

## **A PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH EXPRESSIVE ACTS BY COL LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN LUBUKLINGGAU**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research aims to explain the pragmatic competence of Col language speakers who live in Lubuklinggau. The subject of the research is 20 Col language speakers who live in Lubuklinggau and are learning or have learnt English for at least six months. To collect the data, Discourse Tests, Interview and Observation were conducted. The result shows that most of the informants applying the similar strategy in respond to the situation given. In some acts they understand to use the expression appropriately but they failed to understand the more appropriate expression in a formal situation.

**Keywords:** Col Language, Discourse Test, English Pragmatic Competence, Expressive Acts

### **INTRODUCTION**

Understanding each other is essential in having a communication. When a speaker says the utterance, it may affect the interlocutor's act and feeling. Therefore, the ability to speak by considering other people's reaction is important to communicate appropriately and smoothly. Austin said 'how to do things with words', it means when someone says something it means he/she acts to do something and not only say the words. If he/she feels sorry and says the expression of apology, it comes with the action of apologizing. The expression of feeling sorry is known as one of the expression in Expressive Illocutionary Acts. In using the expressive act, speakers may express their psychological states of like, dislike, joy, sorry, etc. The act is known as the part of pragmatic competence when using the expression appropriately in communication. Pragmatic competence is understood and created inside a speaker since they were using

the language back then. Therefore, if someone is a multilingual, they maybe have a different pragmatic competence when using a new language.

Naturally speakers know how to use the language in certain way. They understand where, when and how to use the language that they acquire because it happens subconsciously. They have this knowledge. This competence is called Pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence can be defined as the ability that the learners possess, develop, acquire, and use or lose in learning a language (Kasper & Rose, 2001). Thus, the pragmatic competence in language acquisition will be difficult to adjust into the Target Language that is learnt in formal education.

Furthermore, according to Plaza (2014), pragmatic competence of one language is different from another language used by the speaker. It is due to the different prior knowledge and form-of-life that the speaker has. Moreover, if the language master by the speaker is different the pragmatic competence maybe overlapped. In the case if the speaker probably is still learning the certain new language, the pragmatic competence that they use can be almost similar or no difference. According to Blum-Kulka research (cited in Koike, 2012), native speakers of English, when learning Spanish as the L2, will transfer their speech act knowledge and expect to find equivalent grammatical means and pragmatic rules in the L2, but they may misuse the L2 structures. Thus, they speak Spanish but employ English grammar in producing it.

While the case above showing the transfer of First language (L1) pragmatic competence in learning Second language (L2), Teaching English as a Foreign Language may have some different problems. In Indonesia, English is as the foreign language which has completely different language structure to the native languages. English and many languages in Indonesia derived from different proto language. English derives from Proto Indo-European and Language in Indonesia derives from Proto Austronesian. Therefore, the assumption that occurs has two different assumptions whether or not English pragmatic competence of Expressive Illocutionary Acts of the students may be influenced by their L1 or L2.

Moreover, Sumatrans have a strong-rising intonation in speaking (Selvi, 2021:105). For those who listen, It might sound differently rough. It also happens among *Col* language speakers who speak in a rising tone and loud voice.

*Col* language is language used in Lubuklinggau by native Lubuklinggau. This language is the native language in Lubuklinggau and still used by mostly native tribe in the city. According to Seli and Kristi (2020), *Col* language maintenance in Lubuklinggau is in 'good' or 'positive' in family and friendship domain. People are proud in using it to communicate around those domains but they are a bit uncomfortable to speak it in education, public places and workplace. It happens because Lubuklinggau people are multilingual, the speakers use more than one language. *Col* language speakers also speak national language in a formal situation. They also communicate using other regional dialects or *lingua franca*, such as Palembang Malay with Lubuklinggau Dialect (PMLD).

By looking at this phenomenon, the researchers are interested in exploring and investigating English pragmatic competence of Expressive Illocutionary Acts of *Col* language speakers when they are learning English or had learning English. Investigating the expressive acts can also be much more interesting to prove whether or not their *Col* pragmatic competence of expressive acts different from their English Pragmatic Competence of Expressive Acts.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research, the researcher conducted descriptive qualitative research. The data derived from some *Col* Native speakers who live in Lubuklinggau and are learning/learned English as their foreign language. They must be accessible and had experience in learning English at least 1 semester/six month and be able to use English to communicate. In this research non-participant observation, Pragmatic competence test and interview will be used to collect the data.

The data were collected through some steps including non-participant observation, questionnaire and Discourse Completion Test. To analyze the data, there are some procedures which were carried out such as Identification and coding, classification, data reduction and description.

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

There are two types of discourse tests presented in three parts, namely, multiple choice test and completion test. The results of the discourse test are presented in the following tables.

**Table 1****The Results of Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test of Expressive Acts**

No	Expression	Freq of Respond	
		Appropriate	Less-appropriate
1	Thanking		
	Expression 1	9	14
	Expression 2	4	19
2	Apologizing		
	Expression 1	18	2
	Expression 2	15	4
3	Praising		
	Expression 1	16	14
	Expression 2	16	4
4	Congratulating		
	Expression 1	14	6
	Expression 2	17	3

**Table 2****Discourse Completion Test Result for Expressive Acts**

No	Expression	Freq of Respond	
		Appropriate	Less-appropriate
1	Thanking		
	Situation 1	17	3
	Situation 2	16	4
2	Apologizing		
	Situation 1	13	7
	Situation 2	16	4
3	Compliment		
	Situation 1	20	0
	Situation 2	11	9
4	Congratulating		
	Situation 1	9	11
	Situation 2	19	1

**Table 3****The Result of The Most and The Less Used of Expressions**

No	Expression	Freq of	Respond
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		Most Used	Less Used
1	Thanking: Thank you very much	12	
	I'm very much obliged to you		13
2	Apologizing I'm so sorry for...	16	
	I'm ashamed of...		15
3	Compliment You look fantastic today	16	
	I totally admire...		2
4	Congratulating Congratulations	13	
	Congrats		7

## DISCUSSION

Expressive act is the utterance that represent the speaker's emotion. There are five expressive acts such as thanking, apologizing, praising, refusing and congratulating. These expressions are the most frequently used by the speakers when they use English. Thanking means expressing gratitude, appreciation or acknowledgement. In the test, the informants should recognize the appropriate thanking to the utterance and its situation. To the response of casual talk or informal situation between classmates or friends, they say '*thank you, thank you very much, thank you so much and thanks/thanks Dude*' as the most frequently used expression. It shows that some informants understand well how to thank appropriately to their classmates that maybe in their first respond have a close distance. On the other hand, there were 6 other informants who probably think that the classmates have a medium social distant so they use '*Thank you so much or Thank you very much*'. However, in thanking to a friend in a casual style, an English speaker usually says 'Thanks' to show a close distance and solidarity. Saying 'Thank you very much' to a friend is probably more polite and sounds awkward.

In some cases, the informants could not recognize the use of thanking and the suitable addressing term. For example, they chose 'Thank you Dude' instead of 'Thanks'. In English thank you is more formal than thanks but in 'Thank you Dude' there is an inappropriateness in combining more formal thanking and less formal addressing term 'Dude' or 'Bro'.

In thanking to the respond of a formal situation, the informants mostly fail to understand the appropriate or more polite expression. Mostly they choose some shorter expressions than the longer ones. In English, the more complicated or longer expression, the more polite the expression is.

Apologizing means expressing regret for something done or said. In choosing the appropriate expression to respond the utterance, few informants failed to identify the situation. They failed to recognize whether the situations were formal or informal. Therefore, when the situation was casual, they responded by the formal apologizing.

‘I can’t’ write because you lost my pen’

‘I apologize, Sir’

The utterance above showing an informal situation and the use of apologizing is not suitable. In English, the expressions of ‘I apologize, Sir’ or ‘I beg your apology’ are used in a formal situation to someone we respect. The addressing term ‘Sir’ indicates the man is more superior than the speaker.

In contrast, between 15 -19 informants (75-90%) understand the use of expression in responding to the appropriate situation, such as:

I’m sorry for my mistake Ma’am

I’m sorry, Miss.

I apologize, Sir

In respond to the frequently used apologizing, they chose the expression with the words ‘sorry’ and ‘apology’ which were more familiar to them. Other expressions without those words were not chosen.

Compliment means express warm approval or admiration of someone or something. In English, a compliment includes vocabularies of a positive assessment such as adjectives (nice, good), nouns (beauty, angel), verbs (to, love, to like) (O’gli, 2022:59). This lexical selection is also used in *Col* language, such as, adjectives (*belagak*/beautiful), and verbs (*agam*/to love).

The test presents some situations correspond to giving compliment in a formal and neutral situation. Mostly informants understand to use the appropriate compliment according to the situation. Only one informant, out of 20 informants, who used an

informal utterance in response the formal situation. it can be seen from the following example.

1. I am the participant in the presentation
  - a. You look great
  - b. I totally admire your presentation
  - c. It's good

The situation above is semi-formal situation and it happens in the classroom. When the speakers presented a good performance, the compliment should be uttered can be a) and b). The last option is not appropriate to say as the compliment because it does not sound as the expression of admiration. Most participants chose a) and b) in respond to situation given.

The next expressive act is congratulating. Congratulating means say the expression of pleasure to a person on the occasion of success or good fortune. In understanding this expression, the informants mostly know how to express the utterance both in formal and informal situation.

For example, in response to 'I won the speech contest on Teachers' Day celebration'. Most of informants chose 'congratulations!' that is appropriate to the situation when congratulating the person, we know. The expression of 'well-done' is also appropriate to use but only 3 informants who choose it. The bias expression is 'congrats' because it is not commonly used in English. The expression of 'congrats' is commonly used by the speakers when using *Bahasa* or Lubuklinggau dialect.

In response to 'I did my entire project done and I got promoted' 90% informants chose 'congratulations on your promotion'. This is an appropriate expression to use also for older people. On the contrary, saying 'nice' is not appropriate to use because it shows a less-enthusiast feeling to the interlocutor achievement.

## **SUGGETION**

For further researcher, they will conduct similar research with a wider scope and more in-depth analysis and continue research on fish-bones by conducting simultaneous investigations and more references that can be used to explain and describe phenomena.

## **CONCLUSION**

Col language speakers apply almost similar strategy to express the expressive acts in a formal and informal situation. They can differentiate the appropriate utterance to use

in particular situation even though sometimes they failed to apply the appropriate utterance to the situation given, especially into a formal situation. It proves that *Col* pragmatic competence of Expressive acts influence the understanding of English expressive acts even though it is not really significant.

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