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“You gon’ let me hold that card”: Directive speech acts and authority in *The Wire*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (Linguistics) from
The College of William and Mary

by

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Abstract

This study uses HBO's *The Wire* as a corpus for examining the link between directive speech acts and authority. It looks at all the conversations from the show in which there is a clearly defined superior speaking to an inferior hearer and the distribution of two types of directives in those conversations. The two types of directives analyzed are standard directives (e.g., "Do that thing!") and obligation statement indirect directives (e.g., "You're gonna do that thing!") (Searle, 1965; Searle, 1975a; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). This paper finds that obligation statements only appear in situations in which the superior speaker and the inferior hearer belong to the same realm depicted in the show (e.g. the police department, a drug ring, a school system, etc.) and argues that this occurs because in those situations, the power of the speaker is mutually agreed upon by both speaker and hearer. In situations in which there is a difference of power but it is not agreed upon by speaker and hearer, obligation statements do not appear, and standard directives are used instead. This study can be situated in the context of speech act research, language and authority research, and research on television shows.

Introduction

Over the course of its five televised seasons, *The Wire* paints an intricate picture depicting many aspects of modern-day Baltimore, from the police department to the drug culture, from the upper echelons of politics to the public schools. Fictional, though based strongly in reality, the series has been called a televised version of the Great American Novel, and for good reason. One especially interesting aspect of the show is the way power structures are established and examined throughout the episodes. Power hierarchies exist within realms and between realms. The police department has its own hierarchy, as does the political system, as do the drug rings. But it is the mayor's office that exerts power over the police department and the police department over the drug dealers, establishing a complex web of power relations among the groups and the characters. In addition, the power structures of certain domains are rigidly defined, like the bureaucracy of the police department, while those of other spheres are not, like those of the gangs fighting for territory in the streets. This leads to varying reasons for groups' needs to assert authority.

This power structure lends itself well to a linguistic study of the language of authority. Scholars such as Brenton (1993) and Matoesian (1999) have examined various linguistic strategies that speakers use to convey control over their audience. Other work (e.g., Kotthoff, 1997; Garland, 2008) has been done on similar topics, such as crafting an authoritative "expert status" or "national identity" using the same types of strategies. Based on observations of the power methods used in *The Wire*, I have examined the role that different types of directive speech acts play in asserting authority.

Research Questions and Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the various linguistic strategies for asserting authority as depicted in the Home Box Office (HBO) series *The Wire*. The series portrays many different groups of people, clustered by arrangements such as race, socioeconomic status, education level, profession, and gender. My research looks specifically at how these linguistic manifestations of authority match up with these groups. My original research question was a general one, asking what strategies characters in *The Wire* use to assert or demonstrate their authority over another character or group of characters. With that in mind, I made observations from watching the show, and determined that the most interesting strategy frequently employed was the use of directive speech acts. I further narrowed my research questions into the following:

1. What types of directive speech acts do characters in *The Wire* use to assert their authority over others?
2. What are the tendencies and patterns, in terms of preferred linguistic strategy of asserting authority, that are demonstrated?

Literature Review

This research is a convergence of several previous paths of inquiry. Work has been done on television shows and linguistics, on speech acts, on the interplay between language and authority, and on *The Wire* itself— all of which are encompassed in the present study. I have divided this literature review into the subsections listed above.

Television Shows and Linguistics

A wealth of previous linguistic research has focused on television shows, both scripted and unscripted. One specific fictitious and scripted show that has received much scholastic attention is *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Some of this work has concentrated in the field of sociology, with academics examining topics such as race, gender, friendship bonds, and symbolism (Alessio, 2001; Playden, 2001; Erickson, 2002). Other researchers have used linguistic methodologies to examine the show. Mandala (2007) looks at one linguistic variable in particular and how it relates to group membership in *Buffy*. The researcher separates out instances of what she calls “marked -y” and, importantly, explains the guidelines she employed to separate the “marked” ones. Her analysis of the findings is mixed-method, providing a brief but significant table of instances of the variable and following with a longer qualitative look at the role this variable plays in the show. Mandala’s central conclusions are that this specific feature is an identifying marker for a very small subset of characters, and that the deviations are intentional and important (Mandala, 2007). She presents her research as part of the larger framework of sociolinguistic competence theory, and the legitimacy of this work is not diminished by the fact that the focus of study is a fictional show.

A television series is a very useful corpus for study in the fields of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and especially their intersection. Agis (2012) has applied Brown and Levinson’s (1987) famous politeness theory to a fictional Turkish television series. The various politeness strategies (negative, positive, bald on-record, and bald off-record) and the gender of the characters that used those strategies are the variables in her study. This study is far more quantitative than Mandala’s, featuring several graphs and tables demonstrating the usage rates of

the types of strategies and the gender of the speaker. A small qualitative section follows the graphs and explains a few of the examples covered, but the statistics are clearly the main focus of the research. Agis concludes from her data that while neither gender stands out as being more polite than the other, men and women do tend to use different politeness strategies in the same scenarios (Agis, 2012).

Another article that uses pragmatics theories to analyze a television program was written by Lorenzo-Dus (2009), who looks at impoliteness strategies in a British reality show titled *Dragon's Den*. The power structure in this show is rigid and well-defined, with expert “dragons” judging the contestants (prospective entrepreneurs) and often performing many face-threatening acts toward them. Lorenzo-Dus focuses on fifty-six instances of face-threatening behavior in five episodes of the show, and provides a statistical analysis of the occurrences of specific impoliteness strategies in these conversations. She also includes an additional section in which she uses clips of the show to participants and asks them to rate conversations based on how impolite they found the speaker's behavior. Following the lead of Holmes and Schnurr (2005), Lorenzo-Dus employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses, ensuring that she is able to portray patterns in the data and explain the inner workings of a few examples (Lorenzo-Dus, 2009). Looking at a show with such clear and overt power dynamics makes for an easier avenue to analysis without doubts of the accuracy of the attributions of authority.

One last example of research with this focus is Kline's (2005) look at “influence strategies” in home shopping shows on TV. She analyzes the discourse of 104 segments from home shopping shows, and identifies several specific influence strategies that seem prevalent. Kline's research is entirely qualitative, using discourse analysis to point out the strategies used

by the hosts and to explain the context for and utility of such strategies. The influence tactics that she pinpoints all work to connect host and viewer and to convince the viewer, in some way, to buy the product. Kline presents these findings by crafting a few overarching strategies and including more detailed classifications within each section; examples from the corpus are included for each strategy as well (Kline, 2005).

A common thread linking all linguistics research on television shows is the dual nature of the context the author provides: information about the show to furnish the setting, and the linguistic tools to employ in such a setting. Similarly formatted papers on television shows include those of Luginbuhl (2007), Al-Khatib (2004), and Kerrigan (2011). Each television event or show explored is different, so each deserves a different treatment by the researcher. Even so, context and then a linguistic analysis are present in all.

Speech Acts

The idea of an “illocutionary speech act” was first propounded by the language philosopher J. L. Austin (1962) in his work, *How to Do Things with Words*. This concept was then transferred to the realm of linguistics from that of philosophy by J. R. Searle, who remains to this day a central figure in pragmatics and the founder of speech act theory. In “What Is A Speech Act?” Searle (1965) makes the argument that all illocutionary acts contain both a “propositional content” and an “illocutionary force.” The propositional content is more or less the topic of the sentence: a central proposition expressed, in one way or another, by the sentence. The illocutionary force corresponds to what the speaker wants the hearer to understand upon hearing the utterance. Searle claims that this force is marked by a “function indicating device” and that the English language allows many different types of these signals, including “word

order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and ... a set of so-called performative verbs” (142). To illustrate clearly this point of illocutionary force, Searle provides examples. The utterances “John will leave the room,” “John, leave the room!” and “Will John leave the room?” all have the same propositional content, having to do with John leaving the room, but each wields a different illocutionary force (Searle, 1965).

Searle (1975a) further classifies the different types of speech acts in “A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts,” in which he presents twelve “dimensions” by which to note differences in illocutionary acts in order to classify them. Three of these are especially important in understanding the nature and potential application of an illocutionary act. The one he lists as the most important is what he calls “illocutionary point,” which is the “point or purpose of the type of act” (346). His second dimension, almost as important as illocutionary point, is the “direction of fit between words and the world” (346), and he cites an example from Anscombe (1957) to illustrate this distinction. If a wife writes items on a shopping list and gives it to her husband, and then a detective follows the husband as he shops and records the items that the husband purchases, the two lists will be identical, assuming the husband did not forget anything or purchase anything extra. The function of these identical lists, however, would be different, as the husband’s list attempts “to get the world to match the words” (346), while the detective uses words to reflect what already existed in the world. The third of these dimensions is as follows: “Differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer” (348). Searle explains that the nature of the utterance will follow tendencies based on the positions of the participants; a boss will be more likely to command an employee whereas that employee will be more likely to suggest something to the boss rather than commanding it. With his twelve categories introduced and briefly explained, Searle proposes his taxonomy according to those guidelines. The five

classes he determines are: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Those important to my study are representatives and directives. Representatives “commit the speaker ... to something’s being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition” (354). Directives “are attempts ... by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (355) (Searle, 1975a).

The next relevant development in the history and theory of speech acts is the concept of the indirect speech act, in which the surface form of the utterance and the desired understanding of the utterance are not entirely the same. Searle (1975b) mentions that this can arise in metaphors and sarcasm but also in occasions in which the speaker “means what he says, but also means something more” (59). He claims that there is a fundamental difference between traditional, single-meaning illocutionary acts and these indirect types. Examples of indirect speech acts include, “Can you reach the salt?” which, in a certain context, would not be just a question but also a request, and “I would appreciate it if you would pass the salt,” which, although an expressive speech act in its structure and surface form, is clearly a request and therefore a directive. Searle determines that the success of indirect speech acts relies on “mutually shared background information ... together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” (61). Because of the nature of our society and common interactions, politeness is often the driving force behind indirect speech acts, especially directives. Searle lists numerous examples of indirect directives, and follows with eight pertinent facts. Of chief importance to the present study is Fact 1, which states that “the sentences in question do not have an imperative force as part of their meaning” (67), a tenet illustrated by the possibility of using the sentence in a different context with a different illocutionary force (Searle, 1975b).

Later attempts to further classify speech acts have found ways to combine indirect and direct speech acts into one functional model. The detailed specifics of such a model have been debated by scholars, and various alternatives have been put forth. One such model, proposed by Ervin-Tripp (1976), delineates six distinct categories of directives:

Need statements — “I need a match.”

Imperatives — “Gimme a match!”

Embedded imperatives — “Could you gimme a match?”

Permission directives — “May I have a match?”

Question directives — “Gotta match?”

Hints — “The matches are all gone.”

Ervin-Tripp classifies these directives using a few dimensions, including explicitness (whether or not the utterance is obviously a directive), and the relative relationship between the speaker and the hearer. She also details the likely relationship between the participants according to the specific type of directive (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). This link between directive speech acts and the relative relationship between the participants involved is of utmost importance to the present study.

Another, similar model was presented by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) as part of their Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). Their proposal comprises nine types of speech acts, one of which is relevant to my research and was not included in Ervin-Tripp’s classification. The researchers identified these as “obligation statements,” in which the speaker places an obligation on the hearer to perform a certain action without explicitly

commanding him or her to do it. Blum-Kulka et al., raise a key point by stating that this type of utterance is “locution derivable,” meaning that the successful understanding of the request depends on its semantic content (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

A later study by Culpeper and Archer (2008) uses a corpus of English trials and plays from 1640 to 1760 and analyzes the distribution of various strategies of directive requests. The researchers base their analysis on the CCSARP model but add a couple of noteworthy and relevant aspects to the original theory. They take the category of locution derivable/obligation statements and divide it in two: locution derivable/obligation statement in which the obligation is placed on the hearer, and locution derivable/obligation statement in which the obligation is placed either on the speaker or on the speaker and the hearer. The examples they offer to illustrate this difference are, “You’ll entertain Bellamar,” and “we must go to the city” (71). There is a clear distinction between these two, as the successful performance of one involves solely the hearer, and the successful performance of the second involves the speaker as well. The researchers interpret the model proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. as meaning that such obligation statements compel only the hearer, and see it fit to add a second category to better serve their data. Another category they add is prediction/intention, which they describe as the “speaker’s prediction of or intention to perform individual or joint action” and to which they add “thee and I will make a visit” as an example (71). In their conclusion, Culpeper and Archer argue that their specific corpus gave results that did not match Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness in that there is not much of a correlation between more directness and less politeness. They add that indirect forms of requests do not necessarily correspond with a diminished power of the speaker (Culpeper & Archer, 2008).

Entirely new ways of looking at and analyzing speech acts are idealized cognitive models (ICMs) and illocutionary scenarios (Thornburg & Panther, 1997; Pérez Hernández & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002). While I will not be adopting their ICM/illocutionary scenario system to analyze my data, Pérez Hernández and Ruiz de Mendoza raise a few remarkably interesting and relevant points in their article “Grounding, semantic motivation, and conceptual interaction in indirect directive speech acts.” A large part of their theoretical framework is the “importance of considering social variables, like power or social distance” (261), and they posit that the power relationship of the speaker and hearer plays a crucial role in the understanding of an utterance. The sentence they give as an example is, “Can you get me a cup of coffee?” If a superior says this to an inferior, that is essentially an order, but if one equal says this to another, it is much less of an order and more of a request, which has potential to be challenged or questioned by the hearer (Pérez Hernández & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2002). Considering the relative relationship between speaker and hearer as a parameter for understanding an utterance is a key concept in this study.

Linguistics and Authority

Studying the link between language and authority is hardly a new endeavor; a number of linguists have focused on tenets similar to those that I am analyzing. In “The interactional achievement of expert status,” Kotthoff (1997) looks at “expert status” and its achievement in conversation. Her data pool consists of conversations from a television program, the Austrian discussion/debate show *Club II*, adding another level of similarity. She examines how participants in that show created an “expert status” entirely through conversation. She outlines characteristics of a “dominance relation” that is useful for my definition of that same concept: “superior knowledge, institutional status hierarchies, symbolic capital, physical power,

conversation styles, personal relationships.” She continues, “Those who gain a high intrinsic status often talk a lot ... they are asked questions by others ... they establish their opinions as the most important” (143). Kotthoff compares the strategies and successes of both men and women who achieve this expert status, and, indeed, finds variations across the genders. Her predominant conclusion is that achieving expert status is more important for the men, and determined so by all participants, including the expert male himself and other female and male participants (Kotthoff, 1997).

Garland (2008) has researched authority in a completely different setting: the classroom. In her study, the class consists of an L2 Irish speaker teaching Irish to a number of L1 English students, one of whom already has ample background knowledge of the language. This context makes for an interesting series of interactions between the expert student and the teacher, and between the teacher and the rest of the class. Garland’s principal focus is the way that the expert student spoke in class compared to how the other students spoke in class, and how the teacher addressed the expert student compared to how she addressed the other students. Garland’s linguistic umbrella covers more than just authority; she examines “national identity” and “cultural authenticity” as well, and at the forefront is the linguistic concept of positioning. Hand in hand with this concept of positioning comes the idea of “negotiating authority,” presenting authority as an ever-changing concept that circumstantially calls for reinforcing (Garland, 2008).

Matoesian (1999) also looks at expert identity (similar to Kotthoff’s [1997] expert status) as a movable concept. The case he examines is a rape trial from 1991 in which the defendant was called to the stand to testify as an expert witness. Shifting from the identity of a defendant to an expert with authority provides the relevant scenario for Matoesian to examine. Some of the

specific strategies he covers are “direct and indirect quotes, repetitive parallelism, epistemic modality, counterfactuals, evidentiality, sequencing, and specialized tokens ... to contextualize shifting into and departing from an expert identity” (491). Work such as that done by Garland and Matoesian portray identity and authority as dynamic rather than static; over the course of conversations and interactions, speakers’ identities can change from moment to moment. A participant with some level of authority, therefore, must constantly act to uphold it (Matoesian, 1999). This is where linguistic strategies of maintaining or proving that authority come into the conversation.

Brenton (1993) posits two central research questions in her study of authority in a church conflict: “What semantic and syntactic features characterized the plaintiffs’ attempts to challenge established patterns of authority within the church?” and “What semantic and syntactic features characterized the elders’ attempts to relegitimize their authority in the church” (232). She answers these two questions through discourse analysis, highlighting several strategies that each group used to assert or challenge authority. Brenton asserts that the “methodology of critical linguistics ... may assist other researchers investigating applied communication settings” (240). She claims this theory can help figure out why or how some leaders have been able to reclaim their authority after having it questioned. Another area this framework can aid in is looking at challenges to authority from someone (or a group of people) with inherently less power. The last example she offers is a situation in which authority is unclear; Brenton thinks using critical linguistics can analyze human behavior in a shifting, complex power relationship (Brenton, 1993).

A study by Palmer, Lack, and Lynch (1995) has combined speech act theory with situational authority. The theory on which they base their hypothesis is called “status generalization theory,” which posits that certain traits cause people of higher status to automatically take on greater authority in interactions. These researchers use an airplane cockpit during simulated flight emergencies as their corpus, and look at how pilots and co-pilots use speech acts in their handling of the situation. During the course of a flight, the “authority” (flying the plane) switches between the two pilots regularly, but the “status” never changes; one person is always the captain and the other the first officer. Palmer et al., have found that no matter who has the authority in the situation, the partner with the higher status tends to use more direct directive speech acts, while the one with the lower status uses less direct directive forms, such as mitigated and hedged commands (Palmer, Lack, & Lynch, 1995).

These studies are examples of researchers examining interactions between individuals—linguistics being done on a micro level instead of a macro level. In all instances, authority is either evident and needs to be asserted, or is unclear and needs to be established. Either way, it has been shown that individuals have different ways of accomplishing this task, and, complementarily, strategies such as word choice and pronunciation are utilized in order to achieve this end.

The Wire

In the five years since its final episode aired on HBO, *The Wire* has received a fairly exceptional amount of scholarly attention for a television series. Authors and researchers from many different fields have examined the show to connect it to a wide range of fields, including sociology, education, and philosophy, setting a precedent for dealing with the subject matter in

the show, and the treatment of the show as an element in a study. The series is realistic fiction, and based on true circumstances, but it is, of course, scripted. These characteristics do not necessarily mean it cannot be scrutinized through a lens other than television criticism, but it is an important element that should not be forgotten in research.

This is especially relevant and important to keep in mind for a linguistic study because the lines are not the original thoughts of the people delivering them. If I analyze a line said by the character Stringer Bell, for example, it is at the very least relevant to remember that Stringer Bell did not come up with that line, nor did Idris Elba, the actor who portrays Bell on the show. Goffman (1981) explained this as the author/actor distinction. The author is “someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the words in which they are encoded,” while the actor is the one “active in the role of utterance production” (144). A team of writers and creators (the authors) composed the lines to be delivered by the actors (the actors) (Goffman, 1981). That does not make analyzing the line any less legitimate, but it is important to make sure not to ascribe too much agency to the character being analyzed. That said, the screenwriters are professional and aim to make those lines as realistic as possible. The language isn’t necessarily naturally occurring when it is delivered, but it was originally created naturally and still lends itself well to a linguistic analysis. The interactions conveyed in the show, though staged, are examples of real conversations that could happen outside of the show, and the speech acts involved are most certainly real.

The Wire provides an interesting body of research for linguistic study. One of the defining features of the language of *The Wire* is the use of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Trotta and Blyahher (2011) have looked at the use of AAVE features prevalent in the show, specifically AAVE grammar and vocabulary (they also acknowledge that there are

phonetic aspects of AAVE covered in the show, but do not delve into these in this article). Their study is qualitative, illustrating examples rather than counting them. Among the features they list are copula deletion, invariant *be*, double modals, and slang in various aspects of life in the show, among others. After explaining these features and providing examples, Trotta and Blyahher analyze one excerpt from the show in depth. They also point out that ethnicity is not the only factor for representing AAVE features in the show, and acknowledge the fact that the lines delivered by characters are scripted. They note that, according to Quaglio (2009), “some features will be exaggerated or heightened for effect, while others ... are played down” (Trotta & Blyahher, 2011). This seems truer for conscious decisions that screenwriters and actors make, such as having a character deliver lines using AAVE features. On the other hand, a screenwriter considering the pragmatic effects of a locution derivable directive speech act rather than an imbedded imperative seems inconceivable. Regardless, the script is written and delivered so as to most accurately reflect unscripted situations, and the speech of the show is relevant.

Trier (2010) analyzes season four of *The Wire* from an education perspective. His article is intended for a specific audience: instructors of courses in education. Trier’s purpose is to show that *The Wire*, in addition to being an excellent television show, contains valuable lessons and general discussion topics in this specific field. He describes how various representations of education from the show can be utilized in a curriculum of an education course. There is no additional research or statistical analysis in Trier’s article; it is just a presentation of various examples from the show, each coupled with a corresponding lesson plan. Trier uses both his knowledge of the show and his knowledge of the education field (he is an associate professor at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill’s School of Education) to craft the article. The series is

a work of fiction, yet Trier shows that it has valuable applications to one specific real-world subject, and the fact that the show is fiction is hardly a detriment (Trier, 2010).

Bzdak, Crosby, and Vannatta (2013) have edited a book that falls in the same category as Trier's article. *The Wire and Philosophy: This America, Man* is a collection of essays by various authors, each of whom connects a theme from *The Wire* to a topic from the field of philosophy. This source is another example of the feasibility of applying the show to an academic arena of inquiry. Unlike Trier, who has a specific audience and goal with his article, the authors in this volume use *The Wire* as a pool from which to draw evidence for a scholarly discussion. No further application is inherent in the essays beyond the discussion of philosophy, setting a precedent for *The Wire* as a topic of academic writing for the sake of academia (Bzdak et al., 2013). Potter and Marshall (2009) do the same thing, collecting a series of essays based in various fields on *The Wire* in their book. Themes covered in *The Wire: Urban Decay and American Television* include narrative production, social justice, urban tragedy, and the role of women, among others (Potter & Marshall, 2009).

My research takes this corpus, already at the center of several linguistic and non-linguistic studies, and applies to it the classic linguistic approaches of analyzing speech acts and examining the link between language use and authority. Studying these four areas of existing research along with my methodology has allowed me both to perform my analysis and to situate it in the larger linguistic schema.

Methodology

In the examination of speech acts and authority in *The Wire*, I have employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodology of my study. The relation between discourse and power is a central focus of this sociolinguistic theory, making it a pertinent framework within which to carry out my analysis. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) summarize it well by saying that the objective of CDA is to make discourse “an opaque power object in modern societies... more visible and transparent” (448). As established by Fairclough and advanced by scholars such as Wodak and van Dijk, CDA is unique in the way it focuses on the link between language and power (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

A key element of CDA is that it examines more than just the written or spoken words; it includes a view of the society and the context that underlie those words being written or uttered. In applying CDA, the assumption is that “discourse is structured by dominance” (3). All speakers and hearers are interconnected, as defined by both their personal relationships and societal structures. While other methodologies of analyzing discourse focus only on the text, CDA maintains that such a text is inseparable from the context—meaning social processes and structures—in which it exists, and that that context must be studied as well. Another significant aspect of CDA is that the precise method can vary from study to study and can include qualitative approaches, quantitative approaches, or mixes of both (Wodak 2001).

I also derive my definition of power from CDA. Wodak (2001) notes that power is “particularly about the effects of differences in social structures” (11). She also contends that “CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and

manipulations of power.” For my purposes, this means the assertion of power, based on and referencing a preexisting hierarchy of power relationships (Wodak, 2001).

Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) also lay out a program of how to go about applying CDA in their analysis of the methodology. Citing Fairclough (1992), they offer a three-dimensional approach. The first aspect of this approach is what they call “discourse-as-text,” the systematic analysis of choices and/or patterns within speech or writing. Looking at a specific feature and the effects the use (or lack) of that feature has on social interactions is a key tenet of CDA, and is the approach I have taken. The second is “discourse-as-discursive practice.” Included in this dimension is attention paid to speech acts in order to “link a text to its context” (449). Blommaert and Bulcaen provide a partial list of topics that researchers using CDA tend to focus on. *The Wire* is a fictional television series that spans a number of domains and contains several elements that they list, including the realms of political discourse, media language, institutional discourse, and education (Fairclough, 1992; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

My iteration of CDA is a slight variation of the way it is commonly applied. As designed and practiced, CDA deals with “discourse-as-social-practice,” which is the third dimension of Blommaert and Bulcaen’s summary. This aspect studies changing social hegemonies on a macro level, and in this way, CDA can often be used as a vehicle to spark social change, exposing inequalities and unfairness in real-life situations and conversations. Seeing that my topic is a work of fiction (although powerfully based in reality), I cannot directly bring about social change through my analysis.

CDA studies often tackle macro issues, concerning matters such as international politics and institutional racism. Some research, however, uses the methodology to study smaller

domains. One such study, by Mancini and Rogers, analyzes interviews with two patients recovering from serious psychiatric disabilities. Using CDA, the researchers examine the way these patients position their own identities in relation to their recoveries. In explaining why they chose CDA as their approach, Mancini and Rogers (2007) mention that it allows them to “capture the linguistic nuances that are associated with identity” (38). They analyze the narratives, pointing out occurrences of linguistic items of interest such as passive voice and past tense, linking those features to the way the narrators portray their identities throughout different phases of their recoveries (Mancini & Rogers, 2007). Like these researchers, I have analyzed conversations (instead of narratives), looking for items of interest and linking those linguistic choices to the marking of identity.

Another study using CDA within a particular “world” is Diamond’s (1996) analysis of the interactions of various therapists and students in a training center for psychotherapy. Her study looks at constraints on social interactions between individuals, and how those constraints shape the discourse. In one instance, Diamond deals specifically with power in these interactions (Diamond, 1996). Though Diamond focuses on different manifestations of power assertion in her study, the key concept I have explored advances the same purpose: analyzing discourse to identify certain strategies that various people use to assert or bid for power within a small “world” or domain.

Data Collection

All the conversation that I have analyzed came directly from *The Wire* itself. I watched the entire series for pleasure more than a year ago, so I was already quite familiar with the characters, plotlines, and themes of the program. By last summer, I had decided to use *The Wire*

as the subject of this thesis. Based on my knowledge of both linguistics and the series, I came up with the general study topic of “language and authority.” With this in mind, I re-watched the entire 60 episode series from start to finish.

Knowing that I would be dealing with the language of authority, I documented every conversation in which a figure directly addresses a character (or several characters) of less authority. I adopted a fairly straightforward way to determine this authority, based on my knowledge of the series. Authority could be based on institutional position (such as a police commander addressing a lower ranking officer or a teacher addressing a student) or on the immediate threat of violence or punishment (such as one drug dealer holding a gun to the head of another or a police officer addressing a citizen). Because one character always has more power than another in these situations, the spoken directives are all orders rather than requests. The constructions I explored—obligation statements and imperative directives—are relevant to the examination of orders (and not requests), so I stayed away from conversations involving characters of equal power, no matter what directive constructions appeared. I set up a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel with several columns indicating the season and episode of the conversation as well as the minute marker in said episode where the conversation occurred. In addition to the episode number and minute marker, I assigned other columns in this spreadsheet to provide a more detailed classification of each conversation. One column indicates the authority character, one designates the character(s) to whom that character is speaking, and one column denotes what I called the “realm” of the conversation, that is, the realm of the show to which the relevant characters belong; among others, these included the police department, the Barksdale drug circle, the school system, and the newspaper. This spreadsheet can be examined in full in Appendix A.

I finished documenting all these pertinent conversations and ended up with more than 400. Some episodes had many conversations and some included very few, averaging a bit under seven conversations per episode. With these examples readily accessible, my first plan was to accumulate a list of previously studied linguistic strategies of authority and try to apply that to the conversations I had compiled. I drew strategies from various sources, including Brenton (1993) and Luginbuhl (2007). With a list of eight strategies, I started from Season 1, Episode 1, and looked for instances of these strategies in the conversations I had highlighted. This proved to be an execrable approach, and after attempting to analyze Season 1 in this way, I realized I needed a new methodology. Searching for eight different strategies in a conversation is difficult to do, and rewinding several times per conversation is quite inefficient. The prescriptivist approach I was using proved to be an inefficient methodology for this study. Trying to apply a scatterplot of strategies to my specific conversations was futile; they did not match up well at all.

In search of a new strategy, I decided to return to the start and watch the pertinent conversations I had documented and simply observe. Instead of trying to ascribe outside strategies to the data I had gathered, I adopted a descriptive approach: watching and listening with an open mind and seeing what strategies were used with frequency in these interactions. This brought me to the research on Critical Discourse Analysis: examining linguistic phenomena in discourse by connecting them to the immediate and general societal or institutional contexts. Based on these observations, I decided to focus only on directive speech acts that characters used to address other characters of less authority, and I discovered two important types to distinguish—one “standard” form that appeared with high frequency and in a variety of scenarios (imperative directives) and one form to focus on in contrast with the standard form that seemed to appear only in certain circumstances (obligation statements). I added a column for these

categories to the conversations spreadsheet and started over from Episode 1, documenting examples of each of these kinds of speech acts in each of the conversations. After finishing this analysis, the number of relevant conversations was trimmed down to approximately 225.

It is appropriate to note here that there are limitations to the methodology. I did not yet know exactly what I was seeking when I separated pertinent conversations in the show from the irrelevant ones. It is possible that I missed a few examples of speech acts that I would later be searching for in conversations that did not seem important when I was initially highlighting conversations. In addition, there were a number of conversations that did have the characteristics I was looking for—one character addressing another character of lesser authority—but contained no directive speech acts. Because my focus is specifically on directives, I decided to omit these examples. They are included, for reference, in Appendix A. I am confident, however, that the sample size I utilized in the end is of a viable magnitude and accuracy, and has allowed me to perform a complete analysis of the trend that I have sought to investigate.

Data

In order to best present my analysis, it is important to give ample background information on the series. Although a complete viewing of the entire series is not at all necessary to understanding the linguistic analysis, a brief overview of the setting and relevant characters will help contextualize some of the examples and greater forces at work that appear in the analysis.

Setting

The Wire takes place entirely in Baltimore, Maryland, with only a few stray scenes set outside of city limits. According to the 2005 census, which was conducted midway through the

airing of the series, the population of Baltimore was 635,815. African-Americans made up a majority of this population (396,495, 65.2%), which is reflected in the show. In that same year, there were 11,248 violent crimes in the city, including 269 murders. This was the sixth-highest murder rate in the United States, and well ahead of other cities with similar populations, including Nashville, Louisville, Washington, D.C., Boston, and Memphis (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Homicide was the cause of death for 4% of all deaths in the city in 2004 (Baltimore City Health Department, 2005).

Baltimore is also known for its rampant drug use during this time, providing a sizable market for the drug trade to exist and thrive. In 2004 there were 204 deaths due to opiate intoxication and 40 from other drug intoxications. Related to this drug use was a high HIV/AIDS incidence rate. Although significantly down from the mid-1990s, the HIV/AIDS incidence rate (per 100,000 people) was 175.9 in 2004 and 185.9 among African-Americans (Baltimore City Health Department, 2005). A related issue is homelessness in the city. In January 2005, there were 2,943 individuals counted as homeless, 82% of them African-American. A majority of these individuals lived in shelters, while a few hundred lived on the streets; 60% of these homeless individuals reported having graduated from high school (Baltimore Homeless Services, 2005).

Poverty is another problem relevant to the city of Baltimore. The 2005 American Community Survey reported that 18.9% of all families and 22.6% of all people lived below the poverty line in the previous 12 months. Among individuals over age 25 who had never attained a high school degree, the rate was 29.6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

According to a 2013 Baltimore City Public Schools report noting progress over previous years, the 2006—2007 (the time during which *The Wire* was set) dropout rate was about 9.33%. The same study shows that in 2004, there were almost as many dropouts (3,241) as high school graduates (3,643) (Baltimore City Public Schools, 2011). Season 4, with its focus on the school system, sheds light on these significant issues in the city's education system.

Characters

Because an essential part of my analysis is the relationship between speaker and addressee, it is important for me to introduce and define the realms and types of characters who appear in the show. Since there are some 60 hours filled with character development, I will simply attempt to paint an introductory picture in order to provide enough background information to permit a transition for understanding the analysis. These are the “realms” I refer to in this study. They are presented in chronological order based on when they become a focus of the show.

Police department.

The police department is at the very center of *The Wire* and its plotlines. Various aspects of this system are explored, from the highly political moving and shaking at the top of the department to the day-to-day work of detectives and officers. Power relations are extremely important throughout the department, and are an entrenched part of the official protocol. The roles are rigidly defined by title, and characters are often even referred to by title rather than by name. A strict hierarchy prevails within the department, and any behavior that conflicts with this hierarchy is widely and severely frowned upon. A common term used in the show is “chain of

command,” which means that an order comes from the top and moves down, oftentimes passed along by those in the middle. A typical example of how this operates would be the deputy commissioner giving an order to a lieutenant, who in turn might pass that order on to his detectives, who would carry it out. Questioning, or worse, contradicting, an order from above is called “breaking the chain of command.” Some characters refuse to break the chain of command no matter what, while others are more than willing to do so.

For my purpose, the most interesting character from the police department is **Cedric Daniels**. He appears to be the only one concerned with both respecting the chain of command and doing good police work, two trajectories that are constantly at odds with each other. He starts the series as a lieutenant and falls out of grace shortly thereafter, only to experience a meteoric ascent and appointment as the commissioner for a brief period of time. Early on, Daniels is the boss of a special detail tasked with taking down a drug crew; he struggles as he tries to balance giving orders from above while working with the detectives below him to solve the case. Throughout Season 1, he is strict about enforcing chain of command within his detail but is persuaded several times to go back up this chain and contradict his superiors. Daniels employs the greatest number of obligation statements out of characters in the police department and the second-most of the whole series.

At the top of the police department hierarchy are **Ervin Burrell** and **Bill Rawls**. For a good portion of the show, Burrell is the commissioner and Rawls the deputy commissioner. Characters in these positions work closely with the mayor’s office, and delegate all the police work to their majors and district commanders. When a new mayor is elected in Season 4, time runs out on Burrell and Rawls, and Daniels is swiftly promoted to the top position. Burrell

epitomizes what comes to be portrayed as the “old regime” of the police department, often playing number games (“joking stats”) to make crime appear down instead of focusing on “real police work.” Chain of command is important to Burrell and Rawls because they are at the top of it—what they order should be set in stone, and they do not take kindly to questioning of their authority. Similar in mindset is **Sgt. Jay Landsman** of the homicide department. He adheres closely to the chain of command and therefore it is he who gives many of the orders to the detectives within the department. A relevant character in Season 2 is **Major Stan Valchek**. Though portrayed as a relatively incompetent policeman, Valchek holds a high position within the department because of his connections to those within City Hall.

At the opposite end of the bureaucracy are the detectives and officers, some of whom want nothing more than to contradict the supposedly sacred chain of command. This perspective is epitomized by **Jimmy McNulty**, a complex character whose career is riddled with ethical and personal missteps. He is fearless when it comes to questioning orders, a tendency that earns him a suspect reputation within the department. McNulty echoes some of the sentiments shared around the office, but he is the one who always speaks out, and even refuses a direct order to go on a raid with the rest of the detail because he believes it will harm the case. There is no one main character in *The Wire*, but McNulty is as close as it gets; the series opens and closes with him.

Detective **Lester Freamon** is almost as defiant as McNulty, though less vocal and abrasive about it. Lester is very wise, and he mentors a couple of young detectives along the way. Of note here is the only relevant female character in the police department, **Shakima Greggs**. “Kima” is in the middle of the hierarchy, often disagreeing with orders from above but

never taking it as far as McNulty or Lester; she is willing to cooperate with her superiors and rarely questions orders. In Season 3, **Major Bunny Colvin** is a central figure; pressured by Rawls and Burrell to reduce the crime rate, Colvin turns to a radical enforcement strategy in his district. Once the superiors find out about his scheme, an internal battle that reaches all the way up to the mayor's office ensues over who has to take the blame for the actions.

Barksdale drug ring.

The prominent drug alliance throughout the first three seasons is the Barksdale crew, named for its leader, drug kingpin **Avon Barksdale**. Avon is in charge of much of West Baltimore's drug territory, and it is his crew that distributes heroin and cocaine to the addicts of the city. For this reason, Avon is at the center of the police investigations of Seasons 1 and 3. Avon's right-hand man is **Russell "Stringer" Bell**, in many ways the most linguistically interesting character of the entire series. Relevant to the present study is that Stringer is the one who passes on Avon's orders to the drug dealers on the street. Avon has to stay far away from the street and the daily drug deals, so Stringer is the intermediary who gives the orders. Stringer delivers more obligation statements than any other character on the entire show. With Avon imprisoned in Season 2, Stringer gets his shot to run the entire Barksdale drug operation, and his reign, and leadership style, are quite different from Avon's. This is reflected in the actions they each take and the directives they give. Stringer also develops a strong desire to be an entrepreneur, enrolling in an economics course at a community college and attempting to become a legitimate city developer. This places Stringer in realms and conversations rare for drug dealers, interacting with lawyers, developers, and contractors whom the typical drug dealer would avoid.

Another important character in the Barksdale realm is Avon's nephew **D'Angelo Barksdale**. Family is of the utmost importance to Avon, so D'Angelo receives special attention from the boss. To Stringer, however, D'Angelo is just another midlevel dealer and warrants no special treatment. D'Angelo is a street dealer in charge of a small crew in "The Pit" during Season 1, giving direct orders to a trio of young lower-level dealers. Mentorship is not an aspect of the drug trade, but D'Angelo does pass on some advice to the young "hoppers." One of these young dealers, **Bodie Broadus**, outlasts the Barksdale organization after Avon and Stringer are out of the picture and continues dealing on his own. Bodie and D'Angelo are the addressees of many of the Barksdale organization's directives.

Port.

Season 2 shifts the focus to a Baltimore port terminal and the stevedores who work its docks. **Frank Sobotka** is the head of the stevedores' union and the day-to-day organizer of the dock workers. Included among those workers are Frank's nephew, **Nick**, and his son, **Ziggy**. Along with the regular cargo they import, they also handle illegal goods for a pair of European traffickers: **The Greek**, who is not of Greek descent, and **Spiros Vondas**, his right-hand man. Frank and Nick work closely with the traffickers and their organization to sneak drugs, prostitutes, and stolen goods through the port.

Miscellaneous drug dealers.

Midway through the show's chronology, a new West Side kingpin comes to the forefront: **Marlo Stanfield**. Marlo joins up with "**Proposition**" **Joe Stewart**, the major player on the East Side, and the rest of his drug co-op. The establishment of a co-op enables all the Baltimore

dealers to import the best product and is designed to minimize territorial conflicts and, in turn, police intervention. The co-op presents an interesting power dynamic, as no rigidly defined hierarchy exists as it does within each drug organization. Marlo sees this as an opportunity to manipulate his way to the top and does not hesitate to do so, often with the help of his two gun-toting lieutenants, **Chris Partlow** and **Felicia “Snoop” Pearson**. With their penchant for forcibly removing anyone who stands in their way, this trio find themselves at the center of police investigations in Seasons 4 and 5.

The most iconic character of the entire series—the most recognizable figure from the series with highly quotable lines, not to mention the favorite character of many *Wire* fans—is **Omar Little**. Omar makes his living robbing drug dealers and is known for the double-barreled shotgun that he is not afraid to use. Omar is widely detested and feared, and the mere mention of his name makes dealers give up their stashes without question in hopes of avoiding conflict. Omar is an interesting and relevant character for this study because he belongs to no organization. While other authoritative characters owe their positions of power to the organizational structure of which they are a part, Omar owes his entirely to his gun and the fear associated with his name. When he gives an order, it is followed out not because of respect for his position in a hierarchy but rather to avoid conflict.

Politics.

The workings of the local political system start coming into focus in Season 3 and continue through the end of the series. The major characters, including mayor **Clarence Royce**, mayor **Tommy Carcetti**, and corrupt state senator **Clay Davis**, do not deliver many directives, so their role in this study is of little consequence.

School.

Season 4 follows the lives of four Baltimore youths—**Michael, Namond, Randy,** and **Duquan**—all of whom attend Edward J. Tilghman Middle School. The classroom provides an interesting setting for authority within the show, as the teacher theoretically has authority over the kids. But the system does not always work the way it is supposed to. The teacher the season focuses on is **Roland Pryzbylewski**, a cop in the major crimes detail in Seasons 1–3, who turns to the school system after being forced to leave the department. Being a new white teacher in an all-black school proves to be a troublesome role and Mr. Pryzbylewski has to work very hard to earn the respect of the children. Most of his early directives go to waste, but as he continues to teach he eventually earns the respect a teacher deserves. Other, more well-established figures in the school, such as assistant principal **Marcia Donnelly** and English teacher **Grace Sampson**, have already gained the kids' respect.

The youths' lives outside of school are depicted as well. Namond's father, an ex-Barksdale gunman prominent in Season 1, is in jail serving life, so Namond lives alone with his mother, **De'Londa Brice**. She grew up close to the Barksdale organization, and her husband was respected and feared on the streets, so she expects the same from her only son. She repeatedly forces him to go out on street corners and work for Bodie Broadus, and questions him if she thinks he is being soft. **Dennis "Cutty" Wise**, another former Barksdale warrior, gets out of jail in Season 3 after serving a lengthy sentence. Trying to get back into "the game," he discovers that he is no longer cut out for dealing drugs and begins a journey to open up a boxing gym. The four schoolboys are not his regular trainees, but they do spend a lot of time hanging out at the

gym. Cutty attempts to work with and train Michael to keep him off the streets but his efforts are ultimately unsuccessful.

Newspaper.

Season 5, the final one, focuses on the *Baltimore Sun* and its reporters and editors. Many characters from this realm are introduced to the viewer, but the only one important to the present study is Metro section editor **Gus Haynes**. When a reporter engages in faking quotations and making up news stories, much to the delight of the Pulitzer-hungry managing and executive editors, Gus appears as the voice of reason, frustrated with the paper's lack of integrity and respect for the profession. Much like Daniels and Landsman in the police department and Stringer Bell in the Barksdale organization, Gus is a midlevel figure in the newspaper hierarchy and therefore he is the one who delivers most of the orders.

Analysis

The construction I am focusing on in this study was referred to by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) as an obligation statement. In this type of statement, the speaker places an obligation on the hearer to perform a certain action without explicitly commanding him or her to do it. Examples of this type of statement would include, "You will deliver the package" or "You're gonna go to the store." On the surface and without context, these are not directives. "You will deliver the package" is, ostensibly, a representative speech act, like, "She will deliver the package" or "They will go to the store." In context, however, this construction addressed to the second person "you" is often used as an indirect directive speech act, ordering that "you" do the action mentioned. These are obligation statements. In some cases, obligation statements can be

accomplished without using the second person “you” as the subject; such cases, like the other ones, depend on immediate context.

Below is a table containing the instances of obligation statements in *The Wire* in which one character is addressing a character (or group of characters) of lesser power. I have included the episode (Season x episode #) and minute marker of the conversation, the speaker and the hearer, and the realm to which the conversation belongs. The last column, “type,” indicates if the speaker and hearer belong to the same realm of the show or not. If the characters are within the same realm, the example is marked “in-group”; if the characters are not, it is marked “out-group.”

Table 1

Instances of Obligation Statement Directives in The Wire

Episode	Time	Speaker	Hearer	Realm	Type
1x1	21 min	Rawls	McNulty	Police	in-group
1x1	33 min	Stringer	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group
1x1	48 min	Daniels	McNulty/Santangelo	Police	in-group
1x1	49 min	Daniels	McNulty/Santangelo	Police	in-group
1x2	23 min	Daniels	Greggs	Police	in-group
1x2	49 min	Daniels	Pryzbylewski	Police	in-group
1x3	46 min	Daniels	McNulty	Police	in-group
1x5	11 min	Stringer	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group
1x5	27 min	Avon	Stinkum	Barksdale	in-group
1x5	27 min	Avon	Stinkum	Barksdale	in-group
1x7	48 min	Stringer	D'Angelo/Bodie	Barksdale	in-group
1x8	13 min	D'Angelo	Poot	Barksdale	in-group
1x8	36 min	Stringer	Employees	Barksdale	in-group

1x9	10 min	Lester	Pryzbylewski	Police	in-group
1x9	11 min	Lester	Sydnor	Police	in-group
1x9	47 min	Daniels	Carver/Herc	Police	in-group
1x11	15 min	Stringer	Wee Bey	Barksdale	in-group
1x11	46 min	Wee Bey	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group
1x12	4 min	Stringer	D'Angelo/Bodie/Poot	Barksdale	in-group
2x1	5 min	Valchek	Pryzbylewski	Police	in-group
2x1	37 min	Avon	Stringer	Barksdale	in-group
2x4	1 min	Frank	Nick	Port	in-group
2x7	37 min	Frank	Bruce	Port	in-group
2x9	8 min	Stringer	Bodie	Barksdale	in-group
2x12	13 min	Valchek	Daniels	Police	in-group
3x1	17 min	Colvin	Officers	Police	in-group
3x10	43 min	Greggs	Bubbles	Police	in-group
3x10	50 min	Burrell	Colvin	Police	in-group
3x11	16 min	Stringer	Slim Charles	Barksdale	in-group

4x3	9 min	Royce	Cabinet	Politics	in-group
4x3	17 min	Rawls	Lieutenants	Police	in-group
4x3	33 min	Donnelly	Students	School	in-group
4x6	14 min	De'Londa	Namond	Family	in-group
4x6	14 min	De'Londa	Namond	Family	in-group
4x6	37 min	De'Londa	Bodie	Miscellaneous	out-group
4x8	34 min	Michael	Michael's Mother	Family	in-group
4x9	34 min	Donnelly	Teachers	School	in-group
4x11	45 min	Omar	Prop Joe	Miscellaneous	out-group
4x12	5 min	Landsman	Lester	Police	in-group
4x13	55 min	Wee Bey	De'Londa	Family	in-group
5x4	31 min	Prop Joe	Cheese/Marlo	Co-op	in-group
5x5	42 min	Gus	Scott	Newspaper	in-group
5x7	16 min	Gus	Reporters	Newspaper	in-group
5x7	16 min	Daniels	Officers	Police	in-group
5x9	20 min	Marlo	Chris/Monk	Stanfield	in-group
5x10	14 min	Pryzbylewski	Damian	School	in-group

To set up a comparison, I have also gathered data from the series on another, more conventional type of directive: the imperative. Imperatives are what we think of as the classic directive, the command form by which the speaker directly orders the hearer to act. Examples include “Write!” or “Deliver this package!”

Below is a table containing some instances of imperatives in *The Wire* in which one character is addressing a character (or group of characters) of lesser power. There are many examples of imperatives throughout the series, so I have chosen just a small random selection from Season 1, Episodes 5–9. This is a large enough representative sample to demonstrate differences between the imperatives and the obligation statements, but not too large as to distract and overwhelm. Imperative directives from all episodes can be found in Appendix A. Many of these conversations include multiple imperatives, so an additional “# of directives” column is present in the table.

Table 2

Instances of Standard Command Form Directives in The Wire

Episode	Time	Speaker	Hearer	Realm	Type	#
1x5	11 min	Stringer	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group	3
1x5	16 min	Carver/Herc	Bodie	Police—Streets	out-group	1
1x5	25 min	Avon	Stringer/Stinkum	Barksdale	in-group	4
1x5	34 min	Landsman	McNulty	Police	in-group	1
1x5	35 min	D'Angelo	Wallace	Barksdale	in-group	1
1x5	50 min	McNulty	Omar	Police—Streets	out-group	2
1x6	5 min	Rawls	McNulty	Police	in-group	1
1x6	13 min	D'Angelo	Wallace	Barksdale	in-group	4
1x6	23 min	Carver/Herc	Bodie	Police—Streets	out-group	1
1x6	26 min	Landsman	Bunk	Police	in-group	4
1x6	28 min	Daniels	Polk	Police	in-group	3
1x6	46 min	McNulty	Omar	Police—Witness	out-group	1
1x7	4 min	Rawls	Santangelo	Police	in-group	1
1x7	14 min	Landsman	Santangelo	Police	in-group	2

1x7	21 min	Daniels	Carver	Police	in-group	1
1x7	37 min	Avon	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group	1
1x7	48 min	Stringer	D'Angelo/Bodie	Barksdale	in-group	2
1x8	6 min	Pryzbylewski	Carver/Herc	Police	in-group	1
1x8	6 min	Greggs	Carver/Herc	Police	in-group	1
1x8	14 min	Wee Bey	D'Angelo	Barksdale	in-group	1
1x8	20 min	Avon	Orlando	Barksdale	in-group	2
1x8	21 min	Burrell	Daniels	Police	in-group	4
1x9	4 min	D'Angelo	Wallace	Barksdale	in-group	1
1x9	10 min	Lester	Pryzbylewski/Sydnor	Police	in-group	10
1x9	13 min	Carver/Herc	Wee Bey	Police—Streets	out-group	7
1x9	47 min	Daniels	Carver/Herc	Police	in-group	1

As evidenced in the tables above, obligation statements (e.g., “You’re gonna go”) show up only in in-group conversations, with only two instances of out-group conversations from all 60 episodes of the series. The other type, standard imperatives, appear in both in-and out-group circumstances. There are more in-group conversations than out-group, which accounts for some of the disparity, but that does not explain why 96 percent of the obligation statements are from in-group conversations.

I propose that this distribution of obligation statements occurs because this construction would only be useful to the speaker in situations in which there is a mutual agreement of power. Using the phrase “you’re gonna go” as a command requires some sort of familiarity between speaker and hearer, as well as some respect for the speaker in the mind of the hearer. These directives are all orders rather than requests, and as such, there is no emphasis on the politeness of the statement. Were a subordinate to request something of a superior, courtesy would likely be at the forefront of the request. All these conversations involve a clearly established superior ordering a subordinate, meaning that there is an obligation placed inherently on the hearer to perform the action ordered. As will be shown, this superiority can come from various factors, including age, status in the organization, the law, and presence and threat of a deadly weapon.

There are a few different types of realizations of obligation statements that appear in the corpus. The most common and straightforward form is “You will—,” or, in conversational English, “You’re gonna—.” Obligation statements, however, can appear in various forms, one of which does not use the second-person subject. A few times, when a speaker is addressing multiple hearers, he or she will use a pronoun or a proper noun as the subject in this construction. Likewise, the construction, although usually in future tense, can appear in present tense as well.

In order to further illustrate this point beyond the tables, I have provided several transcribed examples. Were I studying the phonetics or phonology or prosody of *The Wire*, a much more intricate transcription would be required. I have done a simpler transcription, omitting some of those details, as such a transcription better suits my research purpose. The obligation statements, the focus of my study, are bolded in the transcriptions.

Example 1—in-group

Season 1, Episode 1—32:43. **D'Angelo Barksdale** gets off the bus for his first day of work since being released from prison on a murder charge. He returns to the spot where he used to be a drug dealer and finds **Stringer Bell**, a superior, already there waiting for him.

D'Angelo Barksdale: Yo, Stringa!

Stringer Bell: Oh, you here early.

D'Angelo: Yeah, I'm on my game today.

Stringer: Mmm.

D'Angelo: Eggy put out testers?

Stringer: Mmm ... [*D walks past S.*] D ... [*D stops walking, turns around.*] New deal today.

You gon' out on point picking up business in The Pit.

D'Angelo: What?

Stringer: You the man in the low-rises.

D'Angelo: The low-rises? You got Ronny Mo in The Pit.

Stringer: Ronny Mo got eight fifty-one this morning.

D'Angelo: How you gon' put me in the low-rises when I had a tower since summer?

Stringer: Yeah, you had a tower. And you might have a tower again if you can keep your mind to shit.

D'Angelo: This is fucked up.

Stringer: You show us you can run The Pit and you'll be back uptown soon enough.

D'Angelo: My uncle know about this?

Stringer: [*Smiles and looks away.*] Now what do you think?

D'Angelo shows up to work as if it were any other day, and the idea that he is not going to be working in that same spot is news to him. Stringer's relay of this news comes in the form of an obligation statement. Stringer and D'Angelo are members of the same structure (the Avon Barksdale drug organization) and Stringer is established as a higher figure in that structure than D'Angelo. Though this demotion is unfortunate news to D'Angelo, he knows that he has to do what is ordered of him. Stringer and D'Angelo are both well aware of their relative statuses within the organization, and for that reason, Stringer can use this alternate construction to deliver the news to D'Angelo.

The sentence "You goin' out on point picking up business in The Pit" is, on the surface, a representative speech act. In this context, however, it is clearly used as a directive speech act, intended to inform D'Angelo that circumstances have changed and he is to do something else. Because of their shared understanding, there is no confusion or conflict with the use of this construction. Stringer intends it as an order and D'Angelo understands it as one.

Coupled with the use of obligation statements comes a mutual agreement of a power relationship. Most of the time, this agreement comes from the fact that the characters belong to the same realm or organization. Power structures within such organizations are clearly defined, whether it be the rigid rank and promotion system of the police department, the less official but no less clearly defined status of figures within a criminal organization, or the powerful administrative roles of a school, newspaper, or political office. In contrast, many out-group conversations lack that mutual power agreement. One such example is an arrest, in which, the police officers, by law, have power over whomever they are addressing or questioning. A young drug dealer getting arrested, however, is not likely to agree that the police officer should have more power, or even that the officer does have more power. This attitude is made apparent throughout the series. Other out-group situations include discussions between members of rival drug circles, courtroom proceedings, police interrogations or raids, and “civilian” (meaning anyone not involved with the police department, the city government, or the drug game) interactions.

This does not mean that there are no out-group conversations in which there is a mutual agreement about the relative power. In some situations, the threat of violence is often used as a way to establish power. Even if the hearer does not, in general, respect the speaker, he will respect the speaker with a gun held to his head. In these circumstances, there is a mutual understanding of who, at the exact moment, has the power and, therefore, indirect directives will be understood as intended. One such example is given below.

Example 2—out-group

Season 4, Episode 11—45:30. **Omar Little** and his associate/boyfriend, **Renaldo**, break open the door of **Proposition Joe Stewart**'s pawn shop, where Joe is chatting with his nephew, **Cheese**. Omar is not a member of Joe's drug co-op.

[Renaldo walks in holding a gun up toward Joe and Cheese.]

Proposition Joe Stewart: The fuck happened to our boy on the door?

Renaldo: Siesta, papa.

Omar Little: *[Places clock down on counter in front of Joe.]* You fix this, Joe?

Prop Joe: *[Picks up clock.]* What's the problem?

Omar: *[Pulls out gun, points it at Joe.]* Ran out of time. Now Joe you been so busy being devious, you done messed around and got yourself caught up in the web.

Prop Joe: Omar, I don't know what you been hearing

Omar: Come on now, Joe, ain't no time for no lies now. Now, see, I need you to be straight. Just like you did on that new day co-op sit-down. Oh yeah, I know about that. I know you the one got Marlo up in this mess, too.

Prop Joe: Hey, Omar, take a deep breath. Proposition might fall kindly on your ear.

Omar: Well tickle my fancy, fat man.

Prop Joe: Money? Drugs? Your call.

Omar: Come on now, Joe, you can do better than that.

Prop Joe: Hey, we, we coming at this all wrong. See, you the one with the high card, you should speak your mind.

Omar: You gon' serve up Marlo.

Prop Joe: You wanna take out Marlo Stanfield?

Omar: No, no. But I got a real powerful urge to take out everything he own. And I'm quite confident you the man can make that happen.

Prop Joe: It might take some doing.

Omar: Nah, nah, see, we got to have it simple. See, Omar like it simple. So how we gon' do this, y'all? Huh?

Prop Joe: My sister's boy. [*Motions to Cheese.*] He do the drop. We call you and give up the spot. That simple enough?

Omar: That's what it is. But see now Joe, I need you to resist your natural inclination to do anything twisted up in this here play. You feel me? I even catch a whiff of you doing something foul, Joe ... I mean, I might got to go tell Marlo you the one put me up on that card game. We understood? [*Joe nods.*] Now go 'head and write my ticket so I can tip on out. Go on now.

This is an out-group conversation, as Prop Joe and Omar do not belong to the same organization. Joe is an East Side drug dealer and co-op organizer, and Omar makes his living robbing drug dealers. There is, however, a mutual understanding of power; when Omar is holding a loaded gun right in Prop Joe's face, there is no question about who is in control. Omar's obligation statement, "You gon' serve up Marlo," is one of only two such statements that come from an out-group conversation. Because of the immediate threat of violence, however, Omar knows that his command will be understood as such.

Most out-group conversations, however, do not involve loaded guns being waved in the hearer's face, and most such conversations contain no obligation statements. In these out-group conversations, directness seems to be at the forefront of the speaker's commands. For this reason, obligation statements are almost never employed in these conversations and imperatives are used with great frequency. One of many possible examples is given below.

Example 3—out-group

Season 4, Episode 8—48:45. **Sgt. Thomas "Herc" Hauk** and **Officer Kenneth Dozerman** pull over a car driven by **Chris Partlow** and **Snoop Pearson**, the muscle of **Marlo Stanfield**'s drug organization. Herc knows that Marlo has stolen a police camera that he desperately needs back and is trying to catch other members of the organization doing something wrong, so he has leverage with Marlo.

Thomas “Herc” Hauk: [*Through police car loudspeaker*] Pull over, asshole. [*Car pulls over.*]

Kenneth Dozerman: Step out of the car, please. Step out of the car. Put your hands on the car. Got anything on you? Have a seat on the curb. Have a seat. Cross your feet. Put your hands on your head. [*Herc checks front seats of car, finds nothing. Dozerman checks the trunk and finds a nail gun, which he removes and hands to Herc.*] Fuck is this powder?

Chris Partlow: Lye from my mamma’s garden.

Herc: What are you, building a clubhouse? [*Points nail gun at Snoop.*]

Snoop Pearson: Yo that shoot nails, be cool!

Herc: Oh I know what it does. [*Shoots nail in ground next to Snoop, then brings it back to the car.*] I want my fucking camera.

In this out-group conversation, directness is key. Herc and Dozerman use clear, concise, direct directives when addressing Chris and Snoop. Almost all interactions between police and citizens in which arrest is a threat involve only direct commands, like this one. An obligation statement, such as, “You’re gonna have a seat on the curb,” would seem out of place in a situation like this. This, in part, comes from a lack of mutual agreement of power. Though the police officers do, by law, have authority over the citizens, Snoop and Chris (and every other drug dealer in the show, for that matter) do not respect this authority. They don’t respect it in general and they respect it even less when they are the target of police interest or activity.

The most common form of obligation statement is second-person subject + future marker + action ordered, such as in “You gon’ serve up Marlo,” but these statements can show up in a variety of different forms. The subject of the sentence does not need to be the hearer in order for a speech act to be intended and understood as an obligation statement directive. One such example is given below.

Example 4—in-group

Season 2, Episode 4—0:11. **Frank Sobotka**, head of the stevedores’ union, has called his nephew **Nick Sobotka**, another dock worker, to have a talk with him at the dock early in the morning. Nick and his cousin Ziggy, Frank’s son, have just stolen a cargo-load of expensive digital cameras off the docks for Spiros Vondas and The Greek, the organizers of a large web of criminal activity.

Frank Sobotka: Good anchorage, good cranes, good railroads, close to I-95, lotta people ready to work, right? That’s my fuckin’ town. Except the thing is, we’re another 110 miles for any ship coming up from Hampton Roads. An extra day. So why come, right? Why come unless you know that your cargo is gonna move fast and clean through the port. Why offload in Baltimore except that the Baltimore gang will turn your ship around faster than any other port, and the Baltimore gang will make sure that your cargo ... all your cargo ... gets where it needs to go faster than anywhere else.

Nick Sobotka: Like you guys never stole nothin’ back in the day.

Frank: We ain't back in the day, Nicky. When's the last time you saw trucks backed up for three miles outside Patapsco terminal? If it wasn't for the car ships, we'd be starving ... **The cameras come back.** I'm serious, they come back today, we tell the shipper we lost the can in the stacks.

Nick: They're gone. We turned them over already.

On the surface and without context, "the cameras come back" is clearly a representative speech act, but it is not used as one in this conversation. In saying "the cameras come back," Frank is placing an obligation on Nick to return the stolen cargo without using a direct command construction such as, "Bring the cameras back!" or "Return the cameras!" As Nick's uncle and boss, Frank surely has the relative power to order Nick to act, and this power is agreed upon by both parties. "The cameras come back," though not in the most common obligation statement form, is a command placing obligation on Nick to act, and is understood as such by both speaker and hearer.

There also exists another, less common, type of obligation statement that does not employ the second-person "you" as the subject. In this type of command, there is more than one hearer present, and the speaker uses a proper name and third-person verb forms in the obligation statement.

Example 5—in-group

Season 1, Episode 9—10:18. **Lester Freamon**, a detective in the police detail running a wiretap on Avon Barksdale’s crew, is explaining to two younger detectives, **Roland Pryzbylewski** and **Leander Sydnor**, how best to track down information about the Barksdale crew and their legal fronts.

Lester Freamon: Now we can come at this a few ways. First thing is we need the names of all front companies. Limited partnerships, LLCs, and all that mess.

Leander Sydnor: LLCs?

Lester: Limited Liability Corporations. Start with the nightclub which Barksdale owns. Look up Orlando’s by address; you match it. You see it’s owned by who?

Sydnor: It’s on, uh, Baltimore Street, right? [*Sydnor looks through a phone book.*] Got it! D&B Enterprises.

Lester: Hand that over to **Prez, who’s gonna get off his ass and walk on over to the state office buildings on Preston Street.**

Lester’s command uses “Prez who’s gonna get” instead of “You’re gonna get.” Just like the other form, this is a representative on the surface, yet a directive in context.

Obligation statements do not always have to be in future tense. Though future markers like “will” and “gonna” show up frequently in such statements, they are not necessary aspects.

Example 6—in-group

Season 1, Episode 1—Conversation starts at 21:30. **Major Bill Rawls** calls **Detective Jimmy McNulty** into his office. McNulty has bypassed the proper channels and given information to Judge Daniel Phelan, who is now making life difficult for Rawls and the rest of the department. Rawls is furious at McNulty for going behind his back and bringing this upon the department.

[23:04]

Bill Rawls: Let me understand something. You are having the deputy bust my balls over a prior year case? Is this what I need from you, you insubordinate little fuck?

Jimmy McNulty: Major, look, I’m really sorry. Phelan, he and I we—we go back a little, you know. He wanted to know what I know about the crew in his court, I didn’t mean to cross you—

Rawls: I had to go upstairs knowing nothing and explain to the deputy why he’s getting calls about murders that don’t mean a shit to anybody.

McNulty: Look, sir. This judge, he fucks me up! He asked me a question, I answer it. I didn’t know he was gonna call anybody.

Rawls: [*Sticks both middle fingers up at McNulty.*] You have my attention, detective. My complete, undivided attention.

McNulty: Yes, sir. [*Stands up.*]

Rawls: Where you going?

McNulty: I'm eight to four.

Rawls: No. **You're typing.**

McNulty: Sir?

Rawls: Deputy wants a report on his desk by 0800.

McNulty: A report?

Rawls: Clean, no typos, make it look right, then put my name on it.

In this conversation, “you’re typing,” appearing on the surface to be a representative, is delivered as a command, informing McNulty that he would not be doing what he had previously thought. This comes as news to McNulty, and is a direct order from a superior. Although present tense, this is still an obligation statement.

Another type of organization in which hierarchies are firmly entrenched and mutually agreed upon is the family; obligation statements appear in family discussions as well.

Example 7—in-group

Season 4, Episode 6—14:14. **De'Londa Brice** is talking to her son, **Namond Brice**.

De'Londa is making sure Namond knows her expectations for him—that he should follow in the footsteps of his father (currently in jail) and become a major player in the small drug circle (led by Bodie Broadus) that exists as a remnant of the Barksdale organization.

De'Londa: You gon' have to step up now, Nay.

Namond: Aight.

De'Londa: Be the man of the family. You older than your daddy was when he went out on the corner.

Namond: That's what I been sayin! Damn! He quit school.

De'Londa: You ain't quittin school! Not yet.

Namond: Ma!

De'Londa: But you are going out on your own. You gon' ask Bodie for a package.

Namond: What if he say no?

De'Londa: I ain't take no for an answer.

Namond: Just did.

De'Londa: What you mean?

Namond: With Brianna.

De'Londa: Hand me the damn phone!

Namond: And what she say about you already getting paid enough money?

De'Londa: She a lying bitch, Namond. You see? There's a lot about this world you just don't know.

This example is a classic in-group scenario. De'Londa has power over Namond, and Namond recognizes and respects this power. The use of the obligation statements “You ain't quittin' school” and “You gon' ask Bodie for a package” is understood by Namond and in line with the in-group pattern of use.

Although there must necessarily be some sort of power hierarchy within a family, it does not have to be the typical one. Every family is different, and some have power relations that are generally considered backward or upside down. One such example is given below.

Example 8—in-group

Season 4, Episode 8—33:49. **Michael Lee** is at home in the kitchen looking for food for him and his brother, Bug. **His mother**, a drug addict and incompetent parent, is putting on a coat, preparing to go out.

Michael Lee: Where's the Rice-A-Roni? Ma, where's the Rice-A-Roni?

Mother: There was some boy on the stoop looked like he was starvin'.

Michael: So you cooked it for him?

Mother: Nah. I just gave it to him.

Michael: Just gave it to him ... Boy ate a raw box of Rice-A-Roni ... [*Walks from kitchen into room where mother is.*] How much did you sell the groceries for?

Mother: Don't look at me like that ... I gotta go out. [*Michael turns around, pulls out a wad of cash from his pocket, looks through it, and hands mother a bill.*] Ten?

Michael: You have your Rice-A-Roni profit.

Mother: Michael. Come on! Boy I ain't gon' let you hold the DSS card if you ain't gon' do right by me.

Michael: You gon' let me hold that card.

Mother: You a hard child. [*Walks away and out of house, leaving door open behind her.*]

Michael: Next time don't go selling the food out of our mouths!

Although such a relationship is atypical, it is clear from this conversation that Michael and his mother have a mutual agreement that Michael, the responsible son of a highly inept mother, is the one who controls the family's finances and looks after its youngest member. His utterance is intended and understood as a command.

I believe that the examples given above have been sufficient to show the range of the syntactic form of the obligation statements as well as the various situations they can appear in.

Below, in Table 3, is a list of all of the obligation statements from this analysis.

Table 3

Obligation Statement Lines in The Wire

Episode	Time	Speaker	Obligation statement
1x1	21 min	Rawls	“No, you’re typing”
1x1	33 min	Stringer	“You goin’ out on point”
1x1	48 min	Daniels	“McNulty and Santangelo will work back”
1x1	49 min	Daniels	“Detectives McNulty and Santangelo are going back down”
1x2	23 min	Daniels	“You’re along for this interview”
1x2	49 min	Daniels	“Maybe you elected to approach the youth”
1x3	46 min	Daniels	“Yeah you are”
1x5	11 min	Stringer	“You gonna call them like you gonna pay them”
1x5	27 min	Avon	“You gon’ move our thing down to Edmonson Avenue”
1x5	27 min	Avon	“You gon’ put out the strong product”
1x7	48 min	Stringer	“Y’all need a payphone, you walk a few blocks”
1x8	13 min	D’Angelo	“You the man for an hour”
1x8	36 min	Stringer	“You not gonna bring that corner bullshit up in here”

1x9	10 min	Lester	“—to Prez, who’s gonna get off his ass”
1x9	11 min	Lester	“You’re gonna keep your head in this here assessment book”
1x9	47 min	Daniels	“It comes back and it goes to ECU”
1x11	15 min	Stringer	“Little Man gotta go”
1x11	46 min	Wee Bey	“You gon’ give them different food for each tank”
1x12	4 min	Stringer	“Nobody gon’ use these cell phones”
2x1	5 min	Valchek	“You’re gonna take the sergeant’s exam next month”
2x1	37 min	Avon	“You gon’ holler at him”
2x4	1 min	Frank	“The cameras come back”
2x7	37 min	Frank	“So you’re gonna talk about the canal”
2x9	8 min	Stringer	“Anything that shot a bullet has gotta disappear”
2x12	13 min	Valchek	“Prez rides the Southeastern desk on midnight shift”
3x1	17 min	Colvin	“Until you learn that much, you carry one”
3x10	43 min	Greggs	“The money comes back”
3x10	50 min	Burrell	“You’re taking it now”
3x11	16 min	Stringer	“You gettin’ him”
4x3	9 min	Royce	“Nothing else comes out about that murder”
4x3	17 min	Rawls	“You report there tomorrow”
4x3	33 min	Donnelly	“Students will walk, not run”
4x6	14 min	De’Londa	“You ain’t quittin’ school”
4x6	14 min	De’Londa	“You gon’ ask Bodie for a package”
4x6	37 min	De’Londa	“You gon’ give this boy his own package”

4x8	34 min	Michael	“You gon’ let me hold that card”
4x9	34 min	Donnelly	“All teachers will devote class time”
4x11	45 min	Omar	“You gon’ serve up Marlo”
4x12	5 min	Landsman	“You will not pull down any more fucking wood”
4x13	55 min	Wee Bey	“You gon’ let go of that boy”
5x4	31 min	Prop Joe	“My nephew gonna heed the boundaries”
5x5	42 min	Gus	“You’re gonna go off the front”
5x7	16 min	Gus	“You don’t go home without checking for updates”
5x7	16 min	Daniels	“Lt. D’Addario’s shift will man the wiretap”
5x9	20 min	Marlo	“Y’all gon’ go down to them corners”
5x10	14 min	Pryzbylewski	“You’re gonna buy him a new sandwich”

Discussion

In this study, I have demonstrated a meaningful difference between the way in-group and out-group directives are given in *The Wire*. While many of these orders are the same in both categories of conversation, there is a certain type of directive—the obligation statement construction—that appears only in in-group speech. This construction relies on both speaker and hearer being aware of the situational and societal contexts in order to ensure that there is a successful exchange. For the directive to succeed, the speaker and hearer need to have a preexisting mutual understanding of the power relation between the two. If this power relation does not exist, or if the relation is disputed or—at the least—not accepted, by the hearer, the

obligation statement directive will not be a successfully understood or accepted order. It therefore never appears in such situations.

Both obligation statements and imperatives can appear in a variety of different realms, such as a drug ring (Example 1), the port (Example 4), the police department (Example 6), or a family (Examples 7 and 8). As I have shown, the exact syntactic construction of the obligation statements can vary, but the context in which they appear is almost always in-group—for all the different constructions.

This research falls in line with other studies of the same methodology (Diamond, 1996; Mancini and Rodgers, 2007). As I have mentioned, I have drawn the process and framework, though not necessarily the scope, from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Were *The Wire* not fictional, there would be room for both advocacy and the examination of inequalities in speech. The “power” I examined was that found within various institutions rather than so-called social power (i.e. giving, or not giving, a voice to the voiceless). Treating discourse as a text to analyze and as context-sensitive falls in line with the CDA approach. Speech in the real world is inseparable from its context, and context (both immediate and general) can often shape the discursive choices a speaker makes.

In following the CDA approach, I have shown that the context of relative power and the agreement of such power shape the directives that a figure will use. Situations in which the speaker has more power, as agreed upon by both speaker and hearer, allows the speaker to use the indirect construction “You’re gonna X” as a directive. In situations in which the speaker has more power but this is not mutually agreed upon, such a directive would fall short; in these scenarios, standard directives are employed.

The Wire has engendered both linguistic studies of fictional television shows and academic research on the series; in this study I have combined the two. *The Wire* is a valuable corpus for analyzing AAVE speech because of its accuracy to that dialect (Trotta and Blyahher 2011); in the same way, it is a suitable corpus for studying power relations because such relations are a crucial theme at the core of the series and its extensive plotlines. Other television shows have served as viable corpora for pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse analysis studies (Kline, 2005; Mandala, 2007; Lorenzo-Dus, 2009; Agis, 2012), and in my research I have demonstrated that *The Wire* has as well.

Because of the time required to examine an entire series encompassing five televised seasons, I limited my analysis to directives in conversations in which speaker and hearer were on different power levels; that is to say, I did not explore any conversations in which neither party had power over the other. Examples of this type of situation in *The Wire* would include conversations between detective partners, a husband and wife, friends, campaign advisers, or co-workers in any realm. These conversations could reveal another pattern of directives that occurs when the speaker has no more power than the hearer but still wants him or her to do an action and therefore uses a directive.

This study has broken down the linguistics of power relations through another distinction, that of in-group vs. out-group. Brenton (1993) has looked at strategies speakers use to assert their power in an interaction between two separate groups. Comparing such strategies across the in-group/out-group distinction adds a new dimension to this type of analysis. Other scholars have furthered the discussion about footing and positioning of identity (Kotthoff, 1997; Matoesian,

1999; Garland, 2008), and this study fits into that conversation as well, with relative power being the identifying aspect of the speaker in this case.

Finally, this study can be seen as a part of larger research on speech acts. I have taken the obligation statement—a side note in Blum-Kulka et al.'s program (1989)—and made it the focus of my study. Further analysis of this particular construction, and especially the variation in the use of it, could offer a valuable research direction. Similarly, I have found that distinctions between the use of direct directives and various types of indirect directives can be very telling and informative, especially in studies of discourse analysis that explore contextual shaping of speech.

Conclusion

I have shown that *The Wire* is a viable corpus in which to examine language and authority, based on its large number of conversations in which difference in speaker-hearer power is an important aspect of the discourse. The show also demonstrates different types of power, and corresponding variation in acceptance of power by the parties involved. These features of the series allowed me to explore differences in the directives used when speaker and hearer exist in the same realm and those used when speaker and hearer exist in different realms. By showing that a certain type of directive is used when speaker and hearer belong to the same organization, I have demonstrated the larger point that context—both general and immediate—shapes language and drives variation in use. This study can thus be situated in a number of spheres: in the larger Critical Discourse Analysis framework, in research on language variation, in scholarly work on *The Wire* and other television shows, and in the analysis of speech acts.

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Appendix A

The table beginning on the following page is the entire spreadsheet I developed throughout watching the series. It contains columns for the episode, time, speaker (character 1), hearer (character 2), how many obligation statements appear, how many imperative directives appear, the realm of the characters in the conversation, and whether the interaction is in-group or out-group. Some of my terminology has changed over the course of my data collection and analysis processes, so there may be some inconsistencies either within the appendix table or between the appendix table and the rest of the paper.

Ep	Time	Character 1	Character 2	OS	IMP	Realm	Type
1 x 1	19 m	Foerster	Daniels		1	Police	in-group
1 x 1	21 m	Rawls	McNulty	1	5	Police	in-group
1 x 1	25 m	Wee Bey	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	26 m	Avon	Orlando		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	27 m	Avon	D'Angelo		2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	33 m	Stringer	D'Angelo	1		Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	34 m	Stringer	Wee Bey		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	36 m	Foerster	Daniels		1	Police	in-group
1 x 1	38 m	D'Angelo	Wallace		2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 1	41 m	Burrell	Daniels		3	Police	in-group
1 x 1	48 m	Daniels	McNulty	1		Police	in-group
1 x 1	49 m	Daniels	Detail	1		Police	in-group
1 x 2	8 m	D'Angelo	Wallace			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 2	14 m	McNulty/Bunk	D'Angelo/Bodie			Police - Streets	out-group
1 x 2	23 m	Daniels	McNulty/Greggs	1	1	Police	in-group
1 x 2	25 m	McNulty/Bunk	D'Angelo			Police - Streets	in-group
1 x 2	30 m	Levy	D'Angelo		6	Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 2	32 m	Daniels	Detail			Police	in-group
1 x 2	40 m	Avon	D'Angelo		2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 2	49 m	Daniels	Carver/Herc/Prez	1	2	Police	in-group
1 x 3	0 m	D'Angelo	Bodie			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 3	4 m	Burrell/Valchek	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 3	9 m	McNulty	Mahon			Police	in-group
1 x 3	26 m	Stringer	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 3	43 m	Omar	Stash House		5	Omar - Barksdale	out-group
1 x 3	44 m	Omar	Brandon		1	Omar - Barksdale	in-group
1 x 3	46 m	Daniels	McNulty/Herc	1	4	Police	in-group
1 x 3	46 m	Daniels	McNulty			Police	in-group
1 x 3	48 m	Wee Bey	D'Angelo			Barksdale	in-group

1 x 3	49 m	Police	Barksdale Crew		9	Police - Streets	out-group
1 x 4	13 m	Landsman	McNulty		2	Police	in-group
1 x 4	19 m	Avon	Stringer/Wee Bey		3	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 4	24 m	D'Angelo	Bodie			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 4	33 m	Rawls	Landsman		1	Police	in-group
1 x 4	38 m	Burrell	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 5	1 m	Avon	Wee Bey			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 5	11 m	Stringer	D'Angelo	1	3	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 5	16, 17 m	Carver/Herc	Bodie		1	Police - Streets	out-group
1 x 5	25, 27 m	Avon	Stinkum	1	4	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 5	27 m	Avon	Stinkum	1		Barksdale	in-group
1 x 5	34 m	Landsman	McNulty		1	Police	in-group
1 x 5	35 m	D'Angelo	Wallace		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 5	37 m	McNulty/Bunk	Tywonda			Police - Witness	out-group
1 x 5	50 m	McNulty	Omar		2	Police - Streets	out-group
1 x 6	5 m	Rawls	McNulty		1	Police	in-group
1 x 6	13 m	D'Angelo	Wallace		4	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 6	17 m	Judge	Levy/Bodie			Courtroom	out-group
1 x 6	23 m	Carver/Herc	Bodie		1	Police - Streets	out-group
1 x 6	26 m	Landsman	Bunk		4	Police	in-group
1 x 6	28 m	Daniels	Polk		3	Police	in-group
1 x 6	36 m	Avon/Stringer	D'Angelo			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 6	38 m	Rawls	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 6	42 m	D'Angelo	Wallace			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 6	46, 52 m	McNulty/Greggs	Omar		1	Police - Witness	out-group
1 x 6	53 m	Burrell/Rawls	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 6	56 m	Rawls	Santangelo			Police	in-group
1 x 7	4 m	Rawls	Santangelo		1	Police	in-group
1 x 7	11 m	Judge Phelan	McNulty			Court - Police	out-group
1 x 7	14 m	Landsman	Santangelo		2	Police	in-group

1 x 7	21 m	Daniels	Carver		1	Police - Streets	in-group
1 x 7	37 m	Avon	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 7	48 m	Stringer	D'Angelo/Bodie	1	2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 7	50 m	Landsman/Greggs/McNulty	Bird			interrogation	out-group
1 x 8	6 m	Greggs	Carver/Herc		1	Police	in-group
1 x 8	6 m	Prezbo	Carver/Herc		1	Police	in-group
1 x 8	13 m	D'Angelo	Poot	1		Barksdale	in-group
1 x 8	14 m	Wee Bey	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 8	20 m	Avon	Orlando		2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 8	21 m	Burrell	Daniels		4	Police	in-group
1 x 8	23 m	Daniels	McNulty			Police	in-group
1 x 8	29 m	Judge Phelan	McNulty/Greggs/(Burrell)			Court - Police	out-group
1 x 8	36 m	Stringer	Copy Shop Boys	1		Barksdale	in-group
1 x 8	42 m	McNulty/Lester/Greggs	Omar			Out-grouprogation	out-group
1 x 9	4 m	D'Angelo	Wallace		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 9	10 m	Lester	Prezbo	1	10	Police	in-group
1 x 9	11 m	Lester	Sydnor	1	x	Police	in-group
1 x 9	13 m	Carver/Herc	Wee Bey		7	Interrogation	out-group
1 x 9	29 m	Lester/Greggs	Shardene			Interrogation	out-group
1 x 9	38 m	Avon	Referee		4	Streets	out-group
1 x 9	47 m	Daniels	Carver/Herc	1	1	Police	in-group
1 x 10	11 m	Waylon	Bubbles		1	Miscellaneous	in-group
1 x 10	21 m	Daniels/McNulty	Wallace			Interrogation	out-group
1 x 10	27 m	Levy	Orlando		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 10	31 m	Stringer	Omar			Streets	out-group
1 x 10	42 m	Greggs	Bubbles			Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 10	44 m	Burrell	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 11	1 m	Rawls	Police		3	Police	in-group
1 x 11	8 m	Lester	Carver/Herc/Sydnor			Police	in-group
1 x 11	13 m	Rawls	McNulty		1	Police	in-group

1 x 11	15 m	Stringer	Wee Bey	1	2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 11	25 m	Holley	Bubbles		1	Interrogation	out-group
1 x 11	26 m	Daniels	McNulty		3	Police	in-group
1 x 11	29 m	Avon	Stringer		2	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 11	35 m	Burrell	Daniels		1	Police	in-group
1 x 11	46 m	Wee Bey	D'Angelo	1	7	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	0 m	Daniels	McNulty		3	Police	in-group
1 x 12	7 m	Levy	Avon			Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 12	9 m	Burrell	Daniels		2	Police	in-group
1 x 12	13 m	Avon/Stringer	D'Angelo			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	17, 20 m	D'Angelo	Wallace		3	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	19 m	Daniels	McNulty/Lester		2	Police	in-group
1 x 12	22 m	Burrell/Clay Davis	Daniels			Police	in-group
1 x 12	26 m	Stringer	Bodie			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	38 m	Avon	D'Angelo			Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	4 m	Stringer	D'Angelo/Bodie/Poot	1	4	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	43 m	Daniels/McNulty	D'Angelo			Interrogation	out-group
1 x 12	46 m	Stringer	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
1 x 12	47 m	Burrell	Daniels		1	Police	in-group
1 x 13	8 m	Levy	Avon/Stringer		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 13	14 m	McNulty/Bunk	D'Angelo			Interrogation	out-group
1 x 13	38 m	Feds	Daniels/McNulty/Lester			Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 13	42 m	Daniels	Carver		1	Police	in-group
1 x 13	47 m	Rawls	McNulty		1	Police	in-group
1 x 13	49 m	Levy	Lawyers			Miscellaneous	out-group
1 x 13	52 m	Lawyers	Wee Bey			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 1	5 m	Valchek	Prezbo	1		Police	in-group
2 x 1	13 m	Frank	Nick		1	Port	in-group
2 x 1	14 m	Frank	Ziggy/Guy		2	Port	in-group
2 x 1	25 m	Stringer	Bodie			Barksdale	in-group

2 x 1	37 m	Avon	Stringer	1	1	Barksdale	in-group
2 x 2	4 m	Spiros	Frank			Port	out-group
2 x 2	14 m	Valchek	Frank			Port	out-group
2 x 2	22 m	Burrell	Valchek			Police	in-group
2 x 2	29 m	Avon	Wee Bey		4	Barksdale	in-group
2 x 2	35 m	White Mike	Ziggy		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
2 x 2	36 m	Avon	Stringer		1	Barksdale	out-group
2 x 2	52 m	Sergei/The Greek	Turkish Crew Member		5	Interrogation	in-group
2 x 3	11 m	Landsman	Beadie			Police	in-group
2 x 3	14 m	Stringer	Shamrock			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 3	31 m	Lobbyist	Frank		2	Port	in-group
2 x 3	45 m	Avon	D'Angelo		1	Barksdale	in-group
2 x 4	1 m	Frank	Nick	1		Port	in-group
2 x 4	7 m	Burrell	Daniels		2	Police	in-group
2 x 4	19 m	Avon	D'Angelo			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 4	25 m	Rawls	Bunk/Lester			Police	in-group
2 x 4	28 m	McNulty	Bubbles		2	Miscellaneous	out-group
2 x 5	5 m	Daniels	Carver			Police	in-group
2 x 5	20 m	Professor	Stringer			Miscellaneous	out-group
2 x 5	21 m	Cole	Horse Face		1	Interrogation	out-group
2 x 5	31 m	Spiros	Nick		1	Port	out-group
2 x 5	49 m	Stringer	Whole Crew			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 5	53 m	Daniels	Bunk/Lester			Police	in-group
2 x 6	12 m	Levy	Omar			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 6	21 m	Frank	Union			Port	in-group
2 x 6	25 m	Prezbo/Greggs	Shardene's Friend			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 6	34 m	Prop Joe	Nick			Miscellaneous	out-group
2 x 6	37 m	D'Angelo	Brianna			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 6	44 m	Frank	Ziggy			Port	in-group
2 x 6	47 m	Daniels	Bunk/Lester/Beadie			Police	in-group

2 x 7	4 m	Landsman	Bunk/Beadie			Police	in-group
2 x 7	6 m	Nick	Frog			Port	out-group
2 x 7	12 m	Rawls	Daniels			Police	in-group
2 x 7	37 m	Frank	Bruce	1		Port	in-group
2 x 8	11 m	Daniels	Bunk		1	Police	in-group
2 x 8	38 m	Frank	Horse Face		4	Port	in-group
2 x 8	54 m	The Greek	Frank/Nick			Port	out-group
2 x 9	8 m	Stringer	Bodie	1	1	Barksdale	in-group
2 x 9	10 m	Spiros	Nick		1	Port	out-group
2 x 9	13 m	Prop Joe	Stringer			Streets	out-group
2 x 9	29 m	Cole/Norris	Bodie			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 9	35 m	Stringer	Crew			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 10	6 m	Stringer	Bodie			Barksdale	in-group
2 x 10	20 m	Brother Mouzone	Cheese		2	Streets	out-group
2 x 10	23 m	Prop Joe	Cheese			Streets	in-group
2 x 10	34 m	Landsman	Ziggy		1	Interrogation	out-group
2 x 10	40 m	Frank	Nick			Port	in-group
2 x 10	42 m	Valchek	Daniels/Prezbo		4	Police	in-group
2 x 11	11 m	Daniels	Landsman			Police	in-group
2 x 11	14 m	McNulty/Greggs	White Mike			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 11	16 m	Stringer	Omar			Miscellaneous	out-group
2 x 11	38 m	Lobbyist Bruce	Frank			Port	in-group
2 x 11	43 m	Omar	Brother Mouzone			Streets	out-group
2 x 11	47 m	Spiros	Nick			Port	out-group
2 x 11	49 m	Detail	Frank			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 11	52 m	Frank	Nick		3	Port	in-group
2 x 12	13 m	Valchek	Daniels	1		Police	in-group
2 x 12	16 m	The Greek	Spiros			Miscellaneous	in-group
2 x 12	21 m	Detail	Nick			Interrogation	out-group
2 x 12	40 m	Spiros	Prop Joe			Miscellaneous	out-group

2 x 12	41 m	Avon	Stringer		1	Barksdale	in-group
2 x 12	46 m	Bunk/Lester	Sergei			Interrogation	out-group
3 x 1	12 m	Stringer	Bodie/Poot		3	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 1	16 m	Daniels/Perlman	McNulty			Police	in-group
3 x 1	17 m	Colvin	Officers	1	2	Police	in-group
3 x 1	29 m	Burrell	Daniels			Police	in-group
3 x 1	36 m	Rawls	Major Taylor		1	Police	in-group
3 x 1	46 m	Burrell/Rawls	Police			Police	in-group
3 x 2	16 m	Stringer	Bodie/Crew		2	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 2	34 m	Rawls	Major		4	Police	in-group
3 x 2	36 m	Marlo	Bodie			Streets	out-group
3 x 2	36 m	Daniels	McNulty			Police	in-group
3 x 2	41 m	Carver	Officers		2	Police	in-group
3 x 2	41 m	McNulty/Bunk	Cheese			Interrogation	out-group
3 x 2	54 m	Colvin	Officers			Police	in-group
3 x 3	1 m	Rawls/Burrell	Major Taylor			Police	in-group
3 x 3	24 m	Rawls/Burrell	Colvin			Police	in-group
3 x 3	29 m	Stringer	Crew		1	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 3	33 m	Landsman	Bunk		1	Police	in-group
3 x 4	24 m	Colvin	Officers		1	Police	in-group
3 x 4	25, 28 m	Carver/Herc	Corner Boys			Police-Streets	out-group
3 x 4	38 m	Colvin/Principal	Corner Boys		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
3 x 4	52 m	Daniels	McNulty			Police	in-group
3 x 5	0 m	Bubbles	Johnny		1	Miscellaneous	in-group
3 x 5	11 m	Cutty	Guys		2	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 5	12 m	Rawls/Burrell	Lieutenant		1	Police	in-group
3 x 5	16 m	Landsman	Bunk			Police	in-group
3 x 5	20 m	Omar	Stick Up Crew		2	Miscellaneous	in-group
3 x 5	35 m	Colvin	Dealers			Police-Streets	out-group
3 x 5	45 m	Stringer	Marlo			Miscellaneous	out-group

3 x 6	9 m	Avon	Stringer	1	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 6	16 m	Stringer	Avon	1	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 6	22 m	Stringer	Bodie	2	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 6	23 m	Avon	Slim Charles	2	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 6	24 m	Krawczyk	Stringer	1	Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 6	25 m	Slim Charles/Cutty	Soldiers	5	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 6	41 m	Daniels	Greggs/McNulty	1	Police	in-group	
3 x 6	42 m	Bunk	Omar		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 6	46 m	Clay Davis	Stringer		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 6	52 m	Avon	Slim Charles/Cutty		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 7	7 m	Daniels	McNulty		Police	in-group	
3 x 7	16 m	Stringer	Donette		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 7	44 m	Royce	Carcetti		Politics	in-group	
3 x 8	9 m	Clay Davis	Stringer		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 8	16 m	Carcetti	Rawls/Burrell		Politics	out-group	
3 x 8	26 m	Carver	Police		Police	in-group	
3 x 8	32 m	Rawls	Colvin		Police	in-group	
3 x 8	53 m	Avon	Stringer		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 9	13 m	Slim Charles	Idiots		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 9	21 m	Perlman	Cell Phone Exec		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 9	26 m	Avon	Soldiers	1	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 9	26 m	Avon	Stringer		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 9	40 m	Clay Davis	Stringer		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 9	47 m	Avon	Brianna		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 10	7 m	Colvin	Carver	2	Police	in-group	
3 x 10	25 m	Prop Joe	Stringer		Miscellaneous	out-group	
3 x 10	27 m	Stringer	Avon		Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 10	43 m	Greggs	Bubbles	1	Miscellaneous	in-group	
3 x 10	43 m	Stringer	Shamrock	2	Barksdale	in-group	
3 x 10	44, 48 m	Rawls/Burrell	Colvin	1	2	Police	in-group

3 x 11	6 m	Royce	Cabinet		1	Politics	in-group
3 x 11	9 m	Levy	Stringer			Miscellaneous	out-group
3 x 11	16 m	Stringer	Slim Charles	1	1	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 11	17 m	Avon	Stringer			Barksdale	in-group
3 x 11	25 m	Avon	Slim Charles		1	Barksdale	in-group
3 x 11	35 m	Daniels	Fitzhugh		1	Police	in-group
3 x 12	41 m	Burrell/Rawls	Colvin			Police	in-group
3 x 12	43 m	Burrell	Daniels			Police	in-group
3 x 12	51 m	Carcetti	Burrell			Politics	out-group
4 x 1	9 m	Bodie	Namond/Lex			Barksdale	in-group
4 x 1	26 m	Terri	Carcetti		1	Politics	in-group
4 x 2	10 m	Wee Bey/De'Londa	Namond		1	Parenting	in-group
4 x 2	21 m	Bubbles	Sherrod			Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 2	48 m	Principal	Crystal		1	School	in-group
4 x 2	49 m	Cutty	Michael		2	Coaching	out-group
4 x 3	8 m	Marlo	Bodie			Marlo	out-group
4 x 3	9 m	Royce	Cabinet	1	4	Politics	in-group
4 x 3	12 m	Bodie	Michael			Streets	out-group
4 x 3	17 m	Rawls	Lieutenants	1	2	Police	in-group
4 x 3	23 m	Hotel Manager	Colvin			Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 3	28 m	Maramo	Detail			Police	in-group
4 x 3	32 m	Prezbo	Students		2	School	in-group
4 x 3	33 m	Principal Donnelly	Students	1		School	in-group
4 x 3	34 m	Miss Sampson	Students		1	School	in-group
4 x 3	35 m	Royce	Herc			Politics	in-group
4 x 3	37 m	Prezbo/Sampson	Students		1	School	in-group
4 x 3	39 m	Maramo	Detail		1	Police	in-group
4 x 3	43 m	Prezbo	Students			School	in-group
4 x 3	52 m	Rawls	Lester			Police	in-group
4 x 4	6 m	Cutty	Michael			Coaching	out-group

4 x 4	12 m	Marlo	Andre	2		Marlo	in-group
4 x 4	14 m	Burrell	Foerster			Police	in-group
4 x 4	18 m	Prezbo	Students	6		School	in-group
4 x 4	2 m	Marlo	Security Guard			Marlo	out-group
4 x 4	21 m	Chris	Bodie			Streets	out-group
4 x 4	23 m	Principal	Randy			School	in-group
4 x 4	24 m	Foerster	Landsman			Police	in-group
4 x 4	45 m	Maramo	Herc			Police	in-group
4 x 4	54 m	Omar	Marlo	2		Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 4	55 m	Cutty	Justin/Michael			Coaching	out-group
4 x 5	9 m	Prezbo	Namond	3		School	in-group
4 x 5	22 m	Chris	Michael	2		Streets	out-group
4 x 5	25 m	Royce	Burrell			Politics	out-group
4 x 5	34 m	Landsman	Greggs			Police	in-group
4 x 5	44 m	Wee Bey	Namond			Parenting	in-group
4 x 5	53 m	Prop Joe	Marlo	1		Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 6	9 m	Marlo	Crew			Marlo	in-group
4 x 6	11 m	Brianna	De'Londa			Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 6	14 m	De'Londa	Namond	1	1	Parenting	in-group
4 x 6	14 m	De'Londa	Namond	1	x	Parenting	in-group
4 x 6	19 m	Rawls	Landsman			Police	in-group
4 x 6	25 m	Principal Donnelly	Randy			School	in-group
4 x 6	29 m	Daniels	Prezbo			Police	in-group
4 x 6	37 m	De'Londa	Bodie	1	1	Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 7	7 m	Tony	Carcetti			Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 7	9 m	Prezbo	Students			School	in-group
4 x 7	11 m	Principal Donnelly	Prezbo	1		School	in-group
4 x 7	11 m	Bunk	Omar			Interrogation	out-group
4 x 7	16 m	Prop Joe	Marlo	1		Streets	out-group
4 x 7	20 m	Cutty	Kids	2		Coaching	in-group

4 x 7	27 m	Bond	Perlman			Politics	out-group
4 x 7	29 m	Prezbo/Donnelly	Students	4		School	in-group
4 x 7	34 m	Kima	Anthony			Interrogation	out-group
4 x 7	39 m	Carver	Herc			Police	in-group
4 x 7	43 m	Herc/Sydnor	Randy			Interrogation	out-group
4 x 7	51 m	Colvin	Namond			School	in-group
4 x 7	53 m	Prezbo	Randy			School	in-group
4 x 8	4 m	Landsman	Officers			Police	in-group
4 x 8	6 m	Maramo	Herc	1		Police	in-group
4 x 8	8 m	Duquette/Colvin	Students	2		School	in-group
4 x 8	13 m	Carcetti	Lester/Greggs			Police	out-group
4 x 8	20 m	Prop Joe/Slim Charles	Marlo			Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 8	24 m	Bunk	Andre	1		Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 8	27 m	Officers	Man			Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 8	33 m	De'Londa	Namond			Parenting	in-group
4 x 8	34 m	Michael	Michael's Mother	1	1	Parenting	in-group
4 x 8	36 m	Teachers	Prezbo		2	Teaching	in-group
4 x 8	46 m	Namond	Kenard		2	Streets	in-group
4 x 8	49 m	Herc	Chris/Snoop		3	interrogation	out-group
4 x 8	50 m	Carcetti	Daniels			Politics	in-group
4 x 8	53 m	De'Londa	Namond			Parenting	in-group
4 x 8	55 m	Landsman	Bunk/Holley			Police	in-group
4 x 9	1 m	Herc	Corner Boys			Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 9	6 m	Carcetti	Nerese			Politics	in-group
4 x 9	8 m	Prop Joe	Marlo	1		Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 9	15 m	Bodie	Namond/Donut		2	Streets	in-group
4 x 9	16 m	Marlo	Chris			Marlo	in-group
4 x 9	28 m	Prop Joe	Andre			Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 9	31 m	Carcetti/Norman	Rawls			Politics	in-group
4 x 9	34 m	Principal Donnelly	Teachers	1		School	in-group

4 x 9	39, 41 m	Herc/Sydnor	Lil' Kevin		Interrogation	out-group
4 x 9	4 m	Bunk	Omar		Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 9	47 m	Prezbo	Students		School	in-group
4 x 9	49 m	Prop Joe	Marlo		Miscellaneous	in-group
4 x 9	52 m	Carver	Namond		Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 10	16 m	Carver	Namond	3	Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 10	17 m	Clay Davis	Carcetti		Politics	in-group
4 x 10	19, 26 m	Carver	Namond	2	Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 10	2 m	Walker	Donut		Police-Streets	out-group
4 x 10	5 m	Clay Davis	Burrell	2	Politics	out-group
4 x 10	8 m	Bodie	Lil' Kevin	2	Streets	in-group
4 x 10	9 m	Principal Donnelly	Colvin		School	in-group
4 x 10	28 m	Maramo	Herc		Police	in-group
4 x 10	36 m	Slim Charles	Bodie		Streets	in-group
4 x 11	8 m	Duquette	Students		School	in-group
4 x 11	13 m	Norman	Rawls		Politics	out-group
4 x 11	17 m	Rawls	Daniels		Police	in-group
4 x 11	18 m	Michael	Walker	4	Miscellaneous	out-group
4 x 11	28 m	Prezbo	Randy	1	School	in-group
4 x 11	29 m	Rawls	Officers		Police	in-group
4 x 11	39 m	Carcetti	Officers		Politics	out-group
4 x 11	45 m	Omar	Prop Joe	1 2	Streets	out-group
4 x 12	5 m	Landsman	Lester	1	Police	in-group
4 x 12	11 m	Lester	Detail		Police	in-group
4 x 12	30 m	Rawls	Daniels	1	Police	in-group
4 x 12	31 m	De'Londa	Namond	1	Parenting	in-group
4 x 12	40 m	IID	Herc		Police	in-group
4 x 13	1 m	Landsman/Norris	Bubbles		Interrogation	out-group
4 x 13	7 m	Burrell	Rawls	1	Police	in-group
4 x 13	12 m	Prop Joe	Co-Op	1	Streets	in-group

4 x 13	17 m	Mello	Officers	3	Police	in-group
4 x 13	24 m	Omar	Prop Joe		Streets	out-group
4 x 13	40 m	McNulty	Bodie		Interrogation	out-group
4 x 13	45 m	Marlo	Chris	2	Marlo	in-group
4 x 13	52 m	Mello	Carver	2	Police	in-group
4 x 13	55 m	Wee Bey	De'Londa	1	Miscellaneous	in-group
5 x 1	0 m	Bunk	Man		Interrogation	out-group
5 x 1	6 m	Marlo	Man	2	Marlo	in-group
5 x 1	7 m	Carver	Officers	3	Police	in-group
5 x 1	10 m	Mello	Carver		Police	in-group
5 x 1	13 m	Carcetti/Norman	Burrell/Rawls		Politics	in-group
5 x 1	19 m	Rawls/Burrell	Daniels		Police	in-group
5 x 1	21 m	Michael	Duquan		Miscellaneous	in-group
5 x 1	25 m	Gus	Reporters	1	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 1	27 m	FedRep	Carcetti		Politics	out-group
5 x 1	30 m	Prop Joe	Marlo		Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 1	39, 42 m	Gus	Alma/Jeff	6	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 1	43 m	Carcetti	Daniels		Politics	out-group
5 x 1	52 m	Daniels	Detail		Police	in-group
5 x 2	8 m	Marlo	Chris/Snoop	2	Marlo	in-group
5 x 2	17 m	Gus	Scott	1	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 2	21 m	Whiting	Gus		Newspaper	in-group
5 x 2	28 m	Avon	Marlo	2	Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 2	40 m	Gus	Scott		Newspaper	in-group
5 x 3	15 m	Whiting	Reporters		Newspaper	in-group
5 x 3	24 m	Whiting/Klebanow	Gus		Newspaper	in-group
5 x 3	33 m	Spiros	Marlo		Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 3	39 m	Gus	Scott		Newspaper	in-group
5 x 3	40 m	Perlman	Price		Courtroom	out-group
5 x 3	48 m	Landsman	McNulty	1	Police	in-group

5 x 4	10 m	Spiros	Marlo			Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 4	25 m	Carver	Tony			Police	in-group
5 x 4	27 m	Carcetti	Nerese			Politics	in-group
5 x 4	29 m	Perlman	Clay Davis			Courtroom	out-group
5 x 4	31 m	Various	Various	1	3	Miscellaneous	in-group
5 x 4	37 m	Klebanow	Gus			Newspaper	in-group
5 x 5	21 m	Carcetti	Daniels			Politics	out-group
5 x 5	27 m	Michael	Dukie		1	Miscellaneous	in-group
5 x 5	28 m	Landsman	McNulty			Police	in-group
5 x 5	30 m	McNulty	Greggs		2	Police	in-group
5 x 5	34 m	Daniels	Lester			Police	in-group
5 x 5	35, 42 m	Gus	Scott	1	2	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 5	47 m	Landsman	McNulty		1	Police	in-group
5 x 5	51 m	McNulty	Scott		2	Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 6	9 m	Whiting	Gus			Newspaper	in-group
5 x 6	20 m	Rawls	Daniels			Newspaper	in-group
5 x 6	26 m	Marlo	Co-Op		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 6	30 m	Omar	Fat Face Rick		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 6	36 m	Bunk	Michael's Mother		1	Interrogation	out-group
5 x 6	48 m	Gus	Scott		1	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 7	14 m	Carcetti	Secretary			Politics	in-group
5 x 7	16 m	Daniels	Officers	1	1	Police	in-group
5 x 7	16 m	Gus	Reporters	1	1	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 7	18 m	Michael	Spider		1	Streets	in-group
5 x 7	27 m	Gus	Fletcher		3	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 7	47 m	Omar	Michael		2	Streets	out-group
5 x 8	9 m	Carver	Officers		1	Police	in-group
5 x 8	24 m	Sydnor	Officers		1	Police	in-group
5 x 8	28 m	Gus	Fletcher/Alma		2	Newspaper	in-group
5 x 9	10 m	New Bubs	Dukie		1	Miscellaneous	in-group

5 x 9	10 m	Robert	Printer			Newspaper	in-group
5 x 9	11 m	Sydnor	Officers		1	Police	in-group
5 x 9	20 m	Marlo	Chris/Monk	1	2	Marlo	in-group
5 x 9	26 m	Snoop	Michael			Marlo	in-group
5 x 9	29 m	Landsman	McNulty		1	Police	in-group
5 x 9	4 m	Lester	Officers		3	Police	in-group
5 x 9	7 m	Chris	Guy		1	Miscellaneous	out-group
5 x 10	2 m	Carcetti/Steintorf	Various		2	Politics	out-group
5 x 10	14 m	Prezbo	Damian	1		School	in-group