PRAGMATIC REPRESENTATION IN A LOCAL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

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Abstract

Textbooks play an important role in language learning as they contain language input for language learners. It may assist learners to be able to communicate in the target language effectively. This implies that learners learn how language is supposed to be used in daily communication. Therefore, other than linguistic competence which covers grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, the learners should be exposed to pragmatic information to be knowledgeable of language use appropriateness. For this reason, the study explores pragmatic information in a local English textbook written for Indonesian secondary school students. Content analysis deploying pragmatic references was used to conduct this study. Findings show that pragmatic information is still under-represented in the textbook. It contains less metapragmatic information, e.g. in dialogues or conversations, which resulted in the inappropriateness of language use. Consequently, the dialogues do not serve communicative functions. The implications of these results for teachers and textbook writers are discussed.

Keywords - *pragmatic information, local English textbooks, communicative function*

Introduction

A language textbook, without any doubt, assists learners to enhance the language they are learning. Cunningsworth (1995, as cited in Richards, 2001, p. 251) underlined that coursebooks have some roles:

> "(They are) a resource for presentation materials (spoken and written), a resource of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction, a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on, a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities, a syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that have already been determined), and a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence."

Thus, the language aspects and skills written in the book should thoroughly be examined to avoid inappropriate language input.

Studies and reviews on language coursebooks have been conducted over the past few years. Some of them have been concerned with the pragmatic information in English coursebooks, both the ones written by monolingual users of English and published by international publishing companies and those written by bilingual users of English and published by local publishing companies.

Research on Pragmatics in English language teaching materials has revealed that EFL textbooks did not contain adequate pragmatic information. Speech acts, sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and metapragmatic information were less incorporated in the textbooks

whereas they claimed that they integrated communicative language functions. (Vellenga, 2004; Nguyen, 2011; Nurdiana, 2019; Nu & Murray, 2020). The inadequate amount of pragmatic aspect in EFL textbooks may have a significant effect on learners' knowledge of language use. The ability to produce a correct English sentence can be improved; however, learners might have difficulty in using the language appropriately.

For this reason, this small study attempts to investigate three pragmatic aspects—metapragmatic, sociopragmatics, and pragmalinguistics. It is formulated in the research question below:

1. To what extent are the three aspects of pragmatics—metapragmatic, sociopragmatics, and pragmalinguistics—integrated into a local English textbook?

The implications of the present research indicate the importance of understanding pragmatics in EFL textbooks which leads to the improvement of appropriate language use both for language teachers and learners.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach and a content analysis using previous studies on pragmatics in ELT materials. The data were some language expressions discussed in a local English textbook for the 10th graders of senior secondary school. The book was published by 'Kemdikbud' in 2014 implementing 'Kurikulum 2013'. To investigate the three pragmatic aspects, the language expressions were first compiled and they were classified into particular functions, i.e. congratulating and complimenting others. Then, they were carefully examined from metapragmatic, sociopragmatic, and pragmalinguistic points of view.

Findings and Discussion

Results of the present research indicate that there is a paucity of metapragmatic information which consists of information regarding social relationship (to whom people speak), setting (where we have a conversation), and what we talk about (topics). Blundell et al. (1982) underlined that to be able to use appropriate language, i.e. when we speak informally, in a neutral tone, and speak formally, several aspects should be taken into account. It is formulated in the following table.

Table 1: Typical aspects of neutral, formal, and informal language and situations

setting	pub ⇩	bus stop; shop ⇩	boardroom; ceremonial reception ⇩
topic	the latest football match; a TV comedy program ⇩	weather; travel ⇩	an important business deal ⇩
social relationship	a friend; child; close colleague ⇩	a stranger in the street; taxi-driver; customs officer ⇩	a senior colleague ⇩
psychological attitude	relaxed; light-hearted ⇩	no strong feelings either way ⇩	very serious ⇩
probable language	informal language	neutral language	formal language

To investigate the pragmatic representation, below are some of the language expressions analyzed from the three aspects of pragmatics.

- Congratulating Others

After a long struggle and hard work, Alif is finally appointed as the director of a national company where he works. Many of his friends who work at the same company congratulate him.

Samuel	: Alif, congratulations. You deserved it man.
Alif	: Thank you very much. This is because you always help me
Sinta	: I am very happy for you, Alif. Now, that you are the director of the company, I believe the company will develop even faster.
Alif	: (replies with a happy tone) Thank you. I cannot forget your collaboration with me, and I will still need your help.

Other friends shake his hands and congrats him too.

Deni	: That's wonderful Alif.
Alif	: Oh, thanks.
Santi	: Good for you. Good luck.
Alif	: Thank you very much.
Bejo	: Well done.
Alif	: Thank you for saying so.
Ivan	: That was great. You must be very proud of your achievement.
Alif	: Thanks. I'm glad you think so. But I still have to learn a lot.

His staff also congratulate him.

Eny	: Please accept my warmest congratulations sir.
Alif	: It's very kind of you to say so. Thank you.

Bintari: I must congratulate you on your success.
Alif   :Thank you very much for saying so.

Source: *Bahasa Inggris Kelas* X

By learning to congratulate others, students are exposed to the use of language expressions of congratulating. The list of expressions of congratulating is not discussed, but how to serve this function is integrated into a dialogue. The expressions used in the dialogue are 'congratulations', 'you deserved it man', 'please accept my warmest congratulations sir', and 'I must congratulate you on your success.'

The social relationship in the conversation is quite clearly described; however, other than 'congratulations', the other expressions or what is said in line with 'congratulating others' seem to be sociopragmatically and pragmalinguistically inappropriate. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.449), sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics are defined as:

'The interface between linguistics and pragmatics, focusing on the linguistic means used to accomplish pragmatic ends. For example, when a learner asks, 'How do I make a compliment (or a request, or a warning) in this language?' this is a question of pragmalinguistics knowledge. This can be contrasted with sociopragmatics and sociopragmatic knowledge, which are concerned with the relationship between social factors and pragmatics. For example, a learner might need to know in what circumstances it is appropriate to make a compliment in the target language and which form would be most appropriate given the social relationship between the speaker and hearer.'
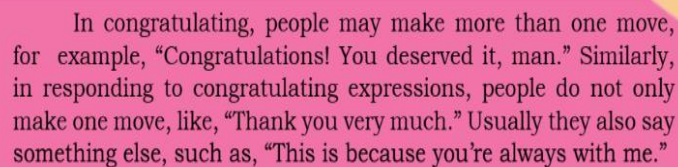
In this context, the expressions 'please accept my warmest congratulations sir', and 'I must congratulate you on your success' indicate a paucity of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic information.

The people involved in the conversation are colleagues while the situation or the setting is not clearly described. The occurrence of congratulating others does not signify a specific place. It can take place in a restaurant, a café, or any other place, other than their office. The

setting, as Richards and Schmidt (2010) suggested, determines language use. Consequently, 'please accept my warmest congratulations sir', and 'I must congratulate you on your success' appear to be inappropriately used because they might be too formal due to the unstated information regarding where the event takes place. In particular, 'I must congratulate you on your success' indicates inadequate pragmalinguistic information as this expression seems to be the translated phrase from the Indonesian language to the English language. It might serve congratulating function, yet it is not the proper English language to congratulate one's achievement.

Having presented the conversation from which the learners have exposure to the expressions of congratulating others, the author explained how to congratulate people as seen in figure 1.
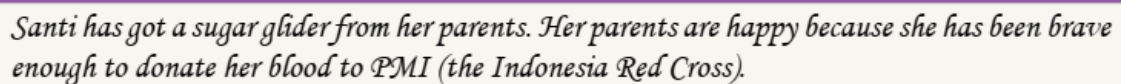
Figure 1: Expressions of congratulating others

In congratulating, people may make more than one move, for example, "Congratulations! You deserved it, man." Similarly, in responding to congratulating expressions, people do not only make one move, like, "Thank you very much." Usually they also say something else, such as, "This is because you're always with me."

Source: *Bahasa Inggris Kelas X*

However, there is no pragmatic information such as in what circumstances we should congratulate people, and other language expressions possible to use to congratulate others and to respond congratulating expressions. Following the explanation of congratulating others, there is a writing practice for this function as seen in figure 2.

Figure 2: A writing practice

Santi has got a sugar glider from her parents. Her parents are happy because she has been brave enough to donate her blood to PMI (the Indonesia Red Cross).

Source: *Bahasa Inggris Kelas X*

Students are required to practice the expression of congratulating people by referring to the situation in figure 2. The situation given has no clear metapragmatic information which may result in inappropriate expressions.

- Complimenting Others

Figure 3 below shows the explanation of complimenting, However, the pragmatic information of this function is not properly discussed. Paying a compliment does not always involve the situations described in figure 3.

Figure 3: Complimenting

COMPLIMENTING

Compliment is an expression to appreciate or praise other people. Compliment is useful to give encouragement so that people will keep on doing their best and even improve their performance.

When to express compliment :
- On daily basis,
- When someone has done his/her best,
- When you visit someone's house for the first time,
- If you notice something new about someone's appearance.

Can you think of other situations when you need to compliment?

Source: *Bahasa Inggris Kelas X*

The following pictures illustrate examples of language expressions for complimenting.

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

Source: *Bahasa Inggris Kelas X*

The context in picture 1 is clearly depicted that it is a music performance and the woman's utterance is pragmatically acceptable as 'what a wonderful performance' is an appropriate expression in that situation. Compared to picture 1, picture 2 has less metapragmatic information, and thus, the expression 'I must express my admiration to you' and 'Thanks a lot for your appreciation' might be sociopragmatically and pragmalinguistically inappropriate since

the setting or the situation and the social relationship are not explicitly stated. 'I must express my admiration to you' sounds too formal and it may not represent 'complimenting'; instead, it indicates 'admiring'. So does 'Thanks a lot for your appreciation'. It is not a proper response for the former expression. These two expressions seem to be the result of the Indonesian language translated to the English language.

Picture 3 seems to have a quite clear context (assuming the man and the woman are friends); however, what is said might not meet the criteria of appropriateness from sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics perspectives. 'Great job' is commonly used to pay a compliment on one's achievement. The man's intention could be saying 'The painting is beautiful' which serves complimenting function based on the situation or he could say to the woman 'You're such a talented painter'. The response following the expression 'Great job'— 'I'm glad you like it'— might not suit the former expression. Picture 4 might have metapragmatic information that presupposes the two women in the picture know each other. 'You look gorgeous' is a common expression for complimenting, yet the response 'It's very kind of you to say that' could be sociopragmatically and pragmalinguistically unacceptable.

The findings of this research support the earlier studies on pragmatics in ELT materials, particularly in English textbooks. Ren and Han (2016) argued that pragmatic knowledge in language textbooks is still under-represented. According to Harwood (2014), language learners are often presented with insufficient context when they are introduced to the target language.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the English textbook investigated presents less pragmatic information. The issues lie in the lack of metapragmatic information and as a result, the target language introduced to the learners contains inadequate sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistic. This implies that developing an English textbook is not an easy assignment. Material developers should be knowledgeable of pragmatics to avoid developing content that exposes the students to appropriate language use.

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