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COMMUNICATION OF THE CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

KOMUNIKASI ANAK DENGAN AUTISME: PRINSIP KERJASAMA GRICE

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Abstract

Autism is also believed to be one of the linguistics impairment causes. Not only having problems in the language acquisition in general, but pragmatic deficit has also become serious problem of the children with autism. The objective of this study is to demonstrate how children with autism obey the Grice's cooperative principles. There are 5 children with autism that become subjects of this study. Those 5 children are specifically children with autism that is categorized as verbal autism children. The data are speech produced by the children with autism in the class. Data collection is done by recording and followed by transcribing. It is analyzed using Grice's cooperative principles with 4 maxims to be obeyed. The results showed that most of the utterances produced by the children with autism obeying 2 maxims with the most frequent maxim to be obeyed was maxim of quantity.

Key words: Autism, Pragmatic, Cooperative Principles

Abstrak

Autisme juga diyakini sebagai salah satu penyebab penurunan linguistik. Tidak hanya memiliki masalah dalam perolehan bahasa secara umum, tetapi defisit pragmatis juga telah menjadi masalah serius pada anak-anak dengan autisme. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menunjukkan bagaimana anak-anak dengan autisme mematuhi prinsip kerja sama Grice. Ada 5 anak autis yang menjadi subjek penelitian ini. Kelima anak tersebut adalah anak autis yang dikategorikan sebagai anak autis verbal. Data adalah tuturan yang diproduksi oleh anak-anak dengan autisme di kelas. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan merekam dan dilanjutkan dengan proses transkripsi. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan prinsip kerja sama Grice dengan melihat pematuhan 4 maksim yang ada. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pematuhan 2 maksim adalah yang paling seringmuncul pada tuturan anak autis dengan maxim yang paling sering dipatuhi adalah maxim kuantitas.

Kata Kunci: Autisme, Pragmatik, Prinsip Kerja Sama.



Introduction

Autism is one of the developmental disorders. The definition has been developed for several centuries. It was taken from Greek "auto' which means someone who likes to enjoy their own life inside the world in their own mind (Veskarisyanti, 2008). Leo Kanner (Sastry & Aguirre, 2014) defined autism as a social interaction disorder due to the lack of mother's warmth. However, this definition later is categorized as Kanner Syndrome. Practically, the entire autism cases started from either birth or earliest stages and influence the creating mind that leaves them unfit to frame a typical social connections and create normal communication (Baron-Cohen, 2008; Baron-cohen & Bolton, 1993; Frith, 2008). Based on those definitions, autism is strongly believed as developmental disorder in terms of social interaction and affects the communication of the sufferers.

On the other hand, autism is also considered one of the language disorder causes. Not only having problems in the language acquisition in general, but pragmatic deficit has also become serious problem of the children with autism. This perspective is rising since in communication, children with autism meet their difficulties to convey what they intend to say. Sastry & Aguirre (2014) pointed out that most individuals with autism also suffer with difficulty in using language effectively, especially in social interactions. It is in line with what Peeters (2012) explained that autism is pervasive developmental disorder that characterized by the disruption in both verbal and nonverbal communication. He also added that this disorder is not categorized as mental disorder.

Believed as one of language impairment, autism is attracting scholars in linguistics on whether or not this disorder affects the pragmatic ability. Pragmatic is the one branch of the linguistics that mostly is talking about context-based meaning. Pragmatic ability means the ability of the language user to say or understand the meaning of the language used based on the context. Birner (2013) elaborated the domain of the pragmatic based on language philosopher, Grice, to distinguish it from semantic which also talks about meaning. Birner stated that pragmatic is related to 1) non-natural meaning, 2) sense and reference, 3) speaker's intention vs. sentence meaning, and 4) discourse model and possible world. Henceforth, Sastra's (2011) explanation that children with autism have difficulties in expressing what they want and their feeling so that their relationship with others is disrupted can be used as conclusion that children with autism is positively having problem with pragmatic.

Studies that involved children with autism as the subjects were mostly related to their speaking ability aspect as well as their language acquisition (Ezmar & Ramli, 2014; Sari, 2013; L. D. Shriberg et al., 2001; Lawrence D. Shriberg, Paul, Black, & Van Santen, 2011). However, as what stated above, the problem that the children with autism faced the most is their social interaction. The children with autism are considered having lower level in social interaction and they tend to be unpredictable in giving responses (Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Larkin, Hobson, Hobson, & Tolmie, 2017). Grice's (1989) theory on communication, especially the cooperative principles, is able to picture how the children with autism social interaction is that cannot be found in the previous researches mentioned above done by (Jones & Schwartz, 2009; Larkin et al., 2017).

Previously, Loveland, Landry, Hughes, Hall, & McEvoy (1988) started the "fire" of studies on communication of children with autism reviewed by their pragmatic ability.

However, such study was only observing the speech act of the children with autism which is only a small part in the domain of pragmatic studies. Following the trend, Lam & Yeung (2012) also involved in the study on pragmatic ability of the children with autism that, unfortunately, only measure the children with autism's pragmatic processing using Pragmatic Rating Scale. Rubin & Lennon (2004), however, provided the great results on how the children with autism involved in social interaction even though, this study was not applying Grice's theory (1989).

Considering those previous researches above, it can be concluded that the research that aims at describing the cooperative principles in children with autism which take place in classroom context is never done before. Thus, the objective of this study which is to demonstrate how children with autism obey the Grice's cooperative principles is going to be the novelty in pragmatic studies. This research will be based on Grice's cooperative principles (1989) in which he divided into 4 maxims namely, 1) maxim of quantity, 2) maxim of quality, 3) maxim of relevance, and 4) maxim of manner. This research only focuses on the obedience of each maxim instead of the violation.

Method

This research is descriptive qualitative research that aims to describe in general how the cooperative principles are obeyed by the children with autism. Dornyei (2007) explains that the main purpose of qualitative research is to describe social phenomena that occur naturally. The nature of this description is that the role of researchers is to record carefully the data that is realized in words, sentences, discourse, pictures / photos, daily notes, memoranda, and video-tapes (Subroto, 2007).

In data collection, the researcher used SBLC method by that can be translated into Free Conversational Participation Observation (Sudaryanto, 1993). This means that the researcher's role is as an observer that observes what the subjects say without interfering the conversation process. Recording and Transcribing are the advanced technique used to collect the data. The purpose of recording is to preserve data to be analyzed anytime anywhere to avoid process disturbance. The transcribing technique is used to convert the audio-visual data into written data that can be analyzed linguistically.

Turning to data analysis, this research uses heuristic pragmatic analysis (Leech, 1993) to analyze the cooperative principles in children with autism. The following technique is data classification that classified the data based on 4 maxims of cooperative principles by Grice. This data classification serves to help finding out the tendency of cooperative principles obedience. Later on, the data will be presented formally using table and informally using words and sentences. It is intended that the results of data analysis can be more easily understood and then conclusions can be drawn. The names of the students are censored for privacy reasons.

Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis done by the researchers, compliance in each maxim can be found. Nevertheless, the researcher first divided the data analysis based on how many maxims in each utterance were complied. The researcher found that only 3 maxims were at maximum compliance. Children with autism tend to violate at least one maxim. With the total of 54 utterances, table 1 shows the data on how many maxims in each utterance complied,

Table 1. Classification of Cooperative Principles Maxim Compliance

Compliance Form	Maxim	Total	Percentage	
1 Maxim	Quantity	11	20.37%	35.19%
	Quality	2	3.70%	
	Relevance	6	11.11%	
	Manner	-	-	
2 Maxims	Quantity and Quality	11	20.37%	44.44%
	Quantity and Relevance	8	15.81%	
	Quality and Relevance	5	9.26%	
3 Maxims	Quantity, Quality, and Relevance	11	20.37%	20.37%
Total		54	100%	100%

Cooperative Principles 1 Maxim Compliance

As shown in table 1, it can be inferred that children with autism in SLBN Surakarta tend to obey 3 maxims in one utterance at most. In 1 maxim compliance, Maxim of quantity becomes the most complied maxim in children with autism. The researchers found that of 54 utterances, 20.37% is complying the maxim of quantity as one maxim compliance. Maxim of quality is only found at 2 utterances or 3.70%. In terms of relevance in their utterance, maxim of relevance is complied in 11.11%. However, maxim of manner cannot be found since the children with autism violate this maxim the most. The examples of the utterances that comply or obey 1 maxim are:

(a)

Teacher Maret, tahun berapa?
 (March, what year?)
 G Dua ribu delapan belas
 (two thousands and eighteen)

Participants in conversation (a) are the teacher and one student with initial "G". This conversation took place in the classroom in SLBN Surakarta. In this conversation, the teacher was asking about the date and year before the lesson begin. When the day, date, and month were already answered, the teacher was asking the students on what year. Thus, G answered *dua ribu delapan belas* which means two thousands and eighteen. This conversation has identified that it obeyed one maxim which is maxim of quantity.

(b)

Teacher

Baik, bagus ya. Anak-anak tadi semua ikut upacara?. R, G, kemudian F

(Fine, okay good. Kids, everyone was coming to the flag ceremony, right? R, G, and then F)

- G *Ya. F* (Yes. F)

In conversation (b), the teacher was asking whether the students participated in the flag ceremony or not. By mentioning each name of the students, the teacher was expecting the students to say that they came to the flag ceremony. However, G, once again, answered it by saying "yes" and "F" to indicate that his friend, the student with initial "F", also came to the flag ceremony. This data suggest that the utterance complied maxim of quality since the answer from G can be proven its quality. It means that G was not lying that Faris actually did come to the flag ceremony. (c)

- Teacher L, buat kalimat dengan kata baju

(L, make a sentence with word clothes)

- L L memakai baju (L is wearing clothes)

Utterances in conversation (c) happened in another class and in another day. Contextually, it was the teacher asking one of the students to make a sentence using the word *baju* or clothes. As as response to what teacher asked, the student with initial "L" directly made a simple sentence as an answer. It can be inferred that utterance spoken by L was obeying maxim of relevance. This is seen by the relevancy of the answer and the question. The answer conveyed by L was suitable with what the teacher expected.

Cooperative Principles 2 Maxims Compliance

In obeying cooperative principles, one utterance, in some cases, is complying more than 1 maxim. It can be 2 or even 4. In this section, it will be shown the results on the utterances that complies 2 maxims. Based on the result, there are 3 combinations of 2 maxims compliance. They are 1) maxim of quantity and maxim of quality that were complied at once in 11 utterances or around 20.37%, 2) maxim of quantity and maxim of relevance compliance in one utterance that shown in 14.81% or 8 utterances of the total data, and 3) maxim of quality and maxim of relevance that were complied in 9.26% of the total data. The example of each category is shown in (d), (e), and (f). (d)

- Teacher Siapa yang tidak masuk hari ini? (Who is absent today?)

- G C.

In (d), the conversation happened when the teacher was about to start the lesson. In starting the lesson, the teacher was checking the attendance and asking who was not coming at that day. G, the most active student, answered that one of his classmates, student with initial "C", was not coming. This response was analyzed and found that it observed two maxims that are maxim of quantity and maxim of quality. This due to the answer provided by G was sufficient and qualified since it is what really happened, C was really not coming.

(e)

- Teacher L? - L Saya (I am)

In this case, as shown in (e), the teacher took attendance in the class before starting it. It was expected for the students to answer "yes" or "I am". Thus, (e) showed the utterance that was relevance with the previous utterance which is calling the member of the students. Besides, there were no more than what is expected to say when the students being called by the teacher. L, as a speaker and student, who is expected to answer the call, did not attempt to answer it more or less than what was expected. Hence, this utterance also comply the maxim of quantity.

(f)

- Teacher R menyalin ya? Kita belajar apa?
(R, copy the writing. What do we learn?)

- R *Ma-te-ma-ti-ka* (math-e-mat-ics)

In conversation (f), the teacher asked one student to copy what was written on the board. At the same time, the teacher also asked the student about what the lesson they had. The lesson they had was mathematics. The student performed the answer correctly however he answered it by spelling each syllable. The answer of the student showed that it is obeyed the maxim of quality since it contained the exact information the teacher needed to hear. As well as the quality, the maxim of relevance was also complied by giving relevance answer that was reflected by the appropriateness of the utterance with the question.

Cooperative Principles 3 Maxims Compliance

Since maxim of manner was absent in data analysis, there are only 1 combination of 3 maxims compliance in this research. It is the combination of maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, and maxim of relevance compliance in one utterance. As presented in table 1, 11 or 20.37% of total utterances observed these 3 maxims at once. This 3 maxims combination occurred due to the utterances that having adequate quantity, good quality or in line with the reality, and having high relevance. Conversation (g) is the example of the utterances that observed 3 maxims at once.

Teacher F, lihat papan tulis. Mau mengenal apa?

(F, look at the board. What we identify?)

Mengenal hilangan dan lambananya

- F Mengenal bilangan dan lambangnya (Identify numbers and symbol)

Data (g) is categorized as utterance that complied 3 maxims at once because its ability to convey suitably with the context. At first, F, the student, was looking at something else than the board. Then the teacher tried to bring back F's concentration in the class. The teacher asked about what material they were studying in the lesson. Surprisingly, the student was able to answer the question correctly without any hesitation. The maxim of quantity was complied by giving the answer with no more than what it is needed. Subsequently, the maxim of quality was also obeyed as the answer represented the actual condition. Additionally, by the proof that the utterance of the student was in line with the question given, it means the utterance complied the maxim of relevance.

Grice in 1969 in his writing entitled *Logic and Conversation* introduced new perspective in studying language particularly in pragmatic domain. Grice (1989) formulated the general principles which all participants in conversation expected to observe namely: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purposes or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. Huang (2007) added that the purpose of the principle of cooperation is to ascertain whether a conversation has the right amount of information, and whether an information in a conversation is stated truthfully, is relevant, and in the right way. Thus, by this formulation of principles Grice called it as Cooperative Principles, it can be used to analyzed how children with autism make their contribution in a conversation. However, there were several conditions that affect the conversational contribution of the children with autism.

Some of the previous researches that took place in the classroom (Rakasiwi, Putra, & Suandi, 2014; Yistiana, Sudiana, & Indriana, 2014). Nevertheless, those researches were done with the normal students as subject. Thus what needs to be underlined is that this research is completely different and new in terms of subject of the study. As shown in table 1, it can be inferred that maxim of quantity is the most complied maxim in the conversation between the children with autism and the teacher in the classroom. This result actually is in line with the results in the study done Yistiana et al., (2014) showing that 67.78% of utterances complied the maxim of quantity. This is because in the classroom, students, in any condition, tend to give their contribution and information briefly and suitably sufficient with the needs of the teacher who asks the questions.

The way the children with autism communicate is in peculiar manner (Baron-Cohen, 2008; Baron-cohen & Bolton, 1993; Grossman, Bemis, Skwerer, & Tager-Flusberg, 2010; Paul, Bianchi, Augustyn, Klin, & Volkmar, 2008; Sastry & Aguirre, 2014; L. D. Shriberg et al., 2001; Lawrence D. Shriberg et al., 2011). As presented in (f), it can be seen that one of the student was answering the question by spelling the answer. It is considered weird since the subject on that conversation was in the age of junior high school age. It can be concluded by using explanation by Hadis (2006) who also mentioned that children with autism are children with pervasive developmental disorders. This disorder is very obvious in social interactions. This disorder is also very influential on aspects of communication and also behavior and emotional disorders. Therefore, the developmental aspect, including the language acquisition, cannot be compared to the normal children.

The findings presented in table 1 also showed that the compliance of 2 maxims had the highest number when 3 sub-categories were summed up. It was 44.44% utterances that obey 2 maxims at once. This is similar with the study done by Sari (2013) finding out that most of the students' utterances complied more than one maxim at once. This can be due to the teacher way of stimulating the students with gentle verbal expression. It is in line with the study done by Sussman & Sklar (1969) showing that autistic children tend to violate harsh command. The compliance of more than 1 maxim is due to the purpose of the speaker to exchange information maximally as stated by Grice (1989) saying that the maxims purposes were to maximally effective exchange of information or in other words, general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others. Even though, in case of children of autism, they tend to obey more than one maxim since their communication conveyed in direct way. It is due to lack of ability in expressing something indirectly. Sastra (2011) also explained about this problem resulting in the inability of children to seek attention and feelings in relation to others will be transferred.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there are 3 maxims complied by the children with autism. They are maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, and maxim of relevance. Those maxims were complied singly or combined with other maxims in one utterance. However, in Grice's theory, there were 4 maxims that affect the contribution including maxim of manner. This maxim was absent due to the most of the children with autism were answering the questions in ineffective ways such as spelling, or using lots of pauses. In the findings, it is also seen that maxim of quantity is

the most obeyed maxim. In 1 maxim compliance, maxim of quantity obeyed in 20.37% of the utterances. In 2 maxim compliance, the combination of maxim of quantity and maxim of quality also occurred in 20.37% of utterance. As well as in 3 maxims compliance, which also occurred in 20.37% of the utterances, it is also involved maxim of quantity. Thus, it can be inferred that children with autism had no problems in giving sufficient contribution of information in the conversation. They tend to give no more or less than what it needed in exchange of information.

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