Realizations of Promising Speech Act by Students of English as a Foreign Language of Semarang State University

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Article Info

Abstract

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To communicate with others requires the ability of communicative competence. The communicative competence covers discourse competence, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, socio cultural competence and lastly actional competence. Pragmatic competence is such a communicative competence which is important to study in order to fill the gap among the speakers, especially students of English as a foreign language. The gap among the speakers of different languages can be decreased by the study of speech act in various languages and perspectives. The focus of this study is the analysis of pragmatic study that focuses on promising speech act delivered by Students of English as a Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang. The objectives of his study are concentration on analysing the realization of promising speech act by the students, the probable factors that influence the students in realizing promising speech act, how those factors influence students to realize a promise and what dominant strategy used by the students. This research is qualitative descriptive research. The source data of this research is document. In order to collect the data, there are two methods used in this research; DCT and Role play methods. The types in analysing the data are transcribing, coding, classifying and interpreting. The subjects of the research are 20 students of English as a Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang at sixth and eighth semester. There are 480 utterances of promising speech act produced by the students from the DCT and Role play data elicited. Based on the analysis, the study reveals that the students applied future action, promise-to-act and predictive assertion strategy to realize the promise. The probable factors that influence students to realize the promise are distance, dominance and imposition. Actually, those factors (distance, dominance and imposition) are not primary factors that impose the students in realizing the promise. Some situations with different combination of social parameters deliver different strategy. The different combination of the three factors in situation given and interference of students' native language and pragmatic transfer in the language learning process also affects the respondents in realizing a promise strategy. The dominant strategy used by the students is future action strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a way that is used as a communication device among human beings in this world. It uses systematic patterns in many forms and it may not be stable by the era. The forms of languages evolve to what are now called spoken and written language. Language is a system of arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written or gestural symbols that enable members of a given community to communicate intelligibly with one another (Brown, 2000, p.5). Through the language people express their ideas, wants, thoughts, knowledge, and feelings. One of major functions of language is the expression of personal identity (Crystal, 2003). Students have many problems in learning English as a foreign language. A finding from Sofwan (2015) revealed that many students have not had the opportunity to learn how to express thinking skills in English because they are continually exposed to curriculum that focuses on basic skills in English. In order to be able to know each other in communication, people have to understand the language itself that is integrated on four skills of language; listening, speaking, reading and writing. How well we can communicate to others depends on how we master all language skills. The necessity to be able to understand each other in a worldwide range is what brings people to use English as the International Language.Warsono (2017) stated that understand the context of situation in a text, particularly spoken, students are exposed to conversation texts that mostly focus on the use of functional expressions.

Ellis (1994; 13) stated that communicative competence includes knowledge the speaker-hearer has of what constitutes appropriate as well as correct language behaviour in relation to particular communicative goals. In a case of asking questions, for example, the speaker must know how to set a question correctly and to whom the question is addressed. We may say that different interlocutor requires different way. It is what Ellis means that the purpose of communicative goals influenced the way we use language to communicate. Asking a question to a professor or a lecturer in a classroom requires different strategy from asking a question to a new one that we meet on some places. Moreover, the same situation happens not only in asking a question, but also in answering a question, inviting someone, making a request and offering something, promising and many others.

Promise is one of the speech acts that deals with something that may happen in the future and commitment of the speaker. Mey (1993), quoting Searle says that a promise should not be about things that are going to happen, or should happen anyway. This clear thing up that someone cannot promise that the sun will rise tomorrow because it does not deal with commitment of the speaker, or in this case we call the speaker as promiser.

In Pragmatics, according to Austin (1962), promise belongs to performative act which cannot be judged as true or false; they would rather be considered as felicitous or infelicitous. Performative act of promise is under the speech act theory which is defined by Lyon (1977) as an act performed in saying something. In daily life, some people are very familiar with making promises. Sometimes, promises are made with no intention of keeping them. For example, when people say I'll call you later, and I'll be there in ten minutes, they make promises. However, often those promises are not kept. How could promises be made without intention to keep them? It is due to the fact that not all promises are felicitous. In making promises, some people may be felicitous that they intend to keep the promises, but some others may not. There are some felicity conditions to determine whether a certain promise is felicitous or infelicitous. Based on these conditions, we are able to discover whether a promise is made as a merely lip service or a real felicitous promise. Furthermore, pragmatic competence is one of communicative competences that has important role in determining the language purpose to use appropriately in order to achieve the goals of communication.

To communicate with others requires the ability of communicative competence. The

communicative competence covers discourse competence, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, socio cultural competence and lastly actional competence. Pragmatic competence is such a communicative competence which is important to study in order to fill the gap among the speakers, especially students of English as a foreign language. Communicative competence among the speakers is important because the second language students have the problem with the interference of their native language. As stated by Mujiyanto (2017) that learning a second language, learners cannot totally disconnect themselves from their cultural context where they rely on the knowledge source constructed from their home society.For long time and many years, exploring the relationships between cultural identity and language development has existed in second language acquisition researches.The gap among the speakers of different languages can be decreased by the study of speech act in various languages and perspectives.

The focus of this research is the analysis of pragmatic study that focuses on promising speech act delivered by Students of English as a Foreign Language of Universita Negeri Semarang. The objectives of the study are concentrates on analysing the realization of promising speech act by the students, the probable factors that influence the students in realizing promising speech act, what dominant strategy used by the students and how those factors influence students to realize a promise.

Theoretically, the research is expected to enrich the previous theories of speech act of promising since this research will give description of how English Department students produce promises. Practically, it is hoped that the research will give contributions to students who study English and English teachers or researchers to develop further research related to speech act of promising strategies. Pedagogically, the research can be used as supplementary information for both EFL teachers and learners related to speech act of promising strategies. Hopefully, this study can be used by teachers to interpret and criticize the lesson of the promise expressions appropriately.

In line with the previous statement, the finding will give a contribution to the readers to enrich the knowledge about speech acts especially promising speech act. It also can be useful in cultural understanding in learning English based on the native speaker's intention in expressing speech act of a promise and develop the awareness of language varieties which may result in better understanding of others' utterances.

Several previous studies about promising speech acts have been done by the researchers. Saeidi et al (2014) conducted a research on speech act of promising. The research compared speech act of promising produced and recognized by native speakers and Iranian EFL learners. The research was based on communicative competence gap among speakers. The study was aimed to investigate the strategies used in expressing promises in different situations. The data were not only expression of promising in English but also promising expressions in Farsi, the Iranian language. An open-ended data collection technique was employed for studying participants' responses and verbal reactions to different situations. The result suggested that the two groups vary in using strategies and types of promising. It was found that Iranian EFL learners' sensitivity to their first language made them use inappropriate expressions and strategies in their English responses.

Bernicot and Laval (2004) conducted a research on children about promising speech act. Their study has two objectives. The first was to gain an accurate understanding of the role of the preparatory condition in the comprehension of promises. The second objective was to test linguistic forms which do not contain the verb promise but which, according to the speech acts classification (Searle and Vandeveken, 1985; Vanderveken 1990a; 1990b) are specifically commissive, i.e., they contain verbs in the future tense (active or passive voice). This current research differs from Benicot and Laval's research in terms of the subject of the research

research. The subject of the previous study is children, and the current research is EFL Learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang.

Suwigno (2011) studied the interlanguage pragmatics of agreement strategies by non-native speakers. The research took two groups of Indonesian respondents who are college students in the sixth semester who were given questionnaire in the form of DCT. It showed that disagreement is realized through contradiction, counterclaim, irrelevancy claim, contradiction and counterclaim, and challenges to personal/non-personal issues in different social status. Even though, both Suwigno's research and this current research used DCT, the bias is avoided in this current research by using two methods of collecting the data. Those methods are the role play and DCT.

Schauer&Adolphs (2006) explored the similarities and the differences between a discourse completion tasks (DCT), corpus data and discussed potential implications for using the two in pedagogic context. They did the study by contrasting native speakers' expressions of gratitude elicited by DCT with those found in a five million word corpus of spoken English. They also examined the advantages and disadvantages of the both data sets with regard to the language-teaching context. The result suggested that a combined use of both instruments might aid the teaching of formulaic sequences in the classroom. This particular study compared the DCT result with corpus data. Meanwhile, this current research used both DCT and role play to avoid the bias and to produce a balance result.

Karyono (2015) studied about the promising speech act used by teacher of Vocational School in Pacitan that focused on pragmatic analysis of the speech act of promising used by Pacitan Vocational English teacher and the aimed of the study is to fulfil the gap of the dissimilar languages and culture with interethnic communication difficulties. The study concentrated on the analysis of the strategies of promising and what dominant strategy used by Pacitan Vocational English teachers. The data of his study is documents.

The documents are taken from Vocational English teachers which consist of 10 males and 15 females and the level of English proficiency was middle to advance. The data were collected from the responses of DCT produced by the teachers. He found that the respondents applied performative and non-performative verb in stating the promises. The dominant promising strategy used by the teachers is promising non-performative verb strategy.

All of the previous studies have the similarities and differences to this current study. The similarity is that all of the previous studies and this research analyze the promising speech acts utterances. Furthermore, there are also differences between each research. Some of the differences of each research have been explained above. Almost all of the previous studies compared the use of speech act by native speakers of English or English as a second language. Most of the previous studies also only analyse realization and strategies of promising speech act. In this current research, the researcher will examine the realization and the strategies of promising speech act and also the factors that affect the strategies of promising speech act by students of English as Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang.

METHODS

This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this research were the students of English as a Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang that consists of 20 students. They were chosen by the assumption that they used English as a means of communication. The object of the study was utterances of promising speech act produced by these students.

The data source of this study is document. The documents are taken from Students of English as a Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang. The research deals with expressions of promises produced by Student of English as Foreign Language of State University of Semarang consists of six male and fourteen

female students. Ten students are in the sixth semester and the other ten of students are in the eight semester. The data was taken from responses of DCT and Role Play produced by the students.

There are two instruments that are used in this research to collect the data; DCT (Discourse Completion Task) and Role Play. DCT has been commonly applied as one of the methods to collect the data with second language learners as the contributors. DCT is the most effective research instrument (Seran&Sibel, 1997). The data in this study were collected through a controlled elicitation method called open questionnaire which is a modified version of DCT. DCT includes a brief description of the situation and a one participant dialogue. Each situation consists of a brief description of the addressee's characteristics important to this study, namely, social distance (the relative degree of the social power of the interlocutors over each other), and finally the offence being committed (Afghari&Kafiani, 2005).

The second instrument to collect the data is role play method. Kasper & Rose (2002, p. 86) defined role play as a social or human activity in which participants take on and act out specified roles often within a predefined social network or situational blueprint.

There are several types I used in the method of analyzing the data since the data are in the form of qualitative data. Those are transcribing, coding, classifying and interpreting. Firstly, transcribing deals with the process of transcribing the sound data from the role play activity. In this process I transcribed the recording data (audio data) into written text by listening to the audio data, and writing it down. Since I used the DCT data, role play data and awareness test to support each other, the data that needs transcribing is only from the role play. A coding is giving code to the speech act of promising, based on the data I gathered. The next step, classifying is the process to classify the data based on the promise strategies proposed by Bernicot and Laval (2004). These two steps are done at the same time since I give codes (which are in the forms of numbers) and put them in

different columns in the tables in order to classify them. The next classification is based on the probable factors of promising strategies. In this step, each factor has different situations they are suited to the purpose. The coding and classification tables will be in the appendix.

Finally, in the interpreting phase, I interpreted the data which can be seen and explained in the following chapter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research explained in the previous chapter, Students of English as a Foreign Language of Universitas Negeri Semarang realize a promise by utilizing three types of strategies. Those three strategies are future action, promise-to-act and predictive assertion strategies. Future-action strategy is a strategy of promise, which applies the verb conjugated in the future tense. The verb 'promise' does not appear, and the grammatical subject of the sentence is the person making the promise. The social act intentionally posed by the speaker is a commitment, but not a firm one. Promise-to-act strategy is a strategy, which explicitly contains the verb 'promise' followed by a verb in the infinitive form. The grammatical subject of the sentence is the person making the promise. The social act intentionally posed by the speaker is a firm commitment, while the predictive assertion strategy is a strategy in which the verb is in the passive voice and future tense. The verb 'promise' does not appear and the grammatical subject of the sentence is not the person making the promise. In this case, there is no commitment on the part of the speaker. It is a prediction of something that will happen in the future related to what the speaker says to promise.

There are 480 utterances of promise produced by student as the respondents in all situations both DCT and Role play data elicited. Here are the figuring results of promise realization from the highest strategy to the lowest one;

1. Future action strategy is 64.8% or 311 out of 480 realization of promise strategies.

2. Promise-to-act strategy is 30.4% or 146 out of 480 realizations or occurrences of promise strategies.
3. Predictive assertion strategy is 4.79% or 23 out of 480 realization of promise strategies.

The strategy most frequently used by the respondents is future action strategy. It is most frequently used by the respondents because they are Indonesians' students, especially Javanese people. They tend to express a promise implicitly without using the word 'promise' itself. Although, there are some situations that have the same combination of social parameters both in DCT and Role play, the data elicited from the respondents have different dominant strategy as explained in the discussion. The percentage and frequency of all the data gathered from DCT and Role play are provided in the appendices.

There are many factors that influence the respondents in realizing strategies promise using those three strategies. Those factors are the combination of social parameter, student's ability in understanding a promise, the interference of students' native language, and pragmatic transfer in the language learning process. The combination of social parameters such as Distance, Dominance and Imposition in each situation given determine to the respondents in using what strategy that will be utilized, though not of all respondents use the same strategy in the same condition or situation given. Almost respondents employed promise-to-act strategy in the situation that designed contains Hearer Dominant, but they employed the other strategy when the combinations of social parameters turn with the different social parameters. It also happened in the situations that has the social parameter of High Imposition and the others. The combinations of each social parameter determine respondents to use the strategy to produce a promise. The ability of student's awareness about promise also takes part in students' realization of promise. How respondents understand what is a promise related to the commitment obviously lead the respondent to utter or state a promise correctly by using the right strategy. Some students or

respondents delivering promise with actually a prediction rather than commitment of promise, or they are also delivering in grammatical error.

The interference of students' native language and pragmatic transfer in the language learning process also affects the respondents in uttering a promise. It cause the students employed the grammatical errors in structuring or uttering a promise. Students realized a promise initially used their native language and then translated to target language when uttering a promise. It makes the utterances produced are not as English native speaker produced. Students' ability in learning English determine to produce utterances of promise correctly. That is to say, the strategy they employed different to each other.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion concerning to the research problems can be drawn as follows: first, students of English as a foreign language of State University of Semarang employed a promise by using three types of strategies; future action, promise-to-act, and predictive assertion strategy. Second, the most frequently used strategy by students to realize a promise is the same strategy called future action strategy. The least frequently used strategy is predictive assertion strategy. The interference of students' native language and pragmatic transfer in the language learning process also affects the respondents in uttering a promise. It cause the students employed the grammatical errors in structuring or uttering a promise. Students realized a promise initially used their native language and then translated to target language when uttering a promise. It makes the utterances produced are not as English native speaker produced. Students' ability in learning English determine to produce utterances of promise correctly. That is to say, the strategy they employed different to each other.

SUGGESTION

To students of Indonesian which have different culture from the English Native speaker, it is important to understand and aware about English culture. The ability to deliver the right promise speech act is influenced by to what extent we know the target language is used and the ability of communicative competence in English culture. And, also many respondents in realizing utterances of a promise are influenced by the negative interference, so that they have many grammatically error made. By avoiding negative interference, students can alleviate the grammatical error. To the next researchers of promise speech act, it is hoped that there will be a research that will reveal the promise more detail and naturally design to native speaker as the subject. Hence, it will contribute to decrease the communicative competence gap between the speakers.

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