

Politeness in Classroom Directives: A Pragmatic Analysis of Indonesian Language Teachers' Speech Acts in Kikim Selatan Junior High Schools

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

directive speech act;
principles of politeness;
learning

Article history:

Received 2025-01-28

Revised 2025-03-30

Accepted 2025-09-15

ABSTRACT

Effective teacher-student communication is essential in educational settings, particularly through directive speech acts guided by politeness principles. This study investigates how Indonesian language teachers in junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District utilize directive speech acts and politeness strategies during classroom instruction. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving five teachers from four different schools. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and audio recordings. The analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, focusing on categorizing types of directive speech acts and identifying politeness principles. The analysis revealed a predominance of commands (70 instances) and challenges (49), with advising (23), suggesting (15), and requesting (5) used less frequently. The most commonly applied politeness principles were generosity (41 instances) and appreciation (38), which served to reduce the potential for face-threatening acts and foster a more respectful classroom environment. The choice of speech acts was context-dependent: calm classroom settings facilitated clear instructions and challenges, while noisy environments prompted more assertive and persuasive strategies. These findings highlight the nuanced application of speech acts influenced by classroom dynamics and underscore the importance of integrating politeness strategies into instructional communication. Teachers adapted their language based on environmental cues to maintain engagement and authority while preserving student rapport. The study contributes to the broader understanding of educational discourse by demonstrating the role of politeness in directive communication. It suggests practical applications for teacher training programs to enhance communication flexibility and empathy in classroom management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language enables individuals to express ideas, desires, and emotions, as well as convey information and experiences (Devianty, 2021; Mailani et al., 2022). Language plays a vital role as the primary medium in teaching and learning processes. One of the key aspects of language is speech acts, particularly directive speech acts. Directive speech acts reflect a speaker's effort to influence the listener to perform a specific action (Mulyaningrum & Sumarti, 2020; Sasmita et al., 2022; Suputra et al., 2022). In the field of education, teachers often use directive speech acts to deliver commands, requests, or suggestions to students. According to Swastiana et al. (2020) directive speech acts can indicate the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students, which ultimately impacts the teaching and learning process.

Teachers' ability to use language, especially directive speech acts, can influence students' understanding of the material being presented. Previous studies have shown that effective teacher communication patterns can enhance students' motivation and learning outcomes (McCroskey et al., 2006; Pogue & AhYun, 2006; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). In this context, directive speech acts play a crucial role in creating dynamic and structured classroom interactions. Teachers who are able to deliver instructions clearly and use polite language can foster a positive and conducive learning environment. Furthermore, directive speech acts that are conveyed with politeness principles contribute to building harmonious interpersonal relationships between teachers and students (Manik & Hutagaol, 2015; Sulistyani, 2018; Sumarti et al., 2018). This is significant because a comfortable and respectful classroom atmosphere can increase students' active participation and motivate them to be more enthusiastic about learning.

However, despite the recognized importance of directive speech acts, previous studies have tended to focus on analyzing the meaning and function of speech acts in general without specifically exploring the application of politeness principles in the learning process (Asri et al., 2022; Dewi et al., 2020; Hariati et al., 2020; Hidayat, 2016; Maiza & Himawati, 2022). In fact, politeness principles play a crucial role in establishing harmonious social relationships between teachers and students, while also influencing the effectiveness of message delivery (Dewi et al., 2023; Haryanto et al., 2018; Li, 2016). Therefore, an in-depth investigation into how teachers apply politeness principles in directive speech acts is essential to better understand the dynamics of classroom communication.

The use of directive speech acts in the learning process has far-reaching implications for the effectiveness of communication between teachers and students. Teachers are not only information providers but also serve as facilitators who guide, motivate, and mentor students throughout the learning process (Goodyear & Dudley, 2015). Therefore, the communication strategies employed by teachers, especially through directive speech acts, play a key role in creating a conducive and interactive learning environment (Fitriani & Prihadi, 2020).

In the context of Indonesian language learning, the use of directive speech acts is highly relevant because language serves as the primary tool for conveying concepts and meanings. Indonesian language teachers frequently utilize these speech acts in various forms, such as instructions, requests, and invitations, aimed at guiding students in understanding the subject matter and developing their language skills (Febrianti et al., 2022; Rahman & Tressyalina, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these speech acts heavily depends on the application of politeness principles, which can influence students' acceptance of the instructions provided (Prayitno et al., 2021).

Politeness principles, as proposed by Brown and Levinson, emphasize the use of communication strategies that maintain the positive feelings of the interlocutor and minimize potential face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Abdul-majeed, 2009; Athuman & Tibategeza, 2021). In an educational context, this principle serves to foster harmonious social relationships and create a supportive learning environment (Luo et al., 2019). Teachers who effectively apply politeness principles in directive speech acts can enhance student engagement, cultivate respect, and strengthen their motivation to learn (Haryanto et al., 2018).

In recent years, research in the field of classroom communication and pragmatics has shown

significant developments. A study by Handriani et al., (2025) highlights the importance of politeness strategies in intercultural communication, emphasizing that the application of pragmatic principles can enhance the effectiveness of interactions in multicultural educational settings. Additionally, recent research has examined the role of pragmatics in the development of students' language interactions in elementary schools, focusing on infelicities and types of utterances that influence the learning process (Liu & Kinginger, 2021). Another study by Putri et al. (2024) analyzes the use of slang in teenage communication on social media platforms like TikTok through a pragmatic approach, providing insights into language dynamics and its impact on social interactions among students. These findings reinforce that the application of politeness principles and pragmatic understanding in educational communication can create a more effective and harmonious learning environment.

However, although numerous studies have discussed the importance of speech acts and politeness principles in educational communication (Kurdghelashvili, 2015; Pramujiono & Nurjati, 2017; Samsi, 2019; Zulianti & Nurchurifiani, 2021), research that specifically examines the application of politeness principles in directive speech acts within classrooms remains limited. Furthermore, studies focusing on local contexts, such as those in junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District, have yet to be widely explored. This situation creates a significant research gap, particularly in understanding the forms of directive speech acts used by Indonesian language teachers and how politeness principles are applied in this specific setting.

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This study aims to identify the forms of directive speech acts used by Indonesian language teachers during the learning process at junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District; analyze the most dominant politeness principles applied in those directive speech acts; and examine the contextual use of politeness principles in the directive speech acts most frequently employed by Indonesian language teachers in SMP Negeri Kecamatan Kikim Selatan.

The results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the fields of pragmatics and language education. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of speech acts by focusing on politeness principles in classroom communication. Practically, the findings can serve as a guideline for teachers to enhance their communication skills, enabling them to create more effective and polite learning interactions. Additionally, this study can offer insights for teacher training programs in pedagogical communication and language-based teaching methods that promote interactivity and collaboration.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative method (Alatas & Rachmayanti, 2020; Sidiq, 2024). This design was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of directive speech act usage by Indonesian language teachers at junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District. The descriptive qualitative method enables researchers to capture and interpret the meanings behind teachers' utterances during the teaching process, while also considering the social and communicative context of classroom interaction.

The research objectives are threefold:

1. To identify the forms of directive speech acts used by Indonesian language teachers.
2. To analyze the application of politeness principles in these directive speech acts.
3. To examine the contextual use of politeness principles in the most dominant directive speech

acts.

2.2 Participants and Setting

The participants consisted of five Indonesian language teachers teaching at four state junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District:

1. SMP Negeri 1 Kikim Selatan: 2 teachers (Grade VII)
2. SMP Negeri 2 Kikim Selatan: 1 teacher (Grade VII)
3. SMP Negeri 3 Kikim Selatan: 1 teacher (Grade VIII)
4. SMP Negeri 4 Kikim Selatan: 1 teacher (Grade VIII)

These schools were selected to provide varied yet comparable contexts of Indonesian language teaching at the junior high school level.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through four main procedures:

1. Non-participant observation – The researcher observed classroom activities without intervening in the teaching process (Hopkins, 2017), ensuring that natural teacher–student communication could be documented.
2. Audio recording – All classroom sessions were recorded to capture authentic linguistic data that could be reviewed multiple times.
3. Transcription – Recordings were transcribed into textual form to facilitate systematic coding and analysis.
4. Field notes – Observational notes were taken to record contextual elements such as classroom atmosphere, non-verbal expressions, and teacher–student interactions.

2.4 Operationalization of Directive Speech Acts

To systematically analyze teacher utterances, each was categorized into one of five types of directive speech acts, adapted from Searle's speech act theory and contextualized for the Indonesian classroom. The operational definitions are as follows:

1. Commanding (Co): Direct and explicit instructions requiring students to perform an action, usually leaving no option for refusal. Example: *"Open your book to page five."*
2. Requesting (Re): Utterances that politely or indirectly ask students to perform an action, often marked by mitigating expressions such as *please* or appeals to cooperation. Example: *"Could you read the first paragraph for us?"*
3. Advising (Ad): Utterances intended to guide students toward beneficial or correct actions, including moral or educational recommendations. Example: *"You should review this material regularly so it will be easier to understand."*
4. Suggesting (Su): Utterances that offer options or proposals without imposing obligation, allowing students to exercise choice. Example: *"You might want to try working in pairs for this task."*
5. Challenging (Ch): Utterances that stimulate students to think critically, compete, or go beyond their comfort zone, often framed as questions or tasks that require effortful responses. Example: *"Who can explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction?"*

These categories served as the coding framework and were consistently applied during data analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves three interconnected stages:

1. Data reduction: Selecting, coding, and grouping teacher utterances into the five predefined

directive categories, while excluding utterances irrelevant to the study's focus.

2. Data display: Organizing reduced data into tables and matrices to identify patterns of directive usage and politeness strategies.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: Interpreting the findings in relation to speech act theory and politeness principles, followed by verification through triangulation.

2.6 Validity and Reliability

To enhance credibility, multiple strategies were employed:

1. Data triangulation by cross-checking recordings, field notes, and informal discussions with teachers (Lauri, 2011; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012; Nunes et al., 2019).
2. Peer debriefing with fellow researchers to minimize interpretative bias.
3. Iterative coding to ensure consistency in applying the five speech act categories.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Directive Speech Acts of Indonesian Language Teachers in Junior High Schools in Kikim Selatan District

The following table presents the classification and frequency of directive speech acts used by Indonesian language teachers in junior high schools within the Kikim Selatan District. These speech acts were identified through classroom observations and audio recordings, then categorized into five main types: commanding, requesting, advising, suggesting, and challenging. The data reflect how teachers employ different directive strategies to manage classroom interactions, guide student behavior, and facilitate learning processes. The frequency of each type provides insight into the dominant communication patterns observed during instructional activities.

Table 1. Directive Speech Acts

No	Directive Speech Acts	Jumlah
1	Commanding (Co)	70
2	Requesting (Re)	5
3	Advising (Ad)	23
4	Suggesting (Su)	15
5	Challenging (Ch)	49

3.1.1 Commanding

Data shows that directive speech acts of commanding dominate with 70 utterances. This indicates that teachers at SMP Negeri in Kikim Selatan District frequently use instructive and authoritative language to deliver commands or instructions to students. This dominance suggests that the learning process is primarily focused on control and regulation of classroom activities, where teachers assume a central role in providing directions. Several examples of commanding speech acts include the following.

"Penutup ya, kalian ulang lagi, kalian ulang. Daffa Daffa ulang lagi coba kau bacakan isi untuk paragraf pembuka silakan!"

Excerpt 1, G.1-S.1

"Ya oke materi bab berikutnya tentang literasi, nah sekarang ayo coba ulangi lagi baca lagi materi tentang literasi nya, bab empat kegiatan literasi baca lagi dulu nanti setelah dibaca saya akan jelaskan"

Excerpt 2, G.1-S.3

"Baik sebelum kita mulai pelajaran hari ini silahkan pimpin doa terlebih dahulu"

Excerpt 3, G.1-S.4

"Yang nomor tiga salam pembuka kamu tunjukkan salam pembuka pada surat tadi apa contohnya?"

Excerpt 4, G.1-S.1

"Yang ketiga apa? Gio yang ketiga apa Gio? Yang ketiga bacakan"

Excerpt 5, G.1-S.2

The use of this directive speech act confirms that teachers adopt a top-down communication style to ensure that students follow learning procedures clearly and systematically. However, the high frequency of commands may risk creating a learning atmosphere that is overly formal and less supportive of student creativity if not complemented by a more flexible approach. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to balance commands with collaborative and interactive instructions to promote active student engagement and participation in the learning process.

3.1.2 Requesting

Directive speech acts of requesting are a form of utterance aimed at politely asking the interlocutor (in this case, the students) to carry out an action in accordance with the speaker's (teacher's) intent. There are only 5 instances of requesting speech acts recorded, reflecting the rare use of polite and persuasive approaches by teachers to encourage students to perform a task. Although this type of speech act is softer and less authoritative, it is often perceived as less effective in classroom situations that demand clear and immediate actions from students. Some examples of requesting speech acts include the following.

"Dah stop ya stop, kemudian ditunjukkan sebagai hiburan, hanya sebatas hiburan apa Gilang?"

Excerpt 2, G.1-S.2

"Oke baik sebelum memulai pelajaran hari ini tolong dengarkan ibu dulu ibu ingatkan dulu akhir bulan ini jangan lupa ujian praktek, praktek apa kemaren?"

Excerpt 3, G.1-S.3

The low use of requesting speech acts may reflect a communication pattern where teachers place greater emphasis on authority rather than interpersonal politeness. Nevertheless, this type of speech act plays a crucial role in fostering a more egalitarian and supportive relationship in the classroom. Therefore, its frequency of use should be increased to promote a more democratic and friendly learning environment without compromising teaching effectiveness.

3.1.3 Advising

Directive speech acts of advising are forms of utterances intended to provide guidance, direction, or suggestions to the interlocutor (students) to consider actions that are deemed better, correct, or beneficial. A total of 23 instances of advising speech acts indicate that teachers frequently provide educational and moral guidance to students, covering both academic content and moral or ethical aspects. This type of speech act highlights the teacher's role as a mentor, who not only delivers subject matter but also shapes students' character. Some examples of advising speech acts include the following.

"Ngape dide? Harus berani berbicara walaupun salah, salah dak jadi masalah"

Excerpt 1, G.1-S.2

"Makanya kita harus sekolah terus jangan malas karena ilmu yang kita dapat dari sekolah ini ya, ya sampai di sini ada yang belum jelas?"

Excerpt 2, G.1-S.1

"Nanti videokan dan bapak akan ambil nilai, nilai akan pak masukan nilai ulangan harian ya, jangan ada alasan pak tidak punya cerita, karena kalian tidak membaca, kalau kalian baca bapak yakin kalian punya cerita ya okey"

Excerpt 3, G.1-S.4

The significant presence of advising speech acts reflects the teacher's efforts to build both emotional and educational connections with students. Teachers not only guide students academically but also assist them in developing positive attitudes and life skills. This strategy reinforces a humanistic approach to learning and serves as an important foundation for shaping students to be disciplined and responsible individuals.

3.1.4 Suggesting

Directive speech acts of suggesting are forms of utterances intended to provide proposals, ideas, or suggestions to the interlocutor. Data indicate that there are 15 instances of suggesting speech acts, reflecting that teachers also offer guidance or alternative options to students for completing tasks or understanding materials. This demonstrates an effort to encourage independent thinking and student creativity. Some examples of suggesting speech acts include the following.

"Ha? Bareng-bareng sama temannya yang ini"

Excerpt 1, G.1-S.2

"Memahami buku fiksi dan nonfiksi, ada yang lain? Sudah bagus sudah hampir mendekati pengertiannya, sudah bagus pintar. Yang lainnya? Ayo apa itu literasi"

Excerpt 1, G.1-S.3

The use of this speech act highlights the teacher's role in supporting students' independent decision-making processes. The suggestions provided by teachers enable students to evaluate multiple options before taking action. Although its frequency is not dominant, this type of speech act has the potential to enhance students' critical thinking skills and foster greater learning independence.

3.1.5 Challenging

Directive speech acts of challenging are forms of utterances aimed at motivating, provoking, or encouraging the interlocutor to think critically or take action. With 49 instances, challenging speech acts represent the second most frequently used type of communication. This indicates that teachers in these schools frequently employ motivational strategies and healthy competition to encourage active student participation. Some examples of challenging speech acts include the following.

"Untuk pencapaian kompetensi kita yang pertama, jelaskan pengertian drama, kemudian siswa mampu menyebutkan jenis-jenis drama, yang ketiga mengidentifikasi unsur untuk drama ada yang pernah melihat drama?"

Excerpt 1, G.1-S.2

"Surat pribadi, ada yang bisa menjelaskan apa yang dimaksud dengan surat? Surat kan ada dua ya yang pertama ada surat pribadi yang kedua surat?"

Excerpt 2, G.1-S.1

"Buku itu ada dua, yang pertama buku fiksi dan yang kedua buku non fiksi coba siapa bisa membedakan apa yang dimaksud buku fiksi dan buku nonfiksi, coba hayo? Ya Charles, silakan erik!, Jansen silakan!"

Excerpt 3, G.1-S.4

The use of challenging speech acts reflects an active and dynamic teaching approach. Teachers aim to foster a competitive spirit and encourage students to try, think critically, and express their opinions confidently. However, it is important for teachers to ensure that the challenges posed do not overwhelm students who may lack confidence. Instead, these challenges should be designed as tools to build intrinsic motivation and enhance student creativity.

3.2 Politeness Principles in Directive Speech Acts of Indonesian Language Teachers in Junior High Schools in Kikim Selatan District

The table below illustrates the application of politeness principles in the directive speech acts used by Indonesian language teachers in junior high schools in the Kikim Selatan District. The analysis categorizes the data based on Leech's politeness maxims—generosity, tact, appreciation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy—across five types of directive speech acts: commanding, requesting, advising, suggesting, and challenging. This distribution highlights how teachers incorporate various politeness strategies to mitigate the potentially face-threatening nature of directives, ensuring that instructional communication remains respectful and supportive. The frequency of each maxim within specific directive types offers a deeper understanding of the teachers' pragmatic choices in classroom interactions.

Table 2. Politeness Principles in Directive Speech Acts

No	Types of Maxims	Total				
		Co	Re	Ad	Su	Ch
1	Generosity	14	0	4	6	17
2	Tact	14	0	4	2	4
3	Appreciation	19	1	2	1	15
4	Modesty	2	0	2	3	2
5	Agreement	9	2	6	0	9
6	Sympathy	13	2	1	1	1

3.2.1 Generosity Maxim

Speech acts referring to the Generosity Maxim include 41 instances. This data indicates that teachers tend to apply the Generosity Principle by providing freedom and opportunities for students to respond to instructions or challenges given. Teachers focus on creating space for students to express their opinions without coercion.

“Rangkaian memang menjalin sebuah cerita atau alur cerita, alur itu ada berapa? Ada yang masih ingat? Apa saja kalau bisa”

Excerpt, G.1-S.2/T.Mn

The application of this maxim indicates that teachers strive to value students' contributions by providing them with opportunities to respond actively. In the context of challenging, the use of generosity encourages students to explore new ideas with greater confidence. However, its significant presence in the challenging category also suggests that this approach is often used to stimulate motivation and boost students' courage to think critically and offer solutions.

3.2.2 Tact Maksim

Speech acts that adhere to the Tact Maxim amount to 24 instances. The essence of this maxim is that teachers aim to minimize coercion by using more diplomatic language. Teachers encourage students to take action by highlighting the benefits they can gain from the learning process.

“Surat dinas ya, Sekarang kalian jelaskan yang dimaksud surat dinas itu apa?”

Excerpt, G.1-S.1/T.Me

The use of tact in commanding and advising speech acts demonstrates that teachers attempt to combine clear instructions with a more persuasive approach. This supports the creation of a non-authoritative and flexible learning environment, where students feel valued and motivated. On the other hand, the low application of this maxim indicates that teachers still need to improve communication strategies that promote collaboration rather than relying on one-way instructions.

3.2.3 Appreciation Maksim

The appreciation principle is reflected in 38 instances, indicating that teachers provide recognition and appreciation for students' contributions during the learning process. In the commanding and challenging categories, the Appreciation Maxim helps boost students' confidence by offering positive reinforcement for their efforts.

"Damai ya, benar. Tepuk tangan dulu untuk Karan, kalau di pedesaan itu suasananya damai sesuai dengan apa yang dikatakan Karan tadi kemudian kalau kita dikejar-kejar hantu misalnya, suasananya apa?"

Excerpt, G.1-S.2/T.Mu

The high frequency in the commanding and challenging categories demonstrates that teachers value students' active participation in responding to instructions and challenges given. The application of this principle can strengthen interpersonal relationships and enhance learning motivation. However, the low occurrence in the requesting and suggesting categories indicates the need to increase appreciation in open discussions or informal consultations to foster more egalitarian interpersonal relationships.

3.2.4 Modesty Maksim

The modesty principle is reflected in 9 instances, indicating that teachers use simple and straightforward language to ensure that instructions are clear and easy to understand without causing ambiguity.

"Dah stop ya stop, kemudian ditunjukkan sebagai hiburan, hanya sebatas hiburan apa Gilang? Sebatas hi?"

Excerpt, G.1-S.2/T.Mo

The relatively low use of this maxim reflects that teachers tend to employ explicit and direct language in their communication. While this approach is suitable for instructional situations, it could be enhanced in discussion contexts that require more flexible language to foster collaboration. In the suggesting category, simplicity aids students in easily understanding directions, especially in activities that involve practical steps.

3.2.5 Agreement Maksim

This maxim is applied in 26 instances. The agreement principle reflects the teacher's efforts to build consensus or collaboration with students, whether in completing tasks or conveying ideas.

"Kita lanjut ke dalam jenis-jenis drama ada berapa jenis-jenis drama?"

Excerpt, G.1-S.2/T.Mi

The use of the Agreement Principle in commanding and challenging speech acts demonstrates that teachers seek to integrate teamwork into the learning process, encouraging students to feel more involved and responsible. This approach helps create an inclusive atmosphere that enhances students' sense of ownership over the learning process. The high frequency of advising also reflects the teacher's effort to foster open dialogue, promoting student input and active participation in discussions.

3.2.6 Sympathy Maksim

The sympathy principle is reflected in 18 instances, highlighting how teachers demonstrate empathy and concern for students' emotional needs through the use of softer and more friendly language.

"Dah stop ya stop, kemudian ditunjukkan sebagai hiburan, hanya sebatas hiburan apa Gilang?"

Excerpt, G.1-S.2/T.Mo

The high frequency in the commanding category indicates that, although instructions are frequently used, teachers also strive to balance them with empathy to avoid an overly authoritative impression. The low frequency in other categories, particularly challenging, suggests that teachers could apply more sympathy in competitive situations to help students feel more comfortable and

supported when facing challenges.

3.3 Context of Using Politeness Principles in Directive Speech Acts by Indonesian Language Teachers in Junior High Schools in Kikim Selatan District

Table 3. Context of Using Politeness Principles in Directive Speech Acts

No	Context of Use	Total				
		Co	Re	Ad	Su	Ch
1	-KR-SR=T	37	2	13	9	36
2	-KR-SR=R	16	3	5	5	7
3	-KR-SR=G	14	0	2	1	5
4	-KR-SR=S	0	0	0	0	0
5	-KR-SR=M	3	0	3	0	0

3.3.1 Speaker with Lower Authority, Unfamiliar Relationship, and Calm Atmosphere (-KR-SR=T)

In a calm atmosphere, teachers employed 37 commanding speech acts, 2 requesting, 13 advising, 9 suggesting, and 36 challenging. This data indicates that a calm environment provides space for teachers to deliver clear and structured instructions, whether in the form of direct commands or challenges aimed at motivating students.

This context reflects a conducive classroom environment for learning. Teachers tend to adopt an authoritative yet flexible approach, with commanding and challenging speech acts being dominantly used. The presence of advising and suggesting speech acts indicates that teachers also strive to guide and encourage students to think critically without pressure. The low frequency of requesting speech acts suggests that a calm atmosphere allows teachers to feel more confident in delivering direct instructions.

3.3.2 Speaker with Lower Authority, Unfamiliar Relationship, and Noisy Atmosphere (-KR-SR=R)

In a noisy atmosphere, teachers employed 16 commanding speech acts, 3 requesting, 5 advising, 5 suggesting, and 7 challenging. This environment requires a firmer and more instructive approach to regain control of the classroom situation.

Teachers predominantly used commanding speech acts to maintain order and ensure the learning process continues smoothly. The increase in requesting speech acts in this context reflects the teacher's effort to ease tension with a more persuasive tone. Meanwhile, advising and suggesting speech acts were employed to redirect students' attention toward more structured activities. Although a noisy atmosphere often demands an authoritative approach, the presence of challenging speech acts demonstrates the teacher's attempt to channel students' energy productively.

3.3.3 Speaker with Lower Authority, Unfamiliar Relationship, and Cheerful Atmosphere (-KR-SR=G)

In a cheerful atmosphere, teachers employed 14 commanding speech acts, 2 advising, 1 suggesting, and 5 challenging. This data suggests that a positive environment facilitates dynamic and participatory interactions in the classroom.

Teachers take advantage of the cheerful atmosphere to boost active student participation through challenges that stimulate their critical thinking. Commanding speech acts are still used to maintain the structure of learning, but they are often complemented by challenging speech acts to foster a healthy sense of competition. The low frequency of requesting speech acts reflects that a cheerful atmosphere encourages students to be more responsive to instructions without requiring a gentle persuasive approach.

3.3.4 Speaker with Lower Authority, Unfamiliar Relationship, and Sad Atmosphere (-KR-SR=S)

No speech act data was found in a sad atmosphere. This absence is attributed to the minimal occurrence of negative emotional situations during the observation of the learning process. The lack of speech acts in this context suggests that sad atmospheres are rare in the classroom or that teachers effectively manage students' emotional dynamics. Nevertheless, this situation highlights the importance of teachers' preparedness to use requesting and advising speech acts should similar situations arise, in order to support students' emotional needs.

3.3.5 Speaker with Lower Authority, Unfamiliar Relationship, and Angry Atmosphere (-KR-SR=M)

In an angry atmosphere, teachers employed 3 commanding speech acts and 3 advising speech acts. This data indicates that teachers prefer a controlled and thoughtful approach to manage tension. Teachers utilize commanding and advising speech acts to refocus the class and diffuse tension. The use of advising speech acts reflects the teacher's effort to provide moral guidance and direction to improve the situation. The absence of challenging and suggesting speech acts suggests that this atmosphere requires a more formal and focused approach to calm students' emotions effectively.

Discussion

This study examines the use of directive speech acts and politeness principles by Indonesian language teachers in junior high schools in Kikim Selatan District. The findings reveal how teachers adjust their communication strategies to various classroom contexts, aligning with previous research while also providing new insights relevant to the observed environment.

The dominance of directive speech acts, such as commanding and challenging, observed in this study aligns with the findings of Deppermann (2018), which state that teachers frequently use imperative forms to regulate classroom dynamics and deliver clear instructions. Commands serve as a key tool for establishing authority and maintaining classroom discipline (Politzer, 1980). However, this study also highlights the importance of politeness strategies in moderating the impact of these speech acts to foster a positive learning environment. These findings support Sari (2018), who concluded that a combination of authority and politeness enhances student responses and engagement.

Interestingly, the significant use of challenging speech acts serves to motivate students, encouraging critical thinking and active participation (Franco & DeLuca, 2019; Styers et al., 2018). This study, however, introduces a new dimension by analyzing the balance between firm commands and motivational challenges, showing that teachers in Kikim Selatan adopt both strategies based on situational needs. This approach reflects a cultural context where respect for authority is blended with an emphasis on individual initiative.

The application of politeness principles, particularly generosity and tact, stands out in this study. Teachers frequently employ these principles to minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs), aligning with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). Recent research by Dewi et al., (2020) supports these findings, emphasizing that tact and generosity reduce student resistance, thereby improving compliance and cooperation. Additionally, the principle of appreciation is often utilized, especially in the context of challenging and commanding speech acts. These findings are consistent with earlier studies, which highlight that acknowledging students' efforts reinforces respect and boosts motivation (Gui-dong, 2018; Komarraju et al., 2010; Ningtias & Mahbubah, 2022). However, the low use of sympathy and agreement principles suggests that there is room for improvement in fostering more empathetic communication, particularly in situations where students lack confidence or engagement (Manik & Hutagaol, 2015).

Adjusting directive speech act strategies and politeness principles to situational contexts represents a key contribution of this study. The findings show that teachers modify their approaches based on classroom dynamics, aligning with Asri et al. (2022), who emphasize that effective classroom communication is inherently situational. For instance, in a calm atmosphere, teachers employ commands and challenges to structure learning, reflecting a balance between control and motivation

(Bartholomew et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2016; Meyer et al., 2014). Conversely, in a noisy environment, politeness principles such as tact and sympathy are more prominent, helping to restore order without damaging interpersonal relationships (Sulistiyani, 2018).

Interestingly, the absence of data in a sad atmosphere suggests that negative emotional situations are either rarely encountered or that teachers effectively manage emotional dynamics in the classroom. These findings align with Hariati et al. (2020), who noted that teachers in Indonesia tend to prioritize maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere. However, this result also highlights the need for further exploration regarding teachers' communication strategies in more complex emotional contexts.

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of integrating politeness principles into directive speech acts to create a supportive and effective learning environment. Teachers' ability to combine firm instructions with empathetic and motivational strategies reflects best practices highlighted in recent studies (Maiza & Himawati, 2022). For example, the use of challenges to stimulate critical thinking aligns with the constructivist approach, where students are encouraged to actively engage in the learning process (Khoerunnisa et al., 2023).

However, the low frequency of requesting speech acts raises concerns about whether teacher-student interactions are overly hierarchical. Batt-Rawden & Traavik (2022) emphasize the importance of egalitarian communication in fostering collaborative learning environments. Teachers may benefit from training programs that highlight the value of polite requests and suggestions to promote a more inclusive classroom culture. Additionally, the heavy reliance on commands in noisy situations suggests the need for alternative strategies to manage disruptions. Techniques such as incorporating humor or non-verbal cues to capture attention, as recommended by Hidayat (2016), can complement directive speech acts and help reduce potential tension in the classroom.

These findings also reflect the influence of cultural values on communication styles. Classrooms in Indonesia often emphasize respect for authority, which is evident in the dominance of commanding and challenging speech acts (Li, 2016). However, the integration of politeness principles demonstrates a shift toward more balanced, student-centered communication. This aligns with the study by Suputra et al. (2022), which observed that Indonesian teachers are increasingly adopting strategies that blend traditional authority with modern pedagogical practices.

Although this study provides valuable insights, its geographical and cultural scope represents a limitation. Future research could explore similar dynamics in different cultural contexts to identify universal and culture-specific communication patterns. Additionally, longitudinal studies may examine how teachers' communication strategies evolve over time and their impact on student learning outcomes. Another area for further investigation is the role of student feedback in shaping teachers' communication strategies. As suggested by Xie & Derakhshan (2021), integrating student perspectives can offer a more holistic understanding of classroom communication effectiveness.

This study highlights the relationship between directive speech acts and politeness principles in classroom communication. By adjusting their strategies to suit various classroom contexts, teachers in Kikim Selatan demonstrate a deep understanding of effective pedagogy.

4. CONCLUSION

This study fills a gap in the literature regarding the application of politeness principles in directive speech acts by Indonesian language teachers. The novelty of this research lies in its contextual analysis, which connects classroom dynamics with teachers' communication strategies, demonstrating linguistic flexibility and adaptation that reflect situational needs. The findings reveal that teachers tend to combine authoritative approaches with politeness to create an effective and collaborative learning environment. The dominance of appreciation and generosity principles highlights the importance of building positive relationships with students, while the low frequency of requesting acts suggests potential improvements in more egalitarian communication strategies.

The contributions of this study include new insights into how teachers adjust their use of speech acts to motivate students, manage classrooms, and maintain social harmony. The practical implications

involve recommendations for teacher training to enhance politeness-based communication skills, including the use of persuasive and empathetic strategies that are more balanced. Theoretically, this study reinforces politeness-based communication models in education, while practically, it provides guidelines for the development of more adaptive and interactive teaching methods.

Future research could explore similar dynamics in different cultural contexts or through longitudinal studies to understand the long-term impact of teachers' communication strategies. Involving a larger sample and quantitative approaches, such as experimental or correlational designs, could provide measurable data on the effects of directive speech acts on student comprehension. Additionally, studies on the use of politeness strategies in digital learning could enhance understanding of communication adaptation across different teaching methods.

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