



The Mother Character's Use of Directive Illocutionary Acts in 'The Croods: A New Age' Movie

Ketut Dika Widhyayukti¹, Putu Nur Ayomi²

English Study Program Faculty of Foreign Languages, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar.
Jalan Kamboja No. 11 A Denpasar – Bali 80233

Correspondence Email: ¹widyayukti71@gmail.com, ²putu.nur.a@unmas.ac.id

Abstract

The study aims to identify and analyze the categories of directive illocutionary acts performed by Ugga, the mother character in *The Croods: A New Age* movie using Searle's (1979) theory, supported by Halliday and Hasan's (1989) theory of the context of the situation. Employing observation and note-taking methods for data collection, this study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach for analysis. The results revealed five categories of directive illocutionary acts: Ordering (14 utterances, 41.18%), directing (2 utterances, 5.88%), warning (2 utterances, 5.88%), asking (11 utterances, 32.35%), and suggesting (5 utterances, 14.71%). The study found ordering to be the most dominant illocutionary act category, indicating that characters often exert authority or urgency in their interactions toward other characters.

Keywords: *directive, illocutionary act, movie*

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis kategori tindakan ilokusi direktif yang dilakukan oleh Ugga, tokoh ibu dalam film *The Croods: A New Age* dengan menggunakan teori Searle (1979), didukung oleh teori Halliday dan Hasan (1989) mengenai konteks situasi. Dengan menggunakan metode observasi dan pencatatan untuk pengumpulan data, studi ini menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif untuk analisis. Hasil studi mengungkapkan lima kategori tindakan ilokusi direktif: Perintah (14 dialog, 41,18%), pengarahan (2 dialog, 5,88%), peringatan (2 dialog, 5,88%), pertanyaan (11 dialog, 32,35%), dan saran (5 dialog, 14,71%). Studi ini menemukan bahwa perintah adalah kategori tindakan ilokusi yang paling dominan, menunjukkan bahwa karakter sering kali menunjukkan otoritas atau urgensi dalam interaksi mereka terhadap karakter lain.

Kata kunci: *direktif, tindakan ilokusi, film*

Introduction

Pragmatics is a field that explores how language functions in specific contexts, focusing on how elements like tone, context, and social cues contribute to the interpretation of meaning. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is concerned with how listeners infer intended meanings based on contextual clues, extending beyond the literal meanings of words and sentences. This discipline examines the role of language in performing actions and achieving communicative goals, which includes understanding the intentions behind statements and their effects on listeners. One

crucial aspect of pragmatics is the analysis of **speech acts**, a concept introduced by Austin (1962). Speech acts are categorized into three main types: Locutionary Acts (basic utterances with literal meaning), Illocutionary Acts (where the speaker's intention drives the action), and Perlocutionary Acts (the impact of the speech on the listener's emotions and actions). Understanding these categories is essential for comprehending how language operates in communication.

Expanding upon the foundation laid by Austin, Searle (1979) provided a more detailed framework for analyzing speech acts in his seminal work, "Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts." The framework includes five distinct types of illocutionary acts: Assertives, which assert propositions; Directives, which aim to prompt specific actions; Commissive, which involve pledges to future actions; Expressives, which communicate the speaker's emotional states; and Declarations, which bring about changes in the external world through utterances. Halliday and Hasan (1989) further elaborate on the concept of "context of situation," which encompasses all aspects of the communicative environment. This includes not only the immediate verbal interactions but also broader situational elements like physical settings, social dynamics, and cultural factors. Recognizing and analyzing these contextual elements is essential for accurate interpretation and effective communication, including in various forms of media such as a movie.

Movies, with their narratives and utterances, illustrate the workings of speech acts, shaping plots and character relationships. Applying insights from pragmatics and speech act theory can enhance the appreciation and understanding of cinematic storytelling. Animated movies, with their engaging speech acts and visuals, are particularly suitable for such studies. *The Croods: A New Age* was selected as the focus of this study due to its rich character interactions and a compelling narrative, which provide a valuable context for examining illocutionary behaviors. This animated film, a sequel to the popular 2013 movie *The Croods*, presents an engaging depiction of the prehistoric family's adventures and introduces new challenges and dynamics. Specifically, the study concentrates on Ugga's utterances, leveraging her role as a central maternal figure to explore language use and communication dynamics within the family setting. Ugga, a devoted mother of three children, embodies the protective and nurturing aspects of parenthood. Throughout their adventurous journey, the family encounters numerous challenges, from escaping predatory creatures to navigating unfamiliar territories, all while seeking a safe haven. Ugga's directives in these high-stakes situations provide a rich context for analyzing how a maternal figure uses language to guide, protect, and support her family. This focused approach offers insights into how directive illocutionary acts function within the film's narrative context.

Several studies have explored directive illocutionary acts in various contexts. Purnama, Putri, and Ariyaningsih (2021) investigated the types and frequencies of directive illocutionary acts in the Best Health Podcast, using Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) theory. The findings indicated that advice acts were the most frequently used and effective way of expressing the speaker's wishes in the podcast. Rahayuni, Maharani, and Candra (2022) examined directive illocutionary acts in *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*, identifying commands as the most common type with 51 instances, followed by requests and suggestions. Sembiring and Ambalegin (2022) analyzed

James Corden's utterances on *The Host* show, finding that commands were dominant due to the host's authoritative role. Aritonang and Ambalegin (2023) studied directive acts on the *Steve TV Show* YouTube channel, noting that interrogative forms were prevalent due to the interview format. Lastly, Arini and Candra (2024) focused on the movie *The Guilty*, categorizing 44 instances of directive illocutionary acts. The analysis, based on Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) theory, showed that commands were the most frequent type, followed by requests, advice, and asks.

Despite numerous studies examining directive illocutionary acts in various media like podcasts, thriller and action movies, and TV shows, less attention has been given to animated movies, especially focusing on a specific character within a family dynamic. A key limitation of these previous studies is that while they focus on identifying types of directive acts, they do not explore the context of the situation behind these acts. This leaves a gap in understanding how directives function within specific social settings. Animated films, in particular, provide a different context, offering a unique opportunity to examine how directives operate within family interactions, something often overlooked in other media.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing both the directive illocutionary acts in Ugga's utterances and the context of the situation behind those utterances, focusing specifically on her role as a mother figure in *The Croods: A New Age*. In contrast to the previous study, which tends to emphasize the focus on analyzing the directive illocutionary acts alone, this study goes further by considering the situational context in which those directives occur. By studying Ugga's specific directives within the situational context, this research brings new insights into how a maternal figure communicates in an animated setting. This dual focus on the form of directives and their situational context adds depth to the existing body of research. This study aims to analyze the directive illocutionary acts in Ugga's utterances and explore the situational context behind these directives within the movie.

Method

In this study, data were collected from Ugga's utterances in the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age* due to her role as a central maternal figure, which provides a rich source of language data related to directive illocutionary acts. Ugga's frequent and varied use of language in directing, suggesting, and interacting with other characters offers insights into communication within family dynamics and extraordinary circumstances. Ugga's interactions as the mother of the family often reflect her role as a nurturer and mediator within the family. This study employed an observation method, watching the movie and making transcriptions by note-taking to gather relevant data. The collected data were then analyzed based on Searle's (1979) directive classification of illocutionary acts. A descriptive qualitative method was used for analysis, incorporating two theoretical frameworks: Searle's (1979) theory for identifying directive illocutionary acts, and Hasan and Halliday's (1985) theory for understanding the context of the situation. Both formal and informal methods were utilized in presenting the data. The formal method involved tabulating the occurrence

of directive illocutionary acts found in the movie, while the informal method explained the directive illocutionary act of Ugga’s utterances, supported by the context of the situation.

Result and Discussion

This chapter delves into the analysis of Ugga’s utterances in “The Croods: A New Age.” To determine the categories of directive utterances made by Ugga in the utterances in the movie, the study analyzes the utterances using Searle's (1979) theory for classification. The study identifies a total of 34 directive utterances, categorized into five distinct types: ordering, directing, warning, asking, and suggesting. The following is the breakdown of the findings:

Table 1.1 Directive Illocutionary Act Categories

No	Directive Illocutionary Act Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ordering	14	41.18%
2	Directing	2	5.88%
3	Warning	2	5.88%
4	Asking	11	32.35%
5	Suggesting	5	14.71%
	Total	34	100%

Based on the results of the study, 34 utterances are identified and classified as directive illocutionary acts, in line with Searle's (1979) theory. The directive illocutionary acts in *The Croods: A New Age* are divided into five types: ordering, warning, directing, asking, and suggesting. The analysis reveals that ordering is the most prevalent type, with 14 instances making up 41.18% of the utterances. This suggests that characters often exert authority or urgency, reflecting the adventurous and sometimes perilous situations they face. Asking follows with 11 instances, representing 32.35% of the utterances, indicating that characters frequently seek information or ask to do some action within their interactions. Suggesting comes next, with 5 instances constituting 14.71%, highlighting the role of collaborative problem-solving and idea-sharing among characters. Warning and directing both have 2 instances each, making up 5.88% of the utterances, suggesting these acts are present but not predominant, indicating a more balanced and nuanced communication style. This distribution demonstrates the diverse use of directive illocutionary acts in the movie, with a notable emphasis on ordering and asking.

Illocutionary acts refer to the actions performed by a speaker when saying something with a specific function or purpose; to put it simply, illocutionary acts emphasize the intention behind the utterance (Austin, 1962). Essentially, an illocutionary act involves using language to perform a function, rather than just conveying the literal content of the words spoken. The study concentrated on directive illocutionary acts, which can take many different forms, including direct, request, ask, urge, tell, required, demand, command, order, forbid, prohibit, enjoin, permit, suggest,

insist, warn, advise, recommend, beg, pray, supplicate, entreat, beseech, and implore (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985).

1. Ordering

Ordering, according to Searle and Vanderveken (1985:201) is a directive given by a speaker who possesses a position of power over the hearer. Orders have a significant degree of strength, similar to commands, but do not necessarily require an institutional structure of authority. One can issue an order simply by virtue of their position of power, regardless of whether that power is institutionally sanctioned. While commands require the speaker to be in a position of authority, orders only require the speaker to have some form of power over the hearer. Like commands, issuing an order commits the speaker to not giving the hearer the option of refusal. The following is an example of the ordering category identified in the data source:

Data 1

Context: Grug, a family-oriented and traditional father of the Croods, is accustomed to sleeping in a sleep pile with his family, a tradition that fosters closeness and security. However, the Batterman, who live by the motto “Privacy Promotes Individuality,” insist that everyone sleep in their own room. This new arrangement leaves Grug feeling lonely, sad, and upset as he struggles to adapt to the unfamiliar concept of sleeping alone.

Ugga : *If you give this place a chance, you might actually like it here.*

Grug : *Do I have to like Phil?*

Ugga : ***You have to be nice, no hitting.*** (24:25)

The utterance “You have to be nice, no hitting” by Ugga is considered an order form of directive illocutionary acts due to several factors. Firstly, Ugga's role as a mother places her in a position of authority, allowing her to issue directives that are expected to be followed without option for refusal, which is a key characteristic of an order. The imperative form “have to” signals necessity and obligation, reinforcing the forceful nature of the order. Linguistically, the prohibition “no hitting” sets a clear rule, indicative of a peremptory directive. Therefore, this utterance exemplifies an order as it mandates compliance and establishes behavioral norms, reflecting the authoritative and obligatory nature inherent to commands.

2. Directing

According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985:198), “Direct” is a fundamental English directive verb used to represent the entire range of directives. It is typically employed in the passive voice and reflects the basic directive illocutionary force. In English, directives can be realized in different ways: either by allowing the listener the option to refuse or by not permitting refusal. The term “direct” is used in a neutral

sense, not specifying whether refusal is an option. It encompasses both permissive directives, where the listener has the choice to comply or not, and imperative directives, where compliance is expected without the option to refuse. The use of “direct” implies an expectation for the listener to take a particular action, with the specific form depending on the context of communication and the manner in which it is conveyed. The following is an example of the directing category identified in the data source:

Data 2

Context: Grug was frustrated and angry because his daughter, Eep, and a teenage boy named Guy were supposed to be making a fire but were instead distracted, flirting with each other. When Grug reprimanded them for not focusing on the task, Guy nonchalantly told him to “just chill,” which only fueled Grug's anger further.

Guy : *Come on, man. Just chill!*

Grug : *No, you come on, man!!! I'm gonna chill your a- ow!!*

Ugga : *Hey, hey, hey! Easy! **Calm down, big guy.** You know, Grug, eventually, Eep and Guy, they're gonna want to start their own pack, just like we did. It's our nature. (7:58)*

The phrase “calm down, big guy” in Ugga's utterance is considered a direct form of directive illocutionary act because it is an attempt to influence Grug's immediate behavior by giving a clear instruction. Directives are speech acts intended to get the listener to do something, and here, Ugga is directing Grug to change his emotional state and behavior. By using “calm down,” she is explicitly instructing him to reduce his agitation and aggression. The addition of “big guy” serves to personalize the directive and soften its tone, making it more affectionate while still maintaining its imperative nature. Based on the context, Ugga, as a maternal figure with social authority, seeks to de-escalate a tense situation, reinforcing her role as a mediator within the family. Therefore, “calm down, big guy” exemplifies a directive illocutionary act by aiming to alter Grug's conduct in a specific and immediate manner, fitting into the broader category of directives that encompass both permissive and imperative forms.

3. Warning

Searle and Vanderveken (1985:202) stated that Warning can be either a directive or assertive regarding a particular state of affairs. To warn someone means to alert them to a potential danger or negative situation with the intent of prompting them to take action. For example, if I warn you (assertive) that the bull is about to charge, my aim is to get you to take evasive action (directive). When I warn you to do something, I am typically asking you to perform an action (directive) while implying that failure to do so would result in negative consequences (assertive). The following is an example of the warning category identified in the data source:

Data 3

Context: The Croods family embarks on an adventurous journey to find the place Guy calls “tomorrow.” During their travels, Grug decides to cross a canyon inhabited by wild kangadillos, which subsequently chase them. Following the chaotic incident, Ugga reminds Grug of her prior warning against taking that route.

Ugga : *I told you don't take the canyon.*

Grug : *Ok.*

Ugga : *You never take the canyon.* (4:39)

The dialogue by Ugga, “I told you don't take the canyon” and “You never take the canyon,” is categorized as warning within the framework of directive illocutionary acts. This is because it serves to alert Grug to the potential dangers and negative consequences of taking the canyon, aiming to influence his future actions. Based on the context, Ugga's utterances emphasize the risks associated with the canyon, and by saying “I told you don't take the canyon” and “You never take the canyon,” she reiterates her previous cautionary advice. These statements are issued with the expectation that Grug should recognize the danger and avoid taking the canyon in the future. By reiterating her warning after the incident, Ugga underscores the severity of the consequences and the importance of heeding her advice, demonstrating the intent to prevent harm. This aligns with the definition of warning, as Ugga's communication aims to safeguard Grug and the rest of the family by making him aware of the potential negative outcomes, thus fitting the criteria of a directive illocutionary act that seeks to prevent undesirable actions.

4. Asking

Asking has two primary uses: one involves inquiring information, and the other involves requesting someone to perform an action. When asking a question, the speaker is attempting to elicit a response from the hearer, which can either affirm or deny a propositional content, or provide specific information. In this context, “asking” serves as a directive to get the hearer to perform a speech act, typically in the form of an assertion or declaration. When asking for an action, “asking” functions similarly to “request,” involving a direct appeal for the hearer to act in a specified way. Questions are considered directives because they aim to elicit a response or action from the hearer, whether it be providing information or making a declaration (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985:199). The following example illustrates the asking category identified in the data source:

Data 4

Context: While on their way to rescue Grug, Phil, and Guy, Ugga and the others decide to rest after Hope freezes while crossing a crater filled with ice-shooting geysers.

During the rest, Ugga searches for Eep, who had gone to collect firewood, concerned about Eep's condition after noticing her grumpiness and sadness earlier.

Ugga : *Eep? Eep?*

Eep : *Oh, hey! I'm just... I'm just getting some firewood.*

Ugga : *I think you've got it covered. **Do you wanna take a break from beating up the forest? Are you ready to talk about it?** (1:06:18)*

The dialogue by Ugga is considered a form of asking in directive illocutionary acts because it aims to elicit responses from Eep, both in the form of information and an action. In this interaction, Ugga poses two questions: “Do you wanna take a break from beating up the forest?” and “Are you ready to talk about it?” The first question functions as a request for Eep to perform an action—taking a break—which directly appeals to Eep to change her current activity. The second question seeks to elicit information about Eep's readiness to discuss her feelings, functioning as an inquiry into her emotional state. Both questions are designed to prompt a response from Eep, either through verbal affirmation or through the act of taking a break and engaging in conversation. This approach reflects Ugga's intent to provide support and comfort, emphasizing her role as a nurturing figure. By asking rather than commanding, Ugga respects Eep's autonomy, inviting her to share her thoughts and feelings voluntarily. This exemplifies the directive nature of asking, as it seeks to guide Eep's actions and elicit her participation in a manner that aligns with her willingness and comfort.

5. Suggesting

Suggesting, as stated by Searle and Vanderveken (1985:202), is considered a weak directive. Suggesting is a form of directive that is less forceful compared to commands or orders. Unlike stronger directives, suggesting does not impose a strong obligation on the hearer. It functions by offering a recommendation or proposal without the same level of authority or insistence. Suggesting involves proposing an idea or course of action, but it does not demand compliance with the same urgency or authority as stronger directives. The following example illustrates the suggesting category identified in the data source:

Data 5

Context: Grug and Ugga become furious upon realizing that Phil and Hope were trying to force them out, leaving Guy with the Bettermans. Grug had been manipulated by Phil, while Ugga received a travel basket from Hope, a clear indication that they were expected to leave.

Grug : *Betterman!*

Ugga : *Betterman!*

Ugga: *Maybe we should take it down a notch, honey. We gotta focus. We've gotta get Guy and get out of here.* (41:07)

Ugga's dialogue "Maybe we should take it down a notch, honey. We gotta focus. We've gotta get Guy and get out of here" is considered a form of suggesting in the context of directive illocutionary acts. In this dialogue, Ugga proposes an idea to Grug, recommending that they calm down and concentrate on their mission. The use of "maybe" and the gentle tone of "honey" indicate a proposal rather than an order or command, reflecting a collaborative approach. Ugga's suggestion aims to influence Grug's behavior and mindset without imposing a strong obligation or urgency, making it a clear example of suggesting. This subtle form of direction aligns with the definition of suggesting as it offers a course of action without demanding compliance, allowing the hearer, in this case, Grug, to consider and potentially agree with the recommendation.

Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis of directive illocutionary acts in *The Croods: A New Age*, several key findings emerged. This study, which applied Searle's (1979) theory and Halliday and Hasan's (1989) context of situation framework, identified five distinct categories of directive illocutionary acts. These include ordering, directing, warning, asking, and suggesting. The results highlighted that ordering was the most prevalent type, comprising 41.18% of the instances, which indicates its significant role in shaping character interactions and plot dynamics. Asking was the second most frequent at 32.35%, reflecting a substantial use of inquiries and requests within the dialogue. Suggesting, warning, and directing were less common, each making up a smaller percentage of the utterances, with suggesting being notably prominent among them. This distribution underscores the varied use of directive illocutionary acts in the film, illustrating how different forms of communication contribute to the narrative and character development. The findings offer valuable insights into how language functions to influence and direct actions within the cinematic context, emphasizing the diverse ways characters engage with one another and advance the storyline.

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