

## The Directive Speech Act of Public Officials in Handling of Covid-19



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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to describe the directive speech act of public officials in handling COVID-19 by involving the context that occurs in the community. The study used a qualitative research design. Data collection uses documentation and recording methods. The data analysis technique uses the interactive analysis model of Miles Huberman. The results showed that from a total of 56 directive utterances, it was found that the use of "ask" directive utterances amounted to 2 utterances or 4%; directive speech "invite" 12 utterances or 21%, directive speech "force" 3 utterances or 5%, directive speech "suggest" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterance "insist" 2 utterances or 4%, directive speech "order" 5 utterances or 9%, directive utterances "demand" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterances "Plead" 3 utterances or 5%, and directive utterances "give a cues" 9 utterances or 16%. Public officials handling COVID-19 have a tendency to use directive speech acts of inviting. The lingual markers used are in the form of asking words, let's, please, suggest, must, do not, plead, in order to, because.

**KEYWORDS:** Directive Speech Acts, Public Officials, Covid-19

### I. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia began with the discovery of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on March 2, 2020. The number of COVID-19 cases continues to grow and the latest information can change quickly. One of the measures taken to deal with this pandemic, every level of government has appointed a public official to be the spokesperson for the government who continuously informs the latest developments on the COVID-19 problem and also continuously urges, requests, invites, ask the public to follow all the rules set by the government.

Public officials assigned by the government to convey this information must have good communication skills so that the information conveyed can be understood by the public. Through well-delivered communication, the COVID-19 problem is expected to be resolved. However, the number of COVID-19 cases continues to grow and the government is increasingly reminding the public to obey the government's appeal.

Language is used as a tool or medium to convey messages. The role of language is very important to provide understanding related to the problem of COVID-19. Communication through language is not just conveying words but also accompanied by a behavior or action. A person's actions in his speech are called speech acts. There are three types of actions that can be realized by a speaker, namely locutionary acts, illocutions, and perlocutions. Wijana (2009) states that locutionary acts are speech acts to state something; illocutionary acts are speech acts to state something with a specific purpose; and perlocutionary acts are speech acts that give certain effects so that they influence the interlocutor to do something. Speech delivered by government public officials is in the form of illocutionary speech acts. The speech delivered has a specific purpose, which is to invite the public to obey the rules and various policies set by the government in handling COVID-19. The speech act is in the form of a directive speech act, which is a speech act intended by the speaker so that the speech partner takes action according to what is stated in his speech. Included in the directive speech acts are the utterances of ask, invite, force, suggest, order, demand, insist, urges, plead, challenge, give cues. (Leech, 1993: 164 ; Tarmini, 2019).

Specifically, the formulation of the problem in this study is how the directive speech acts of public officials selected by the government in communicating to the public are related to handling the COVID-19 problem? Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the Public Officials' Speech Actions in Handling COVID-19 by involving the context that occurs in the community. The results of this study are expected to be used as recommendations as one of the considerations for communication by a public official in conveying information related to problems in the socio-psychological context of society.

Several studies related to directive speech acts have been carried out, including Lorena Pérez (2002) discussing the semantic motivation of indirect directives; Lilo Moessner (2010) discusses his paper to identify and analyze directive speech acts in a corpus of Early Modern English and Present-day English written texts from legal, religious and scientific discourse; Shahpouri Arani 2012 discusses the forms and functions of directive speech acts spoken by Persian-speaking children; Fatma

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2020 discusses spoken academic discourse, there are various directive speech acts forms and strategies both formal and informal; Karandeeva. 2020. The article represents the results of a phonetic experiment devoted to the study of pragmatically, and the stylistically determined manifestation of directive speech acts in the modern German language, International.

Directive speech act research varies widely. In general, directive speech act research discusses the form and function of speech. During the Covid-19 pandemic, directive speech acts used by public officials play an important role. The communication conveyed must be able to influence the community so that people understand and follow the rules set by the government.

### II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design. Data collection uses documentation and recording methods. The method stages in this research consist of (i) field research to obtain primary data which is carried out through direct data recording from mass media (print, electronic, internet) and (ii) library research to obtain secondary data conducted through books, journals, and related research results. The data analysis technique uses the interactive analysis model of According to Miles & Huberman (1992) which consists of three activity lines that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, data withdrawal conclusion/verification.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study resulted in 56 directive utterances with the distribution of the number and percentage of data as follows.

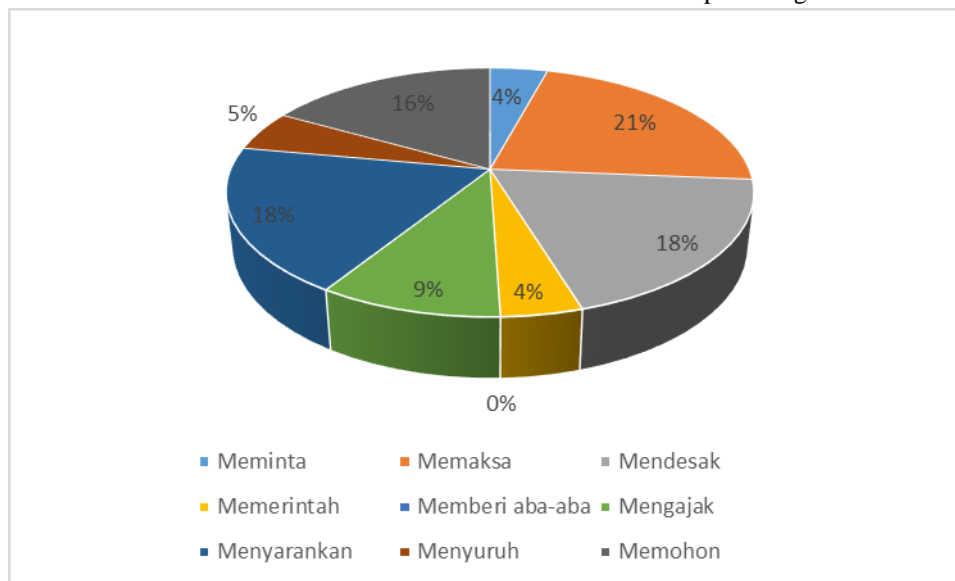


Figure 1. Diversity of public officials' directive speech acts in handling COVID-19 in Indonesia

directive utterances "ask" a total of 2 utterances or 4%; directive speech "invite" 12 utterances or 21%, directive speech "force" 3 utterances or 5%, directive speech "suggest" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterance "insist" 2 utterances or 4%, directive speech "order" 5 utterances or 9%, directive utterances "demand" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterances "plead" 3 utterances or 5%, and directive utterances "give cues" 9 utterances or 16%.

Speech is an utterance that contains action as a function in communication that considers aspects of the speech situation. The use of polite language has a positive impact on many things. Polite speech is positive energy that can create a higher quality of personal life (Tarmini, 2018).

Searle in Tarigan (2009) suggests that pragmatically there are three types of actions that can be realized by a speaker, namely locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. This is in line with Austin's opinion which also divides the types of speech acts into locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions. (Lekan, 2010). The speech act is used according to the purpose of the speech to be conveyed (Studies, 2019).

#### 3.3.1 Directive Speech Act "Ask"

The directive speech act of asking is found in 2 utterances, namely in data [3] and [23] which can be seen below.

- [3] Therefore, I **ask** once again, **let's** obey together about close contact, avoid close contact ... Therefore, keep your distance when communicating with anyone ...
- [23] Therefore, I **ask** the whole community to keep in mind to maintaining social distance in social communication

In data [3] and [23], directive speech acts with the intention of asking are marked by the context of the sentence which states a request to perform an action and is marked by the lingual markers ask and let.

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### 3.3.2 Directive Speech Acts of "Invite"

The directive speech act of *inviting* is found in 12 utterances, namely in data [1], [4], [6], [8], [22], [26], [28], [33], [35], [44 ], [52] and [55]. The following are some examples of viewable data.

1. [1] **Let's** break this chain of transmission together (covid-19) [...]
2. [4] Therefore, let's once again have an understanding to protect the sick. We protect the sick so he can isolate well [...]
3. [6] Let's keep our distance together in communicating, keep physical distance, take a safe distance of 2 meters. This becomes important not only outside the house but also inside the house.. this becomes something important [...]
4. [8] ... Then this transmission occurs which then looks at this, so once again, let's think together to break this chain of transmission. First, we will try to find positive cases. We will carry out a quick test with a rapid test. [...]
5. [22] Therefore, **let's** be very aware that this addition to the number of positive cases once again illustrates that outside the community there are still positive cases that are still in isolation [...]

In data [1], [4], [6], [8] and [22], directive speech acts with the intention of inviting are marked by the context of the sentence which states an invitation to take an action and is marked by the lingual marker *let*.

### 3.3.3 Directive Speech Act of "Force"

The directive speech act of forcing is found in 3 utterances, namely in the data [10], [16], and [30] which can be seen below.

1. [10] What is even more important is that the government's recommendation to maintain social distance from social contacts in the community must be obeyed because a very close distance of less than half a meter provides transmission through saliva splashes when someone who is sick coughs on other healthy people.
2. [16] Therefore, if some of you have done a rapid test and the result is negative, don't mean that you are free from this disease because some negative cases are actually cases that have been infected but are still less than 7 days, so antibodies have not been formed [...]
3. [30] There must be a passion to know, I took the term that is always used by the army, namely the BNPB concept itself, recognize the threat, prepare a strategy, know the problem, find a solution.

In the data [10], [16], and [30], directive speech acts with the intention of forcing are marked by the context of the sentence which states coercion to perform an action and lingual markers in the form of the modality *must*, *don't*

### 3.3.4 Directive Speech Act of "Suggest"

The directive speech act of suggesting is found in 10 utterances, namely in data [7], [11], [17], [18], [20], [21], [31], [40], [42], and [56]. The following are some examples of viewable data.

1. [7] Self-isolation at home is important.
2. [11] We should be grateful that today the accumulation of recovered patients in DKI is 202 patients, East Java is 86 patients, South Sulawesi is 42 patients, Bali is 32 patients, West Java is 28 patients and in other provinces the total number is 548 patients.
3. [17] Regarding to contacting, keeping distance, and washing your hands diligently, you should be careful not to travel because the risk will be very large, especially if you have to travel to the village[...]
4. [18] Therefore, it is wise in terms of planning when you will go home later. We suggest you should be postponed as much as possible until condition get much better
5. [20] Staying at home doesn't mean you're not productive, please do work from home, study at home and worship at home, diligently washing your hands are important

In the data [7], [11], [17], [18] and [20], the directive speech act with the intention of suggesting is indicated by the context of a declarative sentence which states a suggestion to take an action with the lingual marker *such as should*, *suggest* and *please*.

### 3.3.5 Directive Speech Act of "Insist"

The directive speech act of insisting is found in 2 utterances, namely in data [5] and [36] which can be seen below.

1. [5] Let's also protect the healthy. For those who are sick, really realize that we have to take care of the people around us so they don't get sick [...]
2. [36] All components of the nation must unite. Again, don't take it lightly.

In data [5] and [36], directive speech acts with the intention of insisting are marked by the context of the sentence which states an urge to take action immediately with lingual markers *must*/*have to* and *don't*.

### 3.3.6 Directive Speech Act of "Order"

The directive speech act of ordering is found in 5 utterances, namely in the data [17], [25], [27], [48] and [50] which can be seen below.

1. [17] Therefore, a re-examination should be carried out 7 days later from the first examination. So now it can be said that [...]
2. [25] Pay close attention to etiquette when coughing and sneezing cover with a mask or use gloves. Stay safe and productive at home. Take care of each other among family members. Don't let the healthy become sick.
3. [27] You must be a patriot for yourself and your family and you can be a hero of humanity if you succeed in protecting others.

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- [48] Relocating budgets and re-functioning activities for handling Covid-19. (Implicitly order)
- [50] Every activity in the province, district/city activities please be directed to cash labor-intensive programs, must be reproduced, must be multiplied but still pay attention to health protocols

In the data [17], [25], [27], [48] and [50], the directive speech act with the intention of ordering is marked by the context of the imperative-directive sentence which states ordering to do an action with lingual markers such as should, pay attention, must, please.

### 3.3.7 Directive Speech Act “Demand”

The directive speech act of demanding is found in 10 utterances, namely in data [2], [13], [24], [32], [37], [41], [45], [46], [47] and [49] which can be seen below

- [2] The government's recommendation to maintain social distance on social contacts in the community **must be obeyed** because a very close distance provides a great opportunity for transmission.
- [13] **Do** self-monitoring. Conduct consultations with health workers, you don't have to leave the house to come to the puskesmas, you don't have to go out of the house to come to the hospital, now there are lots of media that we can access for consultation [...]
- [24] Try to stay at home when. Avoid crowds. Use a mask when we are used to being in a crowd. Wash hands with soap. Avoid touching your face, it's important because this is where there's actually a lot of contagion.
- [32] Public places, crowds, public areas, places of worship should be avoided! Including public transportation and tourist destinations.
- [37] We must support each other! We have to face it together!

On data [2], [13]. [24], [32] and [37], directive speech acts with the intention of demanding are marked by the context of the sentence which states an order to take action immediately with emphasis in the form of repetition of words and lingual markers **must**

### 3.3.8 Directive Speech Act “plead”

The directive speech act of pleading is found in 3 utterances, namely in the data [19], [43], and [54] which can be seen below.

- [19] We **hope** this is what must be done in terms of anticipating some future activities
- [43] If this is wrong, **I'm sorry**, this is just a personal opinion because I'm not a doctor
- [54] We ask (plead) religious leaders, community leaders, RT/RW leaders to always unite in following government directives, especially in healthy living behavior, wash hands with soap in running water, keep your distance, and wear masks.

In the data [19], [43], and [54], the directive speech act with the intention of plead is indicated by the context of the sentence stating the request to perform an action with the lingual marker plead.

### 3.3.9 Directive Speech Act of “give cues”

The directive speech act of giving cues is found in 9 utterances, namely in data [9], [12], [14], [15], [16], [34], [38], [39] and [51] which can be seen below.

- [9] We do this together with the community, of course so that we can find and then isolate
- [12] The most common age factor is hypertension, ...the second is diabetes, the third is heart disease, the fourth is lung disease and asthma. This is the cause of the high mortality rate
- [14] You are not alone at home, all families will protect and all families are determined to take care that the sick can carry out isolation properly
- [15] Currently, many cases have been cured because this is a disease caused by a virus. There is no need to then have to consume special things, everything is fulfilled with the principle of balanced nutrition and sufficient nutrition is important.
- [16] Therefore, if one of you has done a rapid test and the result is negative, don't mean that you are free from this disease because some negative cases are actually cases that have been infected but are still less than 7 days so that antibodies have not been formed, so during the examination it can give a negative image/report.

In the data [9], [12], [14], [15], [16], [34], [38], [39] and [51] directive speech acts with the intention of giving cues are indicated by the context of the sentence. which states a causal explanation in order to take one action and is marked with a lingual marker in the form of a conjunction such as in order to, *because*.

Here are the directive speech acts of public officials in handling of covid-19

**Table 1. The directive speech acts of public officials in handling of covid-19**

No	Directive Speech act	Contextual Marker	Lingual marker
1	Ask	characterized by the context of a sentence that expresses a request/ask to perform an action	<i>ask, please</i>
2	Invite	marked by the context of the sentence that states an invitation to take an action	Please
3	Force	marked by the context of sentences that	must, don't

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		express a forcing to perform an action	
4	Suggest	marked by the context of a sentence that states a suggestion to take an action	suggest, please
5	Insist	characterized by the context of the sentence that expresses the urge/insistence to take an action	Have to
6	Order	marked by the context of the sentence which states ordering to do one action	must
7	Demand	Directive speech acts with the intention of commanding are marked by the context of the sentence which states an order to immediately take action with emphasis in the form of repetition of words	Must
8	Remain	-	-
9	Plead	marked by the context of a sentence that expresses a plead to perform an action	Plead
10	Challenge	-	-
11	Give cues	marked by the context of a sentence that states a causal explanation in order to take an action	In order to, because

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the research on the Speech of Public Officials Handling Covid-19 is as follows.

1. From a total of 56 directive utterances, it was found that the use of "ask" directive utterances amounted to 2 utterances or 4%; directive speech "invite" 12 utterances or 21%, directive utterance "force" 3 utterances or 5%, directive utterance "suggest" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterance "insist" 2 utterances or 4%, directive utterance "order" 5 utterances or 9%, directive utterances "demand" 10 utterances or 18%, directive utterances "plead" 3 utterances or 5%, and directive utterances "give cues" 9 utterances or 16%. Public officials handling COVID-19 have a tendency to use directive speech acts to **invite**.
2. The lingual marker used in the directive utterance "ask" is marked with the lingual marker ask, please ; directive utterances 'invite' are marked by the lingual marker please, directive utterances 'force' are marked by the lingual markers must, do not; directive speech "suggest" is indicated by the lingual marker please ; The directive utterance "insist" is marked by the lingual marker have to ; directive utterances "order" are marked by the lingual marker must; the directive utterance "plead" is indicated by the lingual marker plead ; directive utterance "give cues" is indicated by the lingual marker in order to, because.

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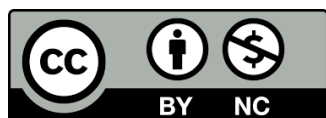
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