

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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**A STUDY OF TEACHERS' DIRECTIVES
IN LECTURES IN ENGLISH**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

The fact that the interaction between the teacher and his students is highly emphasized in communicative classrooms leads to the important role of teacher's directives. Teacher's using directives mostly decides the success of his communicative purposes.

Stephen (1970) used "directive teaching" for describing the use of behavioral technology in schools. Directive teaching is cyclical beginning with assessing of students' performances, designing and implementing instruction based upon his assessment information, and evaluating the effects of instruction. The inappropriate or incorrect responses enable students to have trouble learning. So, it's very important to give effective instructions for students especially in English lectures.

Along with the globalization, English has become the second language in many countries included Vietnam. Thus, teaching and learning English is more and more popular in Vietnam. It is strongly believed that the ineffective in English classes is mostly caused by the fact that Vietnamese teachers have made a lot of mistakes in using directives. Recent surveys have given some reasons for their mistakes as following. The most important reason is that the teacher tend to share their mother tongue with their

learners and use expressions that resemble Vietnamese discourse to make the message accessible to the learners. Also, they don't perceive completely the syntactic and semantic features, the illocution and perlocution of English discourse. Last but not least, the fact that a few studies relate directives in lectures makes the teachers hardly find out the solutions for giving effective commands in classrooms.

With the hope of overcoming the troubles in using directives in classes, this thesis is conducted to deal with the study of teachers' directives in lectures in English.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The aim of this study is to investigate the teachers' directives in lectures in English in terms of semantic and pragmatic features to provide the Vietnamese teachers and students of English with a better understanding into the use and interpretation of the meaning of teacher's directives in lectures in English.

1.2.2. Objectives

To achieve the aim of the study, the study intends to fulfill the following objectives

1. To examine the teachers' directives in lectures in English in terms of semantic and pragmatic features .
2. To describe the teachers' directives in lectures in English in terms of semantic and pragmatic features.
3. To put forward some implications to the teachers and the

students of English relating to using and interpreting the teachers' directives used in lectures in English.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To fulfill the objectives mentioned above, the study attempts to answer the following questions

1. What are the semantic and pragmatic features of teachers' directives in lectures English?

2. What are the implications for teaching and learning directives in classroom?

1.4. SCOPE OF STUDY

In the scope of this study, such issues of syntax like clausal structures of the declarative sentences, imperative sentences and interrogative sentences, syntactic functions of lexical items used in teacher's directives and issues of pragmatics like the interpersonal functions of the teacher's directives like the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of utterance, and the politeness markers used in this kind of speech act. To facilitate the examination of the syntactic features and pragmatic features of teacher's directives, such phonetic phenomena as intonation and timbre will not be examined in the scope of this study.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

This thesis consists of 5 chapters as follows:

Chapter 1, *Introduction* presents the rationale, the aims and objectives, of the study, research questions, scope and the organization of the study.

Chapter 2, *Literature Review and theoretical background* deals with some related studies and necessary knowledge of lecture discourse. Also, background on speech act theory of Searle and George Yule is mentioned. And notions of indirect speech act and direct speech act, felicity conditions and politeness are all presented in the last part of this chapter.

Chapter 3, *Methods and procedures* describes methods and procedures carried out in this study. It consists of research design, the sample, data collection, and research procedures.

Chapter 4, *Finding and Discussion* presents the summary of data collected, their analysis and discussions of the linguistic features, syntactic realization

Chapter 5, *Conclusion and recommendation* gives conclusions and suggests some implications basing on the results in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bernard Robin (1950)'s "Teacher use of directive language" opened up many available things for our attitudes toward the language that the teachers and the parents have been using nowadays. In his article, he suggested the directive language teachers and parents used at different levels of students. Through this article, one can pay more attention on the significance of language habits especially language used in classrooms. For me, this article brings about some new ideas to do my thesis.

Ngo Thi Nhu Ha (2005)'s "A study on directives in advertising in English and Vietnamese" examines the realization of typical directives in advertising and analyzes their syntactic and pragmatic features. She contrasts directives in advertising in English and Vietnamese. Her thesis provides me lots of useful knowledge about syntactic and pragmatic features of directives. Because my thesis concerns about directives in lecture, findings about advertising in hers can't be applied.

In "An investigation into the syntactic and pragmatic features of directives in English and Vietnamese", Nguyen Thi To Nga (2002) identifies syntactic representations of directives in English and Vietnamese and analyzes their syntactic and pragmatic

features. She finds out similarities and differences in these features of directives in English and Vietnamese as well. This thesis enables me to get knowledge of all related the syntactic and pragmatic features of directives. But my thesis just focuses on directives in lectures in English and it is not the contrastive studies between directives in English and Vietnamese like hers.

In the MA thesis “Imperative in English and Vietnamese - A pragmatic perspective”, Cao Thi Thanh Hai (2007) finds out the imperative mood, illocutionary acts realized by imperative and supportive moves of imperative in English and Vietnamese. She also recognizes the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese in terms of imperative mood, illocutionary force, and their supportive moves. Because imperative is a sub-part of directive, this thesis provides me with lots of knowledge about imperative which enables me to fulfill my thesis better.

Overall, no researches are found in investigating the directives in lectures in English. That's why my study is conducted to researching the pragmatic, syntactic and semantic features of directives in lectures.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Speech Act theory and related concepts

a. Definitions of speech act

b. Speech act theory

c. Speech act classification

d. Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

e. Felicity conditions

f. The performative hypothesis

2.2.2. Teachers' directive and related concepts

a. Definition of directive

b. Definition of lecture

2.2.3. Conceptual meaning vs. procedural meaning

2.2.4. Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

2.3. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH METHOD

3.2. SAMPLING

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Of the basis of 450 directives, data analysis is carried out in terms of two main aspects: semantic and pragmatic features. At first, data of the first corpus will be examined based on the six levels of Taxonomy to which the verbs contained in directives belong. The next step of data analysis will be an exploration into the pragmatics of teachers' directives in the dimensions of epistemic modality, speech acts.

With a multi-dimensional framework, the data will be examined to yield qualitative information regarding these aspects in the research questions:

- A taxonomy of the language realizations of teacher's directives as linguistic structures used in teacher's directives in English

- The pragmatic features of teacher's directives in view of speech act theory

3.5. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Those lecture was extracted from the well-known English

materials which use authentic English language. The consistency in the samples chosen and qualitative information was ensured with a set of criteria for sampling so that the instances under investigation were the intended ones for examination and were not the ones the qualitative results of which deviated from the descriptive framework mentioned in chapter 2. As for the validity of the data collection and analysis, the study checked whether the samples observed have yielded information in terms of the semantic and pragmatic features as intended in the objectives of study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF TEACHER'S DIRECTIVES IN TERMS OF CONCEPTUAL AND PROCEDURAL FUNCTIONS

4.1.1. Teachers' directives with procedural function

This type of directives are frequently used to guide students through procedural and pedagogical purposes. Procedural acts perform in classroom activities through some directives as shown below:

(1) It's best to do some stretches before and after you walk.

Take short quick steps, stand straight, and take deep breaths.

For basic health, it's good to walk most days of the week.

Walk for 20 to 30 minutes or more at a "talking pace."

To lose weight, walk for 30 to 45 minutes or more. Walk as many days as you can. Walk fast enough so that you finish slightly out of breath.

To make your heart stronger, walk quickly for 20 minutes or more. If you can, walk where there are some small hills. Walk two or three times a week. Go as fast as you can, but enjoy yourself. Exercise should never be painful.

(E, p. 647)

4.1.2. Teachers' directive with conceptual function

As a consequence of the fact that some directives contain and convey descriptive information of the lesson, students can easily approach the new knowledge. These imperatives beginning with a verb can be seen as variations of declarative sentences. The effect of teachers' using these imperatives is to emphasize the key points in the lectures that their students need to remember. Those directives are shown below.

(5) ***But remember***, whatever you decide, you have to do that job every day. (E, p. 642)

4.2. TEACHERS' DIRECTIVES IN THE VIEW OF BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

In the process of analyzing the data, I myself believe that this thesis is not perfect without mentioning the Bloom's Taxonomy. Thus, directives here are also examined in the six levels according to Bloom.

4.2.1. Teachers' directives on knowledge level

In this level, the students are asked to recall previous learned material. Let us take a more detail look at some samples containing Bloom cognitive verbs at the knowledge level as follows:

(17) If something is wrong, ***list*** what the problem is and what should be done to fix it. If you need information, ***state*** clearly what you want to know. (E, p. 638)

4.2.2. The teachers' directives on comprehension level

It can be sure that students' comprehension plays a vital role in achieving the teacher's goal in teaching. Mastering how students understand the lectures enables the teachers to succeed in assigning their learners tasks. Thus, this thesis also deals with investigating the teachers' directives. Now we will consider directives including the verbs belong to comprehension level by looking at some below examples:

(38) *Make* the key *special in your mind*. (E, p. 642)

(39) Just *read* the passage first. (E, p. 644)

4.2.3. The teachers' directives on application level

It is said that students' using the knowledge in materials in the real situations in life is one of the teacher's wishes. Besides, the more the students can apply, the better they comprehend the teachers' notes. The following instances present what the teachers expect their students to apply after the lesson.

(50) *Say* "no" in a good way. (E, p. 638)

(51) *Use* polite language. (E, p. 638)

4.2.4. The teachers' directives on in analysis level

Undoubtedly, the teachers look forward to the students' proficiency in analyzing the materials. It is suggested that we think of this level as an support to more comprehension. We will examine activities on it in the below instances as in:

(66) Let's *compare* that with lake salt. (A, p. 662)

4.2.5. The teachers' directives on synthesis level

This level is believed to provides creative activity for the learners. In this level, the students are asked to compile component ideas into a new whole or propose alternative solutions. Through examine the data, some directives involving in this level will be shown as follow

(72) On the front of the card, *write* the new word. On the back, *write* a definition of the word at the top... In English. (E, p. 638)

4.2.6. The teachers' directives on evaluation level

Evaluation level is regarded as the highest level of learning in which the students can judge the values of ideas, materials and methods by developing and applying standards and criteria. We will look at some examples to see how the teachers involve the activities of this level in their lectures

(86) To do this, you need to *know* how fast you read now. (E, p. 640)

4.3. CLASSIFICATION OF DIRECTIVES IN TERMS OF PRAGMATICS

4.3.1. Introducing the topic/content points of lecture

To help the students focus on what they are going to learn in their lectures, the teachers uses many directives whose illocutionary force is to inform the content points of the lecture such as introductions, transitions, conclusion.

Directives occurred at the beginning of the lecture are often used to introduce the content or topics. *Let-* imperatives are

employed in this case with a high percentage. With this kind of directive, the subjects of the lectures are directly presented.

(95) *Let's begin our study of vitamin D.* It's something we must have. Among other things, it helps our bodies use the important mineral, calcium. Calcium makes our bones strong. It also helps our nerves and muscles work the way they should. (E, p. 651)

4.3.2. Lead-ins towards the topic of lecture

Teachers often used lead-ins to introduce the topic of the lecture indirectly. By this way, the new lectures easily attract the students and the students can get some basic knowledge to perceive the new lesson. To achieve their purpose, teachers often use examples, review the old knowledge or organize activities.

(102) Let's begin. Last week, we learned how most fish use their swim bladder to move around in the water. *Remember, when the fish breathes oxygen, some of that oxygen goes into its bladder.* This causes the fish to rise in the water. When it squeezes some of the gas out of its bladder, it sinks toward the bottom. So, it can move vertically--- go up and down --- kind of like a hot-air balloon. (E, p. 651)

4.3.3. Marking the transitions

It can not be denied that coherent and logical outlines significantly improve the effective of the lectures. Ones who

master the ways to connect the ideas in their talk easily convey the information they really want the hearers to get. Thus, transitions take a quite important role in lectures especially in long ones. For that reason, this thesis also concerns in transitions in lectures.

4.3.4. Marking the conclusions

Through analyzing the data, it is found that teachers sometimes use directives to give conclusions so that they can mark the end of their lectures. The teachers themselves can meet their demand neither by reviewing the lessons' main points or giving the tasks for the next classes. Clearly, most directives used in these cases are in imperative forms.

(116) *Let's review what we have discussed today.* If you happened to see a sleek mammal with a blowhole, a wave-like dorsal fin, and a beak playing in the water near a boat, what would it be? A dolphin. And if while scuba diving, you ran across a chubby mammal with a blowhole and triangular dorsal fin that swam away when you came near, what would it be? A porpoise. (A, p. 665- 666)

4.3.5. Giving instructions of a process/ sequence of a task

In the process of lecturing, teachers occasionally use instructions to clarify or demonstrate their explanation in order to help students easily get the new knowledge. To fulfill their teaching duty, teachers utter lots of *Let*-imperatives, negative imperatives and basic ones.

4.3.6. Giving examples

In investigating the data, some samples in forms of directives are found to give examples which support explanations and illustrations of the teachers. Those instances are uttered in the forms of imperatives as follow:

(130) *Take something you often lose, like a key, for instance.* (E, p. 642)

4.3.7. Requesting the learners' tasks in the course of lecture

To achieve the success in communicative classrooms, teachers need to create lots of interactive between the teachers and learners. To do this, the teachers can not avoid requesting students to do some tasks in order that the students have chances to express their own ideas and creativity in the class. Thus, some directives whose illocutionary force is requesting the learners' tasks are also investigated in this research.

4.3.8. Remind the key points in the lectures.

In lecturing, some keys are important to the process of students' learning. Hence, the teachers need to remind students these main points. This results in the occurrence of directives implying the teachers' reminders.

4.4. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ENGLISH DIRECTIVES SENTENCES IN LECTURES

It is shown through the process of examining the data that

directives are distributed in different sections of the lectures such as the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The section in which directives occur mostly defines their functions.

4.4.1. Directives used in the introduction of a lecture

Undoubtedly, the directives in the beginning of the lectures often imply the content or topic of those lectures or convey the purpose of the lectures.

(132) Many people think that dolphins and porpoises are exactly the same. Although they are similar in many ways, a dolphin is not a porpoise, and vice versa. There are both similarities and differences between the two. *Let's learn about some of these similarities and differences.* (A, p, 665)

(133) W: *Today, let's move on to the final stroke that I want you to practice--- the butterfly.* I hope you've all been working on freestyle, breast stroke, and back stroke in your scheduled pool time. On your physical exams, you'll have to show us that you can do them all with proficiency, so don't neglect any one of them.

4.4.2. Directives used in the body of a lecture

Admittedly, the body expands the introduction's main points. Thus, directives of this part may have various indirect illocutionary force such as carrying out some tasks and giving instructions given in the introduction.

(134) Here are some steps to help you decide what to choose:

1. *Look for the main idea. Follow the way it's being told through the passage.*

2. *Look at the beginning and ending paragraphs. They often give the information in a simple form.*

3. *Pick out transitional words that give you important information.*

i.e., "the point is," "in sum," "most importantly," and so on

4. *Try reading the ending first, so you know where the passage is going.*

5. *The next day, look over the passage again. Only read what you've underlined. Do it again a week later. Now, each night for several nights before a test, look at your list. Take an hour or two. You'll remember some things from class. When you find something you can't remember, look it up.*

You'll learn what you don't remember this way. You'll have no problem getting a high score on the exam. Learning this does take time, though. So don't get discouraged.

Keep practicing. You'll get it. (E, p. 644)

4.4.3. Directives used in the conclusion of a lecture

Conclusion often summarize the lectures' points. As the result, directives in this part mostly imply the act of reviewing.

(135) *Let's review what we have discussed today.* If you happened to see a sleek mammal with a blowhole, a wave-like dorsal fin, and a beak playing in the water near a

boat, what would it be? A dolphin. And if while scuba diving, you ran across a chubby mammal with a blowhole and triangular dorsal fin that swam away when you came near, what would it be? A porpoise. (A, p.666)

(136) OK, *let's recap a bit*. AI, or artificial intelligence, is the attempt to program computers to have human-like adaptability and intelligence. There are four main branches of artificial intelligence, including Logical AI, Search AI, Pattern Recognition AI, and Inference AI. (C, p. 711)

To conclude, the function of directives in different parts of lectures is fully shown in the next table.

Table 4.16. Functions of directives in lecture parts

| Parts of the lecture | Functions of directive sentences |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce the content - Lead to the main content - Get students' focus on the new lesson |
| Body | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting the content - Engage students in classroom activities |
| Conclusion | Marking the conclusion or summary |

4.5. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. CONCLUSION

Directives can be uttered in many types of sentences such as imperative, declarative and interrogative. This research is done based on the conscious of the central role of directives in English teaching and learning. It is also carried out with the wish to improve the teachers' ability to employ directives in lecturing. As the result, the effective of teaching and learning English is gradually increased.

Semantically, this thesis considers directives in the view of Bloom 's Taxonomy. With this basic, the directives were classified into six levels of cognitive domain according to Bloom. The classification was mainly based on what intellectual activity the verbs in those directives represent. It must be signed that some directive examples do not contain verbs suggested by Bloom. However, I strongly recommend putting them in the levels that I myself infer their meaning in clear contexts in which the teachers uttered those directives.

With the descriptive/procedural functions of directives, there are two types of directives which are content directives and procedural ones. Content directive are used to present the theories or concepts on some topic. On the contrary, procedural directives

enable the teachers to get their students actively engage in classroom activities or tasks. The teachers make best use of the various syntactic forms of directives to express their requirement or their lectures' notes in many ways.

Pragmatically, teachers use directives to issue many illocutionary acts in classroom. Directives are uttered not only to introduce the topic of the lecture but also to make lead-in towards the content of the lecture. Also, transitions or conclusions can be marked by directives. Beside, giving instructions of a process/sequence of a task or example is the things that directives can do. Then, the teacher use directives to request the learners' tasks in the course of lecture or remind the key points in the lectures.

Last but not least, this thesis examines how directives are distributes in a lecture. The figure shows that directives mostly appear in the body to present the lecture's content more clearly.

To sum up, this study's findings shows the extremely significant demand for mastering directives. Hence, it is hoped that this thesis can contribute to improve the knowledge and using of directives in lectures in English.

5.2. IMPLICATION

As you know, directives play a vital part in communicative classrooms where the interaction between the teacher and the

students are highly required. The aim of this study is to give both teachers and students of English an overview of directives in terms of semantic and pragmatic. Because teaching and learning involve in not only the teacher but also the students, I would like to give some implications to both of them.

5.2.1. To the teacher

At first, the teachers should choose the appropriate directives to utter. The way to choose the directives in classroom may be based on the following factors: the age, the level of the students' comprehension and the time of lessons. Let me clarify this point. For example, short directives beginning with base forms of verbs are suitable for students who are young and in the elementary level. If the time of the lesson is coming up, short directives are best choices to finish your lecture in time. If you teach in an advance class, you can require students perceive more complex directives. For example, the directives are in form of declarative or interrogative. The choices of directives largely decide the teachers' success in classroom. So, be careful in choosing directives!

Secondly, the teachers should avoid the ambiguous Bloom verbs. We all know that Bloom verbs represent the intellectual activity which the teachers want to get their students involve in. However, some Bloom verbs appear at the two or even three levels such as *write*, *compare*, *select* and *summarize*. This makes the

students have troubles in understanding what the teacher really want them to do.

5.2.2. To the students

Understanding of teachers' directives brings about lots of advantages. It enables you to recognise the key points and details of the lectures. Besides, you can focus on the important knowledge that the teachers emphasize. Additionally, you can easily get the teachers' tasks in the course of lesson. With lots of benefits, students need to pay attention on some below things about directives

Firstly, directives can be appear in different kinds of syntactic form such as declarative, interrogative and imperative. So, always analyze more carefully the teachers' utterances to make sure they are directives or not.

Next, the true actions implied in directives must be completely understood. For example, the teacher says "Can anyone give me an example?". In this situation, the teacher do not simply expect your Yes or No answer. In fact, he/she wants you to give him/her an example of some concepts or ideas. Understanding the directives exactly prevents you from demotivating in learning English.

5.3. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to the limited time, a lack of knowledge and materials,

and some unmentioned objective factors here, this study may not kept away some following limitations. Firstly, the number of full lectures is quite modest and is restricted to just listening transcripts in TOEFL iBT materials. The second one is the trust of the results may not be persuasive as a consequence of the small of the population of directives. Despite the above limitation, this thesis is still carried out with hope to make contribution to help both the teachers and the learners improve their knowledge of directives.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This thesis only concerns directives in term of semantic and pragmatic features. Thus, many aspects of the two features were not discovered completely. Besides, this study did not have a chance to examine directives in term of syntactic characteristics. As a result, some suggestions for further study will investigating directives dealt with the syntactic features in the view of Functional Grammar.