

6th Annual International Conference on TESOL
“Responding to Challenges of Teaching English for Communication”
August 13-15, 2015
SEAMEO RETRAC, Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam

The Use of Speech Acts in Selected Communicative Filipino Language Classes

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Introduction

- Language is primarily used in communication.
- In language teaching one of its purposes is to help learners learn to communicate in the target language.
- In the past, there has been a shift in the trend in language teaching.
- Structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology were the prevailing influences in language teaching (Celce- Murcia, 2006).

Introduction

- Larsen-Freeman (2000) notes that students could produce sentences accurately in a lesson but could not produce them appropriately when genuinely communicating outside of the classroom.
- This means that being able to communicate requires more than linguistic competence; it requires communicative competence – knowing when and how to say what to whom (Hymes, 1971; in Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Introduction

- These observations lead to the shift from linguistic-structure-centered approach to communicative approach (Widdowson, 1990; in Larsen-Freeman, 2000).
- It is claimed that the goal of any language teaching program should be the development of the learners' communicative competence, which is essential in achieving actual use of a language for communication (Savignon, 1983; in The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 2009).

Introduction

- This approach has provided language teachers with techniques for providing comprehensible second-language input to learners: providing supportive nonverbal context, pausing, repeating, and watching for signs of non-comprehension (Tarone & Tedick, 2000).

Introduction

- In theory, a communicative classroom aims to promote interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning.
- Learners should be active in the participation of a meaningful interaction in class (Kumaravadivelu, 1993; in *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 2009).

Introduction

- The theories and definition about communicative language teaching clearly show that its focus has mainly been on learners as well as their learning.
- In other words, learners themselves play the key role in the development and implementation of communicative approach (The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 2009).

Introduction

- Communicative approach acknowledges the interdependence of language and communication.
- As a speaker of a second or foreign language, the value of knowing what speech is appropriate for given situations is clear to the speaker and he/she almost inadvertently keep track of what the preferred things are to say so as not to offend anyone.

Introduction

- Speakers know that successful speaking is not just a matter of using the correct words and forms—but that it means using whatever strategies are necessary for learning what to use them for, when to use them, and how to use them (The intersection of language and culture, n.d).

Introduction

- In the classroom, communication requires students to perform certain functions such as promising, inviting and declining invitations within a social context (Wilkins, 1976 in Larsen-Freeman, 2000).
- These functions are known as speech acts.

Introduction

- Speech acts are functional units of communication (e.g., what is being said).
- Since they take culture into account (e.g., who is being spoken to and in what context) they are an integral part of intercultural communication (The intersection of language and culture, n.d).

Introduction

- Searle (1969, p. 21; in Schiffrin, 1999, p. 55) views speech acts as “the basic unit of communication” and associated speech acts “with the study of language (its production, its interpretation) and meaning (both speaker meaning and linguistic meaning)”.

Introduction

- Schiffrin (1999) notes that “speech act theory developed from the basic belief that language is used to perform actions; thus its fundamental insights focus on how meaning and action are related to language.”

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- Further, research has found that classroom instruction on speech acts can help learners to improve their performance of speech acts and thus their interactions with native speakers. (Pragmatics and Speech Acts, 2015).
- This suggests that in teaching language for communication, lessons on speech acts are important part of language teaching.

Introduction

Theoretical framework

- Larsen-Freeman (2000) listed the principles of Communicative Language Teaching as follows:
 1. Whenever possible. 'authentic language' – language as it is used in a real context – should be introduced

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2. Being able to figure out the speaker's or writer's intention is part of being communicatively competent
3. The target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of the study

Introduction

4. One function may have many different forms. The emphasis is on the process of communication rather than just mastery of language forms
5. Students must work with language at a discourse or suprasentential level (above the sentence). They must learn about cohesion and coherence, those properties of language which bind the sentences together

Introduction

6. Games are important because they have certain features in common with real communicative events – there is a purpose to the exchange, the speaker receives immediate feedback from the listener on whether or not he or she has successfully communicated, having students work in small groups maximizes the amount of communicative practice they receive

Introduction

7. Students should be given an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions
8. Errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills
9. One of the teacher's major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication

Introduction

10. Communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among students. It gives students an opportunity to work on negotiating meaning
11. The social context of communicative event is essential in giving meaning to the utterances
12. Learning to use language forms appropriately is an important part of communicative competence

Introduction

13. The teacher acts as a facilitator in setting up communicative activities and as an advisor during the activities
14. In communicating, a speaker has a choice not only about what to say, but also how to say it

Introduction

15. The grammar and vocabulary that the students learn follow from the function, situational context, and the roles of the interlocutor
16. Students should be given opportunities to listen to language as it is used in authentic communication. They may be coached on the strategies for how to improve their comprehension.

Introduction

- Moreover, illocutionary act is one of the two facets of a speech act; and is defined as “what the speaker does in uttering a sentence” (Parker and Riley; 2000, p.15).
- According to Dayag (1999, p.56), illocutionary act “in recent years has come to be synonymous with speech act.”

Introduction

- Searle (1979) classified illocutionary into five (5) types.
- They are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Introduction

- Representatives are utterances whose aim is to commit the speaker to something being the case.
- In other words, the speaker conveys his belief in the truth of the expressed proposition (Dayag, 1999; Bautista 1979).

Introduction

- Asserting, stating, denying, confessing, admitting, notifying, concluding, predicting (Parker & Riley, 2000), and describing or illustrating an object or thing, giving information such as statistics, facts and figures, identifying or naming something, explaining or clarifying a point, exemplifying or enumerating objects in a series (Dayag, 1999) all fall under representatives.

Introduction

- Directive is the second classification in Searle's (1979) illocutionary acts. It is an utterance in which the speaker tries to get the hearer to do something (Parker & Riley, 2000; Dayag, 1999; Bautista, 1979).
- This type include commanding, begging, pleading, praying, inviting, permitting, advising (Bautista, 1979); and requesting, ordering, forbidding, warning, suggesting, insisting, recommending (Parker & Riley, 2000).

Introduction

- The third type of illocutionary act is commissive.
- This type of illocutionary act commits the speaker to some future course of action or to do something (Bautista, 1979 and Parker & Riley, 2000). This include promise, vow and guarantee (Bautista, 1979); volunteering, offering, pledging, betting (Parker and Riley, 2000).

Introduction

- Next type of illocutionary act is the expressive which is used to express the emotional state of the speaker (Parker & Riley, 2000) or to express the speaker's psychological state about something (Dayag, 1999; Bautista, 1979).
- Expressives include thanking, congratulating, apologizing, condoling, welcoming, deploring (Bautista, 1979).

Introduction

- The last type of illocutionary act is the declaration. In uttering a declaration, the speaker brings about a correspondence between the prepositional content of his utterance and reality (Dayag, 1999; Bautista, 1979).
- Appointing, naming, resigning, baptizing, surrendering, excommunicating and arresting are included in this type of illocutionary act (Parker & Riley, 2000).

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

- This study aimed to find out the answers to the following questions: 1) What CLT Principles are employed by ESL teachers in the elementary level; and 2) How can learners' and teacher's utterances be described in terms of speech acts?

Introduction

Scope and Limitation of the Study

- This study looked for evidences of Communicative Language Teaching in elementary ESL classroom by comparing the principles of CLT with what was actually happening during classroom interaction. It also discussed the taxonomy of speech acts found in Teacher Utterances and Student Utterances.

Introduction

Scope and Limitation of the Study

- However, this study had its limitations regarding the data. It focused only on the teacher's activity and students' activity but not on student to student activity.
- Student to student interactions did not become the focus since they were difficult to capture in the video/audio recording so it could not be transcribed.

Methodology

Data

- The data came from recordings of English as Second Language (ESL) classroom proceedings in two public elementary schools and two private elementary schools southern part of Metro Manila. The grade level of the learners range from grades one to grade six.

Methodology

Data Gathering Procedure

- Observations were recorded, compiled and transcribed by the author.
- After transcribing, the transcripts were divided into T-units to facilitate tabulation.

Methodology

- According to Hunts (1970; in Reynolds, 1993), “the basic result of using T-units is to separate conjoined sentences into two independent clauses while leaving the complex sentences as one.” The T-units were then counted and tabulated for comparison.
- After dividing the data into T-units, the individual units in the transcripts were marked according Searle’s (1979) taxonomy of illocutionary acts.

Methodology

- But since the transcript (written) was based on actual speech situation, the author made some modifications because the interaction was context-dependent.
- Aside from the T-units, fragments/utterances whose meaning might derived from context were also counted in tabulating the speech acts.

Methodology

- Incomprehensible utterances whose meaning could not be derived from context were not included in the counting of the speech acts as well as those utterances with similar meaning as the previous utterances (repetition).

Methodology

Data Analysis

- For evidences of Communicative Language Teaching in elementary ESL classes, the principles of CLT enumerated by Larsen-Freeman were charted.
- Then the author observed carefully what was happening in the recordings.
- What the researcher observed in the recordings was compared to the principles.

Methodology

- If a principle was observed in the recordings, it was marked with a check; cross, if other wise.
- Then the check marks were counted and added.

Methodology

- For speech acts, simple frequency count was done to the T-units and sentence fragments/utterances.
- The speech acts were classified according to the taxonomy given by Searle (1969).
- After tabulating the speech acts, the data were analyzed according to their classification.

Results and Discussion

CLT Principles in ESL Classrooms

- After analyzing the recordings, the researcher came up with the following results as presented in Table 1.
- [Link to Table 1](#)

Results and Discussion

- There is little evidence that CLT is used in the elementary ESL classrooms because of the following reasons:

Results and Discussion

1. None of the videos shows the use of authentic language in their classroom teaching. All lessons are based on textbooks and other teaching materials.
2. Only video three shows that the students were able to grasp most of the teacher's intention.

Results and Discussion

3. In all the videos, the target language is used as the object of the study not as a vehicle for classroom communication. This is shown by teaching the rules of grammar and having students produce sentences according to rules. Some videos also show drill patterning.
4. As seen in the videos, only one form of language is used to convey meaning. The teachers prescribe what the student has to say to answer the questions.

Results and Discussion

5. None of the videos show that students work at language in the suprasentential level because the language used in the interaction is controlled by the teacher. Students' answers are limited from sentence fragments to one or two sentences.
6. Only video two incorporated games in the lesson.

Results and Discussion

7. None of the videos show that students were allowed to express their opinions and ideas in the class since teachers only ask convergent/factual/recall questions. There is only a limited response on the part of the students. The only time students have the turn to speak is when they answer the questions asked by the teacher. Higher order thinking skills which are developed by divergent questions is not shown.

Results and Discussion

8. All the videos show that errors were not tolerated. Teachers immediately correct errors by providing feedback/corrections and by giving the initial part of the sentence to be completed by the students.

Results and Discussion

9. None of the teachers in the video established situations likely to promote communication because lessons are text-book based and are highly structural.
10. Only two videos show that there was a communicative interaction which encouraged cooperative relationship among the learners. The other two videos provided tasks but these were intended for individual learners.

Results and Discussion

11. All the videos show that teachers did not provide social context of the communicative event. The students' responses were only limited to answer the teacher's questions.
12. All videos show that teachers focus heavily on language forms either by explicitly stating the rules of grammar or by providing corrections to the errors made by the students.

Results and Discussion

13. Only video two shows that the teacher acted as facilitator and advisor during the activities.

Results and Discussion

14. The videos show that learners were not given much chance to say what they want to say because they were only expected to answer the question of the teacher. They were not also given the chance to say things the way they want to say it because teachers provide them the initial part of the sentence which students are expected to complete

Results and Discussion

15. None of the videos show that the grammar and vocabulary that students learn follow the function, situation context, and the roles of the interlocutor because the textbook is the primary source of their vocabulary. Functions, situation context and the roles of the interlocutors are not explicitly taught as seen in the videos.

Results and Discussion

16. Finally, none of the videos show that opportunities to listen to authentic language as it is used in communication. As previously mentioned, the focus is on the structure of the language and not on its use.

Results and Discussion

- Based on the principles outlined by Larsen-Freeman (2000), the most common principle employed by ESL teachers in elementary is the twelfth principle of CLT which states that learning to use language forms appropriately is an important part of communicative competence.

Results and Discussion

- All the teachers focused on the grammatical or linguistic competence (Savignon, 1983 in Celce-Murcia, 2006). Grammatical competence is just one of the four important components of communicative competence outlined by Savignon (1983).

Results and Discussion

- Other competencies include discourse competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence which are not given emphasis during the classroom observation.

Results and Discussion

- Results of the study show that there is minimal evidence that Communicative Language Teaching is employed in elementary ESL classes.

Results and Discussion

RQ2 Table 2 Speech Acts in Teacher and Students Interactions

Results and Discussion

- In video one, the number of times the learners performed speech acts was almost three-fourths as that of the teacher.
- Among the data gathered based on the transcript of the videos, only video one has a close number of teacher-student interaction although generally, it is still teacher dominated.

Results and Discussion

- The teacher also performed representatives to state facts and to clarify points in the lesson.
- The teacher also performed expressive speech acts to congratulate the students for stating the correct answers.

Results and Discussion

- Students performed more representatives such as stating facts and giving answers to the questions of the teacher.
- The teacher performed more directives in the classroom interactions such as asking questions that require students' answers.

Results and Discussion

- In video two, the teacher dominated the classroom interaction.
- Her speech acts were primarily involved representatives to clarify and to explain her points.
- She also explicitly stated rules of grammar.

Results and Discussion

- Her speech acts also involved representatives which are composed mainly of wh-questions to elicit answers from the students.
- She also used expressive to congratulate students for answering the questions correctly.
- Students in video two performed representatives to repeat and to agree to the information given by the teacher.

Results and Discussion

- In video three, the teacher dominated the classroom interaction.
- She performed directives to get the students to answer questions and to ask students to write information either on their paper or on the board.

Results and Discussion

- When students answer the questions correctly or had successfully completed the task, the teacher performed expressive to congratulate the students by saying 'very good.'
- Students' level of participation in the lesson included responding to yes/no questions posted by the teacher, following teacher's instructions and directions and repetition of the teacher's examples.

Results and Discussion

- In video four, the teacher manipulated majority of the interaction.
- She did this by using a number of directives in the form of questions, and physical activities that require movements, and commands to involve young learners.

Results and Discussion

- She also performed representatives to give information to her learners.
- When students are able to answer questions or do the expected task, the teacher congratulates the students by saying 'very good.'
- Congratulating is kind of expressive speech act.

Results and Discussion

- The teacher also performed two commissive speech acts by promising that she will perform something for the students.
- She also made declarations by saying that the pictures which were identified correctly by the learners are theirs for keeps.
- Most speech acts performed by the learners were representatives to repeat what the teacher has told them to say.

Results and Discussion

- Generally, the teacher dominated majority of the classroom interaction.
- Majority of the speech acts performed by the teachers were directives to asks questions or command tasks.

Results and Discussion

- Speech acts under directives were done to encourage students' participation by answering questions or performing physical tasks.

Results and Discussion

- Teachers used representatives to state and explain rules of grammar, clarify and exemplify points given.
- Teachers often used expressive to commend students for answering questions correctly and for performing the expected task well.

Results and Discussion

- Teachers provided only limited situations to encourage the use of representatives, directives, expressive and commissives.
- These speech acts are performed in day-to-day interactions in situations both in and outside of the classroom.

Results and Discussion

- Communication's purpose of negotiating for meaning is overlooked because the objectives of the teachers are towards accuracy and not language use

Results and Discussion

- Results of the study show that there is a link between the classroom approach and speech acts as reflected in the observations in the four videos.

Results and Discussion

- The teachers in the videos subscribe to a more traditional classroom approach in elementary ESL classes such as the audio-lingual and the grammar translation approaches which are either subject or teacher centered which is a direct contrast with Communicative Language Teaching which is learner-centered.

Results and Discussion

- Lazaraton (n.d. in Celce-Murcia) noted that in teaching the oral skills, the teaching of speech acts is part of the informal conversational rules such as opening and closing a conversation, introducing and addressing people, giving invitations, expressing thanks, apologizing, complimenting, getting attention and interrupting, agreeing and disagreeing, controlling the conversation, and getting information.

Results and Discussion

- There are no evidences in the videos that these speech acts are taught.
- Since the teachers in the videos applied traditional classroom approaches, none of them used role-playing which is considered to be one of the major classroom activities in Communicative Language Teaching.

Results and Discussion

- In role playing, speech acts taught and learned are applied.
- In the same activity, other communicative competencies are also taught, not just grammatical or linguistic competence.

Results and Discussion

- As teachers learn more about how people behave in real life and how their behavior is encoded in speech (by accumulating research on speech acts and different varieties of English for example) they will be in a better position to teach and design materials based on authentic language and communication patterns (Lazaraton, n.d. in Celce-Murcia, 2006.).

Conclusion

- Teachers are one of the factors in language teaching and learning.
- In school, teachers are one of the primary sources for language input (Richards & Rogers, 2001) for students in terms of communication and interaction.

Conclusion

- In order to promote Communicative Language Teaching, teachers must have a full understanding of the concept and application of CLT.
- He/she must think of ways to encourage communication among students by acting as facilitator/co-communicator and by providing tasks that require the use of language.

Conclusion

- He/she must be familiar with the techniques and strategies in language teaching and apply them as he/she sees as appropriate.
- In addition, familiarity with learners' interests and knowledge of engaging activities for them is important in creating meaningful classroom experiences.

Conclusion

- Since language may have the same function but come in different forms, teachers should not limit or prescribe students' response to a particular form.
- Teachers must put value to the learners' experiences by allowing them to make their own choices in terms of the forms they want to use for a particular function.

Conclusion

- Teachers should be able to relate language form and function to social context by simulating real life situation where authentic language is used.
- These situations and task must be applicable to situations even outside the classroom.

Conclusion

- For language teachers who want to employ the Communicative Language Teaching approach, s/he should not only focus on one component of communicative competence.
- Instead, there should be equal attention given to the four communicative competencies to ensure that language is used in a meaningful context.

Recommendation

- This paper attempted to answer the questions on the evidences of Communicative Language Teaching in elementary ESL classroom and the speech acts involved in classroom interaction.
- However, this paper has some limitations and is open for further investigation.

Recommendation

- The author recommends that more recordings be gathered to find out the extent of the Communicative Language Teaching in a particular district/division.
- He also suggests that more videos of the same teacher be recorded over a longer period of time to see the consistency of his/her learning methodologies.

Recommendation

- Lastly, he recommends that the interaction between and among the students be given attention during the recording of the classroom proceedings to give a more accurate picture of what transpires inside the classroom.

Thank you!

Maraming salamat!