

**CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN CHILD LANGUAGE :
A MALAYSIAN CASE STUDY**

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By

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ABSTRACT

Conversational Implicature (CI) is a form of pragmatic indirectness in language use that is widely considered to be an adult discourse phenomenon. However, detection of its use in children's discourse has led the researcher to embark on a study to document evidence of this phenomenon by investigating 10 subjects aged 3 to 7 years.

The participant observation method was adopted for this study and the data collected was presented as noted verbatim. The 'as is' nature of the data presented in Chapter Four served to document the children's ability to both extricate and generate applied meaning. Furthermore, by applying adult discourse perspectives to the analysis of the data, the researcher was able to identify various aspects of pragmatic competence within the children's possession which have facilitated the management of CI in their conversations.

The findings reveal that young children possess not just an understanding of what language can do and what human communication entails, but also knowledge of pragmatic competence and the ability to apply it to their daily discourse. The findings also uphold the view that child discourse can be a source of authentic data for the study of human communication where adult discourse theories may be applied.

ABSTRAK

Dalam bidang pragmatik, 'Conversational Implicature (CI)' adalah sejenis 'indirectness' yang sering dianggap sebagai satu fenomena wacana orang dewasa. Akan tetapi, penyelidik pernah menemui kewujudan CI dalam wacana kanak-kanak. Ini telah menggalakkan penyelidik supaya membuat satu kajian untuk mendokumentasikan kegunaannya dalam situasi-situasi perbualan harian dengan memerhatikan 10 subjek yang berumur diantara 3 hingga 7 tahun.

Kaedah 'participant observation' telah digunakan untuk kajian ini dan data yang dikutip telah dikemukakan sebagai 'noted verbatim'. Data yang dikemukakan dalam Bab 4 adalah sepertimana ia dicatatkan semasa pengutipan data ini dengan sendirinya merupakan dokumentasi mengenai kebolehan kanak-kanak untuk menjanakan and mencungkil maksud yang 'implied'. Juga, dengan menggunakan perspektif-perspektif wacana orang dewasa dalam penganalisan data, penyelidik telah dapat mengidentifikasikan berbagai aspek kemahiran pragmatik yang menjadi milik kanak-kanak. Kemahiran inilah yang telah memudahkan penggunaan CI dalam perbualan mereka.

Penemuan penyelidikan ini telah menunjukkan bahawa kanak-kanak mempunyai pemahaman mengenai apa yang boleh dicapai dengan penggunaan bahasa secara pragmatik dalam perbualan seharian.

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