Directive Speech Acts Represented as Teacher Feedback at Indonesian Higher Education Level

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ABSTRACT

This study scrutinizes the common types of directive speech act performed by the teacher in the form of written feedback along with its function classification. Descriptive qualitative was used as the research design. For data collection, observation and documentation were used to obtain utterances performed by the speaker. In this regard, one English lecturer at one of universities in Indonesia was chosen teaching one class under the subject of Advanced Reading. Then, thematic analysis was used to analyze and categorize the data set. There were 81 number of data found from this study as directive speech act in the teacher feedback. This study revealed that direct acts were dominant with 50 data while the indirect acts consisted of 31 data. Furthermore, out of six (6) types of directive speech acts, the findings demonstrated that the function of requestives and questions were the most frequent acts performed by the teacher in the feedback. The result of this study suggested that the further research may take account into different criteria of giving feedback, such as the other types of speech acts, the teacher gender, and the subject of the class.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom interactions involve the language used both by the teacher and the students to build a convenient learning process (Brown, 2001; Khirahla & Tyas, 2020; Wirawan & Sahiruddin, 2021). In the way of delivering the material, teachers usually have many plans to achieve the learning objectives (Khusnaini, 2019). Teachers' knowledge and pedagogical background are mainly the source to provide the maximum outcome for students. Regarding classroom interaction, teacher talk would be a key aspect to see whether the learning process is being done well (Iswan, 2016). Furthermore, Xiao-yan (2006) argued that one of the functional features of teacher talk is teacher feedback. In classroom interaction, teacher feedback might play important role to build a supportive classroom environment. Saliu-Abdulahi et al. (2017) emphasized that feedback is an essential technique that can effectively be used by the teacher to give instruction to the students.

These perspectives make the teachers use many styles of communication beside the academic composition factor. The strategies of communication involved by the teacher might determine the verbal plans as a concern of classroom interaction (Azhari et al., 2018). Also, teachers' explanations have to be as clear as possible to be easily understood by the students. It can include the errors correction and content feedback provided by the teacher naturally (Rustandi & Mubarok, 2017). Teachers that provide personal comments or reactions usually do not recognize their choice of words. One of the possibilities to give feedback is by using directive speech act in order to make someone do what the speaker wants (Searle, 1979; Yule, 2010).

In order to give clear instruction and information, teachers may firstly build a good impression and create an interpersonal relationship with students. It can be done easily since teachers are the more powerful persons in the classroom interaction context (Anagaw & Mossu, 2019). In this regard, the researcher wants to know the patterns of teachers' utterances in giving correction and feedback to the students. Moreover, the feedback would be divided into some types of sentence form including declarative, interrogative, and imperative. Also, the researchers are curious about the considerations of the teachers in delivering feedback to students' project in the classroom.

The previous research done by Azhari et al. (2018) analyzed the strategies used by teacher based on speech acts in the classroom interaction. The result of this study showed that imperative speech act (43%) and assertive speech act were dominant categories of the classroom interaction. Another research about teacher feedback was done by Jodaie & Farokhi (2012). It revealed that the teachers used directive acts as their preference in giving feedbacks. In addition, Septianingsih & Warsono (2017) revealed the use of directive speech acts in the classroom interactions. The directive speech acts were represented both by the teachers and the students. However, none of the previous studies have covered the way directive speech acts performed by teacher inside of classroom.

Thus, the objectives of this paper are to find out how the directive speech acts are represented in the EFL classroom interactions in the form of feedback by the teacher. In this current study the researchers would like to investigate whether the teacher prefer to use direct or indirect acts to deliver the feedback. The subject of the study was one female lecturer teaching in Advanced Reading class from one university in Indonesia based on the expertise in reading skill. In addition, the researchers chose the Advanced Reading class because the mid-term test would be a project so that the teacher might give a lot of feedback during the consultation session. By that, the teacher is required to give her best to give feedback and improvise the students' project report. Furthermore, the researchers also categorized the directive speech acts into its classification, namely requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories. The findings of this study were expected to encourage teachers in EFL countries, especially in Indonesia, to wisely take advantage in using certain utterance in order to give feedback for the students.

DIRECTIVE SPEECH ACTS

Directive speech acts have the illocutionary point which tries to have the hearer perform actions (Azhari, et al., 2018). The actions being done could be request, order, or advice depending on the situation (Renkema & Schubert, 2018). However, there are some cases in which the utterance would act as implicit illocution. For example, the utterance 'Can you pass the salt?' is not asked to know the hearer's ability, instead the speaker wants the hearer to pass the salt. Another example is when the speaker says 'It's so hot in here.' to request the hearer to turn on the fan. Additionally, the use of implicit act is generally connected with the better politeness in the society rather than explicit act (Yule, 1996). Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the directive speech act does not only take place as imperative sentence but also as any structural forms including declarative and interrogative forms (Yule, 1996). If there is more additional information needed to determine the real function of implicit utterances, much knowledge of discourse situation is also needed to interpret the right illocution from a locution (Renkema & Schubert, 2018). It is important because the hearer might fail

to recognize and not perform the right uptake from the implicit act (Yule, 2010). Furthermore, in order to classify the directive speech act delivered by the teacher, a theory from Bach and Harnish (1979) was used to describe it.
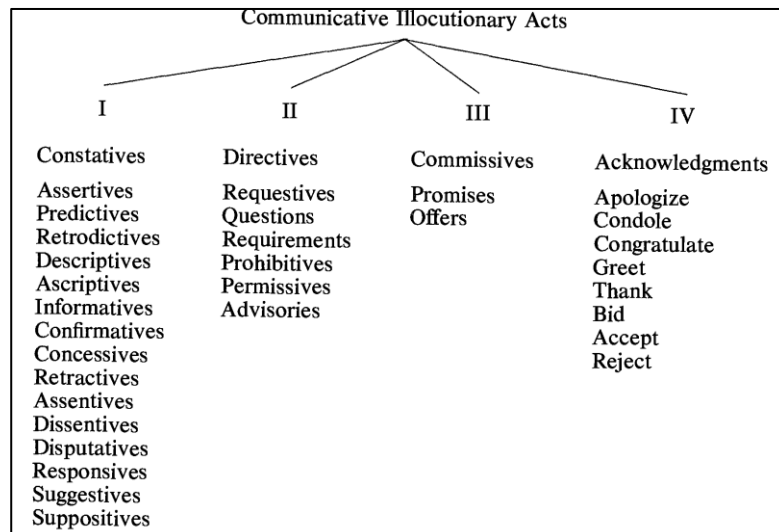

Figure 1. Classification of Illocutionary Acts (adopted from Bach and Harnish, 1979:41)

A directive act could belong to *requestives* if the speaker requests the hearer to do something with the hearer's desire. For *questions*, it is when the speaker asks the hearer to provide information. In *requirements*, the act expresses the speaker's belief that the utterance contains enough reasons for the hearer to perform something. *Prohibitives* category fits for an act that the hearer will not do something because of the speaker's utterance. The category *permissives* includes an act that realizes the utterance of the speaker entitles the hearer to do something. The last is *advisories*, in which the hearer will take the speaker's utterance as the reason and advice to do something.

METHOD

The researchers would like to examine the patterns and intended meaning of directive speech act in teacher feedback. Descriptive qualitative design was applied to describe the result in the form of explanation of words. It is because descriptive qualitative is more about the interpretation of language phenomena in the surroundings. In this regard, the research was done to observe the utterances of teacher feedback focusing on the use of directive speech acts.

One female teacher in one of the universities in Indonesia was selected to be the subject of this study, who is called as Mrs. "E". The criteria of choosing the teacher are due to the competence or expertise of reading skill, the teaching experience for minimum of 5 years, and also the educational background of having the master's degree in English education. One class under the subject 'Advanced Reading' was observed for this study, in which the students were expected to make a mid-term project report. Thus, the teacher would likely to give feedback for improving the mid-term project. For this present research, the class was observed for several meetings before the mid-term taking place.

For this study, the instruments were observation and documentation during classroom interaction. After having permission to join the class, the researchers would record and take note on every feedback performed by the teacher. The researchers focused on searching the directive acts performed by the teacher in her feedback. The feedbacks used were based on the consultation process

for the mid-term project. The researchers then made a transcription for the discourse patterns happening in the way the teacher provides feedbacks.

In analyzing the data, the researcher applies thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kiger & Vipro, 2020). The first process of analysis done for this study was to get familiarized with the data by writing down every act possible. The second step, which is coding, was done categorizing the teacher feedback based on directive speech acts in the form of declarative, interrogative, and imperative. After that, in order to search for themes, the researcher divided the directive speech acts performed by the teacher into two mains based on Yule (2010) including direct and indirect speech acts. After that, the researchers classified the acts into the functions of directive speech acts from Bach and Harnish (1979), which are requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives, and advisories. The next step of reviewing themes, the researcher re-read every act that had been categorized to decide if there was any misplaced act. The following step for defining themes was by stating the illocutionary points of every feedback especially in indirect acts to understand the intended reason. Lastly, the analysis process is about writing up, in which the researcher gave the report of the analytic process into narrative data along with the extract.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The findings of this study will be presented into two parts as follows.

Directive Speech Acts Commonly Performed by the Teacher in the Feedback.

The first objective of this study is to investigate the kinds of directive speech acts commonly performed by the teacher in the feedback. This objective necessitated observations through the feedback given by the teacher on the students' report progress. The findings of the observation illustrated that the teacher performed 81 directive speech acts as her feedback. After the data were analyzed, there are two main types of directives speech acts performed which are direct acts and indirect acts. The dierct acts were being performed in three subcategories of sentence types including declarative forms, interrogative forms, and imperative forms, whereas the indirect acts only consisted of declarative and imperative forms.

Based on the data collection, it was found that 50 feedbacks given by the teacher were in the form of direct speech acts where the teacher wants the students to do something directly. The data were found in every form of structure, including statement, question, and command. Both statements and commands became the most frequently used as the teacher feedback with 20 data for each sentence form, whereas the interrogative forms only exist in ten (10) data. From this data, the illocutionary points are not necessarily needed as the teacher state explicitly what she intended to the students. In the form of statement, every feedback was stated clearly for certain purpose to connect with the topic discussed and the report progress. For instance, when the teacher was not satisfied with the students' response, the teacher wanted the students to give more explanation by giving them clue. In the interrogative forms, the teacher mostly asked the students to state what was missing, such as the reference in the text. Also, the teacher sometimes needed the students to clarify the ideas that had already been given by the students. In giving commands, the teacher directly gives instruction to the target for showing different attention such request, prohibition, and advice. Additionally, the teacher also used nonverbal command instead of using action verbs, for example in the utterance *"Be specific please!"*

On the other hand, the teacher might also use indirect acts as the feedbacks, which means it contains certain illocutionary points. From the data taken by the researcher, it was projected that the teacher produced 31 indirect acts as the feedback for the students' report. The indirect acts found

were divided in the form of declarative as well as interrogative utterances. No imperative sentence was included in this category as imperative structures tend to directly point out what is intended by the speaker (Yule, 1996). About 14 out of 31 data as indirect acts were found in the declarative forms. The illocutionary points for these data were varied on the importance of the students' report progress. Most of data found shows that the teacher wanted the students to give clearer explanation about what had been established in order to create more complex ideas. Furthermore, the teacher also wanted the students to make up some ideas stated to improvise their writing as their report. Lastly, the teacher also wanted then students to clarify their competence in doing the task including reading the passage until writing down the progress report. Nevertheless, the teacher made sure that every student gets his/her idea properly based on the criteria of the assignment. The next category found from the data is indirect acts in the interrogative forms. This data set consisted of 17 number of utterances done by the teacher as the feedback. The questions included are divided both in the form of general question (yes-no question) and special question with question words. For general questions, the teacher merely asked it to the students because the teacher wanted to point out specific reason in order to revise the students report. Meanwhile, the special questions were used in order to emphasize about the answer from the students.

The first finding of this present study indicates that direct speech act was more frequently performed by the teacher during her feedback with 50 out of 81 utterances in the form of directive speech acts. The result of this study seems to be in contrast with previous study done by Azhari, et al. in 2018. While the current study found the teacher feedback in the form of directive speech acts, Azhari, et al. (2018) argued that there were no directive speech acts performed during classroom interaction but the teacher produced imperatives speech acts as the most dominant acts. However, this present study is similar to a previous study by Basra & Thoyyibah (2017), despite having different focuses; this study focused only on the teacher feedback, whereas Basra & Thoyyibah examined all of the utterances produced by the teacher during teaching process. They stated that directive speech acts were the most dominant frequency in the classroom with 70% of total data. Moreover, they believed that the use of directive speech acts was determined to engage the students' productive skills during teaching and learning process. Also, this present study confirms another study done by Septianingsih & Warsono in 2017. Their findings showed the types of directive speech acts being performed both by the teacher and the students in classroom interaction. While this present study categorized the directive speech acts based on the structural form of sentences, they categorized the directive speech acts into its function namely requesting, commanding, advising, and asking question, and analyzed it with the ways of the teacher's power. Lastly, the result of this present study also confirmed the study done by Jodaie & Farrokhi (2012) stating that the teachers mostly preferred to use explicit speech act as the best strategy.

The Functions of Directive Speech Acts Performed by the Teacher in the Feedback

In order to categorize every function of directive speech act performed, the researcher applied the classification of communicative illocutionary acts by Bach and Harnish (1979). The researchers would look further the classifications of the directive speech acts after being categorized into the direct and indirect acts. This finding demonstrated the detailed information of the distribution of dierct acts performed into the category of the directive speech acts' functions. It revealed that requestives was the most frequent function of the direct act. It is suggested that the teacher performed requestive acts to intend what she needs directly to the students. The next category found from this data set was requirements. This category also occurred in every sentence form. For the

prohibitives category, the utterances were found only from imperative sentences. There was neither declarative sentence nor interrogative sentence functioning as prohibitives. In permissives category, the data were found in the form of declarative and imperative. In the last function, advisories, the utterances were distributed from declarative and imperative forms. Unfortunately, this study could not find any direct act having its function as questions.

Function	Number of Utterances		
	Declaratives	Interrogatives	Imperatives
Requestives	11	8	13
Questions	0	0	0
Requirements	2	2	2
Prohibitives	0	0	2
Permissives	1	0	1
Advisories	6	0	2

Tabel 1. The Function of Direct Acts

The next finding is about the categorization of the indirect acts based on its function. The finding illustrated that indirect acts were performed into every function of directive speech acts. Furthermore, it indicated that questions category was the most dominant function followed by the requestives and requirements with the same number of occurrences. Requestives function contained more utterances from interrogative forms rather than declarative. It showed that the teacher used the questions not to know whether or not the students understand something. Instead, the teacher used the question to make request which is in contrast from the syntactic structure of the utterance, which is similar with the idea stated by Yule (2010). Nevertheless, there was still one utterance in declarative form with the function of a request. The category of questions was unsurprisingly found only in interrogative question. The main objective of this category is to know whether or not the students understand about something discussed by the teacher. It can be said that the teacher often performed this category to make sure that the students were still under her control. For requirements, the declarative forms had higher number than the interrogative forms. The utterances in statements indicated that the teacher needed the utterance to tell her intended meaning through her idea indirectly. Meanwhile, the utterances in the interrogative forms were performed to indirectly remind the students before doing something. In prohibitives, the teacher used few utterances to perform this function. Besides, the teacher clearly used this category to restrict the students from doing unwanted action. This study also found this category delivered in the form of question, which is unlikely happened. For permissives category, there was only one utterance included into this category. It was in the form of declaratives, which means this category did not consist a single interrogative utterance. The last category, advisories, only consisted of three utterances. All of them were in the form of statements. Similar to previous function, there was no interrogative form found.

Function	Number of Utterances	
	Declaratives	Interrogatives
Requestives	1	6
Questions	0	8
Requirements	6	2
Prohibitives	3	1

Permissives	1	0
Advisories	3	0

Tabel 2. The Function of Indirect Acts

This finding is in line with the finding of Suryandani and Budasi (2021). Both the previous study and the present study revealed that questions category was the most frequent type produced by the teacher. It seems natural for classroom interaction since the teacher wanted to engage the students to give response. The communication between the teacher and the students carried out through conversation where the teacher gave questions.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the results of this study shows that the teacher uses directive speech acts as the feedback for the students in several categories. The feedbacks were delivered both in explicit and implicit ways. The explicit acts were dominant with 50 out of 89 feedbacks delivered by the teacher. It showed that the teacher wanted the students to understand what the teacher intended as soon as possible so that the students can improvise their performance. On the other hand, the implicit acts were also done in several occasions. It indicated that the teacher sometimes wanted the students to pay attention more with the feedback given. It needed the students to carefully consider every word in the feedback and look at the context which could be the previous feedback, the clue, or certain topic in the passage. Additionally, the researcher also found several utterances in the complex sentence form. The teacher first built the reason of the feedback so the students will gather the mistakes and give the instruction afterwards to improve the ideas. From this study, it is also shown that the directive speech acts were done in several types of sentence forms including declarative, interrogative, and imperative. The deeper analysis was done in order to categorize the function of the speech acts. It was found that the requestives category was the most dominant for explicit act. On the other hand, the questions category was the most frequent type produced in implicit acts. The considerations of giving feedback might be about encouragement to the students, the relationship to the students, or the preparedness.

From this study, it is suggested that the further research need to consider several things. First, the further study might analyze the use of other types of speech acts in the teacher feedback. If needed, the further study is also suggested to take more participants to compare the different possible reasons. Second, in regards to some participants, the further researcher might also consider the gender differentiation in choosing the participants as male and female teacher have different personality that might affect their way in giving feedback. Another option is to take the research under different English subject with the potential of different strategies in delivering the feedback. Lastly, the further researcher is also suggested to conduct research to analyzed the feedback delivered by the teachers in relation to their power as the superior side in classroom.

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