

## A PRAGMATIC FORCE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' SPEECH ACTS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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**Abstrak** - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan jenis tindak tutur dan daya pragmatik yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Indonesia dalam proses pembelajaran di SDN 12 Payung. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa tuturan guru yang diperoleh melalui observasi, rekaman, dan wawancara. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tiga tahap yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menggunakan lima jenis tindak tutur menurut teori Searle, yaitu direktif, ekspresif, representatif, komisif, dan deklaratif. Dari 65 data tuturan, tindak tutur direktif mendominasi dengan persentase 43,1%, diikuti oleh tindak tutur ekspresif sebesar 23,1%. Daya pragmatik yang muncul meliputi fungsi pengarahan, motivasi, penghargaan, dan penguatan partisipasi siswa. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan tindak tutur yang tepat dan variatif dapat menciptakan interaksi belajar yang efektif, sopan, dan bermakna. Guru berperan penting dalam membangun komunikasi yang mampu meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah dasar.

**Kata kunci:** tindak tutur, daya pragmatik, guru Bahasa Indonesia, pembelajaran, sekolah dasar

**Abstract** - This study aims to describe the types of speech acts and pragmatic forces used by Indonesian language teachers during classroom interactions at SDN 12 Payung. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observation, recordings, and interviews. Data were analyzed using three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the teacher used five types of speech acts based on Searle's classification: directive, expressive, representative, commissive, and declarative. From 65 utterances, directive speech acts were the most dominant (43.1%), followed by expressive speech acts (23.1%). The pragmatic forces observed include directing, motivating, appreciating, and reinforcing students' participation. The findings suggest that appropriate and varied use of speech acts fosters effective, polite, and meaningful learning interactions. Teachers play a crucial role in building classroom communication that enhances students' motivation and engagement in Indonesian language learning at the elementary level.

**Keywords:** speech acts, pragmatic force, Indonesian language teacher, learning interaction, elementary school.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in human life as it serves as the primary tool for communication and social interaction (Redjeki & Muhajir, 2020). As social beings, humans constantly need contact with others, and language functions as the most effective medium to fulfill this need. Through language, individuals can express feelings, convey ideas, and demonstrate their roles and existence within society (Clarke, 1983). The use of language can be found in various aspects of life, including education. In the context of learning, language becomes a key component that determines the success of the teaching and learning process. All elements of education—teachers, students, and learning materials—interact through language. Charmila et al. (2016), emphasizes that language skills encompass not only structural aspects but also pragmatic aspects, namely the ability to use language appropriately in specific communication contexts to achieve particular goals. Teachers play a very

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important role in the learning process. As educators, teachers act as facilitators, motivators, managers, guides, and evaluators (Osakue et al., 2011).

With these multiple roles, teachers are required to possess high competence in order to create effective and meaningful learning experiences. Bereczki & Kárpáti (2021), states that teachers are not only curriculum implementers but also designers and developers of contextual and adaptive learning that meets students' needs. In the context of language use, language users—including teachers and students—must consider the social norms and cultural values of their community (Chandler, 2007). Inappropriate use of language that does not align with social norms may lead to negative perceptions, such as being considered impolite, arrogant, or disrespectful (Kridalaksana, 2008). Therefore, language skills are not limited to linguistic competence but also include pragmatic competence, which involves understanding context, communicative goals, and social relationships among speakers (Chaer, 2014; Afisi, 2020; Santamaria-Gracia, 2017).

Effective classroom communication occurs when there is alignment between the teacher's intended meaning and the student's understanding (Putri Dewi Saraswati & Noor Farida, 2017; Black & William, 2019; Burns, 2019). This process involves speech acts—actions performed through utterances. In the learning process at SDN 12 Payung, teachers frequently use various types of speech to give instructions, reprimands, motivation, or praise to students. However, these utterances are sometimes interpreted differently by students due to variations in contextual understanding or situational factors (Bach, 2017; H. G. Tarigan, 2021; Wulandari, 2020). This phenomenon highlights the importance of analyzing speech acts and pragmatic force in classroom interactions (Leech, 2016). As the main speaker, the teacher needs to understand how their utterances affect students' responses—both cognitively and affectively (Ariwibowo & Yuliasuti, 2021; Suarsih, 2018). By understanding the pragmatic force of speech acts, teachers can adjust their communication style to be more effective, polite, and conducive to a positive learning atmosphere.

Based on these issues, this research was conducted at SDN 12 Payung with the following objectives: (1) To describe the types of speech acts used by teachers in teaching Indonesian language. (2) To analyze the pragmatic force contained in teachers' utterances during the classroom learning process. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, began to develop in the 1970s in the United States and has become an essential area of language study because it focuses on the relationship between language and its context of use (Wijana, 1996). Pragmatics examines the meaning of utterances in real communicative situations, taking into account factors such as the speaker, listener, communicative goals, setting, and atmosphere of the interaction (Saifudin, 2018). According to Leech (2016), Santamaria-Gracia (2017), and Cruse (2004), pragmatics is the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms. Levinson (as cited in Tarigan (1993)), adds that pragmatics studies the relationship between language and context that underlies the understanding of utterance meaning. Thus, pragmatics goes beyond semantic meaning (literal meaning) and includes contextual meaning—the meaning intended by the speaker.

In speech act theory, Karim & Affif (2006), classifies speech acts into three types (1) Locutionary acts – the act of saying something according to its lexical or structural meaning; (2) Illocutionary acts – the act of doing something through speech, such as commanding, advising, or promising; (3) Perlocutionary acts – the act that produces an effect on the listener, such as obedience, motivation, or persuasion. Furthermore, categorizes speech acts based on their communicative functions into five types: (1) Representative – stating, reporting, or describing something; (2) Directive – commanding, advising, or requesting; (3)

Expressive – praising, thanking, or criticizing; (4) Commissive – promising or swearing; and (5) Declarative – deciding, prohibiting, or permitting.

In the classroom context at SDN 12 Payung, these five types of speech acts frequently appear in teacher–student interactions. For example, teachers use directive acts when giving instructions, expressive acts when praising students’ work, and representative acts when explaining lesson materials. Moreover, pragmatic force (illocutionary force) is a crucial aspect that determines how an utterance functions in communication. Pragmatic force reflects the strength of meaning behind an utterance that can prompt the listener to take certain actions. For instance, when a teacher says, “Come on, who has finished writing?”, the utterance is not merely a question—it also serves to motivate students to complete their tasks quickly. Therefore, understanding the types of speech acts and their pragmatic force is essential for improving classroom communication effectiveness. Teachers who can strategically use appropriate speech acts are more likely to create a conducive learning environment, respect individual student differences, and foster mutual respect in classroom interactions.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Type and Research Approach

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to describe in depth and naturally the phenomenon of teachers’ speech acts in Indonesian language learning at SDN 12 Payung. The qualitative method enables the researcher to understand the meaning behind utterances, their contextual use, and the pragmatic force that arises during classroom interactions.

According to Hadi (1993), qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects—such as behavior, perceptions, and actions—holistically, through descriptions in the form of words and language in a natural context.

### 2.2 Research Object and Subject

- **Research Subject:** The fifth-grade Indonesian language teacher at SDN 12 Payung.
- **Research Object:** The utterances produced by the teacher during the teaching and learning process of the Indonesian language.

The teacher was selected because she represents the communicative practices of elementary school teachers, exhibiting various types of speech acts and pragmatic forces.

### 2.3 Data Sources

The data sources consist of:

- **Primary Data:** Recordings of the teacher’s utterances during classroom instruction, classroom observations, and interview results.
- **Secondary Data:** Supporting documents such as lesson plans (RPP), classroom observation notes, and teaching reflection reports that help analyze the context of the speech acts.

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### *2.4 Data Collections Techniques*

The data were collected through three main techniques:

1. **Classroom Observation** – Directly observing the Indonesian language learning activities to record teacher-student verbal interactions.
2. **Recording** – Audio-recording the teaching sessions to allow for detailed transcription and analysis of each utterance.
3. **Interview** – Conducted with the teacher to understand the intended meaning and contextual background of her utterances.

### *2.5 Research Instrument*

The instruments used in this study include observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and a speech act analysis sheet.

**Table 1.** Below is an example of the instrument used to analyze the teacher's speech acts:

No	Teacher's Utterance	Type of Speech Act (Searle)	Context	Pragmatic Force	Student Response
1	"Please repeat your reading more clearly, okay?"	Directive	Giving instruction on reading	Motivation and guidance	The student corrects their reading
2	"Your writing is excellent today."	Expressive	Giving praise	Appreciation	The student smiles and becomes more enthusiastic
3	"Who knows the meaning of this word?"	Interrogative/Representative	Eliciting student knowledge	Encouraging participation	Students raise their hands
4	"I promise, if you finish this exercise, we will play a word game."	Commissive	Motivating students	Promise of a reward	Students eagerly complete the task

### *2.6 Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles & Huberman (2019), model, consisting of three stages:

1. **Data Reduction** – Selecting and focusing on utterances relevant to the research objectives.
2. **Data Display** – Presenting the data in tables and descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding.

3. **Conclusion Drawing** – Interpreting the meaning of speech acts and their pragmatic forces based on the classroom communication context.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

##### a. Observation and Speech Recording Results

Based on the results of observation and recordings of Indonesian language learning at SDN 12 Payung, a total of 65 teacher utterances were identified, reflecting five types of speech acts according to Searle's classification. The distribution of these speech act types is shown in the following table:

**Table 2. Distribution of Teacher Speech Act Types in Indonesian Language Learning**

Type of Speech Act	Number of Utterances	Percentage (%)	Example of Utterance
Directive	28	43.1	"Come on, open page 25, let's read together."
Expressive	15	23.1	"Excellent! You've understood the story well."
Representative	10	15.4	"This sentence shows an event in the past."
Commissive	7	10.8	"I promise, those who are active will get a star."
Declarative	5	7.6	"Alright, now let's start writing a new text."
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>	—

From the table above, it can be seen that directive speech acts are the most dominant type used by the teacher during the learning process. This indicates that the teacher plays an active role in directing, motivating, and controlling students' learning activities.

##### b. Pragmatic Force Analysis

The analysis of pragmatic force shows that each teacher utterance carries a specific communicative function that influences students' responses. For instance, directive speech acts convey pragmatic forces such as motivation and instruction, while expressive speech acts carry affirming and emotional forces that boost students' confidence.

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Teachers also employ commissive speech acts to encourage participation and make classroom interaction more engaging. Meanwhile, declarative speech acts are used to manage the flow of instruction, such as starting or closing a lesson.

### ***3.2 Discussion***

The findings indicate that the Indonesian language teacher at SDN 12 Payung most frequently uses directive and expressive speech acts. The dominance of directive speech acts suggests that the teacher serves as the primary controller of classroom activities—using language to instruct, correct, and manage the class.

The use of expressive speech acts demonstrates the teacher's concern for students' emotional aspects. Through praise and encouragement, the teacher fosters a positive classroom atmosphere that enhances learning motivation.

The pragmatic force inherent in the teacher's utterances fulfills various communicative functions—not only to convey information but also to shape students' behavior, emotions, and participation. This finding aligns with Searle's theory (1979), which states that language is not merely used to *say something*, but also to *do something*.

Thus, employing a variety of speech acts appropriate to the learning context enhances communication effectiveness and contributes to meaningful and interactive Indonesian language instruction.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. The teacher's speech acts in Indonesian language learning at SDN 12 Payung consist of five main types: directive, expressive, representative, commissive, and declarative. Among them, directive speech acts are the most frequently used, as the teacher often gives instructions, guidance, and motivation during lessons.
2. The pragmatic force reflected in the teacher's utterances demonstrates various communicative functions that support the learning process. The teacher uses pragmatic force to direct students, provide reinforcement, build participation, and enhance learning enthusiasm.
3. The use of appropriate and varied speech acts can improve the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning. Teachers who understand communicative context and pragmatic functions of language can create interactive, polite, and emotionally supportive classroom environments.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of pragmatic competence for teachers in designing effective classroom communication. It is expected that the results of this research can serve as a basis for developing teacher training programs in pragmatics and classroom communication, particularly in elementary schools.

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