

LANGUAGE AND POWER IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Najib Khoirul Muhyiddin

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta Indonesia

najibmuhyiddin@gmail.com

Abstract: Classroom interactions between teacher and students are crucial in building a positive classroom atmosphere. For many years, teacher centered learning became one of the teaching approach. This situation is believed to be a cause of a gap between the teacher's powers to the students' motivation to be active in classroom interaction. Due to the curriculum of 2013 which emphasize good characters to be developed for the learners, teacher should be able to manage a good classroom interaction so that the students are engaged to be more active. Therefore, the researcher is interested to analyze the implementation of the teacher's power in ELT classroom, to understand the impact toward the students' motivation. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The instruments used are interview, video recording, and transcripts. The result of the study shows that the power of teacher affects the students' learning attitude, such as affecting the students to be more motivated in responding the teacher's command.

Keywords: Classroom Discourse, Language, Power Relation

INTRODUCTION

Language as a mean of communication is very essential to be acquired through listening as the basis, and produced through speaking. Brown (2000) defines language as a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, gesture symbols that enables members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another. Spoken language in communication is more often performed than written language. It is similar to what happens in the classroom when the interactions between teachers and students occur. This type of learning activity in the classroom that involves the interaction of teachers and students is one form of language uses for social roles. In the context of classroom learning, language has role as interactional function. Brown and Yule (1996) describe the function of language becomes transactional function and interactional functions. Transactional function is a function to reveal the contents, while the interactional function is a function of language in social relations and personal attitudes.

The Language used in classroom interactions between teacher and students are believed to be crucial in building a positive teaching and learning atmosphere. Rivers (1987) stated that the process of collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between the people affecting each of them. By having the mutual influence between the participants through giving and receiving messages, the skills of listening and speaking of the learners will be enhanced. In order to catch the message in the classroom interaction, the participants should understand the context of the language user.

Nowadays, communicative approach is applied by most school in Indonesia. The use of communicative approach is expected to be able to develop the students' communicative competence in real situation. According to Hymes in Poolsawad, Kanjanawasee, and Wudthayagorn (2014) communicative competence refers to the knowledge of how to use the language and the capacity to produce infinite number of sentences. In communicative approach, the students should be given more time to be active in the classroom than that of teacher. However, for many years in Indonesia, teacher centered learning becomes one of the teaching approach. The teacher is known to be too dominant in class rather than the students. The application of communicative approach in Indonesia still does not run well. This situation then

affect the paradigm of the students to believe that the teacher has the strongest power in class so that all the interactions will be determined by the way the teacher speaks. From this situation, it can be seen that the power of the teacher successfully affecting the students' motivation in classroom interaction.

Furthermore, the teacher's power is commonly delivered in the form of directive speech act. Teacher in classroom, intentionally or unintentionally giving command to the student. In order to be obeyed by the students, the teacher tends to show the power to gain the students attention and expecting to be able to motivate the students. Some students may be comfortable with it, but some may feel afraid and the worst thing they will choose to keep silent in order to avoid mistakes.

The concept of power according to Fairclough (1995) is conceptualized both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (and hence the shapes of texts) in particular sociocultural context. In addition, Van Dijk (2001) says that power involves control from member of a people group to others in form of action, so the power group can limit the freedom of other group that will influence their minds. In other word, people who have power can control the behavior of people who under control. Moreover, Brown and Gilman (1960) say that the power can be in form of physics, prosperity, age, sex, or institutional role.

Right now, the research about the use of power in language in the English teaching classroom especially in Indonesia is still rare. While according to Fairclough (1989) in any interactions, there is a form of power that can be revealed by using critical discourse analysis. The phenomena of using power in classroom cannot be avoided as long as there are interactions between teacher and students. The perception of power in classroom is now the influence of teacher's acts or expressions toward the students' learning attitude. Based on these situation, it is interesting to know more about the use of power and language in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom especially in the form of directive speech acts.

METHOD

To meet the seized result, this research conducted qualitative study. Cresswell (2008) defines qualitative study as "a type of educational research in which the research relies on the views of participants; ask board, general questions; collect data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analysis these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in subjective biased manner". The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomena of using power in language by teacher in classroom. The subject of this research was the English teacher in Kudus. The data was collected and analyzed from observation, interview and transcript of video recording.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The power represented by a teacher can be seen from his/her utterances in directive speech acts. Harnish in Geis (1995) say that directive utterances express the speaker's attitude toward some prospective action by the hearer and his intention that the utterance, or the attitude is expresses, be taken as a reason for the hearer's action. In the classroom discourse, the directive speech acts commonly happen and used by the teacher in order to manage the class atmosphere. In applying this acts, the teacher tends to apply a power which can be in high restriction, standard, or low (humanistic) form. Therefore, it will show how a teacher views his or

her status compared to their students. The use of directive speech acts can be seen in the following transcript of teacher and students interactions.

Datum 1

Teacher : Listen, when you are answering the questions, you have to understand the reason. (1) Pertama, jangan asal memilih A, B, C, or D. (2) Maksudnya, you have to support your answer with a reason, ok?
 Students : Yes, mam.
 Teacher : Good. Ok, silakan dikerjakan!

The dialogue shows the situation where a teacher was giving an instruction in answering questions. The students are asked to give reason for their answer. Viewed from the form of command, it could be classified into directive speech act from the using of modality 'have to' in turn (1), the prohibition 'jangan asal memilih' turn (2), and another modality "have to" in turn (3). In accordance to this, the representation of power possessed by the teacher in the classroom can be seen from the teacher's intention to use the high restriction of command. It can be seen from the relational modality 'have to'. It can be assumed that the teacher placed her and her students as concept of a superior-subordinate. By using modality 'have to' the speaker wanted the listener did what the speaker expressed. In the context of classroom, when giving directions concerning matters that are considered urgent, teacher tend to use direct commands that present the dominant power.

Datum 2

Teacher : When you are writing about something, do not only just write but try to understand the words that you use. (1) Ketika menulis, jangan asal tulis.(2) same as reading, jangan asal membaca lewat saja, harus dipahami makna dan pesannya (3) (the teacher go around class and check the students' work and ask to one of students)
 Teaceher : Finish?
 Students : not yet mam.

The power of the teacher is presented through the directive speech acts in run (1), (2), (3). The teacher explained to her students that if they wanted to write down a text, they had to understand the words they used. It was equal to reading a text, students had to understand the meaning in that text material. The teacher used the direct speech acts to give idea or advice to students in order to understand with what they write or read. It can be assumed that the teacher wanted to share her experience so that the students will followed the teacher's habit.

In the context of teacher in the classroom, teacher had the legitimate, the referent and expert power. According to Thomas (1995), legitimate power is the power which comes from role, age, or status. Referent power is the power which is gained by someone because he or she is admired and many people wants to be like him or her. While the expert power is the power which is gotten by someone because of his or her knowledge or skills. In the context of above dialogue, it can be seen that the teacher had legitimate power where in the class the teacher has higher social status than that of students. Because the teacher wanted her students to follow what she did, the teacher wanted to be an admired figure in her class. It is called as referent power. The last, the teacher had expert power because she was as the source of knowledge.

Datum 3

- Teacher : Next, who want to try to answer? Silahkan. (1)
 Student : Get... get in touch with somebody is contact somebody.(2)
 Teacher : How do you know?(3)
 What is your supporting sentence?(4)
 Student : the speaker says "give me a call" (5)
 Teacher : Give me a call means kontak saya, hubungi saya. (7)
 What about the others, same?
 Students : same (9)

The situation of dialogue happened when the teacher gave a question to students. However, no one was brave enough to answer the question. Then the teacher elicited students to answer it by saying "who want to try? Silahkan". It can be interpreted that the teacher wants the students to be active in class. Teacher tried not to dominant in the classroom. The students did not give the responses until the teacher elicited them. It could be caused the students' anxiety in answering teacher's question. Finally one of the students was ready to answer although he was nervous that could be seen in repetition word and vibrating sound in turn (2). In turn (3) the teacher repeated the student's answer and requested student to give more detail explanation by giving supporting sentences (turn 6). After student gave supporting sentence, the teacher repeated what the student said and translated it into Bahasa Indonesia. To assert the answer, the teacher delivered a question to ask the other students' agreement by asking "same?" the students replied by saying "same".

The activeness of students in the classroom can be seen in their responds toward teacher's elicitation or questions. Although the teacher has given them chance to be active, the students still feel anxiety. Usually they will answer teacher's question nervously. The factors of students' anxiety in the classroom can be from the students' perception about the subject and from the students' perception toward the teacher. The form of power represented in the above dialogue was the teacher's utterance "can you make supporting sentence?" it was a kind of power in request form which is actually a kind of directive speech act. In this case, it can be understood that sometimes power is manifested unintentionally by a teacher in the classroom. They consider it as a normal thing happens in the classroom.

The Implication of Power in Language Manifestation by Teachers

Based on the data above, the manifestation of power does not only happen in politic activity but also in the classroom activity. The application of power in language usually done by a teacher because he or she has legitimation to control the class. The forms of power that teachers do in the classroom involve making the regulation before, during and after the teaching learning process, distributing someone's speaking in the classroom, controlling the topic of learning and etc. Moreover, the form of teacher power not only in making regulation, but also in teacher's utterances. Because the teacher has an authority in the classroom, teacher's utterances have power that affect the students' learning attitude.

The finding of the research showed that the teaching learning activity in the classroom involving the interaction between teacher and students was the form of language uses for social roles. The way of teacher' interaction to students reflected the teacher's view to their students' position. In the classroom, a teacher has role not only as the knowledge source, but also as the

controller of teaching learning process. It means that a teacher has more power and authority than that of students in the classroom. The form of control conducted by the teacher in the classroom can be in the forms of teacher's utterances involving directive speech acts. The use of the speech act can produce the power in classroom because by implementing the speech act essentially the teacher has triggered students to do what the teacher's want.

During observation, in the classroom discourse, the directive speech acts were commonly used by a teacher to control the class. The directive acts were manifested by teacher in the classroom including command, request, prohibition, permission, advice, and asking form. In applying these acts, a teacher represented the power form could be in high, standard, or low (humanistic) restriction degree. Therefore, it should be showed how a teacher viewed his or her status compared to their students'. The command act had the high restriction because there were consequences if the students broke the rule. Viewed from the teacher and students relationship, this power showed that the teacher had the higher position rather than the students.

CONCLUSIONS

In teaching learning process, intentionally or unintentionally, a teacher performs the power manifestation in the classroom. It will bring some effects to students' learning attitude. In the classroom discourse, a teacher can represent his or her power in language into directive speech acts form. The use of directive speech acts are intended to get students to do something. The application of teacher's power in speech acts forms can influence students' learning attitude as follows; (1) The implication of directive speech acts toward students affect different views of students to teacher's status in giving command and students are not brave to utter honestly to refuse the teacher's command. Consequently, the do the teacher's command not sincerely. (2) For the students, implementing teacher's request is enjoyable because they assume that it is a natural thing to do. There is no negative effect toward students' learning attitude when the teacher performs the request act in the classroom. (3) The teacher's prohibition has the influence toward students' attitude because the students consider that the teacher's prohibition is a must. There are consequences if the students break the prohibition. For the teacher, it is as a form of training for students to be more discipline.

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