

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, research question, research objectives, the significances of the study and the definition of terminologies.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The effective teacher's communication is a key factor in successful language learning. As one of the parts of the teacher's communication, speech acts significantly impact English learning. Amir (2023) states that the impact of using appropriate speech acts can increase students' engagement in learning, help them understand the material better, and create an interactive learning environment. Also, one important element of this communication is the use of directive speech acts, which help manage classroom interaction and guide students through instructional tasks. These speech acts include giving instructions, asking questions, offering suggestions, and giving advice—functions especially vital in language classrooms. Novitasari et al. (2023) found that various communication styles, such as friendly, brief, attentive, animative, relaxed, and dramatic, affect student motivation and engagement.

In English language teaching, speech acts do more than transmit information; they perform actions. Austin (1962) introduced the concept of speech acts in pragmatics, which was later developed by Searle (1979), who classified them into five types of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Among these, directive speech acts dominate classroom discourse, as they prompt student actions and responses. For example, teacher may say, "*Open your book on page 10*" (command), "*Can you read this paragraph?*" (request), or "*You should review this at home*" (advice). Searle (1979) notes that directives may take various forms, including orders, requests, questions, prohibitions, and permissions. These utterances are often reinforced by non-verbal cues like eye contact or gestures to enhance clarity and authority.

A number of studies have highlighted the impact of teacher speech acts on student engagement in the classroom. Suryandani & Budasi (2021), for example,

reported that the use of questions-categorized as a type of directive speech act-can stimulate student motivation and encourage more active participation in class discussions. Similarly, Azizah et al. (2020) found that students respond more positively to directive forms such as requests and advice, compared to direct orders, which are often perceived as too controlling. In a study by Basra & Thooyibah (2017), it was revealed that 70% of teacher's utterances were directive, which supports the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that prioritizes student-centered and productive language use. In addition, Aini et al. (2023) showed that assertive (57%) and directive (40%) speech acts were most often used by teacher to convey instructions clearly and maintain classroom structure. These findings suggest that a balanced use of directive speech acts-from questions to suggestions-can foster a more interactive and supportive learning environment, which in turn increases student participation and understanding.

Directive speech acts have a very important role in the teaching of certain genres such as procedural texts, especially at the junior high school level. As noted by Lating (2022), procedural texts are designed to guide readers on how to complete a task or create something through a series of logically sequenced steps. The genre is characterized by the use of imperative verbs (e.g., mix, cut, stir), temporal connectives (e.g., first, then, next, finally), and adverbs of manner (e.g., slowly, carefully), all of which are integral components of its linguistic structure. In the classroom context, these linguistic features not only serve to build students' genre awareness but also create opportunities for teacher to use directive speech acts effectively. Instructions such as "Write the title first" or "Underline the verbs in your procedure" illustrate how teacher talk can help improve students' understanding of text structure while encouraging active participation in the task.

In the class practice, the teacher actively use directive speech acts to help students understand the structure and content of procedure texts. Research conducted by Purwaningsih et al. (2022) found that in the absence of clear verbal instruction from the teacher, ninth-grade junior high school students often struggle to write procedural text systematically. The reality in the field shows that although procedural text is taught formally, students' ability to understand and produce this text still often faces various obstacles. As revealed by Rachma Nabila et al. (2024),

many students have difficulty logically sequencing procedure steps when speaking or writing due to a weak understanding of instructions and the use of imperative language. This finding is in line with Novianti et al. (2022) research, which shows that although supporting media such as pictures can help students understand, the main role remains in the clarity of instructions given by the teacher.

Although the use of directive speech acts in teaching procedural text has become a common practice in the classroom, studies examining this phenomenon are still limited, especially at a junior high school level. Most previous studies focus more on the use of learning media, such as videos or pictures, to improve students' writing skills; this is expressed in research conducted by Jupri (2019) and Lating (2022) where they examine more about improving students' ability to write procedural text through the use of learning media such as videos. Meanwhile, studies focusing specifically on the teacher's directive speech acts in the context of procedural text learning at a junior high school level are still very limited. The same thing is also revealed in the research conducted by Triwiyanti et al. (2023) and Rachma Nabila et al. (2024), who discuss more inquiry-based teaching methods or scientific approaches but have not examined deeply the pragmatic aspects of the use of directive speech acts in the classroom.

Based on this background, this research needs to be conducted to fill the void of studies on the use of directive speech acts in teaching procedural text in junior high school. Understanding how the teacher use directive speech acts in real classroom practice is expected to contribute to the development of English learning strategies that are more communicative, effective, and in accordance with the needs of students at a junior high school level.

## **1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

The selection of this topic is based on the growing awareness of how teacher's communication strategies influence the effectiveness of English language teaching. Among these strategies, directive speech acts are essential because they show the teacher's role in guiding learning activities, managing classroom interaction, and maintaining students' attention. According to Siregar and Pulungan (2022), directive speech acts such as commands, requests, and suggestions are

commonly used by teacher to lead students' responses and clarify expectations during lessons.

Although many studies have discussed directive speech acts in classroom discourse, only a few have focused on their use in teaching procedural texts at the junior high school level. Research by Suryandani and Budasi (2021) revealed that teacher use directive expressions to encourage participation and critical thinking, but their study was conducted in a vocational school with a different learning context. In addition, Nisa and Abduh (2022) reported that junior high school students often find it difficult to understand procedural texts without clear and structured teacher guidance. Considering these findings, this study aims to explore teacher's directive speech acts in teaching procedural texts to provide deeper understanding and practical insights that can support more communicative and effective English teaching at the junior high school level.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Based on the issues highlighted in the background and the research gaps that have been identified, this study aims to investigate the use of directive speech acts within the context of teaching procedural text at a junior high school. In this context, directive speech is an essential communicative tool that structures instructional discourse guides classroom activities and promotes students' engagement and comprehension. Despite their pedagogical significance, prior research has predominantly explored directive speech acts in general classroom communication without addressing their role in teaching procedural text. To address this gap, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What types of directive speech acts are used by the teacher in teaching procedural text at a junior high school? And,
- 2) How do the teacher's directive speech acts influence students' engagement and understanding of procedural text in the classroom?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

In line with the title "Teacher's Directive Speech Acts in Procedural Text at a Junior High School" and the research questions presented earlier, this study aims to achieve two main objectives. These are:

- 1) To identify the types of directive speech acts used by the teacher in teaching procedural texts at the junior high school level. This involves classifying the forms of directive expressions such as commands, requests, advices and suggestions based on relevant pragmatic theories to reveal how they function in guiding students' learning.
- 2) This study aims to analyze how the teacher's use of directive speech acts influences students' engagement and understanding of procedural texts. The analysis focuses on the way these directives affect students' responses, participation, and comprehension of both the structure and language of the text.

This research also considers the classroom context, including patterns of interaction, teaching style, and overall learning atmosphere. Through this investigation, the study expects to provide a clearer understanding of how directive speech acts support effective English teaching, especially in helping junior high school students learn procedural texts more successfully.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study aims to analyze the use of directive speech acts by the teacher in teaching procedural text at a junior high school. The results are expected to contribute to two main aspects, namely theoretical and practical, especially in the field of English language teaching in the context of procedural text.

#### **1.5.1 Theoretical Aspect**

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of pragmatics, especially within speech act theory. It provides empirical data on how teacher use directive speech acts in actual classroom settings during procedural text instruction. The study expands understanding of directive speech's forms, functions, and communicative intentions, particularly in helping students follow instructional sequences. By focusing on procedural text, the research demonstrates how directive speech acts support learners in processing step-by-step tasks and language use. Additionally, the results may serve as a foundation for further studies on classroom discourse, teacher talk, and the development of pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, especially among junior high school learners.

### **1.5.2 Practical Aspect**

In practical terms, this study is relevant for teacher, students, and curriculum developers in the field of English language education. For teacher, this study offers valuable insights into the use of directive speech acts in procedural text instruction and their effects on students' engagement and comprehension. The findings can assist teacher in evaluating and refining their communication strategies in the classroom to achieve greater clarity and effectiveness. For students, a better understanding of directive speech patterns can enhance their ability to follow instructions and improve their understanding of procedural texts. This awareness supports more meaningful participation in classroom activities. For curriculum developers, this study provides useful input for designing teacher training programs that focus on pragmatic strategies in instructional communication. The research can also support the development of a more communicative English language teaching curriculum that meets the needs of junior secondary school students. Overall, this study offers theoretical contributions to academic discourse and practical benefits for improving classroom interaction and curriculum development.

### **1.6 Definition of Terminologies**

#### **1) Speech Acts**

Speech acts refer to utterances that perform actions rather than merely convey information. As introduced by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1979), speech acts are central in pragmatics, where speaking is viewed as doing. This study analyzes speech acts as part of teacher communication during English instruction.

#### **2) Directive Speech Acts**

Directive speech acts are functions intended to influence the listener's behavior, such as giving instructions, requests, commands, or suggestions Searle (1979). In the context of this research, directive speech acts are examined as instructional tools teacher use to guide students in understanding and producing procedural text.

#### **3) Procedural Text**

Procedural text explains how to perform a task or create something through a sequence of ordered steps. According to Lating (2022), it typically includes a goal, required materials, and steps written using imperative language. In this study, procedural text is the target material in which the teacher's use of directive speech acts is observed and analyzed.