Chapter II

The Framework of Theories

2. 1 Theories on Speech Acts

In practice, there are found that we can perform acts by using language, for example to give orders, to make promise, to make offer, or to threaten, and these are called as speech acts. (Cummings: 2005, p.6) There are two most influential scholars about speech acts; Austin and Searle. Austin classifies speech acts into three types, while Searle classifies these more detail, those are into five types.

2.1.1Theory of Austin

There are several scholars classifying speech acts into some types, and the most regarded theories are taken from Austin, which is later is more specified by Searle.

Austin distinguished speech acts into three types; **locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary**. The first is **locutionary act** which refers to the literal or factual meaning of the sentence (utters about something that exists in the real world, may be judged true or false), for example is 'The ice cream is cold' referring to the temperature of the ice cream. Meanwhile, **illocutionary act** refers to the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc., uttered by a speaker in order to deliver his or her intention. Nowadays, this type of acts is being referred as the 'speech acts' itself, since the utterance will make someone do something as a response according to our speech, for example is when we order someone to close a door, we may say 'Close the door!', and the hearer will give a response whether

he will close the door or disobey it. While the third, **perlocutionary act** refers to the effects on the audience when someone is uttering a speech. Such effects are being special to the circumstances of utterance – the utterance that gives effect into someone whether it is into someone's feeling, mind or action. For example is the response from the hearer after he or she listened to the utterance 'Close the door!', he or she may close the door or refuse to close the door .

2.1.2 Theory of Searle

Searle, as cited in Levinson (1995, p.240), expanding from the types that Austin has noted, makes a further distinction, i.e. five types of basic actions which can occur in utterance :

a. **Representatives**, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)

   Example: "The lasagna is very delicious."

b. **Directives**, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: ordering, requesting, questioning)

   Example: "Turn on the lights!"

c. **Commissives**, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)

   Example: "I promise you that I'll be there on time."

d. **Expressive**, which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating)

   Example: "I congratulate you for your winning."

e. **Declarations**, which effect immediate changes in a state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate state of affairs and elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)

   Example: "Hereby I declare you as husband and wife."

2.1.3 Theory of Habermas

Afterward, as cited in Cummings (2005, p.203), the theory of speech acts is also discussed by Habermas in the study of universal pragmatics. He noted four theses about speech acts in universal pragmatics:

1. *THESIS 1*: A speech act succeeds in establishing the interpersonal relation that is intended by its speaker to the extent that it has an illocutionary effect upon the hearer.
2. *THESIS 2*: For a speech act to have an illocutionary effect upon a hearer, it must satisfy a condition à la Searle. These conditions take the form of rules – preparatory, essential and sincerity – for the 'successful and non-defective' performance of a speech act.
3. *THESIS 3*: These rules place the speaker under certain obligations. For a speaker to have an illocutionary effect upon a hearer, the speaker must secure the hearer's recognition of his or her (the speaker's) intention to engage seriously with these obligations. For institutionally bound speech acts, the speaker can appeal to the norms of institutionally unbound speech acts, the hearer's recognition is secured through appeal to validity claims.
4. *THESIS 4*: Validity claims attach automatically to speech acts – constantive speech acts, for example, contain a claim to truth. These claims commit the speaker to various forms of proof of his or her intentions, etc. In the case of a claim of truth, the speaker is obliged to provide grounds for the truth of an utterance. Should these grounds or other forms of proof fail to dispel doubt, the validity claim itself becomes the subject of examination within, usually, theoretical or practical discourse.

From this utterance, 'I promise to come to your party on time tonight.', the rules which are mentioned Habermas (or conditions according to Searle) could be achieved. First, preparatory rule could be achieved if both of the speaker and the

hearer want the action of the promise done and it would not otherwise be done. Second, the speaker must intend to perform the promised action as the sincerity rule. Third, as the essential rule, the utterance must be regarded as an obligation and the speaker must commit to do the promised act upon them if the speaker is to have an illocutionary effect on the hearer. (Cummings: 2005, p.202)

However, a speech act is highly affected by the form, the content, and the context in which it occurs. It can be identified properly by relating it to its complete text, including what has come before and what will come after it, rather than by examination of an utterance in isolation (Flowerdew in Paltridge: p. 17), e.g. in the word 'Hello'. As Richards and Schmidt found that the word 'Hello' may be a greeting (as in 'Hello!'), or a summons (as in 'Hello – anybody home?'), or an answer to a summons (as when someone answers the telephone). Furthermore, it is also common for an utterance to have more than a single illocutionary force; to have several possible meanings. It can be seen from this utterance, 'I will buy you a dress later' – here it can be inferred that the speaker is not only stating that he or she will buy someone a dress but also promise to do that.

2.2 Theory of Situational Context

Context is the 'environment' or 'circumstances' in which the language is used. Context, in the view of Hymes, besides has the role to limit the range of possible interpretation, it also has the role to support the intended interpretation (Hymes in Wooton in Brown and Yule: 1983, p. 38):

> The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context it eliminate the meaning possible to that context other than those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support.

2.2.1 Features of context

There are features of context which are set by Hymes as cited in Brown and Yule (1983, p.38) that may be relevant with the identification of a type of speech event, those are:

a. **The roles of addressor and addressee** – the addressor is the speaker or the writer who produces the utterance, while the addressee (or audience for the presence of the overhearers may contribute to the specification of the speech events) is the hearer or the reader who is the recipient of the utterance

b. **Setting** – either terms of where the event is situated in place and time, or in terms of the physical relations of the interactants with respect to posture and gesture and facial expression

c. **Channel** – the way how is the contact between the participants in the events being preserved – by speech, writing, signing, smoke signals.

d. **Code** -- what language, or dialect, or style language is being used

e. **Message form** – what form is intended – chat, debate, sermon, fairy-tale, love letter, etc.

f. **Event** – the nature of the communicative occasion within which a genre may be embedded; thus questioning and answering activities may be a part of larger events, a presentation in a class.
g. **Key** – which involves evaluation – was it a good presentation, a pathetic explanation, etc.
h. **Purpose** – what did the participants intend should come about as a result of the communicative event

2.3 Theory of Co-text

There is a term named the *previous discourse* co-ordinate which is introduced by Lewis. This co-ordinate functions to take account of the sentences which include specific reference to what has been mentioned before. However, any sentence other than the first in a fragment of discourse, will have the whole of its interpretation forcibly constrained by the preceding text. (Brown and Yule, 1983, p.46) Besides that, within co-text, a further context may be constructed which has its own index of coordinates.

2.4 Literature Review

Several researches about speech act types have been conducted, just as mentioned before. Fahey, Nastri, Peña and Hancock, Copestake and Terkourafi, and Sapitri (2008) are some of them who have conducted a research about this topic. Fahey found out that although speech acts are universal, there are some particular speech acts that can be different because of cross-cultural happened in language and cultures. Meanwhile Nastri, Peña and Hancock, found out that the

“away messages” often be constructed by assertive, which means that the message has a purpose to inform or to entertain the addressee.

In their research, Copestake and Terkourafi found out that the conventional formulae is used by the speaker in order to make hearer can interpret his intention clearer. In the mean time, Sapitri (2008) found out about the syntactic structure, the intention of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary in each utterance of the Clumsy Hans Comic.