

DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS AND GENDER-BASED LANGUAGE PATTERNS IN THE COMMENT SECTION OF THE @MENKEURI INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines directive speech acts and gender-based language patterns in the comment section of the official Instagram account @menkeuri on the post entitled “Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted.” The study aims to identify the forms and functions of directive speech acts and to analyze gender differences in their use within the context of digital political communication. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a content analysis method. The data consisted of comments containing directive speech acts posted within one month after the upload of the post. Data were collected through documentation and note-taking techniques and analyzed using Ibrahim’s (1992) classification of directive speech acts. The findings reveal 154 directive speech acts categorized into five forms: requestives (63.63%), questions (12.34%), requirements (11.04%), advisories (9.74%), and permissives (3.25%), while prohibitives were not found. The identified functions include requesting, pleading, praying, questioning, demanding, ordering, advising, warning, proposing, and suggesting, with praying emerging as the most dominant function. In terms of gender, male netizens produced more directive utterances than female netizens. Male language patterns tended to be more assertive and action-oriented, whereas female language patterns tended to emphasize empathy, solidarity, and politeness. These findings indicate that gender-related language patterns may influence how users express aspirations, criticism, and demands regarding public policy in digital political communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is used by humans as the primary means of communication, conveying information, and expressing feelings. In linguistics, the meaning of an utterance is not only determined by the arrangement of words, but also by the speaker’s intention and the context in which the utterance is delivered. The branch of linguistics that studies this is pragmatics, which examines the meaning of language based on the situation and context of its use. According to Sukmawati and Fatmawati (2024), context plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of an utterance, so understanding speech cannot be separated from the communicative conditions that accompany it. One important concept in pragmatics is speech acts, namely actions performed by speakers through their utterances, which not only aim to convey information but also carry specific intentions such as requesting, commanding, suggesting, or warning the interlocutor.

One type of speech act frequently encountered in daily communication is directive speech acts. According to Ibrahim (1992), directive speech acts are utterances used by speakers to encourage or request the interlocutor to perform a particular action. Ibrahim classifies directive speech acts into six forms: requests (requestives), questions (questions), commands



(requirements), prohibitions (prohibitives), permissions (permissives), and advice (advisories), each of which has specific functions in communication. The development of technology and social media has created new spaces for the practice of these speech acts. Platforms such as Instagram allow netizens to interact directly with various parties, including government officials, through public comment sections that can be accessed by anyone.

The Instagram account @menkeuri is the official account of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, which has 634 thousand followers and serves as a medium of communication between the government and the public. On November 20, 2025, this account uploaded a post titled “Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted,” which triggered 2,024 comments from netizens. The high number of comments reflects a gap between the government’s optimistic statements and the economic reality experienced by the public, such as inflation, rising prices of basic necessities, and difficulties in accessing business credit. This condition encourages netizens to express various directive speech acts in the form of requests, questions, demands, and advice directed at the Minister of Finance. The issues that need to be examined are the forms and functions of directive speech acts used by netizens, as well as whether there are differences in their use based on gender. To address these issues, this study employs a pragmatic approach using speech act theory (Ibrahim, 1992) as the analytical framework.

According to data published by Badan Pusat Statistik, Indonesia experienced inflation pressures throughout 2025, particularly in food commodities and household necessities, which affected the purchasing power of lower- and middle-income communities. In addition, reports from Bank Indonesia indicated that access to productive financing for small and medium enterprises remained uneven in several regions. These conditions contributed to public dissatisfaction and encouraged citizens to express criticism, demands, and aspirations toward government economic policies through social media platforms such as Instagram.

Several previous studies have analyzed directive speech acts in various contexts. (Paradifa & Fatmawati, 2024) found directive speech acts in everyday conversations and concluded that such utterances are predominantly used to request and encourage interlocutors to take action. (Anjarini & Ningsih, 2024) analyzed directive speech acts in classroom interactions and concluded that the forms and functions of directives are strongly influenced by hierarchical relationships between speakers and interlocutors. Meanwhile, (Maulidia et al., 2025) examined gender-based language differences and found that women tend to use more expressive and polite language, while men tend to be more direct and assertive. However, studies on directive speech acts in the context of digital political communication on social media, particularly Instagram, are still limited, creating a research gap addressed by this study.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to connect directive speech acts, gender-based language patterns, and digital political communication within the context of public responses to fiscal policy discourse on an official ministerial Instagram account. Unlike previous studies that mainly examined directive speech acts in classroom interaction, films, or face-to-face communication, this study focuses on citizen–government interaction in a highly interactive digital public sphere. Furthermore, this research contributes to the development of digital pragmatics by demonstrating how directive speech acts function not only as linguistic



expressions, but also as forms of political participation, criticism, negotiation, and public aspiration in social media discourse.

Based on the background above, this study formulates three main research questions: (1) what are the forms of directive speech acts, (2) what are their functions, and (3) how do directive speech acts differ between female and male netizens in the comment section of the @menkeuri post titled “Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted.” The objective of this study is to analyze the forms, functions, and gender-based differences in the use of directive speech acts within the context of digital political communication. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of pragmatics, particularly the study of directive speech acts in social media, while also broadening the understanding of digital political communication. Practically, the findings of this study can be utilized as learning material in pragmatics, especially in teaching speech acts within the increasingly relevant context of social media in the digital era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pragmatics and Speech Acts

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines meaning based on context. Unlike semantics, pragmatics emphasizes how meaning is interpreted in actual communication situations (Leech, 2015; Yule, 2006). In this perspective, language is not merely a system of symbols, but a form of social action. The concept of speech acts was first introduced by Austin (1962), who distinguishes three levels: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. This theory was further developed by Searle (1969), who classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Among these, directive speech acts are central in this study because they aim to influence the actions of the hearer.

2.2 Directive Speech Acts Based on Ibrahim’s Classification

This study primarily adopts the framework proposed by Ibrahim (1992), who provides a more detailed classification of directive speech acts. According to Ibrahim, directive speech acts are divided into six forms: requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories. Each category reflects different communicative intentions, ranging from non-coercive requests (requestives), information-seeking acts (questions), strong commands (requirements), restrictions (prohibitives), granting authority (permissives), to persuasive advice (advisories). Compared to Searle’s general classification, Ibrahim’s framework is more specific and operational, making it suitable for analyzing complex and varied utterances in digital communication contexts.

2.3 Digital Political Communication on Instagram

The development of social media has transformed communication into a more open and interactive public discourse. Instagram, as a digital platform, allows direct interaction between government institutions and citizens through comment sections. In this context, comments function not only as responses but also as forms of public participation, criticism, and negotiation of power. Digital communication is characterized by anonymity, asynchronous interaction, and



broad audiences, which influence how speech acts are produced and interpreted. Therefore, directive speech acts in social media are not merely interpersonal but also ideological and public.

2.4 Gender and Language in Digital Communication

Language use is influenced by social and cultural constructions, including gender (Prayitno, 2017). Previous studies (Lakoff; Tannen) suggest that women tend to use more polite and expressive language, while men tend to be more direct and assertive. However, these patterns should not be viewed as absolute, but rather as tendencies shaped by context and social interaction.

In digital communication, gendered language becomes more fluid due to the absence of physical cues and the flexibility of identity. Therefore, this study examines gender differences carefully, focusing on patterns found in the data rather than making essentialist generalizations.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the content analysis method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the data collected consist of utterances in the comment section that require contextual interpretation rather than statistical measurement. According to Sugiyono (2020:2–3), qualitative research focuses on analyzing social phenomena by describing the data that have been collected. The content analysis method is used to systematically and objectively examine, process, and interpret directive speech acts, as stated by Bungin (2015).

The data in this study consist of all utterances categorized as directive speech acts found in the comment section of a 10-second video uploaded by the Instagram account @menkeuri on November 20, 2025, titled “Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted,” with the limitation that only comments posted within one month after the upload are included. From a total of 2,024 comments, 154 utterances were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on specific criteria, namely: (1) comments containing clear directive speech acts, (2) comments relevant to the topic of economic policy, (3) comments that can be contextually interpreted, and (4) comments that are not duplicated, spam, or irrelevant. This selection ensures that the data analyzed are representative and systematically categorized based on Ibrahim’s (1992) framework.

Data collection was carried out through documentation and note-taking techniques, namely by documenting comments from the Instagram comment section and recording them systematically for analysis. Data analysis was conducted in four stages: identification by assigning codes to each data point, classification of data based on the forms and functions of directive speech acts using analysis tables, content analysis of the utterances, and interpretation using the theoretical framework proposed by Ibrahim (1992).

In addition, this study also considers gender as a social variable influencing language use. Language use is influenced by social and cultural constructions, including gender (Prayitno, 2017). Previous studies (Lakoff; Tannen) suggest that women tend to use more polite and expressive language, while men tend to be more direct and assertive. However, these patterns are not treated as absolute in this study, but rather as tendencies shaped by context and social interaction. In the context of digital communication, gendered language becomes more fluid due to the absence of physical cues and the flexibility of identity. Therefore, this study examines



gender differences carefully, focusing on patterns that emerge from the data rather than making essentialist generalizations.

The validity of the data was ensured through four criteria: credibility through source triangulation techniques, transferability through systematic presentation of results, dependability through regular consultation with the academic supervisor, and confirmability through repeated verification of the entire research process and findings (Sugiyono, 2020).

1. Gender Identification Procedure

The identification of gender in this study was conducted carefully based on publicly available profile indicators, including usernames, profile photographs, self-descriptions, linguistic markers, and contextual interaction patterns in the comment section. However, the researcher recognizes that gender identity in digital spaces is fluid and cannot always be determined with complete certainty. Therefore, gender classification in this study is interpreted as a linguistic tendency rather than an absolute identity category.

2. Coding Procedure

The coding process was conducted in several stages. First, all comments were collected and filtered based on relevance to directive speech acts. Second, each utterance was categorized according to Ibrahim's (1992) classification framework. Third, the researcher identified the communicative function of each utterance based on contextual meaning. To maintain consistency, the coding process was repeatedly reviewed and discussed with academic supervisors. Comments containing ambiguous meanings were re-evaluated contextually before classification.

3. Ethical Considerations

This study used publicly accessible comments from Instagram. To protect user privacy, personal identities were anonymized and usernames were not fully displayed in the analysis. The data were used solely for academic purposes and analyzed within the principles of research ethics in digital communication studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Distribution of Directive Speech Acts

Based on the analysis of comments in the Instagram post uploaded by the official account @menkeuri entitled "Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted," 154 utterances containing directive speech acts were identified. Referring to Ibrahim's (1992) classification, the data were categorized into five forms of directive speech acts: requestives, questions, requirements, permissives, and advisories. Meanwhile, the prohibitives form was not found in the data.



Table 1. Distribution of Directive Speech Acts in the Comment Section of @menkeuri

No	Directive Speech Acts	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	Requestives	62	36	98	63.63%
2	Questions	15	4	19	12.34%
3	Requirements	15	2	17	11.04%
4	Prohibitives	–	–	–	–
5	Permissives	3	2	5	3.25%
6	Advisories	7	8	15	9.74%
	Total	103	51	154	100%

The findings demonstrate that requestive speech acts dominate the interaction patterns in the comment section with 98 data (63.63%). This indicates that netizens tend to express aspirations, expectations, criticism, and emotional responses through persuasive and relatively non-confrontational language strategies. In contrast, directive speech acts in the form of requirements and advisories appeared less frequently, suggesting that direct commands and explicit criticism were not the dominant patterns in this digital political discourse.

The dominance of requestive speech acts also reflects the nature of communication in social media, where users often attempt to influence government policies indirectly through requests, prayers, encouragement, and suggestions rather than through highly authoritative expressions. These findings indicate that Instagram comments function not only as responses to information, but also as a medium through which citizens negotiate public policies and express collective expectations toward the government.

4.2 Dominant Functions of Directive Speech Acts

Among the various directive speech act functions identified in the data, praying, encouraging, questioning, and demanding emerged as the most dominant and representative forms in the context of digital political communication. These functions illustrate how netizens express expectations, criticism, aspirations, and emotional involvement toward government economic policies.

Praying Function

The praying function was the most dominant function found in this study, with 41 data identified in the comment section. This function reflects how netizens express hopes and expectations regarding Indonesia’s economic condition through spiritual expressions directed toward God.

One example is the utterance:

“Alhamdulillah, hopefully Indonesia’s economy continues to improve.”

This utterance reflects a directive speech act in the form of requestives because the speaker expresses hope for positive economic development. The phrase “hopefully” serves as a marker of prayer and expectation. The high frequency of praying functions indicates that Indonesian netizens tend to combine political responses with religious and emotional expressions when responding to government economic discourse in social media.



The dominance of praying functions also demonstrates that digital political communication in Indonesia is closely connected with cultural and spiritual values. Netizens not only evaluate policies rationally but also express collective hopes through religious language as part of public participation in digital spaces.

Encouraging Function

Another dominant function found in the data is encouraging. This function reflects support and motivation directed toward the government in maintaining or improving economic policies.

One example is:

“Great... keep it up for a better Indonesia.”

This utterance demonstrates an encouraging function because the speaker motivates the government to continue implementing policies considered beneficial for society. The use of positive expressions such as “great” and “keep it up” reflects supportive communication strategies that emphasize optimism and solidarity.

The encouraging function indicates that not all comments in political communication spaces are confrontational or critical. Some netizens actively provide moral support and encouragement as forms of constructive participation in digital discourse.

Questioning Function

The questioning function was found in 19 data and reflects public curiosity and criticism toward government policies. Through questions, netizens seek clarification, accountability, and transparency regarding economic decisions.

One example is:

“Sir, why is teacher certification disbursed every 3 months?”

This utterance demonstrates a questioning function because the speaker seeks clarification regarding a policy affecting teachers. The use of the interrogative marker “why” indicates the speaker’s need for explanation from the government.

The findings show that questioning functions serve not only to obtain information, but also as indirect criticism toward public policies perceived as problematic by society. In this context, questions become an important mechanism of public control in digital political communication.

Demanding Function

The demanding function reflects direct and assertive expressions aimed at changing or criticizing government policies. Compared to other functions, demanding utterances tend to be more concise and confrontational.

One example is:

“Eliminate village funds....”

This utterance reflects a demanding function because the speaker directly requests policy changes without using politeness strategies. The imperative structure indicates a strong level of dissatisfaction and urgency.

The emergence of demanding functions demonstrates that social media comment sections provide space for citizens to openly negotiate policies and express dissatisfaction toward government actions. Directive speech acts therefore become instruments through which citizens attempt to influence political decision-making in digital spaces.



Other directive functions identified in the data include requesting, pleading, inviting, commanding, instructing, regulating, proposing, suggesting, warning, and permitting. These functions reflect various communicative purposes ranging from criticism and demands to support and policy suggestions. However, compared to praying, encouraging, questioning, and demanding, these functions appeared less frequently and therefore played a less dominant role in shaping the overall discourse pattern within the comment section.

4.3 Gender-Based Patterns of Directive Speech Acts

The distribution of directive speech acts demonstrates differences in communication patterns between male and female netizens. However, these differences are not interpreted as fixed linguistic characteristics, but rather as communicative tendencies shaped by social interaction and the context of digital political communication.

Male netizens dominated the use of directive speech acts with 103 data, while female netizens produced 51 data. Male netizens were more dominant in requestives, questions, requirements, and permissives. The data in this study indicate that male netizens tended to use more assertive and action-oriented expressions in this communication context, particularly in directive functions such as demanding, commanding, instructing, and regulating. These tendencies reflect how male participants in digital political communication often prioritize directness and concrete action when expressing criticism, demands, or expectations toward government policies.

This tendency can be seen in utterances such as:

“Eliminate village funds....”

and:

“The state budget must be maintained so that its allocation is prioritized for the welfare of the people.”

These utterances reflect concise and direct language strategies that emphasize urgency and policy action.

In contrast, female netizens tended to employ more empathetic and solidarity-oriented expressions, particularly in praying, pleading, advising, and encouraging functions. Female participants often used more polite and emotionally nuanced strategies when expressing aspirations and criticism in digital political communication contexts.

This tendency can be observed in utterances such as:

“Please do not reduce BPJS facilities, especially for retirees, Sir.”

and:

“Great... keep it up for a better Indonesia.”

These utterances demonstrate how female netizens tended to combine criticism or expectations with politeness and emotional support.

The findings indicate that gender-related language tendencies influence how netizens communicate within digital political spaces. Nevertheless, these tendencies should be understood contextually rather than essentially, because communication patterns in social media are dynamic and influenced by interactional goals, social context, and the characteristics of digital discourse itself.



4.4 Directive Speech Acts as Digital Political Participation

The findings indicate that directive speech acts in the Instagram comment section function not only as linguistic expressions but also as forms of digital political participation. Through requests, criticism, questions, prayers, suggestions, and demands, netizens actively negotiate public policies and express their expectations toward the government.

In this context, Instagram comments become a participatory public space where citizens communicate directly with state institutions. Directive speech acts therefore reflect not only interpersonal communication, but also broader socio-political interaction in the digital era.

Furthermore, the comment section demonstrates how social media enables citizens to participate in public discourse more openly and interactively. The use of directive speech acts reflects public engagement with economic policies and shows that digital communication platforms have become important spaces for negotiating government authority, accountability, and public expectations.

These findings strengthen the view that social media platforms are increasingly functioning as democratic communication spaces in which citizens are able to express aspirations, criticism, and support toward government policies in real time.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 154 instances of directive speech acts in the comment section of the @menkeuri Instagram post titled “Solid Economic Growth, Acceleration of Spending Continues to Be Boosted,” it was found that directive speech acts appear in five out of the six forms, namely requests (requestives), which dominate with 98 instances (63.63%), questions (questions) with 19 instances (12.34%), commands (requirements) with 17 instances (11.04%), advice (advisories) with 15 instances (9.74%), and permissions (permissives) with 5 instances (3.25%), while the form of prohibitions (prohibitives) was not found at all. In terms of function, these five forms are distributed across eighteen functions, including requesting, pleading, pressing, inviting, praying, encouraging, urging, questioning, commanding, ordering, demanding, instructing, regulating, permitting, advising, warning, proposing, and suggesting, with the function of praying being the most dominant with 41 instances, reflecting the tendency of Indonesian netizens to express political aspirations through a spiritual dimension. From a gender perspective, male netizens dominate with 103 instances compared to female netizens with only 51 instances, where males tend to use more assertive, concise, and action-oriented expressions, particularly in functions such as demanding, commanding, instructing, and regulating, while females tend to use more subtle, empathetic expressions that emphasize solidarity, as seen in functions such as praying, pleading, advising, and encouraging within advisory forms. These findings hold significant implications for the study of pragmatics and digital sociolinguistics in Indonesia, as they demonstrate that the comment section of government social media is not merely a space for receiving information, but a dynamic arena of political communication where gender factors influence the linguistic patterns of netizens in expressing aspirations, criticisms, and demands regarding public policy. Therefore, these findings can serve as a reference for developing government communication strategies that are more responsive to the diversity of public expression in the digital era. These findings demonstrate that Instagram comment sections on official government accounts function as dynamic spaces for public participation in digital



political communication. Directive speech acts are used not only to convey requests or criticism, but also to negotiate policies, express collective expectations, and construct citizen–government interaction in digital spaces. Furthermore, gender-based language tendencies identified in this study should be understood contextually rather than essentially, as they are influenced by social interaction, communication goals, and the characteristics of digital discourse.

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