

SPEECH ACT ANALYSIS OF TEACHER TALK IN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This research studies discusses about types of speech act employed in the classroom by the teacher. The objectives of the research are to discover what speech act classification frequently spoken by an EFL teacher while teaching and the motive of why particular classification was chosen. This research belongs to case study research as the technique of the research. By applying this method, the researcher uses recording of the classroom activity as the source of data. The data itself is the utterances said by the teacher during the class. The writer applied Searle's (1979) classification of speech act as the underlying theory. The results of the research show that the frequency of each classification found as the following: 57% for assertive, 25 for expressive, 40% for directive, and 1% for commissive. Assertive speech acts are frequently used by the teacher because the teacher gives the students test practice and discusses it later on. The study concludes that the certain speech act classification chosen by the teacher affect the teaching approach and vice versa.

Keywords: Speech act, Teacher talk, Communicative competence

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, in state and commercial educational institutions, the continuous increase in English learning and teaching worldwide has produced a new professional team: EFL teachers. Some have transformed from teaching English as a mother tongue to others, and some have transformed from teaching modern languages to others. Many people have become interested in this field because of their English speaking ability, or maybe because they speak English as their mother tongue. Celce-Murcia (2000) pointed out that the language used in the classroom will affect the learning process and progress of students. In EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching in the Indonesian context, the teacher is not the native language of English. It is very troublesome to run EFL teaching and learning in terms of teaching in English and letting students understand the instruction given by the teacher which is delivered by using English. However, there are issues related to the use of English (as a foreign language) in class.

Since it deals with the information to be conveyed, one way to solve this problem is to have so-called communication skills. As stated by Hymes (1972), Communicative competence is the knowledge that enables someone to use a certain language. Effective real communication involves two or more speakers. These speakers interact verbally or in writing, and inspire each other to respond to what everyone says.

According to Celce-Murcia (1995), there are five components of communicative competence: discourse competence; linguistic competence; actional competence; sociocultural competence; and strategic competence. The component of communicative competence that relates to the way students convey and understand their intent in communication is what we call actional competence. This competence involves knowledge of how speech acts and language functions are patterned and sequenced in real-life situations (Celce-Murcia, et al, 1995)

Basra and Thoyyibah (2017) conducted a study involving classroom teacher's speech. This research is called "A Speech Act Analysis of teacher Talk in EFL Classroom". They focused on the teacher's speech during class. The purpose of this research is to find out the speech act classifications mainly used by EFL teachers in the teaching process, the reasons why certain classifications should be selected, and the influence of the selected speech act classifications on the teaching process. They collect the data by recording the teaching process and interviewing teachers. The results show that there are four of the five types of speech act classifications in the entire classroom. What did not happen was declarative speech act. The most common speech act used by teachers is directive speech act. In the interview, the reason why he prefers a certain classification and the influence of the selected speech act classification on the teaching process is that he intends to let students speak more and implement the principle of "Communicative Language Teaching". Hadhi (2013) pointed out in a research that, considering the current situation of EFL teaching, it is recommended that EFL teachers need to introduce speech act theory and provide relevant knowledge in the classroom to help students have the ability to make appropriate speech expressions. Behavior in cross-cultural communication, because the speech act theory not only carries language rules related to speech, but also guides students to use language correctly and effectively (Hadhi, 2013). The above research is to observe the speech behavior in the teacher's speech when the teacher discusses the text and focuses on reading. At the same time, this research pays more attention to the speech acts of teachers when they practice and discuss in the classroom.

Teacher talk

For foreign language learners, the classroom is the main place where they often come into contact with the target language. The language that teachers use to teach in class is called teacher speech. For this term, "Longman Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics Dictionary" defines it as "multiple languages that teachers sometimes use in the teaching process. When trying to communicate with learners, teachers usually simplify their speeches and give foreigners Many characteristics of human speech and other simplified speech styles for language learners" (Richards, 1992: 471).

Rod Ellis (1985) has studied SLA for many years. He put forward his own views on the teacher's speech: "The teacher's speech is the special language that the teacher uses when speaking to L2 learners in the classroom. The formal characteristics of teacher language have been systematically simplified... The research on teacher speech can be divided into research on the types of languages used by teachers in language classrooms and studies on the types of languages used in courses." He also commented, the teacher's language for second language learners is regarded as a registered language, with its specific form and language characteristics.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is defined as a small part of linguistics and semiotics that studies the contribution of context to meaning. Akinwotu (2017) of Basra explained that pragmatics is the study of the use of language. In addition, Murcia (2000) pointed out that pragmatics is "...the study of the relationship between language forms and the humans who use them".

A broader definition comes from Yule (1996). He pointed out that pragmatics is the study of the meaning of the speaker. Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning and is the second definition. The third definition, pragmatics is the study of more ways of communication than it is said. The last definition is that pragmatics is the study of relative distance expression. Yule also said that to understand pragmatics briefly, it is necessary to establish connections with other fields of linguistics. Semantics and grammar may be related to this research. Through the explanation mentioned, it can be said that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between language, meaning and context or situation.

Speech act

Speech acts refer to acts such as making statements or asking questions, giving orders or orders, rejecting, complimenting, apologizing, etc. Yule (1996) admits that by performing speech acts, people do not only use a certain language out of the blue. On the contrary, they have intention and power behind the words they utter, which may affect the behavior of the audience. According to Austin (1975), speech act is a linguistic theory in which the focus of communication is meaning, not the language used. Mey (1993) pointed out that “the first thing to pay attention to is that speech acts are actions that are happening in the world. At the same time, Fauziati (2016) explained that the basis of speech act theory is true meaning, which can be done by saying a certain kind of speech instead of the language of the utterance draws conclusions from the speaker.

Speech act classification

A number of different scholars revealed different speech acts classifications which actually were originated from Austin's. Oluremi (2016) pointed out that Austin's speech acts classifications include verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. However, a popular American Philosopher, John R. Searle, extended the ideas, making his taxonomy a reference or framework of speech act classification used by many researchers conducting research on speech act classification. Searle (1999) categorized five different types of speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative.

As explained by Searle, the point or purpose of the members of the assertive class is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition. All of the members of the assertive class are assessable on the dimension of assessment that includes true and false. Once we recognize the existence of assertives as a quite separate class, based on the impression of illocutionary point, then the existence of a large number of performative verbs that refer illocutions that seem to be assessable in the True - False dimension and yet are not just "statements" will be easily to understand in terms of the fact that they mark features of illocutionary force which are in addition to illocutionary point. Thus, for example, consider: "boast" and "complain". They both show assertives with the added feature that they have something to do with the interest of the speaker. "Conclude" and "deduce" are also assertives with the added feature that they mark certain relations between the assertive illocutionary act and the rest of the discourse or the context of utterance. Sentences “I inform you that our team leader is making a good decision” shows what the speaker's belief and express truth according to him.

Directives as explained by Searle are the illocutionary point of these consists in the fact that they are attempts (of varying degrees, and hence, more precisely, they are determinates of the determinable which includes attempting) by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. They may be very modest "attempts" as when I invite you to do it or suggest that you do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it. The verbs indicating members of the directives class namely: beg, plead, pray, challenge, ask, order, command, request, invite, permit, advise, dare, defy and entreat. Sentence “Don't touch that!” and “Can you reach the sugar for me?” are directive order the hearer to not do and do something.

Commissives as explained by Searle are those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action. The direction of fit is world-to-word and the sincerity condition is intention. The propositional content is always that the speaker does some future action. For example sentence “We will complete the job next week.” expresses the idea of future activity. Also for sentence “I'm going to buy the car tomorrow.”

Expressives are the illocutionary point to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. The various types of expressive verbs are thanking, congratulating, apologizing, condoling, deploring, and welcoming. Notice that in expressive types, there is no direction of fit. In performing an

expressive, the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world; rather the truth of the expressed proposition is assumed. For example sentence “I congratulate you on finishing the project.” expresses congratulating expression toward someone’s achievement. Another example is “I thank you for lending me your money.” which expresses thanking or gratitude towards someone kindness.

Declarations has special characteristic of this class that the successful performance of one of its members brings about the connection between the propositional content and reality, successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world. Sentence “I declare that your project is approved.” and “I declare that his position is terminated.” are stating about something or someone is accepted or rejected.

Yule (1996) represented a table of the five speech acts classification based on the theory of Searle.

Table 1. Searle’s Speech act classification

Speech Act Type	Direction of fit	S = Speaker X = situation
Declarative	Words change the world	S causes X
Assertive	Make words fit the world	S believe X
Expressive	Make words fit the world	S feels X
Directive	Make the world fit the words	S wants X
Commissive	Make the world fit the words	S intends X

From the theories and studies above, the researcher tries to focus on speech act uttered by the teacher during the class. The objective of this study is to analyze the speech act classification mostly used by an EFL teacher while teaching, the reason of why certain classification was preferred and the implication of the selected speech act classification toward the teaching and learning process.

METHOD

This research is a case study. The purpose of this research is to investigate the classroom speech behavior of English teachers in English courses. Yin (2018) explained that case studies are best suited to "how" and "why" questions. This research also followed the recommendations of Cresswell (2012), which suggested using qualitative case study methods to gain exploration and understanding of certain phenomena in the field. Therefore, the case study is very suitable for this research, because the main purpose of the research is to reveal how teacher performs speech acts in the teaching process.

This research involved an English instructor. He is 24 years old. He has a remarkable experience related to English teaching. The instructor was chosen for some reasons. He has 557 score of TOEFL and has been teaching English for about three years. Meanwhile, the class from an English course was chosen because it was mainly focused on university entrance test which the writers hypothesize would have different result with the previous study.

There some types of data that had been collected. First, a video recording of a teaching and learning process in one meeting which lasts for 90 minutes. Second, a short interview with the instructor. Third, some pictures that can be used as an authentic document from the learning process.

The data collecting procedure started with an observation. The video recording was taken from the classroom where the teaching and learning process taken place. Second, the instructor was interviewed to get more data related to the topic of the research which is speech act. After the data were collected, the video recording was transcribed to visualize the utterance produced by the instructor. The writers use framework by Searle (1976), then, applied to classify what utterance belonged to each speech act classifications. The classifications defined by Searle were assertive, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Classification of the speech act used by the writers is from Searle that classifies speech act into five types; declarative, assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive. The writers found 227 speech act uttered by the teacher in the whole lesson. Assertives is one of speech act types that is used the most by the teacher during the lesson by showing 57% of talk using assertives. Meanwhile, declarative type of speech act shows completely opposite result. The teacher does not use any declarative sentence in the classroom.

Declarative (0%)

It is found that only four out of five types of speech act used by teacher. He did not utter any declarative speech act in the class that changes the world of the hearer via utterances uttered by a speaker (Yule, 1996). It means that speech act uttered by a speaker changes the world or situation. The speaker needs to have a special institutional role to change the world of the hearer. The changing world of the hearer means that the situation which is changed from him/her/them caused by a speaker is not easy to be avoided or broken or left.

Assertive (57%)

Assertive speech act dominates what the teacher said during the teaching process. Assertion is an illegitimate meaning of stating a certain point of view. The speaker achieves self-confidence when expressing world things (ThoughtCo, 2019). The following is a list of assertive speech act, which are mainly spoken by the teacher in class:

Table 2. Finding of assertives speech act uttered by the teacher

Utterances
It is parallel, it needs to be in line.”
“D because there is will there.”
“Will is always followed by verb 0.”
“A, hang on means wait a minute.”

Expressive (2%)

Expression refers to the speech acts that express the speaker's feelings. They express mental states and can express pleasure, pain, like, dislike, joy or sadness. Beijer (Beijer, 2003) pointed out that the term emotion/expressive discourse refers to any discourse that the speaker involves emotionally, and expresses this participation in language through intonation or use of expression. Four kinds of speech expressed as expressive speech acts were found in the data. Qadir and Riloff (2011) categorized the essence of words and expressions by expressing clues such as

gratitude, apology, congratulations, condolences, regrets, appreciation and welcome. Among these four types of discourse, most expressive speech acts are listed below.

1. *Thank you (name of student).*
2. *I am sorry.*

The utterance like “thank you” is always mentioned by the teacher after receiving things from the students or whenever her students try to remind her about something. “I’m sorry” is uttered when the teacher makes mistakes such as forgetting students’ names or after making jokes that she thinks might hurt her students. In the interview, she admitted that her reason of doing so is basically a habit because people are supposed to say “thank you” when somebody gives them something, say “sorry” if they think they might hurt somebody else’s feeling. The other reason is that the teacher wants to grow those basic habits in her students by being a good role model of a social human being. Therefore, the students will do the same when they interact inside or outside of the classroom.

Directive (40%)

Among those 227 utterances, 92 or 40% of them have directive speech acts word clues. Qadir and Riloff (2011) listed clues of directive speech act word. Utterances containing the force or intention to ask, order, command, request, beg, plead, pray, entreat, invite, permit, advise, dare, defy, and challenge, are categorized into directives. Mostly, the teacher used directives with the intention is to ask the students about something, and to command and request the students to do something. These are the words that are said by the teacher:

Table 3. Finding of directives speech act uttered by the teacher

Utterance	Directive Categories
Let’s discuss together.	Order
Number 121 please read start from Deta	Command
122 miss Eka (asking the student to read the question)	Order
Is there any other answer?	Asking
Let’s move on to error questions number 151.	Order
Which one is incorrect?	Asking
What should it be?	Asking
Is there any question?	Asking

Commissive (1%)

In the teaching process, teachers least advocate the speech act of commissive. Commissive refers to the kind of speech act that speaker used to promise to take certain actions in the future. They expressed the intention of the speaker. They are promises, threats, rejections, guarantees, which can be executed by the speaker alone or by the speaker as a group member. The teacher only mentioned 2 sentences which is indicated as commissive, which means that the percentage is only 1% of 100%. These are the words classified as commissive speech acts:

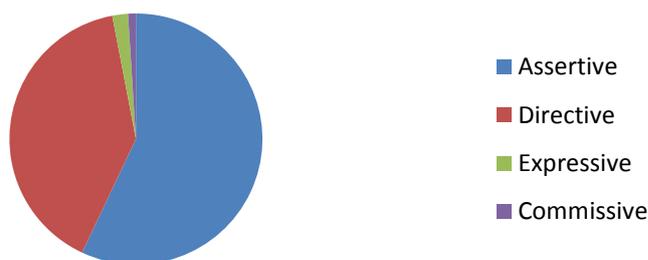
1. *Today we are going to have another practice.*
2. *Okay guys, we are going to have a break for 15 minutes.*

DISCUSSION

The data of this study is gathered by conducting interview and field observation. In the interview session, the teacher said that she does not really think of the utterance that she used to explain the material. What come to her mind was that the students would understand her explanation. Because the agenda of that meeting was practice and discuss questions, so the utterance that was used the most is assertives. She stated, "I asked my students first about the possible answer to a question, but then I have to give them the correct answer and explain it". As explained by Searle (1979), the point or purpose of assertive is to commit to the truth of the expressed proposition, it can be concluding or deducing

It can be concluded that, there is one main reason why the teacher unconsciously use assertives speech acts which is met with the principle of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) Approach. Richards (2006) defined CLT as an approach which highly values communicative competence rather than grammatical competence. Because the teacher had to elaborate each and every questions directly to the students so it is understandable if she did not pay attention to each sentences she said. The point that is stated by the teacher was also met with theory of communicative competence. According to Celce-Murcia (1995), one of components of communicative competence is actional competence, which closely related to speech act. The implication of the selected speech act classification toward the teaching and learning process is that, the teacher could deliver the material effectively to the students by asking them first, rather than giving out the correct answer directly. Test discussion activity is rarely used by others' researcher to examine its speech act. That is why the result of this study is contrast with Arani (2012) that shows directive speech act as the preferred types to use in EFL classroom. She examined a teacher when he explain a material to the student, rather than test discussion activity.

Percentage of Speech Act Uttered by the Teacher



CONCLUSION

The use of appropriate speech act classification while teaching is based on the teaching approach the teacher adopts. This study aims at investigating speech acts classification of teacher talk in EFL classrooms, the reason of the teacher uses certain speech acts, and the implication that can be drawn from the finding. Based on the findings and discussion, four classifications of speech acts are found from the data (teacher talk). The total of the utterances uttered by the teacher in one meeting of teaching and learning is 227 utterances. Four classifications have different portions, with assertive speech acts as the dominant one, taking over 57% of the utterances. The second dominant classification is directive speech act for 40%. The expressive and commissive speech acts have small portions, namely 2% and 1%, respectively. The teacher argued that her reasons of using more assertive speech acts are to make students understand about the material.

Because the material that is taught that day is practice and discussion, so the students need to have correct understanding of each of the materials. The recommendation is addressed for English teachers, especially in Indonesian context. Teaching Indonesian students a language which is foreign for them is not an easy task. Then, to expose them more to English, the classroom language instruction which is better to be used is English. However, teaching with foreign language instruction can cause trouble and misunderstanding between teacher and students. English teachers should realize soon their belief in teaching English.

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