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An Investigation into Speech Acts Used by Lecturers in English Classroom

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Abstract

The study investigates the various speech acts that lecturers use in a Discourse Analysis classroom. The study attempted to determine which type was most frequently used based on Searle's theory. The study was conducted by involving two lecturers of Discourse Analysis classroom in the Graduate Program of English Education UIN Jakarta, using a qualitative research design. The data were gathered through Zoom video recordings capturing the nuances of learning sessions and the collection of messages within the WhatsApp class group. Subsequently, the data were transcribed and analyzed. The interesting findings revealed; 50% of what lecturers said consisted of commands or directives, 24% were representatives, 13% were commissive, and also 13% were expressive. The results indicated that the most dominant type of speech act was directives (50%). Lecturers predominantly utilized directives to guide students in specific actions, including; asking students to allocate more time to study, suggesting them to read reputable scientific journals, and encouraging students to work gradually on their papers to avoid last-minute rushes. In the end, this research helps to understand how lecturers talk and share ideas in a Discourse Analysis classroom. It also provides insights into how lecturers conduct teaching in that particular class.

Keywords: *Classroom Activities; Discourse Analysis; English; Speech Act*

Introduction

In order to comprehend the meaning of communication in society, the area of discourse analysis in linguistics examines how language is used in various circumstances (Rahim, 2018). It focuses on how language represents societal

standards, develops social interactions and creates cultural norms. Above all, the classroom provides an ideal location for conducting discourse analysis research since it is an exciting environment where communication is critical and plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process (Morton, 2020). It is clear from the dynamic communication situations in the various classroom settings that teachers play a crucial role in the learning process. Teachers prepare activities for teaching and learning to give meaningful interaction in the classroom (Njika, 2020). They also can change how student talks and behaves. The way in which teachers employ speech acts, such as talking tools, might impact students' learning outcomes. In response to that, Juvrianto (2018) said that the study of speech acts in the context of discourse analysis classroom is an essential area of research because it helps to teach better and see how words and communication work in society.

Speech acts are based on the ideas of J.L. Austin and John Searle, who demonstrated that words can be used for more than just conveying information; words can also be used for actions such as asking, telling, or making promises (1962). These speech acts serve as tools for knowledge transmission, order maintenance, learning promotion, and the development of a positive learning environment in the classroom. Given how complicated classrooms can be, it is essential that students learn speech acts. In classrooms, where teachers hold positions of authority and students are expected to follow by academic norms and rules established by teacher, complex power interactions frequently occur (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). This power relationship influences the way speech acts are used, received, and interpreted in the classroom. Understanding speech acts help to recognize how teachers leading, maintaining order, and fostering a friendly environment to learn.

Furthermore, the way in which teachers employ various speech actions in the classroom might provide a spotlight on the most effective methods for instruction and learning (Zulianti, 2018). For example, teachers' choice of words can increase students' attention, improve their understanding, and help them retaining information. Also, researchers can discover ways to improve instruction and provide students greater benefit from their classrooms by examining how teachers employ speech acts. Additionally, speech acts studied in discourse analysis classes have applications outside of the classroom. It relates to more general issues of language use, social engagement, and communication. As a result, language serves as a tool for socialization, identity building, and power negotiation along with serving as a medium for knowledge transfer in classrooms, which are like tiny replicas of the actual world (Hirst, 2004). Thus, examining speech acts in this

setting may bring light on how language is used to negotiate, convey identities, and establish social hierarchies, which are essential aspects of discourse analysis.

To put it briefly, the study of speech acts used by lecturers in discourse analysis classroom is a research area with implications for education, linguistics, and sociolinguistics. The study attempts to describe various speech acts used by lecturers and to determine which type of speech acts are frequently used in the Discourse Analysis classroom. Once more, understanding how speech acts are employed in the classroom can enhance teaching and learning practices and offer valuable insights into the complex interaction of language, power, and identity in educational contexts.

In the light of the perspectives outlined earlier, this study focused on the interactions within the Discourse Analysis classroom of the English Education Graduate Program at UIN Jakarta. The study included exploring: (1) the varieties of speech acts used by the lecturers and (2) the most frequently type of speech acts used by lecturers, following Searle's theory during the teaching and learning process.

Literature Review
Classroom Communication
Numerous studies on classroom conversation have demonstrated the importance of interpersonal communication for learning and skill development. According to Allwright (1991), it is critical to engage students in conversation with one another during class. The goal of the so-called communicative method is for teachers to help students communicate rather than just teach them to speak. Giving students opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills requires an interest in the social interactions that take place in learning environments. For the purpose of teaching and learning, interaction is crucial. Interaction is something that a group of people do together (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). The teacher assigns who speaks in class, to whom, about what, in what language, and other matters. However, despite all, classroom interactions are mostly about students working together.

Furthermore, communication is the exchange of information between two or more individuals who share the same signs and conventions. When two objects or actions affect one another, that is called communication (Wagner, 1994). Communication is a two-way street; there cannot be one message exchange at a

time. When people talk about "classroom communication", two elements are important. Teachers and students first gather in the classroom to discuss and learn from one another. Brown (2004) defined communication as the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas by individuals. Meanwhile, classroom communication defined by Richards (2011) as the verbal and nonverbal ways in which students communicate with one another. It is a component of studying how teachers talk, how people learn a second language, and the overall conversation in the classroom. Quirk et al (1985) also defined classroom communication as the configurations of social connections and spoken or unspoken communication that occur within a classroom. In short, classroom communication is communication act involving two or more individuals within a classroom setting. This activity aims to convey thoughts, express ideas, communicate feelings from one student to other members of classroom.

Theories of Speech Act

Speech act theory that was proposed by Austin (1962) and then developed by his student Searle (1979) has explored the connection between language and action. Essentially, when people speak, they do not just share words, but actively perform various actions, such as expressing gratitude, making requests, or promising things (Fowler, 2014). In simpler terms, using language allows people to do things or influence others. This idea is fundamental in linguistics, where speech acts are viewed as actions carried out through spoken words. In line with this, people own the ability to take action by simply speaking.

As highlighted by Hidayat (2016), speech acts enable the communication of physical actions using only words and phrases. This is similar to Yule's statement (1996) that speech acts are actions performed through oral expression. Further, Searle (1969) noted that speech acts are the primary or the smallest unit of linguistic communication. It is about using language to do things like saying facts, giving instructions, making promises, stating things, and expressing feelings (Janson & Woo, 1996).

Further, Searle (1969) pointed out that speech acts happen in real situations where people use language. He explained that the main idea behind speech act theory is that the smallest part of human communication According to Bachman (1996), the pragmatic dimension is connected to the creation and comprehension of speech acts, as compared to the morphological, syntactic, and rhetorical dimensions of the structural organization of language. These two aspects serve as communication's exchange.

To sum up, understanding the meaning behind what people say requires an understanding of speech acts. It relies on how effectively a person can communicate through language. Studying speech acts will make it easier for people to communicate effectively. When they speak with others, they make sure the other person knows what they are saying in addition to merely uttering words aimlessly. Speech acts are performed by both the speaker and the listener during discussions or dialogues. Beyond merely the words said, people can learn more about communication by seeing how others speak in various contexts. It entails observing how they utilize language and identifying typical means of self-expression in order to accomplish particular goals in conversation.

Kinds of Speech Act

Speech acts can be divided into three simultaneous parts, according to Austin's (1962) theory: the locutionary act, which means saying something to the listener in order to convey information (linguistic meaning) to the listener; the illocutionary act, which involves doing something in accordance with the context or meaning of the words; and the perlocutionary act, which is about persuading the listener to do what the speaker wants. Context is the shared background knowledge between the speaker and listener that helps them understand what is being said. For instance, when someone says, "it is so spicy", it may not be understood correctly by someone other than the speaker and listener because they both know the context behind that sentence, while others do not.

In other ways, Searle (1979) identified five primary goals for speech acts, namely; first is declaratives which bring about instant changes to the social situation and frequently rely on customs or norms that beyond language, such as punishment, war declarations, layoffs, and so on. Second, representatives or assertive, in these cases, the speaker confirms the accuracy of an argument or conclusion. Third is expressive, it expresses the feelings or mental condition of the speaker (example: include expressing one's feelings, attitudes, gratitude, regret, greeting, or psychological state). Next is directives, where the speaker makes a request or raises a question in attempt to persuade the listener to do something. Lastly is commissives, this is when the speaker commits to do something in the future, like promising, threatening, or offering something.

Following Searle, Yule (1996) provided the following summary of the five general functions:

Type of Speech Act	Meaning	Description
Declarative	The word is adaptable or flexible	The speaker caused situation
Assertive	The word matched the situation	The speaker believed situation
Expressive	The word matched the situation	The speakers feel situation
Directive	The situation matched the word	The speakers want situation
Commissive	The situation matched the word	The speakers intend situation

Figure 1. The Type of Speech Acts

Method

This research utilizes a qualitative research design, specifically focusing on the discourse analysis approach, to identify the types and predominant use of speech acts by two (2) EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lecturers in the Discourse Analysis classroom of the English Education Program at UIN Jakarta. The research findings are elaborated in a descriptive format to provide readers with comprehensive information. Consequently, this research aligns with the principles of qualitative research design (Asriyanti et al., 2022). To be more precise, a case study approach is used to examine the speech acts that lecturers use in the classroom, which is in line with the objectives of the investigation stated by Idris et al.(2020). According to Creswell (2012), a case study design is appropriate when a researcher reports case descriptions and themes while examining a system of instances. This methodology makes sense for this research because its main goal is to identify the type of speech acts used by lecturers during the teaching and learning.

This study utilized audio and video recordings to record language that is used during the learning process, subsequently transcribing the recorded content. The transcription of video/audio recordings is conducted following the observation phase of data collection. Additionally, the researchers observed the communication between lecturers and students in the WhatsApp group class. In the process of gathering data, the teaching and learning activities are observed to identify the speech acts used by the lecturers. The recorded sessions of the class are transcribed and the speech acts are then analyzed using Searle's five major classifications: representatives, directives, commissive, expressive, and declaratives. To categorize

utterances into Searle's theory, a framework based on word clues proposed by Qadir and Riloff (2011) is developed. Following this, the percentages of each speech act classification are calculated and interpreted in the findings and discussions.

The data obtained during the research are being analyzed qualitatively through the triangulation method. in analyzing data from classroom observation, the researchers employed the qualitative data analysis by Miles and Huberman (2014, pp. 11–14) which consists of three stages:

1. Data compression: this means selecting key information from all the notes. The researchers recorded and wrote down what happened in the class session. Subsequently, figuring out the types and the dominant speech acts using the ideas of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).
2. Data presentation: after selecting out the important parts, the researchers presented the findings after highlighting the most significant information. The data is presented based on what is sought in the study.
3. Description of draw/conclusion: finally, decisions are made by the researchers in accordance with the findings. The researchers decided what type of speech acts used by English lecturers in the Discourse Analysis class at the English Education Graduate Program, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

Results and Discussion

This part presented the results, with a focus on the findings from the class observation. These results illustrate the outcomes derived from observing speech acts during classroom communications between the lecturers and students. This section is structured in accordance with the order of the research questions. The researchers classified the lecturers' speech acts into four categories; assertive/representative, expressive, directive, and commissive in accordance with Searle's (1969) theory based on her class observations. The frequency of occurrence for each form of speech acts in the classroom was shown in figure 2.

During the teaching process, four categories of speech acts were recognized. Among all the speech acts that lecturers used, the directive speech act was the most dominant. The frequency of directive speech acts, which represented four utterances and roughly 50% out of the data. Following this, the representative speech act had a volume of around two utterances, representing for 24% of the data, positioning it as the second most frequently used speech act by teachers. The next category of speech act included only one sort of utterance produced by teachers,

making up roughly 13% of the data. This emphasized how crucial it is for educators to express their emotions during the teaching process in order to fulfil the intended purposes of their speech. At last, a single utterance representing approximately 13% of the data demonstrated the commissive speech act.
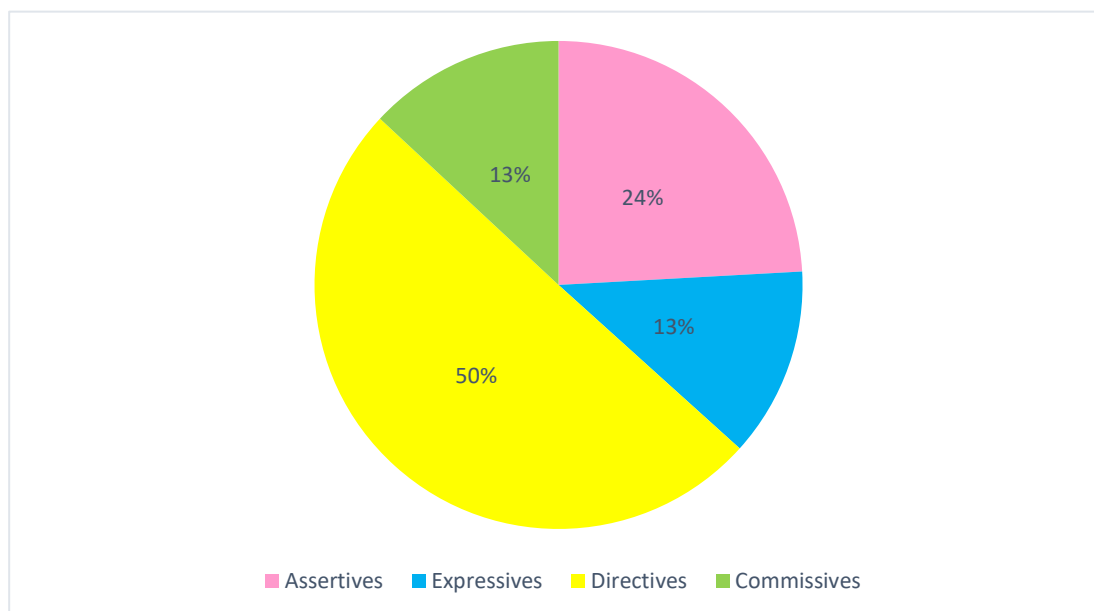

Figure 2. The Percentage of Discourse Analysis Lecturers' Speech Acts Performances

1. Declaratives

    It was noticed that lecturers only used four different kinds of speech acts when observing the communications in the classroom. The lecturers notably avoided using declarative speech acts. According to Yule (1996), "by using declarative, the speaker changes the world via words". This decision can be explained by the fundamental characteristics of declarative speech acts. The world can change as a result of declarative utterances, but executing this typically needs an institutional or governmental role to effect such changes. The altered state is difficult to reverse or interrupt, and its effects tend to endure.

2. Assertive/Representatives

    A collection of word clues was developed by Qadir and Riloff (2011) to distinguish utterances as assertive or representative speech acts. Words like "hypothesize", "demand", "brag", "complain", "conclude", "determine", "identify", "assert", "believing", and "suspect" were included in the list. After

the data was analyzed, it became clear that the lecturers primarily used representative/assertive speech acts, which included things like making assertions and drawing conclusions.

Table 1. Assertive/Representatives

No	Speech Act	Utterance	Total
1	Making assertions	*"Assalamualaikum, this coming week is Week 3. Please prepare 3 topics for your research (we'll choose one) along with a description on the Rationales and Significances (max. 100 words each). Further information will be disclosed later. In the meantime, please learn these websites.* *inserting two links discussing how to write the rationale and significance in the paper*. Thanks."* (Lecturer 2 on WhatsApp Group Class)	1
2	Drawing conclusions	*"It is important for everyone to keep in mind that the discussion and findings sections of your article should be written separately. Do not write findings in the discussion section, as I have frequently seen situations like this. As a reminder, the discussion section aims to explain and contextualize the findings within the larger study framework, whereas the findings section presents the raw data and outcomes. When taken as a whole, these sections help readers to gain an extensive understanding of the research topic and its implications."* (Lecturer 2 on online class via Zoom app)	1

3. Expressive

It was common to see "I wish you all the best" as an expressive speech act. Good wishes and pleasant thoughts were being conveyed to the students by the lecturer in this particular case, which was an example of an expressive speech act. The focus was on the lecturer's emotional state and the desire for the well-being and success of the person to whom the

statement is addressed. Here was the situation where the lecturer wishing something good for his students in the end of the learning session.

Table 2. Expressive

No	Speech Act	Utterance	Total
1	Expressing desire	*"I wish you all the best."* (Lecturer 1 on WhatsApp Group Class)	1

4. Directives

The category with the highest frequency of directive speech acts was used by lecturers to complete the tasks. English lecturers frequently gave the instructions to their students in the context of class discussion, instructed them what to do or how they should turn in assignments. Commanding was the category of directive speech act that found in this study. Making direct requests or giving instructions to someone to perform a particular task was the role of commanding (Mukminin, 2023).

Table 3. Directives

No	Speech Act	Utterance	Total
1	Commanding	• *"Red-marked items require correction and double-checking. Once reviewed, please resend your recent work." *in context examining students' work* (Lecturer 1 on WhatsApp Group Class) • *"Do not forget, next week is the submission of the draft for discourse analysis paper. Whoever has had their titles approved can start drafting. Nevertheless, if your title has not been approved, please do not hesitate to consult."* (Lecturer 1 on WhatsApp Group Class) • *"Kindly forward the Zoom link, starting at 4:00 PM. For five minutes, each student will share their Word document file on the screen as they discuss their research findings. All students need to be seen/appear on camera from the beginning to the end."* (Lecturer 2 on WhatsApp Group Class) • *"Assalamualaikum. Regarding the presentation, I have coordinated with the*	4

heads of English Education Program to make it more impactful. The department will organize the 1ˢᵗ TESOL Research Colloquium and is set for Tuesday, December 19, 2023, from 9:00 to 12:00 AM. In this colloquium, we will present 27 undergraduate and 11 graduate research projects. As a result, students will gain expertise giving presentations at academic gatherings and have the chance for publication in accredited national journals. The deadline for submitting the research paper's second draft is Thursday, December 14, 2023. There will be more specific details provided. Thank you.

5. Commissive

Commissive characterized speech acts through which lecturers initiate to undertake future actions. In this study, the lecturers used threats as a kind of communication to dedicate themselves to work on papers seriously. The lecturers emphasized the students who did not follow the guidelines for writing their papers that they could not be able to participate in the remains of the class. This is in keeping with Juniartha's (2020) list of example of commissive speech acts, which include refusals, threats, and promises. The following sentences provided an example in the act of threatening happened in Discourse Analysis class.

Table 4. Threats

No	Speech Act	Utterance	Total
1	Threats	*"Assalamualaikum. We are extending the deadline for individuals who have not yet completed the guidelines on topic submission until tonight at 23:59. Kindly read and comprehend the instructions provided. We will make an announcement tomorrow regarding the students who can continue on this course until the end of the semester."* (Lecturer 2 on WhatsApp Group Class)	1

Language plays a critical role in both teaching and learning. For students, attending school is similar to learning a new language to use and comprehend. Teachers use certain language usage strategies to make their lesson plans effective when they have a clear purpose in mind. In 2008 Curtis and O'Hagan used the term "class speech act" to describe this type of teaching (2008). It indicates that a particular type of classroom conversation is required when educating. Additionally, Searle (1969) asserted that speech acts' function similarly to language's building components. He defined them as fundamental linguistic components, similar to putting together words to make sense in a particular context. Thus, language comprehension and speech patterns play a critical role in the learning process.

All spoken expressions employed in the classroom for communication purposes are collectively referred to as classroom speech acts. Discourse studies, also referred to as discourse analysis, is the study of speech acts that take place during instructional activities in classrooms. The goal of this study is to comprehend the relationship between language usage and the context in which it is used (McCarthy, 1991; Seken, 2004). Correspondingly, Cazden listed three primary purposes for language that highlight the importance of language in education, especially in the classroom. In order to do these duties, teachers must use language to regulate communication, transmit the curriculum, and express their own identities.

Conclusion

It became clear from the findings and discussions that there were four sorts of speech acts in the data. The distribution of these categories showed variation, with directives speech acts being the most common, making up 50% of all utterances. With 24% of the vote, representatives came in second, followed by expressive with 13% and commissive with 13%. During classroom communication, lecturers can provide students with comprehensible input and language models by using speech acts. The study observed that by practicing these speech acts frequently, students will be able to mimic and apply it to daily communications.

Given these results, the study suggests that English educators to introduce and expose their students to a wider variety of speech act performances, especially when teaching in an Indonesian environment. Furthermore, speech act performances help EFL students in improving their communication ability by enhancing their comprehension of conversational contexts and enabling more natural interactions between educators and students. In-depth investigation of this subject is recommended through subsequent research studies.

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