

## ***SPEECH ACTS ON EFL LEARNERS' TEACHING PERFORMANCE AND ITS IMPLICATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITY***

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### **Abstract**

*This research attempts to find the classification of speech acts and its implication in teaching and learning activity. The researcher uses observation and recording technique to collect the data. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. It was found that there are two types of speech acts: direct and indirect speech acts. It is categorized into four: representative, expressive, directive, commissive. The use of speech acts gives some implications: improving students' understanding of speech acts, increasing level of decency in a communication, improving class atmosphere and students' motivation, and building good relationship between teacher and students.*

**Keywords:** *Speech acts, EFL Teaching Performance*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Communication is a way of getting information from others which is done by using a language. The use of language could help people share their intention to other in social community. The language used in a communication could be in formal or informal form, written or spoken form, and verbal or non verbal form. In doing a communication, through the use of language people deliver a message or messages in their utterance. Kurdghelashvili (2015: 306) said that as one of the functions of a language is to convey meaning, it is indispensable for

language users to know how to utilize various grammatical or lexical units for effective and rational interaction. In addition Kreidler (1998: 181) said that whenever one person speaks to another, the speaker has some intention in producing the utterance, and the addressee interprets the utterance. As Searle (1969: 42) puts it, "all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts". This is to say that there is an act in every communication that people perform (Al-Bantany, 2013:22). In this case, through the utterances they might ask someone else to do something, invite someone else in some events, complain

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something, order something and so forth. The use of such utterance in a study of language is called speech act. McCarthy (1991: 9) said if we are doing something with language in speech or writing for example the language is used as a request or an instruction or an exemplification, we are concentrating on what that piece of language is doing, or how the listener/reader is supposed to react, such entities is called speech acts. Speech act is one of topics which is discussed in pragmatics. It is an utterance considered as an action, particularly with regard to its intention, purpose, or effect. As stated by Yule (1996:47) speech act is action performed via utterances. In English, are commonly given more specific labels such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request. Basra and Luthfiyatun (2017: 75) stated that speech acts are those acts of making statement or question, giving commands or order, refusing, complimenting, apologizing, and etc.

In a communication, the use of speech act can occur in formal situation or in informal situation such as in daily life. In formal situation, it can be used by some teachers in their communication with their students in a classroom. Student-teacher or trainee in

teaching practice could also use speech act during the teaching and learning process. The interaction between the teacher and the students will run well if both of the teacher and the students understand what is meant through the utterance. In this case, the teacher and the students should have the same background knowledge; share the same experience, and capable to observe the context of the communication. As stated by Zulianti and Febriyanti (2018:166) to understand the meaning of someone's utterances, it is important to have the same comprehension between the speakers and the listener or the writers and the readers, so the meaning of utterances or sentences can be reached well. Furthermore, Hymes in Brown and George (1983:38) in interpreting the utterance, someone needs to observe the context of the utterance such as channel (how is contact between participants in the event being maintained), code (what language), message-form and event. He adds other features such as key and purpose.

Discussing about speech acts, teacher as a person who transfer knowledge is possible to produce speech acts in a classroom communication. The producing of speech acts can be done consciously or unconsciously. Beyond

that, the speech acts produced could have some explicit and implicit meaning which is shared to be understood and expect appropriate response.

Based on the explanation above, here the researcher is interested to investigate the use of speech acts on students' teaching performance and would like to understand its implication on teaching and learning activity. It is hoped that the finding of the research could give some information and contribution for English teachers and students in understanding of speech acts and its effect on their learning and teaching process. Besides that, both of the teachers and students can increase their ability in understanding what someone else says through his/her utterance. It is done to have better communication and avoid misunderstanding. This research also gives benefits for the teachers and students of English who study pragmatics and those who want to do the same research in the same field.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is descriptive qualitative research. The data of the research are taken from the oral communication among trainee and students in teaching and learning

activity. The writer analyzes the use of speech act by using pragmatic approach to know the meaning of the utterance and its implication in teaching and learning activity. In collecting the data, the writer uses recording and observation technique. To have the data in written form, it is combined with writing technique or noting technique. It is the continuation technique which is applied in recording and observation technique.

In analyzing the data, the writer uses the theory of pragmatics proposed by Yule and Paltridge. The data analysis helps the researcher to interpret the meaning of utterance used by the teacher or students-teacher and to find its implication in teaching and learning activity.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the research finding, the researcher divides the data analysis by using pragmatics theory by Yule and Discourse analysis by Paltridge. In the first part, the researcher shows and describes the data of speech acts which are divided into two categories namely direct and indirect speech act proposed by Paltridge. Meanwhile, in the second part, the researcher shows and describes the data which are divided into five parts

according to Yule’s theory of speech act. In the third part, the researchers describe the implication of using speech act in teaching and learning activity. For the detail explanation, the researcher begins the description in the section below.

### 3.1 Types of Speech Act

Based on the result of analysis, the researcher classifies the types of speech act into two namely direct and indirect speech acts. The researcher finds 76 data out of 112 which include in direct speech act and 36 data out of 112 which include in indirect speech acts. Here are the percentage of occurrence and explanations of each type:

**Table 1: The Percentage of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts**

No	Type of Speech Acts	Number of Occurrence	Percentage
1.	Direct Speech Acts	76	67
2.	Indirect Speech Acts	36	33
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 3.1.1 Direct Speech Acts

It is not unusual for what someone says to have direct relationship between the utterance

and the function. Direct speech act is an action performed via utterances which has direct relationship with the structure. As Yule (1996:55) said that direct speech acts is a direct relationship between the structure and the function of utterance. In this research, the researcher finds 76 data which have direct relationship between the structure and the function. Here are some examples:

- (1) *Speak in English please!*
- (2) *Repeat it in more than three times!*
- (3) *I will invite some of you to read the dialog in front of the class.*
- (4) *Where can we find the example of obligation?*
- (5) *In which line can you find the expression of compliment in the dialog?*

From the data above, some of the students-teachers used direct speech acts to communicate with their students. In data (1) and (2) the trainees used imperative structure in their utterances which represent direct speech act. The function of the utterance is observable directly through the use of structure of the utterance. In the data above, the trainee asked the students to speak in English in the classroom (shown in datum 1) and asked the students to

repeat the material in three times (shown in datum 2). In this case, the students understood what the trainee means through the use of imperative sentence which function as request.

In datum (3), the trainee used declarative sentence in the communication. The declarative sentence in this datum used to make statement. The trainee only stated that he/she will invite the students to do something. Meanwhile in data (4), and (5), the trainee used interrogative sentence which represent direct speech act. Datum (4) shows that the trainee asked the students directly by using W-question 'where' to find in what place the example of obligation can be found, and datum (5) to find the expression of compliment in the dialog. The trainee used interrogative sentence which functions as request someone to do something directly. In this case, the students could observe the structure of utterance to find what the speakers means through his/her utterance.

### 3.1.2 Indirect Speech Act

Referring to the analysis, there are also some data which show indirect relationship between the structure used by the speakers in communication and its function. The researcher finds 36 data out of

112 which include in indirect speech act. Here are some examples and explanation:

- (6) *Can you find the differences between banner and poster?*
- (7) *Can you write the example of letter on the whiteboard?*
- (8) *I left my book at office.*
- (9) *You are standing in front of whiteboard.*
- (10) *Ok. You still have 2 minutes.*
- (11) *Why didn't you move your chair here in the group?*
- (12) *Who know the meaning of .....?*

According to the data analysis, some trainees produced indirect speech act during the teaching and learning process. The structures of the utterance found in the data are in the form of interrogative and declarative. Each utterance has different function depend on the context of the communication. The context may include the goal and situational context in the classroom.

In datum (6) and (7), the speaker used interrogative sentence to make utterance. Generally in English, modal auxiliary 'can' is used to make 'yes/no question'. In this case, by using 'can' the listener can answer

the question 'yes or no'. But in pragmatics study, there is a difference related to the function of 'can'. As shown in data (6) and (7), modal auxiliary 'can' does not only ask the listener about the ability to do something but it requests an action. In datum (6), the speaker asked the students by saying "*can you find the differences between banner and poster?*".

In this case, the students are not only asked whether they can find it or not by saying "yes/no", but they need to mention the differences between banner and poster. In line with this case, the speaker of datum (7) asked the students by uttering "*can you write the example of letter on the whiteboard?*". By observing the context of the utterance, the speaker does not only ask the students about the ability to do something but she/he requested the students to come forward to write the task on the whiteboard. Both of data (6) and (7) include in indirect speech acts because there are implicit meanings which cannot be observed directly through the structure of the utterance. In

understanding the meaning, the listener should be able to observe the context of the communication.

Data (8), (9), and (10) are indirect speech acts in the form of declarative sentence. The declarative sentences here are not used to make statement. Based on the context observed, datum (8) has a function as request. The speaker requested the students to take the speaker's book at office because it will be used in learning activity. Meanwhile in datum (9) the speaker tended to command towards the students' standing position in the class. Looking at the context, other students could not see the material on the whiteboard when others tried to practice the task in front of the class. The trainee tried to give command by uttering the sentence in datum (9) which meant the students should move aside so others can see the material.

In datum (10) the trainee used indirect speech act in the form of declarative which functions as instruction. The trainee uttered "*Ok. You still have 2 minutes*". According to the context of the conversation, the

trainee instructed the students to finish the task immediately. In this case, through the use of indirect speech acts the trainee instructed the students to do something.

Data (11) and (12) showed other forms of indirect speech acts. The trainee used interrogative form in their utterance by applying W-question 'why' and 'who'. Generally in English the word 'why' is used to ask the reason of something, while the word 'who' is used to ask a person as subject or object in a conversation. In the case of datum (11), the trainee uttered "*why didn't you move your chair here in the group?*".

Based on the context observed, datum (11) has an implicit meaning that the student pointed should move her/his chair. In this case, the students can not only respond by giving the reason, but he/she should move to another chair. Relating to the datum above, the trainee gives more information than is said.

Meanwhile in datum (12), the trainee used 'who' in her/his utterance. The word 'who' in this context is not only used to ask the person in the classroom but also

asking the students to explain the meaning of something. In this case, in order to have good communication, both of the speaker and the listener should observe the context of the conversation because as stated by Levinson (1983: 236) in uttering sentences, one is also doing things and we must first clarify in what ways in uttering a sentence one might be said to be performing actions.

### **3.2 Classification of Speech Acts**

Yule classifies speech act into five categories namely assertive, representative, expressive, directive, and commissive. Based on the analysis, EFL students' speech acts are classified into four categories namely assertive, expressive, directive, and commissive. The explanation of each category will be described in the following section:

#### **3.2.1 Representative**

Representatives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not (Yule, 1996:53). In using representatives, the speaker makes the word fits the world. In addition Cutting (2002:17) explains that

these acts can be used to perform some functions such as describing, claiming, hypothesizing, insisting and predicting. Referring to the analysis, the researcher finds that representative speech acts used by trainee are in the form of explaining, informing, stating, agreeing, correcting, confirming, and disagreeing. For the detail description of each form, the researcher provides some examples below:

- (13) *The differences between hortatory and analytical exposition text is in the last paragraph of each text.*
- (14) *To be able to have deep understanding of caption, next week you will have an exercise about it and present your task in the class.*
- (15) *Oohh..Hopefully she will get better soon.*
- (16) *I agree with your friend's statement that smoking is not good for our health.*
- (17) *Not combine, but join.*
- (18) *Ok. So the function of advertisement is to persuade the reader to buy a product.*
- (19) *No, other students can give other opinions?*

Looking at the example of the data above, the trainee or speaker uses different kinds of representative speech acts. In the datum (13) the speaker tried to give explanation about the material to the students. It includes in explaining which describe or tell someone about the fact. Meanwhile in datum (14), the speaker informed to the students about the next week activity. Informing is used to make the students are aware of fact.

The third datum (15) includes in stating. The trainee stated something to the students who got sick and could not come to the class at that time. This kind of representative is used to show a respect of the teacher to his/her student's condition. In the forth datum (16), the speaker uttered an agreement with the student's opinion. In this case, the speaker has the same view as the student about the topic. Different case lies on the example (17). Correcting student's used of vocabulary becomes another example of representative speech acts. The speaker checked students' answer by giving them the correct one. In



this case, the speaker believes what he/she said to be true.

Other examples of representative is confirming and disagreeing. In the example (18) the speaker established the truth or correctness of students' opinion about the topic. Meanwhile in the example (19) the speaker denied the students' opinion and gave the chance to other students. Disagreeing is a statement which is used to represent different opinion.

### 3.2.2 Expressive

Expressive is a kind of speech acts in which the speaker's utterance express what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes joy, or sorrow (Yule: 1996: 53). In addition Leech (1983: 56) states that the illocutionary force of these acts can be in the forms of apologizing, condoling, praising, congratulating, thanking and the like. Based on the analysis, expressive speech act in the data includes in different forms namely surprising, thanking, complimenting and apologizing. Here are some examples of

expressive found in teaching and learning process:

- (20) *Ohh.. Why she didn't come?*
- (21) *Thank you for presenting the task, give applause..*
- (22) *Ok..that's good.. you've done a great job!*
- (23) *I'm really sorry for the media that is not working properly.*

Referring to the example above, the speaker expressed his/her feelings in different forms. Example (20) shows us the expression of surprise. Based on the context observed, the teacher was feeling surprise when he/she called one name of the students but he did not come (absent). The second datum (21) is the example of thanking. The teacher expresses his/her thanking through the use of language. Meanwhile in datum (22) the speaker expresses his/her feeling about students' task. The speech acts include in complimenting or praising towards the students' job. In this case, compliment is used as a polite expression of praise or admiration.

Datum (23) includes in apologizing. The speaker expressed his/her regret by using verbal language because the media

used in teaching and learning process was not running well.

### 3.2.3 Directive

Directive is a kind of speech acts deal with attempting someone to do something. As stated by Yule (1996: 54) it is a kind of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something. The illocutionary point of directive is to try to get the hearer to behave in such a way as to make his behavior match the propositional content of the directive (Searle, 1998:148). Based on the analysis, the researcher found directive speech act in teaching performance in the form of asking, requesting, and suggesting. Here are the data:

- (24) *Speak in English please!*
- (25) *Ok you, what is your opinion about it?*
- (26) *You need to read a lot of English text books to improve your pronunciation. Ok!*

From the data of the research above show us the examples of directive. The first directive is in the form of requesting. In this datum (24) the speaker requested the students to

speak in English while learning in the classroom. Meanwhile in datum (25) the speaker asked the students to answer the question relates to the topic discussed in the class. In the third datum (26) the speaker suggested his/her students to read English text books to improve their pronunciation. All the example of directive speech acts above require the students/listener to do something based on the context of the communication.

### 3.2.4 Commissive

Commissive is the kind of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action (Yule, 1996: 54). The whole point of commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action (Austin, 1962:156). Cutting (2002: 17) adds that promising, threatening, refusing, and pledging, offering, vowing and volunteering are some examples of illocutionary forces that fall under the category of commissives. According to the result of analysis, commissive speech acts occur in two forms namely offering and promising; here are the examples:

- (27) *If you do not understand the rule, just ask me. I will help you to do it.*
- (28) *For the next section, I will provide some examples of conditional sentence in different types, and you should compare them to find the differences.*

From the example above, the first example (27) shows us the form of offering. Based on the context observed, the speaker committed future action by offering him/herself to help the students in doing something in the classroom. While in the second datum (28), the speaker committed future action by saying to the students that he/she will provide something relates to the topic of the lesson.

### **3.3 Implication of Speech Acts in Teaching and Learning Activity**

Referring to the analysis of EFL students' speech acts above, the use of speech acts can give possible future effect on teaching and learning activity. Speech acts as the basic unit of language which is used in communication such as in the classroom could influence the effectiveness of communication between the teacher and students. Looking at the result of observation, the use of direct speech act in the

classroom influences the students in understanding the meaning of the utterance. The students are easily to catch the meaning of direct speech acts than indirect utterances. It is also said by Hansen (2008: 27) that in giving learner feedback, direct speech is more easily understood than indirect speech. The indirect relationship between the structure and the meaning requires the students to observe the context of the communication and require them to have the ability to understand the message conveyed. It is supported by Paltridge (2006:58) indirect speech acts are often difficult for second language learners to recognize as they may not necessarily know that in English it is request someone to do something, order to do something or something else.

Whereas indirect speech acts have greater politeness than direct speech act. As stated by Yule (1996:56) indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts. In this case, some students are failing to understand the teacher's intended meaning because different background

knowledge, experience, and culture. Thus, the language teachers are required to take a concern and draw an attention to the students to have an awareness of different culture in a communication.

Another result of observation shows that the use of speech acts which have implicit meaning such as in the form of declarative and interrogative could create a pleasant environment. For example, when the teacher asks the students to do something, it is more polite than he/she used imperative as an instruction. To modify the explicit politeness, in this case sometimes the teacher added “please” in the utterance.

Besides, the use of speech act with excessive intonation could influence the students’ happiness in learning activity as in the example *‘Ok..that’s good.. you’ve done a great job!’*. This positive attitude can increase the class atmosphere and students’ motivation. Another example of speech act which can improve class situation when the teacher used commissive speech act in the form of offering. When the teacher tries to offer some helps to the students, it will bring closeness between the teacher and the students. The students will feel comfort in the

classroom when they get more attention from the teacher.

The teachers’ closeness to the students can improve their achievement in learning. As stated by Zulianti (2017:342) the relationship between the teacher and the students is very important. It can increase the students’ achievement. It is supported by Rimm-Kaufman, Sara and Sandilos (2016) those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflict in their relationships.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In learning and teaching process, it is not impossible for the teachers to produce some speech acts in their communication. The producing of speech acts may have their own function and meaning depends on the context of the communication or speech situation. In order to be able to understand what the teacher’s means towards his/her utterance, the students need to observe the context around them. Besides, understanding different culture, background knowledge and experience are also needed to gain the meaning of the utterance. In this case,

the students should have an ability to catch the meaning and are aware of those differences in some aspects.

The other results show that, the use of speech acts in teaching and learning activity give some implications. Two different types of speech acts give a different in the level of decency. Indirect speech acts have greater politeness than direct speech act. The use of speech acts also could increase the students' motivation and class atmosphere. Besides, it also builds good relationship between teachers and students in learning and teaching process.

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