



**THE PRAGMATICS OF DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS
IN ACTION-COMEDY FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF
*BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE***

THESIS

Submitted to Fulfill a Partial Requirements for S1 Degree in The English

Department, Faculty of Humanities Universitas Bung Hatta

By:

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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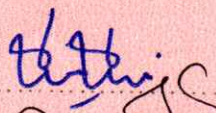
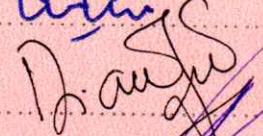
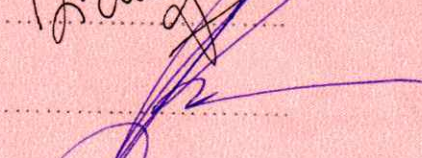
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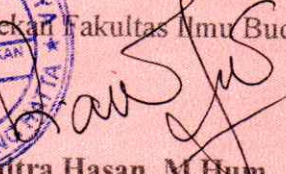
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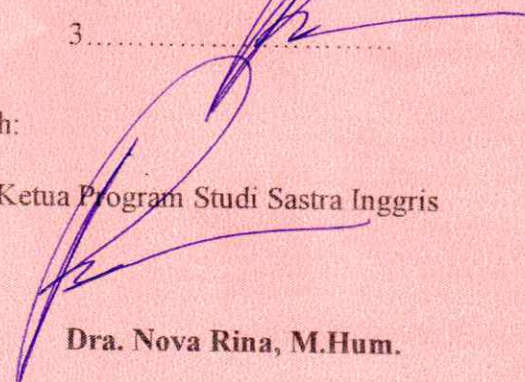
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify the originality of this thesis which I now submit to fulfill a requirement for an S1 in the English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Bung Hatta. The content of this thesis is entirely my work. All assistance received in writing this thesis and the sources cited have been acknowledged within the text of my work.

Padang, 25 Agustus 2025



Echa Tiara Mustika

THE PRAGMATICS OF DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS
IN ACTION-COMEDY FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF
BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of directive speech acts in the action-comedy film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*. The objectives of this research are to identify the types of directive speech acts employed by the main characters, to analyze the strategies used in delivering these acts, and to explain their pragmatic functions in the context of the film. Directive speech acts are essential in cinematic discourse, particularly in action-comedy films, where language serves both to direct action and to enhance humor. This study applies a qualitative descriptive method. The data were taken from the utterances of the two protagonists, Mike and Marcus, which were transcribed and classified as directive speech acts. The classification follows Searle's theory, while the analysis of strategies refers to Cutting and Fordyce. Crabtree's contextual framework, including linguistic, social, epistemic, and physical contexts, was used to interpret the pragmatic functions of the utterances. The findings reveal that directive speech acts appear in the forms of commanding, requesting, suggesting, advising, and forbidding, with commanding being the most frequently used form. These are expressed both directly and indirectly, influenced by urgency, authority, and the interpersonal relationship between speakers and hearers. Pragmatically, directive speech acts in the film function to build tension, coordinate actions, support plot development, and balance seriousness with humor. The study concludes that directive speech acts in action-comedy films are strategically used to achieve communicative purposes while simultaneously constructing character dynamics and entertaining the audience. This research contributes to pragmatic studies by showing how directive speech acts operate in films, especially within the action-comedy genre.

Keywords: pragmatics, directive speech acts, action-comedy film, Bad Boys: Ride or Die, Searle's speech act theory

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Finally, the writer recognizes that this thesis is far from perfect, but hopefully can give a contribution to readers and other researchers. Therefore, for improvement, constructive suggestions and critiques are welcomed.

Padang, August 25, 2025

Echa Tiara Mustika

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

In daily interaction as well as in literary works and films, speech acts play an important role as forms of action expressed through utterances. One type of speech act frequently encountered is the directive speech act, which aims to direct or influence the actions of others, such as commands, requests, and suggestions. Films, as popular entertainment media, not only present interesting stories but also reflect the use of language in various social contexts. The action-comedy genre combines elements of action and comedy, featuring dialogue rich in meaning, both in terms of instruction and humor. Therefore, analyzing directive speech acts in this genre can reveal how language is strategically used by characters to build atmosphere, reinforce characterization, and influence social interaction.

Speech acts constitute a central concept in pragmatics, the branch of linguistics concerned with how context contributes to meaning. According to Searle (1979), speech acts are the basic units of linguistic communication wherein speakers produce utterances to accomplish specific social functions (Searle, 1979). These functions are particularly evident in cinematic discourse, where characters employ various speech acts to advance narratives and develop relationships with other characters. Among the five categories of speech acts classified by Searle (1979) are representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations. Directive speech acts merit special

attention as they directly reflect power dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Directive speech acts represent attempts by speakers to get hearers to perform particular actions (Cutting, 2002). These acts, which include commands, requests, suggestions, and prohibitions, are especially prevalent in action-comedy films where characters frequently negotiate authority, coordinate activities, and resolve conflicts.

Action-comedy films provide a context for analyzing directive speech acts due to their unique combination of high-stakes scenarios and humorous interactions. Kozloff (2000) argues that film dialogue not only helps build the story and characters but also shows how people actually use language in real life. The *Bad Boys* franchise, particularly its latest installment, *Bad Boys: Ride or Die* (2024), is a clear example of this genre. The film features intense action scenes such as fights, high-speed chases, and large explosions that keep audiences engaged. At the same time, it includes humorous moments that mix exciting action with unexpected jokes. This blend of tension and comedy creates a viewing experience that is both thrilling and entertaining, keeping viewers emotionally invested while also making them laugh.

The strategic use of directive speech acts in *Bad Boys: Ride or Die* warrants linguistic investigation as it represents how language functions in contexts of both authority and camaraderie. According to Tannen (2007), language strategies in media reflect broader sociocultural patterns while simultaneously constructing particular character identities. In action-comedy films, directive speech acts often serve dual

purposes: advancing plot-critical actions while establishing character dynamics through linguistic choices.

The writer is interested in choosing the title *The Pragmatics of Directive Speech Acts in Action-Comedy Film: An Analysis of Bad Boys: Ride or Die* because directive speech acts are essential in shaping human communication, especially when conveying instructions or making interpersonal appeals. In the context of an action-comedy film, they are central to how characters interact, assert dominance or solidarity, and deliver humor. By examining the use and function of these acts in *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*, this study aims to reveal how directive speech acts reflect character dynamics, pragmatic choices, and the communicative strategies typical of the action-comedy genre.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background, this research addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of directive speech acts are found in the film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*?
2. How are these directive speech acts used strategically by characters in the film?
3. What are the pragmatic functions of directive speech acts in the context of the action-comedy film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The research aims are formulated as follows:

1. To identify the types of directive speech acts in the film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*.
2. To uncover the strategies used in the directive speech acts in the film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*.
3. To explain the pragmatic functions of directive speech acts in the context of the action-comedy film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*.

1.4 Limitations of the Research

The study is limited to the analysis of directive speech acts performed by the two main characters, Mike and Marcus, in the 2024 action-comedy film *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*. The analysis applies Searle's classification of speech acts, supported by the frameworks of Cutting and Fordyce, to identify and interpret directive forms. Additionally, the study uses contextual analysis based on Crabtree (1991), which includes linguistic, social, epistemic, and physical contexts to enrich the interpretation of meaning.

The data are limited to verbal utterances that can be categorized as directive speech acts; non-verbal features such as gestures, intonation, and facial expressions are excluded. Moreover, the focus is restricted to utterances produced by the two protagonists only, without analyzing other characters. This scope allows for a detailed yet focused exploration of how directive speech acts are strategically used within the context of action-comedy narratives.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research is designed to make a meaningful contribution to the academic field of English, particularly in pragmatics, by examining how directive speech acts are used in a contemporary action-comedy film. The study draws on relevant pragmatic frameworks to analyze how these speech acts are expressed, whether directly or indirectly, and how they function within the genre's unique blend of humor and high-stakes interaction. Theoretically, it enhances understanding of directive speech acts in modern media, showing how they function to build character interactions, drive the plot, and balance humor with tension. Practically, the study serves as a reference for students, researchers, and educators, especially those using film as a tool to teach pragmatic concepts. It also supports the growth of pragmatic studies in the context of contemporary audiovisual language.