

A STUDY ON HOW TEACHERS COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL AND DAYCARE AT KINDY CLUB DENPASAR

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Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to identify the types of speech acts used by teachers (caregivers) at Kindy Club, to examine how these speech acts were employed in communication with children during preschool and daycare activities, and to identify the illocutionary intent behind these speech acts. The research was conducted as a micro-ethnographic study, focusing on six teachers (caregivers) at Kindy Club. Data was primarily gathered through observations, interviews, and video recordings. The collected data was categorized and analyzed using Searle's Taxonomy of Speech Acts (1979), which includes Representatives, Directives, Expressives, Commissive, and Declaratives. The study found that the teachers (caregivers) in both the preschool and daycare programs used all classes of speech acts—representatives, expressives, commissives, directives, and declaratives. Additionally, different combinations of speech act classes were also identified, such as directives-requestive, directives-questions, and directives-prohibitive. The teachers (caregivers) at Kindy Club had unique ways of utilizing each class of speech acts, often combining different classes or producing speech acts that indicated more than one class. Consequently, the findings revealed that some speech acts had multiple illocutionary points.

Keywords: *speech acts, teachers (care givers), preschool, day care*

Abstrak

Studi kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis tindak tutur yang digunakan oleh guru (pengasuh) di Kindy Club, mengkaji bagaimana tindak tutur tersebut digunakan dalam komunikasi dengan anak-anak selama kegiatan prasekolah dan penitipan anak, serta mengidentifikasi maksud ilokusi di balik tindak tutur tersebut. Penelitian ini dilakukan sebagai studi mikro-etnografi, dengan fokus pada enam guru (pengasuh) di Kindy Club. Data dikumpulkan terutama melalui observasi, wawancara, dan rekaman video. Data yang dikumpulkan kemudian dikategorikan dan dianalisis menggunakan Taksonomi Tindak Tutur Searle (1979), yang mencakup Representatif, Direktif, Ekspresif, Komisif, dan Deklaratif. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa guru (pengasuh) di program prasekolah dan penitipan anak menggunakan semua jenis tindak tutur—representatif, ekspresif, komisif, direktif, dan deklaratif. Selain itu, kombinasi berbeda dari kelas tindak tutur diidentifikasi, seperti direktif-requestif, direktif-pertanyaan, dan directive-prohibitif. Guru (pengasuh) di Kindy Club memiliki cara unik dalam menggunakan setiap kelas tindak tutur, sering kali menggabungkan berbagai kelas atau menghasilkan tindak tutur yang menunjukkan lebih dari satu kelas. Akibatnya, temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa beberapa tindak tutur memiliki lebih dari satu maksud ilokusi.

Kata kunci: *Tindak tutur, guru (pengasuh), prasekolah, penitipan anak*

Introduction

With parents increasingly busy with their careers, many are turning to daycare centers or early childhood schools to help care for and educate their children. These centers not only provide supervision but also foster social interaction among young children. As a result, parents place their trust in these centers to support their children's development. Consequently, caregivers and teachers are responsible for both caring for and educating the children, observing their progress, and understanding their needs and developmental characteristics.

Young children have unique characteristics and come to preschool or daycare with different personalities and abilities to adapt to new environments, influenced by their diverse family backgrounds. This often results in varying parenting styles, which McDevitt and Ormrod (2007) describe as "patterns of behavior that a parent uses to nurture and discipline his or her children." Parents find various ways to express affection and guide their children. In this context, teachers and caregivers play important roles; early childhood educators should be skilled and willing to interact with, educate, handle, and manage children's behavior. They are required to use specific language in their speech to effectively influence the children's engagement in educational activities.

The role of teachers in interacting with young children is crucial, as children enter preschool with a natural sense of wonder and curiosity about the world (Conezio and French, 2002). During daycare activities, teachers use specific language to communicate with the children, guiding their actions. For instance, when a teacher uses polite requests like "please," young children understand the intention and respond accordingly. The words and expressions used by teachers are intentional and have a direct impact on the children, influencing how they react and engage as listeners.

In line with this statement, it is believed that words have the "power" to make people act. The concept of how words can prompt actions was first introduced by Austin (1962), who suggested that people use various ways of speaking to influence others. This idea led to the theory of speech acts, which focuses on how language is used and its effect on the listener (Botha, 2007). In essence, the speaker aims to prompt the listener to respond in a particular way.

Thomas (1994) further explains that the same words can be used to perform different speech acts, while different words can achieve the same speech act. Sometimes, an utterance may convey a meaning that differs significantly from its literal sense, and speakers often use indirect language to express their true intentions, leaving the listener to interpret the intended meaning.

There have been numerous studies on the use of speech acts in interactions with children. One such study by Meng (2008) explored the different types of requests made by both mothers and children during daily interactions within a family setting. The study found that mothers often used specific speech acts, making both direct and indirect

requests, and employing a variety of linguistic forms and communicative strategies in different contexts with their children.

There have also been many studies on the use of speech acts in the teaching and learning process. One such study was conducted by Anggreni (2010), which examined four types of directives used by teachers in classes for children with Down Syndrome and Autism: requesting, questioning, prohibiting, and advising. To deliver these directives—an important category of speech acts—teachers employed verbal communication, sign language, and picture techniques to facilitate easier communication with the students. This research highlights how teachers working with special needs students can influence behavior and effectively manage the teaching and learning process through the use of specific directives.

Building on previous research, it became intriguing to explore how teachers or caregivers in preschool and daycare programs use utterances to guide young children's actions and understand how these utterances impact the children as listeners. This study was specifically conducted to examine the use of speech acts by teachers during the teaching and learning process in preschools and daycare settings, particularly at Kindy Club.

Kindy Club, located at Jalan Kratau No.5, Monang Maning, Denpasar, is a facility that cares for children aged one to four years old. Beyond daycare, Kindy Club offers a preschool program that includes various learning activities such as yoga poses, baby meditation, bits of intelligence, creativity, audiovisual sessions, coloring, cooking classes, computer lessons (English for kids), storytelling, flashcard learning, and reading *Widya Wiata Partama* (learning about sound). This research focused on identifying the classes of speech acts used by teachers in preschool activities, how these speech acts were delivered to young children, and the illocutionary points of the speech acts used in both preschool and daycare settings.

This research aims to contribute to the field of science and knowledge, particularly in understanding language use in the teaching and learning processes of young children. Additionally, it seeks to inspire other researchers to conduct similar studies with further developments in the future. It is hoped that this study will provide valuable insights for teachers and prospective educators, especially those working with young children, on the various ways language can be used to interact effectively during teaching and learning activities.

Method

This research is a qualitative study conducted in the form of ethnography. According to Mowatt (2001), ethnographic research involves field observation and qualitative analysis of human behavior. Harris and Johnson (2000), as cited in Emzir (2008), describe ethnography as “a portrait of a people,” providing a written description of a particular culture's customs, beliefs, and behaviors based on information collected through fieldwork. Given this framework, the researcher must decide whether the study

will be macro-ethnography, focusing on complex societies and multiple social institutions, or micro-ethnography, which examines a single social situation. For example, Irvine (1974), as referenced in Emzir (2008), chose to study “greeting” as a specific social situation. This study is classified as micro-ethnography, analyzing the speech acts used by teachers (caregivers) in their interactions with children in the preschool and daycare programs at Kindy Club Denpasar.

The research involves two types of data. Primary data include recordings of speech acts used by teachers during the teaching and learning processes in preschool and daycare activities, as well as notes on the teachers' utterances in various situations. Secondary data, which support the primary data and enhance the validity of the research results, include information gathered from interviews with the subjects. Data collection involved observing and recording classroom interactions during preschool hours and continuing observations during daycare activities in the afternoon. Interviews were conducted at the end of preschool and daycare sessions to clarify specific details, with additional interviews held the following day to address any remaining questions related to the study.

The data collection techniques used are as follows:

a) Observation

The researcher employed participant observation in the form of passive participation. Stainback (1988), as cited in Sugiyono (2010), defines participant observation as the researcher observing what people do, listening to what they say, and participating in their activities. In passive participation, the researcher is present at the scene but does not interact or participate. This type of observation requires the researcher to be in the preschool and daycare settings without actively engaging in the activities. The goal was to observe and study the utterances produced by teachers and the children's reactions.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the classes of speech acts used by teachers to communicate with children in the preschool and daycare programs at Kindy Club Denpasar?
- 2) How are these speech acts employed by teachers in these programs?
- 3) What are the illocutionary points of the observed teacher's speech acts in both preschool and daycare settings at Kindy Club Denpasar?

b) Interview

Data collection also included semi-structured interviews to gather reliable information on teachers' intentions and the speech acts they use. Semi-structured interviews do not follow a fixed guide but are guided by key topics of inquiry. These interviews were conducted to address the following research questions:

- 1) What speech acts do teachers use to communicate with children in the preschool and daycare programs at Kindy Club Denpasar?
- 2) What are the illocutionary points of the teachers' speech acts observed in these programs?

Data analysis was performed using Miles and Huberman's Method of Data Analysis. According to Sugiyono (2010), this method involves interactive and continuous analysis until data saturation is achieved. The analysis process includes:

1) Data Reduction

This step involves summarizing, sorting, and focusing on relevant data while discarding irrelevant information. It includes concluding themes and patterns based on the research problem. Data from observations and interviews are reduced by selecting relevant information and classifying speech acts according to Searle's (1979) illocutionary acts classification.

2) Data Display

This step involves presenting the data in a structured format to facilitate understanding and further analysis. Data can be displayed through short essays, schemes, categorical relationships, flowcharts, or other formats that make it easier to interpret the findings. Data display helps researchers understand the findings and plan further analysis. As noted by Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2010), "Looking at the display helps us to understand what is happening and to do something further analysis or caution on that understanding."

Result and Discussion

This study uses Serly Taxonomy of Speech acts (1979) which classifies the speech acts into five classes namely representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declaratives.

Representatives or assertive are the category of speech acts in which utterances such as statements belong. There are acts of representing a state of affairs. Speaker is committed to believing, to some degree, the proposition he or she asserts. The speech acts which belong to assertive class could also be simply checked its truth, whether the utterances are false or true.

Then, when speaker produces utterances which are classified as directives, it means that he or she desires to make hearer do something as future action. The speaker attempts to make the world (the actions of the hearer) match with the propositional content of the utterance.

Speech acts which are categorized as commissives class have illocutionary points to command the speaker to some future actions. The speaker produces the speech acts to promise to complete it ti the hearer.

The other class of speech acts is expressive. This class of speech act is when speaker produces utterances which are expressing the fact that they feel something for example feeling of gratitude toward the hearer.

Table 1. Class of Speech Acts Used by Teachers in Preschool Program

No	Teachers' Classes of Speech Acts	Frequency stage1	Frequency stage1	Frequency stage1	Frequency stage1	Total frequency and percentage
1	Representatives	16	20	21	28	85(5.33%)
2	Commissive	2	12	21	12	47(2.95%)
3	Expressive	43	33	27	40	143(8.97%)
4	Declaratives	60	27	50	66	203(12.69%)
5	Directives	278	178	210	225	891(55.86%)
6	Representatives-Directives	5	9	12	14	40(2.51%)
7	Commissives-Directives	2	5	13	7	27(1.69%)
8	Expressive-Directives	10	2	3	6	21(1.32%)
9	Declaratives-Directives	35	19	31	41	126(7.90%)
10	Expressive-Representatives	1	1	1	2	5(0.31%)
11	Expressives-Commissives	0	1	0	1	2(0.13%)
12	Declaratives-Expressive	0	0	0	5	5(0.31%)
Total	452	307	389	447	1595	(100, 00%)

According to the table, directives were the most frequently used class of speech acts by the teacher at Kindy Club during preschool time, accounting for 55.86%. This was primarily because the teacher was interacting with young children who tended to act based on their natural impulses, without much concern for whether their actions were right or wrong. The children were often unaware of how they should behave or what they were expected to do in specific activities. Consequently, the teachers frequently needed to guide or direct the children's behavior to align with the activities at hand. The teachers used directives to instruct the children on what to do during these activities or to prohibit certain actions. For example, the directive "come on, look at this, speak loudly" was used by the teacher to encourage students to focus on the flashcard and be prepared to name the items shown on it.

After the directive class, the next most frequently used class of speech acts by the teachers at Kindy Club was the declarative class, with a frequency of 12.69%. In addition to instructing children on what to do, the teachers often used declaratives to inform students about real-world situations, reinforcing how the world operates according to the teacher's descriptions. Expressive speech acts followed with a frequency of 8.97%, reflecting the teachers' need to show appreciation and respect toward students. Since young children enjoy receiving praise, the teachers at Kindy Club often expressed genuine emotions toward students' positive actions. For example, when a student successfully

named items during a meditation activity, the teacher expressed gratitude by saying, “Aduh pintar” (wow, excellent).

The teacher at Kindy Club also employed speech acts that represented states of affairs, but as shown in the table, the representatives class appeared with a frequency of only 5.33%. This indicates that teachers did not often need to provide opinions or statements. Therefore, representatives were used less frequently compared to directives, declaratives, and expressives, but more than commissives.

Among the five classes of speech acts, commissives were the least used by Kindy Club teachers during preschool activities. This is because the focus was more on encouraging students to act rather than on the teachers committing to actions themselves. The teachers aimed to guide students to take part in learning activities rather than doing things for them. Consequently, commissives were the least frequent, appearing in only 2.95% of instances. However, the teachers still occasionally needed to commit to certain actions, especially for tasks that young children under five could not perform. For example, when the teacher took food for a student, they used the speech act, "Teacher ambilinsosisnya Yuri" (I'll take your sausage, Yuri).

As previously mentioned, directives were the most dominant class of speech acts used by teachers during preschool time. This is why combinations involving directives with other speech acts were common. The most prevalent combination was directives-declaratives, with a frequency of 7.90%. Other combinations included representatives-directives (2.51%), commissives-directives (1.68%), and expressive-directives (1.32%).

The frequent use of the declaratives-directives combination suggests that teachers often liked to reinforce or inform students about the reality of a situation while also prompting them to take action. For instance, when a teacher says, “Enjoy your food,” they are declaring that it is time to eat and simultaneously encouraging the students to start eating. This shows how declaratives were sometimes paired with directives. After declaratives-directives, the representatives-directives combination was the next most common, indicating that when teachers wanted students to do something, they often combined instructions with statements of belief or assertions.

Teachers' Speech Acts in Preschool Program

The previous finding has showed that teachers of Kindy Club used all five classes of speech acts in order to deal with the children. The teachers' speech acts are as follows.

1) Representative

Representatives or assertive mean that the speakers committed to believing, committed to some degree, the proposition he or she asserts. Here, the teachers' speech acts which are classified into assertive class.

Table 2. Data of Representatives

Source/Person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary Points
T3	Owe egois kayak gitu, nanti gapunya teman we (Owe, if you are egoist like that, you won't have friends)	Meditation	The teacher believed that being egotistic would have bad effect
T3	Nanti sore lagiya, biargabatuk (Eat it more this afternoon so that you won't get cough, ok?)	Snack Time	The teacher suggested the students not to eat the snack to much

Those examples showed that the teacher committed to believing. She told her belief and she gave her suggestion to student from her belief.

T3: Owe egois kaya gitu, nanti ga punya teman, we. (Owe, if you are egoist like that, you won't have friends)

The teacher gave that statement to the crying student. The teacher believed that being egoistic would have bad effect. The teacher used the speech acts to say what she believed to be true. The teacher' speech act in in this class could be checked the truth so that it was also as the suggestion or foundation on the children mind whether it was true or false. Therefore, from the second example the teacher's belief could be as the suggestion to the student to not eat the snack too much. Teacher believed that it could make the student sick.

2) Comissives

The speech acts that were classified as commissives class were when the teacher produced the speech to promise to do something to the learners. In Kindy Club, the researcher found that the teacher had their way to say or to express the speech which indicated their promises to do something to the children.

Table 3. Data of Comissives

Source/ Person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary points
T2	Ade mau air? (Do you want some water, ade")	Snack time	Teacher committed to give water to students
T2	Nugget mauya? (Nugget, do you want?)	Eating together	Teacher her committed to take other food to student so that she could eat a bit more
T2	Mimikya? (Drink, ok?)	Eating together	Teacher committed to take water to student

T2 Who wants Mediation Teacher committed to give stickers to sticker? students who sang loudly

From the speech acts above, the teacher had their way of committing to some future actions. The teachers’ speech acts above presented that the teachers firstly offered something that would be given or would be taken by them to the students. In other word the teachers used questioning ways of committing to do something and they would complete it with their actions in the future.

3) Expressive

The teacher’ speech acts of expressive class expressed the teachers’ psychological state while they also showed their praises towards students’ action are as follows.

Table 4. Data of Expressive

Source/Person	Teacher’s speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary points
T1	Good girl	Eating together	Teacher praised the students who had opened her mouth to eat the food
	Good	Meditation	Teacher expressed her feeling happy that the student could finish the job well
T1	Ok good	Singing Activity	Teacher praised the student who had song
T2	IhLolisemangat 45 nyanyinya (Loli is so enthusiastic about singing)	Meditations	Teacher felt happy and appreciates to the student who sang loudly and happily

Researcher found that the teacher expressed her psychological states of feeling good or gratitude when the students could show their activities to the teachers. The teachers also like to give appreciation to the students’ action. Moreover, the teacher psychological states or teachers’ feeling of gratitude towards students’ action could be as positive reinforcement to the students.

4) Declaratives

The illocutionary point of declaratives is that its successful performance guarantees the correspondence between the proposition and the world. It means that when speakers produce certain utterances, it matches with world (reality) and the reality also matches with the words. The speakers try to declare something to the learners that the utterance with the reality happens.

Table 5. Data of Declaratives

Source/ person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary Points
T1	Ade has the same card	Card	Teacher just informed that certain student had the same card with her
T3	Deer beginning with D	Coloring	Teacher said that deer began with letter 'D' and the teacher informed it to the students again
T3	Sasykalah (Sasy is lose)	Eating together	Teacher declared that the student was defeated by other students to eat
T2	Finish	Reading WWP	Teacher declared that it was the end of learning activity of reading WWP

From the example, "Ade has the same card" the teacher said what really happened at the time. The teacher was saying that Ade had the same card as she had. At the time Ade was showing and giving his card which was the couple of teacher's card. Then, when the teacher emphasized again that Ade had the couple of her card, this also meant that the teacher informed to the other students what had happened at that time.

5) Directives

Teachers produced speech acts of directives class when they wanted the student to do something intended. The teachers had their ways to show the message of their speech. The teacher did it to achieve their desire that the hearers would commit to future actions. The researcher found that some speech acts of this class had also its types. The teachers of Kindy Club had their ways of producing the speech acts of directives to be able to make the student do something intended. It made the teachers' speech acts of directives class be also categorized into some types of directives. According to Bach and Harnish as cited in Anggreani (2010), directives are requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitive, permissive, and advisories.

The researcher found that directives speech acts of teachers of Kindy Club could be classified more into those types of directives besides the types of directives based on Bach and Harnish. The types of directives class of the teacher are as follows.

a) Directives- Requestives

In this type are performed by the speakers to request the hearers in order to do the actions. The example of this type of directives the teachers of Kindy Club in preschool time are in follows:

Table 6. Data of Directives-Requestives

Source/ Person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary Points
T1	Come on make circle	Opening Activity	Student made circle
T1	Come on join your hands, close your eyes	Opening Activity	Student joined their hand and closed their eyes to pray before starting the activities
T1	Show your fingers	Meditation	Student showed her fingers
T1	Stand up, come on	Singing Activity	Student stood up and got ready to start singing activity
T1	On the wall everybody	Yoga	Student stood up and did the last pose near the wall
T1	Give it to me	Card	Student gave the same card to the teacher
T1	Speak loudly	Meditation	Student mentioned the names of thing loudly

From those examples, the teacher of Kindy Club also used the requisites types of directives class in preschool time. The table showed that the teachers requested the student to do something and the column of illocutionary point has mentioned what were intended by the teachers from their speech.

b) Directives-Questions

In this type of directive class, the teacher intended their utterances to be recognized by the student as reasons for them to answer. So, here, the teacher attempted the students to do something by producing kind of question form of directives. Therefore, the teacher had reason to believe that the hearers might be able to tell them whether or not to proposition. The speech acts of teachers of Kindy Club which were categorizes in this type.

Table 6. Data of Directives-Questions

Source/Person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary Points
T3	How do we speak well?	Lesson	Student listened to the teacher

The speech in Table 6 includes the directive speech act of the question. As seen in the teacher's sentence "How do we speak well?". Through this speech, speakers express sentences using question words to students which are intended so that students can provide information about commendable behavior material, one of which is speaking well to others. In other words, speakers express their desires through these expressions so that students provide information in the form of understanding the contents of the material.

c) Directives-Prohibitive

This category of directives showed that the teachers had reason to believe that the children as the learner should not do the actions. Then, the teacher of Kindy Club had their way to prohibit the children. The teacher sometimes gave warning to the students. The teacher warned the children by also telling what could make the student feel a bit scared. The examples are as follows.

Table 7. Data of Directives-Prohibitive

Source/Person	Teacher's speech acts	Activities	Illocutionary Points
T3	Cepetinsasy, jangandipakekmainangitu (I hurry up sasy, don't play with it)	Eating together	Student stopped playing in dining table
T3	Berhentinangisnya Owe, stop (stop crying Owe, stop)	Crying when meditation	Student stopped crying
T2	Love you friends ya, gabolehgituya, gabolehpukulpukul, saying temenyaya (love your friends, ok? Don't be like that ok? You may not hit, love friends, ok?)	Opening Activity	Student did not hit her friend
T3	Teacher kasihbobysekarangni, kalomasihgini (Teacher bring you to boby now, if you're still like this)	Watching movie	Student stopped sulking
T3	Kaloberdiridisiniyagajadinonton (if you stand up here, we won't watch)		Student moved back and found right position to watch the movie.

In this type of directives there were ways in which the teacher prohibited the students to do something by giving warning to them. The teacher built the thinking of being a bit frightened so that the students were willing to do something that was prohibited.

Conclusion

Referring to the finding and discussion of this study presented in previous chapter, it can be concluded that:

- a. Classes of speech acts used by teachers both in preschool and day care program were representatives, expressive, commissives, directives and declaratives. There were also eight combinations of classes of speech acts which were used by the teachers of Kindy club in preschool and day care namely directives-requestive, directive-questions, and directive-prohibitive.
- b. The teachers (caregivers) of Kindy Club had their ways to use each class of speech acts in preschool and day care program. The *representatives* were used to state teachers' belief, to conclude something, and it was also used as suggestion or foundation on the children mind. The teachers had other ways of using commissive. The teachers used questioning ways of committing to do something to the students, and they also promised to do something for students after doing certain activity. The teachers' speech acts of expressive showed praises towards student's action as positive reinforcement, appreciation towards students action, teachers respect, and also of declaratives as the information to the children because they emphasized what really happened at that time. Teachers mostly used directives classes. It was found that were types of directives which mostly used by the teachers (caregivers), namely: directives-requestives, directives-questions, and directives-prohibitive.
- c. There were speech acts which had more than more than one illocutionary points at the same time. This means that the same speech acts could be used to perform different illocutionary points.

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