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Directive Acts in Bargaining Interaction: A Study of EFL Speaking Assignments

(Tindak Direktif dalam Interaksi Tawar-Menawar: Studi pada Tugas Berbicara EFL)

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Abstract

This study investigates the types of directive acts used by EFL students in bargaining interactions during speaking assignments and how those acts function in the negotiation process. Bargaining requires students to ask questions, negotiate prices, and persuade interlocutors, which makes it a rich context for examining pragmatic competence. A qualitative descriptive design was employed. The data were utterances containing directive acts taken from seven bargaining role-play videos produced by second-semester students of the English Language Education Study Program in the Speaking for Professional Context course. The videos were transcribed verbatim, and the utterances were identified, classified using Ibrahim's (1993) classification of directive acts, and interpreted through Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, following the qualitative analysis model of Miles et al. (2014). The analysis identified 86 directive utterances covering all six categories: Questions (39), Requestives (28), Requirements (11), Advisories (3), Prohibitives (3), and Permissives (2). Questions dominated because buyers sought information about prices, discounts, and payment before negotiating, while Requestives, mostly realized through interrogatives and modal verbs such as can and could, served as polite strategies for negotiating prices. The less frequent categories performed specific functions at particular stages, namely directing procedural actions after agreement, offering solutions, preventing the negotiation from ending prematurely, and granting permission to try products. These findings indicate that the students selected directive forms suited to context and negotiation stage, reflecting developing pragmatic competence, and that bargaining role-play offers an authentic context for practicing directive acts in EFL speaking instruction.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji jenis tindak direktif yang digunakan mahasiswa EFL dalam interaksi tawar-menawar pada tugas berbicara serta bagaimana tindak tersebut berfungsi dalam proses negosiasi. Tawar-menawar menuntut mahasiswa bertanya, menegosiasikan harga, dan membujuk lawan tutur, sehingga menjadi konteks yang kaya untuk menelaah kompetensi pragmatik. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif. Data berupa tuturan yang mengandung tindak direktif dari tujuh video role-play tawar-menawar yang dibuat mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris pada mata kuliah Speaking for Professional Context. Video ditranskripsi secara verbatim, kemudian tuturan diidentifikasi, diklasifikasikan berdasarkan klasifikasi tindak direktif Ibrahim (1993), dan diinterpretasikan melalui aspek situasi tutur Leech (1983) dengan model analisis kualitatif Miles dkk. (2014). Analisis menemukan 86 tuturan direktif yang mencakup keenam kategori: pertanyaan (questions) 39, permintaan (requestives) 28, perintah (requirements) 11, saran (advisories) 3, larangan

(prohibitives) 3, dan pemberian izin (permissives) 2. Pertanyaan mendominasi karena pembeli mencari informasi tentang harga, diskon, dan pembayaran sebelum bernegosiasi, sedangkan permintaan, yang sebagian besar diwujudkan melalui kalimat tanya dan verba modal seperti can dan could, berfungsi sebagai strategi santun dalam menawar harga. Kategori yang lebih jarang muncul menjalankan fungsi khusus pada tahap tertentu, yaitu mengarahkan tindakan prosedural setelah kesepakatan, menawarkan solusi, mencegah negosiasi berakhir terlalu dini, dan memberi izin mencoba produk. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memilih bentuk direktif yang sesuai dengan konteks dan tahap negosiasi, yang mencerminkan kompetensi pragmatik yang sedang berkembang, serta bahwa role-play tawar-menawar menyediakan konteks autentik untuk melatih tindak direktif dalam pengajaran berbicara EFL.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning requires not only grammatical accuracy and vocabulary mastery but also the ability to use language appropriately according to social contexts and communicative purposes (Embarek, 2026; Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024). This ability is closely related to pragmatic competence, which, as Yule (1996) explains, concerns how speakers convey intended meanings and how listeners interpret them based on context. Bargaining interaction is one speaking activity that draws on this competence. In bargaining role-plays, students ask questions, negotiate prices, offer alternatives, give suggestions, and persuade their interlocutors, all of which naturally involve directive language use.

Speech Act Theory offers a relevant framework for analyzing such language use. Austin (1962) argued that language is a tool for performing actions through utterances, and Searle (1979) classified illocutionary acts into five categories, including directives, which function to influence listeners to perform particular actions. To examine directives in greater detail, this study adopts Ibrahim's (1993) classification of six types (requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories), which is more suitable than Searle's broader categories because it accommodates the varied communicative functions that arise in negotiation. Each utterance is interpreted through Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations.

Recent studies have examined directive and illocutionary acts in EFL and ESL contexts. Rohmah et al. (2024) analyzed illocutionary acts in EFL classroom interaction at a vocational school in Jakarta and found that directive acts, particularly questioning, requesting, and advising, were among the dominant categories. Yulian and Mandarani (2023) reported that teachers in ESL classrooms frequently used directive acts alongside representative, expressive, and commissive acts. In an Indonesian university EFL classroom, Akil et al. (2021) found that students used questioning and clarification requests to sustain interaction during speaking performances. These studies show the importance of directive acts and questioning in language learning interaction.

However, a research gap remains. Rohmah et al. (2024) and Yulian and Mandarani (2023) focused on classroom interaction and teachers' utterances and relied on Searle's (1979) classification. Akil et al. (2021) examined students' speaking performances but concentrated on negotiation of meaning, without analyzing directive acts or applying Ibrahim's (1993) classification. Research on directive acts produced by EFL students in bargaining interactions, and on how those acts function in specific communicative contexts, remains limited.

This study addresses that gap in three ways. First, it focuses on students, rather than teachers, as producers of directive acts. Second, it situates the analysis in bargaining interaction as part of speaking assignments, a more authentic setting than ordinary classroom talk. Third, it combines Ibrahim's (1993) classification with Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations. The context of the study is a set of bargaining role-play videos produced by second-semester students of the English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo for the Speaking for Professional Context course, and the unit of analysis is utterances containing directive acts. The study aims to (1) identify the types of directive acts employed by EFL

students in bargaining interactions during speaking assignments, and (2) describe how those acts are used in the communication and negotiation process.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, selected because the study aims to describe and interpret linguistic phenomena as they occur naturally, without manipulation of variables (Nassaji, 2015). Qualitative inquiry is therefore most appropriate for uncovering the pragmatic meaning and communicative functions embedded in students' spoken utterances (Siregar et al., 2024).

The data consisted of utterances containing directive acts produced by students during bargaining role-plays in the Speaking for Professional Context course. They included words, phrases, and sentences that pragmatically functioned to influence, direct, request, suggest, prohibit, or encourage the interlocutor to perform a particular action, and were analyzed using Ibrahim's (1993) classification of directive acts.

The data sources were seven bargaining videos produced by second-semester students of Class A in the English Language Education Department (ELED) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo as a group assignment for the Speaking for Professional Context course. Each video, lasting three to four minutes, involved three to four students enacting buying-and-selling role-plays in English. The videos were selected because they provided a communicative context relevant to the research objectives, namely the use of directive acts in student-produced transactional interactions.

Data collection was conducted in four stages. First, the researcher collected the seven videos and watched each one repeatedly to understand the interaction context, participant roles, negotiation dynamics, and communicative goals underlying particular utterances. Second, all conversations were transcribed verbatim without modification, producing the primary data corpus. Third, the researcher identified utterances containing directive functions, that is, utterances pragmatically intended to influence, direct, request, suggest, prohibit, or encourage the interlocutor. Fourth, only utterances with clear directive functions relevant to the research objectives were retained; utterances without directive communicative purposes were excluded from the corpus.

Data analysis followed the qualitative model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), comprising five stages: data reduction, data classification, data interpretation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

In the data reduction stage, the researcher reviewed all transcriptions and focused on utterances relevant to the research objectives, setting aside data unrelated to directive acts. In the data classification stage, the selected utterances were categorized into one of the six directive act types proposed by Ibrahim (1993), namely requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories, based on the speaker's intention, communicative purpose, and situational context. In the data interpretation stage, the researcher analyzed how directive acts were used within the bargaining process by referring to Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, which encompass the speaker and hearer, context of utterance, goal of utterance, speech act as action, and utterance as a product of a verbal act. These aspects guided the explanation of how each directive act functioned in achieving specific communicative goals during negotiation. In the data display stage, the classified and interpreted data were presented in tabular form accompanied by descriptive explanation. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, conclusions were drawn based on patterns identified across the data.

Data trustworthiness was ensured through consistency verification, in which all classified utterances were re-read to confirm the accuracy of categorization. The context of each utterance, including the speaker's communicative intention and the situational conditions, was considered throughout to ensure that the identified pragmatic function aligned with the actual communicative situation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Distribution of Directive Acts

The analysis identified 86 utterances containing directive acts, and all six categories proposed by Ibrahim (1993) occurred in the bargaining interactions. Rather than depending on a single directive strategy, the students selected different types according to their communicative intentions and the stage of negotiation. The frequency of each type is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Frequency of Directive Speech Acts in Bargaining Interactions

No.	Type of Directive Acts	Frequency
1	Questions	39
2	Requestives	28
3	Requirements	11
4	Advisories	3
5	Prohibitives	3

6	Permissives	2
Total		**86**

Table 1 shows that *Questions* were the most frequent type, accounting for 39 utterances. This indicates that obtaining information was the primary communicative objective: before making offers or deciding to purchase, buyers generally sought information about prices, discounts, product specifications, and payment methods, so asking questions became the initial strategy for establishing the basis of negotiation.

The second most frequent category is *Requestives*, with 28 occurrences. Unlike *Questions*, which primarily obtain information, *Requestives* encouraged interlocutors to perform actions voluntarily. Most appeared when buyers negotiated prices, requested discounts, or asked sellers to reconsider their offers, which shows that bargaining is also a process of persuasion in which participants influence one another while maintaining cooperative relationships.

Requirements occurred 11 times. They generally appeared after agreement had been reached and participants needed to complete the transaction, for example by sending payment information, following procedural instructions, or completing administrative requirements. Compared with *Requestives*, they carried stronger directive force because speakers expected the hearers to perform specific actions rather than merely consider requests. The remaining categories were less frequent: *Advisories* and *Prohibitives* each appeared three times, and *Permissives* twice, yet each contributed important functions at particular stages of the interaction.

3.2 Analysis of Directive Acts

Each directive utterance was examined in terms of its linguistic form, communicative meaning, intended function, and contextual interpretation. Since several utterances demonstrate similar pragmatic characteristics, representative data were selected for detailed analysis, while utterances sharing the same communicative patterns are discussed collectively.

3.2.1 Questions

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Questions* are directive acts used by speakers to obtain information, clarification, or confirmation from the hearer. Although grammatically realized in interrogative forms, they are categorized as directive acts because they require the hearer to provide a verbal response. This category is represented by Datum 1.

Datum 1

Seller : Welcome to our store. How can I help you?

Buyer : *How much is it?*

Seller : It costs thirty million rupiahs.

The interaction occurs at the initial stage of bargaining. The buyer asks about the price after being offered assistance and has not yet made an offer or attempted to negotiate. The utterance *How much is it?* is a WH-interrogative sentence whose phrase *how much* specifically seeks price information. Based on Ibrahim's (1993) classification, it is a *Question* because its primary purpose is to obtain information from the hearer. Its directive force lies in the expectation that the seller will respond verbally, which is fulfilled by *It costs thirty million rupiahs*.

From the perspective of Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, the speaker is the buyer, while the hearer is the seller who possesses the required information. The context is a transactional interaction in which participants have different roles and objectives, and the goal of the utterance is informational rather than persuasive or authoritative. Pragmatically, the utterance reduces uncertainty and becomes the basis for the next stage, such as accepting the price or requesting a discount. Similar question patterns in the data suggest that EFL students consistently used interrogatives as an appropriate strategy for initiating and developing bargaining while maintaining a cooperative relationship.

3.2.2 Requestives

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Requestives* are directive acts in which speakers ask hearers to perform an action voluntarily. Unlike *Requirements*, which express stronger obligation, *Requestives* emphasize politeness and allow the hearer the freedom to accept or reject the request. They are therefore commonly realized through indirect expressions, interrogative sentences, or polite modal verbs. This study found 28 *Requestive* utterances, represented by Datum 40.

Datum 40

Seller: The final price is thirty million rupiahs.

Buyer: *Can you make it twenty-eight million rupiahs?*

Seller: Let me think about it.

The interaction occurs at the negotiation stage. The seller has informed the buyer of a special price, but the buyer still attempts to obtain a more favorable one. Instead of directly demanding a reduction, the buyer

uses a polite request that allows the seller to decide voluntarily. Linguistically, the utterance is an interrogative sentence using the modal verb *can*, which functions as a politeness strategy that softens the directive force. Rather than saying *Lower the price*, the buyer presents the action as a question, reducing the imposition on the seller.

Based on Ibrahim's (1993) classification, the utterance is a *Requestive* because its primary function is to ask the hearer to perform an action voluntarily. The buyer expects a lower price, but the utterance does not imply that the seller is obligated to comply. The seller's response, *Let me think about it*, shows that the seller retains the freedom to accept, reject, or negotiate the request. Pragmatically, the interrogative form expresses a request for a price reduction, so the function of the utterance is persuasive.

Based on Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, the speaker is the buyer and the hearer is the seller. The buyer's goal is a more advantageous purchasing condition, whereas the seller has the authority to decide whether to grant it. Since the buyer has no institutional authority over the seller, a polite and indirect strategy is pragmatically appropriate, particularly because buyers seek lower prices while sellers maintain product value, and forceful expressions may create interpersonal tension. By using the modal, the buyer minimizes the threat to the seller's face and presents the request as negotiable rather than obligatory.

3.2.3 Requirements

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Requirements* are directive acts in which speakers direct or instruct hearers to perform particular actions. Compared with *Requestives*, they express stronger illocutionary force because speakers expect compliance, although the degree of obligation varies with context and the relationship between participants. This study identified 11 *Requirements*, involving actions such as sending payment information, preparing transaction documents, and following procedural instructions. This category is represented by Datum 68.

Datum 68

Buyer: I agree with the price.

Seller: *Please send your account number.*

Buyer: Sure, I will send it now.

The interaction occurs after the negotiation has reached agreement. The buyer has accepted the price, so the participants are moving toward completing the transaction, and the seller instructs the buyer to provide an account number as part of the payment procedure. The utterance *Please send your account number* is an imperative sentence whose main verb *send* directly indicates the expected action, while the politeness marker *please* softens the expression without eliminating its directive force.

According to Ibrahim's (1993) classification, the utterance is a *Requirement* because its primary purpose is to direct the hearer to perform an action necessary for the transaction to continue. Unlike a *Requestive*, where the hearer has greater freedom to refuse, it occurs in a procedural context in which the action is expected to be completed, as the buyer's response, *Sure, I will send it now*, shows. From the perspective of Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, the speaker is the seller, who directs the procedural activity, and the hearer is the buyer. Since agreement has been achieved and both participants share the objective of completing the transaction, the stronger directive force of the imperative is pragmatically appropriate. The use of *please* also shows that directness and politeness are not necessarily contradictory.

3.2.4 Advisories

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Advisories* are directive acts in which speakers provide suggestions, recommendations, or advice considered beneficial to the hearers. Unlike *Requirements*, they do not oblige hearers to act, since hearers remain free to accept or reject them. In bargaining, *Advisories* occur when a participant proposes an alternative solution to overcome difficulties or prevent the negotiation from ending unsuccessfully. Three *Advisories* were identified, represented by Datum 79.

Datum 79

Seller: I am worried about installment payments.

Buyer: *Let's send an ID copy if needed.*

Seller: That's a good idea.

The interaction occurs when the negotiation encounters a potential problem related to installment payments. The seller expresses concern about the security or reliability of the payment process, and the buyer proposes submitting an identification document if necessary. The utterance *Let's send an ID copy if needed* uses the inclusive expression *let's*, which includes both speaker and hearer in the proposed action. Unlike a direct imperative, it presents the action as a shared solution, and the conditional phrase *if needed* further reduces the imposition.

Based on Ibrahim's (1993) classification, the utterance is an *Advisory* because the buyer gives a recommendation intended to solve the seller's problem rather than requiring the seller to act. The seller's response, *That's a good idea*, indicates acceptance. The communicative meaning is therefore cooperative rather than authoritative: the buyer recognizes the seller's concern and attempts to maintain trust. Viewed through

Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, both participants are involved in a transaction in which mutual trust is necessary, and the goal of the utterance is to reduce the seller's concern and encourage a cooperative solution. Although *Advisories* occurred only three times, they show that EFL students used directive expressions not only to obtain information or influence actions but also to provide constructive solutions.

3.2.5 Prohibitives

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Prohibitives* are directive acts through which speakers attempt to prevent hearers from performing particular actions. Unlike *Requirements*, they function to stop, restrict, or discourage actions that may produce undesirable consequences and are commonly realized through negative imperatives. Three *Prohibitives* were identified, and their low frequency indicates that the bargaining interactions were generally characterized by cooperation rather than restriction. This category is represented by Datum 82.

Datum 82

Buyer: I think the price is too expensive.

Buyer: I will look somewhere else.

Seller: *Don't go.*

Buyer: Why?

The interaction occurs when the buyer expresses dissatisfaction with the price and indicates an intention to leave. The seller recognizes that the buyer's departure would end the bargaining and eliminate the possibility of agreement, and therefore attempts to prevent it. The utterance *Don't go* is a negative imperative consisting of the negative marker *don't* and the base verb *go*; this structure explicitly signals the intention to prevent an action, and its conciseness gives it a relatively strong directive force.

According to Ibrahim's (1993) classification, *Don't go* is a *Prohibitive* because its primary function is to discourage or prevent the hearer from carrying out an action, but its meaning must be understood through context. Although it has the grammatical form of a prohibition, the seller exercises no formal authority over the buyer; the utterance functions persuasively, keeping open the opportunity for a different offer or an agreement. Based on Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, the speaker is the seller, the hearer is the buyer, and the context is a critical moment in which the interaction is about to end without agreement. Outside bargaining, the same expression might be interpreted simply as an attempt to restrict someone's movement. This demonstrates that the function of a directive act is strongly influenced by context, and that *Prohibitives* in the data served as interaction-maintaining strategies.

3.2.6 Permissives

According to Ibrahim (1993), *Permissives* are directive acts through which speakers grant permission or authorize hearers to perform particular actions. The speaker possesses the authority to allow or approve the requested action, so the communicative focus lies in providing authorization rather than requesting information or directing actions. Two *Permissives* were identified, making this the least frequent category in the data. It is represented by Datum 86.

Datum 86

Seller: These shoes are our newest collection.

Buyer: Can I try them on?

Seller: *Certainly.*

The interaction occurs when the buyer wants to evaluate the product before deciding whether to purchase it. The buyer asks permission to try on the shoes, and the seller responds positively, authorizing direct interaction with the product. Grammatically, *Certainly* is a short affirmative response, and its meaning cannot be understood from its structure alone. In the context of the preceding question, *Can I try them on?*, it functions as an authorization, so it is categorized as a *Permissive* based on Ibrahim's (1993) classification. As an isolated expression it may simply indicate agreement, but here it specifically functions as permission because it responds to the buyer's request.

From the perspective of Leech's (1983) aspects of speech situations, the speaker is the seller and the hearer is the buyer seeking permission. The context is the evaluation stage before a purchasing decision, and the seller, who controls access to the product, has the authority to grant or refuse permission. Pragmatically, granting permission contributes to trust and cooperation: by allowing the buyer to try the product, the seller demonstrates openness and confidence, which may reduce the buyer's uncertainty. Although infrequent, *Permissives* function as supportive directive acts that authorize actions necessary for product evaluation.

The functions and contexts of occurrence of each type of directive act are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Functions and Contexts of Directive Acts

Type	Main Function	Context of Occurrence
Questions	Obtaining information	Initial stage, before offers or price negotiation
Requestives	Negotiating price politely	Negotiation stage, when buyers ask for discounts or reconsideration

Requirements	Directing actions	After agreement, when the transaction is completed
Advisories	Providing suggestions or solutions	When obstacles arise during negotiation
Prohibitives	Preventing undesirable actions	When negotiation is at risk of ending without agreement
Permissives	Granting permission	Product evaluation stage before the purchase decision

These findings show that directive acts were not used randomly; each category fulfilled a specific function in the progression of negotiation. The students also demonstrated awareness of pragmatic appropriateness: instead of relying exclusively on direct commands, they frequently employed interrogative forms and polite request strategies to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships.

3.3 The Dominance of Questions in Bargaining Interaction

One of the most significant findings is that *Questions* were the most frequent directive acts, suggesting that bargaining is primarily an information-oriented activity: before negotiating prices or deciding to purchase, buyers needed information about prices, discounts, payment methods, and product quality.

This supports Ibrahim's (1993) classification, in which *Questions* are directive acts because they require hearers to provide the requested information. It also reflects the nature of transactional communication, which, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010), focuses on exchanging information to accomplish practical objectives. Because participants consistently gathered information before proposing alternative prices or requesting discounts, *Questions* became an effective strategy for reducing uncertainty and facilitating negotiation.

This finding is consistent with Rohmah et al. (2024), who reported that directive acts, functioning among other things to ask questions and direct learning activities, were among the dominant types in EFL classroom interaction. Although that study investigated teacher–student communication, both studies show that *Questions* facilitate communication and guide subsequent interaction. Unlike classroom discourse, however, where teachers primarily ask questions to monitor learning, *Questions* here were employed mainly by buyers to support transactional negotiation. The finding also aligns with Akil et al. (2021), who found that EFL students actively used questioning and clarification requests to maintain interaction and achieve mutual understanding during speaking activities.

3.4 Requestives as Politeness Strategies in Bargaining Interaction

The second major finding is the high occurrence of *Requestives*, indicating that participants preferred polite requests to direct demands when negotiating prices. Most were expressed through interrogatives and modal verbs such as *can* and *could*, allowing speakers to request actions without imposing excessive pressure. From the perspective of Ibrahim (1993), *Requestives* differ from *Requirements* because speakers expect voluntary rather than obligatory compliance, which suits bargaining situations where neither participant has institutional authority over the other.

The findings also support Leech's (1983) theory of politeness, which emphasizes that speakers often minimize imposition to maintain harmonious relationships. Instead of direct commands such as *Lower the price*, participants preferred expressions such as *Can you make it twenty-eight million?* or *Could you give me a little more discount?*, demonstrating awareness of pragmatic appropriateness. A similar tendency was identified by Yulian and Mandarani (2023), who found that indirect directive expressions helped maintain positive classroom interaction. Although the settings differed, both studies show that indirect strategies promote cooperation while reducing potential conflict.

The finding is also interesting when compared with Siregar and Pulungan (2022), who reported that commands, requests, and suggestions were the most frequent directive acts among teachers in EFL classrooms, with commands the most dominant. In the present study, *Requirements* were far less frequent than *Questions* and *Requestives*. This difference reflects the speakers' roles and contexts: teachers hold the authority to give commands in the classroom, whereas bargaining participants have no institutional authority over one another.

3.5 The Contextual Functions of Requirements, Advisories, Prohibitives, and Permissives

Unlike *Questions* and *Requestives*, the remaining categories appeared less frequently because they fulfilled more specific functions. *Requirements* generally occurred after negotiation had been completed, when speakers no longer persuaded their interlocutors but directed them to complete procedural activities such as sending payment information, signing documents, or following transaction procedures. They therefore reflected procedural communication rather than price negotiation.

Advisories occurred when participants proposed alternative solutions to maintain cooperation or solve emerging problems. Through expressions such as *Let's talk* or *Let's send an ID copy*, speakers encouraged collaborative decision-making rather than imposing authority, which shows that bargaining involves cooperative problem-solving in addition to price negotiation. *Prohibitives* were employed only when speakers tried to prevent actions that might terminate the negotiation prematurely; expressions such as *Don't go* and

Don't walk away yet functioned as persuasive strategies rather than authoritarian prohibitions, so their meanings depended on the interactional context rather than on grammatical form alone. *Permissives*, although identified only twice, also contributed meaningfully: by granting permission to inspect or try products, sellers reduced buyers' uncertainty and strengthened mutual trust. Directive acts thus serve multiple communicative functions beyond requesting information and negotiating prices.

3.6 Directive Acts and Students' Pragmatic Competence

Another important finding concerns the students' pragmatic competence. Participants selected directive expressions appropriate to different situations, adjusting their language to their interlocutors, communicative goals, and the stage of negotiation rather than relying on direct commands. This supports Leech's (1983) argument that interpreting speech acts requires consideration of speakers, hearers, communicative goals, and situational context. Several interrogatives functioned pragmatically as polite requests rather than simple questions, and imperatives performed different functions depending on whether they occurred during negotiation or after agreement.

The students' ability to vary directive expressions indicates developing pragmatic competence, which involves understanding not only grammatical correctness but also contextual appropriateness. Such competence is particularly important in EFL learning because successful communication depends on selecting expressions that suit both linguistic and social contexts. The present study shows that bargaining role-play provides an authentic context in which students can practice various directive strategies simultaneously.

3.7 Implications for EFL Speaking Instruction

The findings have pedagogical implications for speaking instruction. Bargaining activities encourage students to use English for authentic communicative purposes rather than merely practicing grammatical structures: during negotiation, they naturally ask questions, make requests, give suggestions and instructions, prohibit actions, and grant permission as communicative needs change. These demands allow learners to integrate grammatical knowledge with pragmatic competence, so bargaining role-play can be an effective classroom activity for improving students' communicative competence, especially their ability to use directive acts appropriately in real-life interaction.

3.8 Answering the Research Question

In answer to the research question, the students used all six types of Ibrahim's (1993) classification across the 86 identified utterances, in descending order of frequency: *Questions* (39), *Requestives* (28), *Requirements* (11), *Advisories* (3), *Prohibitives* (3), and *Permissives* (2), each serving the purposes summarized in Table 2. This study confirms that Ibrahim's (1993) classification provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing directive acts in bargaining interaction, and, combined with Leech's (1983) theory of speech situations, it explains not only their linguistic forms but also their communicative meanings and contextual functions. The study thus contributes to pragmatic research by demonstrating how EFL students strategically employ directive acts to accomplish transactional communication during speaking assignments.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined how directive acts were used by EFL students in bargaining interactions during speaking assignments. Based on seven bargaining videos produced by second-semester students, it identified 86 directive utterances representing all six types proposed by Ibrahim (1993): Questions (39), Requestives (28), Requirements (11), Advisories (3), Prohibitives (3), and Permissives (2).

Directive acts were used according to the communicative purposes and stages of the bargaining interaction. Questions were mainly used to obtain information about products, prices, and transaction conditions before negotiation, and Requestives to negotiate prices and discounts through polite and indirect expressions. Requirements directed interlocutors to perform actions related to completing the transaction, Advisories provided suggestions or recommendations, Prohibitives prevented actions that could interrupt the negotiation, and Permissives granted permission during the transaction.

Overall, the frequent use of Questions and Requestives indicates that information exchange and polite negotiation were central to the interaction. The findings also suggest that the students demonstrated awareness of pragmatic appropriateness by adapting their directive expressions to the communicative context. Thus, bargaining activities in speaking assignments provided students with opportunities to practice using directive acts appropriately while negotiating and maintaining cooperative communication.

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