



A Speech Act Analysis of a Pre-Service Teacher in an EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Misunderstanding in communication may happen in an EFL classroom due to improper use of speech acts. This research aims to find out and analyze the classification of speech acts and the function performed by a pre-service English teacher at SMAN 7 Malang. This implies a qualitative descriptive study, looking at the pre-service English teacher's talk in an EFL classroom. The present study focuses on the classification of speech acts employed by Searle. The finding of this study indicates four speech act types uttered by the teacher. It consists of 41 representatives out of 185 utterances, 120 utterances of directive type, 7 utterances of commissive, and 17 utterances of expressive. Moreover, of all the most function used in each type, the questioning function was used the most with 73 occurrences. To conclude, the results of this study show that directive type dominates the data with 64.9% out of the utterances, followed by representatives at 22.2%, expressive at 9.2%, and commissive at 3.8%.

Keywords: EFL classrooms; Illocutionary force; Speech acts

Introduction

Language is an important aspect that is used widely in the world, particularly in communication. People often use languages in their daily interactions. They interact with each other to communicate their intended meaning involving expressing their thoughts, feelings, or intentions. However, communication often contains hidden meanings. One may suggest something without actually saying it. Austin (1962) stated that people utter something in attempting to do an action which is known as a speech act (Cooren, 2015). It may lead to misunderstanding for the parties involved in the communication if the meaning of the context is not appropriately understood. Hence, it is important to consider the speech act aspect

which concerns the communicative intention of the speaker in communication.

Pragmatics is a study branch of linguistics that relates to the language used in communication. It deals with utterances specifically considering the meaning of the context. It will be helpful to discuss pragmatics with the distinction of near-side and far-side pragmatics (Korta & Perry, 2020). Near-side pragmatics concerns certain facts of the utterance, while far-side pragmatics concerns something beyond the utterance involving speech acts behind the utterance and the implicature of what is being said. As it studies a meaning in a speech situation, pragmatics has five aspects comprising the speakers and the hearers, the utterance context, the goal of the utterance which means the intended meaning of the utterance, the action in form of an utterance which is known as a speech acts, and also the utterance as a product of a verbal act which means that it is hard to categorize an utterance as a single sentence as it is too short or too long to be called as one. Thus, the utterance of the speaker when using an expression is discussed in semantics, whereas the information conveyed and the action performed through the utterance are discussed in pragmatics. In other words, pragmatics studies the speaker's intended meaning and focuses on language use that enables people to appropriately use and understand the language.

A speech act is a theory of language that discusses how people do something by using language. It was initially proposed by John Langshaw Austin (1962/1975) and then was taken up by John R. Searle (1969, 1979) American philosopher. Austin initially distinguished a declarative sentence into two utterances namely constative and performatives. It was then replaced with a distinction of three acts comprising locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. The locutionary act is the literal meaning of what is being said. For example, "it is cold in here" indicates the cold condition of the room when the speaker utters the statement. An Illocutionary act is the intended action by the speakers when they are being said. For example, "it is cold in here" may imply a request for the hearers to close the window to prevent more wind from coming which leads to a colder room, or a complaint for the hearers who are letting the window open despite the cold condition of the room. A perlocutionary act is the effect of the speaker's utterance. Austin (1962/1975) noted that saying something will normally affect whoever is listening to the speaker (Cooren, 2015). For example, "it is cold in here" may lead to an addressee closing the window to prevent cold (Hafifah, 2020).

Subagiasih, Nitiasih, & Budasi (2018) analyzed speech act types and functions of a teacher's and student's talk. The study was conducted in an EFL classroom involving an English teacher who is not a native speaker of the English language and students in their eighth grade at SMP PGRI 5 Denpasar. There were five speech act types found in the classroom with the dominant directive type occurred than the other speech act types. It corresponds to the purpose of the directive type which makes the classroom under control and leads to easier instructing and monitoring of the students in the process of teaching and learning. In addition, a competitive function was found the most than the other functions in the classroom. It is caused

by the aim of competitive function which is to achieve the social goal such as directing the students to keep silent. Hence, the results indicated that a direct utterance is better to be used than an indirect one since it helps students to understand the speaker.

A study by Mukhroji, Nurkamto, Subroto, & Tarjana (2019) examined the kinds of speech acts by EFL learners at Kampung Inggris, Indonesia. The research subject was 75 advanced-level proficiency students and 12 teachers. All five types of speech acts were found in the interactions with directive type as the most speech act type found at 35.3%. It is due to the most common one occurring in interactions. Furthermore, the results indicated that there are five conditions affecting the speech acts performance consisting of the speech act model, the competence degree with various speech acts, the strategy in using and selecting speech acts, the degree of exposure, and the awareness level in using their pragmatic competence. These all will reflect someone's pragmatic competence and proficiency in the language. Therefore, the study showed that rather than focusing only on grammatical form, the speech act is a study that also focuses on locution. In addition, the speech act also requires the competence of pragmatics since it relates to language proficiency.

Different studies have addressed findings on speech act analysis in various fields. Haucsa et al. (2020) described the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts by the interviewer and interviewee. Through a descriptive analysis design, the findings showed that four kinds of illocutionary speech acts were found with the dominant representative speech acts. It is due to the function of representatives is to describe things the speaker believed to be true which is prominently found in interviews. In addition, Basra & Thoyyibah (2017) also discussed speech act analysis in a language teaching and learning field. They investigated an English teacher's speech acts in the classroom regarding the classification of speech acts, the reason for the usage, and the implication of the findings. Using a case study, it is shown that the use of appropriate speech act classification in the classroom depends on the teaching approach used by the teacher. The most speech act found was the directive speech act which is in accordance with the goal of the teaching approach used by the teacher, to encourage students to speak actively. Hence, the appropriate use of speech acts may achieve the expected goal of the communication which lessens the occurrence of misunderstanding. To fill the gap from the previous studies that have not discussed a pre-service English teacher's talk in an offline classroom, the present study examines the classification of speech acts focusing on the assertive or representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration, performed by a pre-service English teacher at SMAN 7 Malang.

Method

The method used to find out and analyze a pre-service English teacher's talk regarding speech act classification is descriptive qualitative since the collected data is described in paragraphs. The data were collected from the voice recording of the classroom observation containing the utterance of a pre-service English teacher in

an EFL classroom at SMAN 7 Malang. Although the teacher is not a non-native English speaker, he was chosen because of his good English speaking and exposure to his surroundings namely students and colleagues.

The instruments researcher uses data sheets and a supporting instrument namely a mobile phone. The data sheets are used to transcribe the verbal data into written data, and the mobile phone is used to voice record the utterance of the pre-service English teacher in the classroom and also to document the teaching and learning process.

The data collected were speech acts performed by a pre-service English teacher. The procedure of the study starts with an observation in which the researcher goes to the field directly by joining the class to gather data. The gathered data that are supported by the voice recording are transcribed into written data. Then the researcher identifies the data regarding the speech act types and their functions uttered by the participant. The researcher also organizes data and discards data that has nothing to do with the research problem. Then the researcher analyzes the data from the organized data display by interpreting the data in a descriptive form to derive a conclusion that answers the research questions. In addition, the researcher makes a percentage of the data by dividing the frequency of the speech act type by the total frequency and then multiplying the result by 100. The present study analyzes the data by using the speech act framework by Searle (1976). According to Searle, there are five kinds of speech acts consisting of representatives (or assertive), directives, expressive, commissive, and declarations.

1. Assertive refers to words stating what the speaker believes is the case. In this case, the language is used to tell someone how things are in a statement form. The examples are stating, boasting, claiming, reporting, and asserting.
2. Directives refer to words uttered by the speaker aiming to make the listener do something. The examples are commanding, requesting, warning, inviting, and questioning.
3. Commissive refer to words that commit the speaker to future actions. It means the language is used to commit the speaker's intention to do something in the future. The examples are promising, vowing, threatening, refusing, pledging, and offering.
4. Expressive refer to words stating the speaker's feelings. Examples are greeting, thanking, apologizing, and regretting.
5. Declarations refer to words bringing some changes to objects as the declaration has been done. This speech act type is typically used by a speaker authorized to do something within a group or institution. The examples are declaring, resigning, dismissing, and naming.

The primary data of this study is qualitative by scrutinizing the utterance of a pre-service English teacher in an EFL classroom. In addition, quantitative in this study only associated with the frequency and percentage of the speech act types found in the data.

Results

The researcher finds out the representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative speech acts in the pre-service English teacher's talk. The data found is described as follows.

a. Representatives (22.2%)

Representative speech act type was found 41 times out of 185 utterances. Out of these 41 utterances of representative speech act found, there were concluding or repeating students' answers to clarify their answers and stating. The following section is some of the examples of representative speech acts that are discussed.

Datum 1

Teacher: "okay very detail yaa (10:29) tadi ada dibilang sama miss.. miss siapa tadi? Miss nayla? katanya dia berbicara tentang edukasinya. dia berbicara mau apply kemana walaupun itu yaa tadi ada.. mungkin kalau ada yang denger, ada kualifikasinya. okay! but, itu belum menjawab."

"Okay, that was a very detailed answer. As she said, what is her name? Miss Nayla? She said that the man in the video talked about his education. He talked about where to apply even though there was ... if you all heard, there was the qualification. Okay! but, that is still not counted as the right answer."

The datum above is a conversation between an English teacher and EFL students. They discuss content from a video that has been watched in a warming-up session in an EFL classroom. A student has just answered the teacher's question which is her thoughts about the content of the video. Then the teacher used a representative sentence with a concluding function to restate what the students said as the answer to the teacher's question. The teacher said that to clarify the students' answers and lead to the right answer.

Datum 2

Teacher: "okay, udah yaa.. you've read a text about an application letter. you must have understand what's the about. jadi pasti tau dong, apasih tentang apasih ini. tentang letter text ini."

"Okay, you've read a text about an application letter. You must have understood what is the about. So, you must have already known what it is about, about this letter text."

The datum above is set in an EFL classroom wherein EFL students just finished reading a text about an application letter which is the learning material for the day's meeting. Then the English teacher used a representative speech act with assuming function to shift from one activity to another activity which is working on a five-question mini quiz. This is categorized as an assuming function because the teacher simply thinks about students' understanding without actually confirming the truth from the students as proof. Here, the teacher does not have proof of whether the students have comprehended or not the passage they just read to be able to work on the mini-quiz. Hence, the teacher said the statement which serves as an assumption.

Datum 3

Teacher: "person in charge is.. orang yang mempunyai kewenangan, atau bisa disebut dengan si bos. gitu.."

"a person-in-charge is a person who has the authority or can be called a boss."

The datum above took place in an EFL classroom when EFL students were working on their mini quiz that exists a term they do not know its meaning which is "person-in-charge". Thus, the English teacher used the representative speech act which functioned as a stating function to tell the students the definition of the term. It is classified as a stating function because the teacher tells the students about the meaning of a person-in-charge that the students have not known to make them understand its meaning and can work on their mini quiz afterward.

b. Directives (64.9%)

Out of 185 utterances, the directive speech act type dominates the speech act types performed by the pre-service English teacher. The frequency of directive type found was 120. It means that among 185 utterances, 64.9% of them have directive speech acts. It is aligned with the aim of a directive which is making the listener do something. In this case, the teacher used the directive type to encourage students to participate actively in the class by answering questions raised by the teacher or doing the assignments in the class. Correspondingly, the utterances contained the intention to ask, request, command, and order. Out of those functions, the teacher used directives mostly for asking the students about the materials and to order the students to do something such as working on the assignment, making a group work, or paying attention to the teacher. Some of the examples of directive speech acts are explained in the discussion below.

Datum 1

Teacher: "Okay, can you repeat after me? director. di-rec-tor."

The datum above is a conversation between an English pre-service teacher and an EFL student after the student finished reading a text. There was a pronunciation error made by the student. Hence, the English teacher used the directive speech act which functioned as a requesting function to correct the students' pronunciation so the student can pronounce the word accurately next time. This is categorized as a requesting function because the teacher did not directly ask the students to do his command. Rather than commanding the students to pronunciation correcting, the teacher used a request to make it sounds more friendly and not sounds coercing. The teacher politely asked the students to follow the teacher's example in pronouncing the word correctly.

Datum 2

Teacher: "Now you've seen it. I want you guys to make a group."

The datum above happened in an EFL classroom when the students have just finished working on their mini quiz. The teacher wanted to move on to the next activity which is group work as the students have seen the group work section in their worksheets. Consequently, the teacher used a directive speech act type

functioned as an order to make the students form a group to work on their group assignment. This statement is categorized as ordering since the teacher tells the students to perform something instead of asking them to do something.

Datum 3

Teacher: "Okay, di dalam application letter itu ada apa aja sih? 1?"

"Okay, what is included in an application letter? 1? (Guiding students on the first thing that should be included in an application letter)

The datum above is uttered by an English teacher and directed to EFL students. It took place in an EFL classroom at the near end of the class where the teacher asked the students about the learning materials that has been discussed. This is categorized into questioning since he asked the students a question and make the students answer the question based on what has been learned together in the class. This is used to make the students reflect on their understanding of the day's material.

c. Commissives (3.8%)

Among 185 utterances, the pre-service English teacher only used commissive speech act type 7 times. It means that the commissive type is the least type performed by the teacher with only 3.8% out of 100%.

Datum 1

Teacher: "Okay, so, before we move on to our material for today ya, I would like to ask you guys."

The datum above was taken from an utterance by an English teacher in an EFL classroom at the beginning of the class. Before going directly to learn the material, the teacher wanted to have a warming-up session in which the teacher asked a question that relates to the day's learning material to build EFL students' motivation and interest in the topic. The teacher used commissive to tell the students what he wants to do in a minute. He commits to what he wants to do next and let the students aware of it.

Datum 2

Teacher: "Okay, so, I will explain to you about what to write ya.."

The statement above is uttered by an English teacher after the students finished making a group for their group assignment. The teacher used a commissive speech act functioned as a promise that he will do something for the students. In this case, the teacher promised the students that he will tell them the detail of their group assignment.

d. Expressives (9.2%)

17 utterances with the essence of expressive speech act were found. The utterances consist of congratulating, thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and greeting. However, the teacher only used expressive type with the intention of thanking, apologizing, greeting, and leave-taking. The teacher says "thank you" mostly after the students are voluntarily done answering questions and assignments. It is done by the teacher to appreciate students' effort in participating in the class. "Sorry" is also uttered when the teacher says something wrong.

Datum 1

Teacher: "Okay good afternoon, everyone."

The statement above is uttered by a pre-service English teacher at the beginning of class in an EFL classroom. He just came into the class and greeted the students. It is said to start the class. This greeting is used to cool down the students' tension in the class so they can be motivated to learn English.

Datum 2

Teacher: "Okay so, that is all for today guys. I hope you all reaching out for our materials for today and see you next week. Thank you!"

The utterance above happened at the end of the class. The process of teaching and learning has ended and the teacher had a goodbye. The teacher used an expressive speech act to convey his hope and thankful for the students. This is categorized as thanking because he appreciated the students for participating and being active in the class.

Datum 3

Teacher: "next. ke.. hello... (asking for students' attention) number 4. number 4!? sorry, number 3."

"Next. We are going to... Hello... (asking for students' attention) number 4. Number 4? Sorry, number 3."

The datum above is taken in an EFL classroom after the students worked on their mini quiz. The English teacher and students were discussing the answers together and were moving on to question number 3. In shifting from the previous number, the teacher inadvertently said number 4 instead of number 3. Hence, he used expressive speech acts with apologizing type to self-correct his mistake of calling the wrong number. This is categorized as promising because he felt sorry for confusing the students with what numbers to be discussed next.

e. Declaratives (0%)

Out of all utterances made by the pre-service English teacher, there was no declarative type of speech act. There were only four speech act types found which showed that the teacher left the declarative type behind in his teaching in the EFL classroom. It is caused by the declarative nature which is to change the world through the speaker's utterance. According to Yule (1996), this type of speech acts is used for a world-changing by uttering words. To declare something, it is commonly required for the speaker to have a special role in an institution.

To sum up, there were only four speech act classifications performed by the pre-service English teacher. It comprises representative or assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. The directive speech act dominates the data with 64.9% out of all utterances performed by the teacher in his English teaching practice. In addition, the functions of each speech acts found in the obtained data are varied. The stating function dominates the representative speech act data 40 times, questioning is used the most for directive speech act with 73 occurrences, commit happened 7 times, and thanking function dominates the data for the expressive speech acts 13 times. Therefore, out of all the functions of speech acts in this study, the teacher used

the questioning function the most.

The findings are aligned with a study by Andewi & Waziana (2019) where the directive type dominates the data. In addition, the function of speech acts that are mostly used by the research subject is similar which is question directive through questioning the students. This is done by the teacher to manage the classroom aiming for student knowledge and ability checking. Correspondingly, this type fosters the teacher's role as an initiator and a sustainer in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom (Brown, 2001 as cited in Andewi & Waziana, 2019).

Like its nature, speech acts are used in accordance with the intended action of the speaker like the meaning of illocutionary acts by Austin. Someone performs an illocutionary act which has a certain force when uttering something that differentiates illocutionary acts from locutionary acts that are to have a meaning in uttering something and perlocutionary acts that has a certain effect by uttering something (Oishi, 2006). Hence, when a speaker utters something, the speaker always has the intended action behind their utterance. If someone wants to make the listener do something, the directive type is the suitable speech act type to be used as its nature is. Thus, rather than using an expressive type to make someone do something that will lead to misunderstanding, use the directive type instead. For example:

A speaker who wants someone to close the window: "Oh it's freezing!"

Listener: "Yeah, I know right? It's a bit chilly."

The conversation above will result in misunderstanding and failure in communication because the utterance uttered by the speaker is classified as an expressive type that states the speaker's feelings instead of a directive type that is aimed to make someone do something. Therefore, the failure of this communication leads to the listener misunderstanding and agreeing with the speaker's utterance. Rather than using expressive type as what the speaker and listener above do, it is better to have a conversation as what is written below.

A speaker who wants someone to close the window: "Oh it's freezing! Can you close the window for me?"

Listener: "Yeah, sure!"

The conversation above has used the appropriate speech act type to achieve the goal of the communication. In uttering the sentence, the speaker performs illocutionary acts which are to express the feeling using the expressive type and to request to someone doing something using the directive type to achieve the goal of communication which is to make someone do an action. Although not all illocutionary acts have perlocutionary intention resulting in perlocutionary effects in hearers (Searle, 1976), the utterance has the perlocutionary intention attempted to make the hearer close the window as the perlocutionary effect. Hence, because of the appropriate use of speech act classification, the listener in the conversation above understood the speaker's intention and the goal of communication can be achieved.

In line with the conversation above, the obtained data in this research has

found appropriate use of speech acts in an EFL classroom. One of the data samples is when the teacher asked the students to repeat their errors in pronouncing words. For example:

Teacher: "Can you repeat after me? Director. Di-rec-tor." (Directive datum 1)

The teacher corrected the students' errors by using a directive speech act directly. This utterance led to successful communication between the teacher and students in which the students repeated the teacher's example of the right pronunciation of 'director'. The other sample can be seen below:

Teacher: "Okay, so, I will explain to you about what to write ya..." (Commissive datum 2)

The teacher committed his future action by using a commissive speech act to make an organized activity in the class then the students will know what the teacher will do. Hence, it is important to take into account the appropriate use of speech acts.

Conclusion

As has been discussed above, it can be concluded that the pre-service teacher's talk consists of only four speech act types out of five speech act types based on Searle's theory that are directive, representative, expressive, and commissive mentioned from the highest frequency to the lowest frequency. The most frequent directive type and its questioning function are in accordance with the nature of the teacher's role in the classroom. Hence, it is recommended for teachers to use a more directive speech act type in the classroom to develop the interaction between the teachers and students which leads to increased students' participation in the learning process. However, teachers should consider the use of directive types that are not considered too force the students and will result in the opposite of the expected goal which is a positive relationship between teachers and students. In addition, the results of this study may not be completely generalizable because of the shortage of data samples and subjects. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers examine two or more subjects to get more data samples and can explore the diverse interpretation of the samples.

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