Exploring Islamic Teachers' Speech Acts in the Classroom at Private Islamic Junior High School in Rokan Hulu Riau

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Abstract

Teachers' ability to communicate lessons in the classroom is necessary needed to create meaningful teaching and learning process. The selection of words, how the words arranged and how they are uttered determine whether the class run effectively active or vice versa. Even, the nominal of utterances of teacher state how the class is conducted. The excessive proportion of the teacher's speech will actually make the class inactive and the teacher will have difficulty assessing the extent to which students understand the material presented. Barnes (2008) in Groves and Bull (2014) mentioned that teacher talk or teachers' speech in the classroom has an important role in improving and developing students' knowledge skills. This research was piloted to explore what speech acts expressed by the Islamic teachers in their classroom as it ended up to determine how the class directed. The research is qualitative design by taking one Islamic teacher of Private Islamic Junior High School in Rokan Hulu. The result mentions that the most dominant speech acts is the ordering of directive speech act. In this case, teacher often ordered students to accomplish their group discussion and present the result in front of the class. while the lack of productive questions on the stage of interactive and reflection lead to less of students' critical thinking. For the next research, it is suggested to have more participants and use supplementary instruments to enrich the data.

Keywords: speech act, Islamic teacher, Private Islamic Junior High School

Introduction

One of the determinants of the success in teaching and learning process in the classroom is the teacher's ability to maximize every detail of the activity in order to gain the learning objectives. These activities are reflected from the beginning of learning to the time of closing through the interaction that arises between teachers and students. The interaction is illustrated through the language choice that the teacher picks when she is giving instructions to students, how to convey it, how students respond to the teacher's instructions, and how communicative competence in the classroom takes place. These points are a marker whether the class has met the criteria as an active class or inactive classroom (Kasper, 2001)

The teacher's communicative competence becomes crucial in the implementation of the learning process in the classroom. The dominance of teachers speaking in the classroom is also a consideration to produce an interactive and not boring class. The excessive proportion of the teacher's speech will actu ally make the class inactive and the teacher will have difficulty assessing the extent to which students understand the material presented. Barnes (1976, 2008) in Groves and Bull (2014) mentioned that teacher talk or teachers' speech in the classroom has an important role in improving and developing students' knowledge skills. An effective teacher's talking time provides opportunities for students to be actively involved in interacting during the learning process in accordance with the learning objectives they want to achieve. It is stated that active learning is a demand in every learning strategy in the classroom in the modern learning approach. Interactions that are dominated by teachers will only result in unproductive classes (Kasper, 2001).

Speech acts uttered by teacher can be used to measure how the class is processing in achieving the aims of learning. The study of Basra, S. & Thoyyibah, L. (2017); Andewi, W. & Waziana, W (2019); Santosa, A.W. & Kurniadi, A (2020) conclude that the choice of speech acts classification determine the teaching process and vice versa. Furthermore, according to Ibrahim (1993:212), the teacher's speech in the classroom includes providing information, giving explanations, providing definitions, asking questions, giving orders, and giving corrections. This opinion is related to the category of speech acts proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975); Ehlic and Rehbein (1979). While the category itself was developed from Austin and Searle's speech act (1968). The category of speech acts proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard is still widely adopted by linguists. Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory is one of the core elements of modern pragmatics and can be studied in a variety of contexts such as, teaching and learning in the classroom discourse (Leilei Zoul, Zhu Yiye, 2022).

It can be seen by analyzing what kind of speech act implemented by teacher starting from the time the teacher open the class, conducting the core activity and ended by closing the class, we can find out how the process of teaching and learning occurred. Teachers' speech acts that are too assertive in the classroom tend to make students passive learners because teachers give too many explanations. Teachers' speech acts should be able to encourage students to become active learners by maximizing productive question and modeling the appropriate context, and explicit teaching (Edwards-Groves, 2014). This category is also in accordance with the teacher's duties in managing the classroom, namely directing or assigning students to perform certain tasks in teaching and learning activities. Teachers' speech acts should be able to create a comfortable, active and fun learning atmosphere because active learning has become a demand in teaching today.

Recent research discussed in this field has resulted that communicative language teaching in the classroom can be achieved by implementing directive speech acts (Basra, S. & Thoyyibah, L. (2017). Sari, F.A.,Marni, S., Sartika R. (2023) stated that the directive speech acts helped the students to think and influence students to do all the instruction in learning. While the results of pre-research through interviews and observations in the schools found that most teachers' speech acts still tend to be assertive even though most of them state that they use an active learning strategy. Through this paper, the author explores the use of speech acts applied by teacher during the teaching and learning process and its implications in each of teaching stages.

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive design to fully describe the speech acts category used by one of Private Islamic Junior High School teacher in Rokan Hulu, Riau Province. All speech acts are recorded through video recordings to see the general tendency of speech act applied by teachers in the classroom during the teaching and learning process based on the category of teacher speech acts and their functions. The categories of speech acts applied are taken from 5 categories of speech acts by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). These categories are Representatives, Directives, Comissives, Expressives, and Declaratives. The data grouped was analyzed for its suitability with the phase of the teaching and learning process in the classroom range from pre teaching stage, while teaching and post teaching. The data collected from the results of observations is analyzed starting with reducing the data, presenting the data, and verification the data (Miles &Huberman, 1994).

Findings and Discussion

This study found that there were as many as 48 teachers' utterances conducting teaching material entitled the Virtue of Giving. The results of the study are presented based on the category of speech acts by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975).
1. Representative
   The act of representative states what the speaker considers to be true or not. This speech act functions to explaining, claiming, summarizing, and promising. Referring to the results of the data, the researcher found as many as two (2) *representative* speech acts used by teachers, namely the form of informative and one confirming utterance. Here are the words in utterance 6th, 27th and 28th.
   (6) "Baik..kegiatan kita pagi hari ini adalah mengenal pembelajaran projek based learning… dalam PBL siswa atau anak anak nanti ibu bagikan hadis dan artinya kemudian ibuk bagikan kertas origami untuk menulis isi kandungan dari hadis tersebut."
      "Our activity this morning is to get to know project based learning. You will share the hadith and its meaning. The, I will distribute origami paper to write the content of the hadith on it."
   (27) "Bagian yang ini bu?"
   "This part is ma'am?"
   (28)"Ya, bagian yang ini" (sambil menunjuk ke salah satu bagian)
   "*Yes, get here (while pointing to a specific part of the paper)*

2. Directive
   Declarative speech implies that the speaker wants the interlocutor to perform an action according to the function of the language he is speaking. Some of the words that indicate

directive speech acts are advising, invite, asking, asking, instructing, beggar, suggesting, and, prohibiting. The results of the analysis found that there were 31 utterances that were categorized as directives. Some are in the form of ordering, checking, and appointing. Here is the data obtained:

(8) "naah, jadi sebelum ibu bagikan materinya, silahkan setiap kelompok untuk eee membuat yel yel atau yel yel yang sudah disiapkan."
"Naah, so before you share the material, please each group eee to make a prepared yel yel or yel yel."
(9) "Baik, kelompok satu silahkan yel yel nya."
"Okay, group one, please yell the yell."
(10) "Baik, kelompok dua, sudah siap yel yelnya?"
"Okay, group two, are you ready to yell?"
(19) "Silahkan didiskusikan hasilnya nanti di sini."
"Please discuss the results later here."
(24) "Silahkan ditulis isi kandungannya sesuai pemikiran masing masing kemudian ditempel di kertas karton."
"Please write the contents according to each person's thoughts and then paste them on cardboard."
(45) "Ayoo, kelompok dua sudaaah?"
"Come on, the group of two sudaaah?"
(67) "Kita beri aplus."
"We give applause."

3. Commissive

Comissive speech refers to the action that will be taken by the speaker according to the context in which he speaks. Words that express this function include promise, plan, oppose. In this study, no speech acts were found in the *commissive* category.

4. Expressive

This act of speech expresses how the speaker feels about the situation he is experiencing at that time. The speeches that are categorized include *thanking, deploring, welcoming.* In this study, there are nine (9) expressive speech acts used as the examples below:

(10) "Masyaa Allah, tepuk tangannya."
"Masyaa Allah, give a hand clapping."
(51) "Kita beri aplus."
"We give applause."

5. Declarative

This act of speech expresses actions that are carried out instantly to change a situation. This speech action is for example: "*You are fired".* In this study, 6 declarative speeches were found, including:

(2) "absen yaa."
"Absence yaaa."
(12) "Baik, langsung saja."
"Well... Just right away."
(21) "waktunyaaa ibu kasi waktu yaaa waktunya paling lama 15 menit…paling lama 15 menit."
"I give you 15 minutes at most to discuss."
(36) "Baik, ibu tambah,,"
"Okay, plus 5 minutes more."

The speech act categories used in this research are the most widely used category by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) that are representative, directive, expressive and declarative. Based on the data attained, it can be seen that there are 4 categories of teacher speech act in the teaching and learning process at Rokan Hulu Private Islamic Junior High School, namely representative, directive, expressive and declarative. Among these speech acts, the most dominant category of speech acts applied by teacher is directive speech which has the function of ordering. In this case, teacher ordered the students to do what she wanted. For example, in the beginning of the class, teacher ordered student to recite du'a before starting the lesson. In this case, teacher wanted the chairman lead his friends to recite du'a as the sign that the learning began. The utterance used was "Silahkan do'a (please recite du'a). " This activity is always found in the Indonesian classroom at any level. It implicitly mentions that all Indonesian do have a believe in God (Allah SWT).

While in phase of Interaction, teacher ordered each group to write the results of their discussion on paper. Then, asked students to stick the cardboard on the whiteboard and then present the results of their discussion in front of the class. The utterances represented were "Silahkan didiskusikan hasilnya nanti di sini (*Please discuss the result right here!)*" and "Silahkan kelompok tiga untuk menempelkan hasil dari proyeknya." *(Please third group to stick the result of your project here).*

Having directive speech act is required in teaching and learning process since it functions to lead students to do an action. By uttering directive speech act, teachers facilitate students to be more active in the classroom.

Moreover, during the teaching and learning process, especially on Interaction phase it was found that there are 8 repetitions of directive speech act category for the same idea. The repetition functions to order students to discuss the material in their respective groups and then wrote the results on cardboard. The researcher believes that repetition is needed in teaching and learning process to ensure that students understand the teacher's intention that is to improve focus. It instructs the students' brain to stay alert in doing the task. In this case, many times repetitions used by the teacher for the same idea occurred since the students were noisy. So, teacher needed to repeat the instruction many times. The utterances are:

- *"Silahkan ditulis isi kandungannya sesuai pemikiran masing masing kemudian ditempel di kertas karton."*
  "Please write the contents according to each person's thoughts and then paste them on cardboard."
- *"Silahkan ditulis isi kandungannya sesuai pikiran masing masing kemudian ditempel di kertas karton… nanti ditempel di sini."*
  "Please write the contents according to each person's mind and then paste them on cardboard... Later pasted here."
- *"Jika proyeknya sudah di dapat sudah bisa diliat….ini ditempel di sini naa."*
  "If the project has been obtained, it can be seen.... paste it here, naaa."

However, the data shows no productive questioning speech act found during the teaching and learning process either from teacher to the students or students to the teacher or from students to students. The possible questioning was just the one from the students' course book which they worked on during the classroom discussion on the phase of Joint construction. Just like ordering, questioning is definitely important to create students active learning. Productive questioning is used to develop students' critical thinking on the subject

learnt. The data mentions that there were no utterances which intended to find out students' comprehension on the topic learnt from the teacher to the students or from students to students. In this research, the teacher rarely uttered productive questions to students. Frequent questions uttered by teacher to students were questions that functions to check whether students had finished discussion and had written the result of their discussion on the cardboard. The utterances were *"ayoo kelompok dua sudaaah?", "Sudah siap yel yelnya?".* The lack of productive questioning speech acts signs incomplete action of directive in teaching and learning process.

Another missing function of speech act during the teaching learning process in this research was representative speech act which functions as apperceptions about the material will be discussed. This act commonly occurred during the phase of *Mengalami (Experiencing)* in which teacher gives students necessary information about the material learnt. The only information about the material was from the course book. The researcher believes that in teaching and learning process, teacher also needs to explain an amount of information and bring students to the relevancy of the material with their daily life. This phase commonly occurs at the initial stage of Core activity in teaching learning process. This phase will help learners to have background information about the material and create meaningful learning.

In addition to the missing speech act was that there were no speech act represented reflection at the last stage of learning. In this case, teacher directly ended the learning after giving applause to the last group presentation to the class. The only speech act found in this phase was closing statement from the teacher begun with marker as *"Baik,, pembelajaran kita pagi hari ini PBL..sekian dari ibu apabila ada kesalahan kekurangan mohon maaf..billahi taufik wal hidayah.. wasalamu'alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokatuh."*
"Well, our learning this morning was about PBL. It is enough for today. I am sorry for the mistake. May Allah pour us with wisdom and guidance. *Wasallamu'alaikum warohmatullahi wabarokatuh*".

In this point, teacher needs to have an evaluation on the material learnt. It is to ensure whether students understand the material or not. The lack of reflection during the teaching and learning process impacts on students' comprehension of the subject.

The next speech act found in this research is the expressive speech acts. Expressive speech acts refer to how the speaker is feeling toward the situation he is experiencing. Thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and deploring are some forms of expressive speech act. In this study, there are 9 forms of compliment uttered by the teacher during the learning. The compliment is used to appreciate students when they have accomplished teacher's instruction, and to appreciate students' performances. For examples; when the students have finished their presentation in front of the class, teacher praised the students by giving applause and invited others students to give hand clapping for their friends' presentation. Giving compliment on the students' work is necessary to motivate students to be better, to …… The utterances used are "*Masyaa Allah, tepuk tangannya, ", "Kita beri aplus."*. The teacher uttered these expressions during the phase of Interaction each time group of students finished their presentation.

Declaration speech act is also occurred during the teaching and learning process in this research. Declaration is expressions that when the speaker carries the utterance, it changes a situation promptly. In this research, there are six utterances represented declarative. Some

of them are "absen yaa.", "baiklah, langsung aja..", "ok, waktunya ditambah lima menit lagi". In this point, declarative is needed to keep the teaching and learning run well as it is planned.

Conclusion

This research found there are 4 speech act categories during the teaching and learning; representative, directive, expressive and declarative. The dominant speech act was directive. Act of directive is beneficial to create active learning. The dominant form of directive speech act found was ordering. It guides students to learn by themselves in respected group and communicate their comprehension about the material given. In term of interaction between teacher and students seems to be passive because students merely listen to the teachers' ordering. They rarely have an initiation to have a whole class discussion about the topic assigned. Whilst, Garton, S. (2012) concluded his research that learner initiative in teacher fronted interaction may constitute a significant opportunity for learning.

On the other hand, the less form of directive speech act was productive questioning. The lack of productive questioning during the phase of Interaction and Reflection in the teaching and learning process resulted on inactive students' critical thinking and lack of evaluation toward the learning. So, having analyzed the speech acts ensued in this study, it can be summed up that the active learning strategy at this point fetches an independent learning but however it is not well represented. Based on the conclusions above, the researcher needs to carry some of the suggestions as (1) With the results of this study, it is hoped that teachers will maintain the speech act that have been used in the teaching and learning process in the classroom as in the beginning of the session since students are required to be more active, as well as to improve the way teacher expresses their utterances to in the classroom and establish learner initiative in the classroom. Last, for the next research, it is suggested to have more participants and use supplementary instruments to enrich the data.

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