

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive study. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance.

A. Background of the Study

Speech acts are fundamental elements of language use, as they do not merely convey information but also perform actions. According to Searle (1979), speech acts are utterances that function as actions within communication. Among the different types of speech acts, directive speech acts are particularly significant because they are intended to make the hearer do something, such as giving instructions, requests, commands, or suggestions.

In the context of education, speech acts have an important role in the interaction between teachers and students. Speech acts are used by teachers in the classroom during learning activities. These are often used by teachers to direct and motivate students during the learning process (Iswatiningsih et al., 2023). This shows that in classroom interaction, the use of language is not just conveying information, but also creating actions and responses from students. When students understand the material presented by the teacher, this shows the students understanding and indicates that the learning objectives have been achieved. The teacher's success in using is highly dependent on his/her ability to choose the right words and sentence structure so that the message can be well received by the students.

With these directive speech acts, teachers ask students many questions to encourage students to continue to answer and speak. As stated by Iswatiningsih et al. (2023), Students actively respond to the teacher directive speech acts in the classroom. So that it also supports students to be the center of learning. That way, it is in line with one of the programs in the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, namely student-centered learning (Noptario et al., 2024). Thus, it is important to further explore the use of directive speech acts by teachers in the classroom. This approach

will not only provide new insights into the dynamics of communication in the classroom but can also help the development of more effective teaching strategies.

Many studies have examined the use of speech acts. First, the study conducted by Siregar & Pulungan (2022) underlined the important role of directive speech acts in improving classroom interaction and facilitating effective communication between teachers and students. The dominant use of commands shows the teacher's authority in guiding students' behavior and engagement during the lesson. Second, Hidayat et al. (2022) examined speech acts used by teachers and junior high school students. The results showed that directive speech acts became the dominant speech acts used in the classroom, as much as 62%. Speech acts in the form of questions and orders appeared 113 times, which showed that the teacher was aware of his role and position higher than the students. Third, Sumedi & Rovino (2020) showed that teachers dominantly used Directive Speech Acts as much as 68%. This speech act shows that the teacher aims to guide students' involvement and participation in the classroom. In their use, teachers intentionally create a communication environment where students feel encouraged to speak.

However, only a few of the previous studies examined the topic of directive speech acts by combining the function of directive speech act and data from WDCT given to teachers with different levels of experience. Based on the findings of previous research, this study will address the gap in research by exploring the types and functions of directive speech acts using longitudinal classroom observations, observation notes, and the use of the Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), which can provide an opportunity to explore classroom interactions in a structured way, which has not been widely applied in previous research. In addition, this study will provide new insights into teachers' use of directive speech acts in the classroom that are thoroughly analyzed based on their types and function.

B. Formulation of the Problems

The question of the research is “What types and functions of directive speech acts do teachers use in English language learning in an EFL classroom?”

C. Operational Definitions

1. Speech Acts

Speech acts are utterances delivered by the speaker to make the listener perform an action. Speech acts in the context of this research are speech acts delivered by teachers to students in the classroom. In the communication, it is expected that students can respond to his speech by doing a certain action.

2. Directive Speech Acts

Directive speech acts are a form of communication that aims to control or guide students' behaviour in order to match the teacher's desired learning objectives. In the context of this research, teachers use utterances to order learners to do or not to do something during English learning in the classroom.

3. EFL Classroom

EFL classroom are classes that located in non-native or second language English country. In this context, the teachers and the students share a common language culture, specifically in one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia.

D. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the types and function of directive speech act used by the teacher in the classroom of EFL.

E. Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical use

Theoretically, this study contributes the improvement of EFL teachers' understanding of directive speech act in teaching. This study can be the basis for further research development such as research on the use of speech acts in different structures and functions between English and other languages in the classroom environment.

2. Practical use

Practically, this study provides valuable insights for educators and researchers interested in increasing EFL students' engagement during learning. By

understanding these speech acts, educators and researchers can develop effective communication strategies to increase student engagement and support student-centred learning objectives, as outlined in the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

3. Empirical use

This study provides new insights into how the use of certain speech acts can affect students in classroom learning. The results of the study can provide researchers with empirical understanding and awareness of the effectiveness of the use of directive speech acts in English language teaching.