

## Verdictive Speech Acts Produced by the Teacher in Classroom Activity

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### Abstract

All of the teacher's utterances during classroom activities have meanings that are not just information but also express certain things. For this reason, understanding linguistics is very crucial, especially in the field of speech acts that are directly related to communication and interaction between people. There are many types of speech acts and not all of them have been studied, one of which is the verdictive speech act. The purpose of this research is to examine the types of verdictive speech acts that are most often uttered by the teacher during a classroom activity. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The data were collected using observation in class VII-E at SMPN 2 Gudo, Jombang. The research data consisted of teacher utterances analyzed using Charles W. Kreidler's speech act theory. The data were analyzed using the analysis technique model developed by Miles and Huberman. The results showed that the type of verdictive speech act that was often expressed by the teacher was praise with 10 utterances out of 11 utterances and 1 utterance for congratulation. This study concluded that the types of verdictive speech acts that have been found by researchers are praise and congratulation. But other types of verdictive speech acts have not been found in this study including accusation, blaming, and condolence.

**Keywords:** *verdictive speech act; teacher utterances; classroom activity*

### INTRODUCTION

In classroom learning activities, speech acts play an important role in supporting the success of communication and interaction between teachers and students or in other words speech acts often appear in the form of communication and interaction between people. Speech acts often appear in daily conversations, including classroom interactions. As explained by George Yule (2006), speech acts are actions performed by a speaker through speech. However, according to Faturrochman et al. (2021), people can understand the meaning of utterances by understanding the context or situation when the conversation occurs. As in the teacher's utterance, "Please turn to page 14!" this utterance not only contains information but an order that must be carried out by students. Searle (2012) categorizes speech acts into five categories, namely:

1. Assertive - utterances that state facts or beliefs, such as, "The sun rises from the east."
2. Directive- utterances that encourage the listener to act, such as, "Please open the window."
3. Commissive - utterances that contain a promise or commitment, such as, "I will submit the assignment tomorrow".
4. Expressive - utterances that express feelings or emotions, such as, "I am very grateful for the help."
5. Declarative - One type of speech act that aims to change a certain condition such as "You graduated with a perfect score and were awarded a degree as a bachelor of education."

Some previous studies related to the topic are the types of speech acts most often produced by teachers and students in the classroom. One of the most frequently produced speech acts is directive speech act. Speech acts in the classroom are used to teach, give orders to students, direct, or ask for help (Arifah et al., 2024; Faturrochman et al., 2021; Nisa & Abduh, 2022; Suryandani & Budasi, 2021; Yulian & Mandarani, 2023). Based on research from Faturrochman et al. (2021), the speech acts most often used by teachers when teaching by teachers are directive speech acts. Which is used to ask questions, give directions, or give orders to students. Suryandani & Budasi (2021) it is emphasized that directive actions encourage students to complete certain tasks in English classes. Nisa & Abduh (2022) it was found that directive speech acts appeared most often when interactions between teachers and students took place. Yulian & Mandarani (2023) provides more understanding of illocutionary speech acts and how these influence students' actions. Based on the research Arifah et al. (2024), speech acts are used to create a cooperative situation between teachers and students during English classes where the situation is created the learning process will run smoothly. In addition, research at Monika et al. (2020) found forty expressive speech acts used to show appreciation to students and create positive interactions such as praise and thank you. However, Santosa & Kurniadi (2020) showed that the type of speech acts most often spoken by teachers in the classroom is assertive, with 57%, followed by directive, 25%, and expressive, 1% each. These results show that teachers tend to use speech acts to convey information and give directions. The findings show that, although teachers use different types of speech acts, instructive and assertive acts are still most frequently used in the learning process in various classroom contexts, including EFL and ESL.

The theories developed by John Searle and George Yule were commonly used in previous studies that looked at speech acts. However, in this research, the researcher uses the theory of Kreidler (1998), who classifies speech acts into seven main types, namely: (1) assertive utterances that serve to inform what is known and believed, (2) performative utterances that are speech acts that bring about a situation, (3) verdictive utterances that are speech acts in which the speaker makes a judgment or judgment on the actions of others, (4) expressive utterances that are speech acts that arise from previous actions or failures of the

speaker's actions or perhaps the results of these actions or failures in the present, (5) directive utterances are speech acts where the speaker tries to make the speech partner perform an action or not perform an action, (6) commissive utterances are speech acts where the speaker tries to make the speech partner perform an action or not perform an action, (7) phatic utterances are to establish relationships between members of the same community.

The focus of this research is verdictive speech acts in education, especially in teacher-student interaction in the classroom. Many studies have been conducted on speech acts used by teachers. However, most of these studies focus more on directive and assertive speech acts, while verdictive speech acts, which involve judgments or decisions about certain actions or situations, are still rarely the main focus. Verdictive speech acts are particularly relevant in the classroom context because they are often used by teachers to assess students' behavior, make inferences about their tasks or achievements, and provide feedback, such as praise or criticism. This research aims to find out the types of verdictive speech acts that are often produced during the interaction between teachers and students in English classes. The underlying theory of this research is Charles W. Kreidler's verdictive speech act theory (Kreidler, 1998). He classifies speech acts into seven types namely, assertive, performative, verdictive, directive, commissive, and phatic utterances. Charles W. Kreidler's theory is considered relevant because there are not many studies that examine speech acts, especially those that focus on judgment often appear in classroom interactions such as verdictive speech acts (Kreidler, 1998). This research is expected to make a good contribution to the development of speech act research from a theoretical perspective, and practically improve the understanding of how teachers interact with students through the delivery of judgment-related speech acts in the classroom.

There are some things that need to be straightened out, despite the fact that this research provides clear information about the function of verdictive speech acts in learning, especially English. This research provides an overview of how verdictive speech acts such as compliments can be uttered during the teaching and learning process and how this affects the atmosphere of the classroom at that time. For example, the word praise will make students understand and feel to continue to increase their learning motivation in learning English and this will improve the interpersonal relationship in the classroom. It is undeniable that many types of speech acts exist during the interaction between teachers and students which all have their own impact. So, to get a clearer picture, further research is needed related to speech acts. For this reason, this research provides a new update related to speech act research and fills the gap of previous research that has not examined the use of verdictive speech acts in English language learning.

Verdictive speech acts are the main focus of this research, which focuses on giving an assessment of something. Based on the theory from Kreidler (1998) verdictive speech acts are classified into accusing, blaming, congratulating, praising and condoling. Based on Charles W. Kreidler's theory

(1998), this research investigates teachers' utterances that contain verdictive speech acts. This research has theoretical and practical benefits in terms of contribution. Theoretically, this research enhances academic research on speech acts, especially by using Kreidler's theory (1998) to look at verdictive speech acts, which has not been widely researched before. Practically, the findings of this study provide an understanding of how judgments and decisions are communicated linguistically in everyday interactions, especially in education and interpersonal communication. As such, this research not only increases our knowledge of speech acts, but also helps educators and researchers understand how teachers pass judgment in the classroom.

However, there are some shortcomings in this research that need to be rectified. First, further explanation of the definitions and examples of verdictive speech acts such as accusation, blame, congratulation, praise, and condolence could still be expanded, although this research provides a clear picture of how verdictive speech acts function in education. This will help readers better understand how these categories are applied in teacher-student interactions. In addition, although this study focuses on verdictive speech acts, the context of the study such as the level of education (e.g., elementary, middle, or high school) and the demographics of the students involved in the study can be further explained. Readers can gain a better understanding of how these factors affect the use of speech acts in classroom interactions. In addition, it is worth further discussing the limitations of previous research that focused more on instructive and assertive speech acts. We should think about how these limitations affect the way we understand classroom communication and how this can help further research. In addition, Charles W. Kreidler's theory (1998), which was used in this research, is already relevant for exploring verdictive speech acts. However, this theory will be more useful if it is compared with other theories in linguistics and education, such as JL Austin's and John Searle's theories, which also address illocutionary acts. In addition, this research can shed further light on the practical benefits that teachers can gain from implementing verbal verdictive acts to increase students' motivation and engagement in the classroom.

## **METHODS**

This research was conducted using descriptive qualitative research. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative research, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), expressed in the form of speech and behavior of the subjects observed. This research focuses on the teacher's spoken words that express opinions or judgments (verdictive speech acts) during an English learning activity in class VII-E at SMPN 2 Gudo, Jombang. Data collection through observation. The researcher directly observes the teaching and learning process where there is interaction between teachers and students, by recording important information related to the verdictive speech act uttered by the teacher and recording classroom activities through an audio recorder as a tool if there is information missed. For further analysis, transcripts of these voice recordings were used. The data selection criteria determined the types of utterances that

contained verdictive speech act elements, i.e. utterances that indicate a judgment or decision about an action or circumstance, such as praise, criticism, or a teacher's decision about a student. By comparing the results of direct observation with the transcription of audio recordings, the researcher used the triangulation method to ensure that the data were valid and legitimate. To ensure that the data remained accurate, every step of the analysis including the process of data condensation, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification was closely monitored. The analysis steps were carried out according to the model developed by Miles et al. (2014) to ensure that the data analyzed was systematic and accurate. The analysis was divided into three steps: condensing data, presenting data, and drawing and confirming conclusions. Data Condensation; this process involves streamlining and summarizing the collected data to achieve an accurate summary. Data Display; at this stage the information is displayed in a concise and coherent manner to facilitate the process of analyzing the results. Drawing conclusions and verification; at this stage the results of the analysis from the previous stage are summarized in this process. These results are verified to ensure that they are accurate and valid. The purpose of this research is to analyze the types of verdictive speech acts that are often uttered by teachers during classroom activities.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, a detailed description of the analyzed data is presented. Teachers in class 7-C of SMP Negeri 2 Gudo do not express many verdictive speech acts. Kreidler (1998) classifies verdictive speech acts consisting of accusation, blaming, congratulation, praise, and condolence. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of each verdictive speech acts uttered by the teacher.

Table 1. The Frequency of Types of Verdictive Speech Acts

Types of Verdictive Speech Acts	Frequency
Accusation	0
Blaming	0
Congratulation	1
Praise	10
Condolence	0

The researcher found in utterances related to congratulation and praise but no accusation, blaming, and condolence. The table shows that praise is mostly expressed by teachers ten times and congratulation one time.

### 1.) Praise

An example of a verdictive speech act is praise, which conveys favorable assessments of deeds carried out.

T : Okay, good for being brave enough to come forward and answer the question!

The teacher gives an assessment or evaluation of an action taken by the student, after he has been brave enough to come forward and answer the question on the board. The word "good" highlights that the speaker values the

action of others as positive and “for being brave enough to come forward and answer the question” highlights the student's bravery as praiseworthy. The teacher shows appreciation for the students' efforts and courage, which will hopefully encourage them to continue to improve and try again despite risks or uncertainties. As a result, this evaluation not only aims to evaluate students' answers but also to encourage them to be more active in learning.

T : “Okay, good job!”

The teacher gives an assessment or evaluation of an action taken by the student, after he has dared to come forward and answer the questions on the board. The word “good job” highlights that the speaker evaluates the actions of others as positive. But this evaluation is not limited to bravery. In addition, teachers can assess the quality of students' answers based on the accuracy or effort they show in answering the questions. Comments like these go a long way in boosting students' motivation and encouraging them to keep trying. In addition, this assessment aims to encourage students to be more confident in their learning process and better prepared for future challenges. Teachers will assess students with praise and corrections to improve their skills and understanding.

T : “That’s a correct answer.”

The teacher gives a positive assessment of the students' answers. By stating that the student's answer is correct, the teacher provides knowledge of their ability, as seen in the phrase “correct answer.” Students can perform the assessment as part of a broader learning process beyond confirming that they have asked the right question. Teachers can help deepen students' understanding by recognizing their success and providing additional explanation of why the answer is correct. As students feel rewarded for their efforts, this positive feedback increases their motivation. This kind of assessment is not only aimed at correcting what is wrong, but also at helping students develop further in their learning.

## 2.) Congratulation

T : “..... congratulation students on completing the exams so well and all of you moving up to eight grade!”

The teacher utters congratulations as a form of appreciation for the students' achievements after completing the exams so well that they will move up to grade eight. The emphasis on the word “congratulation” indicates that the students' achievement is considered important and worth celebrating, and the phrase “completing the exams so well” shows that the success is recognized and appreciated. This congratulation not only recognizes the student's achievement, but also provides positive encouragement to make them more excited and more confident to face the next challenge. The valuation given through this greeting encourages students to continue to do better in the future, as they will feel valued for their hard work and their achievements.

Based on the analysis of verdictive speech acts of teacher in classroom activity, the researcher found eleven utterances of verdictive speech acts used by the teacher. Verdictive speech acts used by the teacher consist of praise and congratulation with ten utterances and one utterance respectively. As for accusation, blaming, and condolence were not found during the classroom activity. The theory of speech acts in the category of illocutionary acts developed by J.L. Austin and John Searle can be related to this idea. However, there is no specific research that directly investigates teachers' statements related to verdictive speech acts in classroom learning activities. Illocutionary acts are actions performed with utterances with specific purposes (Austin, 1962). In addition to impacting verbal communication, illocutionary acts also impact social and functional interactions (Searle, 2012). Verbal speech acts play a crucial role in assessing actions during learning. Teachers may often produce complimentary utterances to encourage and reinforce positive behavior. In addition, utterances used to appreciate students are verdictive speech acts. There are previous studies that have examined expressive speech acts such as praise, congratulations, and criticism. These speech acts are almost the same as speech acts that aim to judge such as when evaluating certain actions. In Monika's et al. research (2020) found that speech acts that are often produced by teachers in the form of appreciation for positive things done by students during the learning process are expressive speech acts. For students' efforts in completing tasks and following instructions well, teachers give praise to students as a form of appreciation. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that expressive speech acts produced by teachers play an important role in motivating students. Expressions such as praise and congratulations not only make students more confident, but also create more positive learning conditions. Thus, the findings of previous research show that the use of appropriate expressions in evaluation can support students' academic development. In addition, this study shows that the most common speech acts in learning activities are commanding speech acts, while speech acts such as accusations or regrets are not found. The addition of expressive speech acts in learning has a close role with the teacher's evaluation function of student performance. Of course, this will have a big and good impact on students' willingness and participation in the classroom.

This research stated that giving feedback that can motivate students through commanding speech acts produced by teachers because this has a very important role. The speech acts that function to give appreciation and increase students' confidence in the learning process are speech acts in the form of compliments and congratulations. So that these compliments and congratulations can encourage students to continue to improve their abilities in order to show their achievements.

Something positive will give positive results too, such as creating a better and supportive learning environment requires the use of positive conversations and actions too. Because it creates a positive classroom atmosphere, it can increase students' intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to ask questions, try new things, and participate without worrying about making mistakes.

Based on the results, it can be seen that to support students' academic and

psychological progress, the use of appropriate speech acts during evaluation is very important. Teachers should use constructive expressions during feedback or evaluation with the aim of encouraging them to continue learning better with high confidence and informing them of their strengths and weaknesses.

This research supports the theory proposed by Kreidler (1998) related to verdictive speech acts that emphasize how teacher utterances can be an assessment tool that greatly affects students' perceptions and motivation. It can be simplified that, speech acts can affect students' perceptions of their abilities and motivation to continue learning to what extent, can be seen from how the teacher gives feedback through expressions of praise, congratulations, or criticism. This research also complements the theory developed by J. L. Austin and John Searle in which speech acts have a broad role in education, which is as a means of creating a positive learning environment that is able to support students' academic development, not only as linguistic actions. Speech acts have real social and psychological effects in daily interactions which is in line with Austin and Searle's theory related to illocutionary speech acts. Not only that, this research emphasizes that teachers' expressions related to speech acts have a direct impact on students' achievement as well as their engagement in class. Teachers' expressions in a positive way make students feel more valued, more confident, and more active during learning. On the contrary, if the teacher expresses in a negative and unsupportive way, it can hinder students' learning motivation and they do not participate actively in class. Therefore, it can be said that this research helps us to better understand the role of language in education as well as how teachers use non-speech as an effort to support students' development for the better. Even so, there are still shortcomings in this study that may be filled by future research. Based on the results of this study, the speech acts that are often produced by teachers are verdictive speech acts related to praise and congratulations, for other types of verdictive speech acts have not been found. In addition, there is no further explanation regarding these speech acts used during what situations or such as praise given after certain things, such as what, whether after students complete an assignment or pass an exam. In this context, a more in-depth explanation could strengthen the analysis and provide a clearer picture of the dynamics of teacher-student interaction. In addition, this study does not address the potential influence of social and cultural factors on the use of these utterances. Students' age or cultural differences may affect how compliments or congratulations are received and understood. Therefore, it provides further understanding of the use of verdictive speech acts in various contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussions, the researcher did not find five types of verdictive speech acts in all the observations. The research identified eleven verdictive speech acts, with praise being the most common with ten utterances, and only one instance of congratulations. The teacher praised the students when they stepped forward and answered questions, which led to filling the blank words on the board. This result is support Kreidler's theory of

verdictive speech act, which holds that praise and congratulation utterances are instruments for assessing social interaction. Thus, in order to foster responsive learning environments, teachers can changing up their speech acts, such as by giving more encouraging remarks. Unfortunately, the study had some limitations. The five different types of verdictive speech acts, like accusation, blaming, and condolence, were not detected at all. This is one of the remaining flaws in the research. Additionally, there was a lack of research data because the observations were conducted when the students were not actively participating in learning activities. Although this research managed to find eleven verdictive speech acts, with praise being the most frequently used, some important findings still need to be discussed. In the interaction between teachers and students, the use of praise is the most common. This shows that teachers mostly use speech acts to give positive reinforcement to students' behavior. This definitely has an impact on students' desire and engagement. However, the results generated from this research are affected by its limitations. The inability to identify the other five types of verdictive speech acts, such as accusation, blame, and condolence, which were not found in the observations, is one of the main weaknesses. The observation activity occurred when the students were too passive and did not show activeness during the learning activities which made the absence of situations that allowed this type of speech act to occur during the observation. Perhaps it is the limited interaction and complex situation that allows speech acts such as accusing, blaming, and condolence not to appear, because of the limited interaction that only a few variations of verdictive speech acts are identified. Therefore, it is expected that future research can explore more types of verdictive speech acts in diverse learning situations where students can actively participate. Furthermore, the selection of research design that focuses on interactive learning methods that allow the types of speech acts to appear. This research not only provides a new understanding of verdictive speech acts but also provides insight into how verdictive speech acts produced by teachers during interactions with students in the classroom affect the learning atmosphere.

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