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## Directive Speech Acts in Teacher-Student Interaction and Implicit Meanings in Social Media Discourse: A Pragmatic and Discourse Study

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena tindakan tutur direktif dalam dua konteks yang berbeda: interaksi langsung antara guru dan siswa di sekolah menengah atas (SMA), serta praktik komunikasi implisit di media sosial. Tindakan tutur direktif memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk hubungan kuasa, menyampaikan perintah, permintaan, bahkan sarkasme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan analisis wacana, dilengkapi dengan data kuantitatif dari studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan dari transkrip kelas dan posting media sosial, dianalisis melalui teori tindakan ucapan Austin & Searle, implikatur Grice, dan analisis wacana kritis Fairclough. Studi kasus dilakukan di dua SMA di Sulawesi Selatan, dengan data sekunder diperoleh dari jurnal komunikasi digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 62% perintah guru bersifat eksplisit, sementara 73% perintah di media sosial bersifat implisit, diekspresikan melalui sarkasme atau metafora. Artikel ini menyoroti pentingnya konteks sosial, hubungan kekuasaan, dan niat pragmatik dalam membentuk struktur dan strategi penyampaian perintah.

**Kata kunci:** tindakan ucapan perintah, interaksi guru-siswa, media sosial, implikatur, analisis wacana kritis.

### Abstract

*This study examines the phenomenon of directive speech acts in two distinct contexts: face-to-face interaction between teachers and students in senior high schools (SMA), and implicit communication practices on social media. Directive speech acts play a significant role in constructing power relations, delivering commands, requests, and even sarcasm. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method using discourse analysis, complemented by quantitative data from case studies. Data were collected from classroom transcripts and social media posts, analyzed through the lens of speech act theory Austin & Searle, implicature Grice, and critical discourse analysis Fairclough. Case studies were conducted at two senior high schools in South Sulawesi, with secondary data obtained from digital communication journals. The findings show that 62% of teacher directives were explicit, while 73% of directives on social media were implicit, expressed through sarcasm or metaphors. This article highlights the importance of social context, power relations, and pragmatic intentions in shaping the structure and strategy of directive delivery.*

**Keywords:** directive speech acts, teacher–student interaction, social media, implicature, critical discourse analysis.

## Introduction

Language in social interaction functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a tool to influence, regulate, and maintain power relations. One of the primary functions of language in social contexts is directive speech acts. In educational settings, teachers use directives to shape student behavior. Conversely, on social media, users employ directives to indirectly influence public opinion.

The development of digital communication adds a new dimension to how people convey intentions through utterances that often carry implicit meanings. This study aims to analyze the linguistic strategies and social functions of directive speech acts in two different realms: education and online media.

Language is not merely a communication tool but also a means to build, maintain, and regulate social relationships. In pragmatic and discourse studies, language use is understood not only from a structural perspective but also in terms of context, speaker intentions, and its effects on interlocutors. One important form of language use to analyze is directive speech acts, which are utterances intended to influence the actions of the interlocutor, such as commands, requests, or suggestions.

In the context of education, especially in the interaction between teachers and students, directive speech acts play a crucial role in shaping classroom dynamics, disciplining students, and guiding them through the learning process. The patterns of directive utterances used by teachers not only reflect authority but also communication strategies that can create a conducive learning environment.

Meanwhile, in digital public spaces like social media, directive speech acts also appear in various forms of discourse, often with a more implicit style and rich in

implied meanings. These utterances are often influenced by the social, cultural, and ideological contexts behind them. On social media, implicit meanings are important because speakers often deliver messages indirectly to avoid conflict, maintain self-image, or influence public opinion.

This study aims to analyze the forms and functions of directive speech acts in two different domains, namely teacher-student interaction in educational settings and discourse on social media. Using pragmatic and discourse analysis approaches, this research will explore how implicit meanings are constructed and interpreted by participants in both contexts. It is expected that this study will provide deeper insights into the dynamics of language use in society, as well as practical contributions to the development of effective communication strategies in education and digital media.

## Literature Review

Pragmatic studies on speech acts in teacher-student interactions refer to Austin's (1962) fundamental theory, which divides speech acts into three types: locutionary (literal utterance), illocutionary (the intended purpose of the utterance), and perlocutionary (the effect of the utterance). In this context, illocutionary acts in the form of directive speech acts become a crucial focus in learning interactions. Searle (1975) explains that directive speech acts are utterances aimed at getting the interlocutor to perform an action. In classroom interactions, teachers use various forms of directives such as commands, questions, requests, and advice to guide students' learning behavior. Astuti (2023) shows that questions are the most dominant form due to their ability to evoke cognitive responses from students, while Putry and Arief (2024) note the dominance of the bald on record strategy when teachers deliver instructions directly.

Politeness strategies in speech acts also attract significant attention. Yani and Noveria (2024) found that teachers employ both positive and negative small talk strategies to maintain interpersonal relationships with students. These strategies reflect teachers' pragmatic awareness of the social context in the classroom. Fransiska and Atmazaki (2024) note the use of indirect or vague strategies in delivering advice or reprimands, so that the illocutionary intent is conveyed without provoking resistance. Grice's (1975) theory on cooperative principles and maxims violations is highly relevant in explaining how implied meanings or implicatures emerge, especially when teachers convey intentions implicitly yet remain understood by students.

Furthermore, Fairclough (1995) emphasizes that discourse reflects power relations and ideology. In the educational context, teachers not only convey knowledge but also reproduce values and norms through language. Lestari (2023) shows that classroom utterance structures often contain power relations, with teachers positioning themselves as discourse controllers. Heriani and Triana (2024) reinforce this through analysis of speech in writing activities, which still reflect the teacher's role as a guide. In the digital context, Sari (2024) shows that direct messages such as requests or commands in online communication are often packaged more subtly and implicitly.

In social media, the form and meaning of directive speech acts experience shifts. Putra (2020) reveals that humor, satire, and implicature serve as means to convey social criticism without causing direct conflict. Faiz (2022) demonstrates that on platforms like YouTube, such as the channel "Catatan Guru Muda," teachers combine expressive and directive utterances with a personal approach, indicating a shift in communication styles in digital spaces.

Oprea's (2020) study on online sarcasm further highlights the importance of context and implicature in understanding implied meanings. Therefore, understanding directive speech acts in the contexts of educational discourse and social media requires analysis that is not only linguistic but also social and ideological.

## **Research Method**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with pragmatic analysis and critical discourse analysis methods. This approach was chosen to examine the forms, functions, and strategies of directive speech acts as well as the implied meanings emerging in two contexts: teacher-student interactions and social media discourse. The primary data consist of utterances from teachers in classrooms and social media posts containing directive elements.

Primary data were obtained from 10 video recordings of learning interactions in two junior high schools, as well as 50 Twitter posts using the hashtags #education and #socialcritique. In addition, quantitative data were used as supplementary information to show the frequency and proportion of speech act types appearing in each context.

The analysis process was conducted both manually and digitally. For manual analysis, transcription data were analyzed using speech act theory from Austin and Searle, along with Grice's implicature principles to identify the forms and implied meanings of directive utterances. To explore power and ideology aspects in language, critical discourse analysis was applied referring to Fairclough's three-dimensional model.

For digital analysis, the AntConc software was used to trace lexical occurrences and sentence patterns, while NVivo was utilized for data coding,

illocutionary function classification, and thematic visualization. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of techniques and sources, as well as cross-checking among researchers to maintain objectivity and scientific accountability.

## Research Results

This study reveals that the forms of directive speech acts in teacher-student interactions are dominantly explicit but vary in delivery strategies. From 10 recorded classroom interactions analyzed, it was found that 62% of the directive utterances took the form of explicit commands, such as “*Buka halaman 10,*” “*Kerjakan sekarang,*” or “*Kumpulkan sebelum pulang.*” Such utterances indicate the teacher’s dominant position as the director of learning activities in the classroom. Explicit utterances like these typically occur in situations requiring direct control over the flow of learning activities, especially when time is limited or when students are considered unfocused.

Besides direct commands, 21% of utterances appeared as subtle invitations. Examples include “*Yuk kita coba bersama-sama*” or “*Bisa kita mulai dari soal yang paling mudah dulu ya?*”, which pragmatically still carry directive meaning but are packaged with positive politeness strategies. Such utterances are often found among teachers who strive to create an interactive and comfortable atmosphere and maintain good emotional relationships with students. This strategy reflects the teacher’s awareness of the importance of the students’ positive face, as explained in the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson.

Interestingly, the remaining 17% consisted of utterances delivered through humor or metaphor. For example, when a teacher says, “*Kalau ini salah, bisa-bisa nilainya jalan kaki,*” or “*Kalau kamu lupa, nanti bukunya yang ngambek.*” These utterances have pragmatic force that remains

directive but are delivered in a lighthearted and humorous manner. Observations suggest that this style is quite effective in creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere while still conveying firm messages indirectly. This supports Grice’s (1975) concept of implicature and maxim violation as strategies for conveying implied meanings with interpersonal content.

Moving to the social media context, analysis of 50 posts tagged #edukasi and #kritiksosial shows that directive speech acts tend to be more implicit and indirect. Of the total data, 73% were indirect directives, such as “*Coba deh sekolah dulu sebelum komen,*” or “*Kalau gak ngerti, gak usah ikut-ikutan komen.*” These utterances contain elements of social criticism but are wrapped in sarcasm or irony, pragmatically still aiming to direct or reprimand the readers. This communication style illustrates the use of Grice’s implicature principles and maxim violations, especially quality and relevance maxims, as strategies to convey intentions non-confrontationally.

Furthermore, 18% of posts contained direct invitations, such as “*Mari kita laporkan akun ini*” or “*Ayo bantu viralkan berita ini.*” These utterances are not explicit commands but still carry strong collective invitation elements. In many cases, such invitations relate to social, political, or educational issues, indicating that social media discourse also serves as a venue for social action through language use. Meanwhile, only 9% of posts were explicit commands, for instance, “*Blokir akun ini sekarang!*” or “*Keluar dari grup kalau gak suka.*” These types of utterances tend to appear in conflictual or provocative situations.

The use of indirect directives on social media demonstrates users’ awareness of the risks of open communication. Many speakers choose indirect styles to convey criticism to avoid debates or social

sanctions. This aligns with Fairclough's (1995) theory that discourse reflects power relations and ideology. In this context, social media users employ language strategies to maintain their position in social dynamics without engaging directly in open conflict. Social media becomes a space where expression, social control, and resistance converge within a single discourse.

Overall, the findings show that directive speech acts have a contextual character. In the classroom, they tend to be explicit and instructional, reflecting the teacher's role as controller of learning activities. Meanwhile, on social media, directive utterances are more implicit and rhetorical, showing negotiation of meaning, position, and resistance in the digital social order. These findings reinforce the argument that speech acts are not merely a matter of linguistic structure but also representations of social relations, ideology, and communication strategies in different contexts.

The meanings conveyed are often contextual and utilize persuasive strategies without direct confrontation. Social media introduces new communication patterns where directives often appear through symbolic devices such as emojis, hashtags, and irony styles.

## Discussion

The results of the study show that in teacher-student interactions, the dominant form of directive speech acts is explicit commands. This indicates that teachers hold a central role as controllers of the learning process, requiring clear and firm directions to ensure learning objectives are achieved effectively. The use of direct commands aligns with Searle's (1975) theory which states that directive speech acts aim to get the interlocutor to perform certain actions. Clarity and firmness in explicit commands are especially necessary in dynamic and

challenging classroom situations so that the messages conveyed are unambiguous and easily understood by students.

However, softer invitations and the use of humor or metaphor were also found as alternative strategies in delivering directive speech acts. These strategies demonstrate teachers' sensitivity to politeness aspects and interpersonal relationships within the classroom. Consistent with findings by Yani and Noveria (2024), the use of gentle invitations and humor serves as an effective way to maintain students' positive face while still delivering directions. This is important because learning interaction is not only about behavioral control but also about building emotional bonds that support learning motivation. Humor also reduces tension and creates a more enjoyable learning atmosphere.

In the context of social media, the dominance of indirect directives shows a different communication dynamic. Indirect directives through sarcasm or irony allow social media users to convey social criticism without directly confronting the interlocutor. This approach corresponds with Grice's (1975) cooperative principle regarding maxim violations, which are often used to express implied meanings. This strategy reflects an awareness of the risk of confrontation in public online spaces and an effort to maintain self-image while still criticizing or encouraging social change.

Moreover, direct invitations and explicit commands found on social media indicate the diversity of directive functions in the digital realm. Collective invitations such as "Let's report this account" illustrate how language is used as a powerful tool for social mobilization. Meanwhile, explicit commands, although a minority, appear in more intense conflict or protest situations. These differences underline the role of social media as a complex expression space

where users negotiate their positions of power and ideology, as explained by Fairclough (1995).

Overall, the differences in the character of directive speech acts between direct classroom interactions and social media discourse demonstrate the influence of social context and communication medium on language strategies. In the classroom, the need for control and clarity makes directives explicit and instructional, whereas on social media, the need to maintain image and avoid confrontation leads to directives being conveyed more indirectly and rhetorically. These findings reinforce the understanding that pragmatic studies and discourse analysis must consider social and ideological dimensions to capture the complexity of communication across different contexts.

## Conclusion

This study shows that directive speech acts are not always delivered explicitly, especially in the context of social media, which requires caution in conveying criticism through implicit strategies such as irony or sarcasm. In contrast, in teacher-student interactions, teachers tend to rely on institutional authority by using more explicit and instructional directives. These findings emphasize the importance of pragmatic approaches and critical discourse analysis to understand the dynamics of power and differing linguistic strategies within formal education contexts and digital spaces. This study is expected to contribute academically to pragmatic and critical discourse studies in Indonesia and serve as a reference for developing digital communication literacy as well as more dialogic and inclusive education.

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