

THE SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS CLASS DURING VIRTUAL INSTRUCTIONAL-PRACTICES

*Nur Najibah Sukmawati, Sukma Septian Nasution, Purwanti Taman,
Prihatin Puji Astuti*
Universitas Pamulang
dosen02032@unpam.ac.id

Abstract

Mode, as one of elements of context, can influence speech acts. Virtual meeting, as one of modes that signifies the absence of direct interaction potentially influences the speech acts too. This study aims at identifying speech acts in the instructional practices at selected elementary schools in South Tangerang, Banten to answer (1) what types of speech acts used by teachers and students of each school and (2) what factors influence the chosen speech acts. This is a content analysis that explores communication occurrences between teachers and young learners in English classes. Three pre-schools in Pamulang district were chosen as sources of data. The data were collected by recording their communication practices in three consecutive meetings. In total, there are nine communication practices from all the pre-schools. Then, the data were transcribed and segmented by clausal units to identify types of speech acts produced by each party. The findings show that every school performs similar patterns of speech acts dominated by the use of directive expression to maintain the students' engagement, followed by declarative expression to stimulate the students' active participation in various activities during the virtual instructional practices.

Keywords: *Speech act, Pragmatic, English teaching and learning, Descriptive Qualitative Method.*

INTRODUCTION

Speech act as one of fundamental concerns in Pragmatics deals with the utterance to perform a specific action. In daily life, people deliver information that has a different meaning. Indirect speech acts occur whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function. (Yule,1996). Indirect speech acts usually linked with politeness than direct speech act. On the other hand. directive speech act deals with making someone do something, such as asking, ordering, requesting, inviting, advising, and begging. This type of speech act expresses the hearer has been influenced by the speaker to do something. As Yule (2006) proposes that directives can be perceived negative and positive. The utterance can be delivered as negative or positive depends on the situation.

The basis of Austin's theory (1962) lies on his belief that speaker do not merely use language to say things, but to do things and thus utterance could be regarded as speech acts. There are locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts is the basic of utterance. The speaker uses actual words in his utterance. So if there us a people say "it is going to rain" it means that the speaker talks about the wheather cloudly so it will rain. Illocutionary act is speech act that have intention in speaker utterance. When people say "it is going to rain" the

speaker not only say the information, but the speaker gives a warning for the listener to do not go to the outside or if you want to go outside, you should bring an umbrella. Perlocutionary act is the effect of utterance that the listener gets. If the speaker says “it is going to rain” and the listener knows, it is as a warning and she stays at home or she brings an umbrella because she gets warn by the speaker. Meanwhile, declarative used to make a statement indirect speech acts but it is used for a request for indirect speech acts. Griffiths (2006) mentions that speech act is the basic unit of linguistic interaction, such as giving warning, greeting, applying, telling information, confirming an appointment, and other expressions. There are three general functions of language that make communication central in the school, specifically in the classroom. They are language choices, teachertransmits, curriculum controls communication, and reflects personal identity (Juvrianto, 2018). It shows speech acts as one of the factors that make the quality of communication in the classroom effective. Speech act as basic language is the central of communication that allow people to command, thank, like, request, and other possible activities (Kasper, 2006). It happens everywhere in a certain discourse community.

When communicating, people use speech choices influenced by their own culture (Huangfu, 2012). The culture influences patterns of speech acts not only in general society but also in the teaching and learning process in a classroom context where various cultural backgrounds are met. It becomes an interesting study to figure out what speech acts occur where many people with different background are joint in such a discourse community. Questions like whether or not they choose to maintain their original speech acts or will classroom context overpower their genuine choices has been a mainstream for some scholars (Sbisa, 2002; Susanti, Sumarlam, Djatmika, & Rohmadi, 2020; Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). In short, speech acts may have been a long discussion of many scholars, but for the dynamic changes of discourse community where situational context is inside of it, studies on speech acts remain important.

The question becomes more critical when it is situated to virtual classroom that must be implemented during the Covid-19 outbreak. What speech choices are made by teachers? To be more specific, in certain activities designed by the teachers in virtual platform, what speech choices are there between teachers and their young learners? How do teachers adapt to this situation where they cannot make a physical contact but they have to be intimate with their learners? Can young learners follow the flow of instructional practices led by their teachers? All the prompts mentioned above can be answered by scrutinizing what speech acts occur in the class. Therefore, this study mainly focuses on the flow of instructional practices in the English virtual class context where teachers and students communicate to reveal what speech acts are used.

In the English teaching and learning process, there are a lot of conversation between teacher and student to produce utterances in the class. Some studies that concern with this issue are Kurdghelashvili (2015) and Azhari (2018) who focus on its use in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, directive speech acts used by teachers in EFL classroom (Septianingsih, 2017); speech acts on teachers’ talks (Basra, 2017), speech acts on greetings (Zeff, 2016); and the effect of virtual classroom to speech acts performed by teachers and students (Davarzani, & Talebzadeh, 2020). They all suggest that the role of speech acts determine how the teaching and learning process happen in the class as proper uses of speech act is a key to the more effective and active teaching and learning process (Grundlingh, 2018). The teacher uses speech choices to lead the instructional practices, giving instruction, giving information, and also organizing the activities.

Reflecting the significances of speech acts in a classroom conversation as scrutinized by the studied above, it is important to shift the focus onto young learners as the dependent students who need to be taken into account. Mode performed by teachers powerfully influence the success of students’ learning. It gives a clue towards criteria of success in instructional practices in EYL classroom. Therefore, this study focuses on revealing the speech choices or so-called speech acts which are performed by teachers and students in English for young learners (EYL) class. The class is, for the Covid-19 Pandemic, going to be conducted virtually by using Zoom as the platform. It

is exactly the unique case of this study that has not been explored by any of the mentioned researchers. In short, this study aims to reveal the process of activities portrayed through the speech acts produced by each student and by the teacher in the in-distance instructions as well as factors that cause such speech acts occur.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concerning with speech acts studies in classroom context, some studies have been reviewed. Zayed (2014) scrutinized Jordanian EFL teachers' and students' practice of five speech acts: Apology, compliment, greeting, request and thanking. Using classroom observation checklist, he found that EFL teachers and students did not have any proper practice in speech choices although the teachers practiced the speech acts of greeting, request, and thanking better than the speech acts of apology and compliment, and the students practiced the speech act of greeting better than the other speech acts.

Prasety & Mulyani (2018) intrigued the teachers' directive speech acts in a teaching learning interaction to figure out the interactional context dimensions, the social context dimensions, and the individual agency on the teachers' directive speech act in teaching-learning interactions. Using a theory of Rymes on classroom discourse analysis, this study reveals that the teacher performs directive speech acts which are predictable to suit the students' styles, unpredictable interactivity during the instructional practices.

Rahayu (2013) conducted a study on language modification and supportive actions by an English teacher at an EYL classroom. She focuses on analyzing what efforts done by the teacher to modify her speech when communicating with her students. Using video recording, it was found that repeating utterances, using paralinguistic features, especially gestures are mainly chosen by the teacher to make the instructional practices run fruitfully.

Our study and Zayed are in line to focus on speech acts performed in EYL classroom, but his study was conducted in face-to-face learning practices while our study is on virtual one. Prasety and Mulyani focus on directive speech acts as what our study is. But their concern is more to discourse analysis that happens in the community but our study is on speech acts analysis. Rahayu's study and ours focus on communication practices in EYL classroom but her main analysis is on changes or efforts done by the teacher to meet the students' style but our study focuses on what speech acts are chosen in teachers' efforts when communicating with their students. Studies about speech acts in virtual instructional practices in EYL classroom context are very few. Therefore, this study tries to fill in the gap in order that evaluation about speech acts in such context can be done by future researchers,

There are four types of directive speech acts (Yule 1996). They are (1) expressive speech act that shows the expression of utterance, such as apologizing, condoling, praising, congratulating, thanking, liking, and so on; (2) commissive speech act, a kind of speech act that use commit to doing future action. In performing this speech act, the speaker has promising, pledging, offering, and so on with the hearer to do the action; (3) representative speech act, a kind of speech act deals with the utterance that binds the speaker by the truth. Statement of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions are such forms of representative in which people represent the world as they believe it is; and (4) declaration speech act, a kind of speech act that changes the world by their utterance. This speech act usually used by an important person, they can change the state of the world in immediately.

METHOD

This is a qualitative descriptive study aiming at finding the speech acts in EYL classroom context. This study uses the involvement of an interpretive and naturalistic approach as Denzin & Lincoln (2000) suggests that the natural instructional practices are a key to obtaining the accurate data of speech acts. In analyzing the content, content analysis technique is used.

Respondents

Three selected kindergarten schools located in Pamulang, South Tangerang will be the object of this study. The schools conducted virtual class to teach English for their students. Each schools organizes one English class that consists of 20 people who dwell in the district. Most of them age three to four with female pupils (60%) dominate all the classes. Table 1 shows the students' profile.

Table 1. The Students' Profile

No.	Class	Number of Students	Male	Female	Teacher
School A	Pre-school A	20	8	12	1
School B	Pre-school A	15	7	8	1
School C	Pre-school A	15	6	9	1

Table 1 shows information about number of students in each school for pre-school A class. All the schools actually have two teachers assigned to teach for one meeting. However, due to virtual learning only one teacher is assigned in order to maintain the students' focus during the instructions. The instructional practices occur in 30 minutes which means that the authors will have 90 minutes of conversation to transcribe as the basis of analysis. Only School A has 20 students, and the two others have 15.

Instruments in Collecting the Data

In obtaining the data, the writers will use recording technique where the writers will be admitted as part of the classes without being noticed by the students. The data which are collected are natural as the conversations that take in the virtual classes are not to be interfered by any of external parties. Acting as the passive observants, the writers will come into the class for three consecutive meetings as a guess without being noticed by the students in order to maintain the natural communication between the teacher and students as suggested by Sudaryanto (2015) that recording process must be conducted as naturally as possible in order that the utter does not realize that his or her utterance are still being recorded. In this study, the subject of the research was classroom conversation, situation of which is simulated, that condition could not be fully fulfilled. In order to figure out factors that make the teachers use certain speech acts in their classes, the obtained data will be crosschecked by interviewing the teachers.

Technique of Analyzing the Data

The technique of analyzing the data refers to Moleong (2007) that after obtaining the data, the analysis will be done through: (1) transcribing the speech text into written form. The 90 minutes conversation among the classes will be the raw sources of analysis; (2) identifying each utterance and convert it into one proposition clause. Here is the first analysis step occurs where the writers will discuss each proposition made by the teachers and the students of each school; (3) classifying the function of each proposition based on the types of speech acts proposed by Yule; (4) analyzing the pattern of speech choices produced in each class and make comparison when possible; (5) present the data in form of a table to ease the readers in understanding the results; (6) interpret the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the speech acts used in the classroom and the conditions that influence the speech acts. The process of collecting data on classroom speech acts in the English teaching and learning process is note-taking, recording the classroom speech acts and transcribing the data into written form. This study was conducted on fourth grade students at SD Islam Serambi, Limo Depok. This research involved 20 fourth-grade students and one teacher.

Directive speech acts deal with making someone do something, such as asking, ordering, requesting, inviting, advising, and begging.. As Yule (2006) proposes, directives can be perceived as negative and positive. The utterance can be delivered as negative or positive depending on the situation. This study discovered 39 utterances that used a directive speech act. The teacher delivered 25 directive speech acts, while the student used 14 utterances less than the teacher. The condition is mostly influenced by the preparatory condition. The utterance will not happen by itself, so the teacher commands the student to do it during the lesson.

Expressive speech act shows the expression of utterance, such as apologizing, condoling, praising, congratulating, thanking, liking, and so on. The utterance can be reflected as what the speaker felt. Expressive speech act shows that there are 26 utterances used in the English teaching and learning process. There are 18 utterances delivered by the teacher and 8 utterances by the student. The most utterance is influenced by sincerity. The teacher likes and praises the student for doing well on assignments, and the teacher also greets the students and inquires about their well-being at each meeting.

Commissive speech is one in which you commit to doing something in the future. In this speech act, the speaker promises, pledges, offers, and so on to the listener to do the action. There are 3 data of commissive speech act, the teacher delivers 2 utterances and the student delivers 1 utterance. The sincerity condition is mostly used by the speaker and the hearer to make promises as the speaker said.

Representative speech act is a kind of speech act that deals with the utterance that binds the speaker to the truth. Statement of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions are such forms of representation in which people represent the world as they believe it is (Yule,2006). There are 3 data delivered by the student. The students' utterance contains the statement of the truth and the condition that influences this utterance is sincerity.

A declaration speech act is a type of speech act in which the utterance changes the world. This speech act is typically used by a high-ranking official or an important person. They have the ability to immediately change the state of the world. Furthermore, there is no data on the declaration speech act as it is used in the English teaching and learning process

According to Kreidler (1998), some appropriate conditions are required to achieve the purpose of the speech act, such as the content of the utterance, the social situation, and the speaker's sincerity. In order to function, the condition must be appropriate for that purpose. In a directive speech, the teacher mostly says an action to make the class more effective. The situation in which the student, as the speaker, asks and requests information from the teacher. The student expresses their question in expressive speech act ways.

The findings revealed that the teacher and student used four of the five speech acts. The majority of the speech acts used by the teacher and student are directive and expressive. The representative and commissive speech acts are rarely used by either the teacher or the student. In the English teaching and learning process, sincerity and preparation are also used in the classroom speech act. The teachers' most appropriate condition is sincerity and preparation. Sincerity conditions influenced the student the most. The teacher asked the student to do something to help the class run smoothly is a part of the directive speech act. Meanwhile, the students primarily employ an expressive speech act in response to the material, and they employ a sincerity condition in which the students are willing to do what the teacher says.

Based on the result, the utterance delivered by the teachers mostly used directives and expressive. The appropriate condition that influenced the teachers' utterance is preparatory and sincerity. The utterances that the teachers used are asking and requesting the student to make the teaching and learning process successful. Meanwhile, the students used directives, expressive, commissive, and representatives, but the utterance of the students is less than the teacher. The appropriate condition which supports the utterance is sincerity. During the class

learning in the form of speech act, the students' utterance focuses on asking and thanking the teacher.

CONCLUSIONS

The discussion about classroom speech act concluded that the English teaching and learning process in SD Islam Serambi used four of Searle's five speech acts. Directive speech act, expressive speech act, commissive speech act, and representative speech act are the four speech acts used. However, the most commonly used speech act in classrooms is the directive speech act, which has 39 utterances. The conditions that influence the classroom speech act are the preparatory condition and the sincerity condition.

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