

Students' Understanding on Teacher's Speech Acts in the Classroom Instructions

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Abstract

This study analyzes the teacher's speech acts in the classroom. This study covers two points of discussion: speech acts in the teacher's instructions and the students' understanding to the instructions as speech acts. To describe two problems of this study, a qualitative descriptive research was applied in which the transcription of the conversation between the teacher and students can describe how the speech acts uttered by the teacher can be understood by the students. The results of this study indicated that explicit and implicit speech acts that were frequently uttered by the teacher in giving instructions in the learning process in which those instructions can be found in opening, core, and closing. Explicit and implicit speech acts can be categorized as directive form, namely command and/or request. Those utterances are used by the teacher to tell students to do something. Besides that, the students could understand the teacher's instructions in the classroom in various ways such as taking action, and giving statements, but there were some instructions that were not given a response by students.

Keywords: *speech acts, classroom interactions, instructions*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding what the speakers mean not only understands the literal meaning but also explores what the speakers intends to do with their utterances. The communication can run as the participants want if they can cooperate between them. What is communicated by the speakers is not exactly delivered what the speakers want, the participants must infer from words uttered by the speakers. In other words, the speakers not only produce grammatical expressions that are easy to understand but the speakers also perform some actions through those utterances uttered.

The speakers should arrange information when they have to communicate, where it should be taken (Johnson, 1999) in order that the communication they manage can be more effective, as happening in the classroom interactions.

Teacher and students interact in the learning processes in which the teacher will give important information and knowledge. But more than that, how learning process can be taken successfully. There will be interactions intensively in the classroom in which the teacher is delivering some information and knowledge. Cooperation in the classroom interaction indeed determines how the teacher and students communicate in terms of topics discussed. The effective teaching in the class depends on how the teacher and students in their interactions, how the teacher delivers the messages and how the students understand those messages comprehensively based on utterances delivered by the teacher. Johnson (1999) stated that successful communication becomes the indication of effective teaching. Good atmosphere in the classroom is important for learning process so, teacher and

students should have good communication in the class. It aims to understand each other.

In learning process, the interactions between teacher and students are forms of communication where their communication in the classroom has certain purposes, in which Yule (1996) stated that those things are called speech acts. Certainly, the purposes of those interactions in the forms of speech acts relate with how the teacher can deliver messages and the students can understand what the teacher means with instructions in the learning process. However, speech acts not only happen in a global communication (Moeschler, 2001) but also occur in specific situation such as speech acts in the classroom interactions.

The problem in the classroom interactions is how the students can infer those utterances uttered by the teacher, because teachers can use both literal meaning and non-literal meaning in their instructions. When the teachers communicate with non-literal meaning, the students must be able to infer accurately with utterances and their meaning as well as what the teachers intend to do with their utterances.

Therefore, the students must be able to understand performative utterances delivered by the teacher. Gale (1970) stated that performative utterance does not have any description as claimed by Austin. Moreover, according to Austin (1962) performative utterance is neither true nor false. In the other hand, according to Searle (1989) performative utterance is something true or false and a declaration because it contains propositional content. Therefore, the middle way of their opinion, performative utterance is communication between two people or more and the speaker talk something then the listener gets the information or doing action. There are two type of performative utterance, such as explicit performative and implicit performative (Yule, 1996). In addition, to make successful communication in the classroom, they need understand the meaning of utterance. Teacher's speech act can be useful for students.

Classroom interaction is a situation in which it involves teacher and students or students and students in the learning process in the class or it can be called as a social interaction in the class. Interaction between a teacher and students is a social interaction that shows how the success of learning in the class happens (Collins, 1982). In every second, students interact each other for many reasons, such as discussing material (pair work), telling a story, or greeting their friends but classroom interaction doesn't only happen between students and students but teacher and students also. Teachers are engaged in classroom interaction. They have a lot of chance to interact with their students and they are influence for their students in classroom interaction. According to Hall (2000), "interaction plays in helping learners to assimilate and internalize knowledge of linguistic forms in the target language", so interaction needs a good language by teacher.

Teachers should have way to interact with their students because teachers' speech act have a big influence on students. Using a good language is one of option for teacher. Teachers using language in speech act have reasons for example, criticism and admonishment (Leblanc, 2019). Additionally, according to Austin (1962), speech act has five categories, such as: representatives (assertion, claim, report, conclusion), directives (suggestion, request, order, command), expressive (apology, complaint, thank, congratulate, welcome), commissures (promise, threat,

refusal, offer), and declaratives (decree, declaration, christening, marrying). Categories often used by teachers are directive or we can call it by instruction. In this case, they should modify their language to be a good speech act to request their students to work in pair or command their students to do something.

Teachers' instructions are thing that often happen in the classroom. According to Cohen & Goldhaber (2016), instructional and interpersonal skills are characteristics of expert teacher. They know how to use the best words in explaining, helping, and giving instructions to their students. Giving instructions is one of ICALT model in teachers' classroom practice (Maulana, helms-lorenz, & van de grift, 2015). According to those statements, we can conclude that teachers' instruction is necessary in learning activities and it often happen in the classroom but teachers should pay attention in students' understanding also.

The purposeful direction of the learning process in class activities is the teacher's instruction (Fulgham et al., n.d.) Students must follow the teacher's directions in order to perform the action that the teacher desires. Sowell, (2017) stated that the instructor's instructions have a direct impact on the learning process in the classroom. Students will become perplexed if the directions are unclear. To put it another way, there is a misunderstanding, and the pupils may do something that the teacher does not want them to do. Misunderstanding between the teacher and students in classroom activity is about how students respond to what the instructor intends her directions, such as what happens between students and teachers in primary school, as described in a video on social media. The teacher instructs the students to engage in physical activity before assigning them a task in the classroom. In the last session, all students place their work on the instructor's table, and the teacher reviewed the task's results. The teacher was taken aback by one of the students' work because their sentences took up so much space, so she asked him to explain why he did it. He explained that the teacher had requested that he perform physical distancing. This is one of the issues with interpreting the teacher's speech act in the classroom.

Sowell (2017) described how, in a separate setting, teachers who generally offer directions in their first language when teaching English has problems since the instructor utilizes English instructions while teaching English. It happened to pupils at a South Korean university who did not respond to the teacher's English directions. Instructions from the teacher are statements that direct students in the classroom to follow the learning process. In this view, the teacher's speech acts in the teaching process might be defined as utterances used to lead students. As a result, if the context is unclear, a speech act delivered by a teacher in the classroom may be misinterpreted by students. As is the case in South Korea's primary and secondary schools and universities. Misunderstandings between teachers and students occur because the teacher's speech acts in the classroom might be received differently by students depending on their understanding as well as the context and circumstances in the classroom. As a result, the focus of this study is on the students' interpretation of the teacher's speech acts in the classroom.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe speech act phenomena in classroom instructions, and it was conducted by observing the

situation or behavior of employing speech acts in the classroom. According to Bogdan *et al.*, (1975), this is utilized to describe language usage behavior in specific settings. By observing behaviors of teacher and students in the class, this study adopted descriptive qualitative method to design the study in order to be able to learn more about how teachers employ speech acts in the classroom and how students interpret what they hear. Furthermore, the study was a case study because the data were collected from only one class and one teacher. A case study is an approach that necessitates close scrutiny (Joe R. Feagin *et al.*, 1991). When employing a case study, the observer can obtain specific information from a specified source. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the data. The function of the description, according to Rossman & Rallis, (2011), is to describe the circumstance and how the research process is carried out. The data were collected in an online classroom using video recording and handwritten notes by the researcher. The data were then plotted on the results of the study chapter depending on the research questions.

The data were collected in the form of different types of instructions and how the students responded to them, and the data was analyzed using descriptive analysis. This is the process of transforming raw data into data to be easy to comprehend. The study's findings were written and spoken words taken from the data source. Furthermore, this study was an Interactive Model of Analysis study, which included three components, (Miles, 1992), such as reduction, coding, and conclusion. According to Patton *et al.*, (2014), triangulation is a term used in qualitative research to refer to the utilization of methods and data sources. It aids in the development of a thorough understanding of things. To double-check data, the researcher employed data source triangulation, which relates to a variety of research methods. It was carried out in order to acquire data for validation. In this study, the researcher took notes and created a data video to be used as a script dialog. She compared it in order to obtain validation data.

The study was conducted on November to December 2020 in a private school in Surabaya. The research subject was 11th grade students. There were 10 female students and 21 male students in the class. The data were taken from ongoing online classroom learning and were explored more about teacher's speech acts used in the classroom. Video recording technique also applied to which the transcript form can be transcribed. The data were in the form of dialogue fragmentation between teachers and students in the classroom. Therefore, it was easier to understand the teacher's speech acts used in the classroom according to the context. And a direct observation was also conducted to have the data more natural. Then, since this research leads to a qualitative method so the data were concluded as descriptive analysis according to the use of the speech act in the class.

The data taken were kinds of instructions used by the teacher and how the students respond to it and data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. This refers to the transformation of raw data into data that was easy to understand. The results of the study were written and spoken words from the data source. Moreover, this research was an Interactive Model of Analysis research, in which according to Miles and Huberman (1992), the data obtained must be analyzed based on the components: such as Data reduction, coding, data display, and data conclusion. Editing or reduction is the process of selecting data from the main data based on the

required data. The data were reduced to the required data based on research questions. The data display is fragmented based on the interpreted data to answer research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Speech Acts on the Teacher's Instructions

Based on the data, there are two kinds of instructions found in this research. These instructions are classified based on Austin theory such as implicit and explicit instructions. Implicit and explicit instructions made by the teacher can be categorized as direct speech acts and indirect speech acts referring to directive forms, such as command and/or request (Sowell, 2017). The findings of this study support what was found by Retno (2019) in her thesis in which she found a warning and some command utterances by the teacher in the opening section. The teacher warned the students that there was a task to be done and asked the students to do something. These utterances include in explicit directive but she did not mention it and she found several speech acts used by the teacher, such as commands, requests, suggestions, invitations, and warnings in core activity but the speech act that is often used by the teacher is command. In addition, the implicit instructions or indirect speech acts found in this study also support what has been found by Retno (2019) in which she found implicit instruction used by the teacher when starting lessons in EFL classroom interaction.

In this discussion, the teacher's speech acts are focused on three parts of teaching and learning process where teacher is giving instructions to the students in the class, such as opening, core, and closing.

1. Direct Speech Acts Used in Opening, Core and Closing

To start learning process, the teacher begins the class by giving instruction. The data showed that the teacher used commanding type of speech act in the opening section. The teacher began the class by requesting the students to open their book. In this situation, the teacher was giving instruction explicitly. Explicit instructions conveyed by the teacher is called direct speech act; a form or an utterance that has a direct relationship between structure and the communicative function of the utterance as seen the following extract data.

Extract data 1

T: *"kita mulai pelajaran nya ya, open your book page 12"*

[*let's start the lesson, open your book page 12*]

S: (The students are opening the book)

(C17/M2/Exp/Act)

T: **"Open your book page 14!"**

S: (The students are opening their book)

(C37/M3/Exp/Act)

The extract data 1 showed that the teacher began the class by inviting the students and requesting the students to open their book. '*let's start the lesson, open your book, page 12*' is an utterance to open the class. The form of this instruction

can be categorized as direct speech acts because there is a direct relationship between the structure and communicative function in which the intended meaning is illustrated explicitly in the form. In other words, the speaker communicates literally as what is stated in the utterance. The form of command or request in the teacher's utterance can be interpreted explicitly by the students. The students understood what was requested and they did what the teacher asked, that is, the students are opening the book on page 12. The same way happened to the other utterance *Open your book, page 14*.

Based on extract data 1, the speech acts used in the beginning of the class are in the form of command or request. The instructions to open the book at the beginning of the class are categorized explicit instructions because those instructions were uttered explicitly by the teacher to the students. Request of explicit directive speech act in the core section.

Extract data 2

(teacher gave a question to Nabila and she answer it, then the teacher reminded all students that there was word should be changed)

T: "Paragraph berapa Nabila? mic nya gabisa tah? Rusak?"

[Which paragraph, Nabila? Can you use your mic? Is it broken?]

S: "Enggak kok mam, di paragraph 1"

[No mam, the answer in paragraph 1]

T: "kata we diganti they, tulis dulu di buku paket"

[the word 'we' is replaced with 'they', write on your book, please]

S: (The students write on their book)

(C5/M1/Exp/Act)

As extract data 2, this data can be described that the teacher asked one of the students to answer one of the questions that had been appointed. After that, she instructed all of students to change the word. Instruction was used by the teacher is explicit instructions. In Retno research, she found some speech act that used in core activity such as, command, suggestion, invitation, and warning.

Extract data 3

(In the middle of the learning process, there was students came to google meet and the teacher asked him to open his book)

T: "yang barusan hadir buka buku halaman 12"

(someone who just join, open book page 12)

S: (open book)

(C20/M2/Exp/Act)

Extract data 3 shows that the teacher used explicit instructions which was addressed to one of students who came late. This instruction was used by teacher clearly because of that it includes in command speech act. After teaching, teacher usually uses several speech acts to close the learning process.

2. Indirect Speech Acts Used in Opening, Core and Closing

In the context of implicit instructions, teacher usually uses several kinds of instructions in the classroom to direct the learning flow. In the data obtained,

implicit instructions can be found in classroom instruction. The teacher used these instructions in the learning cycle such as opening, core, and closing. Implicit instruction was used by teacher in learning process and she used command of implicit directive speech act in the opening section.

Extract data 4

(In opening section, teacher gave them information about the rules in learning process. One of the rules is turn on their microphone)

T = “gapapa off camera tapi on mic”

(you don't need to on the camera but you have to turn on the mic)

S = (some students turn on mic, some students off mic)

(C38/M3/Imp/Act)

The utterance above is about giving information to the students but at teacher side, she asked them to turn on their microphone. It shows that teacher used implicit commanding to give instruction. This instruction was addressed to all of students who join in the online class. Implicit instruction was used by teacher in learning process and she used command and request type of implicit directive speech act in the core section. For Example:

Extract data 5

(In this part, teacher asked them to look at E section after that she asked them to answered the question implicitly)

T = “sekarang soal yang E”

(Now is E question)

S = ...

(C12/M1/Imp/Noresp)

From data 5, it can be concluded that it is implicit instruction. She used that utterance to command them to answer the question. Utterances was used by the teacher indicates to provide information but based on speaker site, she gave instruction to their students for answering the question and the utterance includes in implicit commanding type of directive speech act.

Implicit instruction was used by teacher in learning process and she used command, request, and question type of implicit directive speech act in the closing section. For example:

Extract data 6

(In this part, before the teacher close the meeting, she reminded her students about the material which would be put on the final examination and used commanding type of directive speech act)

T: “oke, kita akhiri sampai sini pertemuan kali ini, oiya dan soal yang keluar sampek halaman 15”

(oke time is up, let's close our class, oiya the questions in final examination until page 15”

S: -

T: “wasalamualaikum wr. wb”

S: “waalaikumsalam wr.wb”

(C36/M2/Imp/Noresp)

Data 6 shows, this sentence includes in implicit instruction. The teacher's utterances show, the teacher informs to all students that the practice questions come out are up to page 15 but in the teacher's perspective, she asks her students to study exam preparation until page 15

B. Students Understanding to Teacher's Instructions as Speech Acts

Based on the data found in the teacher-student interactions, directive speech acts such as command and/or request were frequently used by the teacher and were responded by the students based on the contexts existing in interactions. The students' responses are an action or, giving statement, even no response. Those responses have reasons because they understand the instructions based on the context. Many of them understand what the teacher says by doing actions or giving statements. These directions are given by the teacher during the learning process. There are three cycles of the process such as opening, core, and closing. However, in each cycle, observer found various students' responses related to what the teacher said. They understand the teacher's words as commanding and/or requesting even though the teacher used explicit and implicit instructions. Mazidah, (2019) stated that the utterances used by the speaker have purposes in certain contexts. While Wahyuni and Retnaningsih, (2019) stated that listeners will focus on the speaker's speech acts to interpret what the speaker means with the utterances.

In this discussion, teachers usually use various forms of instruction. In understanding the explicit form of instruction, students were not confused about understanding the instructions because the teacher has provided instructions explicitly or clearly. Based on data, the teacher used the type of command instructions in the opening session. Students understand the teacher's instructions by showing an action in accordance with the instructions.

Interaction between teacher and students could be seen that the teacher said "*open your book*" where the teacher gave order to all students before the class starts. This instruction is included in the explicit category as Austin theory because the teacher gave instructions clearly as command utterances. These instructions were used by the teacher in the opening session with the aim that students were ready to understand the material in the textbook. The effect of the teacher's utterance is the students do something according to the teacher's orders. the command is "to open the book". It can be concluded that students understand these instructions easily because the teacher provides instructions explicitly. However, in online learning, researchers cannot immediately see students opening books but it can be shown when students can answer questions given by the teacher.

In the core session, the teacher used command and request speech acts. based on the data obtained by the researcher, students can understand all teacher instructions well. The evidence of students' understanding is action and provide a statement. In this condition, it can be described that the teacher asked one of the students to answer one of the questions that had been appointed. The student's answer is correct, but there was word that need to be changed and the teacher said "*kata we diganti dengan they, tulis di buku paket*". The utterance was not only addressed to Nabila but for all students who join online class in google meet so that they changed the right answer. Students receive instruction well because the teacher

used instruction explicitly. They could understand instruction by doing an action. All of them understood the teacher's utterance as command so, they changed This utterance can be categorized as explicit utterance because it is clear utterance.

The teacher used explicit instructions which was addressed to one of students who came late. She said that "*yang barusan hadir buka buku halaman 12*". It means that, the utterance was specifically for students who have just joined Google Meet, which means that they did not know what page the learning process is on. Because of that, the teacher used the utterance for asking him to do something. He understood the teacher's instructions easily by opening the textbook but researchers cannot watch students open books directly. Researchers can interpret students understand teacher instructions because he can answer questions asked by the teacher.

In the discussion, the teacher used implicit instruction in the classroom. Students understood these instructions in various ways, such as doing an action, giving statements, or not even responding. Implicit instructions are used by the teacher in the opening session, the teacher used the command type to give instructions to students. They understood the teacher's instructions by doing an action or providing statements. The teacher gave rules in the classroom before the core session began. She said that "*gapapa of camera tapi on mic*". Teacher used statement to deliver her instruction so, it can be concluded that the teacher gave instruction implicitly as Austin theory. In illocutionary theory, the teacher asked all of student to turn on their microphone. She wanted her class to be active not passive so, every single teacher's utterance, students should respond her. Students understood the utterance based on the context. The context is they are in online learning classroom so, they know that they had to turn on their microphone as teacher's rules. Students' understanding of the teacher's speech by turning on their microphones but there were some students who did not turn on the microphone. The researcher concluded that students who did not turn on the microphone were not in front of the laptop or the microphone was broken Some of them admitted that their microphone were damaged.

In the core session, the teacher used several instructions implicitly. Students understood these instructions in various ways or responses such as giving statements or taking actions or even not doing anything. The teacher gave practice questions to students to add to their scores in the core session. In this case, the teacher said "*sekarang soal yang E*". The teacher provided information about part E but the teacher's illocutionary is to answer the questions in part E. In this context, students did not give a statement that they have seen part E but they could answer the questions in part E. in this context, students understand the teacher's speech as a command because they know the conditions and situations that they are in the process of learning the question-and-answer session. It can be concluded that students understand the teacher's utterance as a command.

The teacher also used implicit instruction in the closing session, in the data that has been found during the study, the teacher used the command and request type as the teacher's speech act. Students respond to the teacher by giving a statement. The teacher provided information to all students about the final examination. she said "*oke, kita akhiri sampai sini pertemuan kali ini, oiya dan soal yang keluar sampek halaman 15*". Her utterance indicates that she was giving

information to students about material that will come out during the examination. The teacher not only provided information to students but the teacher's intention to say that she instructed her students to learn the page that has been mentioned but all of student did not response

CONCLUSION

Giving instructions in the classroom interactions are parts of teacher that cannot be separated in teaching and learning process. A teacher can give explicitly and implicitly based on the contexts in the class. Based on the information that has been gathered, it can be taken conclusion that the teacher commonly used two forms of instruction in the learning process: explicit and implicit instructions. Explicit instructions are direct speech acts, whereas implicit instructions are indirect speech acts that require context to comprehend. As a result, pupils must comprehend the instruction's aims and goals. The learning cycle contains these instructions, such as opening, core, and closing. The directive speech acts, commands and/or requests, were also discovered in teacher-student interactions. The teacher instructs students on what they should do. The teacher can instruct the students with implicit command and/or request. Students could grasp the teacher's directions in the classroom in many ways, such as taking action and making statements, according to other studies, although there were some instructions that students did not respond to.

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