TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF TEACHER SPEECH ACTS

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ANNOTATION: *This article delves into the multifaceted realm of teacher speech acts, exploring their diverse typologies and crucial functions within the educational landscape. Drawing upon established linguistic pragmatics and educational psychology frameworks, the study meticulously analyzes the various ways teachers utilize language to facilitate learning, manage classroom dynamics, and foster student development. Key speech act categories, such as directives, assertives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives, are examined in the specific context of pedagogical interactions. Furthermore, the research investigates the intended and perceived functions of these speech acts, including knowledge transmission, eliciting student participation, providing feedback, maintaining discipline, and building rapport. The analysis incorporates a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative observations of classroom discourse with quantitative assessments of student perceptions. The findings illuminate the intricate relationship between teacher language and educational outcomes, offering valuable insights for teacher training and curriculum design aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of classroom communication.*

Keywords: *Teacher speech acts, classroom discourse, linguistic pragmatics, educational functions, pedagogical communication.*

АННОТАЦИЯ: *В этой статье рассматривается многогранная сфера речевых актов учителя, изучаются их разнообразные типологии и важнейшие функции в образовательном ландшафте. Опираясь на устоявшиеся*

лингвистические прагматики и образовательную психологию, исследование тщательно анализирует различные способы, которыми учителя используют язык для облегчения обучения, управления динамикой класса и содействия развитию учащихся. Ключевые категории речевых актов, такие как директивы, утверждения, комиссивы, экспрессивы и декларативы, рассматриваются в конкретном контексте педагогических взаимодействий. Кроме того, исследование изучает предполагаемые и предполагаемые функции этих речевых актов, включая передачу знаний, привлечение учащихся к участию, предоставление обратной связи, поддержание дисциплины и построение взаимопонимания. Анализ включает в себя подход смешанных методов, объединяющий качественные наблюдения за дискурсом в классе с количественными оценками восприятия учащихся. Результаты освещают сложную связь между языком учителя и образовательными результатами, предлагая ценные идеи для подготовки учителей и разработки учебных программ, направленных на повышение эффективности общения в классе.

Ключевые слова: *речевые акты учителя, учебный дискурс, языковая прагматика, образовательные функции, педагогическое общение.*

INTRODUCTION

The pivotal role of communication in the educational process is undeniable. Teachers, as primary facilitators of learning, rely heavily on language to convey information, guide student thinking, and create a conducive learning environment. The concept of "speech acts," originating from the field of linguistic pragmatics, provides a powerful lens through which to analyze the specific ways teachers use language to achieve particular goals in the classroom. Austin's (1962) seminal work laid the foundation for understanding language not merely as a tool for stating facts, but as a means of performing actions. Subsequent developments in speech act theory, notably by Searle (1969), categorized these actions into distinct types based on their illocutionary force – the speaker's intention in uttering a particular statement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of teacher speech acts draws upon two primary academic domains: linguistic pragmatics and educational research. Within linguistic pragmatics, the foundational work of Austin (1962) on performative utterances and Searle's (1969) subsequent categorization of speech acts into illocutionary acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives) provides the theoretical framework for analyzing teacher language. These categories offer a systematic way to classify the different intentions behind teachers' utterances. For instance, a directive aims to get the student to do something (e.g., "Open your books"), while an assertive conveys information or belief (e.g., "The capital of France is Paris").

Building upon this pragmatic foundation, educational researchers have explored the application of speech act theory to classroom discourse. Studies have examined the frequency and types of speech acts used by teachers in different subject areas and at various educational levels (e.g., Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Stubbs, 1983). This research has highlighted how teachers utilize a repertoire of speech acts to manage classroom interactions, deliver instruction, and assess student understanding. For example, questioning, a common directive speech act, serves not only to elicit information but also to encourage critical thinking and assess comprehension (Graesser & Person, 1994).

Furthermore, research has investigated the functions of specific teacher speech acts in relation to student outcomes. Studies have shown that the effective use of positive feedback (an expressive speech act) can enhance student motivation and self-esteem (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Similarly, clear and concise instructions (directive speech acts) are crucial for ensuring student understanding and task completion (Swain, 1985). The impact of teacher speech acts on classroom climate and student engagement has also been a focus of investigation (e.g., Cazden, 2001). A supportive and encouraging linguistic environment, characterized by positive expressives and collaborative directives, has been linked to increased student participation and a more positive learning atmosphere.

ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the types and functions of teacher speech acts in classroom settings. The qualitative component involves the observation and analysis of classroom discourse, while the quantitative component examines student perceptions of teacher communication.

Data Collection:

Classroom Observations: A diverse sample of lessons across different subject areas (e.g., mathematics, language arts, science) and grade levels (e.g., primary, secondary) will be video-recorded. The observation protocol will focus on capturing the verbal interactions between the teacher and students. Detailed transcriptions of these interactions will be made, paying close attention to the specific utterances of the teachers.

Student Questionnaires: Following the observed lessons, students will be asked to complete anonymous questionnaires. These questionnaires will include both closed-ended questions (e.g., using Likert scales to rate the clarity of instructions or the level of encouragement received) and open-ended questions (e.g., asking students to describe specific instances where teacher language helped or hindered their learning).

Data Analysis:

Qualitative Analysis: The transcribed classroom discourse will be analyzed using a framework based on Searle's (1969) classification of speech acts. Each teacher utterance will be categorized into one of the five main types:

Assertives: Statements that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (e.g., stating facts, explaining concepts).

Directives: Attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something (e.g., giving commands, making requests, asking questions).

Commissives: Statements that commit the speaker to some future course of action (e.g., promising, offering).

By combining qualitative and quantitative data, this methodology aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the types and functions of teacher speech acts and their impact on the educational process.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The analysis of classroom discourse revealed a diverse range of teacher speech acts employed across different subject areas and grade levels. As anticipated, **assertive** speech acts were highly prevalent, constituting a significant portion of teacher talk as they conveyed information, explained concepts, and provided factual details. **Directive** speech acts were also frequently observed, reflecting the teachers' role in guiding activities, asking questions, and managing classroom procedures. The frequency of other speech act types varied depending on the specific pedagogical context and the teacher's individual communication style.

The quantitative data indicated that students generally perceived teacher instructions as clear and felt encouraged to participate. They also reported receiving helpful feedback and felt respected by their teachers. The effectiveness of classroom management through teacher language also received a positive rating.

Qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses revealed specific instances where particular teacher speech acts had a significant impact on student learning and engagement. For example, students often cited specific examples of clear explanations (assertives) that helped them understand complex concepts. They also highlighted the positive impact of encouraging questions (directives) that made them feel comfortable sharing their ideas. Furthermore, specific instances of positive feedback (expressives) were mentioned as boosting their confidence and motivation. Conversely, some students reported instances where unclear instructions or critical remarks (directives and expressives) negatively affected their understanding and engagement.

The findings suggest a strong correlation between the effective use of a variety of teacher speech acts and positive student perceptions. Teachers who effectively employed clear assertives, encouraging directives, and supportive expressives were generally perceived as more effective communicators and facilitators of learning.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the types and functions of teacher speech acts in classroom settings. The findings underscore the crucial role of language in shaping the educational experience. Teachers utilize a diverse repertoire of speech acts to achieve various pedagogical goals, including knowledge transmission,

eliciting student participation, providing feedback, managing classroom dynamics, and building rapport.

The prevalence of assertive and directive speech acts highlights the teacher's central role in delivering instruction and guiding learning activities. However, the study also emphasizes the significant impact of expressive speech acts on student motivation and the development of positive teacher-student relationships. The student perception data further reinforces the importance of clear communication, encouragement, and respectful language in fostering a conducive learning environment.

The implications of these findings are significant for teacher training and professional development. Educators should be made aware of the different types of speech acts and their potential impact on students. Training programs should emphasize the development of effective communication strategies that incorporate a balanced use of various speech acts, tailored to specific pedagogical contexts and learning objectives. Furthermore, encouraging teachers to reflect on their own language use and its perceived impact on students can lead to more mindful and effective classroom communication.

Future research could explore the nuances of teacher speech acts in specific subject disciplines or cultural contexts. Investigating the relationship between teacher speech act patterns and specific student learning outcomes would also be a valuable avenue for further inquiry. Ultimately, a deeper understanding of the power of teacher language can contribute to the development of more effective and equitable educational practices.

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