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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO LINGUISTIC
FEATURES OF DIRECTIVES IN SCHOOL
ANNOUNCEMENTS IN ENGLISH**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Language is the most effective and practical means of communication. In fact, it is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It is also the transmitting of an idea or information from the sender to the addressee. School announcements, in this case, are a type of communication.

In schools, the announcements might say whose birthday it is, what clubs are meeting after school. Basically, it is announcing something, it is an announcement.

1.2. THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study provides to Vietnamese teachers and learners of English the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English, the syntactic features of school announcements in English, particularly the sentence types and the typical directives used in directives of school announcements may help them in writing a correct announcement in English or in understanding and interpreting it.

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Aims

This research aims at examining the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English to provide the Vietnamese learners of English with practical knowledge to understand and grasp this kind of speech acts in writing or in understanding and interpreting a school announcement.

1.3.2. Objectives

This study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English in terms of syntactic and pragmatic aspects;
- To suggest effective solutions to the English teaching and learning concerning the use of school announcements in English.

1.4. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The thesis is about to cover all genres of school announcements from high schools to universities in English and tend to focus on the linguistic features of directives only.

To deal with interpersonal meaning of directives, such issues of the theory of Speech Acts and Functional Grammar, especially clause as exchange, clause as message and illocutionary force were mainly considered in this research.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English in terms of syntactic and pragmatic features?
2. What types of directives are used in school announcements in English?
3. What are the effective solutions for the language teaching and learning concerning the use of directives in school announcements in English?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The research includes five chapters.

Chapter 1 is Introduction. Chapter 2 is Literature Review and Theoretical Background. Chapter 3 is Research Design and Methodology Chapter 4 is Findings and Discussions. Chapter 5 is Conclusion and Implications.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Austin [1976] proposed the theory of speech act and stated and discussed the performatives, the constatives, the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Besides, Searle [1969, 1975] categorized speech act in five groups. Leech [1982] wrote about pragmatics that focused on the communicative grammar, performatives and speech act verb in English. Yule [1977] gave us useful knowledge about pragmatics of speech acts and events, politeness and interaction, conversation and preference structure.

Directives are one of the five basic kinds of speech acts proposed by Searle [1976]. According to Huddleston [1984], for instance, a directive “is a term that covers requests, commands, prohibitions, instructions and the like”. Longer lists of directive speech acts have been suggested by Searle [1969, 1975]; however, I myself only focus on the linguistic feature of directives in school announcements which are recognized as inviting, suggesting, advising and requesting.

Quirk [1980] and Alexander [1978] studied English grammar practice in terms of sentence structures. Meanwhile, Huddleston [1984] and Downing [1983] studied English grammar practice in terms of sentence types including a declaration, an interrogative, an imperative, and an exclamation.

Some Vietnamese M.A students have chosen “school announcements” as their referent to study

Le Thi Phuong [2011] did her research on “A Study of Pre-sequences in Announcements in English Versus Vietnamese”

Truong Le Hong Ngoc [2012] chose “A Discourse Analysis of School Announcements in English” as the topic of her Master Thesis.

Ngo Thi Thu Ha [2005] chose “A Study on Directives in Advertising in English and Vietnamese” to study.

Nguyen Thi To Nga [2002] did her research on the topic “An Investigation into The Syntactic and Pragmatic Features of Directives in English and Vietnamese”.

None of the M.A students mentioned above had studied the sentence types and the typical directives used in school announcements. Therefore, I decided to choose “An investigation into linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English” as my thesis.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Definition of Term

The illocutionary point of directive speech acts consists in the fact that they are attempts by the addresser to get the hearer to do something expressed by the propositional content.

2.2.2. Speech Act Theory

a. Speech Act

Speech act theory attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said.

According to Austin [1976], the speech act is the act that a person does in saying something. A speech act consist of three components: the locutionary act, the Illocutionary act and the

perlocutionary act

b. The directive and its realized functions

Searle (1976) indicates that directives are illocutionary acts with the point of illocutionary being to put the hearer into an obliged situation of performing a future act

According to Bach and Harnish, there are six kinds of acts in this category such as: requestives, questions, requirements, prohibitives, permissives and advisories.

Ken Batch put an emphasis on the communicative act, directives are realized into six subfunctions on the basic of the speaker's authority over the hearer, the optionality of the hearer's future act, the reason for future act, the beneficial recipient and the required form of the directed act (verbal or non-verbal)

Generally, directives are the kind of speech acts that are sensible to interpersonal relationship. The kind of responsive acts are either verbal or non-verbal.

c. Direct and indirect illocutionary force of directives

The illocutionary force of directives can either be direct or indirect. It is indicated by the typical clause types of directives: imperatives for requirements, requestives, advisories, permissives, prohibitives and the typical questions for information. Furthermore, the explicit performatives of directive are another indication of the direct force of directives.

The indirectness of directives can be recognized due to the foundation of many criteria, syntax and pragmatics

2.2.3. An overview of Functional Grammar

Halliday [2004] analyzed lexico-grammar into three broad metafunctions: *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual*. Ideational

metafunction is involved with clauses as *representations* basing on the natural world in the broadest sense. interpersonal metafunction is related to clauses as *exchanges*. Textual metafunction deals with clauses as *messages*.

a. Clause as Exchange

According to Halliday [2004], clause as exchange is a clause having meaning as an exchange. *Mood* and *residue* are the two factors in clause as exchange.

- Mood

Mood element makes clause “negotiable” and consists of *Finite* and *Subject*.

+ Finite

Finite element is one of the small numbers of verbal operators expressing tense (e.g. is, has), modality (e.g. can, must) and polarity (associated with affirmative and negative).

+ Subject

Subject is the responsible element, but in proposition this means the one on which the validity of the information is made to the rest.

- Residue

Residue consists of functional elements of three kinds: *Predicator*, *Complement* and *Adjunct*.

+ Predicator

Realized by a verbal group,

+ Complement

Complement is realized by a nominal group and it answers the question “is/had what”, “to whom”, “did to what”.

+ Adjunct

Adjunct is typically realized by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase.

Table 2.1. Structure of the residue (Halliday, 2004, p.121)

<i>Mr John</i>	<i>'s</i>	<i>planting</i>	<i>roses</i>	<i>in the gardern</i>
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood		Residue		

b. Clause as Message

Clause as message is a clause which has meaning as a message, a quantum of information. There are *theme* and *rHEME* in the clause as a message.

- Theme

A theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message. In a declarative clause, there are:

Unmarked Theme (Theme = Subject): Subject is the 'normal' Theme choice. Nominal group functioning as Subject:

- (4) *That is absolutely correct.* (Will, 2007, p.301)

Talbe 2.2. Structure of the unmarked theme

That	is absolutely correct.
Theme (unmarked)	RHEME

Marked Theme (Theme ≠ Subject): A theme that is something other than the subject. The most usual form of marked Theme is an adverbial group or prepositional phrase functioning as Adjunct in the clause.

- (5) *In a way you are right.* (Will, 2007, p.301)

Table 2.3. Structure of the marked theme

In a way	you are right
Theme (marked)	Rheme

- Rheme

The Rheme is the remainder of the message. A clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme.

Table 2.4. Structure of the Theme - Rheme (Halliday, 2004, p.66)

The duke	has given my aunt that teapot
My aunt	has been given that teapot by the duke
That teapot	the duke has given to my aunt
Theme	Rheme

2.2.4. Modality

Modality is a collective term, used to express the intermediate degrees that fall between positive and negative.

Modal elements are used in directives to express the speaker's attitudes toward the fact or the events being talked about. Modality can be expressed by modal finites, modal adjuncts or personal grammatical metaphor.

2.3. GENERAL VIEWS ON SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

2.3.1. Notion of school announcements

Basically, if it's *announcing* something, it's announcement.

2.3.2. Language of school announcements

The content and design used in school announcements aim at the concept that the addresser attempts to get the hearer to do something expressed by the propositional content.

2.3.3. The structure of school announcements

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH METHODS

A combination of qualitative and quantitative was the general methodology of the study.

3.3. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

A school announcement consists of the two basic factors, syntactic factor and pragmatic factor.

Syntactically, in a school announcement, the sentence types which are commonly used are imperatives, declaratives and interrogatives.

Pragmatically, the typical directives which are widely used in a school announcement are inviting, suggesting, advising and requesting.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

Google search engine is used to find out 200 school announcements from the official websites of high schools and universities in Britain and the US.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

All the samples of school announcements in English were listed out and identified. The data collected were qualitatively and descriptive processed to investigate the linguistic features of directives.

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The data collection was selected from the official websites of high schools and universities in Britain and the US, hence there were no mistakes and of course it makes the thesis reliable and valid.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. THE SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS IN ENGLISH

Sentence Types of Directives Used in school announcements

4.1.1. The Directive in Form of Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentence is used to order, request or require someone to do something. When using imperative sentence, the addressor/speaker expects that the addressee/hearer will obey.

Regarding from the syntactic form of directive, particularly from the aspect of functional grammar imperative sentence, therefore, is related to clauses as *exchanges*. The sentence [4.1] can illustrate what is said above

[4.1] - *For more information, please contact Kirk McAuley, Associate Professor.* [3]

Considering from the aspect of the syntactic form of directive in imperative sentences, it is obvious to state that it is an imperative sentence because the main clause often begins with a predicate.

Let's have a glance at the figure of clause as exchange below

<i>For more information</i>	(<i>You</i>)	<i>please</i>	(<i>contact</i>)	<i>contact</i>	<i>Kirk McAuley, Associate Professor</i>
ADJUNCT	SUBJECT	Polite marker	FINITE	PREDICATOR	COMPLEMENT
MOOD				RESIDUE	

4.1.2. The Syntactic Form of Directive in Declarative Sentences

Declarative sentence is one of the sentence types which are widely used in school announcements.

Declarative sentence is also related to clauses as exchanges regarding from the syntactic form, particularly from the aspect of functional grammar.

a. Syntactic Representation of Directive in Form of a Declarative Sentence with Modal Verb

In this way, the declarative sentence contains a modal verb (can, must, could, should ...) in the mood and it is called *finite*.

Let's see the sentence [4.13] below.

[4.13] - *If you take standardized tests in November, you should have your scores sent directly to Princeton.*

[5]

<i>If you take standardized tests in November</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>should</i>		<i>have</i>	<i>your scores sent directly to Princeton</i>
Adjunct	subject	Finite	Polarity	Predicator	Complement
	Mood			RESIDUE	

The sentence [4.13] mentioned here as usual has all the factors and sub-factors of a declarative sentence.

As far as we know, the modal verb *should* has the meaning of advice, necessity, prediction and recommendation. In the context mentioned above, the finite *should* is used to indicate the advice.

In this part, I present some modal verbs which appear in the

samples.

b. Syntactic Representation of Directive in Form of a Declarative Sentence with Passive Form

In the passive form, the declarative sentence often contains in its mood the finite like am, is, are, was or were and the predicate in the residue in past participle.

[4.17] - *Graduate students and young scientists in relevant fields are encouraged to apply for participation and financial support in the summer school.*

[22]

SUBJECT	FINITE	PREDICATOR	COMPLEMENT/OBJECT
<i>Graduate students and young scientists in relevant fields</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>encouraged</i>	<i>to apply for participation and financial support in the summer school.</i>
MOOD		RESIDUE	

This sentence [4.17] has the syntactic structure of passive form:

Subject + Finite(are) + Predicator(past participle) + Object

From the sentence [4.17] given above, we can have the basic syntactic structure of active form as presented below in view of Functional grammar.

SUBJECT	(FINITE)	PREDICATOR	INDIRECT OBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT
<i>(WE)</i>	<i>(encourage)</i>	<i>encourage</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>to apply for participation and financial support in the summer school.</i>
MOOD		RESIDUE		

4.1.3. Syntactic Representation of Directive in Form of a Interrogative Sentence

The typical function of an interrogative sentences is to ask a question; and from the speaker's point of view asking a question is an indication that he wants to be told something. There are two main types of question: yes, no questions and WH-questions.

a. Yes, No Interrogative Sentence

Yes, no are realized in English by a modal finite or a finite operator or by the verbs *have* or *be*, before the subject of the sentence. Yes, no questions in school announcements just function as the pre-questions to introduce a speech act followed.

[4.27]. *Are you thinking about retiring? Human Resource Services (HRS) will be conducting pre-retirement seminars to assist you with retirement planning.*

[5]

This Yes, No question when put into the figure of clause as exchange has the model as presented below.

FINITE	SUBJECT	PREDICATOR	COMPLEMENT
<i>are</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>thinking</i>	<i>about retiring?</i>
MOOD		RESIDUE	

It can easily be seen from the sentence [4.27] above that the finite *are* is placed before the subject *you* to form a Yes, No question.

b. WH- Interrogative Sentence

In a WH- interrogative, the WH- element is put first no matter what other function it has in the mood structure of the clause, whether Subject, Adjunct or Complement. WH-questions in school

announcements like yes, no questions do not require the information, they just function as pre-questions to introduce a directive act.

[4.31]. *Who can file a Whistleblower assertion?*

[90]

The sentence [4.31] has the model when put into the figure of clause as exchange as presented below.

<i>Who</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>file</i>	<i>a Whistleblower assertion?</i>
SUBJECT/WH	FINITE	PREDICATOR	COMPLEMENT
MOOD	RESIDUE		

This sentence has the syntactic structure: Subject + Finite + Predicator + Complement. The WH-element *who* is put first to form an WH-question.

Table 4.1. Summary of Figures in the Sentence types of Directives

Sentence types of directive used in school announcements	Figures	Notes																						
Directive in form of imperative sentence	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Adjunct</td> <td>(Subject)</td> <td>Polite marker</td> <td>(Finite)</td> <td>Predicator</td> <td>Complement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mood</td> <td colspan="3"></td> <td colspan="2">Residue</td> </tr> </table>	Adjunct	(Subject)	Polite marker	(Finite)	Predicator	Complement	Mood				Residue		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjunct may belong to mood or residue. - Subject is often omitted. 										
Adjunct	(Subject)	Polite marker	(Finite)	Predicator	Complement																			
Mood				Residue																				
Directive in form of declarative sentence	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Subject</td> <td>Finite</td> <td>Polarity</td> <td>Predicator</td> <td>Complement</td> <td>Adjunct</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mood</td> <td colspan="4"></td> <td>Residue</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Subject</td> <td>Finite</td> <td>Predicator</td> <td colspan="2">Complement/object</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mood</td> <td colspan="4">Residue</td> </tr> </table>	Subject	Finite	Polarity	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct	Mood					Residue	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement/object		Mood	Residue				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject normally precedes the verb - Finite is one of the modal verbs. - Subject normally precedes the verb. - Finite is the verb to be or one of the modal verbs with predicator in passive.
Subject	Finite	Polarity	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct																			
Mood					Residue																			
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement/object																					
Mood	Residue																							

Directive in form of Interrogative sentence	Finite	Subject
	Mood	Residue
	Complement/ object	Finite
	Residue	Mood
	Predicator	Subject
		Adjunct
	Complement/object	Adjunct
	Adjunct/comple- ment	

- Finite is often placed before the subject.

- The WH-element is put first
- When WH-element function as subject the figure is: subject + finite + predicator + complement

4.2. PRAGMATIC FEATURES Of DIRECTIVES USED IN SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS IN ENGLISH

The Typical Directives Used in School Announcements in English

4.2.1. Inviting

Inviting is like other acts in the directives such as: request, advising, suggesting ... which the speaker uses to have someone else do something. However, in school announcements, when inviting someone to join an activity or to attend a course, the announcer doesn't mean that he wants to impose the learners or the teaching staff to do that.

The inviting in school announcements expresses both the voluntary and the directive of the announcers to the addressees. It can be considered as a directive act having the weak illocutionary force.

In most cases, inviting in school announcements in English has the presence of the performative verb "invite".

Let's see the following inviting example.

[4.27] - *The School of Economic Sciences would like to invite you to this special lecture which will be held on Wednesday, April 8, at 7 p.m. in CUE 203 with a reception to follow.*

[13]

The examples [4.27], indicates that the inviting here is much more polite than that in daily conversational communication because of the presence of not only the performative verb "invite" but also the presence of "would like to ". Invitation in school announcements is a polite utterance that urges the addressees to do something.

I present all kinds of inviting act with some of my own remarks under each one in this part.

4.2.2. Suggesting

In the directive sense, to suggest is just to make a weaker attempt than inviting to get someone to do something.

Suggesting means that the addressor/speaker proposes the addressee/hearer to do something politely for the sake of the addressor/speaker himself.

In most cases, the suggester shows the inferior position than the hearer.

In school announcements, the announcers, on the contrary, are superior to the addressees because they are the organizers and that what they are organizing will bring the benefits to the addressees. For this part, suggesting in school announcements is partly related to advising.

Let's study the following examples as an illustration:

[4.37] - *If you are not a manager and are interested in learning more, we suggest that you should contact hrstraining@wsu.edu.*

[126]

It can easily be seen from the sentence [4.37] that the explicit performative expressions contain the performative verb “suggest”, which make the sense of the utterance understandable and formal.

In this part, I list out all directives of suggesting act and my own remarks under each.

4.2.3. Advising

To advise a course of action is to suggest that someone perform that action while presupposing that it would be good for him to do it. this sense of the utterance explains why advice is in the directive sense.

In school announcements, the adviser does not force the advisees to do what he advises but he has a strong belief that the advisees will follow the advice because it is beneficial to them. In this way, advising act belongs to illocutionary force.

The following example can be seen as an illustration:

[4.44] - *Employees not based in Pullman who are interested in this training should contact the Office of Procedures, Records and Forms at prf.forms@wsu.edu or 509-335-2005.* [82]

It can be said that the most common and formal way of making advice in school announcements in English is the way that contains the modal verb “should”. The appearance of the modal verb “should” makes the sense of the utterance more polite and less imposing.

In this part, all kinds of advising act are mentioned in this part.

4.2.4. Requesting

A request is a directive illocutionary act that allows the option of refusal.

Specifically, a request consists of an illocutionary act in which the speaker asks the hearer to perform an action which is for the benefit of the speaker. Therefore, this speech act has been regarded as one of the most threatening speech acts, since it intrinsically threatens the addressees’ face.

In school announcements in English, however, most of the requests appear in the structure of imperative sentences. Sometimes, to make the sense of the requests more polite and less imposing, they are often added the modifier “please”. In this case, the requests are called “mood derivable”

Table 4.2. Summary of Pragmatic Features of Directives

Typical directives used in school announcements	Patterns	Pragmatic function	Degree of politeness/formality	Addressees
Inviting	S+V Performative + Invite ...	used to invite addressees to join an activity or attend a course.	Formal	Teaching staff or students' parents
			Informal	Students/learners
Suggesting	S+V Performative+ Suggest ...	used to propose the addressees to do something politely	Formal	Teaching staff/students' parents
			Informal	Students/learners
Advising	S(you)+should/need ...+content	used to tell the addressees what they should do.	Formal	Teaching staff/students' parents
			Informal	Students/learners
Requesting	(Please) Imperative Verb + Object...	used to ask the addressees to perform an action.	Formal	Teaching staff/students' parents
			Informal	Students/learners

Let's see the following example as an illustration.

[4.56] - *Please provide this notice to all employees in your area who may be responsible for the noted audit areas.*

[99]

It can't be denied from the example [4.56] mentioned above that the grammatical mood of the verbs in the utterances marks their illocutionary force as requests.

Besides the request in form of imperative sentence, I present here all kinds of requesting act.

4.3. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSION

The investigation was conducted to find out the linguistic features of directives in school announcements.

Syntactically, the sentences types in English are classified in terms of syntactic classes including *declaratives*, *interrogatives*, *imperatives* and *exclamatives* but in school announcements in English, three sentences types which are commonly used are imperatives, declaratives and interrogatives.

Imperative sentence was found to be related to clauses as *exchanges*. In imperative sentence, the subject in *Mood* is often omitted. Sometimes to make the sense of the utterance more polite and less imposing, a polite marker “please” is added.

Declarative sentences are used to convey information or to make statements. In a declarative sentence, the subject normally precedes the verb. The announcers often use modal verbs “*will*,

would, may, must and should" to strengthen the sense of necessity and obligation and so that the addressees may pay much more attention to the information of the school announcements.

Pragmatically, the speech act which was found in this study was the directives and the typical directives used in school announcements are inviting, suggesting, advising and requesting.

In general, there are three main sentence types in school announcements in English that are imperatives, declaratives and interrogatives and four typical directives such as: inviting, suggesting, advising and requesting all of which form a school announcement in English.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

This thesis is hoped to be useful for announcers and learners of English both theoretically and practically.

For the announcers, this study gave them a good chance to master the sentences types used in school announcements in terms of syntactic classes as well as the typical directives used in school announcements in terms of pragmatics.

For the learners, by knowing that three main sentence types and four typical directives used in school announcements may help them in understanding and interpreting the meaning of an announcement.

5.3. SOME SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

From what has been presented about the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in the foregoing section I would like to have the following suggestions.

Firstly, both announcers and addressees should be aware of the syntactic form of directives and the pragmatic form of directives in school announcements in English.

Secondly, learners and teachers should practise writing and reading the school announcements in English frequently to get used to writing and understanding them.

Finally, when teaching how to write a school announcement in English, teachers should base on the syntactic form of directives and the pragmatic form of directives in school announcements in English.

5.4. LIMITATION OF THE THESIS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study only investigated the linguistic features of directives in school announcements in English. I have tried my best to point out the language used in school announcements in aspects of syntax and pragmatics. However, within the limitation of time and materials, the study is by no means complete and still remains some other aspects awaiting research. I strongly suggest further studies in the following areas.

- A contrastive analysis of the language used in school announcements in English and Vietnamese.
- A contrastive analysis into culture influences on English and Vietnamese school announcements.