Directive Illocutionary Acts as a Teaching Method Relating to Status Scale Dimension in Sociopragmatics Study

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Abstract

Teacher as the main role in learning process tend to communicate with student directly in the classroom. The utterances are categorized as directive illocutionary acts. This can be analyzed by using a sociopragmatic approach. This descriptive research is titled “Directive Illocutionary Acts as Teaching Method Relating to Status Scale Dimension in Sociopragmatics Study”. The object of this research is utterances that contain directive illocutionary acts. The aim of this research is to describe and analyze types of directive illocutionary acts uttered by teachers in the classroom in relation to status scale dimension. The research method used in the research is descriptive. The writer uses a theory about types of directive illocutionary acts proposed by Searle in Cutting (2002). This research also relates directive illocutionary acts with status scale dimension as proposed by Holmes (2002). Another supporting theory is context theory put forward by McManis, et al. (1987) and direct and indirect speech theory by Yule (1996). The result shows that teachers tend to use commanding, requesting, and forbidding directive illocutionary acts. The dominant status scale dimension is superior in a teacher-student relationship which shows that the teacher has power in the classroom. The contexts that influence the utterance are physical, linguistic, epistemic and social contexts.

Keywords: directive illocutionary acts, status scale dimension, teaching method.

Introduction

English has an important role in educational matters which means involving any parties and activities in school. As we know, it develops from time to time. There is no limitation of students to learn English and even pre-school students today have been introduced to English. It seems like English itself has become something very important in developing students’ language skill. English as a lingua franca (ELF) therefore serves as “a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (Firth, 1996, p. 240, cited in Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339).

Teachers as the main parties in teaching the language have many advanced ways to make English easy-to-understand and fun. The teaching way is based on the students’ condition. It means that teaching English to elementary school students will be different from that to high school or college students and also to workers.
The difference of ages and social role among students lead them to find appropriate ways to make students enjoy and happy to learn English. Not only that, teachers also provide students to learn English either inside or outside the classroom. It can prevent the students from getting bored while studying only in a room. The difference of age and social role are categorized as social dimension. As Holmes stated that social dimension includes relative age, gender, social roles, whether people work together, or are part of the same family, and so on (2013, p. 240). They are basic components in sociolinguistic explanations about why we do not all speak the same way, and why we do not all speak in the same way all of the time. Some questions that emerged are related to this situation. Why is it different teaching students with different ages? What are the social factors that lead people to use this kind of utterances rather than the other? In other words, the sociolinguist's aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language (Holmes, 2013, p. 12).

The authors limit the study to speech acts in kind of directive illocutionary acts because the most used speech act in the classroom English is directive speech act. Directive speech which is used to get someone doing something is not merely giving an order or making a request. According to Searle (2002), there are a variety of actions that can be performed through directive speech act, such as requesting, asking, commanding, requesting, suggesting, forbidding, questioning, permitting, encouraging, and wishing. Therefore, the formulations of this study are: What types of directive illocutionary acts are used by teachers? And what types of status scale influence the use of directive illocutionary acts?

**Literature Review**

**Types of Directive Illocutionary Acts**

Directives are illocutionary acts used by the speaker to get something done. This act is a highest rank frequency because in classroom discourse, the English teachers use a lot of instructions for the students to do a particular thing, such as asking the students to do the task, to collect the assignment, to open the textbook, or to erase the whiteboard. There are eight kinds of directive illocutionary acts according to Searle (2002):

1. **Commanding**
   
   According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 51), command is to direct someone by invoking a position of authority or power commits the speaker to not giving him option of refusal. This type of directive illocutionary acts includes: big, charge, command, demand, dictate, instruct, order, prescribe, require (Allan, 1986, p. 199).

2. **Requesting**
   
   Searle and Vanderveken (1985:198) defined request as a directive illocution that allows for the possibility of refusal. Requesting performatives include: ask, beg, implore, insist, invite, petition, plead, pray, solicit, summon, tell, and urge (Allan, 1986, p. 199).

3. **Suggesting**
   
   Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 66) stated that suggesting usually saying something that is good for him/her. Suggesting performatives include: admonish, advice, caution, counsel, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn (Allan, 1986, p. 199).

4. **Forbidding**
   
   Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 198) stated that forbid and prohibit is the propositional negation of ordering. If the occasion is general and formal, it is common to use "no". For example: "No Entry!". While, if the occasion is special and informal, it is common to use "don't". Forbidding performatives include: enjoin, forbid, prohibit, proscribe, and restrict (Allan, 1986, p. 199).
5. Questioning

If someone on the street says to you, “Do you know the way to the Palace Hotel?” (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985, p. 117), it would be in most contexts inappropriate to respond simply “yes” or “no”, because the speaker is doing more than just asking a question about your knowledge: he is requesting that you tell him the way to the hotel. It means that the speaker questions the hearer/addressee as to proposition. Questioning performatives include: ask, inquire, query, question, and quiz (Allan, 1986, p. 199).

6. Permitting

Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 112) stated that permit is the denegation of forbid or prohibit. Permitting performatives include: agree to, allow, authorize, bless, consent to, dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant leave or permission, license, pardon, permit, release, and sanction (Allan, 1986, p. 199).

7. Encouraging

Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 112) stated that encouraging is an illocutionary function used by the speaker to give the listener support or courage to do something. For example: “It’s worth a shot!”

8. Wishing

When wishing, the speaker hopes something good to happen in future. The act of pray refers to the future act. The hearer will do or avoid something as the speakers pray (Vanderveken, 1990). For example: “I pray this child turn out good”.

Status Scale Dimension

Status scale dimension indicates that the differences in social status affect the selection of linguistic features. This scale can also measure whether a person's social status is higher or lower. There are two types of status scale dimension, they are superior and subordinate (Holmes, 2013, pp. 9-11). Where status differences are clearly marked and accepted, superiors tend to use imperatives to subordinates. Teachers often use imperatives to pupils, for instance, “Open your books on page 32”, “Shut the door”, “Stop talking please” (Holmes, 2013, p. 29). Imperatives were usually used by superiors to those of subordinate status. Holmes (2013, p. 10) gives an example of the greeting word “sir” mentioned by students to the school principal indicates that the principal has a higher social status. Thus, the higher a person’s social status is, the more power he has. The lower the status of a person, the less power he has.

Research Method

The research uses a qualitative research with descriptive analysis. According to Djadjasudarma (1993, p. 1), descriptive analysis method is a method that can descriptively provide characteristics, properties and image data through data selection, after the data is collected. In this research, there were three stages, namely data provision, data analysis, and presentation or formulation of the analysis result. Researchers use a variety of literature related to the research topic.

Results and Discussion

Superior in Commanding Utterance

Data (1)
T: Look at the example. “I am wishing you the great years ahead”. You can also say this to your birthday friend.

Data (2)
T: Next week is the conversation test in pair with your friend. Prepare yourself. Note a daily conversation you usually use when you meet your friends at school or on the road. You will practice in front of the class.
A teacher uses this type of commanding utterance to attract the students’ attention and shows them what to do in some particular situation. The teacher has the right to command the students because he or she is the main role in the classroom. The teacher is the one in charge to give instruction to the students, because he or she represents the superior status scale in the classroom while the students are the subordinates. It means that, a teacher has a higher role in the classroom than students. Thus, to ensure the smooth delivery of the teaching-learning process, the teacher should lead the students to act appropriately in the classroom. As a result, this consideration may explain why the data are categorized as superior in commanding utterance.

**Superior in Suggesting Utterance**

Data (4)

T: so, your partner is late for today class? **Seems like better for you to find another pair**, because today is the last day for practicing in front of the class. If you did not make it, you must take remedial class.

In data (4), the teacher suggested that student could consider changing his partner in practicing some dialogue in front of the class by saying “Seems like better for you to find another pair”. This utterance gives the hearer other idea to be considered about. Thus, the utterance is categorized as suggesting because it contains the word “better” which is an illocutionary act indicating device of suggesting (advice).

The teacher chooses this suggesting utterance to teach the student to think and consider a better act to do. The teacher educates them how to make a choice in solving a problem. In this case, the problem the student faced is not having a partner to practice some conversation in the class. In order to solve it, the teacher helps him to find the solution by giving suggestion to find another partner, because if he doesn’t have partner to practice the conversation, he will fail in that subject.

From this utterance, it can be seen that the teacher plays an important role as the superior in the class while the student as the subordinate. The teacher tells the student what a better act the student should perform while having a difficulty in the teaching-learning process. It shows that as the superior, the teacher has the power to lead students to find a way to solve the problem. Thus, the data are categorized as superior in suggesting utterance.

**Conclusions**

The most data of directive illocutionary acts were delivered by teachers by using commanding utterances. The status scale dimension that influences the directive illocutionary acts is superior, because teachers tend to use imperatives to students. In this teacher-student relationship, a teacher plays a role as the superior while students are the subordinate. The teacher mostly chooses commanding utterances
when she or he gives instruction to the students and some of them often use suggestions to give advice when she or he orders the task to the students. This case shows that the teacher, who is the superior in the status scale dimension, has power in the classroom. Thus, the directive illocutionary acts uttered by teacher is suitable to be used in teaching. This directive illocutionary acts is useful to make sure that the teaching-learning process runs properly. A teacher who has a superior status has the right to lead the students to be better in the teaching-learning process. Through the directive illocutionary acts in commanding and suggesting, students listen to and obey what their teacher says in the classroom. It also helps student to consider and find a way to solve the problem in the teaching-learning process.

References