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Exploring EFL Preservice Teachers' Directive Speech Act in Classroom Interaction During Teaching Internship

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Abstract: This qualitative descriptive study investigated the types and functions of directive speech acts produced by EFL preservice teachers during teaching internship. Data were collected through classroom observation and documentation, then analyzed through data selection, reduction, display, and verification. The participants were three EFL preservice teachers at public and private Islamic secondary schools and in Semarang city. It explored them by examining their types, linguistic forms, interactional functions, and politeness strategies within actual classroom interaction. The findings indicate that preservice teachers frequently rely on a range of directive types, including commands, instructions, requests, suggestions, prohibitions, and interrogatives functioning as directives. Among these, instructions and commands were the most dominant, reflecting their need to manage classroom activities and guide students through learning tasks. The results show that there were 144 preservice teachers' utterances of directive speech acts. They consist of 23% requests, 21% questions, 17% requirements, 13% prohibitions, 8% permissions, and 18% advisories. It can be concluded requests are the most dominant of what teachers say. It means that preservice teachers concern on student engagement; establish an interactive learning environment; adapting learning to student needs, cultivate discipline and responsibility. Overall, the frequent use of request-type directive speech acts by teachers shows efforts to create an effective and student-centered learning environment. The study highlights the importance of pragmatic competence in teacher education programs. Preservice teachers need explicit training on how to use directive speech acts strategically to enhance communication effectiveness while maintaining positive preservice teacher-student rapport. Findings suggest the need to integrate pragmatics-based microteaching in teacher preparation programs, focusing on directive strategies, politeness formulas, and context-sensitive language use. Enhanced awareness of directive forms can support preservice teachers in fostering learner-centered interaction, such as using prompts and suggestions instead of only commands.

Key words: classroom interaction, directive speech acts, EFL preservice teachers, teaching internship

Abstrak: Studi ini mengeksplorasi tindak tutur direktif yang dilakukan oleh calon guru Bahasa Inggris selama mengikuti program Praktek Lapangan Persekolahan dengan memeriksa jenis,

bentuk linguistik, fungsi interaksional, dan strategi kesopanan dalam interaksi kelas ketika mengajar. Studi deskriptif kualitatif ini mengumpulkan data melalui observasi kelas dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui seleksi data, reduksi, penyajian, dan verifikasi. Partisipan terdiri dari tiga calon guru Bahasa Inggris yang melaksanakan magang disekolah menengah pertama di Kota Semarang. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa mereka sering mengandalkan berbagai jenis direktif, termasuk perintah, instruksi, permintaan, saran, larangan, dan kalimat tanya yang berfungsi sebagai direktif. Di antara semuanya, instruksi dan perintah adalah yang paling dominan, mencerminkan kebutuhan mereka untuk mengelola aktivitas kelas dan membimbing siswa melalui tugas-tugas pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 144 ujaran tindak tutur direktif dari calon guru. Ujaran tersebut terdiri dari 23% permintaan, 21% pertanyaan, 17% persyaratan, 13% larangan, 8% izin, dan 18% nasihat. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa permintaan adalah yang paling dominan dari apa yang dikatakan guru. Ini berarti bahwa calon guru memperhatikan keterlibatan siswa; membangun lingkungan pembelajaran interaktif; menyesuaikan pembelajaran dengan kebutuhan siswa, menumbuhkan disiplin dan tanggung jawab. Secara keseluruhan, penggunaan tindak tutur direktif tipe permintaan yang sering dilakukan oleh calon guru menunjukkan upaya untuk menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang efektif dan berpusat pada siswa. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya kompetensi pragmatik dalam program pendidikan keguruan. Calon guru membutuhkan pelatihan eksplisit tentang cara menggunakan tindak tutur direktif secara strategis untuk meningkatkan efektivitas komunikasi sambil mempertahankan hubungan positif antara calon guru dan siswa. Temuan selanjutnya menunjukkan perlunya mengintegrasikan pengajaran mikro berbasis pragmatik dalam program persiapan calon guru, dengan fokus pada strategi direktif, rumus kesopanan, dan penggunaan bahasa yang peka terhadap konteks. Peningkatan kesadaran akan bentuk-bentuk direktif dapat mendukung mereka dalam membina interaksi yang berpusat pada siswa, seperti menggunakan petunjuk dan saran alih-alih hanya perintah.

Kata kunci: interaksi kelas, guru praktikan bahasa Inggris, praktek lapangan persekolahan, tindak tutur direktif,

INTRODUCTION

The speech acts theory establishes the framework for teaching and learning and highlights the significance of teachers' speech acts and language use in facilitating and augmenting students' learning. Delivering lectures in English and making sure students understand the instructions given in the language present difficulties when teaching EFL in an Indonesian context when neither the teacher nor the student is a natural English speaker. Being an instructor is one of a teacher's responsibilities. When a teacher gives instructions or explanations to students on how to complete tasks like reading a book, looking at a series of photos, discussing a subject or doing an exercise, completing an assignment, or presenting a lecture in class, they are playing this function.

A key component of teaching and learning is classroom talk. As key players in the classroom, teachers use language to direct activities, regulate student conduct, and promote learning. In educational contexts, directive speech acts are the most common of the several kinds of speech acts. These consist of directives, requests, recommendations, and counsel, all of which are meant to persuade pupils to take action. This study examines how directive speech actions are used by secondary school English teachers during instructional activities and how they impact student participation and replies.

In accordance with Budiasih et al., 2016; Nahak, S., Suwandi, S., Wardani, 2021; Sulamah, (2023), as can be observed, the teacher's general behaviors include giving directions, giving permission, enforcing rules, and ordering. Speech acts are those in which individuals use these utterances to express themselves. A branch of linguistic theory called pragmatic analysis looks at how individuals use language to carry out actions, and speech acts are part of this. The employment of speech acts is strongly related to the function of the teacher because it is by instructing pupils that they carry out their leadership duties in the classroom. Teachers play a variety of responsibilities in the classroom in addition to leadership, such as information givers, authoritative figures, directors, managers, counselors, guides, and occasionally even roles similar to that of friends, confidants, or parents. However, research regarding directive speech acts produced by EFL preservice teachers has not been thoroughly studied. The purpose of this study was to explain EFL preservice teachers' directive speech acts in classroom interaction during their teaching internship.

Although previous studies have examined directive speech acts in EFL classrooms, most have focused on experienced teachers or general classroom discourse, with limited attention to EFL preservice teachers during teaching internships. In addition, prior research has often emphasized directive types or politeness strategies in isolation, rather than examining the interactional functions and pragmatic choices of directives in authentic classroom interaction. Furthermore, studies in the Indonesian EFL context remain scarce, particularly those based on naturally occurring classroom data. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the types, linguistic forms, interactional functions, and politeness strategies of directive speech acts used by EFL preservice teachers during their teaching internship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Directive Speech Acts

Teachers commonly use directive speech acts, which are intended to encourage listeners to take specified activities or refrain from them, in order to carry out this task effectively. Speech acts that require action are known as directive speech acts (Afzaal, Shanshan & El-Dakhs, 2024; Christiano, 2020; Kampf, 2021). It suggests that in order to accomplish the speaker's objectives, the listener will react to each remark the speaker makes. It must be used in class by the teacher. The teacher typically has the power to set the direction of the activities because they are the ones in charge of the classroom. The teachers' authority is demonstrated by their employment of directive speech acts. With an understanding of the directive speech act, the teacher may easily control the behavior of the students in the classroom, respond to incorrect behavior, and encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. A directive speech act is an utterance that conveys a speaker's stance or attitude towards the action they act their speech partner to undertake. In accordance with Alharbi (2018), Christiano (2020), Hidayat, Fadhilah and Setiawan (2022) within directive speech acts, there are six types: requests, questions, requirements, prohibitive, permissive, and advisories.

B. Functions of Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts have several functions. Firstly, they can help teachers to manage classroom activities. Teachers use directive speech acts to organize and structure classroom activities, ensuring that students are engaged in appropriate tasks at the right time. Secondly, they

are used to provide guidance. Teachers offer guidance and support to students through directive speech acts, helping them to understand and complete assignments or tasks. Thirdly, directive speech acts are essential for maintaining order and discipline in the classroom, ensuring that students behave appropriately and respect the learning environment. The last, teachers use directive speech acts to encourage student participation and involvement in classroom activities, fostering a collaborative and interactive learning atmosphere. Those statements are supported by Alharbi (2018), Hidayat, Fadhilah and Setiawan (2022), and Prastio et al. (2021).

C. The Importance of Directive Speech Acts in Classroom Interactions

Directive speech acts are those that aim to influence or control the behavior of others. In a classroom setting, they play a crucial role in maintaining order, facilitating learning, and fostering a positive learning environment. Here is why: firstly, directive speech acts help establish and communicate clear expectations for student behavior. This prevents confusion and misunderstanding. Secondly, when students violate rules, directive speech acts can be used to remind them of the expectations and to enforce consequences. Thirdly, clear and concise directive speech acts are essential for providing students with task instructions, guiding and directing learning for activities and assignments. This statement is supported by Alharbi (2018), Kampf (2021), and Kumala and Rohmah (2021). Teachers often use directive questions as questioning techniques to guide students' thinking and encourage them to specific topics. Respectful and supportive directive speech acts can help build positive relationships between teachers and students. They also foster a positive learning environment. Using inclusive and encouraging language, teachers can create a classroom where all students feel comfortable participating.

Utilizing directive speech acts can promote student engagement and create students' interest. Directive speech acts can be used to introduce topics in a way that captures students' interest and curiosity. They also provide constructive feedback. Directive speech acts, when delivered, can help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and motivate them to improve. In conclusion, directive speech acts are essential tools for effective classroom management and instruction. By using them appropriately, teachers can create a positive and productive learning environment where students can thrive (Alharbi, 2018; Christianto, 2020; Kampf, 2021). Speech acts are essential to classroom communication, particularly directive speech acts, which teachers commonly employ to control classroom conduct, promote learning, and direct student involvement. This study investigates how secondary school English teachers use directive speech acts in their lessons and how their students react to them.

METHOD

A. Type of Research

A qualitative research methodology and a descriptive research design were employed in this study. According to Braub & Clarke (2022), Creswell & Timothy, (2019) and Nassaji (2015) the work is categorized as qualitative descriptive due to the researchers' efforts to observe, analyze and gather various types of instructions and speech acts during classroom interactions. When a teacher employed directed speech acts in a classroom engagement, they recorded every word the teacher said. The investigators observed classes.

B. Research Subjects

Three EFL preservice teachers in their teaching internships around forty-five days at public Islamic secondary schools and a private school in Semarang city participated in this study. They were seven semester students of the English Education Department at an Islamic University in Central Java, Indonesia. By choosing them, the research benefits and obtains insightful information about the application of speech acts in the classroom.

C. Research Instrument

A questionnaire for students was prepared with the following questions:

1. My teacher frequently makes polite requests, such as "Could you..." and "Would you mind..."
2. When my teacher makes polite requests, I feel more comfortable.
3. I fully comprehend the teacher's directions.
4. When the teacher asks questions in a kind manner, I feel inspired to contribute.
5. When the teacher gives me direct instructions, I feel anxious or under pressure.
6. I would rather my teacher make polite requests than give me hard commands.

D. Research Procedure

1. Classroom Observation: In this study, non-participant observation was used. The researchers acted as silent observer, not as members of the group being studied (Braub & Clarke, 2022; Creswell & Timothy, 2019; Nassaji, 2015). To collect information and observe EFL preservice teachers employed in the classroom, the researchers utilized observation guidelines and made field notes. In order to complement data collection about directive speech acts and their performance in the classroom, the researchers also used documentation. Speech data, including speech comprising the directive speech acts, were transcribed from a video recorder that was obtained of the speech.
2. Interviewing: Beside classroom observation, semi-structure interview with open-ended questions was conducted in data collecting techniques.
3. Analyzing: Analyze the types of directive speech acts by transcribing what the preservice teachers said in classroom. The directive speech act data were analyzed based on its characteristics to determine the classification of its characteristics. They were presented in a tabular form.
4. Categorizing: Research categorization was used to make data readable by grouping them into several types of directive speech acts. Within the data analysis process, coding systems were used.
5. Data interpretation: After completing the categorization of data, the final steps in the study were to briefly describe, interpret the data, and calculate the percentage for each result of the use of directive speech. The data were spoken utterances during class activities. They were collected from the video recording of the classroom. In addition, observation sheets or observation checklists are also used to collect data. In this research, the writers used

several steps to analyze the data after data collection was complete. Data analysis techniques come from the interpretation of data collection. The data were found from observations during classroom learning and research documentation. In addition, Creswell data analysis techniques were used in this research, namely data selection, data reduction, and data display (Braub & Clarke, 2022; Creswell & Timothy, 2019; Nassaji, 2015). First, prepare and organize data for analysis. Next, explore and code the data. Observational studies used a coding system to help categorize and describe certain behaviors that are predetermined at the time they occur. This research provided coding and categorization of data in analyzing directive speech acts in learning classrooms.

RESULTS

A. The Types of Teachers' Directives Speech Acts during Classroom Interaction, the Functions and Frequencies

Based on the data of classroom observation, EFL preservice directive speech acts can be identified and presented below:

1. Request

Teacher A: "Now please listen to me!"

Explanation: Students are specifically asked to do one thing in this request, they are requested to listen to the teacher. The teacher used the phrase "please" to ask the class to pay attention. This is meant to grab the attention of the students. The goal of this utterance is to direct students' behavior, specifically to get them to pay attention to the information or material about the recount text the teacher is presenting.

Teacher B: "Open your books to page 27."

Explanation: The teacher is instructing the students to turn to page 27 in their textbooks. This is a direct directive that specifies the exact page number where the students should begin reading or working on a particular assignment.

Teacher C: "Would you like to work in pairs for this activity?"

Explanation: The teacher is suggesting that students work together in pairs for the upcoming activity. This is a polite and indirect request, allowing students to choose whether they want to work individually or with a partner. By asking the question, the teacher is also gauging the students' preferences and potentially encouraging them to collaborate with their classmates.

The analysis of request directive speech acts shows that EFL preservice teachers use various request forms—such as direct requests ("Please read the sentence") and indirect requests ("Could you try answering number two?")—to guide students' actions in a polite and cooperative manner. Request function to maintain classroom control while preserving students' positive face, making them an effective tool for encouraging participation without sounding overly authoritative. Overall, the preservice teachers demonstrated developing pragmatic awareness in choosing appropriate request forms, although some still relied more heavily on direct than indirect request strategies. Request directives served as a polite and

collaborative way to elicit student actions. Preservice teachers used both direct and indirect request forms to encourage participation while maintaining rapport. Their request showed growing pragmatic competence, though some still favored direct forms.

2. Questions as Directive

Teacher A: "Good morning students, how are you?"

Explanation: Often times greetings are considered the first part of an interactional exchange between two or more people. The teacher tried to increase students' engagement by delivering classroom greeting. By greeting students, there will be a more positive classroom atmosphere, and a sense of community among students.

Teacher B: "Could you open the window?"

Explanation: The teacher is making a polite request to the student to open the window. This is an indirect directive, using a question to express the desire for the student to perform a specific action. By using a question, the teacher is being politer and less authoritative than if they had simply commanded the student to open the window.

Teacher C: "Can you answer this question?"

Explanation: When a teacher asks like this, it means that the students attempt to provide an answer to the given question. The phrase "can you answer this question?" is a directive speech act that implies the teacher expects the student to try to solve the problem or provide a thoughtful response. It's a way of encouraging participation and testing the student's understanding of the material.

Questions functioned as indirect directives to elicit actions or responses, commonly used during comprehension checks or task transitions. These questions—e.g., "Can you read this part?"—helped maintain interaction and encourage verbal output. However, some questions were too broad, limiting their effectiveness as directives.

3. Requirement

Teacher A: "You must complete this homework by Friday"

Explanation: The teacher means that the homework is mandatory and has a specific deadline. "You must" is a strong imperative, indicating that there is no option or choice for the student. Next, "complete this homework" clearly specifies the task that needs to be done "by Friday" sets a firm deadline for the completion of the homework. In essence, the teacher is establishing a clear expectation that the homework must be finished and submitted by the end of Friday. There is an implied consequence for not completing the homework by the deadline, which could range from a lower grade to additional assignment.

Teacher B: "It is important to study for the test"

Explanation: When teachers say it's important to study for the test, they mean that students should spend time reviewing the material students have learned in class. Think of it like training for a sport event. The more you practice, the better you will be at the game.

Teacher C: "Students must complete three assignments, two exams, and a final project".

Explanation: A teacher is stating the requirements for a course or assignment. Students will need to complete three assignments: These could be homework, essays, presentations, or other written or practical tasks. Take two exams: These are likely to be formal assessments, such as midterms or finals, that measure students' understanding of the course material. Complete a final project: This could be a research paper, a creative project, or a group presentation that demonstrates students' ability to apply the course concepts.

Requirements appeared when teachers aimed to promote student independence and reflective thinking. By using expressions such as "Maybe you can try this," preservice teachers encouraged students to make their own choices. This subtype supports learner-centered teaching and enhances student engagement.

4. Prohibitive

Teacher A: "Don't talk during the exam"

Explanation:

The teacher means that students are not allowed to speak to each other during the exam. This is a clear and direct prohibition. The purpose is to maintain a quiet environment where students can concentrate on their own work without being disturbed or tempted to share information. Talking during an exam is often considered cheating.

Teacher B: "You may not use your phone during class".

Explanation: The teacher means students should not use their phones for any purpose during class time. This includes texting, calling, playing games, browsing the internet, or using any other apps. It is a rule to ensure that they are focused on the lesson and not distracted by their phones.

Teacher C: "Do not cheat".

Explanation: When teachers say "Do not cheat," they are issuing a direct command or directive. The teacher is explicitly forbidding students from engaging in dishonest behavior, such as copying another student's work, using unauthorized materials, or falsifying information. By preventing cheating, the teacher aims to uphold the principles of fair and honest learning. Cheating undermines the value of education and can create an unfair advantage for some students over others. A classroom free from cheating promotes trust, respect, and a sense of fairness among students and the teacher. It is important for students to understand that cheating is not only dishonest but can also have serious negative consequences for their academic and personal reputation.

Prohibitive directive speech acts were used by preservice teachers to restrict or prevent certain student behaviors in order to maintain classroom discipline and instructional focus. These directives were typically expressed in direct forms, reflecting the need for immediate control, although limited use of mitigation suggests an area for further development in balancing authority and politeness.

5. Permissive

Teacher A: "You may use a dictionary for this exercise"

Explanation:

The teacher is granting permission for students to use a dictionary while completing the exercise. This implies that dictionary use is optional, but allowed if the students choose to use it.

Teacher B: What do you think about this topic?

Explanation: The teacher is inviting students to share their thoughts, opinions, and perspectives on a particular subject. The teacher wants to see if students can analyze and evaluate information. By hearing students' thought, the teacher can gauge how well they understand the topic. This question can spark a conversation and help you learn from their classmates' ideas. The teachers may use students' response to adjust their teaching style or provide additional explanations. Essentially, the teacher is asking students to engage with the material and express students' own ideas.

Teacher C: You can choose to work on this project individually or in a group.

Explanation: Students have the option to decide how they want to complete the project. They can either work alone or collaborate with other students in a team.

Permissive directive speech acts were used by preservice teachers to allow or authorize students' actions in a supportive manner, such as granting permission to speak, move, or complete tasks. These directives helped reduce classroom tension and encouraged learner autonomy, indicating preservice teachers' awareness of creating a more flexible and student-centered learning environment.

6. Advisories

Teacher A: "You should review your notes before the quiz "

Explanation: The teacher is suggesting a course of action that is beneficial for the students. This implies that reviewing notes is likely to improve the students' performance on the quiz, but it is not mandatory.

Teacher B: "It would be helpful to practice the vocabulary words".

Explanation: The teacher recommends that students review and memorize the new words they have learned. This practice will likely improve their understanding and use of the vocabulary in future tasks.

Teacher C: You could ask a classmate for help or discuss the topic with a partner.

Explanation: The teacher suggests that students seek assistance or collaborate with other students to better understand or complete a task. This could involve asking a classmate for clarification, discussing the topic with a partner, or working together on a project.

Advisories are used to scaffold students' responses, especially during questioning or feedback stages. Utterances such as "Try again" or "Look at the next word" helped direct attention without giving the answer outright. They supported students in staying within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Advisory directive speech acts are used by preservice teachers to offer guidance or advice aimed at improving students' performance rather than enforcing immediate action. These directives supported learning development

and reflection, showing an emerging awareness of learner-centered and supportive instructional practices.

Table 1:
The recapitulation of EFL preservice teachers

Type of Directive Speech Acts	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Frequency
Request	12	9	9	33 (23%)
Questions	11	10	9	30 (21%)
Requirements	9	8	7	24 (17%)
Prohibitive	5	6	7	18 (13%)
Permissive	4	5	3	12 (8%)
Advisories	10	8	9	27 (18%)

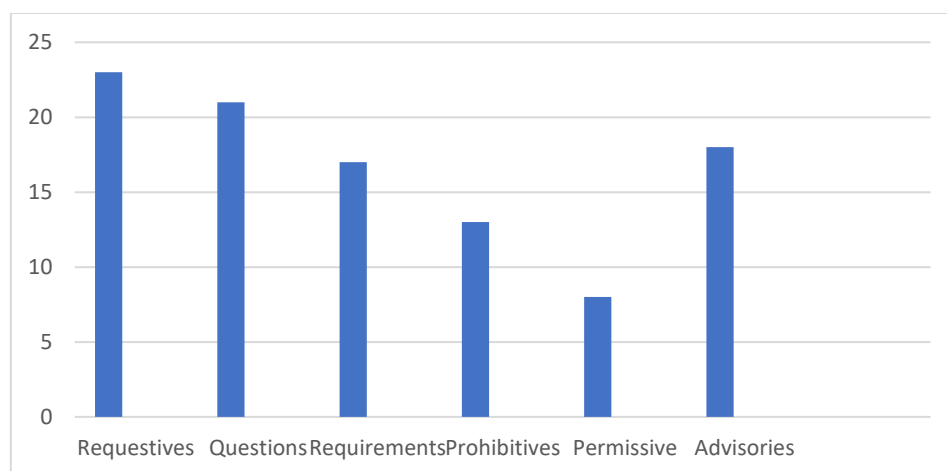


Figure 1:
The chart of EFL preservice teachers' directive speech acts

To strengthen the interpretation of these findings, it is necessary to include a table and a chart of frequency showing how often each subtype of directive speech act occurred. Such a table would offer a concise visual summary of the distribution of commands, request, questions, requirements, prohibitive permissive, and advisories. enabling readers to better understand which forms dominated the classroom discourse and how preservice teachers' pragmatic choices were manifested quantitatively.

B. Students' Responses to the Teachers' Use of Directive Speech Acts

There were six questions statements with five options namely: *Always*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. According to the results of students' responses, teacher's directives were polite or supportive made students' more engagement. Meanwhile there was students' passive response to strict or teachers' impolite commands.

The first statement: *My teacher frequently makes polite requests, such as "Could you..." and "Would you mind..."*. The students answered (88 %) *always* and (12 %) answered *often*.

The second statement: *When my teacher makes polite requests, I feel more comfortable*. The students answered *always* (92%) and (8%) answered *often*.

The third statement: *I fully comprehend the teacher's directions*. For this statement, the students answered *always* (40%), *often* (36%), and *sometimes* (24%).

The fourth statement: *When the teacher asks questions in a kind manner, I feel inspired to contribute*. All of the students answer *always* (100%).

The fifth statement: *When the teacher gives me direct instructions, I feel anxious or under pressure*. The students answered *always* (76%), and (24%) *often*.

The sixth statement: *I would rather my teacher make polite requests than give me hard commands*. The all of students (100%) answered *always*.

DISCUSSION

Request speech acts appear to be the most commonly utilized type of directive, according to preliminary results from teacher interviews and classroom observations. There are various pedagogical and practical explanations for this: First of all, compared to direct demands, request speech acts—like "Can you open your book?" or "Would you please answer this question?"—are less authoritative and more cooperative. They enable educators to regulate classroom conduct while upholding a courteous and respectful demeanor, which is essential for creating a supportive learning atmosphere. Request directives served as a polite and collaborative way to elicit student actions. Preservice teachers used both direct and indirect request forms to encourage participation while maintaining rapport. Their request showed growing pragmatic competence, though some still favored direct forms.

Directive Questions are implemented for participation and comprehension checks. Directive questions ("Can you read this?" "Would you answer number two?") were used not only to elicit information but also to direct students toward specific actions. This aligns with (Alharbi, 2018; Christianto, 2020; Kampf, 2021) argument that classroom questions often perform dual functions: checking understanding and directing behavior. The use of directive questions reflects a more interactive teaching style compared to mono logic teacher talk. However, some questions were overly broad or unclear, limiting their effectiveness as directive tools.

Overall, the variety of directive speech acts used by preservice teachers suggests developing pragmatic competence. Their choices reflect attempts to balance authority, clarity, politeness, and student engagement. Yet the dominance of direct forms shows that their pragmatic repertoire is still limited. This aligns with previous studies indicating that novice teachers often struggle with pragmatics in real-time classroom interaction (Afzaal, M., Shanshan, X., El-Dakhs, 2024; Barzani, 2023; Syah, N.A., Djatmika, D., Sumarlam, 2017). The findings highlight the need for teacher education programs to provide explicit training in classroom discourse strategies, especially regarding: the use of varied directive forms, politeness strategies, scaffolding techniques, reflective analysis of teacher talk

Second, using request promotes psychological comfort and lowers student resistance by reflecting politeness methods (Hussain, S.S., Khan, 2024; Syah, N.A., Djatmika, D., Sumarlam, 2017; Widari, K., Yaniasti, 2023). Kind requests can make students feel more at ease and inclined to reply in EFL contexts where emotive filters may prevent involvement. Third, interactive teaching objectives are supported by request forms. Unlike orders, which frequently just demand conformity, they allow pupils to debate meaning, promote involvement, and stimulate thought. Examples taken during observations in the classroom make this clear. One observed session, for example, had a student raise their hand and read aloud in response to the teacher's request, "Could you read the next line, please?" Similarly, students demonstrated active involvement by organizing themselves constructively when the teacher asked, "Can you work with your group to write a short dialogue?" These examples show how request can be used to encourage student participation and to guide action.

This influence is acknowledged by educators themselves. "When I use polite questions or suggestions, the students are more open and less afraid to make mistakes," one teacher said in the interview. It creates a more casual atmosphere in the classroom. These answers are consistent with theories of student engagement like (Andrea, D., 2023; Barzani, 2023; Elasar, M.A.M., Mustafa, H.R., bt., Pathan, 2023), which highlight how interactions between teachers and students as well as the classroom environment affect behavioral and emotional engagement. Teachers foster a communication atmosphere that boosts engagement, reduces fear, and facilitates meaningful learning by employing request. Teachers' knowledge of classroom dynamics and their efforts to foster a more engaging, inclusive, and communicative environment are thus demonstrated by the high frequency of request speech acts.

If teachers most often use request type directive speech acts in class, this could mean several things. It will focus on student engagement. Teachers may want to encourage students to actively participate in learning. Requests such as "Try explaining in your own words", "Do question number 3", or "Discuss it with your friends", show that the teacher respects students' opinions and thoughts. Requests create a class atmosphere that is dynamic and not monotonous. They also establish an interactive learning environment. Students are invited to think critically, communicate and work together. Requests of directive speech acts can adapt learning to student needs by frequently asking students to do something, teachers can gauge individual student understanding and provide appropriate feedback. This is supported by (Prastio, B., Ibrahim, A.S., Susanto, G., Nurzafira, 2021; Rugaiyah, 2021; Syah, N.A., Djatmika, D., Sumarlam, 2017).

Requests can also be a way to train students to be disciplined and responsible for the tasks given and cultivate discipline and responsibility. Overall, the frequent use of request-type directive speech acts by teachers shows efforts to create an effective and student-centered learning environment. Directive speech acts are essential for classroom management and instruction. In classroom interaction, directive speech acts as crucial tools for teachers to guide and manage students learning. According to Gafur, Latif, and Lestari (2023), Widari and Yaniasti (2023), and Widyastuti and Sartika (2023) these speech acts are used to instruct, request, command, or suggest actions from students, shaping the learning environment and ensuring that students stay on task and engaged.

To use directive speech acts effectively, teachers should consider the following factors, namely clarity and conciseness. Instruction should be clear, concise, and easy to understand, and also avoid using complete language or jargon that may confuse students. Teachers should use appropriate tone. The tone of directive speech acts should be appropriate for the situation. While

firm commands may be necessary in certain circumstances, a polite and encouraging tone is often preferable. Another teacher's consideration is student understanding. This is in line with some research conducted by (Basra, M., Thooyibah, 2017; Nabila, Z., As'ad, 2023; Trihanto, 2022). Teachers should ensure that students understand the directive speech acts based on student needs and responses. They may need to modify instructions or provide additional support to help students succeed. By effectively utilizing directive speech acts, teachers can create a positive and productive learning environment that supports student success.

A key component of teaching and learning is classroom talk. As key players in the classroom, teachers use language to direct activities, regulate student conduct, and promote learning. In educational contexts, directive speech acts are the most common of the several kinds of speech acts. These consist of directives, requests, recommendations, and counsel, all of which are meant to persuade pupils to take action. This study examines how directive speech actions are used by secondary school English teachers during instructional activities and how they impact student participation and replies.

In general, students react better to courteous inquiries (like "Can you...", "Would you please...", or "Could you...") than to direct instructions (such "Do it now," "Sit down," or "Open your book"). These are the reasons:

1. Polite requests encourage comfort in the mind. It means that they made politely help students feel valued and less under pressure. They provide a less intimidating setting, which is particularly crucial for language learners who might be afraid of making mistakes. For instance, "Could you help me answer this question?" asks a teacher. The student is more likely to react favorably since they feel welcomed and uninvited. The statements are supported by (Andrea, D., 2023; Barzani, 2023; Daar, 2023).
2. Polite requests increase students' involvement. Students who receive polite requests feel more like active contributors than passive recipients. Students' enthusiasm to participate in class activities is increased and cooperation is encouraged by this inclusive language. When their thoughts or activities are asked for rather than required, students feel more engaged and appreciated;
3. Polite requests comply with cultural values and politeness norms. Being humble and respectful is highly regarded in many cultures, particularly in collectivist civilizations like Indonesia. Teachers are viewed as role models for respectful communication when they utilize polite forms;
4. Polite requests encourage good teacher-student connections. They are because being courteous helps students and teachers build connection and trust. Students are more likely to act and participate politely in return when they perceive that their teacher communicates with them in a courteous manner; e). Polite requests enhance Willingness to Communicate(WTC) in English. A softer tone and more explicit context are common features of polite and indirect forms, which aid in improving students' comprehension of instructions. Additionally, this makes them more inclined to speak English, particularly in EFL settings.

CONCLUSION

Directive speech acts are a valuable tool for teachers, but they should be used thoughtfully and in conjunction with other communication strategies to create a positive and effective learning environment. Beyond directive speech acts, teachers employ a variety of communication strategies to engage students, foster a positive learning environment, and facilitate effective instruction. By effectively combining these communication strategies, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging classroom where students feel motivated to learn and participate actively. Because they are less scary, more supportive, and more kind, students prefer polite requests, which promote a productive, inclusive, and happy learning environment. In terms of linguistic forms, preservice teachers used a mixture of imperatives, modal constructions, interrogatives, and declarative directives. Although imperatives were common, many preservice teachers softened their directives using modal verbs (e.g., can, could, should) and politeness markers such as please, let's, or hedging expressions. This demonstrates an emerging awareness of pragmatic competence, particularly in balancing authority with politeness in the Indonesian EFL classroom context. The analysis of interactional functions showed that directives served multiple purposes, especially for classroom management, giving instructions, eliciting student responses, and scaffolding. These functions indicate that preservice teachers' directives are integral to structuring classroom discourse, maintaining order, and facilitating students' engagement and understanding.

Politeness strategies were also evident in their speech, with preservice teachers employing various forms of positive politeness, negative politeness, and mitigation to maintain rapport and minimize face-threatening acts. However, there were still instances of bald-on-record directives, suggesting that preservice teachers are still refining their professional communication skills. Overall, the study concludes that while preservice teachers demonstrate an emerging ability to use directive speech acts effectively, their pragmatic choices reflect a developmental stage in which linguistic proficiency, classroom management needs, and cultural norms interact. Strengthening preservice teachers' awareness of pragmatic and interactional competence—especially regarding directive use—can enhance their ability to create supportive, communicative, and pedagogically effective classroom environments. Future teacher education programs may benefit from integrating explicit instruction and reflection on classroom discourse, pragmatic strategies, and interactional practices.

This study was limited by the small number of preservice teachers involved and the short duration of classroom observation. In addition, the analysis focused only on verbal directive speech acts, excluding non-verbal and multimodal directives that may also influence classroom interaction.

The findings of this study imply that EFL preservice teachers need greater awareness of pragmatic competence, particularly in using directive speech acts effectively. Teacher education programs should provide explicit training on classroom discourse and directive strategies to help preservice teachers balance authority, clarity, and politeness. By developing varied directive forms, preservice teachers can create more interactive, supportive, and learner-centered classroom environments.

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