



## Speech acts in EFL classroom interaction in speaking class

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### KEYWORDS

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assertive;  
commisive;  
expressive.*

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### A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to identify preferred speech act found in EFL classroom interaction in speaking class based on Searle's theory of speech act classifications and figure out types of speech acts mostly used in in EFL classroom interaction in speaking class. This study applied qualitative descriptive research design on a eleven grades at an Islamic Senior High Schools in Ciamis. The data were collected through observation and interview. Then the data were transcribed and analyzed. From the observation, directives speech act is mostly produced by the teacher than the others speech acts. This can be seen from the high percentage of assertive speech act has 26 utterances (22%), expressive speech act has 19 utterances (16%), directive speech act has 53 utterances (45%), and commissive speech act has 21 utterances (17%). Regarding directive function, the teacher explained through an interview that, directive of commanding, asking, and requesting are used by the teacher. The function of command is to get students focused on learning when the teacher commands them to pay attention. The teacher used a asking to test the understanding of the students. The teacher employs a lot of request sentences in the core activities to get students to participate in their learning. Its purpose is to assess how far the students' knowledge or understanding has progressed.

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## 1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the most important skills (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015, p. 31) yet, in general to developed takes time of effort to master (Kurniawan, 2022, p. 82). If students wants to improve their speaking abilities, they should parctice their speaking activities as much as possible and gain as much experience as possible. A variety of factors contributed to students' difficulties in mastering English speaking, including inhibition, a lack of speaking, low participation, the use of the mother tongue, low motivation, environmental factors, and a lack of confidenced. The EFL students have common native languages. If the EFL teacher ignores the goal of the teaching process, it impossible to achieve.

After the pandemic hit for about two years and classroom interactions could only happen in two directions, the government is now starting to implement face-to-face learning again as the spread of the covid 19 virus has been controlled. While most students are relieved to be back in school and happy that they can interact with their friends, classmates and teachers face- to-face rather than talking to them through a screen, this transition can be challenging.

Therefore, speech act is essential in teaching and learning (Rizma Yanti & Amin, 2021). This makes sense that teacher talks, which involve speech acts, are used to carry out the acts of knowledge transfer, activity planning, classroom management, and instruction. Knowing enough pragmatics, especially about speech acts, is also important for reducing misunderstandings during the teaching process. As a result, it is possible to argue that the effective use of speech acts has a significant impact on the success or failure of teaching and learning.

## 2. Methodology

### Research Design

This study was the qualitative research design, specifically descriptive research. The goal of descriptive research is to collect data to accurately describe the current situation and to attempt to trace the relationships between the data to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Rizma Yanti & Amin, 2021, p. 94).

### Research Participants

The researcher choose one of the 11th graders in speaking class that categorized in criteria that have been formulated for a sample. The total number of the student was 22, consisting of 10 male students and 12 female students and all students as the subject to investigate. Based on the situation, this class was right one because the class has students who are more active in communicating compared with another class.

### Reasearch Procedure

In the procedure of collecting data, the teaching and learning process observed to determine the speech patterns used by the teacher. Data gathered during the observation using video and audio recording. After, the recording transcribed. Searle proposes five basic categories of speech acts: assertive; directive; commissive; expressive; and declarative; used to study the speech acts. To determine which sentences categorized into Searle's taxonomy, the researcher developed a framework based on word clues proposed by Qadir & Riloff, (2011, p. 752). Furthermore, each speech act classification was calculated, converted into a percentage form, and then interpreted into findings and discussion. After completing the classroom observation, the researcher conducted an in-person interview with the English teacher at that school. The researcher used a mobile phone to record the interview data from the teacher as the interviewee. Throughout the conversation, the researcher was taking notes in order to gather more information. In this study, the interview method was used to gather more 21 specific information about the types of speech acts that teachers most frequently employ in interactions with students.

### Data Collection

To obtain data and information needed in this study, the researcher used several data collection techniques as follows:

1. Observation (non-participant)

Observations can help the researcher directly observe the expressions of speech act considered representative used as data. The researcher choose observation (non-participant) because help the researcher to record of all activities in classroom. It is strengthen by Creswell (2014, p. 212) stated that a nonparticipant observer, according to is someone who simply observes and records the situation being studied without becoming involved with the participants or the surrounding



circumstances. During the research, the researcher filled in the observation checklist.

## 2. Interview

The interview aimed to figure out the types of speech act mostly used by teachers' and students' EFL classroom interaction in speaking class and to verify data gathered from the observation. It entailed audio recording between the researcher and the teacher to gain confirmation as to figure out the types of speech act mostly used by teachers' and students' EFL classroom interaction in speaking class. In this research, the researcher used semi structure interview as with openended. Semistructured interviews can better utilize the dialogue's capacity for knowledge production by allowing the interviewee far more freedom to pursue any angles they deem important (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 1002). During the interview, the researcher attempted to record the interview process in form of notes and audio recording.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study based on interactive model by Miles et al., (2014, p. 12-14).

In general, data analysis in study includes three stages :

1. Data condensation; in this study, a written transcript created from the data collected during the observation recording process. Following that, the researcher identified specific data points in order to determine the categories of speech acts. The researcher defined the categories of speech acts using Searle's theory of speech act
2. Data Display; following data condensation, the researcher described the displayed data using Searle's speech act theory. The data display would displayed depending on the research topic. The researcher analyze the classification of speech acts and display the data about teacher's and student's utterances by using tables, explanation and making percentage. The researcher make percentage of the data to know usage of types speech acts. Lazarton (2005) states that the analysis is looking percentage. The percentage used formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes : P = percentage  
F = frequency  
N = the sum of the frequencies

Description of draw/verification; based on the information presented of the data obtained from observations and interviews., the researcher draws a conclusion. The researcher would form an opinion about the various speech acts and their functions.

## 3. Result and Discussion

This section describes the data that was collected, namely the findings, from observation and interview. The findings represent the result of data observation of speech acts in classroom interaction between teacher and students. This section is organized in terms of sequence of the research question

### Types of speech acts found in EFL classroom interaction in speaking class

#### a. Directive

The first types of speech acts found in this research was directive. From the utterances obtained, there were 118 utterances, 45% or 53 of them are directive speech acts utterances. 44 utterances out of 53 directive utterances are mostly used by teachers. This directive is mostly used by teachers to ask student about something and to demand and request the student to do something. Whereas 9 utterances out of 53 directive utterances are used by students to asking questions to the teacher. The following are some examples of directive speech acts performed in classroom interactions.



### Teacher's asking

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/T	<i>What is the definition of earthquake?</i>

Table 1. directive teachers asking

The the above utterance, the utterance is included in the directive speech act of asking. In this sample, the teacher asked the student about the the definition of the material that they taught.

### Teacher's commanding

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/T	<i>Collect the books and and put them in front of you."</i>

Table 2. directive teachers commanding

The directive speech acts above used to express the commanded and make students follow the teacher's instruction during learning activity. The teacher commanded the students to stop reading and put the book in front of them.

### Teachers requesting

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/T	<i>" Besides I check your attendance. Please make a summary of our material today."</i>

Table 3. directive teachers requesting

Utterance above can be categorize as directive speech act of requesting. The teacher request to student to make a summary or moral value of the material to found out whether students understand about the material or not.

The following directive utterances performed by students are as follows :

### Students asking

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/S	<i>Can you explain again ma am?</i>

Table 4. Directive students asking

This utterance is a directive of asking utterance. It can be seen that the student asked a question to ask the teacher to re-explain the order the teacher gave.

Searle (in Namaziandost, 2019, p. 27) stated that a directive speech act occurs when the speaker expects the listener to do something as a response. From finding above, asking were most used by the teacher during teaching learning process. The directive speech act of asking were used by teacher when asked student's answer and to test student's understanding of the material. Asking is a technique used to elicit a response from the hearer by expressing a question. To encourage active participation from students in the teaching and learning process, the teacher asks questions. Students performed directive when students wanted to confirm something, they asked the teacher a question. The students are motivated to use what they have learned of the subject under discussion by being exposed to the questions. Directive speech is used to request a specific action from the listener. It indicates that the speakers want the listener to carry out their wants.

#### b. Assertive

The second types of speech acts found in this research was assertive. 27 utterances or 23% out of 118 are determined of assertive speech acts. 16 utterances out of 26 assertive utterances are mostly used by students. This assertive is mostly used by students to assume and conclude something. Whereas 11 utterances out of 26 assertive utterances are used by teachers concluding student's answers to ensure what is said. Some data example is shown below :

### Student's assuming

Code	Student's utterance
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M-2/T	<i>"Why are Melza, Haikal, and Naufan nothere"</i>
M-2/S	<i>"It seems they were called by their tutors for the competition."</i>

*Table 5. assertive students assuming*

The utterance is included in assertive speech act of assuming. Because the utterance shows that students answer the teacher's question asking why their friends are not in the class. Then the students answer with doubt because they are not sure what the real reason is. Based on the utterance above, the word "it seems" indicated the answered by guessing the most correct possibility.

#### **Student's concluding/stating**

Code	Student's utterance
M-2/T	<i>"By the way class, have you ever experienced an earthquake?"</i>
M-2/S	<i>"Yes, I have ma'am. I was a child at the time so I don't really remember how it felt."</i>

*Table 6. assertive students concluding*

Conversation that occurred above, the student attempted to answer the teacher. According to the conversation that occurred above, the student attempted to answer the teacher. Based on the utterance above, the word "yes" indicated the student's utterance consists of a conclusion indicating that the student desires to communicate with the addressees

The following assertive utterances performed by teachers as follows :

#### **Teachers concluding/stating**

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/S	<i>"Yes, it can be your own experience, or a definition. It must be related to today's material."</i>

*Table 7. assertive teachers concluding*

This utterance is an assertive utterance of concluding. The teacher did this to conclude that students can answer the questions the teacher gives with experiences that have been felt or about definitions according to students' own understanding as long as it must still be related to the material being studied.

Searle (in Namaziandost, 2019, p. 27) stated that assertive is what the speaker believes. From the findings obtained, assertive was found as a concluding, stating and assuming in the teacher's and student's utterances. From the observations made by researchers, the dominant assertive speech act performed by teacher is concluding and stating. Students provided information and state their personal opinions to the teacher. Most students performed assertive speech acts of concluding and stating for provided information and state their personal opinions to the teacher. The teacher performed assertive to focus more on student when interacting in class so that the teacher mostly concludes student's answer. Searle (in Namaziandost, 2019, p. 27) stated that assertive is what the speaker believes.

#### **c. Commissive**

The third types of speech acts found in this research was commissive. Out of 118 utterances, 18 or 15% of them are commissive. 17 out of 18 commissive utterances are dominated by teachers and only 1 out of 18 commissive utterances performed by students. The speech act of commissive are in term of offering, planning and promising has found out.

#### **Teachers planning**

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/T	<i>"I will give you an extra point if you answer it."</i>

*Table 8. commissive teachers planning*

The utterance above is commissive utterance of planning. In the utterance above, it can be seen that the teacher will give extra points if students are willing to answer about what they understand after learning the material.

### Teacher's offering

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/T	"Who want to tell the main idea of the first paragraph?"

Table 9. commissive teachers offering

The above utterance is an offering commissive utterance. It is done by the teacher to offer to students who want to convey their answers about what is the main idea of one of the paragraph texts that have been assigned by their teacher to read.

The following commissive utterances performed by students as follows :

### Student's promising

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/T	"Why didn't you bring the book?"
M-1/S	"Yesterday, when I walked home, it rained, so the bag's entire contents including the English book were soaked. I took the book in accident since I thought it was the civic book. I'll bring the book next week, ma'am, <u>I swear</u> . I'm sorry, ma'am, once more"

Table 10. commissive students promising

This means that the student commits to do something in the future by informing the other person that he or she will. As you can see, the student does this by the use of a promise utterance, which can be identified by the presence of the phrase "I swear."

Commissive speech act occurs when the speaker commits to a future course of action as stated by Searle (in Namaziandost, 2019, p. 27). Based of the finding above, commissive appeared with the planning and offering done by teacher and commissive appeared with the promising done by students during teaching and learning process. Commissive function done by teacher to planned the students to do something in the future and offered the students to answer the question. Commissive of promising function utilized by students during the teaching and learning process when a student promises to bring the textbook for the next week, this functionshow. Commissive is what the speakers say relate to future action.

#### d. Expressive

The fourth types of speech acts found in this research was expressive. 20 or 17% out of 118 utterances belong to expressive speech acts. 16 out of 20 expressive utterances are dominated by teachers and only 4 out of 20 expressive utterances performed by students. The data driven discovery of expressive speech acts involved the act of appreciating, greeting, congratulating, and thanking. Some data example is shown below :

### Teacher's appreciating

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/T	"That's good. You can understand the text about the earthquake."

Table 11. expressive teachers appreciating

The teacher's utterance is included in the expressive speech act of appreciating. In the utterance, the teacher appreciates the student's answers because they have understood the material

### Teacher's greeting

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/T	"Assalamualaiku, class, How are you today?"
M-2/T	"I say thank you and Wassalamualaikum, wr. Wb."

Table 12. expressive teachers greeting

The above utterance is included in the expressive speech act of greeting. The teacher performs expressive speech act of greeting because she expressed her emotion by giving greeting as the opening before doing the teaching and learning and closing teaching and learning activity.



### Teacher's congratulating

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-2/T	"Congrats David. You got the highest score. So here the gift for you."

Table 13. expressive teachers congratulating

This utterance is categorized as expressive speech act of congratulating because the teacher congratulates one of the students for getting the highest score in the class for the material.

### Teacher's thanking

Code	Teacher's utterance
M-1/1	I thank you for today.

Table 14. expressive teachers thanking

This utterance is included in expressive speech acts of thanking. This utterance contains a teacher who thanks the students for being conducive during the teaching and learning process until the end.

The researcher discovered greeting and thanking as expressive functions performed by student :

### Student's greeting

Code	Student's utterance
M-2/S	"Walaikumsalam ma'am. I am good. And you?"
M-2/S	"Walaikumsalam, wr. Wb. Thank you ma'am"

Table 15. expressive students greeting

The students' above utterance expressed greeting Greeting as an expressive function. The students said greetings in order to greet the teacher in a nice manner.

### Student's thanking

Code	Student's utterance
M-2/S	"Congrats David. You got the highest score in this part. So here the gift for you."
M-2/S	" <u>Thank you</u> . Ma'am".

Table 16. expressive students thanking

The above dialogue was recorded as the teacher expressed appreciation by giving gifts to students who received the highest score. The student's speech is an expressive because the student thanks the teacher for the gift, and thanking is one of the function of expressive.

An expressive speech act occurs in conversation when a speaker expresses his or her psychological state to the listener as stated by Searle (in Namaziandost, 2019, p. 27). Based on the findings about the expressive speech act, it can be appreciated is mostly used by the teacher. Appreciating is used by teacher to appreciate the efforts of the students who have tried to answer the question or ask the question. Congratulating is used by the teacher to congratulate students who have achieved something. Greeting is a polite word that the teacher uses as opening before the class begins. And thanking is used when someone gives something. In this context, the teacher thanks to students for following the lesson until the end. Expressive performed by student when meeting with the teacher, greet him or her with a phrase or a sign of welcome. While thanking expresses gratitude to the teacher. This speech is delivered to teachers who give gifts to students who receive the highest score.

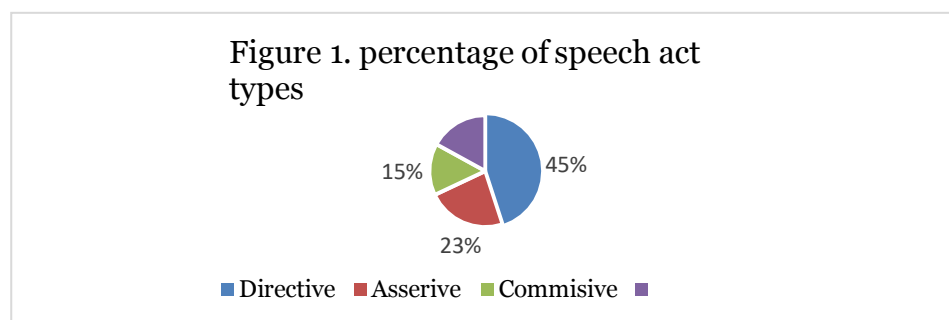


Figure 1 shows the percentage of each types of speech act. In summary, this study identified four categories for speech acts. Assertive, directive, expressive, and commissive are the four types. The directive speech act, which

makes up 45% of a teacher's speech when teaching, is the most common speech act used by teachers.

### **Types of speech act mostly used in EFL classroom interaction in speaking class**

From the observations that have been made, the type of speech acts that are most widely used is directive speech acts with a total of 44 utterances. Who uses the most directive speech acts during classroom interactions is the teacher. The researchers used interviews to know the reason why teachers mostly perform directive speech acts in EFL classroom interactions. From the interview, the researcher found that the reasons were because there are many functions in using directive speech acts. Below is the argument she pointed out related to her act in using directive speech act while teaching :

*“The benefits of the directive itself are first; which is included in the directive is commanding. The benefits of the teacher doing the command is to focus students' attention. Second; asking is included in the directive speech act of asking, so the benefits of the teacher doing the request are to test students' knowledge, and make students do what the teacher instructs. And last, asking is part of the directive speech acts as well, so the benefit of the teacher asking students is to stimulate students' thinking activities to develop thinking skills”*

Based on data obtained from interviews. The teacher explained that the reason why teachers dominantly use directive speech acts in classroom interactions because in directives there are activities in the form of asking, commanding, and asking. Nurjaman (2013, p. 500) claimed that the key to learning a language, particularly for speaking class, is to practice it rather than remember its syntax and structure. As a result, students in Islamic high schools are forced to reside in the school's dormitory and study English straight away so that they can use it in their daily lives. Therefore, the reason why teachers do more directive in class is the teacher giving command to students to pay attention, students become focused on learning, the teacher used request to test students' understanding, and the teacher used asking to generate a conducive and fun classroom atmosphere, where students will be active in thinking.

### **4. Conclusion**

Regarding the whole data which was covered in the previous finding, researcher discovered 118 utterances from two meetings that are appropriated with the types of illocutionary conduct from Searle's theory. The researcher concludes that in teaching learning process, directive speech act is mostly produced by the teacher than the others speech acts. This can be seen from the high percentage of assertive speech act has 27 utterances (23%), expressive speech act has 20 utterances (17%), directive speech act has 53 utterances (45%), and commissive speech act has 18 utterances (15%).

Using speech acts in classroom settings has a number of implications. Speech actions can enhance the classroom environment and motivate students. Additionally, it creates positive relationships between teachers and students throughout the teaching and learning process. Regarding directive function, commanding, asking, and requesting are used by the teacher. The function of command is to get students focused on learning when the teacher commands them to pay attention. The teacher used asking to test the understanding of the students. The teacher employs a lot of request sentences in the core activities to get students to participate in their learning.

Through this research, there are several things that researchers expect related to the use of speech acts, especially for EFL teachers. From the results of this study, the researcher suggests that teachers should do more directive speech act because directive speech act is able to stimulate students to talk a lot so that classroom interaction can be active.

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