PROMOTING PRAGMATICS KNOWLEDGE TO STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM TO FACE AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS EXAMINATION

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Abstract

This paper deals with promoting knowledge of pragmatics which focuses on the knowledge of the illocutionary acts and conversational implicatures to students of English education and English literature study program. It is aimed at describing types of illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces, and conversational implicatures in the context of undergraduate thesis examination. Such types of knowledge of the illocutionary and implicatures are great importance for those students as it confers a clear description of use of speech acts in the context of the undergraduate thesis examination. In reference to these issues, students of English education and English literature study program should be familiar with five types of illocutionary acts which include (1) representatives, (2) directives, (3) commissive, (4) expressive, and (5) declarative. Besides, they are encouraged to clearly understand the nature of the illocutionary forces of each illocutionary act which guides them to make sense of the intentions as performed in the illocutionary act. Added to this, knowledge of conversational implicatures used in undergraduate thesis examination should be clearly understood. The types of implicatures include generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures. This suggests that students who are going to defend their undergraduate thesis draft should be well-prepared and familiar with the types of illocutionary forces and conversational implicatures in order that mis-conception and mis-interpretation of speech acts employed by examiners can be minimized.

Keywords: *Speech Acts, Illocutionary Acts, Illocutionary Forces, and Implicatures.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini memfasilitasi mahasiswa program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris dan Sastra Inggris pengetahuan pragmatik khususnya pemahaman pengetahuan *illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces*, dan *conversational implicatures*. Tulisan ini bertujuan menjelaskan jenis-jenis *illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces, and conversational implicatures* yang digunakan dalam ujian skripsi mahasiswa program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris dan Sastra Inggris. Pengetahuan ketiga hal tersebut sangat penting karena pengetahuan tersebut memberikan gambaran secara rinci tindak tutur yang digunakan dalam ujian skripsi. Berkenaan dengan hal tersebut, mahasiswa program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris dan Sastra Inggris perlu memahami jenis-jenis illocutionary acts yang dibedakan menjadi lima jenis,

yakni (1) *representatives*, (2) *directives*, (3) *commissives*, (4) *expressives*, and (5) *declaratives*. Di samping itu, mahasiswa juga memahami sub-kategori dari masing-masing illocutionary act tersebut. Lebih lanjut, para mahasiswa juga harus memiliki pengetahuan conversational implicatures yang seringkali ditemukan dalam ujian skripsi mahasiswa program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris dan Sastra Inggris. Pemahaman ketiga hal komponen pragmatik tersebut memiliki manfaat yang penting bagi para mahasiswa agar mereka dapat meminimasi miskonsepsi dan kesalahpahaman dalam berkomunikasi ketiga mereka mengikuti ujian skripsi yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris sebagai alat komunikasi.

Keywords: Speech Acts, Illocutionary Acts, Illocutionary Forces, and Implicatures

1. Introduction

A language, for example English, is defined as a system of sounds, symbols, or signs that conveys meanings. It is commonly used by human beings to express their ideas, feelings, emotions, and the like in different settings of communication practices which include natural and formal settings. In natural settings, English is widely employed by some Indonesian society members such as *becak* drivers, tour guides, cashiers, and the like to communicate with non-domestic tourists in some resorts like Malioboro, Borobudur, Bali, and others. In formal settings, English is employed by English or non-English teachers, English trainers, and the like as a means of classroom communications beside Indonesian language. In international seminars or conferences, English is also employed by presenters and participants as a means of presenting their ideas during discussion. In addition, English is also used as a device of communication practices between the board of examiners and examinees whose major is English education or English literature as their study programs.

The use of English by the board of the examiners and examinees in the undergraduate thesis examinations is unique in nature. The uniqueness shows that the examination is dominated by question and answer practices between the examiners and the examinees employing English as the matrix language or dominant language. The questions raised by the examiners somehow do not really ask the examinees' content of thesis drafts; instead, the questions as reflected in the form of the speech acts are primarily aimed at reconfirming the examinees' understanding of what they have written in their undergraduate thesis drafts. The insufficient knowledge of contextual language use may create some misconception and misinterpretation on the part of the examinees which lead to the undergraduate failure of thesis examination. In other words, the utterances of the board of the examiners can be comprehensively analyzed when examinees (students of English education and English literature study programs) have sufficient knowledge of pragmatics including the knowledge of illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces, and conversational implicatures. This is in line with Lihui and Jianbin (2010: 51) advocating that English language learners including students of English education should not only be concerned with knowledge of language but also knowledge of language use in context.

In reference to the above issue, this article presents the description of the nature of illocutionary acts, the types of illocutionary forces of each illocutionary act, and the conversational implicatures,

the pragmatic knowledge which have commonly aroused within the undergraduate thesis examination. Some examples of illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces, and types of implicatures are taken from the communication practices conducted by examiners and examinees involving the writer as one of the board of examiners in reference to theories of pragmatics. The exploration of the three issues is believed to be of great importance for students of English education and English literature study program who are about to be engaged in the undergraduate thesis examination. By understanding the three issues, misinterpretation and communication barriers could be minimized.

2. Notion of Illocutionary Acts and Illocutionary Forces

In relation to pragmatics, Yule (1996: 47) states that pragmatics is primarily concerned with the issue of a speech act, an action performed via utterances or spoken forms which have specific labels such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise or request, and the like. According to Austin (1962), speech act is divided into three types: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (in Huang, 2007: 102). The locutionary act refers to an utterance that is tied in terms of sense and reference. It is concerned with what a speaker utters. The illocutionary act, on the other hand, is defined as the making of a statement for example, offering, promising, etc in expressing an utterance, by virtue of the conventional *force* associated with it. The perlocutionary act means the bringing about effects on the audience by means of the utterance.

In reference to the illocutionary act, Searle in Finch (2000: 182) classifies the illocutionary acts into five types, namely (1) representative, (2) directive, (3) commissive, (4) expressive, and (5)

declarative. The term *representative* is defined as one of the illocutionary acts in which the speaker commits to the truth of the uttered proposition. It is commonly used to represent a state of affairs (Finegan et al., 1997: 344). Such a type of the illocutionary act is divided into some illocutionary forces which include such as: stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming, and announcing (Leech, 1983:105). Further, Cutting (2008:14) proposes some illocutionary forces of the representative, namely describing, hypothesizing, insisting, and predicting. Each could be clearly explained when the utterance is analyzed from the context.

The second type of the illocutionary act is *directive.* It is defined as asking the hearer to do something. With the use of directive, the addresser attempts to get the addressee to do some actions as he/she wants. This illocutionary act is subdivided into some types which include commanding, requesting, suggesting, inviting, questioning, and warning. The term *commissive* refers to committing the addresser to some future course of actions. In other words, it deals with an action which will be or will not be done in the future course. This illocutionary act is categorized into some illocutionary forces which include promising, vowing, offering, threatening, and refusing (Cutting, 2008).

The fourth illocutionary act is *expressive.* It is defined as a speech act which expresses a psychological state. This can be in the form of stating pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, anger, joy, sorrow, and the like. According to Cutting (2008), the illocutionary act of expressive has some illocutionary forces such as greeting, thanking, apologizing, complimenting, stating pleasure, stating pain, stating doubt, stating confusion, stating surprise, stating panic, stating anger, and stating dislike. Another type of the illocutionary act is *declarative.* It refers to a speech

act in which effects immediately change an institutional state of affairs. Added to this, it tends to rely on elaborated extra-linguistic institutions. This illocutionary act comprises some illocutionary forces which include excommunicating, declaring war, christening, marrying, firing from employment, and others (Finch, 2000: 182). This type of the illocutionary act can also be found in communication practices during undergraduate's examination of thesis. The five types of illocutionary acts discussed above are commonly used in communication practices including the communication performed by board of examiners in the undergraduate thesis examination. The following provides examples of the five illocutionary acts and forces used in the undergraduate thesis examination.

3. Examples of Illocutionary Acts and Illocutionary Forces used in the Undergradute Thesis Examination

In the undergraduate thesis examination, the five types of illocutionary acts commonly used by the board of examiners will be elaborated below.

3.1 Representative

As mentioned earlier, representative refers to commits by the speaker to the truth of the uttered proposition. It deals with representing a state of some issues in communication practices. The following presents some examples of illocutionary forces of representative as commonly performed by the board of examiners. Each illocutionary force has a linguistic feature as presented in the bold and underlined forms.

a. **Assertives**

No	Types of Illocutionary Forces		Examples
1.	Informing	C	: Dear examinee, <u>**let me inform**</u> you that in the first part of the examination, you are given time fifteen minutes to present the summary of your thesis and then in the second part, the examiners will ask you the details of your research.
		S	: Thank you, Sir.
2.	Stating an opinion	**E-1 :**	**In my opinion,** at least there are two factors to successfully comprehend the English text. They are schematic knowledge and systemic knowledge. What do you think about it
		S	: That is right, Sir.
3.	Agreeing	**E-1**	: Giving the students more chance. Now, what do you mean about applying some new speaking activities? What do you mean by speaking activities?
		S	: Some new speaking activities include conversation games, role play, and so on that I have explained to you, Sir.
		E-1	: <u>**Yes, I agree with you**</u>.

4	Arguing	S	: **In my opinion, students' motivation is one of the external factors that influences the success for reading comprehension.**
		E-1	: **How come? I don't think that student's motivation is one of the external factors.** <u>It must be internal factor as it comes up from his/ her own student.</u> **Not, like this one.**
		S	: **Sorry, Sir.**
5	Explaining	S	: Because the class bilingual, Sir.
		E-2	: I think you mean is "because the classes are bilingual" right? **<u>When you use "because" it must be clause, when you use "because of" must be followed by phrase</u>.**
6	Convincing	E-1	: What text did you give to the students?
		S	: Narrative, Nyai Loro Kidul?
		E-1	: **<u>Roro, or *Loro*. *Loro moto*. *Roro itu kan julukan*. It is easier to pronounce *Loro* but it should be Roro not Loro<u>.</u> *Ya Roro ya, not Loro*.**
7	Predicting	E-1	: I believe that if the students are familiar with the schematic knowledge **<u>they will be easier to make sense of the English texts</u>**. What do you think about it?
8	Announcing	C	: After we have a long discussion dealing with your performance, **<u>we come to the agreement that you pass this exam,</u>** but you have to make some revisions.
		S	: Thank you very much, Sir.

b. Directives

In the undergraduate thesis examination, the illocutionary act in the form of directive is often found. It is concerned with asking the hearer to do something. The following exemplifies the illocutionary forces of the illocutionary act of directive. Each illocutionary force has a linguistic feature as presented in the bold and underlined forms.

No	Types of Illocutionary Forces		Examples
1.	Commanding	E-1	: **<u>Now open to page 54</u>**. You can display Table 14. **<u>Please tell me the meaning of the information of each column</u>**.
		S	: Yes, Sir.

2.	Requesting	C	: **<u>Would you please show us the identification of the problem in your slide</u>**? *Ya*, this one.
		S	: Alright, Sir.
3.	Suggesting	E-1	: I think **<u>it's better for you to give an emphasis that students still found difficulties in comprehending text for the first cycle.</u>**
		S	: Thank you, Sir.
4.	Inviting	C	: **Now, I invite you to present your thesis draft in 15 minutes. The floor is yours**.
		S	: Thank you, Sir.
5.	Questioning	E-1	: **<u>How did the teacher learn English based on your interview? Did they have or attend special English training from school or from the government?</u>**
		S	: They joined in-service training.
6.	Warning	C	: Please highlight that vocabulary should be embedded in the macro-language skills. It is not explicitly taught for the students of secondary school levels. **<u>Don't teach</u>** vocabulary separated from the macro-language skills. Do you understand this point?
		S	: I see.

c. Commissive

In the undergraduate thesis examination, the illocutionary act in the form of commisive is often found. It deals with an action which will be or will not be done in the future course. The following exemplifies the illocutionary forces of the illocutionary act of commisive. Each illocutionary force has a linguistic feature as presented in the bold and underlined forms.

No	Types of Illocutionary Forces		Examples
1.	Promising	C	: In the first part of examination you have done 15 minutes to present the summary of your research and then **<u>we will ask you questions and will give you necessary advice for the revision of your report.</u>**
		S	: Thank you, Sir.

2.	Offering	E-1	: **<u>Do you want to drink first before I continue my next questions</u>**? It seems to me that you are nervous. Just relax. Don't be afraid of me.
		S	: Yes, Sir. I am a little bit nervous.
3.	Threatening	E-1	: You have to carefully revise all mistakes that I found on your thesis. **Otherwise, I do not want to ratify your thesis**.
		S	: Alright, Sir.

d. Expressive

In the thesis examination, the illocutionary act in the form of expressive is often found. It deals with expressing their feeling or emotions to the other hearer. The following exemplifies the illocutionary forces of the illocutionary act of expressive. Each illocutionary force has a linguistic feature as presented in the bold and underlined forms.

No	Types of Illocutionary Forces		Examples
1.	Greeting	C	: **<u>Good morning, everyone</u>**. We are very pleased to invite you here to put for the thesis examination.
		S	: Good morning.
2.	Thanking	C	: **<u>Thank you so much for your presentation</u>** and I'd also like to congratulate you on accomplishing your thesis draft, this is writing draft.
3.	Apologizing	E-1	: **<u>I am so sorry</u>**, I could not stay here until the end because I have to join the meeting at Rectorate. **<u>Sorry for making you inconvenience.</u>**
		S	: That is alright, Sir.
4.	Complimenting	E-1	: I am pleased to be your first examiner. First of all, **<u>I would like to say congratulation for your success in finalizing your thesis draft.</u>**
		S	: Thank you very much.
		C	: **<u>You did well enough in your performance</u>** even though there are weaknesses in there.
		S	: Thanks.
5.	Stating pleasure	C	: Board of the examiners, examinee and audience, **<u>it's pleasure for us this morning to have him, to take the examination</u>** of his thesis entitled Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Contextualised Speaking Tasks.

6.	Stating a doubt	E-1	: For me, internal factor is related to the reader. It can be the motivation or the ability of the reader. It is an internal factor. The other factor is the teacher. It can be the external factor. **Perhaps, there are other theories.**
7.	Stating confusion	E-1	: **I don't quite understand why some are included in the internal factors and some others are included in the external factors**.
8.	Stating surprise	E-2	: You have so many prints-out of data but you didn't explain what they mean. **How come? Why happened to you?** *Ini semuanya harus dilaporkan untuk item 1* ('This should be reported').
9.	Stating panic	C	: **Ehm.. ehm..** I have a meeting at Senate. Let me give the opportunity to the first examiners**. Ehm.. I will be right back.**
10.	Stating anger	C	: Do you get *the first examiner's* question? Do you get the point of *his* question**? Oh stupid, she does not understand it**. **It is terrible**.
		E-1	: How many percent is this, spelling? And then total correct answer? 140. 94,9. So the percentage? Is this about spelling or pronunciation? How do you spell 67.7%? How do you write? *Kok bisa, kok kamu bisan* ('How come')? **We are testing what you have done not your purpose?** *Kita bukan ahli kebathinan* (We are not paranormal)*. Jadi yang diujikan adalah yang tertulis* (So what I see is what you write')*,* **"not what I mean"**.
11.	Stating dislike	C	: Could you explain that to me what you mean with their writing ability is low? **I don't like the score when you are talking writing ability. I don't believe in score**. But in writing ability, did you observe the student skill ability? What typical mistake did you find?

Note:

E-1 : The First Examiner   C : Chair Person

E-2 : The Second Examiner   S : Student (examinee)

e. Declarative

In the thesis examination, the illocutionary act in the form of declarative is also found although only once. For example, the utterance of declarative is used when the examiner's declaration to a student after the thesis examination is completed, such as "According to our

discussion with other examiners, *you have passed the examination* by having a few revision". So, in the time after the examiner's speech, the student has already got a status of bachelor degree (in which previously it hasn't be legally spoken). This is so because he/she is successful to answer the questions the examiner asked and finally the examiner declares about the success of theses examination.

4. The Notion of Conversational Implicatures

In any communication practices, the speakers have intentional meanings which are not explicitly stated in their utterances. This drives the hearers to struggle hard to get the message which is implicitly stated in order to minimize communication barriers due to the unsaid information. The implicit message in a conversation is called an implicature. Brown and Yule (1983: 31) state that an implicature is what the speaker can imply, suggest, or mean as distinct from what the speakers literally express. As it is not explicitly stated by speakers in their utterances, the hearers then need to make implication or suggestion in order to gain what the speakers mean through their utterances. Further, Horn and Ward (2006: 3) state that implicature is a component of speakers' meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in the speakers' utterance without being part of what is said. Grundy (2008: 92) claims that an implicature is a meaning that is conveyed but not explicitly stated. To know the intended meaning of the speakers' utterances, the hearers must do a deep interpretation since the speakers' utterances usually have more than a literal meaning.

In terms of the types of implicatures, some experts classify the implicatures into two types, namely (1) conversational implicatures and (2) conventional implicatures. The conversational implicature refers to a particular meaning as implicitly conveyed by the speaker in conversational practices (Cutting, 2008: 35). In this case, the hearers are demanded to make an inference of the speakers' utterances. This type of implicatures is divided into two, namely (1) generalized conversational implicatures and (2) particularized conversational implicatures. The former may arise without any particular context or special scenario to deal with additional conveyed meaning (Yule, 1996: 41). For example, the construction *I saw a university student last Monday standing next to a pretty car* exemplifies the generalized conversational implicature which informs that the student and the pretty car do not belong to the speaker. The latter deals with an implicature that requires very specific contexts in which inferences are needed. Such inferences are required to search out the conveyed meanings. The following presents the example of particularized conversational implicature appering in some communication practices.

John : May I have a ride tomorrow? My car is broken.

Anne : **My mother asks me to take her in the airport at dawn**.

The above conversation shows that Anne could not give a ride to John because she takes her mother in the airport. Such an inference requires particular contexts to interpret the implied meaning.

Different from the conversational implicature, the conventional implicature deals with specific words and results in additional conveyed meanings when the words are employed (Yule, 1996: 45). Mey urges that the conventional implicature cannot be changed by invoking another context as it is standardized by convention (1993: 104). Levinson claims that the conventional implicature is treated as non-truth-conditional inferences which are not

generated from super-ordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but it is simply connected by conversation to particular lexical item (1983: 127). This suggests that such a type of the implicatures can be automatically interpreted by words as literally expressed without occurring in conversations and not depending on special contexts for its interpretation. For example, the word *and* as in *My mother ask me to buy apples and oranges* means additional as the word *and* is a conjunction that links some similar items. In this case, it does not need a particular context to interpret the meaning of the word *and*.

5. The Examples of Conversational Implicatures in the Undergraduate Thesis Examination

As mentioned earlier, there are two types of conversational implicatures. They include generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures. Each is discussed below.

1. Generalized conversational implicature

C   **: Please highlight that vocabulary should be embedded in the macro-language skills**. It is not explicitly taught for the students of secondary school levels. **Don't teach vocabulary separated from the macro-language skills.** Do you understand this point?

The above example shows that the speaker confers an implied meaning as shown in the bold forms. He wants to say that teaching vocabulary cannot be separated from the four macro-language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Such an implied meaning is categorized as the generalized conversational implicature as the hearers

do not need to apply specific knowledge to make sense of such utterances. See the other example below.

E-1   : When you deal with a top-down processing in teaching reading, **we give an emphasis of the use of sub-reading skills**. It is better for you **to add the sub-reading skills when you explain the use of top-down process in your literature review**.

The above example shows that the speaker has an implied meaning through the uttered expressions. He suggests that the examinee as the hearer includes the explanation of predicting, previewing, guessing, scanning, and the like to deal with the application of the top-down processing. The implied meaning is also classified as the generalized conversation implicature as it does not require a specific context to make sense of the used utterances.

2. Particularized conversational implicature

E-2   : Okay. **We've got so many comments from the second examiner**. I think you should revise your thesis report as suggested by him.

S   : Yes, sir. Thank you.

The above example as written in the bold form shows that the second examiner urges that the examinee should highlight what the first examiner asks and commends on her thesis draft to gain the betterment of the thesis report. Added to this, the other implied meaning through his utterance is that he has only a few comments on the thesis report as the first examiner has already covered all part of the undergraduate thesis draft.

C   : I think **we don't have any more question to ask.** Could

you please wait outside for the result of your performance?

S : Thank you very much, Sir,

The above example as stated in the bold form shows that the speaker signals that the thesis examination is up as a great number of questions have been asked and successfully answered by the examinee. Added to this, the speaker also asks the examinee to give privacy to the board of the examiners to discuss the result of the thesis examination. Such implied meanings require particular knowledge to make sense of the utterances. That is why such the implied meaning is categorized as the particularized conversational implicature.

6. Conclusion

With regard to the above explanation, the knowledge of pragmatics is of great importance to students of English education and English literature study program. The understanding of the pragmatic issues such as illocutionary acts, illocutionary forces, and conversational implicatures has facilitated them to easily make sense of the message in some communication practices in different contexts including the context of an undergraduate thesis defense which employs English as a means of communication. This relies on the fact that the use of English in the thesis examination is unique in nature. Therefore, students of English education and English literature study program should be familiar with the five types of illocutionary acts: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The types of illocutionary forces of each illocutionary act mentioned are commonly employed in the thesis examination. In addition, they have to be familiar with the types of implicatures, namely generalised and particularized conversational implicatures. Such understanding is of great use to make sense of the implied meanings in order that misinterpretation leading to the failure of their thesis examinations could be minimized. To sum up, promoting knowledge of pragmatics to students of English education and English literature study program is one of the efforts to establish open-minded graduates in line with the use of English language in some communication practices in order that misconception and misinterpretation of speech acts can be minimized.

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