

# Directive Speech Acts In Trilingual Students' Classroom Interactions At Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha

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## Abstract

The evolution of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) toward a trilingual education model (Arabic, English, and Indonesian) has created a complex communicative landscape in which directive speech acts serve as a primary pedagogical tool. This study aims to: (1) identify the types of directive speech acts employed in trilingual classroom interactions at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha; (2) analyze their pragmatic functions in teacher-student and student-student interactions; and (3) examine how these functions differ between Arabic-dominant Islamic studies lessons and Indonesian/English-dominant general education lessons. Adopting a qualitative descriptive approach with a sociopragmatic lens, data were collected from 12 hours of non-participant observations, audio-visual recordings, and semi-structured interviews with three subject teachers and approximately 90 junior high school students (Grades 7–9) at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha. Data were analyzed using Searle's (1979) directive taxonomy and Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive flow model, with researcher triangulation and data source triangulation (inter-rater reliability: Cohen's Kappa = 0.87) applied to ensure credibility. Seven directive types were identified commanding (38%), requesting (22%), suggesting (12%), inviting (10%), prohibiting (8%), begging (6%), and advising (4%) distributed unevenly across languages. Commands and prohibitions dominated Arabic-medium Islamic studies (42% of all directives), while requests, suggestions, and invitations predominated in English and Indonesian general education lessons (58%). Peer directives were genuinely trilingual, with Indonesian as the primary medium (61%). The study concludes that directive speech acts at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha perform a "dual-identity" function, balancing traditional religious authority with modern pedagogical facilitation, demonstrating that pragmatic competence is essential for effective multilingual educational communication.

**Keywords :** *Directive Speech Acts, Trilingual Classroom, Teacher-Student Interaction, peer student interaction*

## Introduction

Modern Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have undergone significant transformation from purely religious institutions into sophisticated trilingual educational environments where Arabic, English, and Indonesian operate simultaneously within the same institutional space. This linguistic multiplicity creates complex communicative challenges: each language carries distinct pragmatic weights, power distances, and pedagogical expectations (Xie, 2020). The shift toward Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum (Li, 2022), which demands a transition from teacher-centered authority to student-centered facilitation, creates a direct tension with the traditional Arabic-

dominant command structures inherited from classical pesantren pedagogy. This root problem, namely the absence of systematic sociopragmatic understanding of how directive speech acts function across three languages within the same institution, constitutes the primary gap this study addresses. Communication in educational settings is not merely a social activity for information transfer; it is a vital mechanism for establishing relationships, fostering motivation, and channeling learner behavior toward desired outcomes (Li, 2022). The quality of educator-student interaction is a critical determinant of learning effectiveness (Xie, 2020).

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on three interconnected bodies of literature. First, (Austin, 1962) speech act theory introduced the concept that language is performative rather than merely descriptive, distinguishing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Building on Austin, (Searle, 1979) developed a comprehensive directive taxonomy including commanding, requesting, suggesting, inviting, begging, prohibiting, and advising which remains the most widely applied framework in pragmatic classroom discourse analysis. Directives are defined as illocutionary acts in which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to perform an action, with the degree of directness and social imposition varying across subtypes (Izar et al., 2021). Second, (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic framework emphasizes that speech act interpretation is deeply context-dependent, shaped by social distance, power relations, and cultural norms. This framework is essential for explaining why the same directive type (e.g., a command) carries different weight in Arabic versus Indonesian within the same institution. Third, (Li, 2022) and (aleksic G, 2022) translanguaging framework conceptualizes multilingual speakers not as parallel monolinguals but as users of a unified multilingual repertoire from which they draw strategically, assigning distinct pragmatic weight to each language. Together, these frameworks enable a nuanced analysis of how directive speech acts operate across three sociopragmatically differentiated languages (Tanduk, 2023).

Despite a growing body of research on classroom directive speech acts in Indonesia, three critical gaps persist in the literature. First, most studies focus on monolingual or bilingual environments: (Nisa & Abduh, 2022) examined directive speech acts in Indonesian elementary schools and found a dominance of question directives in a monolingual setting, while (Nuraeni, 2025) explored English teacher talk in vocational high schools but limited their scope to English-only interactions. (Susanti&Liusti, 2025) identified commanding as dominant in high school classrooms but focused exclusively on Indonesian-medium teacher-centered interactions. None of these studies examine directive speech acts in a genuinely trilingual context where three languages operate simultaneously with distinct pedagogical and social functions. Second, existing pesantren language studies, such as (Wardoyo, 2017) Investigation of Friday sermon imperative acts, have focused exclusively on monological religious discourse, overlooking the dynamic, bidirectional classroom interactions between teachers and students and among students themselves. Third, the literature lacks a systematic examination of how language code selection alters the illocutionary force, pragmatic function, and reception of directives within the same institutional setting, a gap that is particularly significant given Indonesia's educational reform under the Merdeka Curriculum (Prastio, 2024) (Nguyen, 2022.)

This study addresses these gaps by investigating Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha, a trilingual educational institution where Islamic studies are conducted in Arabic while general subjects utilize Indonesian and English. The novelty of this study lies in three distinct contributions. First, it is the first study to systematically map directive speech acts across all three languages (Arabic, English, and Indonesian) within a single pesantren classroom

context, documenting how illocutionary force and pedagogical function vary by language choice. Second, unlike previous studies that examine only teacher directives, this study captures both teacher-student and student-student directive interactions, revealing a rich ecology of peer-to-peer pragmatic behavior in a trilingual setting. Third, this study bridges sociopragmatics and translanguaging theory by demonstrating that trilingual directive selection is not arbitrary but constitutes a purposeful sociopragmatic performance that constructs and negotiates identity, authority, and solidarity. Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha serves as an ideal research site due to its well-established trilingual curriculum, its heterogeneous student body representing various Indonesian ethnicities, and its integration of traditional pesantren values with modern educational standards.

Focusing on junior high school students (Grades 7–9) is particularly pertinent. These students, aged 12 to 15, are in a critical developmental transition from childhood to adolescence, where their linguistic and social identities are actively being constructed (Yulian, 2023). At this level, students possess sufficient proficiency in Indonesian, Arabic, and English to engage in meaningful trilingual communication, yet they still require structured teacher interventions to navigate complex academic tasks. Initial observations at Al-Aqsha revealed a fascinating spectrum of directives: from authoritative Arabic commands such as “Na’am al’an iftahna kutubakunna” (Yes, now open your books) in religious classes to collaborative Indonesian requests such as “Siapa yang bisa jelasin materi?” (Who can explain the material?) in science subjects. These phenomena suggest that language choice and directive form are strategically aligned with the learning context and the desired student response, a pattern consistent with the facilitative teacher role (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024).

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer three research questions: (1) What types of directive speech acts are employed in trilingual classroom interactions at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha? (2) What are the specific functions of these directive speech acts in both teacher-student and student-student interactions across Islamic studies and general education lessons? (3) How do the functions of directive speech acts differ between Islamic studies (Arabic-dominant) and general education (Indonesian/English-dominant) lessons? By answering these questions, this research aims to provide a detailed account of the sociopragmatic dynamics in modern Islamic boarding schools, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of how language shapes learning in a globalized Indonesian educational context.

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## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a sociopragmatic approach to examine directive speech acts in a trilingual environment at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha. More specifically, this study adopts a descriptive-interpretive design, which is appropriate for studies aiming to document, classify, and interpret naturally occurring communicative phenomena without experimental manipulation (Creswell, 2023). The sociopragmatic lens, grounded in (Yule, 1996) framework, situates the analysis of directives within their broader social, relational, and institutional contexts, acknowledging that utterance meaning is co-constructed by speaker intent, contextual norms, and hearer interpretation. The qualitative paradigm was chosen for its ability to

provide an in-depth picture of social interactions that quantitative measurements may overlook. (Creswell, 2023). This section outlines the procedural steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, allowing for potential replication in similar multilingual contexts. This study was conducted at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha, which was deliberately chosen because of its well-established trilingual curriculum. The research participants consisted of three teachers representing religious subjects with a predominance of Arabic and general subjects with a predominance of Indonesian/English, as well as approximately 90 junior high school students from grades 7, 8, and 9, a level chosen because of their proven ability to manage code-switching and complex instructions in three languages (Yulian, 2023).

Data was collected through three main techniques: non-participant observation, audio-visual recording, and semi-structured interviews. Researchers recorded 12 hours of classroom interactions in subjects including Islamic History (Arabic), English, and Natural Sciences (Indonesian), capturing authentic directive speech acts in their natural environment (HL, 2023). Field Notes Observations were supplemented with field notes documenting nonverbal cues such as body movements and facial expressions, which are crucial for interpreting the illocutionary force of commands (Tanduk, 2023). Following the observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers and students to clarify communicative intentions and capture student understanding. Data analysis followed (Miles and Huberman, 1994) interactive model, comprising three concurrent stages: (1) data reduction, in which all recorded interactions were fully transcribed verbatim and coded using (Searle, 1979) seven directive categories, with the language of each utterance tagged as an additional variable; (2) data display, in which coded directives were organized into analytical matrices by directive type, interactional direction (teacher-student vs. student-student), subject (history Islamic lessons vs English lesson and natural science education lesson, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, in which patterns were interpreted in relation to the sociopragmatic and translanguaging theoretical frameworks. Member checking was conducted with two teacher participants to verify transcription and interpretation accuracy. To ensure accurate analysis, data source triangulation and researcher triangulation (involving two independent coders with an inter-rater reliability of 0.87 using Cohen's Kappa) were applied, with all participants protected through written consent forms and the use of pseudonyms (Nuraeni, 2025).

## Results

This section presents the findings of the study in response to three research questions, organized into two analytical categories: (1) the types of directive speech acts used in trilingual classroom interactions and (2) the functions of these directive acts in two directions of interaction: teacher-student and student-student. Overall, the data obtained from 12 hours of classroom observations at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha yielded a total of 215 directive utterances across three subjects (History Islamic, English, and Natural Sciences) and three language media (Arabic, Indonesian, and English). Of these, 124 (57.7%) occurred in teacher-student interactions and 91 (42.3%) in student-student interactions. Seven types of directive speech acts were identified commanding (38%), requesting (22%), suggesting (12%), inviting (10%), begging (6%), prohibiting (8%), and advising (4%) distributed unevenly across languages. Commands and prohibitions were dominant in Arabic-medium Islamic studies lessons, while requests, suggestions, invitations, and advice were more prevalent in English- and Indonesian-medium general education lessons. Indonesian was the primary medium for peer directives, appearing in

all seven directive types in student-student interactions. These overall findings indicate a clear trilingual functional differentiation in directive speech acts, which are detailed in the sub-sections below. Data show a rich and diverse pragmatic picture, in which seven types of directive speech acts, namely commanding, requesting, suggesting, inviting, begging, prohibiting, and advising, are used dynamically in Arabic, Indonesian, and English. These actions have diverse pedagogical and social functions, depending on the direction of interaction and the language code used.

### **Types of Directive Speech Acts in Trilingual Classroom Interactions**

#### **Commanding**

Commands are a form of speech that we often hear in all classes, especially in Islamic studies classes that use Arabic as the language of instruction. According to (Searle, 1979), commands are a form of speech in which the speaker obliges the listener to perform a certain action based on their authority. The following data shows the use of commands in interactions between teachers and students:

#### **Datum 1**

(Teacher–Student | Arabic | Islamic History Lesson, Grade 7)

(Teacher–Student | Arabic | Islamic history lessons, Grade 7)

Teacher: "*Na'am al'an iftahna kutubakunna.*"

(Yes, now open your books)

Students: (immediately open their books)

This straightforward command, uttered without preamble or embellishment, demonstrates the high level of authority that already exists in the *ustadz-santri* relationship at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha. From (Searle, 1979) perspective, this utterance is a prototypical command directive with maximum illocutionary force in which the speaker, holding a position of institutional authority, obliges the hearer to perform an action with no room for negotiation or refusal. The directive takes the form of a first-person plural imperative in Arabic ("*iftahna*," meaning "let us open"), which, while grammatically inclusive, functions pragmatically as a unilateral command rather than a genuine invitation, as evidenced by the students' immediate compliance without verbal response. The use of Arabic reinforces the illocutionary force of this command: as the language of the Quran and Islamic religious instruction, Arabic carries institutional and spiritual authority that transcends ordinary linguistic politeness conventions, making obedience practically obligatory for students within the pesantren moral economy. This is in line with (Yule, 1966) view that the illocutionary force of a command cannot be separated from the social context in which it is produced authority is not merely grammatical but socioculturally constituted. Furthermore, the absence of any softening devices such as hedges, politeness markers, or justificatory clauses signals that the speaker perceives the power asymmetry as so well-established that face-threatening acts require no mitigation. The students' immediate response confirms the success of the perlocutionary effect of the command, indicating that it was understood and perceived as non-negotiable. Commanding can also be observed in the context of general education, as shown below:

#### **Datum 2**

(Teacher–Student | English | English lessons, Grade 8)

Teacher: "Please open your textbook to page 45."

Students: (open their books to the specified page)

Although the word “please” is used, this expression remains a command in a pragmatic context because it leaves no room for negotiation or refusal. The use of the word “please” serves as a marker of politeness that softens the surface form of the directive without altering its underlying illocutionary intent. In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, this utterance remains a command despite the presence of “please,” because the propositional content still unilaterally directs student behavior toward a specific, non-negotiable action, opening the textbook to a precise page. Importantly, the word “please” serves a face-saving function in Brown and Levinson, 1987) terms by attending to the students’ negative face (their desire for autonomy), while the directive’s content simultaneously imposes upon it. This pattern reflects what (Leech, 1983) describes as a strategic balance between assertiveness and face-saving, which is particularly relevant in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, where teachers are encouraged to project a less authoritative and more facilitative image. Pragmatically, the shift from Arabic (Datum 1) to English (Datum 2) in the commanding sub-type is itself significant: it reflects a code-mediated shift in the teacher’s projected identity from spiritual authority figure to modern academic instructor. The identical perlocutionary outcome of immediate compliance across both data points demonstrates that commanding retains its directive force across linguistic codes, though the relational texture differs markedly. The shift to English also signifies a shift in educational identity from the sacred authority conveyed in Arabic to the academic modernity associated with English-language teaching.

In student-to-student interactions, commands appear during peer-led activities where one student takes on a leadership role in the group:

### Datum 3

(Student–Student | Arabic | Islamic history lessons, Grade 8)

Student A: *"Iqra' ma'ii."*

(read with me)

Student B: (begins reading)

Unlike teacher commands, peer commands at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha are not exclusively delivered in Indonesian. As evidenced by this datum, Arabic also emerges as a medium for peer commanding, which is a distinctive finding that validates the genuinely trilingual nature of student-student interaction at this institution. This phenomenon can be explained through (Li, 2022) translanguaging framework: students do not simply switch between separate linguistic systems, but draw from a unified trilingual repertoire, selecting Arabic for peer commands when the academic-religious context activates that register. The use of Arabic in peer interaction here is pragmatically motivated rather than institutionally mandated, as no teacher is present requiring it which demonstrates that students have internalized Arabic as a legitimate medium for directive acts within their shared communicative ecology. From (Searle, 1979) perspective, this peer command functions as a direct directive with moderate illocutionary force: unlike the unilateral teacher commands in Datum 1, its force is partially tempered by the horizontal power relationship between peers, yet it retains the imperative grammatical structure (*"Iqra' "*, the second-person masculine singular imperative) that marks it unambiguously as a command rather than a request or suggestion, particularly during Islamic studies sessions where students are immersed in Arabic-medium instruction and naturally extend its use

into peer interaction. The command "*Iqra' ma'ii*" (Read with me) is direct and unmitigated,

### Requesting

Requests differ from commands in that they allow the listener a degree of freedom of choice, with commands being regarded as invitations rather than obligations (Searle, 1979) Requests are the second most frequently observed pattern, particularly dominant in general education classes taught in Indonesian and English

#### Datum 4

(Teacher–Student | Indonesian | Science Education, Grade 9)

Teacher: "*Siapa yang bisa jelasin materi yang sudah tadi ibu jelaskan?*"

(Who can explain the material that I just explained?)

Student: (raises hand to answer)

This interrogative functions pragmatically as an invitation to conscious engagement. The use of interrogative structures rather than direct commands gradually reduces the illocutionary force of the directive, positioning the teacher as a facilitator rather than an authority figure. In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, this utterance is classified as a request a directive in which the speaker wants the hearer to perform an action but presents it as optional rather than obligatory. Structurally, the interrogative frame "*siapa yang bisa*" (who can) encodes conditionality: participation is contingent on the student's self-assessed ability, which simultaneously functions as an indirect motivational strategy by inviting students to demonstrate competence. This is distinct from the Arabic commands in Datum 1, where no such optionality is encoded. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic perspective, the choice of Indonesian as the medium for this request is also significant: Indonesian carries a more egalitarian, low-power-distance register compared to Arabic in this institutional context, signaling that the teacher-student relationship in science class operates under different relational norms than in Islamic studies. The open invitation contained in "who can" provides psychological space for students to participate according to their own conditions, as emphasized by (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024) The students' voluntary response, by raising their hands, indicates that the request is considered an invitation rather than coercion. In interactions between students, requests arise during collaborative tasks when a student needs help from a peer:

#### Datum 5

(Student–Student | Indonesian | Science Education, Grade 9)

Student A: "*Eh, boleh minjem pulpen bentar?*"

(Hey, can I borrow your pen for a moment?)

Student B: "*Boleh, nih.*"

(Sure, here you go.)

This utterance is a request that is not overly forceful, marked by the modal verb "*boleh*," which indicates a request for permission rather than a command. The presence of the intensity-reducing word "*bentar*" further reduces the level of forcefulness, while the informal particle "*eh*" indicates that the interaction is casual and peer-oriented. Together, these linguistic features weaken the force of the command and position the speaker not as an authority figure, but rather as someone acting out of solidarity. From a sociopragmatic perspective (Yule, 1996) this request functions within an equal power

relationship, where compliance is optional, not expected. The choice of Indonesian reinforces this interactional framework, as it serves as the default language for informal communication among peers. The listener's immediate acceptance ("Sure, why not") indicates that the request is successfully perceived as non-threatening and cooperative, reflecting a priority on maintaining social harmony over the exercise of power in student-to-student interactions.

### **Suggesting**

Suggestions are a type of command in which the speaker proposes possible actions to the listener without imposing obligations or expressing strong emotional urges (Searle, 1979) Suggestions are mainly found in group work and general educational environments where collaborative problem solving is encouraged.

### **Datum 6**

(Student–Student | English | English lessons, Grade 8)

Student 1: "Let's work on question number 3 first, okay?"

Student 2: "Sure."

This statement is best classified as a suggestion with a low degree of obligation, as evidenced by the inclusive form "let's," which frames the proposed action as a shared activity rather than an imposed command. The closing question "okay?" serves as a means of seeking agreement, explicitly asking for the listener's consent and thereby making compliance negotiable this utterance operates within an equal power relationship, where both participants share control over the organization of the task. The use of English, in this context, reflects an academic environment while maintaining a framework of collaborative interaction. Unlike commands, the directive force here is softened through inclusivity and negotiation, in line with (Searle, 1979) idea that suggestions express the speaker's belief in the mutual benefits of the proposed action. The listener's immediate acceptance ("Sure") confirms that the expression was successfully interpreted as a cooperative and non-coercive directive, functioning primarily as a mechanism for task negotiation and joint decision-making in peer-to-peer interactions. In teacher-student interactions, suggestions often arise at the end of a lesson or when the teacher guides students through problem-solving activities:

### **Datum 7**

(Teacher–Student | English | English Lessons, Grade 8)

Teacher: "Maybe you should try to look at the second paragraph to find the answer."

Student: (turns to the second paragraph and re-reads)

The phrase "maybe" accompanied by "should try" operates as a layered hedging strategy that effectively reduces the illocutionary force of this utterance from a command to a suggestion. In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, this is classified as a suggesting directive one in which the speaker proposes a course of action while leaving the hearer's autonomy formally intact. Pragmatically, the double hedge (epistemic modal "maybe" + volitional "should try") serves two simultaneous functions: it attenuates the face threat to the student's autonomy, and it positions the teacher as a co-learner or guide rather than an authority who issues directives. This is consistent with (Yule,1996)) observation that reduced illocutionary force in suggestions reflects a speaker's sensitivity to face needs,

particularly negative face (freedom from imposition). The choice of English as the medium is pragmatically significant: English in this context carries connotations of collaborative, student-centered pedagogy, contrasting with the high-authority Arabic commands of Islamic studies. This suggestion serves to support the learning process by scaffolding without neglecting student autonomy, which is central to the role of teachers as facilitators (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). The student's autonomous response of turning to re-read the paragraph demonstrates successful perlocutionary uptake: the suggestion was received not as an imposition but as cognitive guidance, confirming that this reduced-force directive effectively promotes self-regulated learning behavior. This finding aligns with (Nguyen, 2022) observation that strategic use of hedged directives is essential for teachers acting as facilitators in student-centered learning environments. The reaction of students who act independently shows that the suggestion is accepted as cognitive guidance, not a command, thus proving the success of this form of direction in encouraging independent learning.

### Inviting

An invitation is a directive speech act that invites the listener to participate in an activity by offering an open choice, where consent is entirely voluntary, and refusal does not result in significant social consequences (Yule, 1996). Invitations are most often found in teacher-student interactions during the interactive stage of a lesson.

### Datum 8

(Teacher-Student | Indonesian | Science Education, Grade 7)

Teacher: *"Ayo siapa yang mau coba maju ke depan dan kerjain soal ini?"*

(Come on, who wants to come forward and try to solve this problem?)

Students: (Two students raise their hands and volunteer)

In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, inviting is a directive subtype in which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to participate in a joint activity, with the critical condition that compliance is presented as entirely voluntary and refusal carries no significant social consequence. The discourse markers *"ayo"* (come on) combined with *"siapa yang mau"* (who wants to) simultaneously signal enthusiasm and optionality, clearly distinguishing this utterance from a command or request. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic perspective, the teacher's choice of Indonesian as the medium for this invitation is itself pragmatically significant: Indonesian carries a more egalitarian, low-power-distance register compared to Arabic, signaling a shift in the teacher's relational identity from religious authority figure to collaborative facilitator. This low-stakes framing reduces students' affective filters (Krashen, 1985) creating a psychologically safe environment for voluntary participation. The double response two students volunteering simultaneously confirms a successful perlocutionary effect, indicating that the invitation was received not as a disguised command but as a genuine open opportunity, consistent with (Humaeroah, 2023) and the facilitative pedagogical (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024) In student-to-student interactions, these invitations emerged during group activities when one student involved a peer in a shared task:

### Datum 9

(Student-Student | Indonesian | General Education, Grade 9)

Student A: *"Aca, abis mapel ini jajan yuk ke kantin!"*

(Aca, after this class, let's go snack at the canteen!)

Student B: "*Yuk, ayok!*"  
(Sure, let's go!)

This utterance is an example of an invitation directive issued in a peer context, marked by the use of "*yuk*," an informal Indonesian pragmatic particle that encodes solidarity and warmth rather than obligation. In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, inviting is a subtype of directive in which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to join in a joint action, with the critical condition that both parties are positioned as mutual beneficiaries. The command is framed as a shared plan, making it pragmatically non-coercive: Student A positions themselves as an equal participant in the proposed activity rather than as someone issuing orders from a position of authority. This is consistent with (Yule, 1996) observation that invitation directives between social equals are characterized by the absence of power-asymmetry markers and the presence of solidarity markers. The use of the recipient's personal nickname "*Aca*" at the beginning of the utterance further indexes social closeness and reduces the potential for face threat, making refusal socially costly without making compliance feel mandatory. Student B's enthusiastic double-affirmative response ("*Yuk, ayok!*") confirms that the perlocutionary goal of the invitation gaining willing participation was successfully achieved. This is in line with what (Prastio, 2024) describe as peer invitations that emphasize a balance between assertiveness and social warmth, which reinforces a collaborative and friendly spirit in interactions between students in a multilingual school environment.

### **Pleading**

Pleading is a directive speech act characterized by high emotional sincerity and urgency, in which the speaker earnestly asks the listener to perform or refrain from performing an action, usually used when other imperative strategies have proven unsuccessful (Searle, 1979). Requests are the least frequently used type of command, but pragmatically have significant meaning due to their emotional nature.

### **Datum 10**

(Teacher-Student | Arabic | Islamic History Lesson, Grade 9)

Teacher: "*Yaa banaatii, arjuukunna an turaaji'na ad darsa jayyidan, haadza lii mashlahatikum.*"

(O my daughters, I beg you to review the lesson well, this is for your own benefit.)

Students: (become attentive and open their books to review)

In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, pleading is a directive subtype characterized by a high degree of emotional sincerity, typically deployed when less emotionally charged directive strategies have proven insufficient. This expression operates simultaneously at linguistic, cultural, and relational levels. The opening address "*yaa banaatii*" (O my daughters) invokes a quasi-familial register that repositions the teacher from institutional authority figure to nurturing caregiver, thereby lowering social distance and increasing receptivity. From (Yule, 1966) sociopragmatic framework, this strategic reduction of perceived power distance softens the face-threatening dimension of the directive while preserving its urgency. The phrase "*arjuukunna*" (I beg you feminine plural) encodes maximum emotional sincerity, culturally amplified by the all-female classroom composition. Crucially, the justification "*haadza lii mashlahatikum*" (this is for your own good) shifts the moral weight of compliance from obligation to personal benefit, invoking students'

self-interest and responsibility. In (Brown and Levinson's, 1987) terms, this constitutes a sophisticated positive politeness strategy that simultaneously attends to students' positive face and mitigates the directive's imposition. This approach is particularly effective within the *pesantren ustadzah-santriwati* bond, where authority is mediated by spiritual and familial trust. The students' attentive response confirms that this emotionally sincere, culturally resonant, and rationally justified plea achieves a perlocutionary effect that a direct command alone may fail to produce at this juncture in the lesson (Yule, 1996). In student-to-student interactions, requests are seen during transitiona moments outside the core of the lesson when a student urgently asks for physical help from a peer:

### **Datum 11**

(Student-Student | Indonesian | science Education, Grade 7)

Student A: "*please dong, bantuin ngerjain soal nomor 5 yang ini, ana beneran ngga ngerti banget, tolong dong sekali ini aja, minta tolong banget.*"

(Come on, help me with question number 5, I really don't understand it at all, please just this once, I'm really asking for your help.)

Student B: "*Yaudah mana sini.*"

(Alright, bring it here.)

In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, this utterance exemplifies peer pleading: a directive characterized by escalating emotional sincerity and urgency, deployed when ordinary request strategies are perceived as insufficient to secure compliance. The accumulation of pleading devices "*please dong,*" "*tolong dong,*" "*sekali ini aja,*" and "*minta tolong banget*" creates a graduated emotional intensification that signals genuine academic desperation rather than casual convenience. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic perspective, this escalation functions as a face-work strategy: by making their vulnerability explicit, Student A increases the social cost of refusal for Student B, framing compliance as an act of peer solidarity rather than obligation. The explicit acknowledgment of incomprehension ("*ana beneran ngga ngerti banget*") serves as a sincerity marker that lends credibility to the request, making rejection socially and morally difficult within peer norms of mutual academic support. "*Yaudah mana sini*" (Okay, bring it here) not only confirms that the request reached its goal quickly and effectively, but also reveals that the peer spontaneously took on the role of tutor, transforming the act of requesting into a moment of peer mentoring. This exchange reflects what (Prastio, 2024) describe as emotion-based peer commands, where urgency and emotional transparency serve as the primary pragmatic tools for eliciting cooperation in informal interactions among students in the classroom.

### **Prohibiting**

Prohibiting is a directive speech act in which the speaker explicitly forbids the listener from performing a certain action, with the aim of regulating behavior and maintaining social order (Searle, 1979). From a theoretical standpoint, prohibiting is distinguished from commanding by its negative propositional content: rather than directing the hearer toward an action, prohibiting directs them away from one. (Searle, 1979) classifies prohibitions as a directive subtype with high illocutionary force, particularly when uttered by a speaker with institutional authority. In (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic framework, prohibitions represent a maximum imposition on the hearer's negative face (freedom of action), and their successful production therefore presupposes either strong

power asymmetry or highly compelling contextual justification. Prohibitions are commonly found in the context of Islamic studies using Arabic, especially when discipline requires immediate enforcement.

### Datum 12

(Teacher–Student | Arabic | Islamic history lesson, Grade 7)

Teacher: "*Laa tatakallamna, isma'na jayyidan.*"

(Do not speak, listen well.)

Students: (stop talking and pay attention)

The phrase "*laa tatakallamna*" uses the feminine plural jussive form in Arabic, a grammatical choice that accurately reflects the composition of the Islamic study class, which consists entirely of women. This specification removes any ambiguity about who is being addressed, reinforcing the firmness and clarity of the prohibition. The positive command that immediately follows, "*isma'na jayyidan*" (listen well), transforms the statement into a two-way regulatory action, simultaneously discouraging undesirable behavior and establishing a desirable alternative. The adverb "*jayyidan*" (well) raises the standard of compliance beyond mere silence, demanding active listening and attention. The use of Arabic in the context of Islamic studies gives this prohibition religious and institutional authority, making noncompliance costly for students both practically and culturally. These findings are in line with (Nisa & Abduh, 2022) who observed that prohibitive commands in the context education carry weight beyond ordinary classroom management and enter the realm of moral and spiritual discipline. The students' quick response proves that grammatically precise Arabic prohibitions are one of the most effective regulatory tools in the pesantren environment. In student interactions, prohibitive actions arise during group work when a student attempts to regulate the behavior of classmates to protect group focus or social harmony:

### Datum 13

(Student–Student | Indonesian | science Education, Grade 8)

Student A: "*hey, jangan berisik ih, ntar kita dimarahin guru.*"

(Hey, don't be noisy, we'll get scolded by the teacher.)

Student B: (lowers voice and continues working quietly)

In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, prohibiting in peer contexts requires reframing, as horizontal power relationships preclude the use of unilateral authority. The softening phrase "*ntar kita dimarahin guru*" (we will be scolded by the teacher) strategically displaces the source of authority from the speaker to an external figure, allowing Student A to regulate behavior without claiming personal dominance. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic perspective, this constitutes a face-saving strategy: by framing the prohibition as a shared risk rather than a personal directive, Student A minimizes the face threat to Student B's negative face (freedom of action) and preserves horizontal social equality. The use of Indonesian reinforces the informal peer register, where prohibitions are typically explained and contextually justified rather than simply issued. This pattern reflects what (Prastio, 2024) describe as consequence-based peer regulation a pragmatic strategy in which shared external consequences substitute for personal authority, making compliance feel cooperative rather than submissive. Student B's immediate compliance confirms the perlocutionary success of this strategy.

## Advising

Advising is a directive speech act in which the speaker recommends actions that are in the best interests of the listener, usually characterized by a tone of concern, expertise, or worry, rather than obligation or authority (Yule, 1996). Counseling is observed in both directions of interaction, but is more prominent in general educational settings where critical thinking and student autonomy are emphasized.

### Datum 14

(Teacher–Student | English | english lessons, Grade 9)

Teacher: "You should review your notes before the exam. It will really help you understand the material better."

Student: (nods and writes a reminder in their notebook)

The modal verb “In (Searle, 1979) taxonomy, advising is a directive subtype defined by two key sincerity conditions: the speaker genuinely believes the proposed action benefits the hearer, and the hearer has not already committed to performing it. The modal verb “should,” combined with a supporting rationale (“it will really help you”), satisfies both conditions, framing the utterance as advice grounded in academic concern rather than institutional authority. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic framework, this advisory directive demonstrates low power imposition and high positive face attention: the teacher attends to the student’s desire for academic success and frames the directive as personally beneficial rather than externally obligatory. The absence of punitive consequences or authority markers positions the teacher as a mentor rather than a superior. In (Brown and Levinson's, 1987) terms, this constitutes a positive politeness strategy: the teacher aligns herself with the student’s interests and goals, minimizing the face-threatening dimension of the directive. This advisory pattern reflects the educational shift, in which teachers are encouraged to guide students toward self-regulated learning (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). The student’s internal response writing a self-reminder in their notebook confirms that the advice was received not merely as external instruction but as personally meaningful and actionable guidance, demonstrating a successful perlocutionary outcome. In student-to-student interactions, guidance emerged during moments of peer mentoring, particularly when more proficient students guided peers who were struggling:

### Datum 15

(Student–Student | English | English Conversation Class, Grade 9)

Student A: "You should speak more slowly so they can understand you better."

Student B: "Oh okay, thanks for the advice."

This data, taken from an English conversation class where students practice speaking in public, provides a clear example of peer advising conducted entirely in English. In (Searle's (1979) taxonomy, advising is a directive subtype characterized by the sincerity condition that the speaker genuinely believes the proposed action benefits the hearer, and that the hearer has not already committed to performing it. The modal verb “should,” accompanied by a causal reason clause (“so that they can understand you better”), satisfies both conditions: the advice is offered for Student B’s benefit, and it addresses a communicative weakness the hearer may not have been aware of. What critically distinguishes this advice from a command or prohibition, in Searle’s framework, is its non-obligatory propositional force: the advice is offered, not imposed, and its

acceptance is voluntary, as confirmed by Student B's explicit metalinguistic acknowledgment of its advisory nature ("thanks for the advice"). From (Yule,1996) sociopragmatic perspective, this utterance demonstrates minimal power asymmetry and maximum positive face attention Student A attends to Student B's desire to be competent and successful, framing the advice as supportive rather than critical. The choice of English as the medium here is also pragmatically significant: it reflects the students' active engagement with the school's English immersion policy, demonstrating that peer-to-peer direction in English arises naturally when the communication context demands it rather than only when institutionally mandated. Student B's explicit metalinguistic acknowledgment confirms that both parties understand the pragmatic function of the utterance. This exchange illustrates what (Amerstorfer & Freiin von Münster-Kistner, 2021) describe as "peer scaffolding" a process whereby students support each other in their linguistic and academic development through informal and non-threatening guidance in a multilingual environment.

### **Functions of Directive Speech Acts in Teacher-Student and Student-Student Interactions**

The analysis of directive speech acts across both interactional directions reveals five dominant functions: (1) managing and regulating classroom activities, (2) facilitating and scaffolding learning, (3) maintaining discipline and social order, (4) encouraging participation and student agency, and (5) negotiating peer collaboration. These functions do not operate in isolation; rather, they intersect and overlap depending on the directive type, the language chosen, and the specific pedagogical context of interaction. These findings are broadly consistent with but extend beyond previous research. (Nisa & Abduh, 2022), in their study of Indonesian elementary school classrooms, identified question directives as the dominant form in monolingual settings a pattern that differs markedly from the command dominance observed here in Arabic-medium lessons, suggesting that language choice and institutional culture significantly shape directive distributions. Similarly, (Nuraeni, 2025), examining English teacher talk in Indonesian vocational high schools, found that requests and suggestions were the most common directive types in English-medium lessons, a finding that aligns closely with the present study's observations in English general education lessons (Data 2, 5, 7, 15). However, where Nuraeni's study was limited to a single language, the current findings reveal that the same teacher uses markedly different directive profiles depending on which of the three languages they are teaching in a multilingual dimension absent from previous work. (Wardoyo, 2017) finding that Arabic commands dominate in Islamic religious monologue is confirmed and extended here to the interactive classroom context, where Arabic commands are shown to function similarly even in dialogic (teacher-student) settings. The presence of genuine trilingual directives in student-student interactions with Arabic peer commands, English peer advice, and Indonesian peer requests all documented goes beyond what any existing single-language study has reported and constitutes a distinctive contribution of this research.

In teacher-student interactions, the main function of verbal commands is to control, which is most strongly manifested through commands and prohibitions conveyed in Arabic during Islamic lessons. As shown in Datum 1, the command "*Na'am al'an iftahna kutubakunna*" achieves immediate compliance because Arabic has institutional and spiritual authority in the pesantren tradition an influence that makes the command non-negotiable without the need for explicit threats or sanctions. The immediate response given by the female students demonstrates a successful perlocutionary effect, proving

that the command was understood and considered non-negotiable. Similarly, the prohibition in Datum 12, "*Laa tatakallamna, isma'na jayyidan*," functions beyond behavioral regulation into the realm of moral and spiritual discipline, in accordance with (Nisa & Abduh, 2022). Notably, the grammatical precision of this prohibition using the Arabic feminine plural form directly refers to the composition of the Islamic studies class, whose members are all female, leaving no ambiguity about who is being addressed or what behavior is expected. The adverb "*jayyidan*" (well) further raises the level of compliance, conveying that passive silence is not enough; active and attentive listening is required.

In addition, requests, suggestions, and advice in English and Indonesian in general education lessons fulfill the functions of learning and developing independence. As shown in Datum 4, the teacher's interrogative request "Who can explain the material that I explained earlier?" has a pragmatic function as an invitation to participate consciously, placing the teacher as a guide rather than a giver of orders. The open request contained in "who can" provides psychological space for students to participate based on their individual circumstances, in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). Datum 7 further illustrates this scaffolding function through softening words such as "maybe" and "you should try," which effectively reduce the force of the command and place the teacher in the role of facilitator rather than instructor. The shift to English in Datum 2 and Datum 7 also signifies a shift in educational identity from the sacred authority conveyed in Arabic to the academic modernity associated with English-language instruction indicating that language choice itself is a functional tool in teacher-student direction.

Inviting and pleading in teacher-student interaction perform a particularly significant relational and motivational function. As shown in Datum 8, the inviting directive "*Ayo, siapa yang mau coba maju ke depan dan kerjain soal ini?*" creates a low-risk environment where participation is celebrated rather than required, thereby reducing students' affective filters as described by (Krashen, 1985). The double response two students volunteering confirms that the invitation directive successfully created a psychologically safe atmosphere for engagement, consistent with (Humaeroah, 2023). Datum 10 presents a more nuanced example: the teacher's pleading directive "*Yaa banaatii, arjuukunna an turaaji'na ad darsa jayyidan, haadza lii mashlahatikum*" operates not through institutional authority but through an emotional and quasi-familial appeal rooted in the *ustadzah-santriwati* bond. The opening sentence "*yaa banaatii*" directly creates an atmosphere of intimacy and motherliness, while the feminine plural marker "*arjuukunna*" carries a higher degree of emotional honesty that is culturally reinforced in the all-female classroom context. The added justification "*haadza lii mashlahatikum*" shifts the moral weight of compliance from institutional obligation to personal benefit, appealing directly to the students' sense of self-interest and responsibility. This form of pleading emotionally sincere, culturally relevant, and rationally justified achieves a perlocutionary effect that direct commands may fail to produce at certain moments, confirming (Yule, 1996) argument that the illocutionary force of a directive is influenced by its emotional and cultural weight within a specific sociopragmatic context.

in student-student interaction, directive speech acts operate along fundamentally different social lines. Rather than vertical institutional authority, peer directives are grounded in horizontal solidarity, collaborative management, and mutual linguistic monitoring. From (Yule, 1996) sociopragmatic framework, the key distinguishing feature of peer directives is the absence of inherent power asymmetry: both parties hold relatively equal social positions, which means that directive force must be constructed

through other means, such as appeals to shared consequences, relational warmth, or task-based legitimacy, rather than institutional role. This is consistent with Searle (1979) sincerity conditions for directives: in peer interactions, the speaker must make the proposed action seem reasonable and mutually beneficial in order to secure perlocutionary compliance without the backing of authority. Notably, peer directives at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha are genuinely trilingual, a finding that significantly validates the trilingual claim of this study and extends beyond what previous monolingual studies could document. Arabic emerged as the medium of peer commanding in Datum 3, where “*Iqra’ ma’ii*” reflects the natural extension of Islamic studies immersion into peer interaction, drawing its pragmatic legitimacy from shared academic and religious context rather than hierarchical position. This supports (Li, 2022) translanguaging claim that multilingual speakers draw from a unified repertoire strategically rather than switching between isolated codes. English emerged as the medium of peer advising in Datum 15, where Student A’s utterance “You should speak more slowly so they can understand you better” arises naturally in an English conversation class. Student B’s response, “Oh okay, thanks for the advice,” explicitly confirms the advisory nature of the directive through the metalinguistic label “advice,” reflecting what (Amerstorfer & Freiin von Münster-Kistner, 2021) describe as peer scaffolding in a multilingual environment.

Indonesian as the dominant language in informal solidarity among peers, appearing in requests (Datum 5), invitations (Datum 9), pleas (Datum 11), and prohibitions (Datum 13). In Datum 5, the request “*Eh, boleh pinjam pulpen sebentar?*” (Hey, can I borrow your pen for a moment?) uses the word ‘*boleh*’ combined with the softening particle “*sementar*” to form a polite and non-threatening request that maintains the dignity of both parties, in line with (Yule, 1996) observation that requests between friends are often accompanied by mitigation strategies to maintain social harmony. In Datum 9, the invitation “Aca, let’s go to the canteen after class!” frames the joint activity as an equal invitation, with the personal nickname ‘*Aca*’ and the particle “*yuk*” creating immediate social closeness. The prohibition in Datum 13, “Hey, don’t be noisy, or the teacher will scold us,” refers to what (Prastio, 2024) describe as consequence-based peer regulation, where shared external consequences replace personal authority to maintain horizontal social equality. Finally, the request in Datum 11 through repeated calls combined with the academic justification “I really don’t understand at all” transforms the simple request into a moment of peer guidance, where Student B spontaneously takes on the role of tutor.

Across both interactional directions, language choice emerges as the most critical determinant of the function, force, and reception of directive speech acts at Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha. Arabic directives consistently invoke traditional authority, spiritual discipline, and religious identity; English directives project academic modernity and global competence; while Indonesian directives provide affective warmth and informal solidarity, functioning as the lingua franca of peer interaction across all directive types. This trilingual functional differentiation confirms that directive speech acts in this institution are not merely linguistic tools but deeply embedded sociopragmatic performances, through which teachers and students continuously negotiate power, identity, and meaning in a complex multilingual educational landscape (Li, 2022)

## Discussion

The findings of this study invite a broader theoretical and comparative reflection on the role of directive speech acts in multilingual educational settings. This discussion addresses three interrelated dimensions: (1) the theoretical implications of trilingual

directive differentiation, (2) the pedagogical significance of the dual-identity function, and (3) the study's contributions relative to existing literature.

The most theoretically significant finding of this study is the systematic functional differentiation of directive speech acts across the three languages at Al-Aqsha. Arabic directives predominantly command and prohibitions consistently invoke institutional and spiritual authority, functioning as tools of moral and religious discipline. This pattern confirms and extends (Wardoyo, 2017) earlier observation about Arabic imperative speech acts in Friday sermons, demonstrating that the authority-encoding function of Arabic directives is not limited to monological religious contexts but operates equally in interactive classroom discourse. From Searle, 1979) theoretical perspective, these Arabic commands and prohibitions represent directives at their highest illocutionary force: the propositional content is non-negotiable, the social power differential is maximized, and the perlocutionary expectation is immediate compliance. This is consistent with (Yule, 1966) sociopragmatic principle that the selection of a particular directive form indexes the speaker's assessment of the social distance and power relationship between interlocutors.

In contrast, English and Indonesian directives at Al-Aqsha function primarily as facilitative scaffolds that promote student agency rather than compliance. Requests, suggestions, and advice in these languages create low-stakes participation opportunities consistent with the pedagogical aims of Indonesia, which explicitly positions the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than a dispenser of knowledge (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). This finding aligns with (Pangemanan et al., 2025) argument that hedged, reduced-force directives are essential for creating student-centered learning environments, while the multilingual dimension adds a new layer of understanding: the functional shift from high-force to low-force directives at Al-Aqsha is not merely a stylistic choice but a sociolinguistically meaningful act of identity negotiation a shift from the role of religious authority to that of academic facilitator, mediated through language choice. This confirms (Wei, 2018) Translanguaging theory: language selection here is not arbitrary code-switching but a purposeful deployment of sociolinguistic resources to achieve specific interactional goals.

The "dual-identity" pedagogical model identified in this study whereby the same institution uses directives to simultaneously preserve traditional Islamic authority and promote modern academic autonomy represents a theoretically significant finding that speaks directly to the broader literature on tradition and modernity in Indonesian Islamic education. It suggests that the perceived tension between traditional pesantren pedagogy and the incorporation of Arabic and English in modern education is not necessarily conflictual, but is instead managed through pragmatic compartmentalization, in which each language embodies a distinct directive repertoire, enabling teachers and students to navigate multiple identities as fluidly as they alternate between languages. This is a novel contribution that extends beyond what prior studies in either Islamic education pragmatics (Wardoyo, 2017) or EFL directive research (Pangemanan et al., 2025) have been able to capture. Future research should examine whether teachers consciously cultivate this dual-identity pragmatic competence or it emerges organically from the trilingual institutional environment, and whether it can be replicated in other multilingual Islamic educational contexts in Southeast Asia.

## Conclusion

This research has systematically examined the nuances of directive speech acts within the trilingual environment of Pondok Modern Al-Aqsha. The findings demonstrate that the use of directives is not merely a linguistic choice but a strategic pedagogical and sociopragmatic tool. Regarding the types of directives, the study identifies a dominant use of commands in Arabic-medium Islamic studies, which aligns with the "power distance" often found in traditional religious (Nisa, 2022). In contrast, requests and suggestions are more prevalent in English and Indonesian during general education lessons, indicating that the choice of linguistic code is intrinsically linked to the level of directness and the perceived social distance between teachers and students (Robinson, 2022).

Furthermore, the functions of these directives vary significantly based on the interactional context. In teacher-student interactions, directives function as a mechanism for regulatory control and pedagogical scaffolding. In Islamic studies, the focus is on maintaining traditional authority and ensuring doctrinal precision (Kalsum et al., 2024), whereas, in general education, directives serve to stimulate student agency and critical thinking, consistent with the objectives of modern learner-centered curricula (Amerstorfer, 2021). In student-student interactions, directives function as collaborative management tools, where trilingualism allows for a unique form of peer-scaffolding and mutual linguistic monitoring through "translanguaging" practices (Li, 2022).

Finally, the functional differentiation between the two curricula reveals a "dual-identity" pedagogical model. The Islamic studies curriculum utilizes directives to preserve spiritual and cultural continuity, while general education lessons utilize them to foster modernity and global competitiveness (García, 2022). This study concludes that the successful integration of traditional pesantren values with modern educational standards is mediated through the sophisticated and flexible use of directive speech acts across three languages, allowing the institution to navigate the intersection of tradition and global education (Prastio, 2024).

Based on the findings, several suggestions are proposed for various stakeholders. For teachers and educators in multilingual institutions, it is recommended to be more conscious of the "pragmatic force" of their directives. While direct commands are effective for discipline, increasing the use of petitionary and advisory directives in all languages can further lower the students' "affective filter" and enhance engagement (Amerstorfer, 2021).

For educational practitioners and curriculum developers, there is a need to incorporate pragmatic competence specifically the use of polite and context-appropriate directives into the language immersion programs of pesantren. This would ensure that students are not only fluent in Arabic and English but also pragmatically competent in various social contexts (Taguchi, 2023). Lastly, for future researchers, this study suggests expanding the scope to include non-verbal communication and prosody in trilingual directives, as well as conducting longitudinal studies to observe the long-term development of students' pragmatic skills in multilingual environments (Tanduk, 2023).

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