

Pragmatic Competence of a Minang Child:

A case study of Karenina's utterances

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Abstract

Pragmatic competence refers to “*the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended*” (Fraser, B. 2010). The aim of this paper is to explain the pragmatic competence of a Minang child named Karenina Annabelle Mikhaila (henceforth KAM) at the age of four years. The writer was inspired by the work done by Dardjowidjojo, S. (2000). He states that pragmatic competence of a child has been obtained as early as possible. From his research, Dardjowidjojo found that Echa has got the pragmatic competence at the age of five weeks. From his research, Echa had one of nine categories of Primitive Speech Act (PSA) stated by Dore, J. (1974). Then, by using Dore’s concept, I would like to examine KAM’s pragmatic competence in her utterances in terms of forms and functions. Data were taken from telephone conversations, video calls, and conversations recordings while playing with her nanny. Some concepts used in analyzing the data were taken from Dardjowidjojo, S. (2000), Dore, J. (1974), Halliday, M.A.K. (1975), Grice, P. (1975), Cutting, J. (2003). From data analysis, the results show: (1) all categories of PSA have been got by KAM, such as **greeting**: [good morning everybody, good morning owl], **labeling/naming**: [*bangun lah..lihat itu ada bulan..kamu lihatlah*][*Nenek kok ke Padang teyus teyus dia..emangnya ada apa.. kok dia hilang emangnya ada apa*], **repeating**: [*Kakek..jangan kerja teyus..teyus yaa..*], [*mami ko kerja teyus..teyus?*], **requesting an action**: [*Nenek tunggu dulu di Padang.. Aku mandi dulu yaa?*], **calling**: [*mami, papi.nenek, nyinyik, kakek, andung, mbak, ankel ‘uncle’, dimas, hai ol ‘owl’, hai dog*], **protesting**: [*sudahlah..! No, aku mau ini..*]; **answering**: (*N: Karen senang ya.. nonton sama mami dan papi? K: [senang]. N: Nenek kok nggak diajak? K: [nggak lah...!]*); and (2) communicative functions followed Halliday’s concept (1975), such as interactional, heuristic, and imaginative functions. As a result, it will be discussed how Minang and Western culture influence KAM’s utterances in terms of the way she switched or mixed her code and the way she obeyed and violated some maxims which affect the ability of KAM’s pragmatic competence.

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