

Speech Acts in Multilingual Digital Classrooms: Miscommunication and Repair Strategies

Lilis Handayani Napitupulu*, Evi Novalin Bako

⁽¹⁾Fakultas Bahasa dan Komunikasi, Universitas Prima Indonesia, Indonesia

⁽²⁾STIE IBMI Medan, Indonesia

⁽¹⁾PUI ELT on Linguistics, Literature & Translation

E-mail: lilishandayaninapitupulu@unprimdn.ac.id

Abstract

This article examines how speech acts are interpreted, misunderstood, and repaired in multilingual digital classrooms. Employing a qualitative thematic literature review as its primary methodology, the study synthesizes peer-reviewed scholarship across five domains: speech act theory, classroom discourse, translanguaging, digital communication, and repair organization. Unlike previous studies that have addressed these domains in isolation, this article integrates them into a unified sociopragmatic framework that positions miscommunication as an interactional event rather than a linguistic deficit. The review identifies four recurring patterns: indirect directives are frequently misread as optional suggestions; multilingual language choice simultaneously functions as a source of trouble and as a primary repair resource; platform affordances reshape pragmatic cues in ways that classical speech act theory does not account for; and repair strategies do more than correct errors — they sustain participation and protect face. The study's main contribution is a five-layer analytical framework covering speech act, sociolinguistic, digital, trouble-source, and repair dimensions, validated through illustrative integrated vignette analysis.

Keywords: speech acts; multilingual classroom; digital classroom; miscommunication; repair strategies; thematic literature review.

Introduction

The term digital classroom in this article refers broadly to any technology-mediated learning environment in which teachers and students interact through digital platforms. This includes synchronous video-conferencing tools such as Zoom or Google Meet, asynchronous discussion forums, learning management systems, and chat-based applications such as WhatsApp or Telegram. Although these platform types differ in their temporal structure — synchronous tools compress turn-taking into

real time, while asynchronous tools introduce delays that may extend across hours or days — they share three characteristics relevant to pragmatic analysis: they are mediated by software platforms with specific affordances, they restructure the conditions under which meaning is produced and interpreted, and they frequently host participants who operate across multiple languages.

Digital classrooms have become a familiar site of language learning and academic interaction. At the same time, these spaces change the way meaning is produced, negotiated, and understood. In multilingual contexts, participants rarely rely on a single stable code. They may move between English, Indonesian, local languages, emojis, abbreviations, silence, screenshots, and platform features such as mute buttons, reaction icons, and delayed chat messages. These layered resources enrich classroom discourse, but they also make pragmatic misunderstanding more likely.

One recurring problem in multilingual digital classrooms is that participants may understand the literal content of an utterance but misread its social action. A teacher's statement such as 'You may revise this paragraph' may be intended as a directive, while students may hear it as optional permission. A student's short chat message such as 'Miss, deadline?' may be intended as a clarification request, but the teacher may read it as abrupt or impolite because it lacks an opening, a modal verb, or an explicit marker of respect. Such moments show that speech acts are not merely sentences. They are socially situated actions shaped by context, relationship, timing, medium, and shared classroom norms.

Speech act theory provides a productive starting point for examining these phenomena, yet it requires significant extension when applied to multilingual digital settings. Classical accounts by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) explain how utterances perform social actions, but they were developed with reference to idealized, monolingual, and primarily face-to-face communication. Prior scholarship has addressed parts of this gap: Seedhouse (2004) and Walsh (2011) have examined how repair operates in language classrooms; García and Wei (2014) have theorized multilingual repertoires; Herring (2019) has analysed how digital platforms restructure discourse. What remains underdeveloped is an integrated account of how these dimensions operate simultaneously in the same interactional event. The present article addresses this gap by synthesizing these lines of inquiry into a single sociopragmatic framework, treating miscommunication not as a product of any one factor but as an emergent outcome of their interaction.

Previous studies have examined speech acts in classroom interaction (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2011), repair organization in conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977), and translanguaging in multilingual education (García & Wei, 2014). Recent work has also shown that online learning environments create new challenges for language teaching, including technological disruption, reduced nonverbal cues, delayed responses, and unequal access to participation (Herring, 2019; Sun, 2024;

Junaid et al., 2025). While each of these lines of inquiry has produced valuable insights independently, the intersections among them remain underexplored. Studies of classroom discourse seldom foreground digital affordances, and research on translanguaging rarely examines repair as a distinct analytical object. There remains, therefore, a need for a sociopragmatic framework that integrates how speech acts, multilingual language choice, digital affordances, miscommunication, and repair strategies operate together in online classroom discourse.

This article addresses that gap by developing a thematic synthesis of literature on speech acts in multilingual digital classrooms. The study is guided by three research questions:

1. RQ1: What types of speech acts are most vulnerable to miscommunication in multilingual digital classrooms?
2. RQ2: What sociolinguistic and digital factors contribute to miscommunication?
3. RQ3: What repair strategies help teachers and students restore understanding and participation?

Literature Review

Speech acts and classroom interaction

Austin (1962) introduced the idea that saying something is also a way of doing something. Searle (1969) later developed a taxonomy of illocutionary acts, including representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. In classroom interaction, speech acts are central because teachers and students constantly perform actions through language. However, classical speech act theory has attracted significant criticism. Taguchi and Roevers (2017) argue that the original framework overemphasized the speaker's intention and underweighted the hearer's interpretation and the role of social context. Levinson (1983) pointed out that Searle's taxonomy is not exhaustive and that the boundaries between illocutionary categories are often blurry in real interaction. More critically, the theory was developed with reference to idealized, monolingual, face-to-face communication, which limits its direct applicability to multilingual and digitally mediated settings (Herring, 2019).

Classroom discourse is institutionally organized (Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2011). Teachers often control topic selection, turn allocation, evaluation, and task progression, while students usually respond within the interactional space made available to them. This asymmetry affects how speech acts are produced and interpreted. A teacher's indirect directive may still carry institutional force, while a student's direct request may be judged through norms of politeness and deference (Brown & Levinson,

1987). Therefore, speech acts in classrooms cannot be analyzed only through sentence form. They must be interpreted in relation to roles, expectations, and power relations.

In digital classrooms, the interpretation of speech acts becomes more complex. Delayed responses, muted microphones, unstable internet connections, limited eye contact, and fragmented chat sequences weaken contextual cues in ways that Schegloff et al.'s (1977) original repair framework — developed for face-to-face conversation — did not anticipate. Silence after a question may indicate lack of understanding, technical problems, fear of speaking, politeness, or disengagement. Kress (2010) and Herring (2019) argue that meaning in digital environments is multimodally distributed across text, image, platform features, and timing, so any analysis that focuses only on verbal content will miss significant pragmatic signals. These conditions make repair strategies especially important.

Multilingualism, translanguaging, and sociolinguistic meaning

Multilingual classrooms are not simply classrooms where many languages are present. They are spaces in which participants select, combine, and negotiate linguistic resources for social and pedagogical purposes. Translanguaging theory argues that multilingual speakers draw on an integrated linguistic repertoire rather than switching mechanically between separate language systems (García & Wei, 2014). In classroom practice, translanguaging may support comprehension, build solidarity, reduce anxiety, and allow learners to express complex ideas before they can fully formulate them in the target language.

Translanguaging theory has itself been subject to critical debate. Canagarajah (2011) argues that the concept must be distinguished carefully from code-switching, noting that codemeshing involves intentional rhetorical strategies, not simply alternating between named languages. Ataş and Sağın-şimşek (2021) found in Turkish EFL classrooms that code-switching served distinct educational and discourse functions depending on who initiated it — teachers and students used language alternation for different purposes, often in tension with each other. These tensions are directly relevant in multilingual digital classrooms where institutional language policies and learner repertoires may pull in opposite directions.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language choice indexes identity, authority, intimacy, and belonging (Gumperz, 1982). English may be associated with academic legitimacy or institutional requirement, while Indonesian or local languages may index solidarity, comfort, or shared cultural knowledge. In multilingual digital classrooms, students may use English for formal answers, Indonesian for clarification, local languages for humor, and emojis for affective alignment (Junaid et al., 2025). These choices can facilitate understanding, but they can also produce miscommunication when teachers and students attach different meanings to them.

Recent research on translanguaging in digital environments shows that technology can support multilingual pedagogy, although it may also reproduce monolingual expectations when platforms, assessment rubrics, or teacher beliefs privilege one language only (Warschauer, 2011). Sun (2024) found that integrating translanguaging pedagogy with the DingTalk platform supported English grammar learning by using students' linguistic repertoires as a bridge. Such findings suggest that multilingual digital classrooms should not treat non-English language use automatically as a problem. Instead, language choice should be understood as an interactional and pedagogical resource.

Miscommunication and repair strategies

Miscommunication occurs when participants do not share the same interpretation of an utterance, action, or sequence. In pragmatic terms, misunderstanding often emerges when the illocutionary force of an utterance is unclear or when the speaker's intended social action does not match the hearer's interpretation (Gumperz, 1982). In digital classrooms, miscommunication may be caused by ambiguous directives, unclear turn-taking, limited contextual cues, delayed messages, mixed-language expressions, or different politeness norms (Herring, 2019; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Conversation analysis treats repair as an organized mechanism through which participants address problems of speaking, hearing, or understanding. Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) distinguish between self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair. In language learning contexts, repair is pedagogically valuable because it allows learners to notice problems, modify utterances, and remain involved in interaction rather than withdrawing from participation. Seedhouse (2004) extends this framework to show how repair in language classrooms is shaped by the pedagogical goals of the interaction: repair that serves communicative fluency looks different from repair that targets linguistic accuracy, and both differ from the repair patterns that emerge when comprehension of a task has broken down entirely.

Empirical studies in EFL classrooms support this point. Belgrimet (2020) found that repair strategies among Algerian bilingual students varied systematically by context and linguistic background. Beshir and Yigzaw (2022) found that students used several forms of self-repair during classroom presentations, including repetition, appropriateness repair, and error repair. Miftachudin, Hartono, and Wahyuni (2025) show that online academic discussions involve repair strategies such as pauses, fillers, hedges, replacement, code-mixing, repetition, and expansion. These studies indicate that repair is not a peripheral feature of communication. It is central to maintaining understanding in classroom discourse.

For multilingual digital classrooms, repair should be understood broadly. It includes linguistic repair, such as reformulating an utterance; interactional repair, such as asking for clarification;

multilingual repair, such as using Indonesian or a local language to explain English content; and technological repair, such as reposting instructions in the chat, sharing screenshots, or confirming whether students can hear the teacher (Kress, 2010). These repair practices reveal how digital classroom participants manage meaning collaboratively.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative thematic literature review as its primary research design. The purpose was not to calculate the frequency of speech acts in a single classroom, but to synthesize relevant scholarship and build an analytical framework for future empirical research on multilingual digital classroom interaction. A thematic review design was selected because the topic crosses several areas: pragmatics, sociolinguistics, classroom discourse, translanguaging, digital learning, and conversation analysis.

Source identification and selection

The review corpus was constructed through a purposive search of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters related to five domains: speech act theory, classroom discourse, multilingual and translanguaging pedagogy, digital classroom communication, and repair strategies. The search was conducted using Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus. Search terms used, both individually and in Boolean combinations, included: ‘speech acts in classroom interaction’, ‘multilingual digital classroom’, ‘online classroom discourse’, ‘translanguaging pedagogy’, ‘miscommunication in EFL classroom’, ‘repair strategies in classroom interaction’, and ‘pragmatics AND digital learning’. The search covered publications from 1960 to 2025, with priority given to recent empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025 and to foundational theoretical texts regardless of publication date.

The initial search retrieved approximately 80 potentially relevant sources. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 20 sources were selected for detailed analysis and synthesis. Because this study is a thematic literature review rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis, a formal PRISMA flow diagram is not required; the purposive selection is appropriate to the goal of developing a conceptual framework rather than producing an exhaustive inventory of all available literature.

The selection followed three inclusion criteria: (1) the source discussed speech acts, pragmatic meaning, classroom interaction, translanguaging, or repair; (2) the source was relevant to language education or multilingual communication; and (3) the source offered conceptual or empirical insight into misunderstanding, participation, or meaning negotiation. Sources were excluded if they treated

communication only as grammatical accuracy without considering interactional context, or if they were not directly relevant to classroom or digital learning environments.

Analytical procedure

The analysis used thematic synthesis following the three-stage procedure proposed by Thomas and Harden (2008): line-by-line coding of key concepts across sources, grouping of codes into descriptive themes, and development of analytic themes that interpret and go beyond the content of the original studies. Coding was conducted by the author and verified through iterative re-reading across two rounds, with a gap of two weeks between rounds to reduce confirmation bias. Where two or more sources described the same interactional pattern using different terminology — for instance, code-switching as ‘trouble source’ versus code-switching as ‘resource’ — the conflict was retained as analytically significant rather than resolved prematurely. These tensions are reflected in the dual-function finding reported in Theme 2. The resulting four themes were then mapped onto a five-layer analytical framework. To demonstrate the framework’s applicability, the article includes illustrative analytic vignettes: constructed examples based on recurrent patterns in the literature, used to show how all five analytical layers can be applied simultaneously to a single interactional moment.

Table 1. *Literature selection focus and analytical categories*

Domain	Main Focus	Relevance to Study	Key Sources
Speech act theory	Illocutionary force, indirectness, directives, requests, and clarification	Explains how classroom utterances perform social actions	Austin (1962); Searle (1969); Taguchi & Roevers (2017); Levinson (1983)
Classroom discourse	Teacher authority, turn-taking, feedback, and participation structure	Shows how institutional roles shape interpretation	Seedhouse (2004); Walsh (2011)
Multilingualism and translanguaging	Code-switching, language ideology, linguistic repertoire, and identity	Explains how language choice can become both trouble and resource	García & Wei (2014); Gumperz (1982); Canagarajah (2011); Ataş & Sağın-şimşek (2021)
Digital communication	Platform affordances, chat delay, reduced nonverbal cues, and multimodality	Identifies how technology reshapes pragmatic cues	Herring (2019); Kress (2010); Warschauer (2011)
Repair organization	Clarification, repetition, reformulation, self-repair, and other-repair	Explains how participants restore understanding	Schegloff et al. (1977); Belgrimet (2020); Beshir &

			Yigzaw (2022); Miftachudin et al. (2025)
--	--	--	--

Results

Theme 1: Indirect directives are highly vulnerable to misinterpretation

The first synthesized finding is that indirect directives are among the most vulnerable speech acts in multilingual digital classrooms. Teachers often soften instructions through modals and polite wording, such as ‘You may check the task again’, ‘It would be better to revise your introduction’, or ‘Maybe you can turn on your camera’. In many academic cultures, such utterances function as directives even when they are grammatically framed as suggestions. However, students may interpret them literally as optional advice, especially when they are still developing pragmatic competence in English. This gap between intended and interpreted illocutionary force is a central problem in second language pragmatics (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

This problem is intensified in digital classrooms because teachers cannot always rely on facial expression, physical movement, or immediate response to indicate urgency (Herring, 2019). When an instruction is delivered through chat, students may read it later, skim it quickly, or interpret it through the norms of informal messaging. The mismatch is therefore not only linguistic; it is also medium-related and sociolinguistic. The teacher may assume that institutional authority makes the directive clear, while students may rely on the literal form of the sentence.

Theme 2: Language choice functions as both trouble source and repair resource

The second finding is that multilingual language choice has a dual function. On the one hand, code-switching and translanguaging may become trouble sources when participants do not share the same linguistic repertoire or when institutional expectations require English-only interaction (Ataş & Sağın-şimşek, 2021; Junaid et al., 2025). On the other hand, multilingual resources often become the most effective repair strategy when meaning is at risk. For instance, a teacher may first explain a task in English, notice confusion, and then provide an Indonesian explanation to secure comprehension. A student may ask a clarification question in Indonesian because the problem concerns task understanding rather than linguistic performance.

This finding challenges deficit-oriented interpretations of non-English use in EFL classrooms. When students move to Indonesian or local languages, they are not always avoiding English. They may be managing anxiety, preserving face, checking meaning, or maintaining participation (Gumperz, 1982;

García & Wei, 2014). In this sense, multilingual repair is sociolinguistically meaningful. It indexes solidarity and inclusion while helping the class continue the academic task.

Theme 3: Digital affordances reshape pragmatic cues

The third finding concerns the role of digital affordances. In face-to-face classrooms, pragmatic meaning is supported by gaze, gesture, posture, proximity, and immediate turn-taking. In digital classrooms, these cues are reduced or transformed (Kress, 2010). Students may be silent because their microphone is muted, their internet connection is unstable, or they are unsure whether it is their turn. Teachers may interpret silence as lack of preparation, while students may experience it as technical difficulty or uncertainty about classroom norms. This divergence in interpretation is more likely in asynchronous environments, where the absence of real-time feedback further decouples the speech act from its social reception.

Chat boxes also reshape speech acts. A brief written message can be efficient, but it may appear abrupt. Emojis may soften requests, but they may also be considered too informal in academic contexts (Herring, 2019). Reaction buttons may signal understanding, agreement, or mere presence, depending on local norms. These examples show that digital classroom pragmatics involves both linguistic and technological competence. Participants need to know not only what to say, but also how platform features change the social meaning of what is said.

Theme 4: Repair strategies sustain participation and protect face

The fourth finding is that repair strategies do more than correct errors. They sustain participation and protect face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In multilingual digital classrooms, students may hesitate to speak because they fear grammatical mistakes, mispronunciation, or negative evaluation. Repair provides a pathway for continuing interaction after trouble occurs (Schegloff et al., 1977). Teachers can support this process by using clarification prompts, confirmation checks, reformulations, recasts, bilingual explanation, wait time, and explicit instruction reposted in chat.

Repair is also relational. A teacher's repair can either invite participation or close it down. For example, 'No, that is wrong' may correct content but threaten the student's face. In contrast, 'I see your point; let us rephrase it together' maintains the student's contribution while guiding linguistic improvement. Peer repair can also be productive when classmates clarify vocabulary, translate a task, or explain a teacher's instruction in a familiar language (Miftachudin et al., 2025).

Table 2. *Integrated five-layer sociopragmatic analysis of speech acts, trouble, and repair in digital classroom vignettes*

Digital Classroom Vignette	Speech Act Layer	Sociolinguistic Layer	Digital Layer	Trouble-Source Layer	Repair Layer
Teacher (Zoom chat): "You may revise the paragraph before Friday."	Indirect directive (modal-softened)	Institutional authority assumed by teacher; student lacks pragmatic competence in English academic register	Chat medium strips prosody and urgency; asynchronous reading decouples message from delivery	Modal "may" misread as permission rather than obligation; politeness obscures directive force	Teacher reformulates orally and in chat: "Please revise and submit the new version by Friday" + confirmation check: "Is this clear?"
Student chat: "Miss, deadline?"	Clarification request (truncated)	Student uses informal L1-influenced register; teacher expects L2-mediated academic politeness norms	Chat affordance enables brevity; no prosody or gesture to signal tentativeness	Message interpreted as rude or abrupt; sociolinguistic mismatch between brevity and expected deference	Teacher models target form: "When is the deadline, Miss?" and explains pragmatic norm without penalizing student
Teacher explains task in English; several students remain muted and silent.	Instruction + comprehension check (attempted)	English indexes academic legitimacy; students' silence indexes uncertainty or face-threat, not necessarily understanding	Muted microphones remove back-channel signals; teacher cannot distinguish comprehension from confusion	Silence misread as understanding; absence of response normalized by platform design	Teacher switches to Indonesian summary, asks students to restate task steps, uses 'react with thumbs-up if clear' as technological repair
Student: "I disagree, Sir" in Zoom chat	Disagreement (direct)	Direct disagreement threatens positive	Written chat removes mitigating prosody	Directness is perceived as face-threatening	Teacher provides pragmatic

during discussion.		face in hierarchical classroom culture; student may not possess indirect disagreement forms	(hesitation, lowered voice) that would signal tentativeness in speech	by teacher or peers; participation may be discouraged	framing: "That's a valid perspective; let's explore it — can you tell us more?" maintaining student's contribution
Student posts emoji after teacher's corrective feedback.	Affective response (ambiguous)	Emoji indexes emotional stance, but its meaning — embarrassment, agreement, or deflection — is socioculturally variable	Platform emoji palette limits expressive precision; reaction buttons do not replace verbal acknowledgment	Teacher cannot determine whether feedback was understood, accepted, or is being deflected; ambiguity may go unaddressed	Teacher performs interactional repair: "Does this smile mean the feedback is clear, or shall we revisit it together?"

Table 3. *Proposed framework for analyzing miscommunication in multilingual digital classrooms*

Analytical Layer	Guiding Question	Example Indicator
Speech act layer	What social action is the utterance performing?	Request, directive, apology, disagreement, clarification
Sociolinguistic layer	What does language choice index socially?	Authority, solidarity, identity, anxiety, politeness
Digital layer	How does the platform shape interpretation?	Muted microphone, delayed chat, reaction button, camera off
Trouble-source layer	What produces misunderstanding?	Ambiguity, politeness mismatch, lexical gap, technology issue
Repair layer	How is understanding restored?	Repetition, reformulation, translanguaging, peer explanation, confirmation check

Discussion

This study set out to explain how speech acts are interpreted, misunderstood, and repaired in multilingual digital classrooms. The synthesis shows that miscommunication in this context is not adequately explained by grammar weakness alone. It is produced through the interaction of pragmatic indirectness, multilingual language choice, classroom power relations, language ideology, and digital platform affordances. Three research questions guided the inquiry; each is addressed in turn.

In response to RQ1, the review shows that indirect directives, clarification requests, direct disagreements, and affective responses — particularly when delivered through chat or emojis — are the speech act types most vulnerable to miscommunication. The common thread across these types is the gap between illocutionary force as intended by the speaker and as interpreted by the hearer, a gap that widens in multilingual digital settings because both the sociolinguistic resources that normally disambiguate intent (prosody, gaze, co-presence) and the pragmatic competence needed to navigate them are unevenly distributed across participants.

In response to RQ2, two interacting factors emerge as primary contributors. The first is the mismatch between sociolinguistic norms: teachers and students may operate under different assumptions about what counts as a directive, what counts as polite, and what silence means. These assumptions are shaped by language ideology, classroom hierarchy, and culturally specific face norms (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Gumperz, 1982). The second factor is the reorganization of pragmatic cues by digital platforms. Features such as muted microphones, chat delay, reaction buttons, and the absence of gaze do not merely complicate communication — they actively restructure which signals are available for interpretation and which are absent (Herring, 2019; Kress, 2010). These two factors operate simultaneously, which is why a single-layer analysis — focusing only on language choice, or only on platform design — will systematically miss the source of breakdown.

In response to RQ3, the review identifies four productive repair types: linguistic repair (reformulating an utterance into a more explicit or pragmatically accessible form), interactional repair (confirmation checks, clarification requests), multilingual repair (switching to a shared language to secure task comprehension), and technological repair (reposting instructions in chat, using reaction buttons as comprehension checks). Across all four types, repair that protects the student's face while restoring understanding is more likely to sustain participation than repair that corrects without mitigating the social cost of the correction (Schegloff et al., 1977; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Peer repair, in which students support each other through vocabulary clarification or L1 explanation, is also effective and should not be suppressed in favor of target-language-only policies.

Taken together, these findings expand classical speech act theory by situating illocutionary force inside multilingual and technologically mediated conditions. Where Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) anchored meaning in the speaker's intention, the evidence synthesized here shows that meaning is negotiated across interactional turns, mediated by platform affordances, and shaped by the asymmetric sociolinguistic resources of participants. The five-layer framework in Table 3 formalizes this expansion into an analytical tool that future researchers can apply to real classroom data.

The results also suggest that digital platforms require explicit pragmatic literacy. Students and teachers need shared norms for chat messages, camera use, turn-taking, emojis, and reaction buttons (Kress, 2010; Warschauer, 2011). Without such norms, platform features may create avoidable misunderstanding. Establishing explicit digital classroom protocols can reduce these misinterpretations.

Pedagogically, the article recommends three practices. First, teachers should make high-stakes instructions explicit and multimodal by delivering them orally, in chat, and with a comprehension check. Second, multilingual repair should be allowed strategically, particularly when task understanding is more important than target-language performance. Third, pragmatic routines should be taught directly, including how to ask clarification questions, disagree politely, request help, and respond to feedback in online academic settings.

The study has limitations. Because it is a thematic literature review, it does not provide frequency counts or naturally occurring classroom transcripts from one specific institution. The illustrative vignettes are analytical constructs, not empirical excerpts. Future research should collect video recordings, chat logs, and interview data from multilingual digital classrooms to test the framework empirically. Comparative studies across Indonesia and other Asian contexts would be especially valuable because norms of politeness, English use, and classroom authority differ across educational cultures.

Conclusion

This article has argued that speech acts in multilingual digital classrooms must be understood as sociopragmatic actions shaped by language choice, digital mediation, and classroom relations. Miscommunication often occurs when teachers and students assign different meanings to indirect directives, clarification requests, silence, code-switching, emojis, or platform-based responses. Rather than viewing such moments only as communication failure, the article shows that they can become opportunities for repair, learning, and participation.

The main contribution of the study is a five-layer framework for analyzing speech acts, sociolinguistic meaning, digital affordances, trouble sources, and repair strategies. Unlike prior

frameworks that address these dimensions separately, this framework integrates them into a single analytical structure and demonstrates their simultaneous operation through integrated vignette analysis. The framework can help researchers examine how multilingual classroom participants negotiate meaning across languages and technologies, and it can help teachers design clearer, more inclusive, and more pragmatically sensitive digital learning environments.

Future empirical research should apply this framework to real classroom data by analyzing recorded online lessons, chat transcripts, learner interviews, and teacher reflections. Such research would provide stronger evidence about which speech acts most often lead to misunderstanding and which repair strategies are most effective in different multilingual educational contexts.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank colleagues and students whose discussions on multilingual classroom communication, digital learning, and English language teaching helped shape the ideas developed in this article.

References

- Ataş, U., & Sağın-şimşek, Ç. (2021). Discourse and educational functions of students' and teachers' code-switching in EFL classrooms in Turkey. *Linguistics and Education*, 65, 100981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2021.100981>
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Harvard University Press.
- Belgrimet, S. (2020). A conversation analysis of repair strategies in communication breakdowns: A case study of Algerian bilingual students. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 459–467. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.52.21>
- Beshir, M., & Yigzaw, A. (2022). Students' self-repair in EFL classroom interactions: Implications for classroom dynamics. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 7, Article 26. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00153-6>
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Canagarajah, S. (2011). Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies of translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 401–417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01207.x>
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Herring, S. C. (2019). The coevolution of computer-mediated communication and computer-mediated discourse analysis. In P. Bou-Franch & P. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (Eds.), *Analyzing digital discourse: New insights and future directions* (pp. 25–67). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Junaid, R., Santaria, R., Masruddin, & Rustan, N. Q. (2025). Code-switching practices in English language classrooms: A classroom discourse analysis and its pedagogical implications for EFL learning. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v13i2.9544>
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.

- Miftachudin, Hartono, R., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). Trouble sources and students' self-repair strategies in maintaining dynamics and understanding in online communication. *Erudita: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 152–165. <https://doi.org/10.28918/erudita.v5i2.12091>
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The preference for self-correction in the organization of repair in conversation. *Language*, 53(2), 361–382. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.1977.0041>
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Seedhouse, P. (2004). *The interactional architecture of the language classroom: A conversation analysis perspective*. Blackwell.
- Sun, L. (2024). Translanguaging pedagogy on the digital stage: Exploring Chinese undergraduates' English grammar learning through DingTalk platform. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, Article 1245. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03771-2>
- Taguchi, N., & Roever, C. (2017). *Second language pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8, Article 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>
- Walsh, S. (2011). *Exploring classroom discourse: Language in action*. Routledge.
- Warschauer, M. (2011). *Learning in the cloud: How (and why) to transform schools with digital media*. Teachers College Press.