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Teacher's and Students' Interaction in an EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how often the English teacher uses explicit and implicit meanings during the teaching-learning process in primary school, and its impact on the students' understanding of the English material. This study was a conversation analysis study that involved one class of grade four in a primary school in a city in Indonesia. This study employed qualitative methods, and used observations to collect data, namely by recording the teaching-learning interaction. The data were analyzed by interpreting the recorded script. The study revealed that the teacher used explicit meaning in the entire teaching-learning process, and these explicit meanings made the students understand the English material easily.

Keywords: explicit, implicit, children's cognitive development, EFL classroom

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1. Introduction

Speech act becomes the spotlight since Austin gave a series of lectures at Harvard and printed his lectures in 1962. Then, many researchers have discussed speech acts, especially classroom interaction, such as the interaction between teacher and students in the science classroom (Scott & Fisher, 2004), the role of teacher and students' interaction in acquiring text comprehension (Santamaria & De La Mata, 2002), a teacher-student interaction in doing project work (Quek et al., 2007), teacher-students' in mathematical interaction (Nührenbörger & Steinbring, 2009; Leder, 1987; Heinze & Erhad, 2006), and teacher-students' interaction in technology class (Slattter & France, 2011; Esjeholm & Bungum, 2013). However, only a few researches discuss the teacher and students' interaction in the English classroom in primary school, especially using explicit and implicit meaning in locution, illocution, and perlocution by considering the students' cognitive level. Therefore, this research was attempted to analyze the teacher and students' interaction in locution, illocution, and perlocution by considering the students' cognitive level with the research questions: (1) How many times explicit and

implicit meanings are used by the teacher during explaining English material? (2) What are the impacts of teacher's explicit and implicit meanings during explaining English material on students' understanding?

The scopes of this research are how often the teacher uses explicit and implicit meanings in explaining the English material in the classroom and the impacts of teachers' explicit and implicit meanings on students' understanding. The research sample was the interactions between one English teacher and the students in one class of grade fourth Primary School in one of Indonesia's cities. This research's significance is as information and reflection of the teacher in using explicit and implicit meanings during explaining the English material in the classroom, whether explicit and implicit meaning can help the students understand the material by considering the students' cognitive level.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Speech act

The human's daily life cannot be separated from the communication that involves speech act as a vital part of communication. Speech act refers to the way of saying something to the other that has 'force' and content (Grundy, 2008). The speech act discusses the performative utterance. A performative utterance is an utterance that needs action, and the action is done by the utterer, such as 'I pay it for you' need the performance of paying by the speaker (Austin, 1962). Austin mentions that performative utterance should be done by uttering and made by the appropriate person, object, names, or things; if not or not fulfill it, the utterance is infelicity. For instance, 'I name this baby Muhammad'; however, the utterer has no right to this, then this is called infelicity. The other example is a saint baptizes a frog. It is infelicity because baptize only can be done for the human. Then, performative utterance does not discuss the false or true statement, but doing something and remains understandable and meaningful (Searle, 1969, p. 6). Many aspects can be discussed in speech act. However, Austin focuses on explaining explicit performative. Explicit performative is the utterance that does not contain ambiguities and has significant expression, such as 'I bet,' 'I promise.' Then, the explicit performative does not mean that the speaker explains or describes what he is doing.

In a speech act, there are the speaker and interlocutor. The speaker is the person who gives the massage, while the interlocutor is the person who receives the message or the listener. The speech act deals with the interaction between the speaker and the

interlocutor. The speaker commonly begins the utterance with the word 'I.' The utterance 'I' that is named as the original first person singular present indicative active form or *peculiar and particular use* by Austin is one of the features of explicit performative. Explicit performative can also be seen from the verb, namely performative verbs such as promise, pronounce, find. Then, the performative utterance cannot use the present continuous tense. Take the case of 'I bet' changes to be 'I betted' and 'He bets,' these utterances are not performative again, but description utterance, and the speaker cannot say 'I am betting.' Another mark is the asymmetry of a systematic kind between the speaker and the other person and tense (Austin, 1962, p. 63).

Identifying explicit performative is not easy. Therefore, Austin provides six devices of explicit performative (1962). The first is an imperative mood; for example, the command utterance 'You may shut it' means the speaker permits the interlocutor to shut it. The second is the tone of voice, cadence, and emphasis. The third is adverbs and adverbial phrases that are used in written language. The fourth is connecting participle by using words still, therefore, although, whereas, hereby, and moreover. Next are the accompaniments of the utterance, such as gestures. The last is the circumstances of the utterance. However, these devices cannot remove the unclear meaning and doubt the interlocutor's perception.

The utterance is not only performative utterances, but also a constative utterance. The constative utterance is an utterance that deals with a true and false statement (Austin, 2000), such as descriptive statements, statements of fact, report utterance, inform utterance, state utterance, and definition (Searle, 1971:31). To distinguish performative utterance from constative utterance, Austin provides locution, illocution, and perlocution (or called speech act) to see sense to say something is to do something, *in* saying something is doing something, and *by* saying something is doing something.

Locution is the head of the speech act. Locution refers to 'the action of saying something' (Austin, 1962, p. 94). Further, Austin mentions that in performing locution, the speaker exactly does illocutionary too. Illocution refers to the meaning of the speaker's utterance that brings force, such as ordering, informing, warning, and undertaking. In explicit performative, the utterer makes the illocutionary explicit, while in implicit performative, the utterer makes the illocutionary implicit. The massage in illocution will be succeeding if the interlocutor gives a response. The perlocutionary act is the response in emotion or action form as the effect of the illocutionary. For instance (Austin, 1962, p. 102):

Locution: He said to me, "You can't do that."

Illocution: He protests against my doing it.

Perlocution: He pulled me up, checked me.

He stopped me; he brought me to my senses, &c.

He annoyed me.

Further, Austin divides the locution acts into three kinds. The first is the phonetic act. The phonetic act is a performance of uttering certain noises, and the utterance of the phonetic act is called the phone. The second is a phatic act. A phatic act is a performance of uttering certain words related to vocabularies and grammar, such as 'She said, "I shall go home",' and the utterance of the phatic act is called pheme. The last is rhetic. Rhetic is the performance of using the vocabularies from phatic with considering the more or less definite meaning and reference (p. 95), such as 'she said that she would go home' and the utterance of rhetic is called rheme. Rhetic is also called indirect speech.

Next, Austin divides illocution to be five classes, namely verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. 'One can exercise judgment (verdictive), exert influence or exercise power (exercitive), assume obligation or declare intention (commissive), adopt attitude or express feeling (behabitive), and clarify reasons, argument, or communication (expositive)' (Oishi, 2006, p.4). Then, Austin also divides perlocution into five acts, namely, achieving to inform, convince, warn, persuade, and mislead (Austin, 1962, p. 108).

2.2. Children's Cognitive Development

Children's cognitive develop concomitant of the children's age. Then, Piaget argues that the critical transition of children's cognitive is started at age seven, where the children's cognitive develops from preoperational to be concrete operational thought (DeHart, Sroufe, & Cooper, 2004). Concrete operation in children's cognitive development refers to the children's ability to think about concrete or real-world objects and events (Turner, 1984, p. 109).

During these ages, many things happen. The children's cognitive improve in 'capacity for logical, systematic thinking using multiple pieces of information, due in part to a marked decline in centration; ability to perceive underlying reality despite superficial appearance; domain-specific knowledge or expertise; information-processing capacity and control over attention and memory; and metacognition, the ability to think effectively about their knowledge and processes of thought' (DeHart, Sroufe, & Cooper, 2004,

p. 381). Further, in this age, the children's cognitive development also develops in space and causality, categorization, transitive inference, class inclusion, deductive and inductive reasoning, and conservation (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2008).

The children's literacy also develops as to how their cognitive development. The children understand and interpret oral and written communication (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2008). Further, Papalia, Olds & Feldman explain that during childhood, the children's language ability will increase, namely in vocabularies, choosing, and using vocabularies. At age six, children commonly use simple sentences. However, in the next age until age nine or more, the children's cognitive in syntax will be more complicated. Besides syntax capacity, children's pragmatic capacity will improve too. Pragmatic capacity relates to conversation ability. The children in the first grade commonly use a short and simple answer when they talk with the adults, but speak more to their friends. Then, the children who are 9 years old or more, have a more complex sentence to explain something and the children commonly ask what they do not know directly.

In children's cognitive development, metacognition is one of the aspects that also develop. Metacognition 'describes children's growing ability to pay attention to their mental state and to use this information to more efficiently solve problems' (Oswalt, 2015). Metacognition needs the language because there is a mental state; for example, know, think, believe, remember, and guess (Larkin, 2010).

Some investigations of children's cognitive have been conducted. For instance, Wellman and Johnson's (1979) investigated children's understanding of remembering and forgetting by telling a short story in different variations and giving them some questions. Their study showed that children between five and seven years old could link their background knowledge and understand more about remembering than forgetting. However, for the children three and four years old, they guess the answer. Lockl and Schneider (2006) found in their study that comprehension of mental state words is necessary for children's cognitive and knowledge development. Besides, metacognitive also influence the children in understanding what they read and develop the strategy to understand the text more (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2008). Rickards and Fisher (2005) found that in their study that involved 3.215 students from 158 secondary schools, the teacher and students' interaction significantly correlated with students' attitude scores. However, there was no strong correlation between interpersonal behavior and cognitive achievement, but there was a positive association between cognitive achievement and cooperative achievement and negative with oppositional behavior. Then, Heinze & Erhad (2006) found in their investigation about how much time the students think about the teacher's question that the students need 2,5 seconds to answer or respond to

the teacher's question. It was also found in working the new content or repeating the content, and comparing homework. This study involved a grade eight class.

Then, it can be synthesized that the speech act deals with performative utterance. The performative utterance is an utterance that contents an action. To distinguish performative utterance from constative utterance, Austin suggests by seeing the senses of the utterances. Then, Austin produces locution, illocution, and perlocution. Locution deals with uttering, illocution deals with the message of the utterance, and perlocution deals with the utterance's effect. Children's cognitive improve to be concrete when the children are at age seven-years-old. In this phase, children's language proficiency and literacy also improve. Then, at the age of nine, children's ability in syntax and pragmatic becomes complex. Previous research showed that children start to remember at age seven years old and try to link their background knowledge with the current circumstance. Then, good interaction between teacher and students affect the students' attitude score.

3. Research Method

The research sample was one meeting of an English teacher and the students' inter- action in the English classroom. The students were in one class of grade forth primary school in one of Indonesia's cities. This research was a conversation analysis study. The conversation analysis study is different from the discourse analysis study. The discourse analysis study analyzes both spoken and written language categorically as the type of analysis, while the conversation analysis study focuses on analyzing spoken language with interpreted as the type of analysis (Nunan, 1992). Further, Nunan explains that the conversation analysis study investigates 'the management of turn- taking, repair strategies, the resolution of ambiguity, speaker selection, and topical relevance. It also investigates how certain speech acts, such as question-answer and offer-decline, combine as adjacency pairs' (1992: 160). However, this study focused on analyzing speech acts, especially explicit and implicit meaning in locution, illocution, and perlocution of teacher-students' interaction in the English classroom.

These research variables were the use of explicit and implicit meaning in locution, illocution, and perlocution by the teacher in explaining English material and the impacts of explicit and implicit meaning on the students' understanding. Because of the limited time, this study was only used observation as the technique of collecting data. Then, the classroom interaction was recorded in an audio record. The procedures of collecting data were: (1) The researcher chose the sample; (2) The researcher informed the English

teacher about the classroom observation; (3) The classroom interaction was recorded during observing on 25 May 2015; (4) The researcher transcribed and analyzed the audio record.

The data would be analyzed by data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Alwasilah, 2009). The audio record would be transcribed first. Therefore, the data of this research is in the recorded transcript form. Inappropriate data would be reduced. Next, the data would be displayed in the paper and its analysis, namely, interpretive analysis. Then, the last was concluding the interpretation.

4. Result and Discussion

There was some data found in the teaching learning interaction process. The data was seen from teacher's utterances and students' understanding. The brief explanation about the data as follow:

4.1. Teacher's utterances

Based on the data, the teacher used explicit meaning in his utterance and explanations during the teaching-learning process, and there was no implicit meaning. Here are some examples of the utterances:

1#

1. T: Oke klas, follou mi. Fud en dring!

2. Fud en dring!

3. S: Fud en dring!

The locution was a teacher's action of saying 'Ok, class follow me. Food and drink!' The illocution was the teacher orders the students to repeat his utterances. The per-locution was that the students repeat their teacher's words. The teacher used explicit meaning that could be seen from his explicit utterance.

2#

1. T: *Nah coba sir buat nih. Sinta like spaghetti.*

2. S: *Sinta suka spaghetti.*

3. T: *Hmm... kalo buat yang gak suka gimana dia?*

4. S: Sinta don't like spaghetti.

5. T: *Bukan* don't.

6. S: I don't.

7. T: *tetapi*?

8. S: doesn't.

The locution was a teacher's action of saying '*Nah coba sir buat nih*. Sinta like spaghetti'. The illocution was that the teacher orders the students to translate the sentence. The perlocution was the students translate the sentence. In this interaction, the teacher did not say his illocution explicitly. However, this may be the culture in their class-as commonly also happen in the other classroom's culture- when the teacher wrote or mentioned a sentence, then the students translated the sentence without any direction.

3#

1. T: Open page forty six!

2. (Students open their book)

3. T: Vocabulary.

4. S: Vocabulary (the students pronounce it together without any command)

The locution was a teacher's action of uttering "Open page forty six!" and 'Teacher's action of saying "vocabulary." The illocution was that the teacher ordered the students to open the book and to repeat the word. The perlocution was that the students opened their books and the students repeated the word. The teacher did not say or give any direction to the students to repeat the word. This speech was felicity because this is their habitual learning; when the teacher askes to open the page that discusses vocabulary, it means that the students need to repeat the words without waiting for the teacher's command.

4#

1. T: *untuk kita. Wi ken it tugeder*.

2. *Kita bisa makan bersama-sama*.

3. *Jadi gini. Kalau di mesjid*.

4. *Kalau di mesjid,*

5. *ada istilah itu bubar,*

6. *apa itu bubar?*

7. S: *kabur* (one of the students)

8. T: *buka bareng.*

The locution was the teacher's action of uttering '*apa itu bubar*?'. The illocution was the teacher orders the students to abbreviate the word '*bubar*'. The perlocution was the student's answer the question, but not fulfill the illocution. In this part, only one of the students answered the teacher's question and gave the other meaning of the word '*bubar*', not to give the abbreviation of the word '*bubar*' as what the teacher's illocutionary was.

    5#

1. T: *Ser mau kalian pertama menterjemahkan Ramadan.*

2. *Lingkari Ramadan. Udah?*

3. *Ramadan dilingkari.*

4. *Ha.. itu kamu terjemahkan,*

5. *bagian b ah,*

6. *halaman empat puluh Sembilan ya*

7. S: *bagian c ga usah?* (one of the students)

8. T: *bagian d ga usah, bagian b sama d sama itu*

9. S: *c!* (one of the students)

10. T: *lain. Udah.. bagian b kamu terjemahkan*

11. S: *b?*

12. T: *iyah. Bagian c kamu jawab. Enser de kuesyen bes on tek*s.

The locution was the student's action of saying '*bagian c ga usah?*'. The illocution was that the student confirmed whether part c also must be done. The perlocution was that the teacher confirmed it; however, the answer did not answer the student's illocution, and the student made the next locution as the perlocution of the teacher's perlocution, namely sentence number 9.

4.2. Children's Understanding

The teacher's explicit meanings make the students easily understand what the teacher's expected. It also helps the students to be easier in understanding the material. It could be seen from their perlocutions during the classroom interaction. For instance:

1#

1. T: Oke klas, follou mi.

2. Fud en dring!

3. S: Fud en dring!

The teacher used explicit meaning that could be seen from the word 'follow.' Using this word made the teacher's instruction or order clear for the students. Then, the students directly did what the teacher expected by repeating the teacher's utterance that could be seen from the third sentence. Therefore, this conversation was successful or felicity.

2#

1. T: *Nah coba sir buat nih. Sinta like spaghetti.*

2. S: *Sinta suka spaghetti.*

3. T: *Hmm… kalo buat yang gak suka gimana dia?*

4. S: Sinta don't like spaghetti.

5. T: *Bukan* don't.

6. S: I don't.

7. T: *tetapi*?

8. S: doesn't.

The teacher said that '*Nah coba sir buat nih*. Sinta like spaghetti'. These utterances seemed to be not the imperative sentences. However, the students had the reference, namely the class culture. When the teacher said or wrote a sentence on the whiteboard meant that the students needed to translate it. Therefore, these utterances were explicit meaning. Then, the students could respond to the teacher's order precisely as what the teacher expected.

3#

1. T: Open page forty six!

2. (Students open their book)

3. T: Vocabulary.

4. S: Vocabulary (the students pronounce it together without any command)

The teacher's utterance was very explicit in the word 'Open' that directly impacted the students to open their books. Then, the teacher said' Vocabulary', the students repeated this word, even though no command from the teacher. This situation was similar to the second example, where the students had the reference, namely the class culture.

4#

1. T: *untuk kita. Wi ken it tugeder.*

2. *Kita bisa makan bersama-sama.*

3. *Jadi gini. Kalau di mesjid.*

4. *Kalau di mesjid,*

5. *ada istilah itu bubar,*

6. *apa itu bubar?*

7. S: *kabur* (one of the students)

8. T: *buka bareng.*

In this conversation, the teacher used the utterance very explicitly, namely asking the students about *bubar*. However, the students misunderstood what the teacher meant. The teacher expected that the students gave the abbreviation of the word '*bubar*'. However, the students gave their meaning. This situation occurred because the students did not have any reference or background knowledge about the word 'bubar' abbreviation.

Commonly, children prefer to ask something new and something they do not know. Papalia, Olds, & Feldman (2008) argue that children will directly ask what they do not know. It was also found in this research, namely:

1. S: *Saya suka fred ciken dan opor sayur.*

2. T: *Saya suka ayam goreng dan?*

3. S: *Opor sayur*

4. T: *Opor sayur*

5. S: *Opor sayur apa ser?* (one of the students)

6. T: *Nah, opor sayur kayak sayur*

7. S: *Sayur dimasak* (the one of other students)

8. T: *Yang disantenin*

In this conversation, the teacher explained the reading text. When the teacher said, *"opor sayur,"* one of the students directly asked the teacher what *opor sayur* is (sentence number 5).

The children prefer to repeat the word that they know and answer the question based on their knowledge. Wellman and Johnson's (1979) found in their research that five and seven years old can link their background knowledge with the current circumstance. This research also found that the students were trying to answer their teacher's question about the word '*bubar*', even though their answers were not what the teacher expected.

5. Conclusion

The teacher used explicit meaning during the teaching-learning process, and his explicit perlocutions made the students understood the material quickly. This research only used observation to collect data, namely by audio recording the learning process. Therefore, the researcher could not record the teacher's and students' gestures to get more meaning of the utterance. Besides, this research was only conducted in one meeting. Thus, it will be better for the next researcher if the research also uses interviews and audio-visual records to collect data and involve more meetings to get more valid data.

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