

Directive Speech Acts in TikTok-Based Scholarship Mentoring: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract: This study examines directive speech acts in scholarship preparation mentoring content on TikTok, analyzes the perlocutionary effects of these speech acts, and explores differences in their use between male and female influencers. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a pragmatic approach. Data were collected from 11 TikTok videos uploaded by six influencer accounts that provide scholarship preparation mentoring, including three male influencers and three female influencers. The data consisted of utterances containing directive speech acts, which were interpreted based on their situational and sociocultural contexts. The results indicate that there were 107 directive utterances containing situational and sociocultural contexts, of which 69 were produced by male influencers and 38 by female influencers. The most frequently used directive speech act among male influencers was orders (31.88%), while female influencers tended to use suggestions more frequently (36.84%). These findings reveal a tendency in the selected data: male influencers prefer more explicit communication strategies, whereas female influencers tend to use more polite communication strategies. This study suggests that the use of directive speech acts in digital academic guidance content may be influenced by gender, communication goals, and the interactional context of social media.

Keywords: directive speech acts, gender differences, TikTok, scholarship mentoring

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, TikTok has rapidly evolved from an entertainment platform into an educational medium. Many content creators and influencers now produce content that offers education, motivation, and useful information, including digital mentoring for scholarships, study-abroad opportunities, interview preparation, and other topics that help audiences efficiently find the information they need. Among the various forms of educational content available on TikTok, scholarship mentoring has become increasingly popular.

Many influencers use TikTok to share tips on how to apply for scholarships, write essays, prepare for interviews, and explore academic opportunities. These interactions often

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include directive speech acts intended to provide motivation, advice, or guidance to viewers throughout the scholarship application process. According to Prayitno et al. (2021), social media is one of the most influential tools across various aspects and spheres of social and cultural life, including government, law, politics, science and technology, and especially education. TikTok is a learning platform that is growing in popularity among students because it offers a wide range of easily accessible information and knowledge. In this context, TikTok functions as a mass media platform that provides a space for informal learning (Frizka & Listyaningrum, 2023). TikTok is widely popular because its content features communication that is concise, fast-paced, persuasive, and interactive. In a study conducted by Afifah et al. (2025), the results showed that social media platforms serve not only as a means of communication but also as spaces for young people to express sociocultural aspects.

In pragmatics, speech act theory is a key foundation for understanding how language is used not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a tool for engaging in specific social interactions. Pragmatics refers to a subdiscipline of linguistics that explores the use of language in specific situations (Nadar, 2009, as cited in Sabila et al., 2024). This is consistent with Levinson's (1983) view that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between language and context, which serves as the foundation for language comprehension. Bach and Harnish (1979) view linguistic communication as an inferential process. Through their speech, speakers provide a basis for listeners to draw conclusions about the speakers' intended meanings. Speakers therefore not only convey literal meaning but can also influence, direct, request, or express attitudes toward their listeners.

Speech acts are defined through the idea that "in saying something, we do something" (Austin, 1962). Austin (1962) states that speech acts are divided into three main categories: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. According to Kreidler (2002, as cited in Suryandani & Budasi, 2021), when communication is successful, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are similar or nearly identical. Searle (1979) divides illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Among these five categories, directive speech acts are utterances intended to encourage the listener to perform an action. According to Yule (1996), a directive is a type of speech act used by a speaker to ask someone else to do something. This act reflects what the speaker expects. Searle and Vanderveken (1985) state that directive speech acts can take the forms of directing, requesting, asking, urging, telling, requiring, demanding, commanding, ordering, forbidding, prohibiting, enjoining, permitting, suggesting, insisting, warning, advising, recommending, begging, supplicating, entreating, beseeching, imploring, inviting, and praying.

In speech act theory, an utterance can have an effect on the listener beyond simply conveying the speaker's intended meaning. In this way, language functions not only as a tool for conveying information but also as a means of influencing responses and behavior in the current communicative context. According to Searle (1979), illocutionary behavior is often closely linked to perlocutionary intent, meaning that an utterance may be intended to have specific consequences for the listener. In social media content, listeners or viewers often leave comments on videos. According to Hufford and Heasley (1983, as cited in Hidayat,

2016), a perlocutionary act is an act performed by a speaker when an utterance has an effect on the listener and other parties. A perlocutionary act therefore refers to the effect of an utterance on the thoughts or actions of others.

In scholarship mentoring content on TikTok, male and female influencers may use a variety of methods to offer advice, guidance, and motivation to their followers. From a gender perspective, male and female speakers are typically associated with different linguistic approaches to expressing instructions. According to Coates (2013), gender, rather than sex, is the relevant term in this discussion. Sex refers to biological differences, whereas gender describes socially constructed categories based on sex. Most societies operate on the basis of two genders: masculine and feminine. According to Tannen (1991), women typically focus more on relationships and closeness when communicating, while men prioritize status and independence. This makes interactions between men and women resemble cross-cultural communication because of their differing communication styles. Tannen (1991) also notes that men's communication is typically associated with status and independence, while women's communication focuses more on relationships and cooperation. This is also supported by Lakoff (1973), who notes that women's speech tends to be far more polite than men's, for example by leaving options open and avoiding the imposition of opinions, perspectives, or statements on others.

Several previous studies have examined speech acts on social media platforms, but some limitations remain. Rohayanti (2025) focuses on the analysis of Shasa Zhanian's speech acts in the promotional content she creates on TikTok. As a widely recognized influencer, her words have the power to shape the views and influence the actions of her followers. Andrea and Fatmawati (2023) conduct a comprehensive analysis of the functions of directive speech acts found in the comments section of the @Kompas TV account on TikTok. Amalia et al. (2022) identify and describe the types of directive speech acts performed by influencers in endorsement content on Instagram, describe the pragmatic roles of these directive speech acts, and explain their impact on endorsement content.

Based on these related studies, a research gap remains. Previous studies have examined directive speech acts in promotional content, TikTok comments, and influencer endorsements. However, limited attention has been given to directive speech acts in scholarship mentoring content on TikTok, particularly in relation to perlocutionary effects and gender-based patterns of use. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of directive speech acts and their perlocutionary effects in scholarship mentoring content on TikTok from a gender perspective.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a pragmatic approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is a method for investigating and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian issues.

The data sources for this study were TikTok videos created by influencers serving as scholarship mentors. The researcher used 11 TikTok videos from three male influencer accounts and three female influencer accounts. The gender categories of these influencers

were identified based on the gender identities they openly display through their TikTok profiles and video content. The videos were selected using purposive sampling. Only videos that focused on scholarship mentoring, contained directive speech acts, and generated audience interaction relevant to the research objectives were included in the analysis. The videos were uploaded between January and May 2026. The data consisted of utterances containing directive speech acts along with their contexts. The selected videos were deemed sufficient because they consistently demonstrate interactions in academic advising that involve directive communication. The 11 selected videos have a total duration of 18 minutes and 32 seconds. The videos produced by male influencers have a total duration of 13 minutes and 44 seconds, while those produced by female influencers have a total duration of 4 minutes and 48 seconds. These videos were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to academic guidance content and the presence of directive speech acts, rather than based on equal duration across gender groups.

Document analysis was employed as the primary data collection method in this study. The data analysis technique followed Miles et al. (2014), which includes data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was conducted by transcribing the selected videos, identifying utterances containing directive speech acts, classifying them based on Searle and Vanderveken's categories, interpreting them in relation to their situational contexts, and examining audience comments as indicators of perlocutionary effects. Viewer comments were analyzed only when they were directly related to the directive speech acts in the videos. Comments unrelated to the instructional content, such as compliments, emojis, or promotional messages, were excluded from the analysis. A comment was identified as a perlocutionary response if it indicated that the viewer understood, reacted to, intended to follow, or had acted in accordance with the instructions provided by the influencer.

This study used data source triangulation to ensure data accuracy and validity. Data source triangulation was conducted by comparing directive speech acts identified in various TikTok videos featuring six scholarship mentoring influencers and by analyzing viewer comments to support the interpretation of perlocutionary effects. This process enhances the credibility and consistency of the findings.

RESULTS

This section presents findings regarding directive speech acts and the perlocutionary effects employed by male and female influencers in scholarship mentoring content on TikTok. The findings are divided into two main sections. The first section discusses the types of directive speech acts identified in the data, while the second section explains the perlocutionary effects observed in audience comments and responses.

A. Directive speech acts

Based on research data collected from scholarship mentoring content, which included 11 videos from six influencer accounts comprising three male and three female accounts, a total of 107 utterances containing situational and sociocultural contexts were identified as directive speech acts. These data indicate that interactions in scholarship mentoring content

are predominantly characterized by speech acts aimed at influencing, directing, or encouraging the audience to take specific actions in line with the intentions expressed by the influencers.

In the content posted by male influencers, 69 utterances were identified as directive speech acts, while the content posted by female influencers contained 38 such utterances. These results indicate a difference in the frequency of directive speech acts between the two groups of influencers. This difference may also be due to variation in content duration between the male and female influencer accounts, which resulted in differences in the amount of data.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of directive speech act use by male and female influencers

Directive speech acts	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Advice	11	15.94%	9	23.68%
Requests	2	2.90%	2	5.26%
Prohibitions	3	4.35%	2	5.26%
Suggestions	20	28.99%	14	36.84%
Orders	22	31.88%	5	13.16%
Warnings	7	10.14%	1	2.63%
Invitations	0	0%	4	10.53%
Asking	4	5.80%	1	2.63%

Based on the data in the table 1, both male and female influencers used directive speech acts in their content. This indicates that directive speech acts are a fairly dominant interactional pattern in the social media content they produce. When the data were grouped according to the directive speech acts under study, eight forms of directive speech acts were identified: advice, requests, prohibitions, suggestions, orders, warnings, invitations, and asking. In digital communication, particularly on social media, language strategies tend to aim at building positive relationships with the audience. Thus, instructions are not conveyed harshly but in softer and more acceptable forms.

In the advice category, both male and female influencers showed a relatively frequent tendency to use directive utterances. For male influencers, advice ranked third among the most frequently used forms, accounting for 15.94%. For female influencers, advice was one of the two most dominant forms, accounting for 23.68%. This speech act is characterized by utterances intended to provide advice considered beneficial to the listener. According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), advice not only directs a person to do something but also reflects the speaker's belief that the action is beneficial to the listener. This finding indicates that both male and female influencers frequently employed directive speech acts to guide and encourage their audiences in educational and self-development contexts. Some examples of data in this category are presented below.

"lakuin hal ini kalau kamu mau lolos beasiswa unggulan tahun ini"

[do this if you want to pass the Unggulan scholarship this year] spoken by Cholis (M).

In this context, the speaker was discussing scholarship preparation and intended to advise the audience on how to increase their chances of passing the scholarship selection. The utterance can be categorized as advice because it reflects the speaker's attempt to tell the audience what they should do in order to achieve a desirable outcome. The conditional expression *kalau kamu mau* ("if you want to") frames the action as guidance for obtaining a benefit rather than as a compulsory instruction. If the utterance were realized as a suggestion, it could take a form such as *"How about doing this?"*, which merely proposes an idea for the audience to consider. In contrast, if it were expressed as an order, it would likely appear in a more direct form, such as *"Do this to pass the Unggulan scholarship this year,"* without the conditional marker that mitigates the force of the utterance.

Another example of advice is presented below:

"usahakan kalian mengerjakan di tempat yang tertutup dan tidak ada distraksi lainnya"
[try to do it in a closed place without distractions] spoken Fallo (F).

In this context, the speaker was discussing tips for completing the first session of the UKBI test and intended to advise the audience to work in a proper and distraction-free environment. The utterance is categorized as advice because it recommends an action that is expected to benefit the audience. The use of *usahakan* ("try to") softens the directive force and encourages voluntary compliance rather than imposing an obligation. If the utterance were realized as a suggestion, it could be expressed as *"How about doing it in a closed place without distractions?"*, which simply offers an idea for consideration. By contrast, if it were expressed as an order, it would take a more direct form, such as *"Do it in a closed place without distractions,"* without the mitigating expression *try*.

In the request category, both male and female influencers showed that very few expressions could be classified as this type of directive act. Two expressions were found among both male and female influencers, accounting for 2.90% and 5.26%, respectively. According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985), a request is a directive form of speech that allows the listener the opportunity to refuse. In this form of speech, the speaker wants the listener to perform an action, but the listener retains the right to accept or decline the request. Several examples of utterances in this category are presented below.

"Follow akun ini kalau kamu mau dapetin tips and trick dan informasi seputar beasiswa"
[Follow this account if you want to get tips, tricks, and information about scholarships]
spoken by Cholis (M)

In this context, the speaker is discussing preparations for applying for the Beasiswa Unggulan scholarship and request viewers to follow their account for more information. The following is another example of a request.

"Aku pengen kamu ceritain tentang apa sih sebenarnya alasan kamu untuk memilih program studi yang kamu tuju" [I'd like you to tell me what your actual reasons are for choosing the program you're applying to] spoken by Teh Jasmine (F)

In this context, the speaker is providing information to the audience about the UI PPKB program and the essay, and is request the audience to explain why they chose their program of study.

These findings indicate that the use of request forms in academic guidance content is very low among both groups of influencers. The low use of this category suggests that influencers more frequently use other direct forms considered more efficient for conveying messages to the audience, such as orders and suggestions. Additionally, the limited use of requests may be influenced by the nature of social media content, which tends to focus on direct and practical information delivery. In this context, influencers seem to prefer providing clear instructions, guidance, or advice rather than using subtler request forms that require a voluntary response from the audience.

In the prohibition category, both male and female influencers exhibited a relatively low frequency compared to other types of directives. Male influencers used 3 such expressions, accounting for 4.34% of their total, while female influencers used 2 expressions, accounting for 5.26%. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985), prohibit speech acts indicate an action that is typically ongoing (standing over), thereby instructing the audience not to perform a specific action over an extended period of time. This indicates that prohibitions are not a primary strategy in the communication employed by either group. Some examples of data in this category are presented below.

“Jangan bilang kalau UI itu paling bagus”

[don't say that UI is the best] spoken by Teh Jasmine (F)

In the context of the speaker explaining essay tips and prohibiting the audience from listing UI as a reason for admission because UI is a top university, this is a common practice and would make the essay seem ordinary. A further example of a prohibit is presented below.

“Jangan sampai situ doang”

[don't just stop there] spoken by Fahri (M)

In the context of the speaker explaining how to write an essay, and the speaker prohibiting the audience from writing only an introduction because that would be considered ordinary and could be skipped by the reviewer.

These findings suggest that when male and female use prohibitive language, such utterances containing situational and sociocultural context typically appear in specific contexts as a means of protecting or regulating the audience's behavior, rather than as the primary mode of interaction. This indicates that male's dominance in directive styles leans more toward direct instructions to perform an action, rather than toward encouraging or prohibiting the audience's actions. Overall, this data shows that both genders more frequently use productive directives such as suggestions and advice, while restrictive forms such as prohibitions are only used in fairly limited contexts.

In the suggestion category, both male and female influencers showed a fairly high usage rate. Among male influencers, suggestion was the second most frequently used type of directive speech acts, accounting for 28.98%. Meanwhile, for female influencers suggestions are the most commonly used form, accounting for 36.84%. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985), suggestion is a weak directive because the speaker only provides an idea or alternative without giving strong pressure to the hearer.. This indicates that both genders tend to use a softer, less forceful approach when conveying their intentions to the audience. Some examples of data in this category are presented below.

“kamu bisa persiapan dengan belajar dari youtube atau membaca”

[you can prepare yourself by learning from YouTube or reading] spoken by Cholis (M).

In this context, where the speaker is explaining the requirements for applying to a prestigious scholarship. They suggest that listeners start learning through digital media or by reading. Another example of a suggestion is shown below.

“kamu bisa menambahkan pengenalan diri kamu”

[you can briefly introduce yourself] spoken by Diana (P).

In the context of speaker explaining how to write a general essay and suggesting to the listener to add a self-introduction after the opening paragraph. The second example demonstrates a gentler way of giving instructions by using the word “can”, making the conversation sound more polite and less pressuring to the listener. The frequent use of suggestions, especially by female influencers, indicates that they prefer a communication style that is more friendly, supportive, and considerate of the comfort of the person they are speaking with, compared to more direct methods such as commands or orders.

In the orders category, there is a fairly striking difference between male and female influencers. Male influencers showed a very high usage rate, with 22 utterances containing situational and sociocultural context accounting for 31.88%, making it the most prominent type of directive in the data for male. Meanwhile, female influencers used only 5 utterances containing situational and sociocultural context, accounting for 13.15%. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985), orders are characterized by the speaker’s dominance even if unofficial over the listener, so that the listener has no option but to comply with the command given. Some examples of data in this category are presented below.

“temukan supervisor!”

[find a supervisor!] spoken by Ilham Barap (M)

In the context of the speaker explaining how to apply for a research program at Deakin University, and the speaker order the audience very directly to find and seek out a supervisor. The next example of an order is presented below.

“ini dia adalah persyaratan umumnya screenshot aja!”

[Here are the general requirements just take a screenshot!] spoken by Teh Jasmine (F)

In the context of the speaker explaining the Padjajaran postgraduate scholarship program, which is similar to PMDSU, and order the audience to take a screenshot of the requirements page displayed. The high frequency of commands in male influencers’ speech reflects a more direct, explicit, and instructive communication style. This pattern indicates that speakers more frequently issue clear order to explicitly guide the audience’s behavior. Conversely, the low frequency of orders among female influencers suggests that they tend to avoid overly forceful forms of direction, preferring instead a softer communication approach such as suggestions and advice. Thus, these results confirm differences in communication styles between the two genders, re.

In the warning category, the frequency of use tends to be low in both male and female influencer content compared to other categories. Data from male influencers revealed 7 instances of warnings, accounting for 10.14%, while female influencers were found to use them only once, accounting for 2.63%. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985), a

warning is characterized by a signal from the speaker indicating a situation or consequence that is considered harmful to the listener if a certain action is taken or ignored. The following utterances exemplify this category.

“kamu nggak bisa lanjut kalau belum dapetin sertifikat UKBI sebagai lampiran”

[You can't proceed if you haven't obtained the UKBI certificate as an attachment] spoken by Cholis (M)

In this context, the speaker explains the requirements for a prestigious scholarship, here the speaker issues a warning for content viewers to prepare the UKBI test as a required attachment. A further example of a warning is presented below.

“udah deh jangan harap essai kamu dibaca sampai akhir sama reviewer”

[Forget it, don't expect your essay to be read all the way through by the reviewer] spoken by Diana (F)

In the context of the speaker providing tips for writing an essay opening with a hook not just a boring standard introduction and the speaker warning viewers that if the opening is boring, it will definitely be skipped by the reviewer because there are thousands of applicants for the elite scholarship.

In the invitation category, there is a difference between the content posted by male and female influencers. Male influencers did not use any form of invitation at all, with a count of 0 utterances (0%), while female influencers produced 4 utterances, accounting for 11.11%. Based on Cambridge dictionary, an invitation is an act of inviting someone to go somewhere or do something. The following utterance illustrates this category.

“Yuk ngulik essai bareng-bareng”

[Let's explore the essay together] spoken by Diana (F)

In this context, the speaker invites the content's audience to pay attention to everything the speaker conveys. The absence of invitations among male influencers may indicate that their communication methods do not include approaches that encourage or socially engage the audience. Conversely, female influencers do use this form, albeit in a non dominant quantity. The use of invitations by female influencers indicates a tendency toward a more inclusive and relational communication style, where the speaker not only directs the audience's actions but also seeks to foster engagement or closeness with the audience through invitations. This suggests that female are more varied in their use of directive communication actions and are not solely focused on order or prohibitions. Overall, these differences reinforce the finding that male are more oriented toward instructive directive forms such as order and warnings, while female tend to use a more varied combination of directive forms.

In the ask category, both male and female influencers showed relatively low usage rates. Male influencers used 4 phrases in the form of as, accounting for 5.79%, while female influencers used only 1 phrase, accounting for 2.63%. According to Searle & Vanderveken (1985), an ask is demonstrated by the speaker's attempt to elicit an answer, information, actions or response from the listener through ask. The following utterances illustrate this category.

“apakah ini mempresentasikan strength kamu, weakness kamu, opportunity, maupun treat yang kamu punya”

[does this represent your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats?] spoken by Rafif (M)

In the context of the speaker wanting the audience to double-check a paragraph in their essay to see if it aligns with themselves. A further example of an ask is presented below.

“dan ini yang terakhir dari promotor tadi ada nggak ya yang dari rumpun kamu?”

[and this is the last one from the promoter earlier; is there one from your field of study?] spoken by Teh Jasmine (F)

In the context of the speaker explaining the Padjajaran scholarship program, the speaker wants the content’s audience to check if there are any promoters from their field of study. Although the difference is not significant, the data shows that male influencers use the ask form more frequently than female influencers. This suggests that male do not rely solely on direct orders but also use ask in certain situations to engage their audience. On the other hand, the low frequency of ask usage by female influencers indicates that this is not their most common communication method. Female are more likely to use directive forms such as suggestions and advice rather than directly asking or interviewing their audience. Overall, the ask category in this study shows that both groups rarely use directive forms such as requests or ask, although their use is slightly more evident among male influencers than female ones.

B. Perlocutionary Effect

Regarding perlocutionary effects, the findings indicate that perlocutionary impact is evident in the audience’s reactions in the comment sections of content shared by influencers. Perlocutionary effects were identified through audience responses in the comment sections of the selected TikTok videos. Rather than relying solely on the number of comments, this study analyzed the content of those comments to understand how the audience responded to the influencers’ directive speech acts.

These reactions demonstrate that speech acts influence the audience in the form of responses, interactions, or reactions to the material presented. Based on the research data, the five videos posted by three male influencer TikTok accounts garnered a total of 123 comments. In contrast, six videos from three female influencer TikTok accounts attracted a total of 701 comments. The selected influencer accounts have a wide range of audience reach. The three male influencer accounts have approximately 3.8k, 6.546k, and 1.212k followers. The videos selected from these accounts received approximately 37.8k and 41.9k views, 588 views, and 934 and 864 views, respectively. Meanwhile, the three female influencer accounts have approximately 21.9k, 3.837k, and 2.750k followers. The videos selected from these accounts received approximately 21.6k and 4.418k views, 70.7k and 288.6k views, and 265.7k and 3.384k views, respectively. Although one video caused a discrepancy in the analysis, the number of comments between male and female content showed a significant difference. Several examples of speaker utterances and perlocutionary effects in the comments can be identified as elaborated below.

“Lakuin hal ini kalau kalian mau lolos beasiswa unggulan One Shot tahun ini”

[Do this if you want to pass the One Shot Unggulan Scholarship this year] spoken by Cholis (M)

This utterance reflects a directive speech act in the form of advice, as the speaker aims to provide the listener with guidance on how to increase their chances of being accepted for a scholarship. The perlocutionary effect of this utterances containing situational and sociocultural context can be seen in the audience's responses in the comments section, for example,

Kalo boleh tau, kakak dulu daftar dan lolos beasiswa unggulan di semester berapa kak ? apakah justru pas masih Maba? [If I may ask, in which semester did you apply for and receive the prestigious scholarship? Was it actually during your freshman year?] spoken by Qwer (F)

This response indicates that the speaker's remarks successfully captured the audience's attention through questions and further discussion of the topics covered in the content. The following is an example of advise direct speech act.

"mulai sekarang belajar cara menulis esai yang baik dan benar"
[from now on, learn how to write a good essay] spoken by Fallo (F)

The perlocutionary effect of this utterances containing situational and sociocultural context can be seen in the audience's responses in the comment section as follows.

"tips and tutor bikin esai dengan benar kak"
[tips and tutorial on how to write a proper essay, please] spoken by Caca (F)

This comment suggests that the audience is interested in the topic being discussed and encourages them to ask the speaker for further guidance. This response indicates that the speaker's presentation successfully sparked the audience's enthusiasm and interest in essay writing skills.

Based on the selected videos, content created by female influencers generated more comments from viewers than content created by male influencers. The higher number of comments may suggest that the communication approach used in the selected female influencer videos encouraged greater audience interaction. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously because audience engagement on TikTok may also be influenced by factors such as follower count, video exposure, upload timing, and the platform's recommendation algorithm. In terms of speech acts, this indicates a perlocutionary effect in the form of increased audience participation following the utterances delivered by the speaker. Additionally, the dominance of directive forms such as suggestions, advice, and invitations among female influencers may also contribute to high audience engagement.

Female influencers' communication styles tend to be more supportive, interpersonal, and emotionally engaging, thereby sparking more active responses. In contrast, male influencers tend to use a more direct and instructive style consisting of orders and warnings, resulting in fewer interactions in the comments section compared with content created by female influencers.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that directive speech acts are frequently used by influencers who provide scholarship mentoring on TikTok, both male and female. However, there is variation in the types of directive speech acts employed. According to Austin (1962) and Searle (1979), speech acts are actions performed through speech. One category is the directive speech act, which aims to encourage the listener to do something. Directive speech

acts are used in scholarship guidance materials to provide instructions and advice in order to guide audiences who need concrete information regarding scholarships.

In this study, directive speech acts are classified according to Searle and Vanderveken (1985). Directive speech acts can take the forms of directing, requesting, asking, urging, telling, requiring, demanding, commanding, ordering, forbidding, prohibiting, enjoining, permitting, suggesting, insisting, warning, advising, recommending, begging, supplicating, entreating, beseeching, imploring, inviting, and praying. The research data revealed eight types of directive speech acts used by both male and female influencers: advice, requests, prohibitions, suggestions, orders, warnings, invitations, and asking. The use of directive speech acts reflects the practical nature of educational guidance on TikTok. Unlike typical entertainment-oriented content, scholarship mentoring content is designed to provide guidance and support for achieving specific goals. Therefore, directives serve as a communication strategy considered effective because they help transform information into actionable steps. These findings support the view that language in digital instructional environments functions not only as a medium for sharing information but also as a tool for guiding and facilitating learning.

The findings of this study are partly consistent with the results of research conducted by Pujiati and Gunawan (2019), which revealed that men are more likely to use direct imperative utterances, while women prefer polite expressions. In this study, male influencers used imperative utterances or order directive speech acts significantly more often, reflecting a strong preference for explicit communication styles. This suggests that male influencers prefer to give instructions using a clear approach. On the other hand, female influencers demonstrated a more dominant use of suggestion speech acts than male influencers. Female influencers tend to soften their directive language through suggestions, thereby creating friendlier interactions that do not come across as overbearing to the audience.

The findings of this study are in line with previous research by Rohayanti (2025), who found that the use of directive speech act strategies is common in the context of TikTok. Furthermore, Amalia et al. (2022) note that influencers frequently employ directive strategies to influence their audiences on social media.

These findings support Tannen's (1991) view that male speakers tend to speak in a more direct style. This is evident from the higher frequency of imperatives among the male influencers involved in this study. This finding is also consistent with Lakoff's (1973) view that women speak more politely than men, using a more subtle and less confrontational style of communication. This tendency is reflected in the higher frequency of suggestions and advice among female influencers in this study. Compared with the use of highly directive instructions, female influencers appear to prefer helpful and collaborative expressions when communicating with their audience. In a study by Malki (2022), women were found to use more polite language in promise speech acts. This is also consistent with the findings of the present study. The findings indicate differences in how male and female influencers use directive speech acts. However, these differences may also be influenced by other factors, such as each influencer's communication style, the purpose of the content created, the nature of the audience, the capabilities of the platform, and the influencer's experience, all of which can influence the choice of directive form. For example, content creators who focus on

conveying procedural instructions may use a more assertive approach, while those seeking to increase audience engagement may tend to use suggestions, requests, or calls to action. Additionally, TikTok's short-form video format encourages a concise, action-oriented communication style, which may explain why directive speech acts are frequently used.

The results of the study indicate that directive utterances made in social media posts not only reveal the speaker's intent but also elicit reactions from the audience in the comments section. This aligns with Searle's (1979) concept that illocutionary acts are closely linked to perlocutionary aims, whereby the spoken phrase is expected to produce a specific effect on the audience. In this study, these effects can be observed through audience responses, including questions that indicate the audience's interest in learning more about the topic discussed.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the use of directive speech acts in academic guidance content on TikTok serves not only to convey information but also as a communication strategy aimed at influencing, guiding, and engaging the audience. Through data analysis, variations were found in the use of several types of directive speech acts, such as advice, requests, prohibitions, suggestions, orders, warnings, invitations, and asking, with different distribution patterns between content created by male and female influencers.

Among male influencers, the use of directive speech acts tends to be dominated by more explicit and direct orders. Meanwhile, among female influencers, the use of directive speech acts tends to be dominated by suggestions. This indicates that female influencers employ more flexible and indirect directive strategies. In the selected data, the use of directive speech acts appears to be influenced in part by gender, although other factors such as content topic, communicative purpose, and platform context may also play a role. The use of directive speech acts in TikTok content is contextual and flexible, reflecting diverse communication styles within the social media environment.

For future research, it is recommended that researchers use a larger dataset and a broader range of influencer accounts. Future analysis should also be expanded to include other aspects, such as comparisons across various social media platforms and a wider variety of educational content, in order to provide a more comprehensive and systematic overview of the use of directive speech acts in digital communication.

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