

Pedagogical directive speech acts in classroom teaching and learning at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang: A sociopragmatic study

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Abstract - This study aims to describe the forms, strategies, and sociopragmatic functions of pedagogical directive speech acts in the teaching and learning process at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang. The study is designed as qualitative descriptive research supported by simple percentage tabulation to map the tendency of directive categories in classroom discourse. The data consist of 120 pedagogical directive utterances produced in classroom interaction, including teacher instructions, requests, elicitation questions, advice, suggestions, reminders, invitations, prohibitions, and permissions. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observation, field notes, audio transcription, and contextual notes on classroom situations. The analysis was conducted through four stages: data condensation, coding of directive forms, sociopragmatic interpretation, and verification through contextual triangulation. The findings show that instructing is the most dominant form, with 30 utterances (25.00%), followed by requesting with 22 utterances (18.33%), questioning or eliciting with 20 utterances (16.67%), advising with 14 utterances (11.67%), suggesting with 12 utterances (10.00%), reminding with 9 utterances (7.50%), inviting with 6 utterances (5.00%), prohibiting with 5 utterances (4.17%), and permitting with 2 utterances (1.67%). Sociopragmatically, these directives do not merely function as commands but also operate as pedagogical tools for organizing learning, scaffolding task completion, maintaining discipline, encouraging participation, and constructing respectful teacher-student relations. The study concludes that pedagogical directive speech acts in elementary classrooms are shaped by institutional authority, learner age, politeness norms, and local educational values.

Keywords: pedagogical directive speech acts, classroom discourse, sociopragmatics, elementary education, language teaching, directive speech acts, pedagogical speech acts

1. Introduction



Classroom learning is not only a process of transferring knowledge but also a communicative event in which teachers and students negotiate meaning, authority, discipline, and participation. In elementary school, teacher talk has a central role because young learners need clear guidance, repeated instructions, and affective encouragement. One important linguistic resource in this process is the directive speech act. Through directives, teachers ask learners to read, write, answer, listen, discuss, cooperate, and follow classroom rules. However, in a pedagogical setting, directives are rarely limited to the force of ordering. They are also connected to how teachers build rapport, manage the class, and protect students from embarrassment while still maintaining learning discipline.

Recent classroom-pragmatic studies show that directive speech acts are frequently used by teachers to organize interaction and support learning. Aini et al. (2023) found that English teachers in online classroom interaction used several forms of directives, including requests, commands, suggestions, invitations, and warnings. Meidini et al. (2023) also showed that teacher and student directives in online learning interactions included requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories. These findings indicate that directive speech acts are structurally varied and pedagogically functional. In Indonesian language learning, Rahmawati et al. (2021) emphasized that directive acts must be examined carefully because certain forms may become impolite when they are not adjusted to context, tone, and teacher-student relations.

The sociopragmatic perspective is useful for analyzing classroom directives because it considers the relationship between linguistic choices and social context. Sociopragmatics explains how power, distance, age, institutional roles, cultural norms, and the rights and obligations of participants influence utterance meaning (Haugh et al., 2021). In the elementary classroom, the teacher has institutional authority, while students occupy the role of learners who are expected to obey, participate, and develop responsibility. Nevertheless, good pedagogical communication requires teachers to transform authority into guidance. Therefore, a directive such as "Open your book" may function not only as an order but also as a learning organizer; "Can you read this sentence?" may be a request and at the same time a strategy to build student confidence; and "Do not laugh at your friend" may be a prohibition as well as moral education.

Current studies consistently demonstrate that speech acts, particularly directive speech acts, play a central role in classroom interaction by enabling teachers to manage classroom activities, provide instructions, regulate student behaviour, and facilitate learning. These findings suggest that effective teaching depends not only on the content delivered but also on how teachers communicate their intentions through contextually appropriate speech acts, thereby influencing classroom engagement and instructional effectiveness (Susanti & Liusti, 2025; Kebede & Endalamaw, 2025; Sari et al., 2025; Suryandani & Budasi, 2022; Narulita & Arifin, 2024; Dewi et al., 2023/2025; Noprilia & Tressyalina., 2025; Swari, 2025; Nisa & Abduh, 2022; Sulistyani & Riwayatiningasih, 2025; Babo et al., 2026; Ramalingam & Manoqaran, 2025; Rahim, 2022; Hidayat et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2023; Acka & Hassane, 2025; Rjoub & Eshreteh, 2026; Obiorah & Edeoga, 2026; Khotijah et al., 2026; Andiopenta & Suyadi, 2024; Latuapo & Sahayu, 2024; Almira & Tressyalina. (2025). Wu, 2021; Vakhobova et al; 2025; Syahabuddin et al., 2025; Sudarmawan et al., 2025; Stevani et al., 2023; Sitisyam & Sudiyana, 2025); Siregar et al., 2026; Retnaningsih et al., 2024; Syahira et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2023; Pratiwi, 2026; Pane & Arbain, 2023; Halil et al., 2023; Ginting & Pasaribu, 2023; Fitriani & Prihadi, 2020; Febrianti et al., 2022; Chaidir et al., 2026; Almira & Tressyalina, 2025).

However, most existing studies remain descriptive, focusing primarily on identifying the forms, functions, and frequencies of speech acts rather than examining their influence on broader educational outcomes such as critical thinking, learner autonomy, motivation, or academic achievement. As a result, the relationship between teachers' pragmatic choices and students' learning performance has not been sufficiently explained, limiting the pedagogical implications of current research (Susanti & Liusti, 2025; Kebede & Endalamaw, 2025; Suryandani & Budasi, 2022; Nisa & Abduh, 2022; Rahim, 2022; Wajdi, 2018; Hidayat et al., 2022; Nuraeni et al., 2025).



Another limitation is the overwhelming emphasis on directive speech acts, while other categories, including representative, expressive, commissive, and declarative speech acts, receive considerably less attention. This narrow focus presents only a partial picture of classroom discourse because effective instructional communication is constructed through the interaction of multiple speech act types that collectively support knowledge construction, negotiation of meaning, and interpersonal relationships in educational settings (Sulistiyani & Riwayatiningasih, 2025; Abdurrahman et al., 2026; Idris et al., 2023; Acka & Hassane, 2025).

Furthermore, many investigations are confined to single schools, specific subjects, or particular educational levels, restricting the generalizability of their findings. Contextual variables such as cultural background, linguistic diversity, classroom environment, institutional context, and teachers' instructional styles have rarely been incorporated into analytical frameworks, despite their potential influence on the realization and interpretation of speech acts during classroom interaction (Kebede & Endalamaw, 2025; Ramalingam & Manoqaran, 2025; Babo et al., 2026; Swari, 2025).

Overall, the existing literature has established the significance of speech acts as a fundamental component of classroom communication, yet substantial research gaps remain. Future studies should move beyond descriptive analyses by integrating pragmatic perspectives with pedagogical, psychological, and learning outcome variables. Employing mixed-methods designs, multimodal discourse analysis, and longitudinal approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers' speech acts shape classroom management, student engagement, and learning effectiveness over time (Sulistiyani & Riwayatiningasih, 2025; Susanti & Liusti, 2025; Abdurrahman et al., 2026; Idris et al., 2023).

Although studies on directive speech acts have developed in online learning, EFL classrooms, and secondary school settings, elementary school classroom interaction still needs more attention, especially in local Indonesian school contexts. SD Arrohmah Dau Malang is relevant as a research site because elementary classrooms involve learners who are still developing linguistic competence, social sensitivity, and classroom discipline. The teacher's directives are therefore expected to perform multiple functions: controlling the learning flow, helping students understand tasks, encouraging participation, and shaping social behavior. This study addresses that gap by examining pedagogical directive speech acts in the teaching and learning process at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang using a sociopragmatic approach.

The research questions are formulated as follows: (1) What forms of pedagogical directive speech acts appear in the teaching and learning process at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang? (2) What strategies are used to realize these pedagogical directives? (3) What sociopragmatic functions are performed by these directives in classroom interaction? The study aims to provide an empirical and interpretive account of how directive speech acts operate as linguistic, pedagogical, and sociocultural practices in elementary education.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design supported by simple descriptive statistics. The qualitative design is appropriate because the main objective is to interpret the meaning, context, and pedagogical function of classroom utterances, while the percentage tabulation is used only to map the tendency of directive categories. This design follows the principle that qualitative data analysis should organize, code, interpret, and verify meaning rather than reduce social interaction to numbers alone (Miles et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The research site is SD Arrohmah Dau Malang. The data source is classroom interaction during the teaching and learning process, especially utterances produced by teachers that contain directive force. The data in this manuscript draft consist of 120 pedagogical directive utterances selected purposively from classroom events. The utterances include Indonesian classroom expressions that were translated into English for reporting purposes. The original Indonesian forms were retained in the analytic notes to preserve pragmatic nuance such as polite markers, address terms, and contextual emphasis.



Data were collected through non-participant observation, field notes, audio recording, and transcription. Observation focused on the opening, core activity, group work, individual task completion, question-answer sessions, classroom management, and closing activities. Field notes recorded the setting, participant response, tone, non-verbal cues, and classroom situation. These contextual notes were necessary because the pragmatic meaning of directives often depends on how an utterance is delivered, who receives it, and what pedagogical problem it addresses.

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, all classroom utterances were reviewed to identify directive speech acts. Second, the directives were coded into forms: instructing, requesting, questioning/eliciting, advising, suggesting, reminding, inviting, prohibiting, and permitting. Third, the realization strategies were interpreted, including direct imperative, mitigated request, inclusive collaborative, interrogative directive, motivational directive, and value-based directive. Fourth, the sociopragmatic functions were examined by connecting the utterances with teacher authority, learner age, classroom norms, politeness considerations, and local educational values. To strengthen trustworthiness, the coding results were checked through repeated reading, contextual triangulation between transcript and field notes, and inter-coder discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The analysis of classroom discourse at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang shows that pedagogical directive speech acts appear in various forms and perform different sociopragmatic functions. The directives are not only used to control student behavior but also to organize learning, guide task completion, invite participation, maintain classroom harmony, and strengthen values. The following sections present the distribution and interpretation of the data.

3.1.1 Forms of Pedagogical Directive Speech Acts

The first finding concerns the forms of pedagogical directive speech acts. Table 1 shows that instructing is the most frequent form because classroom learning requires procedural clarity. Requesting and questioning/eliciting also occur frequently, indicating that teachers do not always rely on command forms but often use cooperative and participatory expressions.

Table 1: Distribution of pedagogical directive speech act forms

No.	Directive form	Frequency	Percentage	Typical example	Pedagogical interpretation
1.	Instructing	30	25.00%	Please open your book on page 42 and read the first paragraph silently.	Directs learners to perform a learning procedure.
2.	Requesting	22	18.33%	Can you help your friend read the sentence again?	Invites cooperation while reducing imposition.
3.	Questioning / eliciting	20	16.67%	Who can explain the meaning of this word?	Stimulates participation and checks understanding.
4.	Advising	14	11.67%	It is better to write the answer in complete sentences.	Guides students toward better academic behavior.
5.	Suggesting	12	10.00%	Try to underline the key words first.	Offers a learning strategy without coercion.
6.	Reminding	9	7.50%	Remember, we listen when a friend is speaking.	Reinforces classroom norms and shared discipline.
7.	Inviting	6	5.00%	Let us discuss the answer together.	Builds collective participation and solidarity.



8.	Prohibiting	5	4.17%	Do not laugh when your friend makes a mistake.	Prevents behavior that may threaten learners' face.
9.	Permitting	2	1.67%	You may use your dictionary after finishing the first task.	Allows controlled autonomy within learning rules.

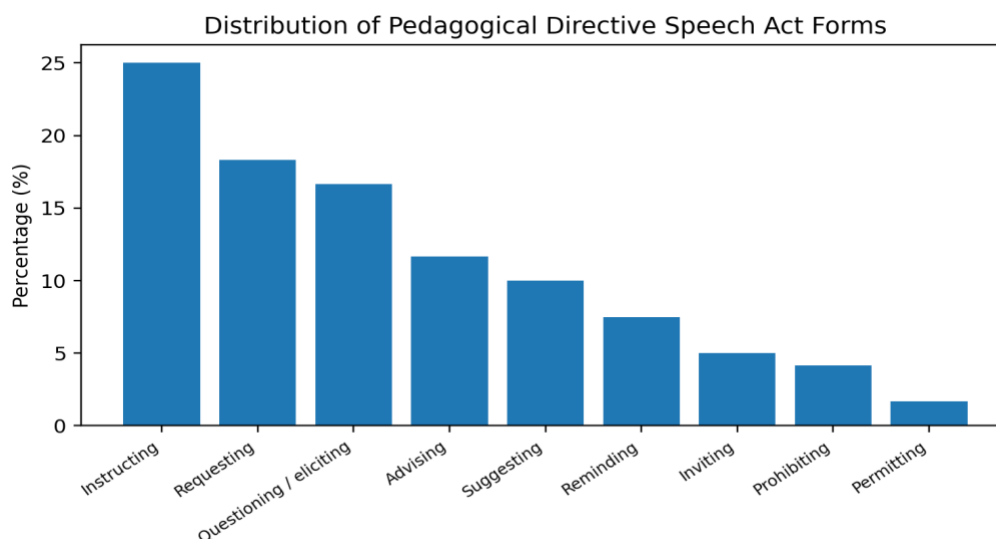


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of pedagogical directive speech act forms

The dominance of instructing (25.00%) shows that the elementary classroom requires highly explicit procedural direction. However, the high frequency of requesting (18.33%) and questioning/eliciting (16.67%) indicates that directive meaning is often realized through softer and more interactive forms. In a sociopragmatic sense, teachers balance authority and care. They must ensure that students follow instructions, but they also need to create a classroom atmosphere in which learners feel safe to respond. This finding supports previous studies showing that classroom directives are connected to learning management, teacher identity, and student participation (Aini et al., 2023; Gündoğan, 2026; Nurani et al., 2025; Meidini et al., 2023; Pastini & Hardina, 2025).

3.1.2 Strategies of Realizing Pedagogical Directives

The second finding concerns the strategies used by teachers to realize directive force. As shown in Table 2, direct imperative strategy is the most frequent strategy, but it is accompanied by mitigated, collaborative, interrogative, motivational, and value-based strategies. This pattern shows that teachers adjust directive forms to instructional urgency, student readiness, and classroom relationships.

Table 2: Strategies of realizing pedagogical directives

No.	Strategy	Frequency	Percentage	Example	Sociopragmatic meaning
1.	Direct imperative strategy	35	29.17%	Open your notebook now.	Used when time, clarity, and class control are prioritized.
2.	Mitigated request strategy	24	20.00%	Could you read the next sentence, please?	Softens authority and protects the learner's face.
3.	Inclusive collaborative strategy	21	17.50%	Let us try the exercise together.	Changes command into shared learning activity.



4.	Interrogative directive strategy	18	15.00%	Why don't we write the answer first?	Uses a question form to guide action indirectly.
5.	Motivational directive strategy	12	10.00%	Come on, you can finish this answer.	Combines directive force with encouragement.
6.	Value-based moral strategy	10	8.33%	Please respect your friend because everyone is learning.	Connects directive meaning with moral and social values.

Direct imperative strategies are used when the teacher needs quick compliance, for example when opening a textbook, forming groups, or stopping disruptive behavior. Nevertheless, the teacher often reduces the force of imperatives by using politeness markers such as please, address terms such as children, and explanations of purpose. Mitigated requests and interrogative directives are used when the teacher wants students to participate without feeling pressured. Inclusive forms such as “let us” or “we will” construct the learning task as shared responsibility. Motivational directives show that teachers do not only demand action but also build students’ confidence. Value-based directives reflect the moral dimension of classroom discourse, especially when the teacher connects learning behavior with respect, patience, honesty, and responsibility.

3.1.3 Sociopragmatic Functions of Pedagogical Directives

The third finding concerns the functions of pedagogical directives. Table 3 shows that directives mainly function to organize learning activities, scaffold task completion, and manage classroom behavior. These three functions are closely related because elementary school learning needs both academic guidance and behavioral regulation.

Table 3: Sociopragmatic functions of pedagogical directives

No.	Function		Frequency	Percentage	Description
1.	Organizing activities	learning	34	28.33%	Structuring opening, task sequence, group work, and closing activities.
2.	Scaffolding completion	task	27	22.50%	Helping learners complete reading, writing, and speaking tasks step by step.
3.	Managing behavior	classroom	22	18.33%	Maintaining attention, order, turn-taking, and respectful conduct.
4.	Encouraging participation	student	17	14.17%	Inviting reluctant students to answer, ask, read, or present.
5.	Strengthening and values	discipline	12	10.00%	Relating obedience, responsibility, respect, and honesty to classroom norms.
6.	Building rapport	pedagogical	8	6.67%	Using directive speech to maintain warmth and teacher-student closeness.

The function of organizing learning activities (28.33%) demonstrates that directive speech acts are fundamental to classroom procedure. Teachers use directives to open lessons, distribute tasks, manage time, and guide students from one activity to another. Scaffolding task completion (22.50%) shows the pedagogical function of directives as step-by-step support. This function is important for elementary learners because they may understand the task goal but still need procedural assistance. Managing classroom behavior (18.33%) reveals the regulatory function of directives. However, when teachers use prohibitions or reminders, the purpose is not merely to impose authority; it is to maintain a respectful learning environment where students can participate safely.

3.1.4 Sociopragmatic Context of Classroom Directives

A sociopragmatic analysis shows that the meaning of directive speech acts is shaped by the relationship among participants, the age of learners, the institutional role of the teacher, and local cultural values. The same utterance may have different pragmatic effects depending on intonation, classroom situation, and student response. Table 4 summarizes the sociopragmatic dimensions that influence the interpretation of classroom directives.

Table 4: Sociopragmatic dimensions of pedagogical directive speech acts

No.	Sociopragmatic dimension	Interpretation
1.	Teacher authority	The teacher has legitimate institutional authority, but directive force is commonly softened through please, let us, personal address, and supportive explanation.
2.	Learner age	Elementary school learners need explicit and repeated guidance; therefore directives often combine clarity with affective support.
3.	Classroom norm	The classroom is organized as a moral and academic community; directives regulate not only tasks but also respect, patience, and responsibility.
4.	Local sociocultural value	Expressions of politeness, collective participation, and moral advice reflect Indonesian educational culture and the religious-social atmosphere of the school.

The data indicate that pedagogical directives at SD Arrohmanh Dau Malang are shaped by a combination of authority and relational care. The teacher has the right to direct student behavior, but that right is exercised through language that considers student face, emotional readiness, and moral development. For example, prohibitions are often followed by reasons, and instructions are frequently accompanied by encouragement. This pattern reflects a pedagogical norm in which discipline is expected to be firm but not humiliating. It also supports the idea that classroom discourse is a sociocultural practice rather than a neutral exchange of information (Haugh et al., 2021; Paltridge, 2021).

3.2 Discussion

The findings show that pedagogical directive speech acts in elementary classroom interaction have a multifunctional character. They are linguistic acts because they contain directive force; pedagogical acts because they guide learning; and sociopragmatic acts because they are shaped by power, politeness, and cultural norms. The dominance of instructing is understandable because elementary students require clear procedures. However, the presence of requesting, questioning, advising, suggesting, and reminding shows that the teacher does not rely only on direct authority. The teacher also uses directive speech to invite, motivate, and build social relations.

These findings are consistent with Aini et al. (2023), who found that classroom directives include more than commands and may appear in requests, suggestions, invitations, and warnings. The results also extend Meidini et al. (2023), who identified teacher and student directives in online learning interaction. In this study, the elementary classroom context highlights a stronger combination of academic and moral guidance. Directives are used not only to ask students to perform tasks but also to teach respectful behavior, cooperation, and responsibility. This indicates that pedagogical directives are part of character formation in classroom discourse. This finding also aligns with Zulaeha and Riyanti (2024) on teacher strategies in solving learning challenges.

The sociopragmatic dimension is especially visible in the use of mitigated and collaborative strategies. A direct command may be efficient, but teachers often soften it when the directive is addressed to an individual student or when the student is at risk of losing confidence. Politeness is therefore not simply a matter of being gentle; it is a strategy for maintaining participation and protecting the learner's face. This finding is in line with studies on politeness and classroom directives that emphasize the importance of context, relational distance, and the

teacher's communicative responsibility (Darmawati et al., 2026; Rahayuningsih et al., 2020; Noprilia, 2025).

Another important finding is that directive speech acts have a scaffolding function. In elementary classrooms, students frequently need procedural help, such as how to start writing, how to read a text, how to answer questions, and how to work with peers. The teacher's directives become temporary support that enables students to complete learning tasks. From this perspective, directives should not be viewed only as controlling language. They can also function as pedagogical assistance that helps students move from dependence toward autonomy. This interpretation is supported by Gündoğan (2026), who links turn-taking patterns and scaffolding to classroom task completion.

The study contributes to sociopragmatic research by showing how directive speech acts operate in a local elementary school context. Unlike online classrooms or senior high school settings, elementary classrooms involve younger learners whose cognitive, emotional, and social development requires a more careful balance between clarity and warmth. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on pedagogical directives as sociopragmatic practices that combine instructional control, politeness, moral guidance, and learner support in the classroom culture of SD Arrohmah Dau Malang.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that pedagogical directive speech acts in the teaching and learning process at SD Arrohmah Dau Malang are realized through various forms, including instructing, requesting, questioning/eliciting, advising, suggesting, reminding, inviting, prohibiting, and permitting. Instructing is the most dominant form, but the presence of softer and more collaborative forms shows that teachers do not only exercise authority; they also guide, motivate, and support learners.

The strategies used to realize directives include direct imperative, mitigated request, inclusive collaborative, interrogative directive, motivational directive, and value-based directive strategies. These strategies are selected according to instructional needs, learner age, classroom situation, and the teacher's concern for politeness and participation. Sociopragmatically, the directives function to organize learning activities, scaffold task completion, manage classroom behavior, encourage participation, strengthen discipline and values, and build pedagogical rapport.

The study implies that teachers need pragmatic awareness when using directive speech acts. Clear directives are necessary in elementary classrooms, but they should be delivered with appropriate tone, explanation, politeness markers, and emotional support. Future studies may involve larger classroom corpora, compare different grade levels, and examine how students respond to different forms of pedagogical directives.

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Research Limitation

This study is limited to the analysis of pedagogical directive speech acts in classroom interaction. The findings do not claim to represent all elementary schools in Indonesia. Because classroom discourse is strongly contextual, future research should involve more classes, more schools, and longitudinal observation to examine changes in directive patterns across time.

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