

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Research in conversational implicature has proliferated in recent years. However, most of studies have tended to focus on adult understanding and use of this phenomenon. There seems to be an assumption that this phenomenon will not feature significantly in children language. Their language is deemed to lack presupposition, hidden intentions, subtlety and indirect meaning.

The phenomenon of Conversational Implicature which can briefly described at this point as, making an utterance mean more than what is said. In the researcher's observation of children using language in naturalistic settings, she has come across many instances of language use which have produced clear examples of conversational implicature. There are instances of conversational implicature where utterances carry a meaning beyond that which is literal. The following is an example where conversational implicature is used in making intention known.

Example 1:

(Rafly has taken Hafis' book without his permission. Hafis is displeased.)

Hafiz : Kau ambil bukuku kan? Kukasitau sama bu guru kau nanti (You took my book. I tell teacher later)

Rafly : Fis,main-main yok ! (Fis, let's play)

Hafis is issuing a threat to Rafly and Rafly understands it to be a threat. However Rafly attempts to strike a bargain with Hafis in conversational implicature.

Situation such as the above observed by the researcher have led her to hypothesize that children do hint and do exploit language for its non-literal potential and they do so very creatively.

Explaining the definition of conversational implicatures as it occurs on the children above, Grice (1975: 158) as the first person who introduces the term of implicature gives the notion of a conversational implicature as one kind of implicature beside a conventional implicature to account for the fact that sentence can imply things that are not directly encoded as part of their meaning. Instead, the implicatures are computed as a relation between what is said and what could have been said based on general principles of cooperation between participants in a conversation.

Grice (1975:158) formulates the Co-operative Principle as mentioned above as 'Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs', and the Co-operative Maxims or known as the Conversational Maxims as the principle which consists of four maxims, namely; quality maxim, quantity maxim, relation maxim and manner maxim. Mulyana (2001:58) adds that the Co-operative principle has a character as the regulation for the Conversational Maxims. That's why, normatively, in every conversation, both the speaker and the hearer have to obey it. However, sometimes this regulation is not obeyed. There

are many cases of violation of the cooperative principles. It does not mean that it is the destruction or the failure of the communication but precisely as a deliberate effort from the speaker to affect the certain implicature such as for lying, making funny and just kidding.

In fact, Bates (1976) in Rohrig considers the study of pragmatics in child-language to be very important because it occupies the interface between linguistic, cognitive and social development and enables researcher to investigate children's developing mental processes and describes in her work that children go through three stages when acquiring pragmatics before their linguistic behaviour reaches the same level of linguistic competence as the one of adults.

The three stages of pragmatic acquisition are the Sensorimotor Period, which applies to 18 month-old babies; the Preoperational Period, which describes the pragmatic competence between the age of 18 months and 4 years and the Concrete Operational Period, which refers to four- to six-year-old children. Furthermore, she assumes that although very young children may sometimes fail to communicate their intention or idea successfully, they still mean it. This is because children's knowledge of a language (competence) often differs from their actual performance. In this case adults have to help to make the communication successful by inferring what the child wanted to say.

Although Bates' pragmatic stages only describe the development of pragmatic skills until the age of six, it does not mean that pragmatic skills are completed by that age. As Foster (1999) states, it is around the age of seven that children can master more complex metalinguistic tasks such as sarcastic

intonation, linguistic humour such as irony, difference between form and meaning of words. This is because now children possess the ability to understand the details and notions of words that appear to have the same or similar meaning on the first glance.

Several previous studies prove that children's acquisition of implicature in different ages have different ability in using implicature. For example, as investigated by Lande (2003), in her thesis about pragmatics acquisition, she finds that a four and half-year-old child has acquired implicature, that is conversational implicature even in the very simple way. The other one is a study by Pessy (2006) which focuses on the speech acts and implicatures, she also has the same assumption as Lande's that the types of implicature acquired by a four-year-old child still in very limited concepts and just got in the purpose to express what the child wants.

In line with this description, the writer decides to investigate five years old children who include in the Concrete Operational Period acquire conversational implicatures. As we know that children in this period are considered to be active speakers with good speaking to communicate his mind. That's why the writer is interested in observing the children in this age.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are formulated in questions as the following:

1. What types of conversational implicature are used by the children ?

2. How is the conversational implicature used by the children ?
3. Why is the conversational implicature used in the way it is?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the problems of the study, the objectives of this research are:

1. to identify the types of conversational implicatures found in the utterances used by the children;
2. to describe how the conversational implicatures are used in the utterances produced by the children and
3. to give the reasons of conversational implicatures used in the children's utterances.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The writer conducts this study in the scope of conversational implicatures as one of the field in Pragmatics. The data is limited to the Indonesian words produced by five-years-old children at Taman Kanak-Kanak Islam Terpadu (TKIT) Permata Hati Tebing Tinggi.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected theoretically and practically to give much contribution in the world of children language acquisition research.

1. Theoretically, this study becomes the basic of the further research which is also interested in investigating the conversational implicature with different focus and object.
2. Practically, findings of this study become some sort of guidelines for the teachers, adults, and particularly parents who directly immerse this area, in order to be able to guide their children in having good language development specifically in practising conversational implicatures.



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