

Analysis of Directive Speech Acts in the Film *Mononoke* Movie: Karakasa (Pragmatic Study)

Moh. Fauzi, Diah Soelistyowati

Dian Nuswantoro University, Semarang, Indonesia
(muhamadfauzi62@gmail.com, diah.soelistyowati@dsn.dinus.ac.id)

Abstract. This study aims to identify the forms and functions of directive speech acts in the Japanese animated film *Mononoke Movie: Karakasa*. The film is set in *Ooku*, a hierarchical and closed palace environment where the chosen women for the emperor gather. Using a stressful social setting, this film is a source of data that contains many directive speech acts. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection was carried out using the free listening method and note-taking techniques. The main data source is the dialogue in the film *Mononoke Movie: Karakasa*. Data analysis uses Namatame's directive speech act theory, which includes five types: commands (*meirei*), requests (*irai*), prohibitions (*kinshi*), permissions (*kyoka*), and suggestions (*teian*). The results show that of the five types, four types of directive speech acts were found, namely commands, prohibitions, requests, and suggestions, while the form of permission was not found. Directive speech acts in the form of commands and prohibitions dominate as a reflection of the repressive power structure of *Ooku*. Furthermore, two types of directive speech acts were found in a single utterance, such as a prohibition and a command, and a request and a suggestion. The absence of permission (*kyoka*) further reinforces the hierarchical and repressive nature of *Ooku's* environment.

Keywords: mononoke movie; karakasa; pragmatics; directive speech acts

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language is a fundamental instrument in human social interaction (Austin, 1962). More than just a communication tool, language functions as a medium for performing actions. In the pragmatics framework, every utterance is essentially a speech act (Akhmad, 2019). Pragmatics studies the meaning communicated by the speaker and interpreted by conversation partners, which is highly dependent on context (Yule, 2006).

One of the central types of illocutionary act is the directive speech act (Searle, 1976, 1979). Directive speech acts are a speaker's attempt to get the other person to do something. In practice, directives include ordering, requesting, suggesting, prohibiting, and permitting. In Japanese, the study of directives is interesting because of the *keigo* system and social hierarchy (Wiyatasari & Yulianti, 2022). The characteristics of directive politeness in Japanese are greatly influenced by the concept of *uchi-soto* and the superior-subordinate relationship.

Mononoke Movie: Karakasa (2024) is a unique source material set in *Ooku*, a special gathering place for women for the emperor in a hierarchical and closed palace. The film presents a social critique of groupthink and the loss of individuality. In such an environment, directive speech acts become a tool of social control (Gede et al., 2024; Laila Syam Halimatus Rafida & Yuana, 2024). The characters Asa and Kame are trapped in a vortex of commands, prohibitions, and repressive pressure. The dialogue between the characters reflects how language maintains power structures. This research fills

the gap regarding the function of directives as a mechanism of social control in extreme contexts (Agung et al., 2024).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pragmatic Theory and Speech Acts

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. Levinson defines pragmatics as the study of the use of language in communication, particularly the relationship between sentences and their underlying context (Levinson, 1983). The main concept in pragmatics is speech acts (Austin, 1962). Austin argued that when someone speaks, he not only produces an utterance (locution), but also performs an action (illocution) and creates a certain effect on the listener (perlocution). Searle (1976) developed Austin's theory and classified illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. This study focuses on the form and function of directive speech acts. Irmayanti and Ainie (2023) in their study of Japanese drama found that directive speech acts can be realised in declarative sentences, such as *dantei* (decision), *suiryō* (assumption), *utagai* (doubt), and *ketsui* (determination). This finding shows that directives are not always structurally imperative (Irmayanti & Ainie, 2023).

Classification of Directive Speech Acts in Japanese

Classification of directive speech acts based on Namatame (1996) in (Soelistyowati & Elika, 2021) categorised into five types, namely:

1. **Command (*Meirei*):** Speech acts that aim to get the interlocutor to do something according to the speaker's instructions. Lingual markers include *~e/~ro*, *~nasai*, *~tamae*, and *~te* without *kudasai* in certain contexts.
2. **Request (*Irai*):** A speech act that requests or asks the interlocutor to do something for the speaker's benefit. Lingual markers include *~te kudasai*, *~te kure*, and *~onegai*.
3. **Prohibition (*Kinshi*):** A speech act that prohibits a speech partner from acting. Lingual markers include *~ru na*, *~te wa ikenai*, and negative declarative forms that function as prohibitions.
4. **Permission (*Kyōka*):** A speech act that gives consent to the speech partner to do something. Lingual markers include *~te mo ii*, *~te mo yoroshii*.
5. **Suggestion (*Teian*):** Speech act containing a suggestion or advice to the hearer. Linguistic markers include *~ta houga ii*, *~to ii*, *~kotoda*.

In addition to grammatical markers, Namatame also emphasises that conversational context significantly determines the function of directive speech acts. This study uses Namatame's five categories as an analytical framework.

Several previous studies have examined directive speech acts in films and anime. For example, Artama and Sundayra (2024) analysed the film *Kaze Tachinu* and found a predominance of directive speech acts in the form of commands and requests. Rafida (2024) found a different pattern in the film *Perfect Blue*, where directive speech acts of commands and prohibitions were more dominant, influenced by the psychological genre. Meanwhile, Andriyani, Ardiantari, and Arve (2024) in their study of Balinese-Japanese intercultural marriages found that the level of ordinary speech forms (*futsuugo*) was more dominant in the family sphere, reflecting familiarity.

This research differs in that it focuses on a film that combines the supernatural horror genre with social criticism and is set in the repressive *Ooku*. Therefore, this study fills a gap in the understanding of the function of directive speech acts as a mechanism of social control in a highly hierarchical context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The data source is the 89-minute Japanese animated film "*Mononoke Movie: Karakasa*" (2024) by Kenji Nakamura. The data consists of dialogue containing directive speech acts. Data collection was conducted using the free listening and note-taking method (Sudaryanto, 1993). The researcher watched the film repeatedly, identified each directive speech act, noted it along with the situational context (participants, power relations, setting, purpose of the utterance) and time markers, and then re-verified it to ensure the accuracy of the data.

The data analysis used Namatame's (1996) directive speech act classification framework, which distinguishes five types: commands (*meirei*), requests (*irai*), prohibitions (*kinshi*), permissions (*kyoka*), and suggestions (*teian*). The researcher then examined their pragmatic functions in the context of conversations in *Ooku*'s environment. The analysis steps included identifying the utterance, determining the type of directive, describing the context, and drawing conclusions about the form and function of directive speech acts in the film.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a representative classification of data based on its type and the use of pragmatic functions accompanied by context in the film *Mononoke: Karakasa*:

1. Directive Speech Acts in the Form of Commands (Meirei)

Command speech acts dominate the film's narrative. This reflects *Ooku*'s highly hierarchical power structure. Commands are generally given by figures with higher authority to their subordinates.

- (1) Sakashita : 大餅曳の祝いの品はこっちで預かるから順番に並んで
*Oomochihiki no iwai no shina wa kocchi de azukaru kara
junban ni narande*
'Items for the oomochihiki celebration can be left here;
please line up in an orderly manner.' (00:59-01:01)

Context:

At the beginning of the film, two newcomers named Asa and Kame arrive at the main gate. They carry their belongings, including a supply of rice balls given to them by Kame's grandmother. The atmosphere is quite lively because a celebration for a safe delivery (*Oomochihiki*) is about to be held. A gatekeeper named Sakashita, dressed formally and with authority, stands near the entrance. He sees Asa and Kame, along with the other newcomers, carrying their belongings. Sakashita instructs them to collect all their belongings first, in a firm but not harsh voice. Then, the newcomers are required to line up in an orderly manner. This instruction is delivered without further ado, directly directing the action to be taken.

Analysis:

In data (1), Sakashita's utterance contains the verb *narabu* (並ぶ), which means to queue or line up, then changed into the verb form *~te* to become *narande* (並んで). In terms of word choice, the verb form *~te* is a conjunction form that removes the verb ending *~u* (dictionary form) to become the verb form *~te*. The verb form *~te* is usually used as a connecting word between sentences, while the formal command form verb is the form *~te* plus *kudasai* (please/go ahead~). However, in data (1), there is no mention of the particle *kudasai* (which means 'please'), making this speech act included in the direct directive. The sentence *junban ni narande* (line up in order!) is a command sentence that begins with the reason stated in the previous sentence. The particle marker *kara* (から) in the first sentence indicates a cause-and-effect relationship, so the verb *narande* is delivered as a direct command sentence. Literally, *narande* means 'line up'. Therefore, this utterance is a directive speech act in the form of a command (*meirei*).

The pragmatic function of this directive speech act is to maintain order and enforce rules. As *Hiroshikiban* (gatekeeper), Sakashita has the structural authority to issue instructions to newcomers. His orders are direct and leave no room for negotiation. This demonstrates that from the moment he enters *Ooku*, every individual must comply with rules and hierarchy. High-authority figures within an institution tend to use direct commands to control the behaviour of subordinates. In the highly hierarchical context of *Ooku*, these commands serve as a primary socialisation tool for newcomers.

Furthermore, the choice of *~te* without *kudasai* over other command forms such as *~nasai* or *~e/ro* (a rough command) demonstrates that Sakashita maintains a professional distance without appearing rude. Sakashita does not use *kudasai*, which would make the command sound more polite (like a request), because he has the authority to give orders. Thus, the firmness of this command is in keeping with his position as a gatekeeper.

2. Directive Speech Acts in the Form of Prohibition (*Kinshi*)

Directive speech acts in the form of prohibitions (*Kinshi*) also appear dominantly, especially to protect the *Ooku* region from external threats.

- (2) Awashima : 女中の私たちは夜伽の間に近づいてはならぬ、それが大奥の決まり
Jochū no watashitachiha yotogi no ma ni chikadzuite wa naranu, afternoon ga *Ooku* no kimari
'We domestic servants are not allowed to come near at night; that is the rule of *Ooku*'

Context:

After the attack by the *Karakasa mononoke*, the atmosphere was tense. Kame, feeling bored, then walked out into the hallway. Curious about a room, Kame tried to enter it. However, Awashima, a senior servant, pulled Kame out of the room and forbade all servants, including Awashima, from approaching the *yotogi no ma* (Emperor's night chamber) area. Awashima was tense, but wanted to maintain safety and order in the *Ooku* area.

Analysis:

In data (2), we found the grammatical form *~te wa naranu*, which is another form of *~te wa ikenai*, which means 'not allowed'. The word *naranu* comes from the word *naru* (dictionary form), which means to be, which is changed into the negative form *~nai*, so the word *naranai* has the meaning 'not to be good', or the meaning in this speech act is 'not allowed'. The use of this form is very standard and formal, suitable for the palace environment, which upholds manners. Awashima uses the word *watashi-tachi* (all of us), so that the prohibition feels like a shared rule and not an authoritarian personal order. Therefore, the speech act in data (2) is a directive speech act in the form of a prohibition (*kinshi*).

The pragmatic function of the prohibition in data (2) is to maintain the sexual hierarchy in *Ooku*. The night chamber (*yotogi no ma*) was a special area where the Emperor rested with his chosen ladies-in-waiting. Ordinary servants were forbidden from approaching to avoid competition, scandal, or disturbance to the Emperor's descendants. Furthermore, in the context of the *mononoke* attack, this prohibition also indirectly served to protect the servants from dangers that might lurk in the area.

Following are directive speech acts in the form of prohibitions (*kinshi*) as well as indicating commands (*meirei*) which can be seen in data (3):

(3) Sakashita :

この大奥はお前のような者が来る所ではない!、ここは天子様のために集められたおなごだけの場所だ。入ってよいのは この七つ口までだ。ここを無断で通ろうものなら、即刻 打ち首だぞ

Kono Ooku wa omae no you na mono ga kuru tokoro de wanai!, Koko wa tenshi-sama no tame ni atsume rareta onago dake no bashoda. Haitte yoi no wa kono nanatsu kuchi mada. Koko o mudan de torou mononara, sakkoku uchi kubida zo

'Ooku, this is no place for the likes of you! This is a place reserved for women gathered for the Emperor. You are only allowed to enter through these seven entrances. If you try to pass through here without permission, you will be beheaded immediately!'

Context:

After Asa and Kame entered the gate area, a mysterious, flashy-looking medicine merchant appeared, carrying a large backpack. The merchant tried to offer Sakashita a love potion (*horegusuri*). Sakashita was shocked and refused. The merchant then tried to go further into the *Ooku*, even though the *Ooku*

was an area specifically for women and prohibited for men (except those with special permission). Sakashita immediately stopped him firmly. He explained that the *Ooku* was a place for women gathered for the Emperor's use. Sakashita warned that if the merchant tried to pass through the gate without permission, the penalty would be death (*uchikubi*). Despite this, the medicine merchant maintained his mysterious smile and appeared unfazed.

Analysis:

In data (3), it begins with the sentence *Kono Ooku wa omae no you na mono ga kuru tokoro de wanai!* (This *Ooku* is not a place for people like you!). The sentence *omae no you na* (people like you), referring to a certain group and in the context of a hierarchical area like *Ooku*, has the meaning of an indirect prohibition for foreigners who come to the *Ooku* area. The next sentence *Koko wa tenshi-sama no tame ni atsume rareta onago dake no bashoda* (This is a place only for women who gather for the Emperor), is a reinforcing sentence for the prohibition that has been conveyed firmly and harshly. Then in data (3) there is the sentence *Koko o mudan de tōrou mononara, sikkoku uchi kubida zo* (if you try to pass through here without permission, you will be immediately beheaded), containing cause and effect, therefore the meaning behind the sentence could contain an order for the listener not to do it, and if they do, they will receive the consequence of being beheaded. In Namatame's theory, commands can be conveyed in various ways, including by stating limits. The particle *zo* (ぞ) at the end of a sentence is a warning or threat marker that strengthens the coercive power of the utterance. The theory also states that threats are included in commands because they aim to influence the speech partner to do (or not do) something. Therefore, data (3) is included in the directive speech act of the prohibition form (*kinshi*) and the command form (*meirei*).

The pragmatic function of the speech act in data (3) is to protect *Ooku* from outsiders who have no right to be there. And the next sentence strengthens the justification for the prohibition and instills an understanding of the rules in *Ooku*. Then the last two sentences function to set the boundaries of the area that can be visited by outsiders and scare traders into complying with the consequences of the death penalty, so that there is no room for violating the order.

3. Directive Speech Acts in the Form of Requests (*Irai*)

The directive speech act in the form of a request (*irai*) in this film is used by a character who is in a weak position or in a less-than-ideal condition to ask for help or protection.

(4) Kame : アサちゃん絶対朝まで手離さないでね
Asa-chan, zettai asa made te hanasanaide ne.
'Asa-chan, jangan lepas tanganku sampai pagi, yaa.'

(57:56-57:59)

Context:

After an attack by a *Mononoke* (spirit) named *Karakasa* (Umbrella Stick), *Ooku's* atmosphere is in turmoil. Several people are injured, and Kame, a timid new servant who often fails at her duties, is terrified. Kame nearly becomes a victim. Asa, her more capable and assertive roommate, manages to save Kame. That night, in the dark and quiet room, Kame is still gripped by fear. She hears strange sounds. In her panic, Kame grabs Asa's hand and pleads with a trembling voice.

Analysis:

In data (4), the researcher found the verb *hanasanaide ne*, which means 'please don't let go, okay'. In the theory of directive speech act classification, the request form (*irai*) has a lingual marker, namely *~te kudasai* or *~onegai* (please). Because Asa and Kame are close friends when interacting, they more often use informal speech acts. Grammatically, the verb *hanasu* (離す), which means 'to let go', is changed into the negative form *~nai* to become *hanasanai*. Then the verb is changed into the *~te* form from the negative to become *hanasanaide*, which is used as a negative request. The particle *ne* (ね) at the end of the sentence functions as a confirmation marker or request for approval, which softens the utterance without direct permission to the listener. The word *zettai* (絶対), which means 'absolute or certain', strengthens the forced request. Here, the particle *o* is omitted because interactions with close friends always use informal speech acts. The use of the nickname with *~chan* indicates familiarity. In the context of the situation, *hanasanaide ne* means 'don't let go, okay'. Therefore, the speech act in data (4) is a directive speech act of request (*irai*).

The pragmatic function of this speech act is to request protection and a sense of security from the interlocutor without their consent. Kame is in a helpless and frightened position, lacking the ability or courage to sleep alone. He does not use commands such as "Don't let go!" because Kame is aware that Asa, his close friend, is the only one he can ask for help. By using gentle requests accompanied by familiar terms such as "Asa-chan" and adding the particle *ne* at the end, Kame attempts to build closeness and gain sympathy. This speech act is a survival strategy in *Ooku*'s repressive environment. For example, when someone lacks formal power, one can rely on emotional bonds to survive. Here, Kame uses the particle *ne* to soften his request while reminding Asa of their promise of friendship. This utterance contrasts with the firm commands of a superior like Sakashita. Kame cannot order Asa because their social positions are relatively equal (both are new servants), but Asa has more capabilities. Therefore, data (4) is a directive speech act in the form of a request (*irai*) and is the most strategic choice.

The following is a directive speech act in the form of a request (*irai*) accompanied by a directive speech act in the form of a prohibition (*kinshi*), which can be seen in data (5):

(5) Utayama : 麦谷さんも あまり熱心すぎないよう お願いいたしますね
Mugitani-san mo amari nesshin suginai you onegai
itashimasu
'Mugitani-san, please don't get too excited, okay?

(10:39-10:40)

Context:

Mugitani is a very obedient and hardworking senior lady-in-waiting. The atmosphere in *Ooku* is tense due to the threat of spirits. Mugitani tries to show her dedication by moving too quickly and energetically, almost knocking over palace furniture and disrupting order. Utayama, seeing this, smiles slightly and reprimands Mugitani in a gentle but firm tone. He doesn't want Mugitani to become overly excited and lose control.

Analysis:

The speech act in data (5) clearly uses the word *onegai itashimasu* (お願いいたします) 'I beg you', which is a marker of a very polite directive speech act in the form of a request (*irai*). The sentence pattern *suginai you* (すぎないよう) 'not to overdo it' is a typical form of conveying advice or suggestions in a subtle way so that the listener does not overdo it in doing work. Compare this with the direct prohibition pattern *~na*, such as *nesshin sugiruna* 'don't be too enthusiastic' which does not appear in this data. Because Utayama tries to reduce the burden or pressure on his interlocutor, Mugitani, by softening his speech. Then the particle *ne* (ね) at the end further softens the speech act while asking for approval. Therefore, data (5) is a combination of a directive speech act in the form of a request (*irai*) while also showing a form of recommendation (*teian*).

The pragmatic function of this directive speech act is to maintain order and collective harmony within the *Ooku* community. Utayama advises Mugitani not to be overly enthusiastic, as excessive behavior can disrupt group stability and even endanger workplace safety (such as bumping into objects). By framing the advice in a polite request, Utayama also preserves Mugitani's image as a respected senior lady-in-waiting. This function is crucial in *Ooku*, as direct confrontation can damage working relationships. Thus, this combined speech act reflects the Japanese communication strategy of prioritizing politeness in giving advice.

4. Directive Speech Acts in the Form of Recommendations (*Teian*)

Directive speech acts in the form of recommendations (*teian*) are used by figures with high authority to convey ideological control in a subtle manner.

- (6) Utayama : 役割を全うするうちに 高くから見えるようになる
Yakuwari o mattou suru uchi ni, takaku kara mieru you ni naru.
'Saat kamu menjalankan peranmu sepenuhnya, kamu akan dapat melihat dari tempat yang lebih tinggi.' (10:09-10:14)

Context:

After the *Oomochihiki* ceremony is postponed, tension arises between the *Ooku* administrators (led by Utayama) and the government overseer (Sakashita, then Asa). Asa, newly appointed as *Otsugi* (assistant), questions the obligation to discard valuable items as part of the ritual. She feels that not everything needs to be thrown away. Utayama, a wise old woman who leads the *Ooku*, hears Asa's objection. Instead of scolding, Utayama gives philosophical advice. Utayama does not directly answer Asa's question but offers a perspective on life in the *Ooku*.

Analysis:

In data (6), there are no lingual markers such as *~to ii* or *~ta* (past tense) + *houga ii*, which are found in the classification theory. However, in data (6), there is a conditional grammar, namely *~uchi ni*, which means "while ~ or as long as ~", which can also be used to convey a recommendation (*teian*). The sentence pattern above has a cause-and-effect context. The initial sentence, namely *yakuwari o*

mattou suru uchi ni', is the cause and the final sentence '*takaku kara mieru you ni naru*' is the effect. The grammar of the form *~you ni naru* can be associated with the recommendation function because it states the positive consequences of an action (previous sentence). Therefore, the directive speech act in data (6) is a directive speech act of recommendation (*teian*).

The pragmatic function of this directive speech act is to provide subtle yet effective ideological control. Utayama teaches that obedience and self-sacrifice (including discarding what is considered valuable) are the paths to enlightenment. The sentence *takaku kara mieru you ni naru* (6), "look from a higher place", is a stimulus sentence for increasing status and understanding. This advice is not practical like "Do your job", but has a deeper meaning. Utayama wants to invite Asa into the value system in *Ooku*, which, by serving fully, will bring benefits in the future. In *Ooku*, advice becomes a tool to perpetuate the hierarchy by making subordinates believe that temporary suffering will be repaid in the future. Delivering advice indirectly, Utayama maintains Asa's self-esteem. Utayama does not order or prohibit directly, so Asa does not feel intimidated. However, his message is still conveyed: submit to the rules. This is a characteristic of high-level Japanese communication that prioritises harmony indirectly.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that directive speech acts in the film *Mononoke Movie: Karakasa* are strongly influenced by *Ooku's* hierarchical and repressive power structure. Directive speech acts in the form of commands (*meirei*) and prohibitions (*Kinshi*) dominate because they are the most effective means of social control. Requests (*irai*) and suggestions (*teian*) are used by characters in powerless conditions or as a subtle strategy to maintain a false harmony. In addition, a combination of two types of directive speech acts was also found in one complete utterance, such as a prohibition accompanied by an order, as well as a request that also functions as a prohibition. The absence of directive speech acts in the form of permission (*kyoka*) indicates that in a system that demands absolute obedience, the concept of "giving leniency" becomes irrelevant. This research enriches the pragmatic study of situations in extreme social contexts that shape and limit the choice of directive speech acts.

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