



An Analysis of Imperatives Used by the Teacher in EFL-Classroom Interaction in Indonesian Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

The way teachers communicate with students significantly affects the success of learning. Giving imperatives is one of the methods teachers use to communicate with students and enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This research aimed to analyze the imperatives used by teachers in EFL classroom interactions in Indonesian secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative design. The subjects of the research were a representative English teacher and students from class XI IPS at SMAN 3 Enrekang, selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through classroom observations, video recordings, and interviews. The data were then analyzed using an interactive model of data analysis, which included data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings revealed that the teacher used different expressions when giving imperatives during the teaching and learning process, including positive, brief, and negative imperatives. The teacher employed imperatives to manage the classroom and instruct students. The use of imperatives was effective because students generally understood the teacher's expectations, although the teacher sometimes needed to repeat certain imperatives to ensure student compliance. Students were able to grasp the imperatives easily because the teacher usually gave brief instructions. However, when the teacher used a different style of imperative, students sometimes became confused and struggled to respond immediately.

KEYWORDS

Teacher's Imperatives, EFL Classroom Interaction, Teacher Communication, Teacher-Student Interaction

Introduction

Language teaching has become a primary focus in applied linguistics. The teacher, as a fundamental aspect of the teaching and learning process, plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of language education. Formal instruction does not operate in a

vacuum; factors such as the school environment, teacher qualifications, curriculum, and instructional approaches interact to foster student growth in academic skills and knowledge. Empirical evidence strongly suggests that a school's success relies heavily on the quality of the teachers it employs.

Classroom-based research is an effective means of determining whether students are receiving appropriate content instruction. Teachers make decisions about classroom management based on student achievement gains. Thus, research into the relationship between teacher characteristics and student academic performance is essential for informing policies related to teacher qualifications. Aenny (1976) argues that great teachers are defined by their impact on students' achievement scores. Similarly, Kilplinger (1997) proposed that teacher characteristics have a stronger correlation with student achievement than school-related factors.

The specific language used in the classroom is the language of instruction. Willis (1987) highlighted that one of the goals of language teaching is to enable teachers to use English effectively and creatively, specifically in three areas: as a means of interaction, as a tool for classroom organization, and as a way to communicate with students as individuals with lives outside the classroom. Therefore, language is essential for managing classroom interactions.

There are numerous language interactions that occur both inside and outside the classroom. According to Hughes (1990), classroom procedures derived from a specific method must almost always be verbalized. This includes giving instructions, forming groups, setting time limits, issuing imperatives, asking questions, confirming answers, maintaining discipline, and more. One of the key instructions in teacher-student interactions is the use of imperatives.

Teacher imperatives are a vital classroom management tool, functioning as instructional cues that guide students in meeting the teacher's expectations for appropriate behaviour, as well as signalling the beginning and end of activities.

In light of the issues outlined above, this research aims to investigate the common challenges associated with the use of imperatives in the teaching and learning process. The objective of this study is to analyze the imperatives used by teachers in EFL classroom interactions in Indonesian secondary schools.

Research Method

The research employed a qualitative design to analyze the teacher's instructional language, describe types of nonverbal communication, and examine its effects on students in EFL classroom interaction. The subjects of the research included a representative English teacher and students from class XI IPS at SMAN 3 Enrekang, selected through purposive sampling.

To gather the data, the researcher used several instruments, namely classroom observation, video recording, and interviews. The data were analyzed using an interactive model of data analysis, which involved data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusion drawing/verifying (Miles and Huberman, 2013). The data were interpreted and analysed through conversation extracts, where relevant data were identified and discussed. The results were processed based on the framework of imperatives proposed by several experts.

Findings and Discussion

This chapter discusses the research findings and discussion of the findings. The findings are arranged according to the formulation of the problem stated in the introduction. The discussion discusses the description and interpretation of the findings. The researcher conducted three extracts in the study, the following are the extracts.

Extract 1: Reading "Kinds of Text" Politeness Form

1. T : *|Prepare your class first!|*
2. S : *|stand up please!|*
|Say greeting to our teacher!|
4. S : *|sit down please!|*
|let's pray!|
|Finish|
12. T : *|**masih ada ulangnya disana belum di cek .. Please sit with your group, back with your group|***
(Teacher gives students' answer sheet)
|Please answer this question first!|
"There are some books haven't checked yet"
"Please sit with your group, back with your group"
14. T : *|So, each group write your answer on the piece of paper|. |**Di kertas selembah yah ditulis ini yang tiga nomor, dijawab|***
|The text has been studied by you for... many times... itu sudah dipelajari sebelumnya... last semester, semester lalu|
|What is the type the same what is the kind yah... sama kalau pertanyaannya what is the kind of the text| |what is the purposes and what is the generic structure| |Please answer five minutes|

"So, each group write your

answer on the piece of paper" write down on a piece of paper, write down these 3 numbers. Answer!"

"The text has been studied by you for many times" it has been studied before, last semester, last semester".

"What is the type the same what is the kind, same question with what is the kind of the text, what is the purpose and what is the generic structure, Please answer five minutes"

15. SS: *|Yes mam|*
16. T: *|Five minus bisa? @@|*
Five minutes, can you?
17. S: *|insya Allah|*
18. T: *|**sudah pernah mi di... semester lalu ini| |Berulang materinya, materinya diulang di semester dua| |text A and text B is the same| |iya ini ini number six dengan number ten sama ji| |What text that you have learnt before?| |Text yang sudah dipelajari... apa-apa? Can you mention|***

"it has been studied in the last semester, the material is repeated, the material is repeated in semester two" text A and text B is the same, yes, number six and number ten is the same, What text that you have learnt before? What text that you have learnt before? Can you mention?".

24. T: *|Funny story the same with spoof| |**Yang** in the beginning of the semester, **di awal-awal itu** text apa yang kamu pelajari| |Hortatory| |analytical| |report| |ee, what else?| |So, the text .. on the paper in the front of you, what*

is the kind of the text? | **Yang itu yang didepan ta, apa kira-kira?** | **Yang mana kira-kira dari ini** | **Silahkan!** | *Please analyze!* | **Silahkan dianalisa**

: "Funny story is the same with spoof, in the beginning of the semester, what text that you have learnt in the beginning, hortatory, analytical, report, what else? So, the text on the paper in the front of you. what is the kind of the text? What is the text in front of you? Which one? Please analyze!"

In the above extract, a teacher was explaining a lesson in the class. It was about kinds of text, by describing, it can improve many skills of the students, namely, vocabulary, grammar, writing and speaking. At the time, the teacher was giving imperatives, for example, when she said "*prepare your class first*" in turn 1. "*please, sit with your group*" in turn 12. "*Please answer this question first*". In turn 12, then "*each group write your answer on the piece of paper*". In turn 14, "*please analyze*". In turn 24

Based on the above extracts, teacher made some kinds of expressions in giving imperatives. The first imperative "*prepare your class first*" was given because the teacher asked the chairman to prepare the class before beginning, and the other imperative "*please, sit with your group*" was given because the teacher asked the students to do the assignment with their own group. Then, "*Please answer this question first*" was given to ask the students answer the question. The last imperative is "*please analyze*" the teacher asked the students to analyze the material.

The imperatives used by the teacher was related to the statement of

Austin (1962) and Searle (1979). They claimed that we need to include all of these functions in the classificatory schema of speech acts assumed to be part of communicative competence. The utterances above namely, "*please, sit with your group, Please answer this question first, please analyze*" and "*prepare your class first*" have a function. The utterance of please, sit with your group, Please answer this question first, please analyze are imperative by using polite form.

Extract 2: Reading

"Narrative text"

Brief Form

1. S: */stand up please!*
|Say greeting to our teacher!
3. S: *|sit down please!*
|let's pray!
|Finish
- 10.T: *|Now, we learn about a certain text, sudah pernah mi dulu dipelajari... berurung-ulang kalimi| |Memang itu materi memang selalu berulang yah dari dulu sampe kelas tiga nanti berulang lagi, kelas tiga dapat lagi| |Ciri-cirinya pake once upon a time|*

"Now, we learn about a certain text, you have studied repeatedly, you will learn this material until you are in the third grade. The characteristic of this text is using once upon a time".
- 11.S: *|Narrative|*
12. T: *|please write your answer!*
- 13.S: *(students analyze the text)*
- 15.T: *|structure of the text, for example if your answer is narrative, what is the structure of narrative. If your*

answer is spoof, what is the structure of spoof? | **Makanya terakhir ini dikasih karena sudah pernah toh?** | ... | **Yah ini, finished mi tawwa** (student's group name).. *Friends* (student's group name). |

|*The word finished*| (student's group name). |*Time is over*| |*Kamil, your ring is very nice... Finished?*|

|Ee, no asking the other ... group. No cheat|

"structure of the text, for example if your answer is narrative, what is the structure of narrative. If your answer is spoof, what is the structure of spoof? That's why we learn it in the last meeting because we have learnt it before, right? finished (student's group name) *Friends* (student's group name)".

"The word finished (student's group name). Time is over, Kamil, your ring is very nice ... Finished?"

16.S: |*mam, mam, maaaam?*| |**Bahasa Inggrisnya untuk menghibur pembaca, to reading entertain**|
"Mam, How to say in English to entertain the reader?"

17.T: |hemmm|
(Checking students' answer)
|*The others? One* (silent counting), *time is over. Cepat mi!* |
The others? One (silent counting), time is over. Hurry up!

19.T: |**kasih kosong mi saja disini?** |
"Let it blank"

20.S: |**iye', kasih kosong mi saja mam**|
"Yes, Let it blank"

21.T: |*late, you are late*|
|*The friends' please come here*

please, come forward to read your answer|

|*Amar, please read your answer!*|

22.S: |**bacai**|
"read"

The extracts above was taken when the teacher was explaining a lesson in the class. The material was reading. She explained about narrative text. She gave imperatives, for example, when she said "*please write your answer*" in turn 12. "*let it blank*" in turn 19. Based on the above extracts, teacher can make some kinds of ways of giving imperatives. The first imperative "*please write your answer*" was given to make the students write the answer. This is a polite imperative by using "*please*" in the end or beginning of the imperative. The second imperative "*let it blank*" was given to ask the students to continue answering the question. This utterance is an imperative.

This is related to the statement of Morgan (1975), he assumed that directives are the larger speech act type of which requests are a subtype. We can see the utterances above such as: please write your answer, let it blank. They are imperatives but also as requests.

Extract 3: Listening

"Narrative Text"

Negative Imperative

1.T: |*chairman, prepare your class first!*|

2.S: |*stand up please!*|
|*Say greeting to our teacher!*|

|Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh|

3.T: |waalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh|

4.S: |*sit down please!*|

7.T: |**ada juga yang tidak pray, cerita mi, de'pa matu cerita mi.**|

|Morning students!|

“There are some students who don’t pray, just talking with friends, talking in the first beginning”

- 23.T: |today I will give you listening/|
|Delfi, would you please take my pencil/|
|Later, you will not work in group but individual|
|**Jadi yang last last time itu tidak pernah** listening, **nanti textnya** narrative **sama** spoof, **jadi dua teks/|**
|**Soalnya ditulis dulu yah!**|

“today I will give you listening, Delfi, would you please take my pencil, Later, you will not work in group but individual, so, the students who never got listening test, the text are narrative and spoof, so there are two texts, write down the question first”

- 24.SS: (write the questions)
25.T: |please write!| don’t cheat
|finished?|
|**Jadi textnya di listen, didengarkan!**|
|So, even though you don’t understand, the sentence you can answer|
|So, pay attention and carefully to what you hear, what you listen|
|**Diperhatikan soalkan baru dengarkan yah!**|
|While, you listening, pay attention to the choices|
|**Sambil mendengarkan itu dilihat pilihannya!**|
|Finished? |

“please write! don’t cheat finished?”

so, the text must be listened, listen! So, even though you don’t understand, the sentence you can answer|
|So, pay attention and carefully to what you hear, what

you listen, While, you listening, pay attention to the choices while listening see the choices.

“Finished?”

In the above extract, the teacher was explaining a lesson in the class. The material was about narrative text. In this lesson, she taught the students in listening section about narrative text. Then she gave imperative by saying “please write, and don’t cheat” in turn 25. Her utterances proved that she can make some kinds of ways of giving imperatives. The first imperative “please write and don’t cheat” was given as an instruction to write the questions and be honest. The last imperative *Don’t cheat* is a negative imperative. The teacher asked the students stop chatting and to make the students silent or quite.

The utterances above are as imperatives tending an order. It is related to the statement of Coulthard et al., (1981), they stated that expansions are totally dependent on prior units, such that it would be difficult to state the rules for expansions independent of sequentially prior speech acts. Expansions are difficult to differentiate from other units. The last utterance is do not make a noise, the utterance is as imperative but also as account, it is related to the statement of Scott and Lyman (1968), they argued that accounts are causally link to prior actions. The prior action is do not do that.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings above, this section presents a brief explanation of the three to find out the use of teacher expressions in giving commands in the teaching and learning process. In the first excerpt, the teacher uses two commands and both are in polite form. Students are used to this type of

command because it is easy to understand. The teacher always uses polite commands in his teaching because he knows that students need to speak politely in everyday life. This form gives a good attitude to students. In the second excerpt, the teacher uses short commands. Students are easy to understand because they do not need to listen to some words that can confuse them. The teacher always uses short commands in his teaching because he knows that students lack vocabulary; by using short commands students can carry out commands directly, students are very used to the teacher's commands. On the other hand, if the teacher always uses short commands students will face difficulties in various types of commands. Students will also have low motivation in learning English, they will think, understand what the teacher's commands mean to understand English. In this excerpt the teacher uses simple commands that can make students feel comfortable in the learning process because of the use of teacher commands. The teacher also uses polite commands. In the last excerpt, the teacher uses one negative command. He asked students to be honest, do the exercises individually and be confident with their answers. Negative commands can be used to prohibit students if they make mistakes and remind them to stick to the right rules. From these findings, it can be concluded that all of the quotes above are related to the theory of speech acts proposed by Searle (1979). There are five principles in speech acts used by teachers, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. As a result, teachers use commands as part of directives to manage the class and ask students to do something. The teacher's use of

imperatives is effective because students can understand what the teacher expects, although the teacher needs to repeat some imperatives so that students can do it. Students can understand imperatives directly because teachers usually use short imperatives, so if the teacher uses a different imperative style, students will be confused and find it difficult to do it directly.

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