

TPR: AN IMPLEMENTATION OF SPEECH ACTS (DIRECTIVE) IN TEACHING TENSES AND ASPECTS TO INDONESIAN STUDENTS

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Abstract

One of the key factors to winning a global competition is mastering English as an international language. In Indonesia, this language is considered a foreign language, and whenever a language has status as a foreign language, it is certain that teaching such language can be challenging. Teaching English as a foreign language, particularly its tenses and aspects, must involve two related fields of study: language teaching (pedagogy) and applied linguistics. These two different fields of study should work together to solve any problems in English language teaching (ELT). This article describes the implementation of one speech act, directives, for teaching English tenses and aspects to Indonesian students in the form of Total Physical Response (TPR). There are six tense-aspect combinations that are explained in the form of teaching procedures, namely present progressive, simple future, present perfect, present perfect progressive, simple past, and present simple. This TPR-directive teaching method can be an alternative for English teachers to teach grammar, particularly to teach tenses and aspects.

Keywords: Speech acts, Directives, Total Physical Response.

Introduction

A. Background

Mastering an international language, English, is one of the key factors to win global competition. In Indonesia, a country where English is a foreign language, teaching English, particularly speaking, is still something that requires a lot of effort.

Not only the students who have the same problem mentioned above but also the teacher, the one who should be able to perform language teaching, inevitably has to deal with problems such as encouraging students' bravery, providing effective learning, many other problems. If these teachers are unable to provide an appropriate method to make effective English learning for adults, it will bring boredom and a frustrating atmosphere into the class.

Linguistics, especially the applied one, and language teaching are the fields demanded to solve problems connecting with language learning problems such as how to teach language with the most suitable method, how to deal with students in the most appropriate way like the problem mentioned above.

Language teaching and applied linguistics share their subject matter like second language acquisition (learning), TEFL, language testing, and syllabus design. Both of these studies also have complementary fields of study based on both pure linguistics and education. Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and others are linguistics based fields of studies that provide language teaching and applied linguistics, as well as curriculum development, teacher education, teacher evaluation which are based on education.

From the general linguistics field, there is pragmatics. Richard and Schmidt (1985) in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* stated pragmatics is the study of the use of

language in communication, particularly the relationships between sentences and the contexts and situations in which they are used.

One of pragmatics' objects of study is speech acts. It is an utterance as a functional unit in communication (*Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*). Pragmatics deals with how speakers use and understand speech acts. There are five types of speech act, declarations, representatives, expressive, directives, and commissives. (Yule: 1996).

Searle (1979), in Yule, briefly explained in correlation between words and world that declarations are about words changing the world, representative and expressive are about making words fit the world, while directive and commissives are about making the world fit the words. And the focus of this paper will be the directives one.

Directive is a speech act that has the function of getting the listener to do something, such as a suggestion, a request, or a command. For example: 'Please sit down' (Searle: 1969). Directive is a speech act type that will be applied in language teaching for speaking.

Directive speech act applied in teaching language especially for speaking has correlation with school of thought in second language teaching. There are three schools of thought that are popular among language teacher; they are

1. Behaviorism.
2. Innatism.
3. Functionalism.

In short, behaviorism is about 'Say what I say', Innatism is about 'It's all in your mind', and functionalism is about 'a little help from my friends'. And this paper will focus more on behaviorism.

Behaviorism was a popular psychological theory of learning in the 1940s and 1950s. In behaviorisms' view, it is believed that imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation will result in language learning (Lightbown and Spada: 2006).

One language teaching method based on behaviorism is Total Physical Response (TPR). It is a method developed by Dr. James J. Asher, a professor of psychology, to aid learning foreign languages.

TPR can be seen as a collaboration between two complementary fields of study from applied linguistics, represented by pragmatics (in speech acts) and language teaching, represented by its school of thought, behaviorism.

TPR, an implementation of one type of speech act, directive, and a realization of behaviorism will be discussed further in connection with its useful function in teaching language.

This paper will describe several techniques of TPR which one of its techniques is encouraging students to perform speech acts, particularly the directive one in order to achieve better results in language learning.

Findings and Discussion

A. Pragmatics

George Yule (1996) stated that pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). Furthermore, he also explains that pragmatics is also the study of how more gets communicated than is said. When we try to communicate our intention, we can say it explicitly or say it implicitly (imply it). When we choose to say it implicitly due to several considerations, it means what we say is less than what we imply or what we imply is more than what we say. That is why the box 'what is implied' is bigger than the box 'what is said'. If I, in one room, say 'this room is so hot' to my friend then my friend directly turns on the air conditioner, it means my friend knows that what I have said was not just a statement but beyond that, it is also an implied command.

B. Speech acts

Pragmatics concerns the meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by the listener. When a speaker wants to communicate his/her intention, he/she uses speech acts, therefore, it is one of the pragmatics' objects of study.

Austin (1962) gives definition about speech acts as the actions that are performed in saying something. It is said that the action which is performed when utterance is uttered can be analyzed on three related acts.

The first act is locutionary acts. Locution is 'what is said' or the form of the words uttered, and the act of saying something is called a locutionary act. Someone performs a locutionary act when he or she is saying something that is meaningful and can be understood. Therefore, when someone is saying 'shoot the tiger' to Javanese who do not understand English, it cannot be included as a locutionary act. It is a locutionary act if this person performs the utterance 'shoot the tiger' to someone who understands English.

The second one is illocutionary acts. It is an act of saying something that is performed with purpose. We do not utter 'shoot the tiger' without any communicative purpose, we may perform this utterance for asking someone to shoot the tiger or for other communicative purposes.

The third act is called the perlocutionary act. It is the result or effect which is produced by means of saying something or it can be said to be the continuation from a locutionary act and illocutionary act. For example, shooting the tiger would be a perlocutionary act.

Speech act classification

Generally, there are five types of function speech acts. They are declarations, representations, expressives, directives, and commissives. The two tables below show us the example of utterances of speech act and type the distinctions among these types based on direction of fit (function) and the relation between speakers (S) and situation (X).

Speech act type	Example of utterances (taken from Yule's)
Declarations	Priest: 'I now pronounce husband and wife'
Representatives	'The earth is flat'
Expressives	'Congratulations'
Directives	'Lend me that pen, please', 'Could you lend me a pen, please?'
Commissives	'I'll be back'

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S = Speaker X = Situation
Declarations	Words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	Make the words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	Make the words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	Make the world fit the words	S wants X
Commissives	Make the world fit the words	S intends X

The five general functions of speech acts (following Searle 1979)

One of the types of speech act, directives, is the main point that will be discussed more in connection with language teaching generally and English language teaching particularly.

C. Directives

According to Yule, directives are kinds of speech act which speakers perform to get someone to do something. Directives express what the speaker wants such as commanding, ordering, requesting, giving suggestions. This kind of speech act could be negative, but it could be positive. When the directives are used in the classroom in order to teach language (in this case English), the result will be positive.

The application of directive speech act has to be conducted continuously to create feedback such as imitations, practices, and habitual formation from students when they are learning language (English). In addition, the application of directive speech act must be conducted by the teacher firstly as the one who have a right to teach his or her students in order to fulfill expected or appropriate circumstances (felicity condition)

Performing a speech act (directives) for language teaching continuously to make students imitate and form their habit in their language learning activity in order to gain positive reinforcement is one teaching method influenced by one of the grand theories of SLA, behaviorism.

D. Behaviorism

Behaviorism was very influential in the 1940s and 1950s, especially in the USA. In its point of view about language learning, this mainstream states that language learning is the fruit of imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation. The students try to imitate the sounds and the patterns that they listen to and get positive reinforcement for performing them. They will continue to imitate and practice these voices and patterns until they succeed in forming 'behavior' of correct language use. This mainstream believes that the consistency of reinforcement carried out by the environment, the quantity and the quality of the language that students have learned determine the success of the language learning.

The behaviorists see that practice and imitation is a primary process in developing language. Below this, an example of what it is called practice and imitation.

Imitation: Word –for-word repetition of all or part of someone else's utterance.

Mother: Would you like some bread and peanut butter?

Katie: Some bread and peanut butter.

Practice: Repetitive manipulation of form.

Michel: I can handle it, Hannah can handle it. We can handle it.

(Taken from 'How languages are learned' by Lightbown and Spada)

But what kind of imitations do the behaviorists consider more important in language acquisition and language learning? The answer is surface-structure imitation. It is 'a kind of imitation where a person repeats or mimics the surface strings, attending to phonological code rather than a semantic code'. 'An imitation level that makes adult people repeat random numbers of nonsense syllables, or even to mimic nonsense syllables'. (Brown 2000: 38).

The table below summarizes concepts and approaches of behaviorism.

Time frame	Schools of Thought	Typical Themes
Early 1900s & 1940s & 1950s	Behaviorism	Description
		Observable performance
		Scientific method

		Empiricism
		Surface structure
		Conditioning, reinforcement

(Taken from Principles of Language Learning and Teaching by Brown)

E. TPR

TPR (Total Physical Response) is based on behaviorism, a theory developed by B.F. Skinner. This theory views learning merely as a result of imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p.34). According to behaviorism, an individual will show certain behavior due to imitation. If he or she gets enough positive feedback, this person will continue to perform this kind of behavior and eventually this performance will develop into a habit (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 10). In the same way, according to behaviorism, in order to learn a foreign language, a language student only needs to imitate the language he/she hears from the teacher and reacts to his feedback. Language development is seen as a result of habit formation (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p.34). This view of language learning is obviously seen in TPR in connection to its focus on performance by the teacher and imitation by the students.

TPR: Reduction of stress

The absence of stress is one of the primary conditions for successful language learning. The difference between first language acquisition and second language acquisition (learning) is the level of stress. The former runs less stressful while the latter, especially for the adults, often runs stressfully because of the atmosphere in teaching and learning process itself. James Asher, the developer of TPR method, stated that learning second language process will be more relaxed if the students experience relaxed and pleasurable atmosphere in the class. Hence, by giving more attention in the language performed through movement than focusing on the abstract side of the language, the learner will be free from self-conscious and stressful process, and moreover they also will be able to maximize their energy in learning second language.

TPR: The example

(Taken from <http://www.lrdc.pitt.edu/fiez/publications/McCandlissEtAl2002.pdf>.)

You say: "Stand" (and gesture to the people on either side of you to stand.

Note: if they try to repeat your direction, signal silence by placing your finger on your lips.)

Next: "Sit" (you sit and gesture your subjects to sit).

Again: "Stand."

Then: "Sit."

Continue with: "Stand" (you remain seated and gesture the individuals to stand).

Then you say: "Sit" (and gesture for them to sit).

Next you say: "Stand" (and stand up with them).

Then: "Walk" (and you walk with them).

Now: "Stop" (and you stop with them).

Next: "Walk" (but you remain where you are and let them walk by themselves).

You say: "Stop."

Now you join them and say, "Turn" while you turn with them and "Turn" again and once more "Turn."

While you remain where you are, say, 'Walk'. 'Stop'. 'Walk'. 'Stop'. 'Turn'. 'Sit'.

Now join them at their seats and invite one of the individuals to perform alone.

For example, here is what you say to Emi:

To Emi: "Stand. Walk. Stop. Walk. Stop. Turn. Turn. Turn. Walk. Stop. Sit."

To Shirou: (Vary the sequence slightly with :) 'Stand'. 'Sit'. 'Stand'. 'Walk'. 'Stop'.

'Turn'. 'Walk'. 'Stop'. 'Turn'. 'Sit'. (Continually encourage the onlookers to applaud.)

Teaching tenses with TPR

Starting point

One of the most famous studies about developmental sequences in first language acquisition is carried out by Roger Brown (1973) that explains steps which children usually take when they acquire their mother tongue. Those steps can be seen below:

- Present progressive (mommy running)
- Plural -s (two books)
- Irregular past forms (Baby went)
- Possessive 's (daddy's hat)
- Copula (Annie *is* a nice girl)
- Article 'the' and 'a'
- Regular past -ed (She walked)
- Third person singular simple present -s (She runs)
- Auxiliary 'be' (He *is* coming)

According to the steps above, present progressive is the item which is firstly acquired by children. Therefore, the first lesson that should be given to the students by using TPR is the present progressive.

Before you go to 'teaching tenses time', it is important for you to make sure that your students understand the command by performing it and are able to give commands. So, for the first time you must teach them the basic TPR material activities like the one suggested below.

Script 1: The room and numbers 1-10

Verbs	Nouns		
Stand up	On the floor		
Sit down	On the chair		
Point to the	Door	Ceiling	Telephone
Touch the	Wall	Blackboard	Clock
Look at the	Window	Light switch	Table
Walk to the	Chair	Wall plug	(floor)
Jump	One	Two	Three
Clap	Four	Five	Six
	Seven	Eight	Nine
	Times		
Open the	Door	Cabinet	Book
Close the			
Shut the			

Teaching present progressive / present continuous

The present progressive expresses an activity that is in progress at the moment of speaking. It is a temporary activity that began in the past, is continuing at the present, and will probably end at some point in the future. (Azar 2002: 13)

Procedures

1. Ask your student to practice in asking and performing some activities such as the ones given above (e.g. stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair)
2. Ask one of the student to ask you to do one activity (e.g. sit down on the chair)
3. **When you are performing the activity**, use present progressive tense to express what you are doing. (e.g. I am sitting down on the chair).
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).

6. When he/she is performing the activity, use present progressive tense to express what he/she is doing. (e.g. he/she is sitting down on the chair).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. they are sitting down on the chair, we are sitting down on the chair).
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words and time signal. (e.g. what is she doing now? She is sitting down on the chair now).

Teaching simple future

Simple future, either will or be going to, is used to express future time. (Azar 2002:51)

Procedures

1. Ask your student to practice in asking and performing some activities given in previous lesson (e.g. stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair)
2. Ask one of the student to ask you to do one activity (e.g. sit down on the chair)
3. **Before you perform the activity**, use simple future tense to express what you are going to do. (e.g. I am going to sit down on the chair).
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).
6. Before he/she is going to perform the activity, use simple future tense to express what he/she is going to do. (e.g. he/she is going to sit down on the chair).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. they are going to sit down on the chair, we are going to sit down on the chair).
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words and time signal. (e.g. what is she going to do after this? She is going to sit down on the chair after this).
9. Repeat all the activities (may be in the following sessions) but with change 'be going to' into 'will'.
10. Explain the difference between 'will' and 'be going to'

Teaching present perfect

The present perfect expresses the idea that something happened (or never happened) before now, at an unspecified time in the past. The exact time it happened is not important. (Azar 2002: 36)

Procedures

1. Ask your student to practice in asking and performing some activities given in previous lesson (e.g. stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair)
2. Ask one of the student to ask you to do one activity (e.g. sit down on the chair)
3. **After you perform the activity**, use present perfect tense to express what you have done. (e.g. I have sat down on the chair).
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).
6. After he/she has performed the activity, use present perfect tense to express what he/she has done. (e.g. he/she has sat down on the chair).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. they have sat down on the chair, we have sat down on the chair).
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words. (e.g. what has she done? She has sat down on the chair).

Teaching present perfect progressive (continuous)

We use the present perfect continuous when we talk about an action (quite a long action) which began in the past and has recently stopped or just stopped'. (Murphy 1985: 32)

'We also use the present perfect continuous to ask or say how long something has been happening'. (Murphy 1985: 32)

Procedures

1. Ask your student to practice in asking and performing some activities given in previous lesson (e.g. stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair)
2. Ask one of the student to ask you to do one activity (e.g. sit down on the chair)
3. **During the time you perform the activity**, use present perfect continuous tense to express what you have been doing. (e.g. I have been sitting down on the chair).
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).
6. During the time he/she has been performing the activity, use present perfect tense to express what he/she has been doing. (e.g. he/she has been sitting down on the chair).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. they have been sitting down on the chair, we have been sitting down on the chair).
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words and time signals. (e.g. what has she been doing until now? She has been sitting down on the chair until now).

Teaching simple past

Procedures

We use the past simple to talk actions or situations in the past. (Murphy 1985: 22)

1. Ask your student to practice asking and performing some activities given in the previous lesson (e.g. stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair).
2. Ask one of the students to ask you to do one activity (e.g. sit down on the chair).
3. **When you no longer perform the activity**, use past simple tense to express what you did before. (e.g. I sat down on the chair).
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).
6. When he/she no longer performs the activity, use past tense to express what he/she did before. (e.g. he/she sat down on the chair).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. they sat down on the chair, we sat down on the chair).
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words and time signals. (e.g. what did she do three seconds ago? She sat down on the chair three seconds ago).

Teaching present simple

We use present simple to talk about things in general. We use it to say something happens all the time or repeatedly, that something is true in general. (Murphy 1985: 4)

Procedures

1. Ask your student to practice in asking and performing some activities given in previous lesson (e.g. 'stand on the floor up or sit down on the chair')

2. Ask one of the student to throw the ball and every time the ball touch the floor he or she must ask you to do one activity (e.g. 'sit down on the chair')
3. **Every time you perform the activity**, use present simple tense to express what you always do. (e.g. 'I sit down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor').
4. Repeat the activity with different verbs.
5. Ask your student to perform something. (e.g sit down on the chair).
6. Every time he/she performs the activity, use present simple tense to express what he/she always does. (e.g. he/she sits down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor).
7. Do the activity No. 6 but with several students. (e.g. 'they sit down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor, we sit down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor').
8. If they have been able to perform the activity and express it based on the tense, repeat the activity and give question words and time signals. (e.g. 'what does she do every time the ball touches the floor? She sits down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor' or 'what do I do every time the ball touches the floor? I sit down on the chair every time the ball touches the floor').

Conclusion

Applied linguistics and language teaching are the fields that are responsible to provide effective English language learning particularly in Indonesia where English is considered as a foreign language. Both of these fields of study have shared their interest in the spirit of improving foreign language learning methods. In language teaching, a field of study based on education Total Physical Response has been proposed. TPR which is based on the grand theory of SLA, behaviorism is an approach focusing on creating positive habitual reinforcement from the students when they are learning foreign language. This method requires speech acts performance especially the directives ones among the teacher and students in the classroom. Speech acts itself, especially the directives that have the study object of pragmatics, one the applied linguistics' field of study that is based on linguistics (pure linguistics).

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