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Directives in Legal TV Series “How to Get Away with Murder”

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## **Abstract**

The study presents directives expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners in legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder*. The research aims to determine which directive strategy is more prominent in the speech of (non)legal practitioners: direct or indirect. Moreover, the study intends to overview the most common functions of directives. Finally, it briefly overviews the success of directive acts concerning context and interpersonal relationships between the speakers in legal TV context. The analysis of directives in legal context is essential since it helps to understand how legal and non-legal practitioners use language, for instance, to assert orders, commands, or suggestions.

The analysis of directives included qualitative and quantitative findings and was carried out following the frameworks proposed by Searle (1969), Yule (1996), and Grice (1983). The data for analysis was collected by transcribing ten episodes of legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder*, obtained from paid streaming service *Netflix*. The corpus was compiled, and the directives were identified using the self-made acronym system.

The findings of the study indicate that legal and non-legal practitioners prefer to express directives directly. In legal contexts, the frequent use of direct directives could be attributed to the speaker's intention to denote commands, orders, instructions, and suggestions clearly and unambiguously. In contrast, indirect directives also express commands, orders, and suggestions, but employ a more subtle approach to achieve specific communicative goals. The most common direct directive acts were requesting, ordering, and questioning, while indirect directive acts were those of suggesting, requesting, and warning. All these functions of directives highlight the strategic use of language by legal and non-legal practitioners, as they navigate conversations to achieve desired outcomes for themselves and others. The study also examines cooperative principles and felicity conditions in shaping the success and effectiveness of directives in communicative interactions between legal and non-legal practitioners.

**Keywords:** speech acts, directives, cooperative principles, felicity conditions, legal practitioners, non-legal practitioners, legal discourse, legal TV discourse, TV series *How to Get Away with Murder*.

## 1. Introduction

Communicative interaction between individuals is a complex process, as it involves exchanging information, beliefs, and feelings. The ever-going intricacy of communication and its dependence on context has drawn the attention of language researchers. By examining the communication between people and considering various factors influencing it, insights into social interaction and interpersonal dynamics have been gained.

The analysis of communication has been open to various linguistics-based fields, e.g., sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, or discourse analysis. The latter has experienced significant growth as linguistics and language analysts from different disciplines try to understand how communication between people can shape relationships, social, and cultural perceptions. Moreover, researchers have analysed the use of language in multiple discourses, for instance, political discourse (Safwar 2015; Cowart 2003), film discourse (Muhartoyo & Kristani 2013), medical discourse (Černý 2007), and while doing so applied different theoretical approaches such as pragmatic analysis or politeness theory.

Speech act analysis is another tool used to research communication between individuals. Its primary focus is on understanding how people use language to perform actions, such as giving commands, making promises or requests. Two prominent language philosophers drew on the theoretical framework of the speech act, laying the foundation for the notion itself and offering valuable insights into how language is employed to achieve social goals. John Austin's (1962) theory emphasized that language is not used to represent reality but also to perform actions. According to the philosopher (1962: 6–7), utterances carry a performative meaning, i.e., language is used to do things (e.g., making promises, giving orders). Another philosopher, John Searle, expanded on Austin's theory by focusing on the intended meaning of the speech act (the effect expressed by the speaker to the listener, later referred to as the illocutionary force) and argued that intended meanings could be direct and indirect (1968: 407). The varying degrees of (in)directness are particularly prominent in the analysis of directives, and it plays an essential role in understanding the communication dynamics.

The level of directness employed in a directive could also determine how committed and conscious the listener is to fulfil the speaker's intended meanings of the utterance. Therefore, within the analysis of the directive act, the attention is drawn to the context as well since it can influence both the speaker's intention and the listener's understanding. The interpretation of a directive utterance is also analysed by taking into account Grice's cooperative principles (1983), Searle's felicity conditions (1969), and Yule's forms of utterances (1996). Grice's cooperative principles (of relevance, quantity, manner, quality) provide guidelines for

determining whether the directive utterance is appropriate or not. For instance, if a speaker violates the maxim of relevance by expressing a directive that is not relevant to the topic, the listener will likely perceive the directive as confusing. Similarly, Searle's felicity conditions (of sincerity, essential, preparatory condition, and propositional content) provide a framework for evaluating whether a directive is appropriate and efficient in expressing the speaker's intended meaning. Yule's categorization of utterance forms (declarative, imperative, interrogative) helps in identifying different patterns of expressing directives.

Various research has investigated the ways that directive utterances shape communicative exchanges, impacting social perceptions and relationships. The studies range from everyday conversations to professional settings and depending on the listener(s) and the goal of the communication, the (in)directness of the directive may vary. For instance, in the medical field (Černý 2007), medical professionals need to denote direct directives efficiently to ensure that the patient follows the instructions clearly. Meanwhile, a political speech is likely to contain a higher number of expressions of indirect directives (Kasenda & Ariyanti 2014), due to the politician's strategic goal of persuading the audience without appearing too confrontational.

Likewise, within legal discourse, directives are also used to achieve specific goals, like requesting evidence (Trosborg 1991). Furthermore, similar to political and medical contexts, directives might also be employed in legal discourse, featuring functions such as providing instructions for clarity or issuing orders to influence individuals' actions. Legal discourse could be found in various contexts, such as legal consultations or courtrooms. However, legal discourse transcends beyond real-life legal proceedings. To be more specific, the representation of the legal world can be extended to other forms of popular media, e.g., TV series.

While there has been some research conducted on the use of directives in real-life legal contexts (Trosborg 1991), there is a lack of research into their use in a more accessible form of legal settings, such as legal TV series. This study recognizes that legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder* is a popular source of entertainment that reflects and forms societal attitudes towards the legal system, primarily how legal language is used. Through the analysis of directives in the series, valuable insights into the use of directives and their effect on the listener(s) in legal TV contexts can be gained. Furthermore, legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder* provides an opportunity to explore how directives are used in fictional legal settings to persuade, order, command, or exercise power.

This study intends to complement the previous research on the use of directives in legal context by identifying directive utterances in the speech of legal and non-legal practitioners in legal TV discourse. The study **aims** to analyse directives in legal TV discourse and reveal what are the

characteristics of directives used by legal and non-legal practitioners. In order to reach the aim, these **tasks** were set: 1) to review extensive literature and establish theoretical framework in order to identify and thoroughly analyse directives; 2) to compile a corpus of legal TV discourse; 3) to determine the degree of (in)directness of directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners<sup>1</sup>; 4) to determine the most prominent functions of directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners; 5) to demonstrate what makes directives (un)successful in legal TV discourse.

In respect to the aims raised, the study **hypothesized** that: 1) legal practitioners issue more direct directives, while non-legal practitioners issue more indirect directives; 2) legal practitioners mainly express directives with function of ordering, commanding, questioning, warning; 3) non-legal practitioners mainly express directives with function of requesting, suggesting, questioning; 4) the directives issued by individuals with higher authority will be more successful compared to individuals with lower authority.

To reach the aims and to test the hypotheses, data for this research was gathered from legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder*. A total of 10 episodes were transcribed and analysed using quantitative and qualitative **methods**. The overview of functions and (in)directness of directives were grouped quantitatively. (In)directness and functions of directives expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners were analysed using a qualitative approach. Moreover, all directives were identified applying Searle's (1969), Grice's (1983), and Yule's (1996) frameworks.

This study has four main parts: literature review, data and methods section, findings, and conclusions. Chapter 2 offers an extensive review of the previous literature and its application in different discourses, highlighting essential frameworks of this study. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used for analysing directives and discusses the process of conducting the data. Chapter 4 provides qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data through the means of illustrative examples. The last part of the study (chapter 5) presents the most important conclusions of the study. Conclusions are followed by the references and appendices are attached to the end of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, the term *(non)legal practitioners* is used to denote both legal and non-legal practitioners.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Theoretical approach: definition of performatives**

Language is more than merely a means of exchanging information; it can also be a powerful instrument for conveying action and expanding social interaction. This idea, defined between the concept of constative and performative language, was first introduced by language philosopher John Austin (1962). By creating his performative hypothesis, Austin established the fundamental difference between the two spoken language types (constatives and performatives), which was later developed into the theory of speech acts.

According to Austin (1962: 3–6), the act of saying something is not just simply saying something – words uttered by the speaker can either perform actions or state things. To avoid confusion, Austin differentiated utterances into constatives and performatives. Constatives then are defined as utterances denoting information about the world that is either true or false (1962: 95). Examples in legal discourse would include factual statements. E.g., if a legal practitioner (e.g., a lawyer) states, “Harold Smith Signed a contract on August 15th, 2014”, he/she shares an objectively variable fact instead of attempting to provide a change to the listener’s world (e.g., persuading), thus, this statement is constative. Meanwhile, a performative act does not describe the world but instead brings a change to it (1962: 90–92). To be more specific, performative utterances change something – they carry a performative verb that has a force of action. For instance, by saying, “I sentence you to twenty years in prison,” the judge is pronouncing the action of sentencing. In legal discourse, convicting provides a world change to the convict, who is now legally subjected to the notion of the crime committed. Overall, performative verbs are crucial in legal discourse because they are the means by which legal practitioners (e.g., judges, lawyers) give commands, issue orders, make requests.

It is important to note that performative verbs can be explicit and implicit. An explicit performative directly states the act being performed, while implicit verbs can be suggested or implied. An explicit performative is an utterance that contains a direct performative verb (Austin 1962: 69–73). For example, by saying, “I order you to go,” the speaker indicates an act of order, and the performative verb of an order, “order,” is used. On the other hand, implicit performatives do not have a direct performative verb, and the actual intended meaning is expressed indirectly. For instance, in the judge’s saying, “It is necessary for the defendant to appear in court,” there is no explicit performative verb (such as “I order”) to express an order. It is understood as an order from the expression “It is necessary”; thus, it is implied that it is a legal obligation for the defendant to perform the action as said. Generally, implicit performatives may be seemingly more complex to understand due to the lack of explicit verb.



Austin's argumentation on some utterances performing actions without explicit performative verbs inspired ongoing research. Its notable interpretation was later expanded by another language philosopher John Searle (1968, 1969), who further developed the theory of speech acts.

The focus on the intended meaning of the utterance brought a newfound awareness of the importance of language and context (Grice 1983; Justova 2006; Sari & Utomo 2020), e.g., legal language and context, where precision and directness are necessary.

## **2.2. Definition of an illocutionary act**

In the theory of speech acts, John Searle expands on Austin's theory and proposes that not all performative verbs are explicit and that a variety of acts can be performed using indirect language. The philosopher emphasizes the importance of an illocutionary act, one of the three components of any speech act, that was first introduced by Austin. These three components of the speech act are as follows: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocution (Austin 1962: 101). A locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of the utterance. E.g., "I hereby bestow my entire estate to charity". The direct meaning of this statement refers to the fact that a person bestows their property to charity, meaning that all that is meant is verbally expressed by the speaker. Another component of the speech act is an illocutionary act. It is the act of "saying something" (Austin 1962: 5). Illocutionary act refers to an intended or implied meaning of the utterance (1962: 102). E.g., in the example above, the speaker's illocution is the expression of the desire to leave the entire estate to charity. Perlocution is the effect that the utterance has on the listener(s) (1962: 102). E.g., more likely than not, the estate would need to be bestowed to the charity in accordance with the speaker's wishes. Following this threefold concept of speech act, Searle broadens Austin's distinction, placing greater emphasis on the illocutionary act. In his work, "Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language" (1969), Searle argues that the illocution of the speech act is crucial for understanding the effect that the language holds in the act of performing the utterance in the world. Moreover, it also depends on social reality: beliefs or shared understanding (Searle 1995: 54–55). By emphasizing the significance of the context, Searle also acknowledges the complexity of the illocutionary act, stating that speakers can say one thing and mean exactly that but also do not mean it at all (Searle 1968: 407). In other words, Searle recognized the role of the context. Accordingly, this study examines directives as acts dependent on legal context rather than analysing them as separate utterances. Based on intended illocutionary force (e.g., to order, to promise), Searle proposed five groups of speech acts:

- 1) Assertives - they express belief or knowledge (e.g., statements, claims);

- 2) Commissives - they commit the speaker to the future of the action (e.g., promises, vows);
- 3) Expressives - they focus on the attitudes and feelings (e.g., congratulating, extending apologies);
- 4) Declarations - they cause a changing state of matter (e.g., being sentenced to prison);
- 5) Directives - they focus on making someone do something (e.g., command, order) (1969: 25–42).

Out of all these illocutionary acts, directives could potentially be the most complex ones to understand, and it has been suggested that directives are the most notable speech acts in the analysis of their (in)directness (Searle 1979: 36). Directives are essential to social interactions because they are used to “get hearer to do something” (Searle 1976: 11), therefore, using directive speech acts speaker can establish social control. Searle does not strictly list all intended meanings of directives but suggests some verbs that denote directives, e.g., commands, requests, challenges, advice, asking (1976: 14). Directives are an important tool in legal communication, used to establish rules, create obligations, and prohibit certain behaviour. One of the tasks set in this study is to analyse directives in terms of their communicative function. Identifying the particular function of a directive is a part of methodology. Thus, these functions are further elaborated on in chapter 3 of this study.

Legal practitioners, such as judges and lawyers, often issue directives during legal proceedings, such as instructing a witness to answer a question. The way these directives are phrased and conveyed can greatly affect their success and the overall outcome of the legal process.

### **2.3. Direct and indirect speech acts**

Searle suggested analysing illocutionary acts as acts having the illocutionary force and propositional content, thus consequently introducing the concept of direct and indirect speech acts. Propositional content refers to the factual, informative content of the utterance, providing the literal meaning of it, whereas illocutionary force is defined as the conventional force that aims at doing something (Searle 1969: 31). Both illocutionary force and propositional content are central to the analysis of direct and indirect speech acts. A direct speech act is an act in which there is a direct relationship between the illocutionary force and the propositional content (Searle 1969: 22–24). In other words, the form matches the function of the utterance, meaning that the speaker’s intended function or effect (the illocutionary force) is clear from the direct meaning expressed through the utterance. For instance, the speaker says, “Submit the documents to the court by 5 pm on Monday”. In this case, the propositional content is the literal

meaning of the words said, which is the submitting of the documents, and the illocutionary force is the command made by the listener to abide by it, or legal consequences may follow.

Indirect speech acts are more complicated since the speaker's intention – illocutionary force – does not match the form – locution – of the utterance. E.g., by saying, “I would appreciate if you could submit the documents to the court by 5 pm on Monday”, the speaker is making an indirect request to the listener. It is indirect since the conditional phrase “I would appreciate if” is used, making it an expectation, but not expressing a command. In legal contexts, maintaining polite and tactful requests or orders using indirectness is rather important because it provides clarity and possibly aids in maintaining positive relationships between people. In this study, the different degrees of (in)directness will be addressed in the same manner as showcased in example above, while also emphasizing the importance of context.

Directness and indirectness can be determined not only by matching of illocution and propositional content but also by the discrepancy between the function and form of the utterance. The following paragraphs will overview the connection between form and function.

Speech acts can be differentiated with reference to structure. There are three sentence types: 1) declarative, 2) interrogative, 3) imperative. These types help to identify the relationship between the structural form and the communicative function (Yule 1996: 54–55). Consequently, if there is a direct connection between the form and function, the speech act is direct; if there is no direct function, it is indirect. Yule argues (1996: 56) that the most prominent type of an indirect speech act is interrogative and that most of these indirect acts are normally associated with politeness.

As a part of the theoretical framework relevant to the analysis of the findings of this study, Yule's classification of the types of acts are illustrated by providing examples from the corpus of this study, focusing only on directives.

In this study, a direct declarative is a sentence or an utterance that makes a direct, unambiguous statement. They are straightforward and explicit in their meaning, and there is no need for the additional analysis of the context/interpretation of its meaning.

A direct directive in its declarative form can be used to give instructions, commands, requests, suggestions, and warnings.

- (1) JUDGE. ***Counsel may proceed***<sup>2</sup>with the reading of charges (S3EP12).

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase in bold highlights the directive issued by a legal practitioner. For convenience, all directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners in this study will be highlighted in bold font.

Example (1) illustrates the use of a direct directive of a command within a courtroom setting. By saying, “Counsel may proceed”, the judge directs the counsel to proceed with the reading of the charges.

An indirect directive in its declarative form can also express commands, requests, suggestions, and warnings and is used to soften the impact of, for instance, direct commands or orders.

(2) A.K. *Bonnie, this isn't your fight.*

B.W. *Sure* (S6EP08).

In example (2), A.K., AN ATTORNEY, tells B.W., another ATTORNEY, that it “isn't your fight”. In this case, this is not simply a statement but an indirectly expressed suggestion not to get involved in the matter that is out of their hands.

A direct interrogative is a type of sentence/utterance that directly asks a question. In most cases interrogatives begin with a question word (e.g., *wh-* questions) or auxiliary verbs (e.g., *do, did*). Direct directives in an interrogative form could convey commands, requests, questionings, and permission.

(3) K.B. *Ms. Winterbottom, you have any questions for the witness?*

B.W. *No, Your Honor* (S6EP08).

A direct directive in an interrogative form is illustrated in example (3). K.B, a JUDGE, is asking B.W., an ATTORNEY, whether there are any questions present for the witness. It is a direct directive since the judge, abiding by the courtroom procedures, asks the question to provide an opportunity for the attorney to speak. There are no other hidden meanings expressed.

An indirect interrogative implies a question by directly asking it. It holds the form of a question, yet sometimes can have a structure of a statement (declarative) rather than a question form. Directives in this form could be expressed requests, suggestions, orders, or commands.

(4) A.M. *Are you all doing papers over there? 'Cause there is no way that I'm helping Annalise or the clinic* (S6EP08).

While presented in a question form, this example (4) provides an utterance with an indirect meaning. A.M., a LAW STUDENT, is asking other students a question about their work over the papers needed for the case study. It could be argued that this is simply a direct question, however, the second sentence “there is no way I'm helping” makes the first question sound more like a warning, meaning that the student expects the others to do the work, stating he will not contribute in any way.

Imperatives are used to tell somebody to do something. Imperatives are typically constructed with the verb (without the infinitive form) and sometimes have an exclamation mark at the end

of the statement. Quite forceful in its form, direct directive in the form of an imperative is employed to denote warnings, requests, suggestions, and commands.

(5) A.K. *Let's find a new suspect, someone Niles fired once* (S5EP03).

As example (5) shows, the speaker A.K., an ATTORNEY, is suggesting a course of action to the other parties of the conversation, in this case the search of the new suspect. By saying “let’s find”, the speaker expresses a directive in a form of an imperative and includes themselves in the action.

For the study of directives in legal TV discourse, classifying acts by their imperative, interrogative, and declarative form is crucial since it helps to identify when the directive act is being used. In this study, two theories of direct and indirect speech acts complement each other: Searle’s view of matching illocutionary force and propositional content and Yule’s overview of the relationship between the structural form and communicative function of the utterance. In other words, in this study if utterance has a performative verb (e.g., *I order to proceed*) or its form matches its function (e.g., *Council may proceed*), it is understood as a direct directive; if the function and form do not match (e.g., *Perhaps the Council would like to consider proceeding*), it is perceived as an indirect directive.

When discussing directive acts, it is important to highlight that their effectiveness depends on how they are interpreted in the given context. The next section of this paper will address the theory of felicity conditions (Searle 1969) and cooperative principles (Grice 1983), which are crucial for analysing directives. These concepts provide a framework for understanding how language is used in particular context to achieve communicative goals.

## **2.4. Successful & unsuccessful directives**

### **Felicity Conditions**

Further research into the theory of speech acts highlights the significance of cultural and social context. Searle set rules to the illocutionary act, which either make it felicitous or not. The conditions are as follows: 1) propositional content, 2) preparatory condition, 3) sincerity condition, 4) essential condition (Searle 1975: 71–80). The propositional content condition is focused on an act expressed in a meaningful proposition, meaning that the sentence can be evaluated in accordance with its truth value. The preparatory condition focuses on recognizing the appropriateness of the utterance (e.g., the authority of the speaker). The sincerity condition expands on the feelings or beliefs of the speaker, and the essential condition involves the exact meaning of the utterance, for example, if the speaker intends to make a promise, this condition would only be fulfilled if the speaker genuinely intends to abide by the promise.

The examples below indicate two instances of directive acts: when the conditions are met and when the conditions are not met.

- (6) E.R. *So you think Mr. Lahey, did it?*  
A.K. *Yes* (S2EP02).

In this short dialogue taking place in a courtroom (6), all conditions are met. Both the speaker (E.R., a JUDGE and A.K., a LAWYER) are communicating effectively, E.R. asks a question and A.K. responds positively. Moreover, both speakers understand the language being used, their social roles fit the context and the intention of the directive act is clear; the question and the answer are logically connected, the speaker is sincere with the question, and the listener (A.K.) is sincere with the answer.

When some conditions are not met, the speech act is infelicitous. The dialogue below illustrates indirect directive in a form of a question and infelicitous directive:

- (7) W.G. *Professor Keating?*  
A.K. *I have no time now* (S1EP06).

W.G., a LAW STUDENT, addresses A.K., an ATTORNEY, by the name. Based on the attorney's response it could be assumed that the student wanted to not only directly attract the attorney's attention but to inquire for some information. The communicative exchange is focused on the student's desire to obtain more details about another missing student.

This given exchange represents an infelicitous directive because the sincerity condition is not fulfilled: A.K. declines to respond not because of the genuine lack of time but because of the attorney's intention to withhold the information (the attorney knows where the student is and does not want to elaborate on it).

Meeting the felicity conditions is important as it provides a framework for understanding the illocutionary act and helps to comprehend better how directives in legal context can be (in)felicitous, which is significant for this study.

### **Cooperative Principles**

Grice's theory of cooperative principles provides another aspect for characterizing directives in legal context in terms of (un)successful communication. It further explores the complicated nature of effective conversational communication. The cooperative principle covers various ways in which people can derive meaning from language and those meanings can either fail or succeed in conversational exchanges (Levinson 1983: 102–106). There are four cooperative principles, also referred to as maxims:

- 1) Maxim of Quantity – providing the right amount of information;

- 2) Maxim of Quality – speaking truthfully and stating what is true;
- 3) Maxim of Relevance – being relevant to the topic;
- 4) Maxim of Manner – being clear and brief (Grice 1983: 46–47).

Maxims can be flouted, resulting in a communicative failure.

(8) W.G. *Arrest him!*

C.W. *We can't, you idiot* (S2EP02).

By saying “arrest him”, W.G., a LAW STUDENT, expresses a directive order in an imperative form to C.W., another LAW STUDENT, who responds negatively. The maxims of relation (the statement is uttered by the person who is not the rightful authority figure) and manner (the statement lacks clarity, is not relevant to the persons involved and the circumstances are unfit) are flouted, and the directive of command is left unrealized. In simpler terms, the directive was not successful (perlocution did not happen) because the maxims of relation and manner were flouted.

In this study, the cooperative principles signify the importance of recognizing social status and context in making conversations successful.

### **2.5. (In)directness in discourse: previous research**

Plenty of research focuses on analysing speech acts in various discourses, such as media, popular culture, and politics (Kumala 2018; Safwar 2015; Sari & Utomo 2020). Popular genres include political speeches, movies, and TV shows. The study of directive acts within these genres and discourses reveals the patterns of the directives used, the power dynamics, and the complexity of analysing language and context. Various approaches are taken to complement the research: the authors consider Grice's maxims, felicity conditions, (in)the directness of speech acts. For instance, Searle's theory of (in)direct illocutionary acts has been applied in the analysis of a play (Justova 2006). The author applied the theory of maxims and felicity conditions in analysing direct and indirect speech acts in the play “Life x 3” to identify the most prominent types of communication (e.g., direct-direct, direct-indirect) between the speakers. The analysis showed that speakers in the play tend to avoid being direct and instead prefer being indirect. Indirectness in this study is widely associated with politeness and is prevalent in instances where respect is needed. Another research focused on the analysis of the locution, illocution, and perlocution of the speech act, aiming to identify the most common illocutionary acts in the movie “The Croods” (Kumala 2018). The study found that the most prominent illocutionary acts were asking, giving commands, ordering, and warning. Political discourse is also subject to analysis regarding the functions of speech acts, as demonstrated by Safwar

(2015). The study aimed to observe the prevalence of certain speech acts used by politicians in their speech, as well as their effects on the audience. The findings indicated that politicians often employ persuasive and commissive speech acts in order to convince listeners of the validity of their claims. Both studies give insights into the ways in which speech acts can be analysed in different discourses.

When it comes to the research on the analysis of directives, the majority is focused on finding out the most common functions of the directives. For instance, Muhartoyo and Kristani (2013) analysed the use of directives in film discourse. By analysing the speech of the characters in the movie “Sleeping Beauty”, the authors determined that out of 139 directives identified, more than 21 percent were used to express orders. Another research on the discourse has been conducted to determine the level of (in)directness of directives on a cross-linguistic basis (de Pablos-Ortega 2020). By analysing 12 movies in English and 12 in Spanish, the author has determined that indirectness is more prevalent in English, arguing that is likely due to social and cultural differences. A different discourse is one of politics, where different directive acts are observed. Sari and Utomo (2020) conducted pragmatic research on the directives in presidential speeches. The analysis of the president’s speech on handling COVID-19 revealed that the most prominent directive acts were prohibiting, ordering, and asking, all of which were used to convince, influence, or prohibit the audience from doing something.

All these studies contribute to this study by providing insights into how directives are used in different contexts and what might be the similarities/differences compared to the genre of TV shows and legal discourse.

## **2.6. Legal discourse**

In general, discourse refers to the use of language in communication. According to Telešienė (2005: 2), there are four elements of discourse: the object of attention, content, discourse participants, and discourse context. In discourse analysis, it is possible to consider all or just some of these elements. As there are many discourses, the following paragraph will define, concerning this study, the notion of legal discourse and its application in research.

Legal discourse deals with legal language in the legal context. Legal language is concerned with spoken or written legal text, defined by varying linguistic properties (Berūkštienė 2016: 100; Solan 2018). Moreover, legal discourse can be classified based on use. As suggested by Maley (1994: 20–32), spoken legal discourse includes regulations, legislatures, pre-trial processes (e.g., pleadings, interviews), and trial processes (e.g., court proceedings, cross-examinations). All these discourses are heavily focused on contextual use, which naturally raises speculation about whether the legal discourse is concerned only with the legal language



used in a legal context. Another researcher (Trosborg 1997: 20–21) broadens the definition of the legal discourse by including jurisdictional contexts, suggesting that legal discourse could be considered as these five components: legal documentation (e.g., contracts), the language of the courtroom (e.g., judge, counsel, lawyer, witness exchanges), language in the textbooks, lawyers' communication (e.g., to other lawyers), people talking about the law. Trosborg's view on legal discourse, which is also considered in this study, is fundamental because it helps to differentiate what is considered a part of legal discourse when there are no specific legal communicative situations (e.g., the communicative exchange happens outside of the court) but legal language by the appropriate persons (e.g., a lawyer and law student talking about a recent case) is being used. Moreover, identifying legal discourse is helpful for this study regarding the application of the cooperative principles and felicity conditions, where directive acts performed in the (in)appropriate circumstances and by the wrong/right people could change the overall understanding of the act.

## **2.7. Definitions of legal and non-legal practitioners**

As mentioned above, in this study, the concept of legal discourse is comprehended following Trosborg's definition; that is, legal discourse involves people familiar with legal language and includes those that do not know it but are a part of contexts where it is being used (1997: 20–21). As stated in the Association of lawyers' webpage *The Law Society*<sup>3</sup>, legal practitioners are defined as individuals who are trained and licensed to practice law. However, it depends from country to country as to who could be a legal practitioner. Typically, these are considered legal professions: lawyers, judges, prosecutors, bailiffs, and notaries (*E-uropian Justice*<sup>4</sup>). Non-legal practitioners, following the distinction provided in *New York Legal Ethics Reporter*<sup>5</sup>, are persons who are not licensed to practice law. However, some may provide different kinds of legal services, such as document preparation. The list of non-legal practitioners includes court clerks, court reporters, court coordinators, social workers, and paralegals (*Texas Law Help*<sup>6</sup>). Students of law, who are also considered to be non-legal practitioners, can apply to paralegal jobs in the form of legal practice for their studies; they support legal practitioners by compiling documentation, doing research, interviewing clients and witnesses.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/public/for-public-visitors/resources/who-does-what> (last accessed on 13 April, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> [https://e-justice.europa.eu/29/EN/types\\_of\\_legal\\_professions](https://e-justice.europa.eu/29/EN/types_of_legal_professions) (last accessed on 14 April, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.newyorklegalethics.com/dr-1-107-definition-of-non-legal-professional/> (last accessed on 21 December, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> <https://texaslawhelp.org/article/when-can-non-lawyers-help-others-with-their-cases>, (last accessed on 16 April, 2023).

The concepts of (non)legal practitioners are also used in this study and are provided with Appendix 1.

## **2.8. Speech acts in legal discourse**

Speech acts in legal discourse have been analysed from different perspectives. E.g., Visconti (2009) draws on the distinction of performative speech acts in various legal written documents. The author argues that performative verbs are crucial in court rulings, trials, and depositions and are heavily dependent on context, which is constantly changing. The author bases the research on diachronic and synchronic perspectives to prove the dynamic nature of written legal discourse and its dependence on the context. The author states (Visconti 2009: 396) that legal speech acts are used to raise claims, suggestions, and justifications but criticizes the truthfulness of the acts, suggesting that certain legal acts present statements in an ambiguous way, resulting in confusion and lack of rationality to all parties involved, especially in cases where clear and truthful statements are simply a must. This confusion sheds light on the importance of analysing indirect speech acts and social context.

Another study analyses speech acts in relation to cooperative principles in forensic linguistics (Khoji & Behnam 2014). The authors analysed written and terminated documents from judiciary files with the aim of determining the degree of violation of the quantity maxim in communication between interrogators and defendants. The study found that in majority of the cases the maxim of quantity was violated, and the degree of violation was restricted and different to each speech act. Moreover, the authors also argue that the high degree of violation of the quantity maxim on the defendants' part is possibly due to the lack of understanding of the legal language, an important point made within the analysis of speech acts in legal discourse.

Legal disputes are also a prominent part of legal discourse. The researcher on legal disputes (Cowart 2003) conducted her study by following Searle's Conventionalist and Strawson's Intentionalist approach to speech act analysis to support an argument of the research that aims to prove how important it is for legal practitioners to use conventional, direct speech acts while asking for consent. By following these two theoretical frameworks, the author suggests that speech acts such as promising or consenting do not follow conventional force but intention (Cowart 2003: 505). Moreover, problems occur when the speaker has no intent for the hearer to recognize the intentional tone of the utterance, leading to the failure of the hearer to recognize the indirect intention. The author found out that the only time the speech act of giving consent is successful is when the hearer is directly informed of the act of consent, which can only be granted and performed by the hearer. In conclusion, the article highlights the difficulties and misunderstandings that arise from the illocutionary act of consent not being clearly

communicated. Moreover, it provides a valuable framework for the studies focused on exploring the nature of an illocutionary act expressed in legal TV discourse.

Agreeing with the ambiguous nature of illocutionary speech acts, Trosborg (1991) analyses speech acts by investigating their influence on the hearer. To be more specific, the author states that legal practitioners use directive speech acts to get the hearer to perform a particular action. However, the author criticizes the usual misconception of the directive act as an act uttered for the speaker's benefit. As stated by Trosborg, directives are used for the "common good" (1991: 75). To verify the claim, various statutes and regulations were analysed. The results conclude that legal practitioners avoid ambiguous, indirect statements and instead employ direct strategies by using words such as *shall* and *ought to* to address obligations or prohibitions. A tendency to use modal expressions such as *would* or *could* was also observed. Lastly, the author concludes (Trosborg 1991: 88) that the use of words like *ought to* or *shall* mainly assert orders or provide permission, while modal verbs are needed to have a certain conversational balance, where the speaker is both polite but also assertive, leaving the listener with not much of a choice but to comply with the statements.

The research provided in this section illustrates how speech acts are analysed in legal discourse. Previous studies have provided important insights, but they have also revealed the insufficient attention to speech acts in the research of spoken legal discourse.

## **2.9. Speech acts in TV series**

The texts in TV fall into several broad categories: drama (like TV series *How to Get Away with Murder*), comedy, documentary, arts, and entertainment (Werndly & Marshall 2002: 44). It is important to note that the meaning of language in television texts heavily depends on the mixture of language and context. As emphasized by Werndly and Marshall, the analysis of television language would not be possible "without taking into account of the signifying context in which it occurs" (2002: 27). In legal TV series, for instance, if the attorney says, "Objection, Your Honour!", the interpretation of the directive utterance depends on and could only be understood in legal context. Understanding this relationship between context and language is especially important in the analysis of directives, where the (in)directness or success of the act relies on the context.

Furthermore, the main difference of verbal language in TV series, compared to everyday life, is represented talk: "a scripted dialogue which is performed by actors who utter words in character" (Werndly & Marshall 2002: 77). This type of language does represent a real talk with the purpose of mimicking real conversations. In other words, it creates a sense of reality so that the speech would appear natural and relate to the target audience. This means that TV

series aim to depict realistic everyday situations, creating a sense of authenticity and making the audience feel like they are part of the narrative.

Because language in TV series mimics language of real-life situations, speech acts are also analysed in different TV genres. One of the studies focused on using speech acts in the TV drama series “13 Reasons Why” (Indriafeni 2020). In this study, the author analysed speech acts to determine the most prominent ones between two characters and what misunderstandings illocutionary acts can cause between them. The study found that the three common types of locutionary acts were declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives. Perlocutionary acts included assertive acts of stating, suggesting, or describing, as well as commissive acts denoting apologies and expressions of feelings. The author also emphasized that quite a few illocutionary acts were met by the silence of either one or both speakers, indicating a level of misunderstanding. Most misunderstandings may occur due to the lack of contextual clues, where characters either consciously (or not) refuse to comprehend the utterance. The study highlights the ambiguity of an illocutionary act, which could depend on the speaker, hearer, and context. Also, the study contributes to the analysis of other types of TV series, such as legal TV series, to gain a deeper understanding of the use of directives in different contexts.

As illustrated in previous research, directives are used to analyse legal texts or television language. However, little research has been conducted on the use of directives in legal TV shows, such as *How to Get Away with Murder*, providing an opportunity for further investigation.

### 3. Data & Methods

#### 3.1. Description of the corpus

To test the hypotheses proposed in the introductory section of this paper, a corpus containing the speech of legal and non-legal practitioners was compiled. The speech of legal practitioners is concerned with legal experts with qualifications to practice law (see Appendix 1 and 2), while the list of non-legal practitioners includes persons who are not licensed professionals but are involved in legal matters (see Appendix 1 and 2). The data for the corpus was gathered by transcribing the episodes of TV series *How to Get Away with Murder* (later to be referred to as an acronym *HTGAWM*) from DVD format to *Word* documents. The series *HTGAWM* was chosen because it is a legal drama that uses legal concepts as the primary basis of the storyline. The series was accessed using a subscription-based streaming platform *Netflix*, and 10 episodes were selected to be transcribed. The episodes transcribed were selected randomly. However, a preview of the episode was first read to determine whether the plotline of the episode will predominantly contain legal discourse.

The corpus of the speech of (non)legal practitioners was compiled in order to investigate the (in)directness of directive speech acts used in communication between legal and legal-non legal experts. The size of every episode range between 4,000 to around 6,000 words (each transcribed episode is put to a separate *Word* document file) (see Table 1 below), and the whole corpus totals about 55,000 words.

Table 1. Size of the Corpora

Source of data (episodes) <sup>7</sup>	Number of words (from the transcripts) <sup>8</sup>
S5EP03	5.732
S1EP01	5.021
S6EP02	5.990
S4EP03	5.724
S1EP06	5.512
S2EP02	5.814
S4EP13	5.609

<sup>7</sup> *S* names the number of Season, *EP* names the Episode of the Season.

<sup>8</sup> The final corpus includes only direct oral contributions by the (non)legal practitioners. Audio tracts were excluded from the corpus.

S3EP12	5.241
S6EP15	5.089
S6EP08	5.972
<b>Total:</b>	<b>55.704</b>

In this study, legal TV discourse includes conversations about legal processes (e.g., trials, documentation, arrests, appeals, etc.) or legal settings (e.g., courts, law firms, mediation centres, prisons). Unrelated settings and topics (e.g., conversations about family, characters going to the shopping centre and talking about their friends) were not considered a subject of analysis of directives.

### **3.2. Methods**

After compiling the corpus and excluding any additional information, the speech of (non)legal practitioners in legal TV discourse was analysed by identifying directive acts. All directives identified were subject to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis highlights the frequencies of direct and indirect directives expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners, moreover, it reveals the differences within the intended illocutions of the directive acts. The qualitative analysis complements the quantitative findings by providing a closer look into the context of the expressed directives. In this case, all directives were analysed following the framework of direct and indirect speech acts proposed by Searle (1968; 1969; 1975; 1995) and Yule (1996). Complemented by Searle’s classification, the functions of directives identified in the corpus are provided in the section below.

To mark directives, a self-made acronym system was developed. Each utterance was marked considering three categories: 1) the form of directive, 2) the (in)directness of directive, 3) the function of directive. For instance, a direct directive in declarative form functioning as an order was marked like this: <DEC.D.OR>. All other acronyms are provided in Appendix 3 of this study.

#### **Functions of directives**

Directives were analysed following Searle’s classification of directives’ function. The most prominent expressions of directives are provided below (see Table 2 below). The table consists of three columns: the communicative function of directive, its definition, and example taken directly from the corpus of this study.

Table 2. Definitions of the communicative functions of directives with examples from the corpus

Function of directive	Definition <sup>9</sup>	Example
Warning	Speaker tells listener to do something to avoid consequences or about something that might happen beyond the listener's control.	Attorney to Law Student: <i>Stay out of my calendar</i> (S5EP03).
Ordering/commanding	Speaker tells listener to do something for the benefit of the speaker.	Attorney to Law Student: <i>Get me everything we have on Ms. Winterbottom - by morning</i> (S6EP08).
Requesting	Speaker wants listener to do something for the benefit of the speaker.	Judge to Witness: <i>Louder for the court, please</i> (S2EP02).
Questioning	Speaker wants listener to say something for the benefit of the speaker or the other involved party.	Attorney to Judge: <i>So, is she perjuring herself now, or was she perjuring herself then?</i> (S5EP03).
Suggesting	Speaker wants listener to do something for the benefit of the listener.	Attorney to Defendant: <i>We can file a motion for a new trial, argue the jury had bias</i> (S5EP03).
Permitting	Speaker allows listener to do something for which the listener has asked permission.	Judge to Attorney: <i>I think it's the 6th Amendment, Mr. Miller. I'll allow it.</i> (S5EP03).
Challenging	Speaker attempts listener to revisit their actions or statements for the benefit of the speaker.	Lawyer to Law Student: <i>Do you want the job or not?</i> (S1EP01).

<sup>9</sup> The definitions are provided by P. G. McAllister (2014) and are based on Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy model.

Instructing	Speaker provides information for listener that will allow the listener to do something.	Judge to Defendant: <i>Will the defendant please rise?</i> (S1EP06)
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It is important to mention that this study will not treat the notion of order and command interchangeably. This study will identify orders as directives issued based on pre-assigned hierarchy, such as legal authority (e.g., a judge ordering a restraining order against somebody); they are strongly expected to be complied with. Commands, on the other hand, will be expressed by the person in authority in cases where immediate action is needed, like in situations of emergency.

Based on the acronym system and the functions of directives, the data was analysed as follows:

- 1) identify the directive
- 2) determine the verbal form of directive
- 3) ascertain (in)directness of the directive
- 4) describe/establish the function of the directive.

The directives, their functions and (in)indirectness were identified based on Searle's (1969) descriptions of a directive act, as presented in chapter 2.2 and taxonomy model as presented in table 2 in this chapter. The form of directives was identified in accordance with Yule's (1996) sentence type categorization, as presented in chapter 2.3 of this study. By following all these steps, it was aimed to investigate in detail what are the characteristics and constructions of directives in legal context.

The analysis of direct and indirect directives in legal TV discourse was also supplemented by Grice's study of cooperative principles (1983) and Searle's felicity conditions (1975), as discussed in 2.4. of this study. Grice's cooperative principles were used to determine whether the speakers can communicate effectively in cases where the context and the intended meaning do (not) match. Searle's felicity conditions were used to measure whether directives are successful or not by considering the speaker, the appropriate context, and the understanding of the utterance by of the listener.



#### 4. Results & Discussion

After transcribing 10 episodes of the legal TV series *HTGAWM*, a total of 928 directives were found. 243 directives were issued in a declarative form, 449 in an interrogative form, and 236 in an imperative form. To better understand how directives are constructed within legal TV discourse, a task to ascertain directive (in)directness was set, and their communicative functions were marked as well. All respective directives, as presented in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this study, were identified and analysed following Searle's, Yule's, and Grice's theories.

The following analysis consists of five parts: part one is a purely quantitative analysis and offers an overview of the frequencies of the (in)direct directives employed by (non)legal practitioners in legal discourse in TV series *HTGAWM*. Parts two to four analyse and interpret data from more qualitative point of view and address the functions of (in)directed directives by the type of utterance, and part five investigates the instances of (un)successful communicative exchanges between (non)legal practitioners.

##### 4.1. Frequencies of (in)direct directives

Quantitative analysis of direct and indirect directives revealed that direct directives are used more frequently than indirect directives in both (non)legal practitioners' discourse. Results are visualized in Figure 1.

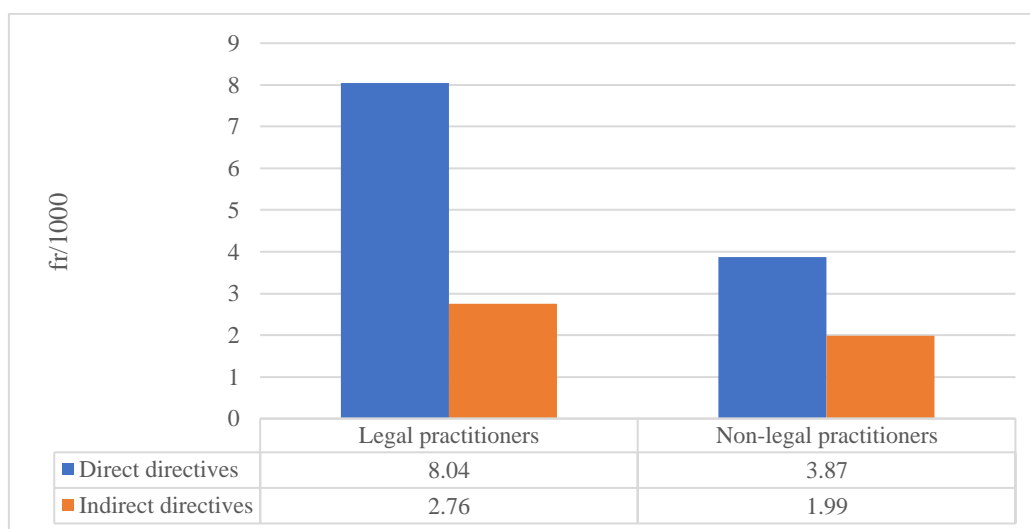


Figure 1. Normalized frequencies of (in)direct directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the normalized frequency of direct directives expressed by legal practitioners is 8.04 (447 instances) and non-legal practitioners – 3.87 (216 instances), accounting for around 2 times more instances in total. Indirect directives are not as prominent, the normalized frequency for legal practitioners is 2.76 (154 instances), and for non-legal practitioners – 1.99 (111 instances).

The numbers indicate a clear preference for the use of direct directives in legal communication between (non)legal practitioners. Direct directives are often used to emphasize the sense of authority (e.g., through order and commands), to provide guidance, and maintain a collaborative tone (e.g., providing instructions, suggestions). Meanwhile, indirect directives are used to avoid direct confrontation and to persuade someone to take certain action (e.g., through requests).

The TV series *HTGAWM* is set in a legal context, which involves a range of legal communicative interactions (e.g., in the courtroom, during cross-examinations, consultations between clients and attorneys). As a result, the dominance of direct directives in TV series could be attributed to these frequent legal encounters.

#### **4.1.1. Frequencies of the functions of direct directives**

Some differences of the use of direct and indirect directives between legal and non-legal practitioners can be observed when the distributions of functions of directives are regarded, as provided in Figures 2 and 3 below.

The following figures indicate the distribution of direct and indirect directives in greater detail by focusing on their functions<sup>10</sup>.

Figure 2 provides the distribution of directives based on their communicative functions: requesting, commanding, ordering, suggesting, warning, permitting, instructing, challenging, questioning.

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<sup>10</sup> Due to the limited size of the study only the functions of higher frequency will be addressed in both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.

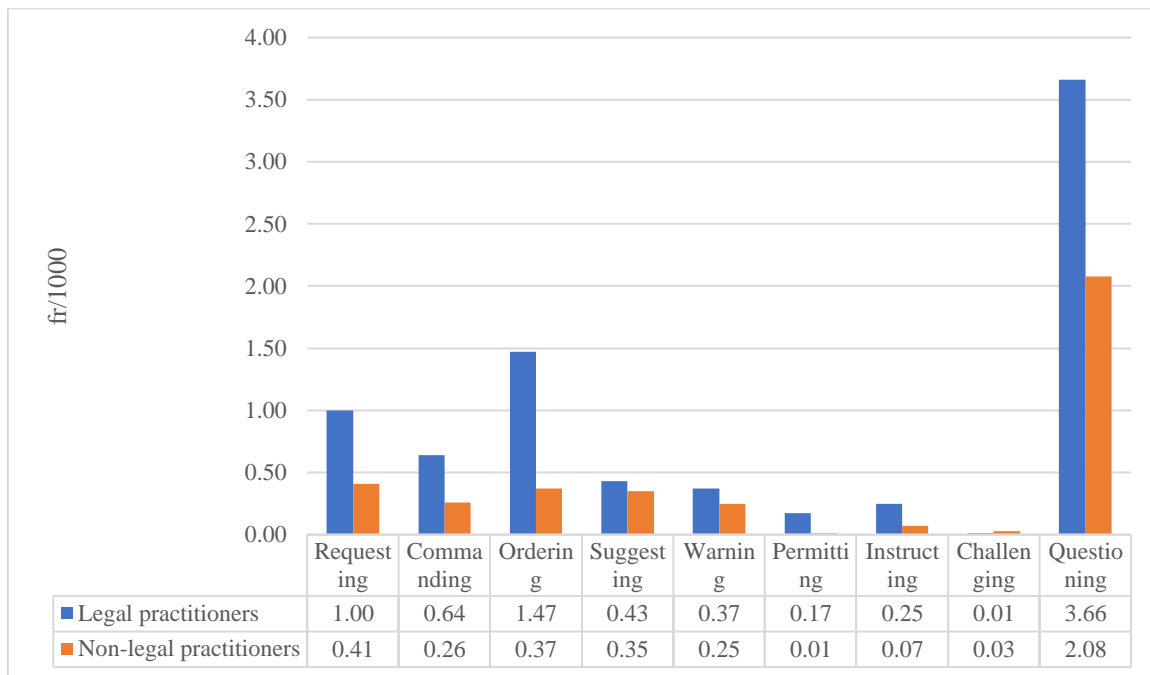


Figure 2. Normalized frequencies of the functions of direct directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners.

As depicted in Figure 2, a high number of directives denoting questioning are used between (non)legal practitioners (3.66 for legal and 2.08 for non-legal practitioners). Moreover, directives functioning as requests (1.0 for legal and 0.41 for non-legal practitioners) and orders (1.47 for legal and 0.37 for non-legal practitioners) are quite prominent as well. Legal practitioners expressed directives as suggestions similarly to non-legal practitioners (0.43 for legal and 0.35 for non-legal practitioners). Commands are more frequently elicited by legal practitioners (frequency of 0.64 compared to 0.26 for non-legal practitioners). In addition, directives issued with the intention of warning are noted as well, with few instances of permitting, instructing and challenging observed.

Direct questioning may be employed frequently in order to obtain additional information and clarification from the listener, while direct orders and requests are often used to provide clear instructions and set boundaries, with the level of politeness, authority, and forcefulness being heavily dependent on the situational context.

The overall distribution of the most frequent functions of directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners appears to be rather similar. Varying differences in the use of the functions in context will be addressed further in the study.

#### 4.1.2. Frequencies of the functions of indirect directives

The frequencies of the functions of indirect directives, compared to directives, are quite different. Figure 3 depicts normalized frequencies of indirect directives:

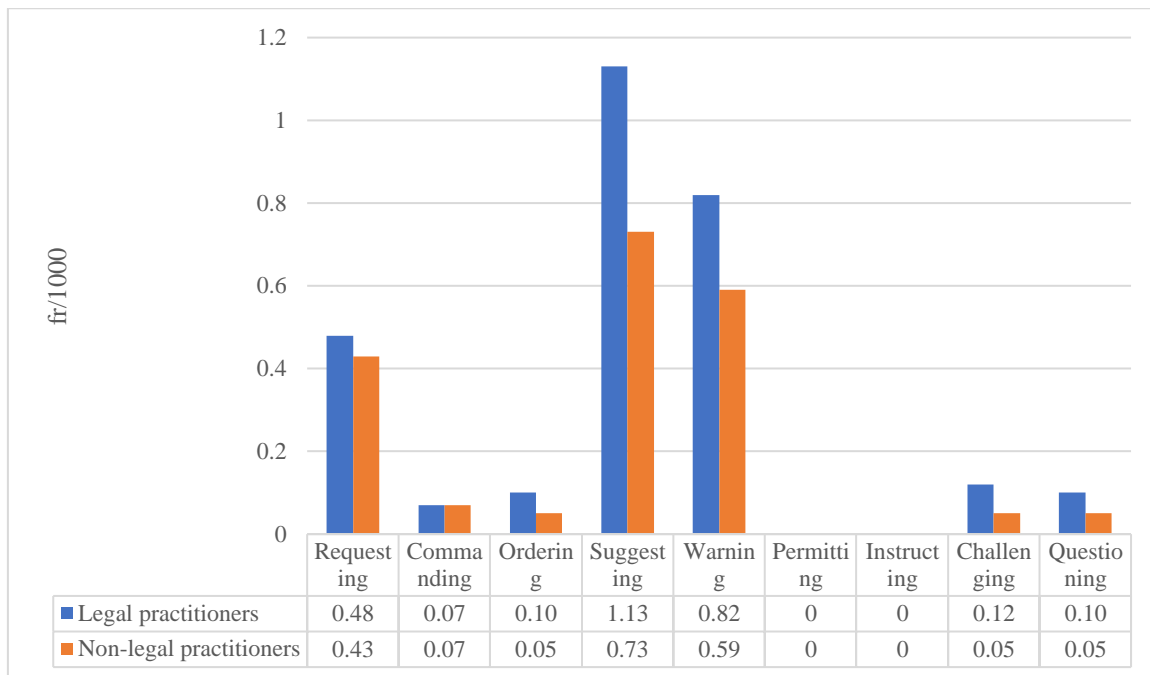


Figure 3. Normalized frequencies of the functions of indirect directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners.

As Figure 3 illustrates, legal and non-legal practitioners tend to employ indirect directives, particularly those of suggesting (1.13 for legal practitioners and 0.73 for non-legal practitioners) and warning (0.82 for legal practitioners and 0.59 for non-legal practitioners), at a relatively high frequency. Furthermore, indirect requests are also not that rare, accounting for the frequencies of 0.48 for legal and 0.43 for non-legal practitioners. However, as can be seen, only a few instances of indirect commands, challenges, orders, and questions are elicited, a significant difference compared to the functions of direct directives. In addition, no indirect directives of giving permission and instruction were observed in communication between (non)legal practitioners. The prevalence of indirect requests, suggestions and warnings is interesting, especially considering the circumstances in which non-legal practitioners express them to (non)legal practitioners. Thus, this study investigates how such indirect directives are employed to convey information politely, maintain a professional tone, and avoid potential confrontations.

Figures 2 and 3 provide a quantitative overview of the functions of directives, highlighting that direct directives are primarily used to convey questions, requests, orders, and commands, while indirect directives are employed to express suggestions, requests, and warnings. The following section will present both quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate how (non)legal practitioners use (in)direct directives in various legal TV settings.

## 4.2. Functions of (in)direct directives in declarative form

### 4.2.1. Direct directives in declarative form

Table 3 below demonstrates the distribution of direct directives expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners in a declarative form.

*Table 3. Frequencies of the functions of direct directives in declarative form*

	<b>Legal practitioners</b>	<b>Non-legal practitioners</b>
<b>Requesting</b>	18	4
<b>Commanding</b>	2	2
<b>Ordering</b>	15	0
<b>Suggesting</b>	15	14
<b>Warning</b>	8	3
<b>Instructing</b>	8	1
<b>Permitting</b>	6	1
<b>Questioning</b>	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>25</b>

As can be observed in Table 3, the vast majority of direct directive declaratives are expressed by legal practitioners (73 compared to 25 instances for non-legal practitioners). Regarding the functions of direct directives in a declarative form, legal practitioners primarily denote requests (18), orders (15), suggestions (15). On the contrary, non-legal practitioners mainly express directives as suggestions (14), with few cases of requests (4) and warnings (3).

Legal practitioners denote direct directives as means of warning, using them to establish their authority and convey as a more forceful form of suggestion. To be more clear, direct directive warnings outline the specific consequences of the actions and, in some instances, provide further instructions to the listener. Interestingly, legal and non-legal practitioners also use declarative directives to express suggestions. Though, suggestions appear to be typically conveyed more subtly and with greater nuance (e.g., indirectly through hedging). Within legal TV context, suggestions are often issued to support legal argumentation, aid in interpreting the law, or even instruct individuals to take a particular course of action. These findings shed light on the varying ways directives are employed in legal communication, as exemplified below.

### **Requesting**

Direct directive requests in their declarative form are rather polite and do not seem as demanding. Having a sense of formality, direct declarative requests in legal settings usually function as requests for a ruling (e.g., ruling a motion), admission (e.g., admitting additional evidence), requesting objection (e.g., requesting to strike the response of the witness from the record). However, depending on the context (where the request is expressed) and the persons involved (who is expressing it and who is receiving it), as well as linguistic nuances (e.g., modality), the function or degree of directness of the request may vary. Consider the examples below:

- (9) B.W. *I **thereby request** to sever their cases and schedule separate trials* (S2EP12).  
(10) T.D., *I **request you** censure Ms. Winterbottom for recklessly impugning my client.* (S3EP12).

In example (9), B.W., an ATTORNEY, requests the judge to take a specific action, i.e., to sever the cases and to schedule separate trials. This utterance carries a formal tone, and the speaker uses clear language (“I thereby request”) to make the request known. The following example (10) also denotes a formal request. However, the level of formality and directness in which the judge is addressed seems higher. In this case, T.D., an ATTORNEY, is requesting a different action, which is for the judge to censure another attorney for reckless claims being made. The speaker uses the word “request”, complemented by the pronoun “you” to directly address the judge. The two examples showcase that legal practitioners in the courtroom use formal directive requests to direct the actions/decisions of the judge, jury, and other legal administrative bodies involved in legal process.

Non-legal practitioners denote directive requests in legal contexts in a similar manner. Nevertheless, the level of (in)directness could also be questioned, as observed in the following example:

- (11) H.B. *You have a witness you’d like to examine, Mr. Walsh?*  
C.W. *Yes, Your Honor. **I’d like** to call Immigration and Customs Agent Zach Mills to the stand, please* (S6EP02).

In this exchange between a JUDGE (H.B.) and a LAW STUDENT (C.W.) in the courtroom, the tone of the communication is notably polite and respectful. The law student, acting as a trainee in a mock trial, is requesting permission from the judge to call a witness to the stand, and is using language that is less direct but still polite. The student’s use of the honorific “Your Honor” clearly emphasizes the judge’s authority. Moreover, the addition of the word “please” further highlights the speaker’s respect to the judge’s authority. Additionally, the phrase of requesting “I’d like” denotes a polite request of asking for permission rather than expressing outright demand. In legal settings, it appears that both legal and non-legal practitioners issue direct directive requests politely. However, the degree of politeness and indirectness varies depending on the situation and to whom the directive requests are addressed.

## **Ordering**

It is important to note that no instances of direct directive orders in declarative form were observed in the speech of non-legal practitioners. This could be due to the fact that non-legal practitioners may not possess the legal authority to exercise orders, e.g., they are not allowed to provide legal advice. Legal practitioners mostly express direct directives in courtroom proceedings (e.g., to issue orders to jurors, witnesses), as shown in examples below:

- (12) J.V. *I'm censuring the witness. Jury, **disregard the last part of his testimony.** Mr. Lennox, meet me in my chambers* (S6EP15).
- (13) R.M. *Mr. Crawford can't make false accusations like that before the jury.*  
V.H. *Jury, **you will strike both** the prosecutor and defense's statements from the record* (S5EP03).

Examples (12) and (13) showcase how judges provide clear and direct orders in the courtroom. In example (12), the phrase “disregard the last part of his testimony” denotes a directive order said by the judge (J.V.), who instructs the jury to ignore a certain piece of information from the testimony. Similarly, in example (13) an order is issued by V.H., a JUDGE, in response to ATTORNEY's (R.M.) objection stating that the certain statements made by another attorney should not be admissible in the trial process. Both examples highlight the crucial role of judges in providing orders in the courtroom. By issuing direct directive orders as such, the court can uphold fairness, protect impartiality, and ensure that legal proceedings are conducted in accordance with the law.

### **Suggesting**

For both legal and non-legal practitioners, directives issued with the intention of suggesting can be a useful tool in controlling situations. More specifically, by expressing suggestions, the speaker can effectively persuade someone to take a particular action or make a different decision. This is particularly prominent in negotiations with clients, courtroom proceedings, and other legal processes where guidance and recommendation are much needed. Consider the example below:

- (14) O.H. *She was only asking me to look into a pro bono case.*  
B.W. ***It's better if you keep your answers as vague as possible.** That way, you technically won't have to lie* (S3EP12).

In this communicative exchange, B.W., an ATTORNEY, consults O.H., an IT SPECIALIST, who will testify in the court. The attorney directly suggests “keep your answers as vague as possible,” thus guiding how O.H. should conduct himself to achieve a certain outcome (to not appear as a liar). The main purpose of this directive suggestion is to assist O.H. in providing information in the courtroom that would not harm the case. This example is an instance of the attorney providing guidance not only for the listener's sake but also for the purpose of protecting her own interests.

Non-legal practitioners also express suggestions to provide guidance, e.g.:

- (15) A.K. *Well, what was he trafficked for? House cleaning? Sex work? If you don't know, you can't prove improper purpose.*  
A.M. ***Then we try to use DACA*** (S6EP02).

In this conversation, A.K., an ATTORNEY, and A.M., a LAW STUDENT, discuss the case involving human trafficking. By brainstorming for possible solutions to prove the instance of improper purpose, A.M. directly suggests using DACA, providing a possible solution to the defence strategy. Direct directive suggestions are an effective means for both legal and non-legal practitioners to provide guidance and offer potential solutions to problems, ultimately helping to achieve positive/favourable outcomes.

### **Warning**

The purpose of warning is to inform about the potential consequences of actions and to caution or advise individuals against doing them. In legal TV contexts, warnings are also often used to protect the interests of various parties.

(16) A.K. *We won by the skin of our teeth. You lie to me again, **and I'll fire both of you*** (S2EP02).

(17) C.W. *Did you know that secretary that tried to kill her boss with an aspirin?*  
O.H. *The legal department **warned us not to talk about that*** (S1EP01).

In example (16), A.K., an ATTORNEY, is talking to her team in the private room about the court hearing that was almost jeopardized due to unclear evidence they submitted. In this case, A.K. warns her team that no other negligence will be tolerated and instructs the team from lying again, stating that similar actions will result in the termination of the contract. As seen in example (17), non-legal practitioners also elicit directive warnings to instruct others from undertaking certain actions. C.W., a LAW student, and O.H., an IT SPECIALIST, talk about the case outside the courtroom. In this communicative exchange, O.H. seems to have received guidance (either an order or command) from the legal department and thus passes the instruction to C.W. as a direct warning. Legal and non-legal practitioners may employ directive warnings as a means to convey a sense importance, particularly in legal situations where it is necessary to set boundaries, communicate expectations, and provide explicit instructions.

### **Permitting**

For legal practitioners, the main purpose of granting permission is to give consent for a particular action/behaviour. By granting permission to do something, legal practitioners exercise their authority to allow or deny certain actions.

(18) A.K. ***The defense agrees that Mr. Harrington can try on the belt, as long as the witness does.*** (S5EP03)

In example (18), the directive is issued in a courtroom setting during the discussion on the admission of evidence. A.K., an ATTORNEY, expresses the directive “The defense agrees that Mr. Harrington can try on the belt”, consenting for the evidence to be submitted. By expressing



this directive, the attorney does not only provide permission but also asserts her authority. Specifically, by setting the condition that the witness needs to try on the belt as well, A.K. exercises her legal authority to ensure equal opportunity to both parties. This regulation maintains fairness in the courtroom and protects the attorney’s case.

#### 4.2.2. Indirect directives in declarative form

A total of 145 instances of indirect directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners were observed. Legal practitioners denoted 91 instances of indirect directives in a declarative form, compared to 54 for non-legal practitioners. In terms of functions, legal practitioners generally expressed indirect directives as requests (11), suggestions (29), and warnings (38), while non-legal practitioners issued indirect directives with the intention to suggest (17) and warn (24). Legal and non-legal practitioners appear to often resort to indirect suggestions. Suggestions are likely preferred, for instance, over direct orders, since the latter could be perceived as being too aggressive. Moreover, indirect warnings may also be elicited subtly, encouraging compliance without appearing too confrontational.

Table 4. Frequencies of the functions of indirect directives in declarative form

	<b>Legal practitioners</b>	<b>Non-legal practitioners</b>
<b>Requesting</b>	11	5
<b>Commanding</b>	4	4
<b>Ordering</b>	5	1
<b>Suggesting</b>	29	17
<b>Warning</b>	38	24
<b>Instructing</b>	0	0
<b>Permitting</b>	0	0
<b>Challenging</b>	3	0
<b>Questioning</b>	1	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>54</b>

#### Requesting

Indirect directives functioning as declarative requests allow the speaker to maintain a respectful tone without being too forceful or direct. Legal context has situations where expressing direct requests would be considered unconventional, e.g., it could act as a direct challenge/threat to the other party. Using indirect language allows legal practitioners to express their requests more subtly, thus avoiding potential disputes. Consider the examples below:

- (19) B.W. *Mr. Delfino never mentioned any involvement by my client.*  
T.D. *Judge, we’re not here to argue the facts of this case* (S3EP12).
- (20) T.P. *I wonder if you could unburden yourself of this guilt and tell us who made you do this.*  
P.G. *I’m so sorry* (S6EP08).

In example (19), the exchange occurs in the courtroom. B.W., an ATTORNEY, makes a statement about the lack of involvement of her client in a certain situation. The opposing ATTORNEY T.D. does not view this comment positively, and instead addresses the judge. By saying, “Judge, we’re not here to argue the fact of this case,” it might seem that T.D. is making a simple statement. However, it appears that the attorney’s reference to the judge is a way to request a change in the direction of the legal proceedings by seeking action from a figure of authority (the judge). As follows, T.D. indirectly tells the judge what the focus should be on without explicitly saying it. Another instance (20) showcases the issuing of an indirect request with an entirely different speaker’s intention. In this case (the action is happening in the courtroom), T.P., an ATTORNEY, indirectly requests P.G., a WITNESS, to disclose the identity of the person that has caused “this guilt.” By saying, “I wonder if you could,” the attorney is not demanding a response but is persuasively offering to “unburden yourself from this guilt,” appealing to the witness’s emotive state. While this request implies a personal choice rather than obligation, it is also manipulative, as it puts pressure on the witness to reveal the truth. Based on these examples, it appears that legal practitioners issue indirect requests to avoid disputes, request action and even manipulate.

### **Suggesting**

Indirect directives functioning as suggestions can serve as a helpful tool in legal proceedings as they allow individuals to express their views and directions respectfully and tactfully while also serving as a means of convincing and directing argumentation for the benefit of the speaker, e.g.:

- (21) A.K. *And you said it was a yellow pill, similar to prosecutor Williams’ shirt?*  
L.T. *Yes.*  
A.K. *Prosecutor Williams’ shirt is blue, Ms. Tanner (S1EP01).*

Example (21) demonstrates the use of indirect directive suggestion in the exchange between A.K., an ATTORNEY and L.T., a WITNESS. In this situation, A.K. questions the witness in the courtroom over the colour of the shirt. The exchange holds significance as A.K.’s subsequent statement indirectly suggests that the witness’s testimony is incorrect. By saying “Prosecutor Williams’ shirt is blue”, the attorney directs the court’s (and possibly the jury’s) attention to the inconsistency of the testimony, and suggestively corrects the witness. This exchange illustrates how indirect directive suggestions can be used to draw attention to inconsistencies in testimonies and consequently benefit the attorney’s own case.

Non-legal practitioners also use suggestions. In most cases, it is issued with a purpose to instruct or advice:

- (22) UM.M.AT. *It's more us wanting to do the right thing for you.*  
N.L. **You can do the right thing by prosecuting the Governor** (S6EP15).

In this exchange, the issuing of the phrase “you can do the right thing” has an indirect implication that the person being addressed (UM.M.AT being an unnamed male attorney) has the authority to take action for the benefit of the speaker (N.L., a POLICE OFFICER). Rather than giving a direct order or command, the police officer responds to the attorney’s request for help by indirectly offering a suggested course of action that could benefit both parties (indicated using the word “by”).

### **Warning**

In most cases, indirect directives functioning as warnings serve the purpose of persuading the listener from doing something. Indirect directive warnings are different from the direct ones because they imply consequences of the action without explicitly commanding or ordering the listener to (not)do something. Examples are provided below:

- (23) A.K. *Admit you killed Trisha Stanley and had my client, David Allen, set up for her murder.*  
TH. *That is enough! Do you hear me? **You say another word, and I'll have no choice but to throw you in jail*** (S1EP06).

In example (23), T.H., a JUDGE, issues an indirect directive warning to A.K., an ATTORNEY, by stating that if one more word is said, “I’ll have no choice but to throw you in jail.” The warning is issued because A.K. makes an unreasonable demand to the witness and, in turn, infringes the courtroom’s order. The judge intervenes and proposes that if the conduct does not change (the attorney keeps pressuring the witness), extreme measures will be taken (“will have no choice but to throw you in jail”). Only the judge can express a warning as such, being the only authority figure to maintain the order of the court.

Non-legal practitioners can also express warnings, e.g.:

- (24) N.L. *You honestly want me to believe you just lost the body?*  
M.T. *We're gonna find it.*  
N.L. **You better** (S3EP12).

As illustrated in example (24), the communicative exchange takes place in an office between a POLICE OFFICER (N.L.) and a LAWYER (M.T.). In this exchange, police officer first expresses disbelief that the body is lost and then, by expressing an indirect directive, warns the attorney to find it. The phrase “you better” could be understood as an urgent call for action, however, it could also hint to the potential legal consequences if the body is not found.

## **4.3. Functions of (in)direct directives in interrogative form**

### **4.3.1. Direct directives in interrogative form**

Table 5 illustrates the distribution of direct directives expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners in interrogative form. 329 direct directives were issued, accounting for 210 instances for legal and 119 for non-legal practitioners. As showcased, legal and non-legal practitioners primarily denote directives functioning as questions (204 instances for legal compared to 116 for non-legal practitioners). Moreover, legal practitioners also expressed few directives as requests (3 instances), while non-legal practitioners also issued directives in interrogative form as suggestions (2 instances).

Table 5. Frequencies of the functions of direct directives in interrogative form

	Legal practitioners	Non-legal practitioners
<b>Requesting</b>	3	1
<b>Commanding</b>	0	0
<b>Ordering</b>	0	0
<b>Suggesting</b>	3	2
<b>Warning</b>	0	0
<b>Instructing</b>	1	0
<b>Permitting</b>	0	0
<b>Questioning</b>	204	116
<b>Total:</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>119</b>

Legal and non-legal practitioners often use direct directive interrogatives functioning as questions to obtain information or clarify a point. For example, in legal TV contexts involving legal practitioners such as attorneys or judges, directive questioning is necessary to elicit relevant information from witnesses to support the case's credibility. Similarly, non-legal practitioners may employ directive questioning in legal TV contexts to assert or challenge opinions and clarify information, which is mainly related to work. However, it is also worth to consider that the level of (in)directness in questioning can vary depending on the context and individuals involved in the communicative exchange.

### **Questioning**

In legal TV context, direct directives functioning as questions could be viewed as a common practice of seeking information/clarification or in cases of progressing an argument. Legal practitioners express directive questioning during cross-examinations and negotiation processes. In contrast, non-legal practitioners issue directives with the intention of questioning in investigation procedures or other work-related settings, where additional information is needed. The examples below illustrate instances of the use of direct directives as questions expressed by legal and non-legal practitioners, e.g.:

- (25) *A.K. Mr. Bryant, you and your business partner, Mr. Kaufman, had a meeting in his office on the morning of the accident, correct?*

L.B. *Yes. To discuss moving Gina to accounting.* (S1EP01).

In example (25), the communicative exchange is taking place in a courtroom, during a cross-examination. A.K., an ATTORNEY, is expressing a direct directive question as an interrogative. By issuing this question, the attorney attempts to elicit a response from a WITNESS (L.B.). The purpose of the question is to receive the information relevant to the attorney's argumentation. Moreover, it could be likely that the question also aims, less directly, to challenge the validity of the witness's testimony. On the other hand, example (26) illustrates the same directive questioning (expressed in a cross-examination) with a clear intention to set doubts to the witness's testimony:

(26) A.K. *And you said it was a yellow pill, similar to prosecutor Williams' shirt?*

L.T. *Yes.*

A.K. *Prosecutor Williams' shirt is blue, Ms. Tanner.*

A.K. *Are you color-blind?*

L.T. *Yes. But I know what I saw that morning.*

A.K. *I see* (S1EP01).

In this case, the ATTORNEY (A.K.) first issues a statement correcting the WITNESS'S (L.T.) response regarding the colour of the pill. Then, following witness's response, A.K. issues a directive that aims to question the previous statement. The witness appears confused ("But I know what I saw that morning") and attempts to justify the previous testimony. The use of direct directive questioning in this example appears to be more provocative than in example (25), as it aims to undermine the credibility of the testimony and challenges its accuracy to the entire panel of jurors, which clearly works out for the benefit of the attorney.

Direct directives issued with the intent to inquire for information/clarification could also have challenging undertones, and they appear to be less direct as well, e.g.:

(27) A.K. *What the hell are you saying?*

O.P. *If you lose this case, it'll set criminal-justice reform back decades.*

A.K. *You don't think I know that?* (S4EP13).

The communicative exchange occurs outside the courtroom, in a private setting between two ATTORNEYS. The first question ("What the hell are you saying?") is a direct directive that aims to challenge O.P.'s statement by asking to clarify/explain her point of view. The second question ("You don't think I know that?") could be interpreted as being somewhat indirect. To be more specific, with this directive question A.K. does not ask for any clarification. It seems that she is aware of the seriousness of the situation and instead indirectly tells O.P. that she should not question her competence or knowledge regarding the case.

Non-legal practitioners also issue direct directive questions with the intention of asking for additional information or challenging beliefs. Consider the examples below:

- (28) REPORTER. *Were you aware the Governor's here today?*  
 A.K. *Probably here to watch me win* (S6EP15).
- (29) A.K. *You think you were framed?*  
 CA.H. *Don't you?* (S2EP02).

Example (28) depicts a situation in which a REPORTER is questioning A.K., who is an ATTORNEY, outside the courtroom after the end of the trial. The direct directive question is expressed with the intention for the listener to provide a response and possibly to obtain a specific, attitude-based answer (based on the listener's response towards the Governor). However, the question could also be less direct, and the reporter may also intend to influence the listener's response by indirectly suggesting that the appearance of this important figure is of significant meaning. The response provided by A.K. implies her attitude toward the situation, which is partially sarcastic.

Example (29) presents an intriguing communicative exchange between A.K., an ATTORNEY, and CA.H, a MURDER SUSPECT. During the investigation, A.K. issues a direct directive question, expecting a straightforward positive or negative response that could be relevant to the case. However, the suspect does not respond directly and instead utters a tag question ("Don't you?"), implying that the speaker, A.K., is expected to confirm or deny the belief. This peculiar questioning is consciously used to influence the attorney's response, confirming that the suspect was indeed framed. Directive questions serve several purposes: asking for information, challenging beliefs, and clarifying points/arguments.

### **Suggesting**

Direct directives functioning as suggestions are, in most cases, indirect. However, the level of directness depends on grammatical structure, the relationship between the individuals, and the context. For instance:

- (30) N.L. *Let me guess. The governor's executive order is screwing with my dad's appeal.*  
 A.K. *Not at all. In fact, the judge just called and set the trial date for the end of the month.*  
 N.L. *Yeah. That's even sooner than you thought.*  
 A.K. *When I push, I push hard. **You wanna tell him or should I?*** (S5EP03).

The communicative exchange is taking place in an office between N.L., a POLICE OFFICER, and A.K., an ATTORNEY. A.K. asks a question ("You wanna tell him or should I?") that could be interpreted as a direct directive suggestion to inform somebody about the trial date. However, it could also be viewed as an indirect suggestion, as A.K. provides an opportunity for N.L. to step in and take charge of the situation. This exchange does not explicitly state whether N.L. commits to the suggestion; hence the lack of response makes the directive ambiguous in its degree of (in)directness.

### 4.3.2. Indirect directives in interrogative form

Table 6 illustrates functions of indirect directives in interrogative form. A total of 120 indirect directives were issued. As can be observed, both legal and non-legal practitioners issued directives in interrogative form to denote requests, give suggestions, provide warnings, and challenge opinions or beliefs. Requests (16 instances for legal and 15 for non-legal practitioners) and suggestions (34 instances for legal and 24 for non-legal practitioners) were the most prominent functions of directives.

Table 6. Frequencies of the functions of indirect directives in interrogative form

	Legal practitioners	Non-legal practitioners
<b>Requesting</b>	16	15
<b>Commanding</b>	0	0
<b>Ordering</b>	1	2
<b>Suggesting</b>	34	24
<b>Warning</b>	8	9
<b>Instructing</b>	0	0
<b>Permitting</b>	0	0
<b>Challenging</b>	4	3
<b>Questioning</b>	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>57</b>

Indirect interrogative directives serve as a means of giving suggestions or making requests in the form of a question, and they differ from direct directives as they are used to ask questions to obtain information. Exactly as directive interrogatives, indirect ones are also used in cross-examination, negations, and witness interviews.

#### Requesting

Indirect directives functioning as requests are commonly used by both legal and non-legal practitioners when they need to ask for information in a polite manner. Moreover, they can also be used to persuade the jury to support a claim or to influence the listener to make a claim that indirectly benefits the speaker. Consider the example below:

- (31) H.C. *Can you tell us the date written there?*  
 L.B. *October 25th.*  
 H.C. *The same night the car was parked near Mr. Miller's home (S6EP08).*

As illustrated in example (31), H.C., an ATTORNEY, is directing a question to L.B., a witness, during a cross-examination. In this exchange, the utterance “Can you tell us the date written here?” could be considered an indirect directive since it is not a simple question about the listener’s ability to do it but a request for the witness to provide specific information. Moreover, by phrasing this utterance as a question, the attorney is being more polite (instead, for instance,

making a direct order like “Tell us the date written here”). Also, it is worth considering the following statement by H.C. as well, by which the connection between the date provided and the circumstance of the testimony is made. The last implication made by the attorney is essential and, even possibly unethical in this legal setting, sets a tone for the jury as they evaluate the witness’s testimony.

- (32) T.P. *Look at this boy. Can you honestly say that the conditions we have him in are not morally repugnant?*  
FORD. *Your Honor, the Chief Justice’s remarks were about Korematsu, a case that has never been overruled* (S6EP02).

In example (32), the communicative exchange happens in a courtroom between attorneys T.P. and FORD. The indirect directive question functioning as a request is employed, and the attorney is not directly requesting the opposing attorney’s ability to do something. Instead, it is a moral appeal to reconsider FORD’s position on the matter. Moreover, the question could be directed not only to FORD but also to the whole courtroom, considering that FORD quickly steps in to clarify the points made by T.P. Legal practitioners often make these types of requests in legal TV settings, as they appear to challenge claims and cast doubt on the information being presented to the court.

Non-legal practitioners also issue indirect directives in an interrogative form, e.g.:

- (33) U.M. *It’s a drive with a browser that allows you to send e-mails anonymously.*  
F.D. *Can you mess with it so they’re not anonymous?* (S5EP03).  
(34) F.P.D. *Do not answer that.*  
L.C. *What were his last words, Frank?*  
F.P.D. *Okay. Meeting’s over. Guard!* (S3EP12)

In example (33), F.D., a HITMAN, is talking privately with U.M., A HACKER, about the possibility of deleting incriminating information. The hitman’s question “Can you mess with it so they’re not anonymous?” is an indirect directive since the hitman is asking about the hacker’s ability to perform the action and indirectly requesting that he do it. Indirect directive questions can also serve a purpose of a challenge, as seen in example (34) taking place during investigation, where a LAW STUDENT (L.C.) directs a question to Frank, a (possible) CONVICT, by asking “What were his last words, Frank?”. Although the speaker appears to inquire for information, the actual speaker’s intention is to provoke and further incriminate the listener. F.P.D., a PUBLIC DEFENDER, is aware of that and thus disputes the attempt by interrupting the conversation. Overall, it appears that indirect requests are quite important in legal contexts when there is a need to persuade and direct the actions or beliefs of individuals.

## **Suggesting**



Indirect directives functioning as suggesting are prominent in legal TV settings, especially in cross-examination (e.g., by eliciting inconsistent information) and mediation processes (e.g., by interpretation of events through questioning). However, differently from direct directive suggestions, indirect directive suggestions can be easily misinterpreted, especially in legal settings where they may be viewed as misleading, too confrontational, and could potentially damage the reputation of the legal team. The following examples illustrate some of the situations discussed above:

- (35) M.P. *Bonnie*.  
B.W. *I said go to work*.  
M.P. *It's about the case. If Eve argued Nate's fingerprint was transferred, couldn't we do the same and say the police transferred Caleb's DNA to the crime scene?*  
(S2EP02).

The exchange (35) takes place at the office between M.P., a LAW STUDENT and B.W., an ATTORNEY. The pair are talking about the possible approach to the case. An indirect directive is issued, by which the law student does not directly suggest but instead hypothetically implies a potential strategy for the case that could be considered. Considering the authoritative dynamic between the two (B.W. appears to have a higher degree of authority than M.P.), conditional “if” and modal verb “couldn’t” soften the suggestion even more, making it less direct and forceful.

Legal practitioners are more up-front with indirect suggestions, e.g.:

- (36) H.C. *All any of us here want is the truth*.  
B.W. *No, you want to protect the Governor*.  
H.C. *Because I won't let you make up fake witnesses the way you made up a fake criminal record?* (S6EP08).

In example (36), during cross-examination in a courtroom, ATTORNEY H.C. indirectly questions the credibility of ATTORNEY B.W.'s testimony through a suggestive statement. This type of indirect directive serves not only as a rhetorical question but also as a means to express personal opinion and potentially damage the witness's credibility in front of the whole courtroom, making it seem that her words lack truthfulness. Similar example can be seen in the following exchange:

- (37) A.K. *Mr. Bryant, as stated in the e-mail, you were angry at Mr. Kaufman for taking part in a sexual relationship with an employee*.  
L.B. *I was frustrated, yes*.  
A.K. *So frustrated that perhaps you swapped his blood-pressure pill for an aspirin in order to gain sole ownership of the company?*  
H.W. *Objection!* (S1EP01).

In this exchange, AK., an ATTORNEY, issues an indirect directive suggestion to L.B., a DEFENDANT, in the courtroom. By questioning LB.'s motives, A.K. expresses a directive, suggesting that something incriminating has been done. The suggestive statement is expressed

somewhat indirectly, as words such as the adverb “perhaps” create a hypothetical situation. The utterance is rather ambiguous in meaning, and it appears that the statement was made to damage L.B.’s testimony or because the attorney wanted to pressure the defendant and provoke a defence against the implied accusation. However, the question was objected to, indicating that such speculating question can be viewed as too vague and unethical in maintaining order in the courtroom.

### **Warning**

Indirect directive interrogatives are not commonly used in legal TV contexts, but they can still be employed by legal practitioners to communicate intentions or set boundaries in a more subtle manner. Consider the examples below:

(38) C.W. *Can you keep it down? The walls are super thin.* (S3EP12).

(39) T.P. *Why is it so hard for you to follow instructions?* (S5EP03).

In example (38), C.W., a LAW STUDENT, issued the indirect directive warning in a private home setting. The discussion was centered around another individual lying during the investigation and loudly expressing happiness about it. In response, C.W. warns the group to be silent, clearly believing that information is confrontational to their case. The question “Can you keep it down?” is indirect, as the speaker has no intention to inquire about the ability to stay silent but instead warns to do so. In example (39), an ATTORNEY T.P. talks to a practicing law student and expresses frustration. The utterance could be considered an indirect directive warning since, while being formed as a question, it indirectly calls for the listener to act in a certain matter (to follow instructions). Using the question word “why” also suggests T.P.’s frustration with the student’s behaviour, as the question is not asked to gain understanding but rather to urge the student to perform the action.

### **Challenging**

Only a few cases of challenges were observed in the speech of (non)legal practitioners. However, they provide an interesting perspective on directives in the interrogative form being issued in order to provoke the listener not to do/think something, e.g.:

(40) M.P. *Fail me.*

A.K. *Oh, you think I won’t?* (S6EP02).

In example (40), M.P., a practicing LAW STUDENT, is talking to A.K., an ATTORNEY. By saying “you think I won’t?” the attorney implies that if she wants, she has the authoritative capability to fail the student. Moreover, by issuing this indirect directive as a challenge, A.K. also indirectly pressures M.P. to reconsider her behaviour to avoid failing.

(41) N.H. *A simple Internet search told me all the reasons not to like you, but what’s your problem with me?*

A.L. *See, his ego can't even handle a simple cross* (S5EP03).

The exchange in example (41) is particularly intriguing as it occurs in a private office setting between an ATTORNEY, A.L., and a DEFENDANT, N.H. The pair are practicing for an upcoming trial by simulating a cross-examination, and the defendant seems to be struggling. Clearly frustrated, N.H.'s issues a directive interrogative. With this indirect directive the defendant is not expecting to receive A.L.'s explanation about his apparent dislike towards him. Instead, his intention is to challenge and change A.L.'s negative behaviour, as he is the client of the case. However, A.L. does not react the challenging question. This could potentially suggest that A.L. provoked the challenging response from N.H. to simulate a cross-examination and evaluate the potential client's behaviour in court.

#### 4.4. Functions of direct directives in imperative form

Table 7 presents the functions of direct directives issued by legal and non-legal practitioners in the imperative form. As can be observed, directives expressed in the imperative form are dominant in the speech of (non)legal practitioners, constituting 164 total cases for legal practitioners and 72 instances for non-legal practitioners, respectively. By uttering directives, both legal and non-legal practitioners express similar meanings. The majority of directives in imperative form for legal practitioners are intended as requests (35), commands (34), and orders (67). Similarly, non-legal practitioners also accounted for a higher number of instances of requests (18), commands (13), and orders (21). Directives functioning as warnings (13 instances for legal and 11 for non-legal practitioners) are also noted in the speech of (non)legal practitioners, with legal practitioners expressing instructions (7 instances) as well. A small number of instances were observed in which legal and non-legal practitioners issued indirect directive suggestions (6 for legal practitioners and 4 for non-legal practitioners) and challenges (1 for both (non)legal practitioners).

Table 7. Frequencies of the functions of direct directives in imperative form

	Legal practitioners	Non-legal practitioners
<b>Requesting</b>	35	18
<b>Commanding</b>	34	13
<b>Ordering</b>	67	21
<b>Suggesting</b>	6	4
<b>Warning</b>	13	11
<b>Instructing</b>	7	0
<b>Permitting</b>	1	0
<b>Challenging</b>	1	1
<b>Questioning</b>	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>72</b>

Legal practitioners express directives as commands, requests, and orders more frequently than non-legal practitioners, considering the nature of their profession and the constant need for precision in communication. Moreover, legal context may allow legal practitioners greater authority in issuing directives. However, as results suggest, non-legal practitioners appear to express these functions of directives too, often when communicating with individuals of similar authoritative status.

### **Requesting**

Direct requests expressed in imperative form are more forceful than those expressed in declarative form, as they convey a sense of urgency in achieving a certain goal. In communicative exchanges, the choice between using requests, orders, or commands appears to be dependent on the context and the relationship between the individuals involved. As demonstrated in examples below, legal practitioners express imperative directive requests in courtrooms (e.g., requesting to provide a testimony from the witness, requesting a judge to make a ruling). In contrast, non-legal practitioners express them in the context of social situations, such as requesting their colleagues to do something for them.

In example (42), a communicative exchange takes place in a courtroom between A.K., an ATTORNEY and F.P., a JUDGE.

- (42) A.K. *Hearsay, Your Honor.*  
F.P. *Not your purview, Ms. Keating, although I agree. Move on, Ms. Sinclair*  
(S2EP02).

In this example, A.K. directly requests the judge by saying, “Hearsay.” This expression is a typical way in a legal context to request the removal of specific evidence, either said by the witness or other legal bodies in a legal proceeding. The request made by the attorney is also polite, considering that the judge’s status was addressed (“Your Honor”), following legal ethics. In turn, the judge agrees with the request and expresses a direct imperative to Ms. Sinclair, an opposing attorney, instructing her to continue with the speech.

Legal practitioners may also issue polite requests that carry a stricter tone:

- (43) A.K. *And were you there? Please answer the question, detective.*  
N.L. *No. I was not* (S1EP01).

In this given exchange, A.K., an ATTORNEY, is questioning N.L., a WITNESS. The exchange shows that, at first, the witness did not follow the questioning, which was crucial for the attorney’s case. As a result, A.K. requests N.L. to answer the question again, but this time in the form of an imperative. The use of “please” could be seen as a polite way of making a request instead of a more forceful command. The attorney maintains a professional demeanour by using

polite language. However, it is also worth considering that legal practitioners issue requests for their own benefit, as in this case, where the attorney's polite request is designed in a way that obliges the witness to answer truthfully (so as not to commit perjury), weakening the testimony, as attorney intended.

In communication between legal and non-legal practitioners, non-legal practitioners express directive requests in cases when information is needed, as observed below:

- (44) C.W. *So figure out this impossible case on my own - is what you're saying?*  
A.K. *Like an actual lawyer. Go.*  
C.W. ***Tell us what's wrong with it*** (S6EP02).

In example (44), the conversation happens between C.W., a LAW STUDENT, and A.K., an ATTORNEY. The student is frustrated, expecting help from the legal professional who refuses to provide it. At first, C.W. seeks clarification through questioning, but A.K. encourages him to figure out the case independently. Then, the student expresses a direct request, straightforwardly and sceptically, asking for more information about the case. Moreover, including the pronoun "us" also implies that the situation indirectly involves not just him but other students as well.

### **Commanding**

Directive commands in the imperative form are issued to give clear instructions/directions and requests. Unlike requests, imperative commands demand a specific action to be taken, and they frequently come from people in a position of authority. However, in legal contexts, commands should be used appropriately, maintaining a professional attitude. Legal practitioners may denote commands in the courtroom for the witnesses (e.g., during a deposition) and other legal practitioners (e.g., instructing during the trial), and outside the courtroom for legal and non-legal practitioners (e.g., in mediation to provide necessary documents). In contrast, non-legal practitioners may issue commands to legal and non-legal practitioners when they need specific legal action (e.g., requesting information). Consider the examples below:

- (45) C.W. *At least six non-American children have died - in the custody of ICE.*  
H.B. *Mr. Walsh, **let me speak.***  
C.W. *And I refuse to wait for my client to die.*  
T.P. *Connor, **stop*** (S6EP02).

Example (45) depicts a mock trial situation where C.W., a LAW STUDENT, is delivering a speech, which is then interrupted by H.B., a JUDGE. At first, C.W. simply provides a statement to make a point, however, it seems that the speech being said deviated from the court's initial proceeding, and an authoritative figure (a judge) had to interrupt by issuing a command ("Let me speak") and addressing the issue. Despite the command issued, the student continued to

speak, refusing to comply with the command. As a result, another authoritative figure (T.P., the stand-in attorney for the student) had to intervene. The attorney issued a command, drawing the student's attention, to prevent the situation from escalating further.

Directive imperative commands may also be used in fast-paced, high-pressure situations where a sudden action is needed, and urgency is crucial, e.g.:

- (46) A.K. *Go to the library and look up this ruling.*  
M.P. *Okay.*  
A.K. *Michaela. We lose without it (S4EP13).*

The conversation occurs in a courtroom during a recess in a trial proceeding. A.K., an ATTORNEY, turns to the STUDENT observing the court (M.P.) and issues a directive command ("Go to the library and look up this ruling"). The exchange is interesting because of the sense of urgency in the command and how the attorney emphasizes the importance of compliance with it. More specifically, the attorney is adding to the urgency of the command by stating, "We lose without it," and the pronoun "we" further highlights how vital the ruling is to the whole legal team and their case.

Non-legal practitioners may also denote imperative commands to their respective colleagues or even legal practitioners in cases of urgency. Consider the example below:

- (47) CA.H. *What do you mean the DNA matches him? What DNA?*  
W.G. *Uh, you know what? Bonnie will be here any minute. I-*  
CA.H. *Tell me what you know (S2EP02).*

In this communicative exchange, CA.H., a SUSPECT, directs a question to W.G., a LAW STUDENT (acting as a paralegal to the lawyer) in an interrogation room. The first directive in interrogative form denotes an attempt to request information from W.G. The student, possibly not being the right authoritative figure to provide any information, evasively responds. The suspect follows up with the command ("Tell me what you know"), emphasizing the urgency and pressuring the student to provide the information without delay. In this exchange, the directive expressing command is rather aggressive. Same as orders (or sometimes requests), commands can be issued in cases of urgency (and may also depend on the level of authority), where immediate action/response is needed.

## **Ordering**

Legal and non-legal practitioners employ imperative directive orders to establish their authority, change the course of action, and gain control over a situation. In legal TV settings, orders are prevalent in a courtroom (e.g., an attorney cross-examining a witness or objecting to a testimony). Also, legal and non-legal practitioners may express orders in meetings,

negotiations, or mediation. The examples below illustrate situations where imperative directive orders are used:

(48) B.W. *Only one defendant in this courtroom has confessed in this crime, and that is Mr. Delfino.*

T.D. **Objection.** *My client's alleged confession is not an issue here (S3EP12).*

Example (48) depicts an exchange in the courtroom between two ATTORNEYS, B.W. and T.D. At first, B.W. makes a statement in court about a previous legal proceeding that resulted in the confession of committing a crime. However, by stating this, the first attorney (B.W.) makes an unnecessary remark, which is objected to by the second attorney. As a result, the attorney expresses a direct order (“Objection”), and by interrupting, another attorney signals to the judge that the statement is irrelevant and requests for it to be removed. Legal practitioners quite commonly elicit this directive imperative orders to challenge statements that are inadmissible in a trial.

Legal practitioners also express directive orders to maintain the order of a specific situation, as can be seen in example below:

(49) E.R. *If I had to disclose the names of all my classmates I've gone up against in court, I'd never have time to argue another case.*

E.S. *This is clearly collusion.*

F.P. **Let's maintain our composure** (S2EP02).

The given exchange occurs in a courtroom, where ATTORNEY E.R. accuses ATTORNEY E.S. of collusion, a breach of conflict of interest. As the situation rapidly escalates, F.P., a JUDGE, intervenes and gives a direct order to “maintain our composure.” The judge’s directive is intended to calm down both attorneys and ensure that they maintain a professional demeanour. It is also interesting to note that within this directive order, the pronoun “our” is used as well, implying that the judge intended to extend the order to the entire courtroom, emphasizing the need for composure.

Orders can also be issued outside the courtroom, as can be observed in communicative exchanges between non-legal practitioners:

(50) M.P. *No! You were trying to get me to steal files from my dream job based on circumstantial evidence.*

L.C. *The evidence is my entire life, okay? My father is a terrible person. He has done terrible things and he needs to go to jail and you can make that happen.*

M.P. **Don't follow me.** *I'll not do it.* (S4EP03).

In example (50), M.P., a LAW STUDENT (who is practicing at the law firm), continuously refuses to aid L.C., a LAW STUDENT, in stealing evidence that could put L.C.’s father in jail. The pair are walking out of the meeting together. M.P. repeatedly refuses and expresses a firm directive imperative “Don’t follow me” to prevent L.C. from following and pressuring her

further. Her following statement “I’ll not do it,” emphasizes the refusal to participate in any unethical behaviour. This exchange shows how directive imperatives can be issued to assert boundaries and maintain ethical standards.

- (51) A.M. *Okay, everyone needs to just chill. Annalise is being framed.*  
C.W. *That’s right. You know, I forgot. Who’s doing that today? The Mahoneys or the D.A.?*  
A.M. **Connor, stop** (S3EP12).

In example (51), a group of LAW STUDENTS are conversing inside a private house. Initially, A.M. raises an important issue (their professor being framed), to which C.W. responds sarcastically. In response, A.M. then issues a directive order to C.W., asking him to stop. The directive is expressed in order to ensure that everyone involved in the conversation is aware of the seriousness of the problem and pays attention to it. The imperative directive in this situation highlights the importance of effective communication and respect for the seriousness of the problem being discussed.

### **Warning**

Usually, directive warnings are issued by clearly establishing the consequences of the actions, urging individuals to not engage in a specific behaviour. Directive warnings in the imperative form occur in negotiations, interpersonal conflicts over legal matters, or disputes. Consider the examples below:

- (52) B.W. *Why are they questioning Wes? Is it because of Annalise’s investigation?*  
N.L. *I said I’m not doing this here.*  
B.W. *If she goes down, she’s gonna take you with her. You know that.*  
N.L. *What did you say?*  
B.W. *You know how she gets when she’s desperate.*  
N.L. **Don’t you ever threaten me again** (S3EP12).

The exchange takes place outside the legal setting where B.W., an ATTORNEY, confronts N.L., a POLICE OFFICER, about his involvement in a case. By saying, “she’s gonna take you with her”, B.W. warns N.L. of the impending consequences of his actions and attempts to persuade him to cooperate in revealing private information. However, N.L. also refuses to engage in compromising conversation outside his office. To further affirm his position and stop the attorney from blackmailing him further, N.L. issues a strong directive warning. It is also worth noting that as a police officer, N.L. has a duty to uphold the law; hence the warning issued. This type of imperative directive warning is expressed in non-legal TV settings to establish clear limits and maintain control over a situation.

- (53) U.M. *I heard you took Crawford’s place as the new managing partner, right?*  
N.L. *Convenient.*  
T.P. *Do you think I had something to do with this?*  
N.L. *I didn’t say that.*



A.K. *Then be smart and stop talking* (S6EP02).

In this example (53), a group of legal practitioners (U.M., T.P., and A.K.) and N.L., a POLICE OFFICER, discuss a recent change in the leadership of a law firm. The most notable directive is A.K.'s, an attorney's, warning statement, "Then be smart and stop talking," directed to T.P. With this warning, A.K. advises T.P. not to engage in the conversation further, as it could lead to undesirable consequences (perhaps the exchange could be incriminating). It appears that the context of the directive warning is not exactly strictly legal. However, as an attorney, A.K. could be exercising her knowledge in legal matters to caution others from discussing potentially (legally) harmful topics. While not as prominent, imperative directive warnings are essential in legal contexts since they convey the consequences of certain actions and possibly direct individuals from committing them. Nevertheless, directive imperative warnings can be perceived as less polite due to their directness, and in certain situations, they could be considered too aggressive or inappropriate towards the listener(s) and other parties.

### **Instructing**

Legal practitioners issue instructions in cases when urgency and clarity are needed. Instructions are especially beneficial in legal TV contexts (e.g., a judge asking a witness to follow a command) since they provide certain compliance with legal procedures. Furthermore, directives functioning as instructions expressed by legal practitioners carry a strong authority in legal TV settings, making them appear as an indisputable obligation. For example:

(54) B. *All rise* (S2EP02).

(55) F.P. *Be seated* (S2EP02).

Both examples demonstrate expressions of instructions issued in a courtroom. In example (54), individual B, a BAILIFF, is instructing everyone in the courtroom to rise. This is a customary and widely recognized practice that usually occurs when the judge enters the room, and it is considered a sign of respect for courtroom ethics. This example illustrates how instructions are used in the courtroom to maintain order and respect for the legal system. In another example (55), F.B., a JUDGE, issues an imperative instruction right after the bailiff's announcement, instructing for the entire courtroom to sit down, thus signalling the beginning of the legal proceeding. Overall, both examples highlight that instructions are often conveyed as a sign of respect and are expressed to ensure that everyone follows proper legal procedures.

### **4.5. (Un)successful directives**

The following section will review the frameworks of Grice and Searle applied in analysing directive acts expressed by (non)legal practitioners to determine their degrees of success based on legal TV context and interpersonal dynamics.

As discussed in section 2 of this study, felicity conditions help to understand the dynamic between the speaker/listener and the context, eliciting the conditions that make utterances successful. Complementary, cooperative principles (also referred to as maxims) help to ensure effective communication, overlooking the relevance of each utterance in conversation.

Due to the study's limitations, only a few cases will be addressed to highlight the importance of context in analysing directive acts. Further research could potentially focus on this matter in greater detail. Nevertheless, below are examples that elaborate on the application of maxims and felicity conditions in different situations of legal TV discourse:

(56) **A.K. *Mr. Bryant, you and your business partner, Mr. Kaufman, had a meeting in his office on the morning of the accident, correct?***

L. B. *Yes. To discuss moving Gina to accounting (S1EP01).*

In this example, A.K. is an ATTORNEY, and L.B. is a WITNESS. The communicative exchange occurs in a courtroom during the cross-examination of the witness. The attorney is questioning the victim and gathering information for the testimony. Considering felicity conditions and maxims, this conversation is an example of a successful exchange between two individuals of different authoritative statuses. All felicity conditions are met: the utterances made by the speakers are relevant to the topic, the question is issued, and a positive response is given. To be more specific, the propositional content condition is fulfilled as the question corresponds to its illocution, which intends to ask for information.

Moreover, both individuals have enough knowledge and understanding of the situation's circumstances, being aware of the details of the case. The utterances are also provided in the proper manner/context (respecting legal ethics, in a legal setting – courtroom), and authoritative figures are recognized (following the law, the witness is obligated to answer the questions provided by the attorney, regardless of its truthfulness), meeting the preparatory condition. Furthermore, sincerity and essential conditions are also fulfilled. To be more specific, the sincerity condition is met by the participants being truthful, as A.K. has provided a question and L.B. provided an answer. Lastly, the essential condition is fulfilled as well, as there are no indications of confusion or ambiguity in the directive utterance.

There were no maxims flouted in this exchange. To specify, the appropriate amount of information is provided for the conversation to be carried out, as the attorney asks a specific question regarding the testimony, the witness understands the question, recognizes it, and answers fully (maxim of quantity). Furthermore, both parties provide truthful and accurate information: the attorney is expected to ask ethical questions, and the witness is expected to provide accurate answers (maxim of quality). The maxim of relation is not flouted, as the conversation remains relevant, the witness does not avoid answering, and the attorney's

authority is recognized. Lastly, the maxim of manner is met (the attorney's question is clear and not ambiguous, as well as the witness's reply).

However, there are instances where legal practitioners appear to exploit their authoritative power, as seen in example below:

(57) A.K. *10 days after, miss Stanley was murdered. Your attorney struck down the injunction, and your project went forward unopposed. So my question is, senator Trucco, did you have Trisha Stanley murdered?*

A.T. *Are you out of your mind?*

C.B. *Your Honor, this has gone on long enough (S1EP06).*

In this example, A.K. (an ATTORNEY) is questioning A.T. (a SENATOR) over the murder of the victim. A direct directive is issued, which is almost instantly objected to by another attorney, C.B., who addresses the judge in hopes of stopping such a line of questioning. This exchange exemplifies a situation in which the attorney oversteps their authority, resulting in an unethical and unsuccessful directive question. At first, the propositional context of the utterance (A.K.'s question) is unclear, as there is insufficient evidence to support the questioning accusation. Consequently, the preparatory condition appears to be partially met, as the directive is expressed in the proper context (legal setting). However, its appropriateness is questionable, as the directive is too direct and inconsistent with the legal protocol of maintaining legal decorum. Also, the sincerity condition of the directive is not fulfilled, as the attorney's intention is not to seek genuine and truthful information but rather to make a manipulative accusation in the form of an interrogative. Lastly, the directive question should serve the initial purpose of gathering information. In this case, the essential condition is not met since the unfounded accusation (the intention of the question was not to inquire for information but to accuse and provoke the senator) lacks substantial evidence.

The maxims are flouted as well. The maxim of quantity is flouted since the question is unclear and too vague. Similarly, the maxim of quality is flouted too since the question implies an accusation without any evidence. Furthermore, the maxim of relevance is questionable as the question, although relevant to the ongoing trial, comes across as an aggressive attack rather than a genuine one, making it inappropriate for legal proceeding. Lastly, the directive question clearly flouts the maxim of manner, as it is overly aggressive, ambiguous, and too direct, thus making the senator uncooperative. Overall, based on the level of authority and context, the communicative exchange fails because, as an attorney, A.K. is expected to abide by legal and ethical standards in cross-examining the witness (in this case, the senator). By making an accusation, A.K. risks compromising the legal protocol. It is implausible for this exchange to have a positive (successful) outcome for the speaker, as the listener would not admit to the accusation made against him.

Non-legal practitioners also exercise their power, even against legal practitioners in non-legal settings. Consider the example below:

(58) F.D. *You found out my name? That means there are more papers listing me as Hannah's kid. Which means I have to make your wife and kids sad and kill you for lying to me.*  
UN.M.AT. *No. Please, no. Please. No. It's not papers. It's a flash drive (S6EP15).*

In this case, the communicative exchange takes place outside the courtroom, at night, between F.D., a HITMAN and UN.M.AT., an UNNAMED MALE ATTORNEY. Regarding felicity conditions and maxims, it seems that the communicative exchange was somewhat successful and somewhat not, as F.D., based on the context, has reached his goal by threatening the life of the attorney's family to gain access to private information. The propositional context condition is met, as the speaker's utterance conveys a proposition that he wants the listener to believe, which is the strong directive warning. The essential condition is also met because the listener clearly understands the warning and its indirect implication (to provide private information to protect himself). However, the terms of meeting sincerity and preparatory conditions are questionable. First, it is worth considering F.D.'s authority as a hitman. In this case, it is possible that the sincerity condition is not fully met for two reasons: firstly, the hitman may have issued the warning with ulterior motives, such as manipulating the attorney to gain information. Secondly, the hitman's warning may not be based on genuine concern for the attorney's well-being but rather a desire to protect his interests. The preparatory condition could be considered from the same perspective: the exchange is about a legal matter. However, it is not concerned with a legal setting, which complicates the success of the directive act. Also, the listener's compliance with F.D.'s warning was probably not based on his legal authority but instead on his authority as a dangerous individual. Thus, the whole success of the directive act heavily depends on external factors: the attorney's understanding of his failure to meet the hitman's expectations due to a lie and the warning being taken seriously purely out of fear rather than respect for the F.D.'s legal authority.

Some of the maxims further highlight the problem with realizing the directive of warning. For example, the quality maxim, which requires communication to be truthful, is flouted in this exchange. F.D.'s warning violated this maxim because it is unclear whether he is sincere or is just a manipulative tactic. Moreover, the maxim of quantity is flouted, as F.D. provided some information to the attorney about his mistake of lying but failed to give enough guidance on how to avoid the potential danger to his family. Consequently, the listener is left to interpret the ambiguous warning and take appropriate action to protect his family. On the other hand, the relevance maxim was not flouted, as F.D. clearly expresses the purpose of issuing this warning: to ensure the attorney does not repeat the same mistake. However, the maxim of manner was

flouted, as the warning was vague and did not provide specific instructions on what the attorney needed to do to protect his family.

The analysis of directives in legal TV context, considering cooperative principles and felicity conditions, is valuable since it helps to determine appropriateness, success, and effectiveness of the implied meaning of directives in achieving a desired outcome/effect. By analysing directives based on these two frameworks, researchers can gain insights into the reasons behind unsuccessful communicative exchanges and evaluate the circumstances that could have ensured their success.

## 5. Conclusions

The way in which legal and non-legal practitioners employ direct and indirect strategies in expressing directives in legal TV discourse influences the overall outcome of the conversation. Moreover, directives serve as a means for (non)legal practitioners to convey their perceptions of certain actions and beliefs, providing an opportunity to influence the course of action to their advantage. The findings of this study highlight the importance of context, particularly social and physical surroundings, in the analysis of directives. Understanding the context is crucial for comprehending the implications and effects of directives in legal communicative exchanges.

One of the aims of the study was to reveal the characteristics of directives employed by (non)legal practitioners. The findings indicate that directives, in terms of their form, are most prominently expressed in the interrogative form. The most prominent functions of directives in interrogative form are questioning, suggesting, and requesting. Additionally, legal and non-legal practitioners also expressed directives in declarative and imperative forms. Declarative directives are often employed as warnings, suggestions, requests, and orders, while imperative directives are predominantly issued as requests, commands, and orders. These forms illustrate how directives are mostly expressed in legal TV discourse.

In the speech of both legal and non-legal practitioners, direct directives are more prevalent than indirect directives. The hypothesis suggesting that legal practitioners employ direct strategies to their directives, while non-legal practitioners lean towards employing indirect directives, was partially confirmed. It was observed that non-legal practitioners also elicit a significant number of direct directives, indicating that there is an overlap in the communication styles between legal and non-legal practitioners. These findings signify that there might be a shared comprehension of legal concepts and contexts that is shared between (non)legal practitioners. It is also possible that legal practitioners adapt their communication style to accommodate non-legal practitioners. In addition, non-legal practitioners demonstrated a preference for direct strategies with the aim of being clear and precise while avoiding potential miscommunication.

Further analysis of the functions of directives provided further support for the second hypothesis, indicating that legal practitioners predominantly utilize directives as orders, commands, questions, warnings, and requests. Direct directives were mainly expressed as questions, orders, commands, and requests, while indirect directives were observed as requests, suggestions, and warnings. These directive functions are employed in situations when compliance is needed, particularly in cases where legal practitioners seek the listener's commitment to certain actions or truths and aim to influence the opinions, attitudes, and actions of other parties for their own benefit. The predominance of these directive uses is not surprising,

considering that non-compliance with them can result in undesirable reactions and legal consequences.

The findings revealed that non-legal practitioners mainly employed directives functioning as requests, warnings, orders, questions, and suggestions, partially confirming the third hypothesis that proposed the use of these functions through indirect strategies. Although the functions of directives seem to align with those issued by legal practitioners, there were differences in the circumstances and purposes for which these directives were expressed.

In legal TV context, the use of directive orders, warnings, and commands by legal practitioners is typically the reflection of their legal authority. These directives are issued to direct actions, manipulate or influence perceptions, maintain order, and change certain behaviours. On the other hand, non-legal practitioners mainly issued commands, warnings, and orders in cases of emergency situations (when sudden action is needed), to alert others of the consequences of actions, or in cases of providing instructions to their fellow colleagues who were also non-legal practitioners.

Moreover, directives functioning as questions also seemed to be issued with a different purpose. Legal practitioners employed directive questions not only to gather information but also to indirectly challenge the validity of the individuals' words, even if some questioning patterns did not exactly align with the legal ethical standards. In almost all cases this was done with the aim of benefiting their legal cases. In contrast, non-legal practitioners primarily issued questions to ask for additional information and provide guidance for themselves and other individuals.

Both legal and non-legal practitioners also elicited directives as suggestions and requests. Suggestions were employed by (non)legal practitioners to propose a course of action or provide guidance. Similarly, requests were issued by non-legal practitioners to inquire information or in cases of asking to perform certain actions, such as providing details of a specific case. Legal practitioners also elicited directive requests, particularly during cross-examination processes, to elicit information and indirectly validate claims that gave an advantage to their case. However, it is important to note that the use of directive requests is highly dependent on the authority of the speaker. Both legal and non-legal practitioners should be conscious of the circumstances in which they request information from others. This awareness is quite vital to ensure effective and appropriate communication.

The last hypothesis focused on highlighting the significance of context and social dynamics between legal and non-legal practitioners by overviewing the felicity conditions and maxims that contribute to understanding why certain directives are successful or not. Effective communication is especially important to legal practitioners as it builds their credibility as a

legal professional. To meet these conditions of success, the communicative exchange must be relevant, clear, expressed with the right authoritative status in the right setting, and conveyed with sincerity to build rapport. While legal practitioners succeeded in issuing their directives, the results suggest that there are cases where success is not achieved, especially when they want to reach a specific goal through manipulative strategies (vague, suggestive, ambiguous language, abuse of power). Furthermore, sarcastic and ironic directive responses also interfere with their effectiveness. Non-legal practitioners also demonstrated similar attitudes in achieving communicative goals. However, it is worth noting that even they may misuse their authoritative status, depending on their position, leading to potential repercussions.

The research of directives expressed by (non)legal practitioners in legal TV series *How to Get Away with Murder* was carried out in hopes to contribute to the previous studies conducted in similar fields. Moreover, research as such could possibly help viewers of legal TV shows to better understand the matters of legal language. However, a limitation of this is its focus solely on the directives in TV discourse, analysed based on qualitative approach, which is always open for interpretation. Possible future research could investigate the use of directives by comparing spoken discourse in real-life court proceedings with directives expressed in legal TV series, which could further contribute to the understanding of legal communication.



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## Santrauka

Šis tyrimas pateikia direktyvų, išsakytų teisininkų ir teisę nepraktikuojančių asmenų, raišką teisiniame televizijos seriale „Kaip išsisukti įvykdžius žmogžudystę“. Tyrimo tikslas – išsiaiškinti, kokia direktyvų strategija yra labiausiai dominuojanti teisiniame kontekste, t.y. ar labiau vartojami tiesioginiai, ar netiesioginiai direktyvai. Tyrimu taip pat siekiama nustatyti dažniausias direktyvų funkcijas bei glaustai apžvelgti direktyvų sėkmių ir nesėkmių sąlygas atsižvelgiant į kontekstą ir tarpasmeninius santykius tarp kalbėtojų teisiniame televizijos diskurse. Direktyvų analizė kalbiniame teisės diskurse yra svarbi, nes padeda geriau suprasti, kaip teisę praktikuojantys ir nepraktikuojantys asmenys vartoja direktyvas, norėdami išreikšti įsakymus, prašymus, patarimus, bei kita.

Tyrimo analizė apima kiekybinį ir kokybinį duomenų pateikimą. Analizė buvo atlikta remiantis Searle'o, Yule'o and Grice'o metodika. Direktyvai buvo analizuojami ištranskribavus dešimt televizijos serialo „Kaip išsisukti įvykdžius žmogžudystę“ epizodų iš mokamos transliavimo paskyros *Netflix*. Tekstyne pateikiami direktyvai buvo nustatyti ir analizuojami remiantis susikurta žymėjimo sistema.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad teisę praktikuojantys ir nepraktikuojantys asmenys direktyvas yra linkę išreikšti tiesiogiai. Teisiniame kontekste dažnas tiesioginių direktyvų naudojimas gali būti siejamas su nedviprasmišku bei aiškiu kalbėtojo ketinimu pateikti nurodymus, instrukcijas, patarimus ir kita. Priešingai, netiesioginiai direktyvai taip pat išreiškia tuos pačius klausytojui skirtus veiksmus, tačiau subtiliau. Dažniausiai tiesioginiais direktyvais buvo siekiama, kad klausytojas vykdytų nurodymus ir atsižvelgtų į prašymus bei klausimus. Tuo tarpu netiesioginiais direktyvais kalbėtojai išreiškė siūlymus, prašymus ir įspėjimus. Visos šios funkcijos nurodo, kaip teisę praktikuojantys ir nepraktikuojantys asmenys naviguoja pokalbiuose siekdami naudoti sau bei kitiems. Tyrimas taip pat nagrinėja bendradarbiavimo principus ir (ne)sėkmės sąlygas formuojant direktyvų veiksmingumą teisiniame televizijos serialo kontekste.

## Appendices

*Appendix 1. List of roles of legal and non-legal practitioners in legal TV series How to Get Away with Murder.*

<b>ROLES OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS</b>	<b>ROLES OF NON-LEGAL PRACTITIONERS</b>
Attorney	Law student
Interim district attorney	Hitman
Defence attorney	Investigator
Death row attorney	Police officer
Judge	IT technician
Lawyer	Witness
Supreme court justice	TV news presenters/journalists
Prosecutor	Detective
Commonwealth attorney	FTB agents
Notary	Governors/senators
Public defender	Psychiatrist
Law professor	Suspects
	Doctors/nurses

*Appendix 2. List of characters in each episode and their position.*

### **S5EPO3**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
 A.K. Annalise Keating (defence attorney)  
 R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
 N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
 U.M. unidentified male character  
 U.F. unidentified female character  
 F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
 M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
 L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
 A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
 O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
 C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
 W.G. Wes Gibbins (law student)  
 T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)  
 U.M. unidentified male character  
 U.F. unidentified female character  
 B.H. Bethany Harrington (wife of Niles Harrington)  
 N.H. Niles Harrington (\*Psychopath CEO)  
 U.F.N. Unidentified female nurse

E.C. Emmet Crawford (attorney)  
E.R. Eve Rothlo (death row attorney)  
V.H. Victoria Harper (judge)  
D. REID. (witness)  
EXAMINERS (persons responsible for civil law examination)  
ANOUNCER (Tv news presenter)

**S6EP15**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
G.M. Gabriel Maddox (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
W.G. Wes Gibbins (law student)  
T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
E.C. Emmet Crawford (attorney)  
E.R. Eve Rothlo (death row attorney)  
OH.H. Ophelia Harkness (A.K.'s mother/witness)  
CE.H. Cecilia Harkness (A.K.'s sister/witness)  
REPORTERS (TV reporters)  
AGENT (FTB agent)  
U.M. AT. unidentified male attorney  
AT.L. Lennox (attorney)  
J.C. Jorge Castillo (CEO/suspect)  
M.V. Martha Vitkay (judge)

C.C. Christopher Castillo (law professor)

U.M. unidentified male character

U.F. unidentified female character

**S6EP08**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)

A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)

R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)

N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)

U.M. unidentified male character

U.F. unidentified female character

F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)

M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)

L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)

A.M. Asher Miller (law student)

G.M. Gabriel Maddox (law student)

O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)

C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)

W.G. Wes Gibbins (law student)

T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)

U.M. unidentified male character

U.F. unidentified female character

U.F.S. unidentified female suspect

L.B. Lynne Birkhead (governor of Pennsylvania)

H.C. Harold Chavez (attorney)

K.B. Kofo Bonaparte (judge)

Robert Hsieh (attorney)

P.G. Police officer Gladden

LOCAL NEWS ANCOR

REPORTER

DOCTOR

**S6EP08**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)

A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)

R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)

N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
G.M. Gabriel Maddox (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)  
V.M. Vivian Maddox (dropout law student)  
J.C. Jorge Castillo (CEO/suspect)  
Helen Bines (judge)  
A.T.F. Ford (attorney)  
A.N. Avery Norris (agent)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
U.F.L. unidentified female lawyer  
U.M.P. unidentified male police officer

### **S4EP13**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
G.M. Gabriel Maddox (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)



W.G. Wes Gibbins (law student)  
T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
J.R. Jacqueline Roa (psychologist)  
I.R. Issac Roa (addiction psychiatrist)  
I.E. Ingrid Egan (commonwealth attorney)  
N.H. news reporter  
OH.H. Ophelia Harkness (A.K.'s mother/witness)  
M.H. Mac Harkness (OH.H.'s husband)  
Kevin Murphy (husband to Paula Murphy)  
Paula Murphy (suspect)

COURT CLERK

MARSHALL OF THE COURT

J.S. Justice Strickland

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE NR. 1

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE NR. 2

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE NR. 3

### **S4EP03**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
G.M. Gabriel Maddox (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
T.P. Tegan Price (attorney)  
U.M. unidentified male character

U.F. unidentified female character  
V.C. Virginia Cross (chief public defender/attorney)  
B.C Ben Carter (suspect of murder/defendant)  
U.M.A. unidentified male attorney  
KYM. (Ben's fiancé)  
W.S. Wenona Sansbury (judge)  
U.F.M. unidentified female police officer  
U.M.W. unidentified male police officer  
U.F.D.M. unidentified female disciplinary board worker  
S.D. Simon Drake (law student)  
U.M.M. unidentified male student  
U.M.A. unidentified male attorney  
I.R. Issac Roa (addiction psychiatrist)  
B.M. Blake Mathis (attorney)

## **S2EP02**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
E.R. Eve Rothlo (death row attorney)  
F.P. Fiona Pruitt (judge)  
E.S. Emily Sinclair (assistant district attorney)  
U.F.REPORTER.  
H.H. Helena Hapstall (murder victim)  
M.N. Marschall Norwood (detective)  
CA.H. Catherine Hapstall (suspect of murder)

U.M. unidentified rentor  
U.M.PR. unidentified male prosecutor  
C.H. Caleb Hapstall (suspect of murder)  
BAILIFF

### **S1EP01**

U.M.S. unidentified male student  
G.S. Gina Sadowski (murder suspect)  
R.S. Rebecca Sutter (murder suspect)  
U.M. OF. Unidentified male police officer  
L.T. Linda Tanner (assistant/witness)  
H.W. Henry Williams (prosecutor)  
L.B. Lionel Bryant (witness)  
G.O. Griffin O'Reilly (student)  
S.K. Sam Keating (professor of psychology)  
GILL (detective/witness)  
K.P. Kathy Powell (judge)  
B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)

### **S1EP06**

S.K. Sam Keating (professor of psychology)  
R.S. Rebecca Sutter (murder suspect)  
D.A. David Allen (murder suspect)  
V.T. Vince Travers (lawyer/witness)  
G.G. George Gabler (attorney)

L.M. Linda Morelli (hospital worker/witness)  
W.M. William Millstone (attorney/judge)  
C.B. Clark Byers (attorney)  
A.T. Art Trucco (senator)  
THOMAS (judge)  
COURT CRIER  
U.M.R. unidentified male reporter  
B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)

### **S3EP12**

B.W. Bonnie Winterbottom (attorney)  
A.K. Annalise Keating (defense attorney)  
R.M. Ronald Miller (interim district attorney)  
N.L. Nate Lahey (police officer/detective)  
U.M. unidentified male character  
U.F. unidentified female character  
F.D. Frank Delfino (hitman/investigator)  
M.P. Michaela Pratt (law student)  
L.C. Laurel Castillo (law student)  
A.M. Asher Miller (law student)  
O.H. Oliver Hampton (IT technician/hacker)  
C.W. Connor Walsh (law student)  
B.D. Briana Davis (police officer)  
C.G. Claudia Gelvin (inmate)

J.B. Jasmine Bromelle (inmate)  
B.J. Barbara Jacobs (judge)  
PROSECUTOR  
T.D. Todd Denver (district attorney)  
OH.H. Ophelia Harkness (A.K.'s mother)  
M.H. Mac Harkness (OH.H.'s husband)  
U.F.PR 1. unidentified female prisoner  
U.F.PR 2. unidentified female prisoner  
S.D. Simon Drake (law student)  
COURT CLERK  
M.T. Meggy Travers (medicine student)  
F.P.D. Frank's public defender

*Appendix 3. Descriptions of all abbreviations present in the corpus of the study.*

### **Type of directive**

Direct – D

Indirect – IN

### **Form of directive**

<INT> – interrogative

<IMP> – imperative

<DEC> – declarative

### **Function of directive**

Commanding – <CO>

Ordering – <OR>

Suggesting – <SU>

Questioning – <QU>

Warning – <WA>

Request – <RE>

Instructing – <IN>

Permitting – <PE>

Challenging – <CH>

Green indicates an indirect directive.

Red indices a direct directive.