

TEACHERS' DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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Abstrak

Bahasa guru dalam proses pembelajaran memiliki peran penting sebagai sarana interaksi, pengarahan, serta pembentukan suasana kelas yang kondusif. Salah satu bentuk penggunaan bahasa yang dominan adalah tindak tutur direktif, karena melalui tindak tutur inilah guru dapat memberikan instruksi, pertanyaan, maupun arahan yang berkaitan langsung dengan kegiatan belajar. Variasi gaya bertutur dan strategi kesantunan yang digunakan guru sering kali memengaruhi efektivitas komunikasi serta partisipasi siswa dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan tindak tutur direktif oleh guru dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas dua guru Bahasa Indonesia, yaitu Anggi Nofrizon dan Yasmin Delta Kori, yang dipilih berdasarkan perbedaan gaya mengajar untuk memperoleh variasi data. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode simak bebas libat cakap (SBLB), rekam, dan catat, dengan peneliti sebagai instrumen utama dibantu alat perekam (Redmi 12) dan catatan lapangan. Data berupa tuturan guru diklasifikasikan ke dalam bentuk tindak tutur direktif (meminta, memerintah, bertanya, melarang, memohon, dan memberi nasihat), strategi bertutur (bertutur terus terang, basa-basi kesantunan positif, basa-basi kesantunan negatif, bertutur samar-samar, dan bertutur dalam hati), serta dianalisis berdasarkan prinsip kesantunan berbahasa (maksim kebijaksanaan, maksim kesederhanaan, maksim penghargaan, maksim pemufakatan, dan maksim kesimpatian). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bentuk tindak tutur yang paling dominan adalah bertanya (98 data), strategi bertutur yang paling sering digunakan adalah bertutur terus terang (170 data), dan prinsip kesantunan yang paling dominan adalah maksim penghargaan (145 data). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa guru cenderung menggunakan komunikasi langsung dan pertanyaan terbuka untuk meningkatkan partisipasi siswa. Namun, aspek kesantunan tetap perlu diperhatikan agar tercipta suasana belajar yang mendukung dan humanis.

Kata Kunci: tindak tutur direktif, strategi bertutur, prinsip kesantunan, pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, pendekatan kualitatif.

Abstract

Teachers' language in the learning process plays an important role as a medium of interaction, guidance, and the creation of a conducive classroom atmosphere. One of the dominant forms of language use is directive speech acts, as through these acts teachers can provide instructions, ask questions, and give directions directly related to learning activities. Variations in speaking styles and politeness strategies employed by teachers often influence the effectiveness of communication and students' participation in learning. This study aims to analyze the use of directive speech acts by teachers in Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects consisted of two Indonesian language teachers, Anggi Nofrizon and Yasmin Delta Kori, who were selected based on differences in teaching styles to obtain varied data. Data were collected using the listening without participation method (*simak bebas libat cakap*), recording, and note-taking, with the researcher as the main instrument supported by a recording device (Redmi 12) and field notes. The data, in the form of teachers' utterances, were classified into types of directive speech acts (requesting, commanding, questioning, prohibiting, pleading, and advising), speaking strategies (direct speech, positive politeness, negative politeness, indirect speech, and silent speech), and were analyzed using politeness principles (tact maxim, modesty maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim). The results show that the most dominant type of directive speech act is questioning (98 data), the most frequently used speaking strategy is direct speech (170 data), and the most dominant politeness principle is the approbation maxim (145 data). These findings indicate that teachers tend to use direct communication and open-ended questions to enhance student

participation. However, politeness aspects still need to be considered in order to create a supportive and humanistic learning environment.

Kata Kunci: directive speech acts, speaking strategies, politeness principles, Indonesian language instruction, qualitative approach

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom learning essentially involves interaction between teachers and students. Teachers deliver and explain material orally, while students respond by asking or answering questions (Solheim et al., 2018; Zydziunaite et al., 2022; Prijanto & De Kock, 2021; Syaharani et al., 2024). This interaction is not merely an exchange of information but also an essential part of creating a conducive learning environment. Therefore, classroom communication must follow appropriate principles to ensure smooth and effective instructional discourse.

In formal educational settings, teacher–student interaction strongly emphasizes linguistic politeness (Mahmudi et al., 2021). Politeness in language functions as a communicative norm that helps maintain social, psychological, and relational balance between teachers and students (Helty et al., 2025; Santamaría-García, 2017). These principles include six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. By applying these principles, classroom communication can be both effective and harmonious.

Another factor that contributes to the success of classroom interaction is the choice of speaking strategies appropriate to the speech context. Suitable strategies help foster a polite atmosphere, reduce potential face-threatening acts, and make students feel more comfortable responding. The choice of strategies is influenced by several factors, such as student characteristics, the speaking situation, the type of utterance, and communicative purpose. With appropriate strategies, classroom learning becomes smoother and more interactive.

Directive speech acts are one of the most dominant forms of language use in the classroom. Through directive speech acts, teachers can request, command, prohibit, advise, or ask questions of their students. The importance of these speech acts has become more pronounced with the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes student-centered and meaningful learning (Kusdarini, 2025). While this curriculum provides schools, teachers, and students with greater flexibility in designing and managing instruction, teacher–student verbal interaction remains a key element of the learning process. For example, when a teacher asks a student to erase the blackboard, the utterance serves as a directive speech act in the form of a command, illustrating the teacher’s role in managing classroom dynamics.

From a pragmatic perspective, teachers’ speech in the classroom should not only be viewed as a transfer of information but also as communication with social and contextual functions. Pragmatics is commonly defined as the study of language meaning in context (Leech & Thomas, 2002; Laughlin et al., 2015; Cutting & Fordyce, 2020). A pragmatic approach enables teachers to select appropriate forms of directive speech acts and speaking strategies that ensure instructional goals are achieved while maintaining positive relationships with students. Thus, pragmatic competence provides a foundation for teachers to employ directive speech acts more effectively and politely.

Preliminary observations at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year revealed various instances of directive speech acts in instructional interactions. For example, when a teacher said “*Rizki Aditya, sit down!*”, the

utterance represented a directive command delivered firmly using a bald-on-record strategy. While effective in managing classroom order, from the perspective of politeness theory it may violate the approbation maxim, as it risks embarrassing the student in front of peers. Another instance occurred when a teacher asked “Where are you going now?” to a student requesting permission to leave. This directive question was also delivered using a bald-on-record strategy, which, although direct and clear, may have been perceived as lacking in respect.

Several previous studies have also examined directive speech acts in educational contexts. For example, Iros Niya Wati et al. (2017) investigated directive speech acts of female teachers in Indonesian language teaching at the senior high school level. Similarly, Winda Elmita (2013) analyzed directive speech acts and speaking strategies used by teachers in early childhood education at TK Nusa Indah Banuaran Padang. In another study, Fabianus Rianni Muda (2020) explored directive speech acts in lecturer interactions in higher education. These studies highlight the importance of directive speech acts in instructional discourse, although the contexts and forms of realization vary.

However, no research has specifically examined directive speech acts in Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. This school was chosen for two reasons. First, there has been no previous study of this nature conducted in this particular setting, creating a clear research gap. Second, SMP Al-Madinah has demonstrated strong academic performance, as evidenced by student achievements in district- and provincial-level competitions. These considerations make SMP Al-Madinah a relevant site for research and ensure that this study contributes new insights to pragmatic studies in the context of education, particularly in relation to teachers’ directive speech acts.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to illustrate the use of directive speech acts by teachers during Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. In line with Bogdan and Taylor’s view (as cited in Moleong, 2013), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words derived from observed behaviors. Accordingly, the data in this research consisted of utterances spoken by teachers during classroom instruction.

The research was conducted at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School in Solok Regency, West Sumatra, with the focus on grades 7, 8, and 9. The participants included two Indonesian language teachers, Anggi Nofrizon and Yasmin Delta Kori, who were deliberately chosen to represent differences in teaching styles. This selection allowed the study to capture a wider variety of directive speech act practices that naturally occurred in classroom interactions.

The data comprised teachers’ spoken utterances during the teaching and learning process. To obtain the data, the researcher used an observation method, specifically the *Simak Bebas Libat Cakap* (non-participatory observation), combined with audio recording and note-taking. The classroom sessions were observed, teachers’ speech was recorded using a Redmi 12 smartphone, and important utterances were documented in field notes for later analysis.

As the main instrument in qualitative research, the researcher took an active role in gathering and interpreting data, supported by recording devices and field notes as secondary instruments. These tools ensured that the collected data were accurate and could be revisited during the analysis stage.

The analysis was carried out by transcribing all the recorded utterances and classifying them into various forms of directive speech acts such as requesting, commanding, questioning, prohibiting, pleading, and advising. Each utterance was then examined based on the

speaking strategies employed, including bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and internal speech strategies. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the principles of linguistic politeness, which cover the tact maxim, modesty maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim.

To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by consulting with an expert, Ms. Elan Halid, S.S., M.Pd., a lecturer in Indonesian Language at UMMY Solok, who reviewed and provided feedback on the collected data. This external validation helped strengthen the reliability and accuracy of the analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to identify the use of directive speech act forms, speaking strategies, and language politeness principles applied by teachers in Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. The research instrument used was the researcher himself, who collected the utterances produced by Indonesian language teachers. The data consisted of spoken utterances, which were subsequently transcribed and used as research data. A total of 191 utterances were recorded and analyzed.

The most dominant form of directive speech act used by teachers in Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School was questioning, with a total of 98 utterances. The most frequently employed speaking strategy was the Bald-on-Record Strategy (BTTB), which appeared in 170 utterances.

As for politeness principles, the most dominantly applied was the Approbation Maxim, found in 145 utterances, indicating that teachers frequently used language that emphasized appreciation or recognition. However, violations of politeness maxims were also identified, with the Approbation Maxim being the most frequently violated, accounting for 36 utterances.

Forms of Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

Based on the research findings, various forms of directive speech acts were identified in the Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. The analysis was conducted by transcribing the utterances spoken by teachers into dialogue form and categorizing them accordingly. Directive speech acts in this context refer to speech that is intended to influence students to perform actions as instructed by the teacher.

The distribution of directive speech act forms used by teachers is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Forms of Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

No	Form of Directive Speech Act	Form of Directive Speech Act
1	Requesting	31
2	Commanding	47
3	Questioning	98
4	Prohibiting	7
5	Pleading	5
6	Advising	3
Total		191

Teachers' Speaking Strategies in Indonesian Language Instruction

Based on the research findings, a total of 191 utterances were identified as employing various speaking strategies used by teachers during Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. The detailed distribution is presented in the table below:

Table 2. Teachers' Speaking Strategies in Indonesian Language Instruction

No	Speaking Strategy	Frequency of Utterances
1	Bald-on-Record (BTTB) – Direct without Politeness	170
2	Bald-on-Record with Positive Politeness	9

	(BBKP)		
3	Bald-on-Record with Negative Politeness (BBKN)	12	
4	Off-Record (BSS) Indirect/Implied Utterances	– 0	
5	Internal Speech (BDH) Unspoken or Silent Reflection	– 0	
Total		191	

The data show that only three speaking strategies were applied by teachers during the learning process: (1) Bald-on-Record without Politeness (BTTB), (2) Bald-on-Record with Positive Politeness (BBKP), and (3) Bald-on-Record with Negative Politeness (BBKN).

The Off-Record (BSS) strategy was not used by teachers, as they tended to communicate directly and clearly without using ambiguous or indirect language. This can be attributed to the teacher's familiarity with their students teachers had already established close relationships and understood their students' personalities and behaviors. This familiarity reduced the need to soften or obscure their instructions.

Additionally, Internal Speech (BDH) was not observed in classroom interactions. This type of strategy typically requires deeper personal reflection or may be identified through interviews or introspective observations, rather than direct classroom utterances. Over the course of six observed sessions, neither the BSS nor BDH strategies were employed by teachers during Indonesian language lessons at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School.

Politeness Principles in Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

Based on the research findings, a total of 191 utterances were analyzed for the politeness principles reflected in teachers' directive speech acts during Indonesian language instruction at

SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. Four types of politeness maxims were identified in the data: the Tact Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim. Meanwhile, the Modesty Maxim and Generosity Maxim were not observed in this study.

The detailed distribution of politeness principles is presented in the following table:

Table 2 Politeness Principles in Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

No	Politeness Principle	Used (Frequency)	
		Usage	Violation
1	Tact Maxim	1	3
2	Modesty Maxim	0	0
3	Generosity Maxim	0	0
4	Approbation Maxim	145	36
5	Agreement Maxim	4	0
6	Sympathy Maxim	2	0
Total		191	

DISCUSSION

The discussion in this article aims to address the research questions posed in the study, interpret the findings obtained, and relate those findings to existing theories, including prior research. Furthermore, this article seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the use of directive speech act forms, speaking strategies, and politeness principles in Indonesian language instruction. It also offers recommendations for future research in related fields.

Forms of Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

The findings of this study indicate that the most dominant form of directive speech act used by teachers is questioning, with a total of 98 utterances. This suggests that teachers frequently utilize questions as a means to encourage student participation and engagement during the learning

process. These results are consistent with the findings of Aminah (2019), who stated that in language instruction, the use of open-ended questions can stimulate students to think more critically and participate actively in class discussions.

In addition, the study also found a significant use of commanding and requesting forms, with 47 and 31 utterances respectively. This supports the research by Yuliana (2020), which found that Indonesian language teachers often employ directive forms such as commands and requests to deliver clear instructions to students, thereby maintaining the flow and structure of the lesson. These findings contribute to the understanding of how directive speech acts are used not only to guide but also to motivate students and sustain the classroom learning environment.

Conversely, the use of prohibiting and pleading forms was relatively minimal, with only 7 and 5 utterances recorded, respectively. This reinforces the findings of Husda et al. (2025), which suggest that prohibitive forms in language teaching are less frequently used, as they may hinder a learning atmosphere that supports student creativity and active participation.

Teachers' Speaking Strategies in Indonesian Language Instruction

The findings show that Bald-on-Record without Politeness (BTTB) is the most dominant speaking strategy used by teachers, with 170 utterances recorded. The use of this strategy aligns with the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), which emphasizes that in educational settings, clear and direct communication is often considered effective especially when a close relationship between teacher and student has been established. This study further affirms that employing BTTB can reduce ambiguity and make instructional messages more easily understood by students.

However, Off-Record (BSS) and Internal Speech (BDH) strategies were not found in any of the observed utterances. This suggests that teachers at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School prefer direct and explicit communication, which is consistent with (Rosarian & Dirgantoro, 2020), who stated that teachers tend to use straightforward methods when interacting with students they are already familiar with.

This study also supports the findings of Yuliana (2020), who noted that while Bald-on-Record with Positive Politeness (BBKP) and Bald-on-Record with Negative Politeness (BBKN) are used less frequently, they still play an important role in maintaining good relationships and fostering more humanistic interactions. In this study, teachers employed these strategies to express care and empathy toward students, albeit with significantly lower frequency compared to the BTTB strategy.

Politeness Principles in Teachers' Directive Speech Acts in Indonesian Language Instruction

The most dominant politeness principle found in this study is the Approbation Maxim, recorded in 145 utterances. This aligns with the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), which emphasizes the importance of using respectful and affirming language to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. The dominance of the Approbation Maxim indicates that teachers at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School prioritize creating a learning environment that values and acknowledges students, both in speech and behavior.

However, violations of the Approbation Maxim were observed in 36 utterances, such as in utterance 77: *"No more talking!"* These violations suggest that while teachers generally maintain politeness, there are instances in which they prioritize the urgency of delivering firm instructions, which may affect students' comfort and willingness to participate. This finding is

consistent with Li & Zhang (2024); Wang (2023), who noted that harsh instructional language that overlooks students' emotions may damage the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship.

With regard to the Tact Maxim, it was applied in only one utterance, indicating that teachers tend to prioritize clarity of instruction over softened or indirect phrasing. This supports Bak et al. (2021), who stated that in formal educational settings, the use of tact is relatively limited due to the need for efficient and unambiguous instruction.

These findings offer several implications for teaching practices at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. The dominant use of questioning and the Bald-on-Record (BTTB) strategy indicates that effective teaching at this school relies heavily on clear communication and active student participation. This underscores the importance of employing directive speech acts that promote engagement and critical thinking, without compromising instructional clarity.

However, the frequent violations of the Approbation Maxim and the predominance of BTTB suggest that in certain situations, teachers may need to be more mindful of students' emotional well-being to foster a more supportive classroom environment. Both Atristain-Suárez & Castaños-Cervantes (2024); Patiño-Domínguez (2024) have emphasized that overly assertive and direct communication though efficient must be balanced with empathy and appreciation to prevent a decline in student motivation.

Based on these findings, future research is encouraged to explore the impact of more empathetic forms of directive speech acts such as BBKP (Bald-on-Record with Positive Politeness) and BBKN (Bald-on-Record with Negative Politeness) on teacher-student relationships and student engagement in learning. Further studies could also examine how the Tact Maxim can be more effectively integrated into firm yet respectful instructional speech. Additionally, researchers may consider the influence of student

characteristics (such as grade level, cultural background, and academic ability) on the teacher's choice of directive forms and speaking strategies.

In conclusion, this study not only provides insight into the use of directive speech acts and speaking strategies in Indonesian language instruction, but also opens opportunities for further research that may enrich the literature on educational communication at the secondary school level.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the use of directive speech acts, speaking strategies, and politeness principles in Indonesian language instruction at SMP Al-Madinah Islamic Boarding School. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that questioning was the most dominantly used form of directive speech act, with 98 utterances, serving to encourage student engagement and maintain active communication throughout the learning process. In contrast, advising was the least used form, with only 3 utterances recorded.

The most frequently applied speaking strategy was Bald-on-Record without Politeness (BTTB), found in 169 utterances, indicating a strong teacher preference for clear and direct communication. Meanwhile, Bald-on-Record with Positive Politeness (BBKP) appeared in only 9 utterances, suggesting that while teachers maintained a level of politeness, they favored directness for instructional efficiency.

Regarding politeness principles, the Approbation Maxim was the most dominant, recorded in 181 utterances, which reflects the teachers' effort to maintain positive relationships with students. However, 36 violations of this maxim were also noted, indicating occasional tension between maintaining respect and delivering firm instructions.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights into how teachers employ questioning, BTTB

strategies, and the Approbation Maxim to build an effective, interactive, and student-supportive learning environment. Future studies are encouraged to further examine the factors influencing teachers' selection of directive speech act forms and speaking strategies, as well as their impact on student motivation and classroom engagement. The study contributes to pragmatic research in educational contexts by offering a detailed analysis of how directive speech acts and politeness principles function in real classroom interactions. These findings may serve as a reference for teachers to reflect on their communication styles and for researchers to deepen studies in applied pragmatics. However, this research also has limitations, particularly the narrow scope of data limited to two teachers and one school, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Future studies are therefore recommended to include larger samples and diverse educational contexts in order to provide broader insights.

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