

The Interdependency of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts in Classroom Discourse

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Abstract

This study examined the existence of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts in classroom discourse. The inseparability of direct and indirect speech acts were explored through elliptical elicitation, elliptical representatives, explanatives, directives and other discourse acts from the continuous delivery mechanisms and reception of the classroom participants in lesson cooperative, interactive and student-focused discourses. Through qualitative approach, the study used empirical data from two selected secondary schools in Lagos State. The method of gathering data was observation. Two schools (Debest International Colleges and Ransom Kuti Memorial School, Yaba) were used. Two subjects (Chemistry and Government) were also selected through simple random technique. The sample population was taken from students and teachers from the selected secondary schools. The total number of students from the selected secondary school was 450 and the selected number of teachers was 2. These constituted our sample population. The researcher tape-recorded lessons from two subjects in the selected secondary schools, listened to them, extracted the excerpts and analysed them using Jefferson's (2004) transcription convention. Frequency count was used to determine the number of acts prevalent in each lesson. The study confirmed that there is the existence of interdependency of direct and indirect speech in classroom discourses.

Keywords: Discourse participants, The Speech Act Theory, interdependency, classroom discourse

1.1 Introduction

Classroom discourse has been a subject of interest to very many scholars such as Dalglish et al (2011), Osisami et.al (2005), Blook and Pouriran (2009), Cazdens (2001), (Siddiqui 2005), Osipeju (2009), Kaplan (2007), McMillan (2001, Carter and Nuana (2007), Upadhya and Singh (2008) Cottrel (2001), Woolf (2009), Maduekwe (2007), Oakes, and Lipton (2007), Zhang (2008) and Palmer (2007). The interest in classroom discourse is borne out of the fact that classroom life is crucial in shaping man's future. On the one hand, if classroom discourse is well organised and exhibited all the participants will benefit positively from it. On the other hand, if it is disorganised and mishandled, classroom discourse beneficiaries (especially the students) may become useless to themselves and the society at large. Therefore, it is pertinent to do everything possible to organise and exhibit classroom discourse appropriately.

Classroom discourse is also known as classroom interaction; it is the lesson taken directly as the teacher stands before his/her class and delivers the lesson. Lessons are replete with direct and indirect speech acts and many discourse analysts such as Olateju, (2004), Dairo and Onadeko (2008) and Osisanwo (2003) have been interested in direct and indirect speech acts over the years. Direct speech act contains only one speech act (function) while indirect speech act has more than one interpretation. Interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts is the inseparability of two acts (direct and indirect speech acts). It is obvious that once there is an indirect speech act, automatically, there is first of all, the direct act before the indirect act or acts.

This paper establishes the existences of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts in classroom discourse. The classroom participants (especially the teachers), consistently and continuously use both direct and indirect speech acts in classroom discourses. To the best of my knowledge, no serious and comprehensive work has been done on the inseparability of direct and indirect speech act before now. Therefore, this work will be beneficial to the classroom participants and researchers.

2.1 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Speech acts are actions done by people through utterances. Yule (2010) explains that they are actions performed by a speaker with an utterance. Speech acts can be direct, indirect and interdependent. Direct speech acts perform only one act (function) while the indirect speech acts perform more than one speech act. Dairo and Onadeko's (2008) observe that the speech act is direct "when the various structural types are used to perform their normal functions" and indirect "when a statement is used as a question or a question is used as a command". Dairo and Onadeko (2008) explanation of indirect speech act seems to be an affirmation of Searle's definition of indirect speech acts. According to Searle (1975 cited in Nicolas and Alex 2001) an indirect speech act is an utterance in which one speech act is performed indirectly by performing another. Viewing indirect speech act in another dimension, Finnegan (2004) maintains that an indirect act is the one that normally violates the cooperative principle (CP) but indirectly cooperative. He identifies the characteristics of indirect speech acts (INDSA) as follows:

- i. Indirect speech act violates at least one maxim of the CP;
- ii. The literal meaning of the locution of an INDSA differs from its intended meaning;
- iii. Hearers (Hs) and Readers (Rs) identify INDSA by noticing that an utterance has character (i) (i.e. violates at least one maxim) and by assuming that the interlocutor is following the CP and
- iv. As soon as the Hs and Rs have identified an INDSA, they identify its intended meaning with the help of knowledge of the context and of the world around them.

Contrasting Finnegan's view, Showman and Biehler (cited in Finnegan, 2004) observe that there are instances where indirect speech acts do not violate any maxim as in law court, church and even classrooms. The participants are urged to understand appropriate

application of Indirect Speech Act (INDSA). The maxims, they maintain, can be used without violation if relevance, orderliness and truthfulness are applied.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Austin's (1962) The Speech Act Theory as its theoretical framework. The aspect of The Speech Act Theory that is relevant for this work is the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is the function or functions performed by speech acts. Classroom discourse of direct, indirect and the interdependency of direct and indirect speeches are suitably identified using The Speech Act Theory. It is quite relevant in identifying, analysing, evaluating, assessing and doing other serious businesses with classroom discourses. In other words, Austin's classification model is suitable for any type of research work in the classroom discourse. Although there are recent works on The Speech Act Theory such as the work of Allan (1986), Austin's Speech Act Theory is suitable and relevant to this work; therefore it is adopted and its detailed explanation is presented below.

2.4 The Speech Act Theory

The Speech Act Theory began with two philosophers, John Austin and John Searle. They developed this theory from the basic insight that language is used not just to describe the world, but also to perform a range of other actions (Schiffrin, 1994). The Speech act or the act of speaking becomes a reality because someone performs the act of speaking. Austin explains that in every utterance, the speaker states a fact, denies or confirms something; makes a prediction, gives advice, or commands or asks questions.

It is worth stating that a series of lectures compiled by Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) is acknowledged as the first presentation of what has come to be known as the Speech Act Theory. He propounds two major types of speech act: the performatives and the constatives. He starts by explaining that some utterances seem to lack what it takes to be the property of statements (i.e. what he calls a truth-value). He observes that such statements that lack truth-value can neither "describe nor report" anything nor the uttering of such be described as saying something. These types of utterances, he calls performatives. He distinguishes performatives from constatives (declarative statements) whose truth or falsity can be judged). Performatives are utterances that are said to be felicitous or non felicitous (i.e. happy or unhappy) whereas constatives are utterances known to be true or false.

There is always confusion in demarcating performatives from constatives. Austin also considers utterances by shifting emphasis from both performatives and constatives to utterances. The emphasis on utterances is the "issuing of the utterances and not on utterances per se". All utterances, he maintains, perform speech acts and these comprise a locutionary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act. A locutionary act is the production of the sounds and words that are meaningful; an illocutionary act is the conventional communicative force, the action achieved by "saying a word" while a perlocutionary act is the actual effect achieved by saying. For example, if a man says to a lady that she should not worry that when he returns overseas he will marry the lady. The locutionary act is the fact that the man makes a meaningful sentence to a lady. The illocutionary act is the steps he takes to approach the lady and the promise he makes

while a perlocutionary act is the feeling of hope that the lady expresses. She is optimistic that one day she will be married. This study is concerned with the illocutionary acts.

These acts produce a total speech act that is studied in the total speech situation. The words used in some instances are to be explained by the context in which they are designed to be or have been actually spoken in a linguistic interchange (Schriffin 1994).

Seale (1975) builds his Speech Acts upon Austin's work. He introduces ideas that provide basic ideas for the application of The Speech Act Theory to discourse; although he insists on the claim that conversation is governed by constitutive rules.

Also, in his work in (1969), Searle maintains that, "the Speech Act is the basic unit of communication". This notion places speech acts at the crux of the study of language, meaning and communication. Again, Searle's principle of expressibility: what can be meant can be said, allows the integration of speech act theory into linguistic theory. The consequences of the principles of expressibility are highlighted in Searle's words:

The principle of expressibility enables us to equate rules for performing speech acts with rules for uttering certain linguistic elements, since for any possible speech act, there is a possible linguistic element, the meaning of which (given the context of utterance) is sufficient to determine that its literal utterance is a performance of precisely that speech act.

Searle's distinction of utterances into speech acts is very similar to those proposed by Austin. The uttering of words (Searle calls morphemes and sentences) is an utterance act. Prepositional acts are called referring and predicating acts while illocutionary acts are acts like stating, commanding and promising.

Illocutionary acts constitute the rules that are responsible for speech acts. Searle calls this special type of rule, constitutive rule. Searle believes that constitutive rules create and define new forms of behaviours. He also observes that apart from being rule-governed, illocutionary acts are intentional; they have names and are what the speaker (S) is doing with words in relation to the hearer (H).

The perlocutionary acts are the consequences of illocutionary acts (i.e. the effects of actions, thought and beliefs of hearer. The illocutionary act that is subject to conditions and rules is central to Searle's framework. Searle classifies illocutionary acts into five basic types namely; representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declaration. REPRESENTATIVE: The speaker is committed to the truth of a proposition, e.g. believe, affirm conclude, deny and report. DIRECTIVE: The speaker tries to get the listener to do something as in challenging, asking questions, commanding, insisting and requesting. COMMISSIVE: The speaker is committed to a certain course of action as in pledging, promising, swearing and guaranteeing. EXPRESSIVE: The speaker expresses an attitude about a state of affairs such as apologizing, deploring, thanking, welcoming and congratulating. DECLARATION: The speaker alters the condition or external status of an object or situation such as in uttering the following: I resign, I hereby declare. You're fired and I baptize.

Besides these, other scholars such as Sinclair and Coulthard (1995) classify illocutionary acts into five classes. These are representatives (e.g. assertions), directives (e.g. requests), commissives (e.g. promises), expressives (e.g. thanks) and declarations (e.g. appointing).

Furthermore, Allan (1986) classifies illocutionary acts into two major parts: interpersonal

illocutionary acts and declaratory illocutionary acts. Interpersonal acts have subgroups namely; constatives, predictives, commissives, acknowledgement, directives and interpersonal authority. Declarative illocutionary acts also have subgroups and these are effectives and verdictives.

This study focuses on the illocutionary act (and not locutionary and perlocutionary acts). The reasons for my choice are that illocutionary acts are suitable for the analysis of the data and that they are core acts for any discourse in classroom situations such as direct speech acts, indirect speech acts and the interdependent speech acts.

3.1 Data Presentation 1 (Government): Excerpt from Duties and Obligations of a Citizen.

<p>T: (A) We want to bring this topic to an end (B) We have treatedalmost () (C) We look at duties and obligations of a citizen (D) Who can tell the definition of a duty? S: (E) Duties are.....as a members if a State T: (F) Thank you. (G) Someone think (sic) there is no different between duties and obligation (H) That is for the lay man. (I) There, we are going to look at duties and obligation of a citizen to a nation (J) Who can attempt a definition of a duty of a citizen? (K) Yes! Yewa (L) Duties, duties of a citizen are what is (sic) expected of a member [of a State S: (M) [of a State T: (N) as a member of a State</p>	<p>(O) Thank you (P) Yes, Alimako is that what you wanted to say (Q) So put it in your own way (R) The way you want to say (S) Let it come out from you also (T) What is a duty of a citizen? Ss: (U) Duties of a citizen are those things that are expected of a citizen to do T: (V) I mean examples of a duties (sic) of a citizen (W) Yes, Michael S: (X) To be an ambassador of a country anywhere he is T: (Y) What about obligation? (Z) Obligation of a citizen (A1) Obligation, obligation, Yes obligation (A2) Adeyanju, Adeyemi, Adeyanju Ss: (A3) To abide by..... T: (A4) Okay, the principle of a rule of law is to abide by the law (A5) ehe, eh, you</p>
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3.2 Data Analysis on Duties and Obligation of a Citizen

This excerpt opens with (A), a focus which acts as a directive . This helps the students to know the progress of their lesson. It summarises the previous lessons and sets the students ready for a new topic. (B) is an incomplete elicitation which cannot be comprehended in isolation except (C) is uttered. (C) is an explanative summary of the previous lesson; it also acts as a reminder to the students. In order to ensure that the students participate in the discourses, the teacher issues an elicitation in (D). This also acts as a demand or a request intending to solicit answer from the students. One of the students attempts to answer the question ,(D), by offering an incomplete elicitation in (E). This necessitates the teacher to now issue an expressive in (F) in order to motivate the student who responded in (D). The expressive nature of (F) is not detachable for its motivational purpose, hence the interdependent speech act. Again the teacher utters a

representative in G, (a direct speech act). (H) is equally interdependent as it offers two non-separate interpretations: one, denotatively, as ignorant people and two, connotatively, as the definition of duties and obligation for the layman. (I) is interdependent, its possible meanings are: one, what the citizens are expected to do and two, what the classroom participants were considering in the classroom at that specific time. Again, the utterance, “there” at the initial position of (I) is quite confusing and ambiguous. There is no correlation between it and the utterance before and after it; it is quite odd.

Another transaction opens in (J) where the teacher makes a request and asks a question. The students do not respond readily and this necessitates him to utter (K). This functions as an elliptical elicitation, a nominative and a directive (inseparability between the direct and indirect acts). (L) is an explanative and a response to (K). The students respond in (M) and this ensures the attainment of their full participation. The teacher now repeats (L) in (N) in an incomplete representative. He further utters (O) which functions as an expressive that is motivational in nature. (P) is an elliptical elicitation, a nominative and a “requestive” elicitation. The teacher also encourages the students to be independent by issuing (Q). This functions denotatively and connotatively. Denotatively to mean, the way you work (which is not related to this context) and connotatively to mean, the way you understand it. This is also interdependent in nature.

Having encouraged the student to be independent, he (the teacher) gives a follow up elicitation and an explanative in (R) to assist the student he nominates in (Q). (S) is an indirect repetition of (R), an imperative and a demand. The teacher now asks a question in (T) which also acts as a request from the students to provide answers. One of the students responses in (U) and this functions as a response (a direct speech act). The use of the utterance, “those things” renders the utterance, ambiguous. “Those things” may stand for activities, duties or things generally. (V) is an emphatic representative as well as an imperative used in order to ensure that the students respond to the imperative , he utters in (W). (W) is an elliptical elicitation as well as a nominative. The student obliges to the demand in (x). This functions as an elliptical representative and an attempted response. The teacher is unsatisfied with the student’s response and this necessitates (Y) which is an elliptical follow up elicitation and an imperative. (Z) and (A1) are elliptical representatives. (A2) is a nominative, (A3) an affirmative representative, (A4) an elliptical flip flop and (A5) an incomplete representative (direct speech act),

A total of thirty-one (31) speech acts were used by the classroom participants in Government lesson, of which fourteen were direct speech acts (B, E, G, M, N, O, R U, Z, A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5; nine were indirect speech acts (A,C,D,L,P,J,V,W and X) and eight were interdependent speech acts (F,H, I, J, K, Q, S and Y). The study establishes that there is the existence of the interdependent speech acts. These interdependent speech acts are quite ambiguous because they have two or more interpretations: the direct speech act and the embedded non-separate indirect speech acts.

3.3. Data Presentation 2 (Chemistry): Excerpt from Carbon and its Allotropes

<p>T: (A) Carbon and its allotropes (B) = Carbon is one of the non – metals (Rep) (C) = It occurs as diamond and graphite (Rep) (D) = It occurs in form of wh[at?] (E) =[Diamond (F) It exhibits the phenomenon of [allotropy</p> <p>S: (G) [Allotropy T: (H) =That is, it can exist in various forms in the same physical state (I) that is the ability to have earlier() (J) = to return form. earlier form. (K) We have crystalline allotrope and non-allotrope (L) = which one is the crystalline allotrope? (M) carbon dioxide, monoxide and diamond (N) These are crystalline allotropy (O) = and non crystalline allotropy (P) = We have charcoal (Q) = We have coal (R) = We have lamp black (S) =We have carbon black (T) =We have animal charcoal (U) We have black charcoal (V) Then the diamond (W) = Diamond is the hardest substance known on earth (X) = Diamond is very very hard (Y) =that is why it cannot cut any other thing on this world (Z) = unless you use diamond to cut, cut diamond (A1) = And diamond is useful in drilling industries (A2) = they use it in drilling because of the hardness (A3) = Diamond is in () form (A4) = We call it Ulster A 1 (A5) = Ulster means A, that is , it is very very hard (A6) That made it not to be easy (A7) = to have free flow of electrons (A8) = Because there is no free flow of electrons (A9) = in stage A, as we can see (A10) = the whole country is big in downward part (B1)= Have you ever seen charcoal power (B2) = If you watch the downward part, there will be hole</p> <p>S : (B3) Yes T : (B4) = The whole country is big in downward part, that is the A there</p>	<p>(B6) that means for the reaction of A (B7) = that is why diamond is a poor conductor of electricity (B8) = And because of its hardness (B9) =It has very high temperature (B10) = At the temperature of 900 °C (C1) What of dioxide? (C2) = Dioxide has a free flow of electron (C3) = that is why a big conductor of electricity (C4) = And its burns at a temperature of 700 °C (C5) =Diamond, ehe, dioxide is very, very strong (C6) = Dioxide is colourless (C7)= Carbon dioxide is what? (C8) Colourless S: (C9) [Again T: (C10) [Yes S: (C11) [Yes T: (D1) A state, dioxide is a state (D2) = Dioxide is a state of life (D3) Diamond is () (D4) = It is such a badly [colour (D5) = [colour (D6) Then non- crystalline form (D7) We have charcoal, coal, carbon black , lamp black, sugar coal and animal coal (D8) = As you all know, charcoal (D9) = How many of you have seen charcoal (D10) = Or if there is anyone in Lagos or Nigeria that says he has seen charcoal (E1) Yes (E2)=And if you're not (sic)seen it before (E3) You will see it now (E4) And you can see charcoal power on the board and the reaction (E5) = This is the structure of charcoal power (E6) = And it has three (3) stages (E7) We have stage A, stage B and stage [C S: (E8) [C T: (E9) () in stage A () (E10) = your carbon reacting with your [oxygen S: (F1) [oxygen T : (F2) And that gives us CO2 (F3) And for the body, that is stage B (F4) Here is very, very minute (F5) And sometimes it doesn't give black coal (F6) That is CO₂ reacts(sic) with your carbon here to have your CO, which is your carbon monoxide (F7) = And your carbon monoxide is</p>
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(B5) = The whole country is big in downward part	poisonous
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3. 4 Data Analysis on Carbon and its Allotropes

This excerpt opens with the teacher's focus in (A); this functions as a directive representative. The students are now given explanatives in (B) and (C) (direct speech acts). The teacher now issues (D), an elicitation to ensure that the students understand what she teaches. This is also a teaching method to get students to participate in the ongoing discourse. The teacher's intention is addressed immediately as the students chorus a unanimous elliptical representative in (E). This is also a response; a typical case of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech act. The teacher's intention and the students' response are not detachable. Satisfied that the students are attentive to the lesson, the teacher utters (F) is a representative and this overlaps with the students' response in (G); another elliptical representative (a direct speech act).

Having received the response from the students, the teacher issues an affirmative, an explanative and an additive in (H). She further issues (I) and (J) which are continuous explanatives. (J) also functions as a boundary terminator (an end of a transaction).

(K) opens another transaction and the teacher quickly applies a pseudo elicitation technique in (L) to ensure the free flow of her lessons rather than using it to solicit question from herself or the students. She now utters an elliptical elicitation in (M); a representative in (N) and an elliptical representative in (O). These are direct speech acts. (P), (Q), (R), (S), (T), (U), and (V) are emphatic explanatives and informatives (interdependent speech acts). (W), (X), (Y) and (Z) are explanatives and informatives. The teacher further gives additives, informatives and explanatives in (A1), (A2), (A4), (A5), (A6) and (A7). (A3) is an incomplete representative. The teacher now utters a causative in (A8) and this complements with (A9) and (A10) to give a complete explanative and representative. (B1) is a rhetorical and illustrative elicitation and (B2), a continuous explanative and elicitation. The students respond to (B2) in their elliptical representative in (B3). This necessitates the teacher to further utter (B4) as an additive explanative. It is repeated in (B5) for emphasis. (B6) is an explanative; it also complements with (B7) and they become additive and explanatives. (interdependent speech acts). (B7) terminates this transaction.

Another transaction opens in (B8); it is an additive explanative. The teacher further explains her lessons in (B9) and (B10) which are explanatives and informative. Again, the teacher employs her pseudo/self elicitation delivery technique in (C1) to sustain the continuous flow of her lesson. She further explains her lesson in (C2), (C3), (C4), (C5) and (C6). These function as additive explanations. Again, she employs a question technique in (C7). This one is not just for continuous delivery but it actually fulfils a sincerity demand as reflected in (C9). The students' response in (C8) does not satisfy the teacher's demand and this is why (C9) is requested. (C9) is also an elliptical elicitation which equally acts as a request (an interdependent speech act). Again, the students respond in (C10), a confused elliptical representative.

The teacher further opens another transaction in (D1) and this functions as an explanative. Its follow-up explanative is (D2.) (D3) is an incomplete representative; (D4) is a representative and this overlaps with the students' participatory slot in (D5). The teacher reemphasises her lesson in (D6), (D7) and (D8). These are elliptical representatives. (D9) is an elicitation and its follow-up (D10) is an elliptical representative. The teacher now expects the students to respond to it in (E1) and elliptical elicitation. No one responds to it and she goes ahead to utter (E2), (E3) (E4), (E5), (E6) and (E7) . These are explanatives. The students interrupt in the teacher's ongoing discourse in (E8). (E9) is an explanative and it complements with (E10). This overlaps with the students' participation in (F1). (F2) ,(F3) , (F4), (F5), (F6), and (F7) are teacher's additives, informatives and explanatives; another typical example of the interdependent speech act.

Again from the analysis above, there is the existence in this classroom discourse. This establishes the fact that speech acts are direct, indirect and interdependent in nature.

A total of 63 speech acts were used by classroom participant

4. 1 Discussion on Findings

Having investigated the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts, the researcher discovered that classroom discourses are replete with direct speech acts. And that indirect speech acts are rarely used by discourse participants. She also found out that there is the existence of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech act. None of the related literature reviewed so far has been able to focus on the subject of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts. This study therefore has been able to establish the impact of interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts in classroom discourse. It is also considered as a step further from the previous attempts towards the study of discourse act.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

Researchers have either focused on direct or indirect speech acts in classroom discourse. There is no literature, to the best of my knowledge , that has centred on the interdependency of direct and indirect speech act. This study has contributed to the study of speech acts by identifying and analysing the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts.

The researcher recommends that topics should be carried out on the relevance of the interdependency of direct and indirect speech acts in classroom discourse.

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