

The Role of Pragmatics in Developing Humanistic Character of French Language Students

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Abstract

Globalization has entered an era called the Industrial Revolution 4.0 that has produced changes in humans, including ways of thinking, ways of communicating. It cannot be separated from information communication technology devices. The courtesy that is usually maintained in face-to-face communication is no longer as important as before. Sometimes people no longer think of the language they use which can hurt others. UNNES as the Teacher Education Institution has the responsibilities to face this situation. UNNES has a role in building the character of the students. Therefore, this study aims to reveal (1) French language competencies of students in using speech acts (2) the role of Pragmatics in developing the humanistic character of students of French Literature Study Program of FBS UNNES. The qualitative approach of Milles and Huberman was used in this study. A total of 55 students were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using 3 steps, namely: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, (3) conclusion. The research findings revealed that (1) French language competencies of students in using speech acts is good; (2) by learning Pragmatics, the students stated that they are (a) more polite in behaving especially when speaking, (b) more careful in using speech or writing messages to not causing misunderstanding, (c) more careful and wiser at the words of others, (d) can produce appropriate speeches for more senior interlocutors, and (e) they have a better ability to use language. The respondents of the research can be expected to be role models as students with good character. The conclusion of this study is that learning Pragmatics can be the main media in building the humanistic character of students.

Keywords : pragmatics, developing, humanistic character, speech act,

Introduction

UNNES (State University of Semarang) which is one of the Teacher Education Institutions in Indonesia aims that the students have good character even though they live in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, moreover for students of FBS (Faculty of Languages and Arts) whose vision is to become a Faculty with cultural conservation insight and international reputation. UNNES is also expected by the leaders of Central Java Province to produce graduates with character. This was revealed by the Governor of the Police Academy and the Secretary of the Central Java Provincial Government in their speeches at Opening Ceremony of the Anniversary of UNNES that UNNES has to contribute in maintaining the integrity of the nation by educating the next generation to have a good and smart character, and also conserving the personality of the nation which is currently eroded. One that needs to be realized to achieve this is the integration of conservation values in all subjects, including Pragmatics.

Pragmatics is a science that study how a language is used in a communication. According to Levinson (1983: 9) pragmatics can also be said as a study of the relationship between language and the context that underlies the explanation of language. In other words, Pragmatics is a study of the ability of language users to adjust sentences with context in a communication

Teaching pragmatics in mother tongue or in national language will be easier to implement because the language intuition of speakers of mother tongue or national language is naturally attached to them. It is different from teaching Pragmatics in foreign languages because when someone learns a foreign language, there will be various problems. Not only the problem concerns with differences in the structure of language, but it also relates to differences in social rules that determine the form of speech (Wijana, 1997: 29). However, Pragmatics are needed in French language learning so that French learners can use the language as French native speakers, what we call *bien français*.

In Pragmatics, there are several studies, namely speech acts, conversation, implicatures, and presuppositions. Pragmatic studies in foreign languages are often referred to as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). One part of the discipline of ILP is research on second language acquisition. According to Jianda (2006: 1), as a study of the use of second languages (foreign languages) ILP examines how nonnative speakers understand and produce speech acts in the target language, ILP examines how second language learners (foreign languages) develop the ability to understand how to act in the target language. Alcon Soler and Martinez-Flor (2008: 3) state that ILP more focus on the study of speech acts, conversation structures, and conversational implicatures.

Speech act is important in the study of Pragmatics. Rustono (1999: 32) says that speech act is the basis of analysis for pragmatic studies, the study of Pragmatics that does not base its analysis on the speech act is not a real Pragmatics.

In the process of language learning, it can be said that communication becomes an important means in the process of developing character education, because character education is influenced by the quality of communication that exists between speakers. One of the values in character education is respecting others. This is related to courtesy, both attitude and verbal. This is in line with the Humanistic Pillar issued by UNNES (Wibowo et.al: 2017). One indicator of the success of achieving this humanistic character is being polite, and respecting different opinions. These indicators are very important to realize, especially in learning foreign languages. This is because there are differences between national language learning and foreign language learning and the problems that arise in this learning are in linguistic rules and also social rules. Thus, learners not only learn language competencies, in this case is French language, but also learn social rules which one them is to be able to respect differences.

Speech acts are the most important part to be studied in Pragmatics. Moechler and Auchlin (2006) refer to speech acts as *actes de langages*, while Léon and Bhatt use the term *actes de parole* (2005). Léon and Bhatt (2005) state that speech acts are actually a way to act on the outside world and on people. Leech (1983) emphasizes that a suitable way to begin the study of speech act is to know three very well-known differences made by Austin (1) locutionary acts, (2) illocutionary acts and (3) perlocutionary acts.

According to Léon and Bhatt (2005: 271) the success of a speech act will depend on (1) the sincerity of the speaker, (2) the skill of the strategy, (3) the suitability of the method used, and (4) the reaction of the other person. According to Reboul and Moeschler (1997: 28) if the interlocutor does not act properly to the speaker's speech, it can be said that the interlocutor's speech act is unsuccessful. Therefore, pragmatic studies cannot be separated from the context so that communication can be established as desired.

Based on the explanation above, this article aims to reveal (1) the French language competencies of students in using speech acts and also (2) the role of Pragmatics in developing the humanistic character of students of the French Literature Study Program of FBS UNNES.

Method

This article is the report of research using a qualitative approach from Milles and Huberman (1996). The source of the data is 55 students of French Literature Study Program of Faculty of Languages and Arts of UNNES who have participated, and whose are currently participating in the Pragmatic Classe. The technique of data collection is done by using a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using 3 steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

Results and Discussion

This section will discuss two research objectives: (1) French language competence of students in using speech acts (2) the role of Pragmatics in developing the humanistic character of students of the French Literature Study Program of FBS UNNES.

French Language Competencies of Students in Using Speech Acts

Learning speech acts of French Language is very important for learners because they can complete their language skills, not only language skills related to grammar, vocabulary and tenses, but also the right context in accordance with its use.

This study reveals that French language competencies related to French speech acts of French Literature students can be said is good. For example, when the respondents were asked "*What is your reaction when in class, the lecturer says 'Il fait très chaud' (It's very hot)?*" Most of them (87% of respondents) answered that they would turn on the AC / fan / open windows and doors. This reaction means that students have understood the concept of Pragmatics and that speech is illocutionary acts.

Furthermore, when respondents were asked to distinguish when to use the expression (1) *Je veux sortir*, (2) *Je voudrais sortir* and (3) *Pourrais-je sortir*, 71% of respondents answered correctly: Expression (1) can be used when talking to friends, (2) is usually used when talking to people who are not yet known or have higher positions, and (3) is an expression of permission addressed to people who are older or who have higher positions and is considered as the most polite form of permission. Thus, it can be said that French Literature students who are currently following and who have taken Pragmatic course have good speech act skills. The students are expected to have good character which will be developed through the accuracy of the use of speech acts in daily communication, especially when using French.

Language politeness is closely related to Pragmatics Studies. Language politeness also becomes a very crucial element in human relations so that pleasant communication is established. Therefore, French language learners must also have adequate pragmatic abilities in order to create politeness when communicating with speakers of that language.

Courtesy is a cultural phenomenon, so what is considered polite by a particular culture is not necessarily the case with other cultures. Likewise, students who learn French, will certainly find a significant difference between French culture and other language cultures.

When communicating, a person not only conveys ideas, but also adheres to cultural norms. For example, the use of the word "*you*" in English cannot be completely equated with the word "*tu*" in French. This is because French has the word "*vous*" which is used for a second single person who is not yet known or someone who is more respected. In another context, "*vous*" can also be used for the second plural while in English still use the word "*you*". In the context of French culture, the word "*vous*" which has a higher value of politeness than the word "*tu*" is not used in communication between children and parents or between grandchildren and grandparents. The communication between them use more "*tu*". In Indonesian or Javanese, the politeness is seen, among others, from the age of his interlocutor. In French, politeness is seen from the closeness between speakers and interlocutors. That is why it is still common to find French-speaking Indonesians, including French Literature students, who still use the "*vous*" even with parents or people who are close. Not because it

does not follow the correct French language rule, but to maintain politeness in the context of Indonesian culture. This is in line with what Levinson (1983: 276) argues that communication is always related to two contexts, namely the context of language and cultural context. This cultural context implies that every language user in social interaction is always patterned by the culture he has.

Besides being related to culture, politeness of language also depends on the use of language that has the principle of cooperation. The Cooperation Principle is what governs what the participants have to say so that the conversation goes well and coherently. According to Grice (1975: 45-47) each speaker must adhere to the four maxims of conversation, namely (1) maxim of quantity, (2) maxim of quality, (3) maxim of relation, (4) maxim of manner. The results of the study revealed that respondents were able to produce expressions containing the principle of cooperation. The following are some examples produced by respondents:

Maxim of Quantity

- Thomas : *Et ça ? Qu'est-ce que c'est ?*
(...And that ? What is it ?)
- Inès : *C'est le robot du film la guerre des étoiles.*
(This is the robot of the movie Star Wars)

Maxim of Quantity

- Martin : *Est-ce que vous êtes mariée?*
(Are you married?)
- Nadine : *Non, Je suis célibataire.*
(No I'm single.)

Maxim of Relation

- Mathieu : *Tu habites où?*
(Where do you live?)
- Dominique : *Dans le quartier la Croix-Rousse .*
(In the District Croix-Rousse.)

Maxim of Manner

- Jury : *Quelles activités aimez-vous faire en classe de langue ?"*
(What activities do you like to do in language class?)
- Candidat : *J'aime beaucoup voir des vidéos- des reportages, le journal télévisé, puis j'aime bien écouter de la musique et découvrir des chanteurs français*
(I really like watching videos, reports, TV news, and I like to listen to music and discover French singers)

The results show that respondents were able to produce expressions that met the each principle of cooperation as follows (1) Make your contribution as informative as is required, (2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence, (3) Be relevant, and (4) Be order. Nevertheless, according to Nugraheni (2015: 116) the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness are not always in line. This is in line with Grice's opinion that if we want to be polite we are often confronted with the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness so we must decide the extent to which we will choose between these two principles.

The Role of Pragmatics in Developing the Humanistic Character of Students of French Literature Study Program of FBS UNNES

One function of language is as a means of communication. To be able to communicate well, sufficient knowledge about the language use is needed. Such knowledge cannot be separated from Pragmatics, a branch of science that studies the use of language in communication. Then, the question that arises is how is the relationship between Pragmatics and Humanistic Character Education?

According to the Ministry of National Education (2011), there are eighteen character values including religion, honesty, discipline, hard work, national spirit, loving the country, caring for the environment, social care, responsibility, curiosity, love reading, creative, independent, democratic, peace-loving, respecting achievement, tolerance and communicative. This is in line with the Humanistic Pillars of Conservation University issued by UNNES (Wibowo et. al. : 2017). One indicator of the success of achieving this humanistic character is communicating and interacting effectively, politely, and respecting differences of opinion.

The results of this study reveal that Pragmatics has a very important role in communication, both in Indonesian and in French that is being studied. The research findings revealed that by studying Pragmatics, students stated that they are (1) more polite in behaving especially when speaking, (2) more careful in using speech or writing messages to not causing misunderstanding, (3) more careful and wiser at the words of others, (4) can produce more appropriate speech for more senior interlocutors, and (5) they have a better ability to use language. These respondents can be expected to be role models as students with good character. Learning Pragmatic can be the main media in building the humanistic character of students. Thus, the Pragmatics has a very important role. Not only providing knowledge but also having a contribution to produce graduates who have humanistic character.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that (1) French language competencies of students in using speech acts is good. This competencies can influence how they communicate and behave properly, (2) Learning Pragmatics can be the main media in building the humanistic character of students. Therefore, the important conclusion of this study is that Pragmatics has a two important roles, not only providing knowledge, but also forming students to have humanistic characters.

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