of illocutionary acts, and the results of those studies showed that most of them found four types of illocutionary acts. They were representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives. Besides, there is also a previous study that has examined illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in a novel (Nurhayati & Yuwartatik, 2016), which focused on five types of illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts, and the result showed that

five types of illocutionary acts were found in the novel while the perlocutionary acts performed by the hearers were varied.

Moreover, there are also previous studies that have investigated directive illocutionary acts in poems (Mualimin, 2018), folklore text (Pamungkas, Rustono, & Utanto, 2018), Friday sermon (Assola, 2017), talk show (Aziz, Mahdi, & Amalia, 2017), and movie script (Della & Sembiring, 2018). All the studies that have been mentioned above which analyzed speech acts were using the theory proposed by Austin (1962), while those studies that analyzed illocutionary acts were using Searle's theory (1979) about the classification of illocutionary acts.

Commanding acts have also been examined by some researchers. Those are commanding acts in drama (Zulaikah, 2014) and movies (Imroatus, 2019; Syah, Usman, & Bochari, 2014; Widowati, 2012). Those research studies focused on types of commanding acts. The results of those research studies showed that both direct and indirect commands were successfully found in which the direct command became the dominant type.

However, most of the research collecting data on commanding acts tends to focus on analyzing types of commanding acts with the strategies rather than with the perlocution. Here, perlocution or hearer's response is essential to be analyzed because it can make us know how the hearer interprets the speaker's intention in producing an utterance and how the hearer responds to the utterance. So this research tries to fill the gap by analyzing commanding acts with the corresponding perlocutionary acts because there is still little information about research that analyzes commanding acts with perlocutionary acts.

A command is a kind of action that is interesting to be analyzed. In this research, the researcher has some reason why choosing commanding acts and perlocutionary acts as the research topic. Commanding acts are kinds of speech acts commonly used by many people and get more attention from the hearer because when the speaker performs the command, he or she tries to control the hearer's action by fulfilling the speaker's wants. The speaker who tries to control the hearer's action becomes the point that differentiates a command from other directive acts. In performing a question, the speaker expects an answer, while in command, the speaker expects an action. Then, in performing a request, the speaker assumes that the hearer can refuse or accept the request, but in a command, the speaker assumes that the hearer will fulfill the speaker's wants. In performing a begging, the speaker humbly asks for something while in command, the speaker tries to control the hearer. Then, for advice, the advice is produced for the purpose of the hearer where the speaker expresses what he or she thinks to the hearer for what the hearer should do or not do in a particular situation. In contrast, the command is produced to get the listener to do something based on the speaker's want. Thus, it can be concluded that what makes a command different from other kinds of directive acts is that command tries to control the hearer's action because the speaker thinks that the listener should fulfill the speaker's command. Hence, investigating commanding acts can help the researcher to know how people use words to command. Then, after the speaker gives a command, there will be a response given by the hearer. Therefore, the hearer's response is also essential to be known whether the hearer fulfills the speaker's wants or not, so that the researcher also analyzes perlocutionary acts.



The researcher intends to conduct the research about commanding acts and perlocutionary acts in the “Little Women” movie. This movie portrays love, family, and dreams which are relevant to everyday life. This movie is interesting and inspiring to watch because it tells about the March sisters, four young women, who have their dreams and are determined to live their life on their terms and also support and care for each other. The movie also portrays women personalities that are different from each other, which can be seen through their actions. Moreover, the movie has many commands which are performed by the main characters since the theme of this movie is about a family wherein the family we usually perform commands. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting research about commanding acts and perlocutionary acts performed by the characters in “Little Women” movie.

Based on the explanations above, this research aims to analyze the kinds of commanding acts performed by the main characters and the responses of the main characters’ interlocutors in the “Little Women” movie. The researcher analyzes the data of this research by using Yule’s theory (1996) to find types of commanding acts. For additional theory, the researcher uses Searle’s theory of directive act, which is one of the types of illocutionary acts. The researcher also uses Austin’s (1962) theory to find perlocutionary acts, which is one of the types of speech acts to support the analysis.































and are determined to live their life on their terms but still support and care for each other. They are Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. They are always together from childhood until when they have grown up, they decide to leave home to reach their dreams. However, even though they are siblings but they have different personalities. Jo, the second sister, becomes the center among those main characters in the film. She always prioritizes her family; she always puts her sisters first before she could focus on herself. When she has become a teacher in New York and tried to achieve her dreams to be a writer, she gets a letter from her mother, Marmee, that Beth's health is getting worse, so Jo decided to go home to Concord, a town in Massachusetts, for taking care of her third sister. In the end, Beth passed away. Jo becomes so lonely because all her sisters have gone. Meg and Amy have married while Beth has died. Then, Jo decides to write a novel based on the lives of her and her sisters. She starts writing all night and into the next days until her book is finally published.

## **2.7 Analytical Construct**

Austin (1962) classified speech acts into three types. They are locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The five categories of illocutionary acts proposed by Austin have been evaluated by Searle (1979). They are representatives, commissives, directives, expressives, and declarations. In this research, the researcher uses Yule's theory (1996) to find the types of commanding act, which is one of the types of directive illocutionary acts. The researcher also uses Austin's theory to analyze the perlocutionary acts. In short, the framework can be seen below.







### 3.2.1 Data and Data Sources

The data of this research were in the forms of words, sentences, and gestures taken from the utterances and behavioral responses of the characters in “Little Women” movie. The words and sentences uttered by the main characters such as Jo, Meg, Amy, and Beth were used to answer the first question, which is to find the types of commanding acts. Then, the words, sentences, and gestures performed by the main characters’ interlocutors were used to answer the second question which is to describe the responses of the interlocutors after the commanding acts are performed by the main characters.

The data source of this research was taken from the movie entitled “Little Women” directed by Greta Gerwig that was released in 2019. The film is adapted from Louisa May Alcott’s novel, and the film received many awards nominations. This movie has a duration of 135 minutes. The researcher also downloaded English subtitles from Google search. The subjects of this research were the main characters such as Jo, Meg, Amy, Beth, and also their interlocutors, since the data of this research were in the form of words, sentences, and gestures performed by them. Jo, Meg, Amy, and Beth are the most influential characters in developing the plot in the movie because they take the most part of the scenes in the movie. While their interlocutors also have an important role in the movie because they get involved in the conversation with the main characters. Therefore, those main characters and their interlocutors were chosen as the subjects of this research.















**Excerpt 1**

00:45:45 – 00:45:47

- Amy : You'll be sorry for this Jo March! You will! You'll regret this!  
 Beth : (stares at Amy who is whining and angry to Jo because she is not allowed to go to the theater)  
**Amy : Stop looking at me like that!**  
 Beth : (stops looking at Amy as she leaves the room)

The utterance takes place in March's house. The setting time is in the past, where the scene of the movie is taken back to 1862. The situation of this scene is when Jo and Meg prepare to go to the theater with Laurie and Mr. Brooke. Jo and Meg go to the theater because they are invited by Laurie and Mr. Brooke. Amy, who is not invited, whines to Jo and Meg to let her join to go to the theater with them. Jo does not allow her because Amy is not invited by Laurie and Mr. Brooke then Amy said that she can pay for herself. Jo still doesn't allow her to come along, and Amy gets angry. Beth, who is playing the piano, looks at Amy because of her behavior.

The bold utterance “**Stop looking at me like that!**” performed by Amy is included in direct command because the utterance is performed in the form of an imperative sentence. It can be seen from the structure of the sentence. Amy's utterance begins with the verb “stop” and ends with an exclamation mark (!), which becomes the features of a direct command. In performing the utterance, Amy intends to command Beth as the listener to stop looking at her because she just gets mad at Jo, and she is getting more annoyed at being looked like that. From the utterance above, it can be concluded that the structure and the function in the sentence of that utterance are directly related. The speaker performs the command clearly without implied meaning. Therefore, the utterance above is classified into direct command.



















1861. The situation of the conversation is when Meg approaches Jo, who is dancing with Laurie, and then Meg said that her ankle hurts. Meg asked Jo about how she can get home. Jo gives her suggestion to get home by carriage, but then she refused because the carriage is too expensive. Then, Laurie offers to drive them home, but Meg also refused because the party has just started, so she does not want to make Laurie leaves the party sooner. Laurie convinces her that he used to get home early, which means he doesn't mind driving Meg and Jo home and he offers it with pleasure. Then, Jo produced the utterance as mentioned above.

The utterance “**What choice do you have?**” is included in the indirect command. The indirect command is performed by Jo in the form of interrogative. Here, the question is not just a question but to command the hearer to do something which means that the speaker expects action from the hearer. Jo's intention in producing that utterance is to command Meg to accept Laurie's offer because he offers to drive them home with pleasure, besides that neither Meg nor Jo seem to have any other choice to get home except to accept Laurie's offer. Therefore, the utterance can be classified into indirect command because the speaker performs her command indirectly which the utterance has the implied meaning which is to command the listener to accept Laurie's offer.

The indirect command is also performed by the main characters in the form of a declarative sentence. In the following example, Amy indirectly commands the hearer to take Amy to go with the hearer to play ice skating.

**Excerpt 4**

00:49:39 – 00:49:41

- Teddy : Good morning ladies! Brisk and brilliant outside today, last day at the river – get your ice skates!
- Jo : (leaves the dining table to get ready for playing ice skating)
- Amy : Jo, you promised me I could come last time, Jo!**
- Jo : (ignores Amy's utterance)
- Amy : Is she going to be like this forever?
- Beth : It was a very hard loss for her.

The conversation above occurs in the kitchen where Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy are having breakfast together at the dining table. The setting time is in the past, where the scene in the movie is taken back to 1862. In that situation, Jo is still angry with Amy because Amy has burnt her novel. Amy sits beside her, but she changes seats away from Amy. A moment later, Teddy comes to pick Jo up to go ice skating. Jo leaves the dining table immediately to get ready. Then, Amy produces the utterance as mentioned above.

In the utterance “**Jo, you promised me I could come last time, Jo!**”, Amy performs indirect command in the form of a declarative sentence. Here, the statement is not just a statement. The speaker's intention in producing the utterance is not just to remind Jo, but there is something more than that, which is to command Jo. The utterance means that Amy indirectly commands Jo as the hearer to take Amy to go with her for ice skating because Jo promised her last time that Amy could come with her. Thus, by saying the utterance, Amy expects action from the listener. Amy performs her command indirectly because Jo is still angry with her, so she performs indirect command by using the declarative sentence to make the command soften. So, it can be concluded that the utterance is classified into indirect command because























**Excerpt 2**

00:50:14 – 00:51:07

Amy : Jo! Wait! Wait! I'm coming!  
**Jo : (ignores Amy and keeps skating on the ice along the river)**

The behavioral response inserted in the bold sentence above is included in hearer rejects. It begins when Amy directly commands the listener to wait for her. Jo, as the listener, rejects Amy's command. It can be seen from the behavior she showed after Amy performing the command. Jo ignores Amy's utterance and continues her activity of skating on the sheet of ice. Jo heard Amy's utterance, but she pretends not to hear Amy's command. Jo rejects Amy for a reason. She is still angry with Amy because she has burnt the novel Jo wrote. Thus, the response given by Jo is classified into hearer rejects because she does not fulfill Amy's command for a reason.

The hearer also can reject the speaker's command in the form of utterance. Here is an example of the data.

**Excerpt 3**

01:09:18 – 01:09:20

Jo : How great is that?!  
 Beth : I love to listen to you read, Jo, but I just love it even better when you read the stories you've written.  
**Jo : I don't have any new stories.**  
 Beth : Why not?  
 Jo : Haven't written any.

The bold utterance above is included in hearer rejects. It begins when Jo reads the literary work by George Eliot for Beth, and then when Jo finishes reading the story, she tells Beth that the story she read is great. Then, Beth indirectly commands Jo to read the story she wrote. Then, Jo gives a response in the form of the utterance,

**“I don’t have any new stories”**. The response given by Jo indicates that she rejects the speaker’s command. Jo rejects the command for a reason. She cannot read the story she writes herself to Beth because she has not written any new story yet so that she cannot fulfill Beth’s command. Therefore, the response given by Jo is classified into hearer rejects because she does not fulfill the speaker’s command.

## 4.2 Discussions

In this section, the researcher discusses the finding of the data analysis. The researcher has done in analyzing commanding acts performed by the main characters and the responses of the interlocutors after the commanding acts are performed by the main characters in the “Little Women” (2019) movie. From the result, the researcher found 63 data of commanding acts. The direct command becomes the dominant type, which occurs 55 times with a percentage of 87%. While indirect command occurs 8 times with a percentage of 13%. Then, after commanding acts performed by the main characters, there are responses given by the interlocutors. Hearer is Doing Something is the response that is frequently used by the interlocutors that occurs 38 times with a percentage of 60%. Then followed by Hearer Stops Doing Something which occurs 14 times with a percentage of 22%. Then, Hearer Rejects becomes the last frequency among other responses, which occurs 11 times with a percentage of 18%.

From the research findings, the researcher discusses two points in this section. First, the researcher found two types of commanding acts performed by the main characters in the “Little Women” movie. They are direct commands and indirect commands. Direct commands are performed in the form of imperatives. For example,



“Help! Help me!”. This command is performed by Amy in the form of imperative. Amy commands Jo to help her because she drowned in the river after the sheet of ice forming on the river surface cracked. While indirect commands are performed in the form of declarative and interrogative sentences. For example, “Jo, you promised me I could come last time, Jo!”. The utterance is performed by Amy in the declarative form. Amy indirectly commands Jo to take Amy to go with her to play ice skating. Then, the utterance “Will this be enough for the train?” is performed by Jo in the form of interrogative. Jo indirectly commands her mother to accept the money she gives for the train ticket. The findings of this research support Yule’s theory (1996) of direct and indirect speech acts who stated that imperative sentence represents direct command while declarative and interrogative sentences that are used to perform command belong to indirect commands.

Direct command is a type of command that is often used by the main characters in the “Little Women” movie because direct command can be easily recognized and clearly understood by the listeners. Furthermore, the “Little Women” movie has the theme of family, and the main characters, March sisters which consist of four young women, tend to perform commands to their sister where usually people who are close to each other and have equal status prefer to use direct command. While the indirect command is rarely used by the main characters. They only used it in certain situations, such as when the listener is angry toward the speaker or when the listener has a higher status than the speaker. They perform the indirect commands to soften the command and make it sound polite. This is in line with Yule’s explanations in his book (1996) that stated indirect command is generally related with greater politeness

than direct command. Moreover, the findings also show that the commands are not only effective when performed by the speakers who have higher status than the listeners but also can be effective for the speakers who have equal status with the listeners. This finding does not conform with Kreidler's explanations (1998) who stated that command is only effective if the speaker has some degree of control over the listener's action.

The second, the findings of the second research question show that the interlocutors used three responses in responding to the main characters' commands. They are hearer is doing something, hearer stops doing something, and hearer rejects. The hearer is doing something is the response that is dominantly used by the main characters' interlocutors in the "Little Women" movie. Then, followed by hearer stops doing something. It means that the interlocutors mostly fulfill the speakers' commands in which the responses they give are in accordance with the speakers' commands. Then, hearer rejects also occurs, but this response becomes the lowest frequency among the other responses. From the findings, the listener usually rejects the speaker's command for a reason, such as when the listener is angry toward the speaker so that the listener does not want to fulfill the speaker's command. Then, the listener also rejects when the listener has not made something the speaker wants. For example, "*I don't have any new stories*". This response is given by Jo when the commander commands her to read the story she writes herself. Jo, as the listener, rejects the command because she has not written any new story yet.

Furthermore, the finding of this research is in line with the research findings of commanding acts conducted by Zulaikah (2014). The result of Zulaikah's study is

that the main character mostly used direct commands in performing commands to the listeners to make the commands clearly understood by the listeners.

Moreover, this research finding is also in line with another study conducted by Imroatus (2019) that found direct commands are frequently used whereas indirect commands are rarely used by the main characters. In this present research, the researcher argues that direct commands are often used by the main characters because the main characters mostly perform commands to the interlocutors who have equal status as the main characters.

From the research findings, the researcher concludes that the speaker can perform a command not only in an imperative form but also in declarative and interrogative forms. We can use an imperative form to perform a command to the listener if the listener has equal status with us. To make the command sounds polite and soft, we can use declarative and interrogative forms. Moreover, the researcher also concludes that the listener would give a response after the speaker gives a command. The response can be in the form of fulfilling the speaker's command or rejecting the speaker's command. There is the factor that can influence the listener in rejecting the speaker's command, such as when the listener is angry toward the speaker, so the listener doesn't want to fulfill the command. This research intends to give knowledge on how to perform commands that can be applied in daily life communication and how to react or respond to the commands. Furthermore, we have to look at the situation when performing the command, such as not performing the command when the listener is angry, to make the command effective.







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