

THE USE OF SPEECH ACTS AMONG FRONT OFFICE STUDENTS IN LEARNING EFL AT SMK NEGERI 2 SINGARAJA

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Abstract

This research was intended to analyze: a) the locutionary act used among prospective front officer students to express front officer tasks in terms of speech acts category, b) the speech styles used among prospective front officer students to express front officer tasks in terms of politeness and impoliteness. c) the errors committed in their speech acts in terms of grammar, diction, and appropriateness. The subjects of the study were the front office students of grade twelve at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja. It was designed as a descriptive qualitative research and employed data elicitation, recording, data transcription and coding as methods of data collection. The data analysis was affiliated with Bach and Harnish's (1979) speech acts theory, Geoffrey Leech's (1983) politeness principle theory and was done following Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of data analysis. This study found that the highest frequency of speech acts produced by prospective front officer students was directives (67.8%) and then followed by acknowledgments (14.9%), constatives (14.4%) and the lowest frequency was commissives (2.9%).

Keywords: *speech acts, prospective front officer students, learning EFL,*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis: a) tindakan *locutionary* yang digunakan diantara siswa calon petugas *front office* untuk mengungkapkan tugas mereka dalam kategori tindak tutur, b) gaya bicara yang digunakan diantara siswa calon petugas *front office* untuk mengungkapkan tugas mereka dalam istilah sopan dan tidak sopan. c) *errors* yang dilakukan dalam tindak tutur mereka dalam hal tata bahasa, diksi, dan ketepatan. Subyek penelitian ini adalah siswa akomodasi perhotelan kelas dua belas di SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja. Penelitian ini dirancang sebagai penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dan memakai *data elicitation*, perekaman, transkripsi data dan *coding* sebagai metode pengumpulan data. Analisis data dihubungkan dengan Bach dan Harnish (1979) teori tindak tutur, Geoffrey Leech (1983) teori prinsip kesopanan dan mengikuti Miles and Huberman (1994) model interaktif dari analisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa frekuensi tertinggi dari tindak tutur yang dihasilkan oleh siswa calon petugas *front office* adalah *directives* (67,8%) dan diikuti oleh *acknowledgments* (14,9%), *constatives* (14,4%) dan frekuensi terendah *commissives* (2,9%).

Kata kunci: *tindak tutur, siswa calon petugas kantor depan, belajar EFL,*

School based curriculum (SBC) is a curriculum which gives the schools independency in designing, developing, and implementing the curriculum based on their own situation, condition and potential. The implemented curriculum model is called Competency-based Curriculum. There are two competencies. Those are standard competency and basic competency. Standard competency is a measure of minimum capabilities that include knowledge, skills and attitudes should be achieved by students and basic competency is detailed component.

As we know that in general, the objective of English teaching programs in high school is to equip students with the four basic skills; those are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language with the objectives to achieve "working knowledge of English", namely: ability to read effectively, ability to understand spoken English, ability to write, and ability to speak (Manda, 2004).

Students in vocational high school are expected to master English communicative competence as one of their provisions in becoming professional workers at national and multinational companies and institutions (policy of vocational high school curriculum as cited in Hapizuddin (2013). For that reason, speaking skill is very important to be mastered by the students in order to be able to communicate effectively. There are some indicators of speaking competency. Those are pronunciation, diction, coherence, fluency, grammar and content. In this case, students of tourism vocational high school especially prospective front officer students are potentially to speak English in their learning process communicatively. It relates to their duties that are focuses on making guests or customers feeling welcome and doing public relations for the hotel. Based on the syllabus of vocational high school grade 12 English subject, standard competency of speaking competency said that, "*berkomunikasi dengan bahasa Inggris setara level intermediate*". Basic competency of speaking said that, "*memahami percakapan terbatas dengan penutur asli*". This basic competency demands students to use English properly when they communicate with the guests or customers. Based on the document of SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja, syllabus (2013) of XII AP, it can be seen from the standard competency saying that "*menyediakan layanan akomodasi reception*" and the basic competency saying that, "*menyambut dan mendaftarkan tamu*". Moreover, there are some tasks of front officer that can be developed based on the basic competency above. Those tasks are (1) welcoming guest, (2) handling guest check in, (3) explaining types of room available, (4) recording guest identity, (5) receiving guest registration, (6) receiving money from the guest who will stay in hotel, (7) receiving guest check in and (8) handling guest check out. Based on those tasks above, the prospective front officer students supposed to produce many speeches in communication on making guest feeling welcome. They certainly have to use polite speeches to interact with the guest to make them satisfy.

In line with that statement, Searle as cited in Merdana 2013 defines speech acts as the basic unit of language in which the production of a token in the context of a speech acts. While, Austin (1962) states that people perform action via utterances, action performed by producing an utterance consists of three related acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is basic act of utterance; it produces a meaningful linguistic expression. Next, the illocutionary act relates to the function or communicative force of utterance; this can be a statement, an offer, an expression, etc. The perlocutionary act is defined as the intended effect of the action. When the speaker is producing an utterance, with an intended meaning it is expected to have an effect. Bach and Harnish (1979) propose the classes of speech acts on the basis of four dimensions into constatives, directives, commissives and acknowledgements.

The researcher conducted preliminary observation at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja, in order to know variety of speech acts used by the front office students. The researcher choose class XII AP I. This class was considered as the best class and can speak English better than the other class. The researcher choose three students randomly, and asking the students to speak in accordance to the tasks of front officer. The researcher found students' speeches to express the front officer tasks. The highest frequency of

speech acts occurred in front officers task was directives (50%) and then followed by commissives (30.4%), acknowledgements (10.7%) and the lowest frequency was constatives (8.9%). The highest frequency of directives was used by prospective front officer student's means that the degree of directness is high. When the researcher asked some students to ask the customer's name, one of the students said: "Your name?" The expression made by the student is considered to be impolite, as Leech (1983) says that the longer an utterance the more polite it is, and he also says that the more indirect an utterance the more polite it is. The utterance made by the student was very short, moreover; it was directly uttered. The explanations before are some considerations for conducting a study about speech acts and speech styles in terms of politeness and impoliteness at the grade twelve students of hotel accommodation at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja.

This study was expected to be beneficial for students of tourism vocational high school especially prospective front officer. It was hoped that this study could contribute to provide students, especially prospective front officer who are dealing with guest to know various ways of using language to interact with the guest in the front office desk. Besides that, this study provides information about polite and impolite speech styles that used to interact with the customer or guest. Prospective front officer must use polite speech style with customer to gain customer satisfaction.

Based on the background and the problems identified before, the research questions of this study were (1) What locutionary acts are used among prospective front officer students to express front officer tasks in terms of speech acts category at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja? (2) What speech styles are used among prospective front officers students to express front officer tasks in terms of politeness and impoliteness at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja? (3) What errors are committed in their speech acts in terms of grammar, diction and appropriateness at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja?

Therefore, the objectives of this study were to find out (1) the locutionary act used among prospective front officer students to express front officer tasks in terms of speech acts category at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja. (2) the speech styles used among prospective front officer students to express front officer tasks in terms of politeness and impoliteness at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja. (3) the errors committed in their speech acts in terms of grammar, diction and appropriateness at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja.

Speech Acts

Speech acts is defined as the action performed by a speaker with an utterance. (Searle, 1979). When language is used for communication, certain act is performed through utterance which is known as speech act. The term speech acts describes actions such as requesting, commanding, informing or questioning. According to Austin (1962), speech acts are analyzed on three levels. Locutionary act, the performance of an utterance. It refers to the surface meaning of an utterance. It is an act of "*saying something*" in the full normal sense. Illocutionary act, the semantic illocutionary force of the utterance. It refers to its real intended meaning, for example, promising, ordering, etc. According to Austin's

explanation, the idea of an illocutionary act is captured by emphasizing that “*by saying something, we do something*”. Perlocutionary act is a speech acts viewed at the level of its psychological consequences such as persuading, convincing, scaring, inspiring, or otherwise getting someone to do or realize something.

Bach and Harnish Categories of Illocutionary Acts

According to Bach and Harnish (1979), there are four categories/types of illocutionary acts based on the functions, they are constatives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgments. Constatives, which express a speaker's belief and his/her desire that the hearer forms a similar one. Directives, that expresses some attitude about a possible future action by the hearer and the intention that his/her utterance be taken as reason for the hearer's action. Commissives, that expresses the speaker's intention to do something and the belief that his/her utterance obliges him to do it. Acknowledgments, which express feelings toward the hearer.

Politeness Principle

The theory that used in this study is pragmatic theory. The theory is proposed by Geoffrey Leech and written in his book *Principle of Pragmatics* (1983). He proposed six maxims that determine politeness. It is well known as Leech's Politeness Maxims. Leech (1983) defines a politeness as forms of behavior that establish and maintain comity. That is the ability of participants in a social interaction to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. Leech (1983) also introduces the politeness principle which principally minimizes the expression of impolite beliefs and maximizes the expression of polite beliefs. Maxim is usually pithy and familiar statement expressing a principle generally accepted as wise or true. Leech said maxims vary from culture to culture, meaning, what may considered as a polite in one culture, may be strange or downright rude in another country. He list six maxims. They are tact maxim, approbation maxim, generosity maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim (Leech, 1983).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was a qualitative research. The subjects of the study were the grade twelve students of Hotel Accommodation in SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja. Because of the limited time that the researcher had in conducting this research and also the activities that occurred in the school, only a class that was chosen to be the subjects in this research which was 12 AP 1. In this research, the method that was used to collect the data was eliciting data. It was conducted by asking the students to speak in accordance to the tasks of front officer. There were two research instruments used in this research, namely data elicitation and recorder. To assess the appropriateness data of this research, two expert judges were used to help analyzing the data. The method used for the data analysis was data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.

The Locutionary Act Used among Prospective Front Officer Students at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja.

No	Speech Acts Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Constatives	87	14.4 %
2	Directives	410	67.8%
3	Commissives	18	2.9%
4	Acknowledgments	90	14.9%
	Total	605	100%

Based on the table above, the highest frequency of speech acts were produced by prospective front officer students was directives (67.8%) and then followed by acknowledgments (14.9%), constatives (14.4%) and the lowest frequency was commissives (2.9%). The highest frequency of directives was used by prospective front officer student's means that the degree of directness was high. By using directives, the prospective front officer students expect the guest consider that the instruction was to benefit for guest or customer.

Table 2.

The Speech Styles Used among Prospective Front Officer Students at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja

Speech styles	Frequency	Percentage
Politeness-Tact Maxim	287	47.4
Politeness-Generosity Maxim	15	2.5
Politeness-Approbation Maxim	4	0.7%
Impoliteness	299	49.4%
Total	605	100%

The table above showed that when the tasks were given to the subjects, most of the subjects had been able to make polite speech style. From 605 speech acts, 306 speech acts (50.6%) were categorized as polite speech style and there were 299 speech acts (49.4%) categorized as impolite.

Table 3.

Errors in Students Speech Acts

No	Speech acts	Errors					
		Grammar		Diction		Appropriateness	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Constatives	17	19.5%	2	2.2%	0	0
2	Directives	6	1.4%	20	4.8%	0	0
3	Commissives	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Acknowledgments	0	0	4	4.4%	6	6.6%

The result of the analysis showed that the constatives speech act, the highest frequency of errors was grammatical errors (19.5%) and then followed by diction errors (2.2%). There were not found appropriateness error. In directives speech act, the highest frequency of errors was diction error (4.8%) and then followed by grammatical error (1.4%). There were not found appropriateness error. In the

constatives speech act, there were not found errors. The last speech acts was acknowledgments speech act. The highest frequency of errors was appropriateness errors (6.6%) and then followed by diction errors (4.4%). There were not found grammatical error. The Bach and Harnish theory of speech acts which presented 4 categories of speech acts involved constatives, directives, commissives, and acknowledgments, all of them have their own intensity of speeches in EFL learning. As what have been presented on the previous explanation, the highest frequency of speech acts was directives. Bach and Harnish (1979) assert that the directives speech act produce an effect some actions that is done by the hearer. From the data collected, the prospective front officer students in learning EFL at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja created this type of speech acts as advising, asking, and begging.

In advising type the prospective front officer students used certain expressions that were treated to advice. The expressions used were 'do not' and 'please'. The prospective front officer students applied in this expression to advice the guest do not to hesitate to ask for receptionist acknowledgments, all of them have their own intensity of speeches in EFL learning. As what have been presented on the previous explanation, the highest frequency of speech acts was directives. Bach and Harnish (1979) assert that the directives speech act produce an effect some actions that is done by the hearer. From the data collected, the prospective front officer students in learning EFL at SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja created this type of speech acts as advising, asking, and begging.

In advising type the prospective front officer students used certain expressions that were treated to advice. The expressions used were 'do not' and 'please'. The prospective front officer students applied in this expression to advice the guest do not to hesitate to ask for receptionist assistance. Furthermore the expression of "please" advised the guest for keep safety of something. Asking type of speech acts used to ask the guest about something. The construction of the asking used forming question. It used *wh-questions* and also *yes-no questions*. It can be seen from the data above, the prospective front officer students constructed the question by applying the question words such as 'how', 'how many', 'what', and 'who'. The position of those words might be put at the beginning. Besides those expressions, in making question, the prospective front officer students employed the Yes/No question type. In making this, the prospective front officer students, based on data, chose modal auxiliary expressions that were put at the beginning of the speeches, such as 'could', 'can', and 'may'.

The one who produces the constatives speech act was seen about commit the truth of the expressed proposition. From the finding above, in constatives speech act type, the data showed that it was appeared in reporting and informing. In reporting something, the prospective front officer students restated of the guest' responds.

The type of acknowledgments speech act produced by the prospective front officer students were greeting and thanking. In greeting the guest, the prospective front officer students employed the expression good morning/afternoon/evening. The prospective front officer students wants to deliver friendly and to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all customer who coming to the hotel. In thanking, the prospective front officer students applied expression 'thank you'.

Commissives speech act were in terms of offer and promise. This speech acts commits the speaker intention to do something and the beliefs that his/her speeches obliges him/her to do it. Towards this, the prospective front officer students of SMK Negeri 2 Singaraja employed the commissives by uttering two kinds of speech acts, namely: offering and promising.

The term speech styles in this study refers to the definition suggest by Selting (2010), which is one device in conversation to achieve a specific contextualization and interpretation of turns. Any language has stylistic varieties such as regional dialects, occupation-based jargon, formality and/or politeness related expressions, gender-based differences, and so on (Walker 2011). Leech (1983) defines a politeness as forms of behavior that establish and maintain comity. That is the ability of participants in a social interaction to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. According to leech politeness principle, there are six maxims dealing with polite behavior, they are tact maxim, approbation maxim, generosity maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim.

Analyzing the data above, it was discovered that the students produced politeness maxim. From the findings, the result was three maxims of politeness principle were used by the prospective front officer students. The obtained data from the speeches by the prospective front officer students were 306 speeches used maxims of politeness principle where 287 speeches of tact maxim, 15 speeches of generosity maxim, and 4 speeches of approbation maxim. Meanwhile 299 speeches used impolite style used by prospective front officer students to express each task.

The employment of tact maxim in the conversations was oriented to the cost and benefit scale of the addressee. Tact maxim was related to politeness principles by emphasizing cost and benefit to other. It requires the participants to minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other. If the utterance uttered by the speaker is more beneficial for the addressee, either financial or prestige, the utterance will be polite. On the other hand, if the utterance uttered by the speaker is damaging to the financial and prestige of the addressee, the utterance will be impolite. From the data analyzed, the employment of tact maxim can be found in all tasks. This maxim was implemented by directives and commissives speeches. From the data, it can be found the employment of tact maxim using directives speeches such as; asking. Meanwhile, the commissives speeches such as offering can be found in data (T7.33, T5.160).

The employment of generosity maxim is minimize benefit to self and maximizes cost to self. This maxim is similar with tact maxim. Both of these maxims apply particularly to speech acts which are directives or commissives. The general principle for both commissives and directives is that, for politeness, anything which involves cost to the hearer or benefit to the speaker should be 'softened' by being expressed indirectly, and the greater the cost the more the indirectness required. Conversely, anything that involves benefit to the hearer or cost to the speaker should be expressed directly. The employment of generosity maxim can be found in task seven. Generosity maxim was used when the students offer something to the customer.

The employment of approbation maxim in the conversations is oriented to the praise and dispraise of the addressee. Approbation maxim is related to politeness principles by emphasizing praise and dispraise of *other*. It requires the speaker to minimize dispraise of *other* and maximize praise of *other*. This maxim requires the speaker to avoid everything which hurts the addressee. If the speaker's utterance minimizes dispraise and maximizes praise of the addressee, the utterance will be polite. On the other hand, if the speaker's utterance minimizes praise and maximizes dispraise of the addressee, the utterance will be impolite. The employment of approbation maxim can be found in task three and task eight. This maxim can usually be found in some acknowledgments speeches such as the speeches of praising and the speeches expressed to say thankfulness.

The findings also showed that the students made some errors in speech acts. From the findings, there were 23 errors found in the term of grammar. Based on the result of the analysis, it was found that there was one kind of grammar error. It was verb form errors (past tense, future continuous tense, and pluralization). Meanwhile, there were as many as 26 diction errors found in the students' speeches. Appropriateness error was found 6 error in students speech acts. After the researcher has analyzed the grammatical, diction and appropriateness errors and found the finding of the research, hopefully the researcher tries to give contribution of the research to the teaching learning English for better way. Learning grammatical will make the student more understand in their speaking.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study was obtained from the result of analysis. Based on the analysis, the use of locutionary acts to express the tasks in terms of speech acts category shows that the highest frequency of speech acts were produced by prospective front officer students was directives (67.8%) and then followed by acknowledgments (14.9%), constatives (14.4%) and the lowest frequency was commissives (2.9%). Further, the use of directives to express front officer tasks also conclude that the directives speech act appeared in all of front officer tasks or task one until task eight. Meanwhile the other speech acts only appeared in some front officer tasks. Acknowledgments speech act conveyed by the prospective front office students involved greeting and thanking. Directives speech act conveyed by the prospective front office students namely asking for information, begging, and advising. Constatives speech act conveyed by the prospective front office students involved informing something and reporting something. Commisive speech act conveyed by the prospective front office students involved offering something and promise.

There were three types of politeness maxim that can be found in this research. Those were tact maxim, generosity maxim, and approbation maxim. Tact maxim states that minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other and maximize the expression of beliefs which imply the benefit to other. Generosity maxim is minimizing the expression of benefit to self and maximizes the expression of cost to self. Approbation maxim states that minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other maximize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other maximize the

expression of beliefs which express dispraise of self. The types of politeness maxim that mostly used among prospective front officer students were tact maxim.

The prospective front officer students were forced to speak English, and it's believed that they were encountered the difficulties in speaking English. There were three aspects of difficulties encountered by prospective front officer students. The aspects were grammar, diction and appropriatness. Based on the result of the analysis, it was found that there was one kind of grammar error. It was verb form errors involved past tense, future continuous tense, and pluralization.

The suggestion, therefore, the result of study provides the variety of speech acts that are used by the prospective front officer students so the teacher can decide a strategy to make better teaching learning process. Teachers must teach the students how to express action variously so that the students can communicate well with the customers.

This study let prospective front officer students to achieve the goal of EFL learning through understanding to speech acts are used in communicate with guest or customer. When the students communicate, they perform action in their utterances. The distinction of the way they perform their action sometimes can be misunderstood by the listener, so the prospective front officer students must learn more about utterance used to communicate with the guest. The purposes were avoiding conflict and create harmonious relationship.

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