

# 7 2019 proceeding pragmatic practice

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**Submission date:** 28-Jun-2020 04:57PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1350707990

**File name:** 7\_2019\_proceeding\_pragmatic\_practice\_dgn\_afendi.pdf (566.04K)

**Word count:** 4306

**Character count:** 23650

## Pragmatic Practice on Students' Interview: Exploring Students' Speech Act and Maxim in English Specific Purposes Program

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the speech act functions and types of maxim emerging in the speech performed by university students during interview; and to examine the accurateness of the students' responses toward the interview question on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program. This is qualitative study. The data was collected through documentation from the result of interview to the students of ESP Program. The result shows that the participants demonstrate all components of speech act function in answering the question. This implies that the students are able to answer the question properly although they could not always deliver accurate information because some of their utterances breached the maxim, such as violating the maxim and floating the maxim. It is suggested to do further research on Pragmatic studies related to students' utterances and factors that make the students break the maxim in the process of teaching and learning; as well as to know the students' need.

**Keywords:** pragmatic, speech act, maxim, ESP

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui fungsi tindak tutur dan type maxim yang muncul dalam pernyataan mahasiswa selama wawancara dan untuk menilai keakuratan jawaban mahasiswa selama wawancara tentang program ESP. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian qualitative yang datanya diambil dari document hasil wawancara terhadap mahasiswa program ESP. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa partisipan menggunakan seluruh aspek fungsi tindak tutur dalam menjawab pertanyaan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mampu menjawab pertanyaan sesuai dengan pertanyaan yang diberikan walaupun informasi yang diberikan tidak semuanya akurat, karena beberapa dari jawaban mereka melanggar maksim, seperti *violating the maxim dan floating the maxim*. Akhirnya penulis menyarankan untuk dilakukan penelitian lebih lanjut tentang pragmatic terutama pada ungkapan-ungkapan mahasiswa dan faktor-faktor yang mengakibatkan mahasiswa melanggar maxim untuk mengetahui kebutuhan mahasiswa dalam proses belajar dan mengajar.

**Kata kunci:** Pragmatis, Tindak Tutur, Maksim, ESP

### 1. INTRODUCTION

ESP (*English Specific Purposes*) program plays a vital role in developing student's English ability because it gives a specific material and particular treatment for students to learn. Historically, after World war II 1945, economic, scientific, technical activity into international scale as a result it made most of people want to learn English for commerce and technology. A mechanic learned English for reading manual instructor and a businessman learned English for selling their product, then in 1970 oil crises made massive flow of fund and western expertise into oil reach country that makes English become big commercial business (Hutchinson and Water, 1991).

ESP reveals as a solution to the problems that happened in the process English Language Teaching (ELT), teachers or lecturers sometimes face some problems in the classroom because of various interest of students in learning English. The ESP becomes big umbrella of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupation Purposes (EOP), English for

secretaries, English for medical studies, etc. Hence, the implementation of ESP should be based on students' need.

Students' need in ESP program play a vital role in the success of its program. This study identifies students' need through different analyses: through the interview result by classifying them into some speech acts and maxims. This may describe students' perception deeply using speech act and maxim analysis. By so doing, it will help teachers to know the students' need emotionally and contextually about ESP program. Some researchers have shown that speech act in ESP program is able to give deeper knowledge about how to understand and interpret someone's speech in literary and non-literary speech. Triki (2002) recommends that Pragmatics deserve greater academic interest in ESP Circles (conference, specialized journal, thesis, and dissertation), source of linguistic explanation for apparently structural concerns, and it can be guiding methodology in the organization of materials. Besides, speech act can also perform social acts such as permission, promises, apologies, insults, or even declaring emergency, or hiring person (Basturkmen & Zealand, 2018).

Speech act theory believes that language is not merely used to inform or to describe thing, but it can also to accomplish action, to do things, and to perform act. Speech act can be used to identify students' emotional. (Paret, 1983) Stated that emotional competency is the ability to show or hide subjectivity in utterance. Furthermore, maxim also can be used to analyze the utterance to know the sensible behaviour of someone. Maxim is way to interpret someone speech both observable and not observable (Black, 2006). Therefore, this research will analyze students' emotional through analyzing the speech act and maxim. Later on the speech act is classified into five type of utterances such as *assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, declarative, representative* (Austin, 1962), (Searl, 1969). Furthermore, maxim of co-operative principle is also used to interpret the observable utterances of the participants through maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation and maxim of manner, on the other hand, the unobservable utterances of the participants is classified through Floating the maxim, violating the maxim, opting out the maxim, and clash (Black, 2006) in order to know the students' accurateness of utterance.

Pragmatic study is very interesting when speech act and maxim come into play. There were many studies were conducted in the study of speech act and maxim such as analyzing the speech act or maxim of someone's speech, speech act and maxim in drama, novel, and humour both literary and non-literary studies. For instance, (Fitrianingsih, 2019) analyzed the speech act of Barack Obama while urging voters to support Hillary Clinton. She argued that politician's speech is very important to persuade other, therefore, the speech act plays very important role. (Zhao & Throssell, 2011) claimed that speech act is very important in different culture communication that leads students to use language appropriately and effectively. Realization of maxim can be applied as good example of natural authentic English (Khayati & Mujiyanto, 2019). Therefore, this study analyses the speech act and maxim through interview result. The result of this study is expected to be useful to know further about the accurateness of the utterances conveyed by the students of ESP Program.

The purpose of the study is to know the speech act performed by the students in the interview about ESP program, type of maxim exists in the speech act, and the accurateness of the students' respond toward the interview questions.

### 1.1. Speech Act

Speech act is a theory that believes languages are not only inform and describe information but also to do things to be performed (Austin, 1962). Speech act is usually used to

analyse the minimal unit of pragmatic in conversation interaction and ethnography speaking. Speech act is involved into greeting, summons, command, jokes, apologies, and interaction (Trudgil, 2003). It can be defined that speech act is a theory of language that can be used to analyse the utterance dealing with the behaviour of speaker in communication.

Based on the function, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) identified speech act into six categories, namely:

- Declarative  
Declaration of self-realizing such as declarations (naturally), christenings, baptisms or other naming ceremonies, pronouncements, admissions
- Directive  
These speech act is an utterance to ask people to do something such as requests, advice, and commands, for example: close your book
- Commissive  
An utterance that produce to commit to do future action. Such as promises and oath for example; "I will close my book" and I promise to do it
- Expressive  
The speech act that express the speaker' emotions and attitudes toward the main proposition, Such as the expression of thanks, congratulation, excuses, and explanations. For example, "I like your t-shirt."
- Representative  
The Speaker communicates and expresses their belief that represent their understanding about of the reality such as claim and report for example: I go to the library to find some book about agriculture

Furthermore, speech act components above can be classified into small classification namely:

DECLARATIVE	DIRECTIVE	EXPRESSIVE	COMMISSIVE	REPRESENTATIVES
decrees	suggestions	apologies	offers	assertion
declarations	requests	complaints	threats	reports
	commands	thanks	promises	claims

### 1.2. Maxim

Maxim refers to get the effectiveness of communication between listener and speaker that aims for understanding each other. (Grice, 1989) developed co-operative principle that are considered effective in conversation, namely:

- Maxim of quantity concern on the quantity of information. it requires the speakers to:  
Deliver information as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).  
Contribute more informative than is required in delivering information.  
for example: Mr.Fendi is coming.
- Maxim of Quality refers to delivering a true information that requires the speakers to:  
Do not say what they believe to be false.  
Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.  
for example: Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia
- Maxim of Relation refers to giving relevance information and contribution that requires the speakers to be relevant.  
for example: I am hungry, I want to eat
- Maxim of manner refers to speak directly a clearly. It requires the speaker to be perspicuous, be brief, be orderly, avoid ambiguity, avoid ambiguity (Black, 2006).

### 1.3. *Breaking the Maxim.*

If maxim fails to be observed, it is interpreted as breaking the maxim. There are four types of breaking the maxim:

- Floating the maxim, introduced by Grice, refers to exploiting the maxim in conversational implicature. The *speaker not trying to mislead or deceive but encouraging the listener to find deeper meaning beyond the semantic level*. For example, irony and metaphor.
- Violating the maxim is the intending to *mislead the hearer. The speaker speaks the truth implies something false (lying)*.
- *Opting-out of the maxim* is the kind of breaking the maxim that shows unwillingness to cooperate. The speaker is unwilling to reveal more than they already have, for instance: politician and reporter.
- Clash refers to one maxim cannot fully co-operative. For example: to fulfil one maxim (say, of quantity) might require one to break another (quality). (Black, 2006)

### 1.4. *ESP and Students' Interview.*

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language which goals and objectives should represent the students' need for the use of English in particular domain (Goldsmith, Riggle, Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2013). The course content and aim of ESP should be refers to specific need of learners that focus on language, skills, and genres that appropriate to the specific activity of students' need to carry out in English. Students play a vital role in the success of ESP program that requires teachers to interpret the student's need well. because the result of the need analysis of the students need will be basic reference for curriculum development to improve students English ability (Rechard, 2001). One of the ways to get the information of student need is through interview.

Interview is the answer of question and communication between two or more people through purposeful exchange of idea. According to (Schostak, 2006) interview is getting in-depth information of certain topic or subject. It can be said that interview is a conversation that aims to gather description of the interviewee. The students' interview in this study refers to getting in-depth information about the students' perception toward the ESP Program.

## 2. RESERACH METHOD

This study is a qualitative study. Words and sentences are used as the data that are going to be described to reveal phenomenon, process, or particular point of view from the perspective of those involved (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010). This study interviewed two randomly participating students in ESP program of Agriculture Faculty, Universitas Samawa (UNSA) Sumbawa Besar, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

Therefore, this research classified the data into specific code in order that the data can be interpreted well. The data in this research is collected by interviewing the students then it will be classified by some specific kind of speech act and maxim in order to find the accuracy of the participants' utterances. The following codes represent the participants of this study:

IR : Interviewer  
 FP : Female Participant  
 MP : Male Participant

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. *Speech act and Maxim Analysis of FP*

This section explains the speech act and maxim exist in FP interview.

IR : How does the faculty Support toward the ESP Program?

FP : Good.

IR : Does the ESP program give positive effect toward your English ability?

FP : Positive.

IR : Do you understand all the material that instructed by the lecturer?

FP : I understand.

Declarative speech act emerged when FP answered the interview question directly and shortly. *She declared that ESP was good and positive program with understandable material.* The short answer that she produced is aimed to give clear meaning and avoid the ambiguity (maxim of manner).

IR : What is your suggestion toward ESP Program?

FP : In my opinion, it is better to continue the ESP program to make the students more confident in learning and speak English but the sound system for listening should be prepared well by the Agriculture Faculty.

Directive speech act emerged in the suggestion that delivered by FP. She uttered true suggestion with adequate evidences that Agriculture Faculty of UNSA should prepare the sound system for listening activity for students in the classroom of ESP, in fact that the sound system was not prepared by the Faculty. It was prepared by the lecturer of ESP. The suggestion can be classified into Maxim of Quality.

IR : What is the purpose of the ESP program?

FP : The ESP Program eases the students in learning English that aimed to provide the students with English ability after graduate because every occupation needs English ability.

FP's answer about the purpose of the program is classified into commissive speech act because she delivered detail explanation through revealing additional information that will be felt in the future. *She added that the program not only eased the students in learning but also eased them to get the job in the future when they are graduated to get the job.* FP tried to convince listener that the ESP program will be very useful for the students. She encouraged IR to understand her by added additional statement to avoid misunderstanding or floating the maxim.

IR : How do you prepare yourself to learn English in the ESP program?

FP : I reread the material at home. So that I can answer the question given by the lecturer in the next day

Representative speech act also emerged when FP reported how she prepared herself in learning English. She communicated her beliefs to represent her understanding about good learning preparation. She delivered good and relevant explanation (maxim of relation). She explained what should be prepared to answer the question from the lecturer well.

IR : What do you think about the lecturer in the ESP program?

FP : In my opinion MissAyu is wow!

An expression "*Miss Ayu is wow*" is the expression of expressive speech act. It is kind of expression showing that FP had good emotion and attitude toward the lecturer who taught in the program. Furthermore, that expression is also classified into Maxim of Quality because it delivers directly and clearly as method to avoid ambiguity that the speaker loves the lecturer methodology in teaching.

IR : What do you think of ESP program?

FP : We are thought about grammar and how to write and pronounce the word. It depends on our speaking ability to defer words and its pronunciation.

The answer of FP represented her understanding of the program. This representative speech act showed that FP did not have enough knowledge the ESP Program. FP did not know what is ESP, FP thought ESP was as the same as regular English class. It could be seen from the unclear statement that She produced therefore the IR should think deeply beyond the semantic level to understand the answer (*floating the maxim*).

### 3.2. *Speech act and Maxim Analysis of MP*

The following information is about kinds of speech act and types of maxim existing on the students' utterances during interview to MP.

IR : What do you think about the lecturer of ESP Program?

MP : If I analyse from the learning system during learning process, the lecturer of ESP provides good learning process

MP delivered relevant information through connecting the analysis and his feeling (maxim of relation). His answer was based on his analysis toward the lecturer of ESP who were teaching in the in the classroom therefore he declared that the *Lecturer of ESP is good lecturer* (Declarative speech act)

IR : Does the ESP program give positive effect toward your English ability?

MP : Alhamdulillah I can improve my English ability. When I was senior high school I was taught Basic English then in the college I am taught through different curriculum

Declarative speech act was also emerged when *MP declared that ESP was good program as a result his English ability was increased*. He tried to convince the listener by delivered long answer and explanation that make the listener to thing deeper to understand his statement (*floating the maxim*)

IR : What is your suggestion toward ESP Program?

MP : I suggest the ESP program to develop a good teaching and learning process so that the students will not get bored when learning English

MP delivered a relevant suggestion that *the program should be developed to make the students interested in learning English* (Maxim of relation). Directive speech act emerged in his answer to represent his hope toward the ESP Program.

IR : Will the ESP program keep exist in the future?

MP : If we analyse from the students' enthusiasm. I though this program will keep exist in the future.

IR : What is the purpose of the ESP program in agriculture Faculty UNSA?

MP : This program is aimed to make agriculture faculty defer from other faculty in UNSA and aimed to create students with a good English ability.

Commissive Speech act emerged when MP adjusted her answer with the reality in the future. He convinced that the high enthusiasms of the students and the innovation of the faculty would make this program keep exist in the future. Furthermore, MP also gave relevant information through relating the fact and the prediction in the future (maxim of relation)

IR : What do you think of ESP Program?

MP : The Lecturer taught us a lot of words meaning in English especially words in agriculture but the learning process in ESP program doesn't apply outside the class.

Expressive speech act emerged when *MP felt that he was bored if he studied in the classroom he needs to study outside the class*. He is also floating the maxim when answering the question hence IR should think deeply beyond the semantic level to understand his answer.

IR : How do you prepare yourself to learn English in the ESP program?

MP : I prepare myself by understanding daily words in English before continuing to the next level. Basic knowledge of English is very important

Representative speech act emerged when FP reported how he prepared himself in learning English. She communicated her beliefs to represent her understanding about learning. On the other hand he delivered rather unclear explanation that required the listener to think deeper to understand the explanation (Floating the maxim)

IR : Do you understand all the material that instructed by the lecturer?

MP : We are as students always face difficulties in learning process, but I understand 90 %.

MP delivered his understanding about the program (representative speech act) that *he understood 90 % of the material given by the lecturer* but he Violating the maxim because he spook the truth that implied something false.

### 3.3. *The Accurateness of Students Respond*

The analysis of speech act and maxim of both participants generally shows that they love the ESP Program. It can be proofed by the declarative and expressive speech act that they produced. They declared their opinions expressively and clearly without ambiguity to show their filling about The program. Furthermore, they also used *maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of manner, and maxim of relation* without breaking the maxim although in some cases, they sometimes break the maxim when answering few questions.

The analysis of FP shows that she answers the question properly by uttering clear explanation using co-operative principle namely he answers most of the question from the interviewer relevantly so that the communication between the interviewer and the participant

can be understood each other, the utterances are produced effectively to avoid the ambiguity (Grace, 1967/1987). The first participant uses maxim of relations, maxim of quality and maxim of manner in most of his answer. On the other hand, there are two questions that cannot be identified through co-operative principle or failed to be observed. (Intisar & Qadir, 2018) stated that breaking the maxim is the utterance that failed to be observed in co-operative principle. She is floating the maxim by showing the intention by long and sometimes unclear explanation that required the listener to find deeper meaning beyond semantic level.

FP preferred to make their utterances more relevant than the MP. It can be seen from the maxim of relation that MP used in most of his utterances, but on the other hand he preferred to deliver irrelevant answer when answering the question "Do you understand the entire lecture instructs by the lecturer?" he answered the question by violating the maxim namely the participant utters the truth that implies something false. He answers "We are as students always faces difficulties in learning process, but I understand 90 %" but his English does not represent his statement that he understood the lecture 90 %.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This pragmatic study finds some interesting results that can be very useful for teachers, lecturers and educational practitioners especially those who are in charge of teaching ESP program in order to know their students' need and interest. It explores the students' perception toward ESP Program through analysing speech act and maxim of the participants' utterances. It is evidence that the intended meaning and the accurateness of the students' utterances can be interpreted through pragmatic study. The result shows that the students of ESP program as participants of this research are able to answer the questions using all speech act component such as declarative, directive, commissive, expressive, and representative. It can be interpreted that the participants are able to answer the question properly based on the question given but there are three questions in the interview do not represent accurate information. It is because the participants break the maxim, namely they are violating the maxim and floating the maxim. It can be interpreted that although the participants can answer the question properly but they sometimes cannot give accurate information by telling the untruth information and floating the information or maxim (*overstatement*). Based on this research, it is suggested to do further pragmatic studies on students' utterances and on factors that make the students break the maxim in the process of teaching and learning.

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