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Speech Comprehension Impairment In Schizophrenia

Kadek Ari Sintya Dewi[1], Ida Bagus Putra Yadnya[2], I Wayan Mulyawan[3]
[1,2,3]English Department, Udayana University
E-mail: arisintyadewi@student.unud.ac.id[1], putra_yadnya@unud.ac.id[2], wayan_mulyawan@unud.ac.id[3]

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to look into the speech comprehension impairment of the schizophrenic main character in the Words on Bathroom Walls movie. A descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. It is concerned with the description of data in the form of the schizophrenic's utterances. The findings of the study demonstrate that only six of the eight types of schizophrenic speech comprehension impairments exist. The types of speech comprehension impairments noticed in Adam were weakening of goal, poverty of speech, looseness, peculiar logic, distractibility, and perseveration. The TLI (Thought and Language Index) theory by Liddle (2002) was used to make this classification.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in communication. The language a person uses affects what he thinks. Thus, it is impossible to share what's on someone's heart with the language they speak. The existence of a language that expresses thoughts is not possible without one's ability to understand the function of thought in one's thinking. In fact, for people with mental illness, speech control can be very difficult due to nervous system disorders and brain damage. People with mental illness often have difficulty expressing the situation, become emotional, and sometimes experience difficulty pronouncing words correctly. This condition affects the people who suffer from mental illness life because they are easily frustrated.

One example of a mental illness scheme is schizophrenia. People with schizophrenia often have poor speech. They found it difficult to distinguish what was real or unreal and express his feelings. Schizophrenia is a chronic psychiatric disorder with a heterogeneous genetic and neurobiological background that affects early brain development and the symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions and disorganization, and cognitive dysfunction (Rasool, Zafar and Erum, 2018). Schizophrenics have certain difficulties with semantic processing or meaning in languages, such as trouble with a word or lexical selection and retrieval, priming distraction, and less proactive resistance. Language difficulties in schizophrenia are thought to be caused by faulty semantic and phonological processing or language production. This phenomenon is well-described in a movie entitled *Words on Bathroom Walls* which tells about schizophrenic life.

Words on Bathroom Walls is chosen as the object of this research due to some reasons. The problem existing in *Words on Bathroom Walls* movie is the impairment of speech comprehension conveyed by Adam as the main character. This occurs as a result of incompetence or the difference

between reason and reality. In this movie, Adam as the main character hears phantom sounds, has hallucinations, and becomes increasingly paranoid. Because of his illness, he must be separated from his social life which commonly happens to people with schizophrenia.

Considering the information obtained thus far, it is legitimate to be curious about the issue and discover more about the type of speech comprehension impairment portrayed and how it occurred in the schizophrenic main character. Speech comprehension impairment is often associated with certain brain injuries. In this case, when schizophrenia occurs, the sufferer may get a disruption on his or her mind influencing the utterances or speech. This language disorder is discussed by the psycholinguistic approach. Psycholinguistics is a science that provides knowledge of how people use language and how they use language to understand others, (Field, 2005). This research was analysed using the psycholinguistics approach to speech comprehension impairment theory by Liddle (2002) and used a qualitative descriptive method. The research findings can give contributions to give more understanding in the psycholinguistics field, especially in speech impairment and also can indirectly open people's minds and thoughts to see and accept the existence of a person who suffers from schizophrenia and other kinds of mental disorders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is a branch of linguistics that combines psychology and linguistics. It investigates the link between linguistic and psychological elements. There are three main topics discussed in psycholinguistics. They are language acquisition, language comprehension and language production. Miller (2006) states that by understanding what the mind is and its mental states, including belief, desire, and knowledge, someone will be able to know other people's behaviours.

Language Comprehension

The ability to comprehend diverse parts of spoken or written language, such as the meaning of words and how they are placed together to form sentences, is known as language comprehension. According to Prat (2011:635), having a strong understanding entails being able to utilize language effectively while interacting with others.

Mental Illness

Mental illness has the potential to affect people all over the world. It has the potential to damage the sufferer's mental health, as well as affect his or her language processing. Furthermore, biological procedures such as examining a virus under a microscope, imaging the brain, or performing blood tests cannot be used to diagnose it. This type of illness is frequently produced by a physical occurrence in the brain as a result of psychological and environmental variables. (Andersen, 2001), mental illness can affect someone's abilities, such as remembering, thinking, conversing, and feeling. In this case, the disturbances in his or her mind may risk the capacity of his or her mind for language processing.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is frequently produced by a physical occurrence in the brain as a result of psychological and environmental variables. Schizophrenia is an illness in which modest but wide-ranging disruptions in brain structure and function affect many components of mental function, according to Liddle (2002:181). Perception, cognition, emotion, and volition are all affected by these issues.

Speech Comprehension Impairment

According to Field (2003), language disorders are divided into two categories: receptive (impaired language comprehension) and expressive (impaired language output), as well as both. Receptive is a process of recognizing, identifying, and interpreting written and spoken words, according to Chaer (2003), quoted in (Murnianti, Sastra, & Marnita, 2015). Expressive, on the other hand, is the process through which a person produces spoken and/or written language, as well as the forms and structures of language. Schizophrenics suffer from a problem with receiving and generating language, which leads to problems with competence and performance.

According to Liddle (2002), eight types of speech comprehension impairments are categorized as three. They are Impoverish: poverty of speech and weakening of goal, Disorganised: looseness, peculiar word, peculiar sentence, and peculiar logic, Dysregulation: perseveration and distractibility. All mentioned relating to those will be discussed in this study theory shows characteristics of psychotic disorder.

a. Weakening of Goal

According to (Liddle, 2002), weakening of goal is the absence of typical elaboration of ideas, the use of uninformative generalizations, and empty speech that delivers little information demonstrating a lack of drive in thinking.

b. Poverty of Speech

The term "poverty of speech" refers to a reduction in the amount of speech available. Answers to inquiries and responses to the picture are both brief and lack depth. Therefore, people with schizophrenia would answer a question with only one or two words no matter how long the questions are given to them.

c. Peculiar Word

Peculiar use of a word also known as a *neologism* occurs when a word is unusual or a newly invented word is used. According to (Andreasen, 1986), neologism means a word that cannot be completely understood.

d. Looseness

According to (Liddle, 2002), looseness is when a person cannot produce a correct statement or tends to give an irrelevant answer.

e. Peculiar Sentence

A theory stated by Liddle (2002), peculiar sentences occur when a schizophrenic sufferer uses an unusual form of sentence that is difficult to understand. However, sentences with grammatical faults due to a lack of knowledge, on the other hand, should not be classified as peculiar.

f. Peculiar Logic

Peculiar logic occurs when the conclusion simply does not make sense or is illogical (Liddle, 2002).

g. Distractibility

Distractibility is the emergence of a new thought or topic as a result of receiving external stimuli from others. It happens when the patient abruptly stops speaking in the middle of a sentence and switches the subject.

h. Perseveration

Liddle (2002) defines perseveration as an unreasonable repetition of words, ideas, or themes. Theory of speech errors proposed by Clark and Clark (1977), perseveration also known as repetition means when the speaker involves words in a row. The speakers make speech errors repeatedatatthe moment they intended to utter something.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research belongs to qualitative research since it dealt with spoken language, which will be analysed descriptively based on the movie itself.

Data Source

The data for this study was taken from the dialogues in the film "*Words on a Bathroom Wall*." *Words on Bathroom Walls* is a coming-of-age romantic drama film directed by Thor Freudenthal and written by Nick Naveda, set in 2020 and based on Julia Walton's novel of the same name. The phenomena of mental illness in the film *Words on Bathroom Walls* demonstrates that some issues are related to the main character's speech comprehension impairment.

Method and Technique of Collecting Data

As this research is a qualitative study, the researcher served as the primary data collection tool. Several steps in collecting data were taken to perform this research more specifically. The first step started with downloading and watching the film "*Words on Bathroom Walls*" as the subject of study. The last step was to group and categorized the dialogues into significant data related to each type.

Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The data analysis technique used to perform qualitative research was textual analysis. The data for this study came in the form of Adam's utterances, which were categorized according to the several forms of impaired speech comprehension. Following the classification of these categories,

the data was evaluated to see what verbal characteristics the schizophrenic character had and how it happen by using the theory proposed by Liddle, et al. (2002).

Method and Technique of Presenting Data Analysis

The results of this study were presented using a descriptive approach. To begin, the data were categorized into different forms of speech comprehension impairment, descriptive explanations were used to describe how speech comprehension impairment can occur.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Weakening of Goal

(00:11:41)
Sister Catherine: Our Lord embraces all children, even those with challenges. We make it a point (Continue explaining)
Adam: Oh, wow.
Sister Catherine: Is something wrong?
Adam: No. Just wow. Ah.

The bold statement shows the example of the weakening of goal occurring at the time of the conversation. In the conversation above, Sister Catherine was talking to Adam's mother and continued to explain the school system, but Adam's response did not match the things they were discussing. This happens when Sister Catherine explains that Adam's uncontrollable hallucinations make as if the head of Sister Catherine was burning so that the word "wow" that Adam issued was not related to the discussion.

Poverty of Speech

(00:17:36)
Maya: So, what, are you some kind of food snob or something?
Joaquin: Tell her you have a big palate
Adam: I have a big palate. (staring at Rebecca)
Maya: Hey, right here.
Adam: Hi. Yeah.

On this data, Adam was talking to Maya. Adam was simultaneously hallucinating which was Rebecca and her friend sitting next to Maya who made Adam not focus on the words Maya said. Therefore, Adam answered briefly and Adam's view did not look directly at Maya but at his hallucinations, which made Maya say "hey, right here" to awaken Adam from his hallucinations.

Looseness

(00:03:40)
Todd: Check this out. We finally got invited to one of Sarah's parties. We can't miss this one, man. You're coming, right? I'll pick you up tonight?
Adam: Who is that?
Todd: Sarah? The love of my life?
Adam: Yeah, right. Sarah.

Looseness was seen when Adam asked "who is that" when Todd invited Adam to date Sarah's party. The question "who is that" is addressed to Todd to ask who is in front of Adam, even though the figure is just a hallucination of Adam Named Rebecca who is dancing in front of him. When Adam returned to reality and heard Todd answer "Sarah, the love of my life" Adam immediately answered "Yeah, right. Sarah" because Adam knew who Sarah was, only when Todd spoke, Adam was drowning in his hallucinations so he didn't pay attention to Todd's words.

Peculiar Logic

(00:12:16)
Sister Catherine: It says here that Adam has begun a recent medical trial to help treat his condition.
Beth: Yes, he… he just started.
Sister Catherine: And how are you feeling?
Adam: Uh… All fired up.

Adam gave an ambiguous answer to the question of sister Catherine. This began when Adam's hallucinations began to emerge when Sister Catherin explained about Adam's new school. Adam's hallucinations made it look like Sister Catherine's head and the entire principal's room caught fire. When Sister Catherine asked Adam "and how are you feeling", Adam answered the same as the hallucination he saw, "all fired up" which meant literal that everything was burning. Adam's answer made his mother and Sister Catherine confused.

Distractibility

(01:26:27)
Maya: Hi
Adam: Can you please make her leave?
(Hallucination) The bodyguard: Oh, I'm ready, boss. All you gotta do is say the word
Adam: Stop! Don't. Don't move.
(Hallucination) Rebecca: Adam, listen to me. She can accept all of you.
Adam: Okay, please, everyone be quiet.
(Hallucination) Rebecca: This is it. This is what it means to let someone find you in all the dark and twisty places inside.
Adam: Shut up!
(Hallucination) Rebecca: No, this can be the beginning of everything, remember?
Adam: Shut up! Shut up!

In this scene when Maya greets Adam, Adam asks his mother to drive Maya out of the place. In this situation, the hallucination of Adam named "the Bodyguard" felt called so he raised the baseball bat and was ready to hit Maya but Adam said "stop Don't move. All of these scenarios took place in Adam's head so that Paul, Beth, and Maya were confused because what Adam said was as if telling Maya to stop don't move, even though Adam himself told Maya to leave the room.

The incident repeated when Adam's hallucination named Rebecca tried to persuade Adam not to drive Maya away. Instantly Adam said "Okay, please, everyone be quiet" Whereas in this

situation no one spoke. From this dialogue, distractibility occurs when Adam's hallucinations begin to speak to make Adam pause for a moment and then say about topics that are not related to his words at the beginning of the conversation.

Perseveration

(01:19:08)
Adam: This is bullshit
Paul: Hey, don't talk to your mother like that!
Adam: Thanks for the parenting advice, Paul.
Beth: What makes you think you could go to the prom tonight? You're suspended.
Adam: This is insane!
Beth: Hey, let's just sit down, okay?
Adam: I'm trapped. This is how it starts. This is how you do it. First, it's the pills. Then the pills make me feel like shit, so, I come off of them. And that's when Paul convinces you to send me somewhere. **Because nothing else works! Nothing else works! Nothing was designed to work. That was the plan! And I was right.**
Paul: That wasn't the plan
Adam: I was right the whole time.
Paul: That wasn't the plan, Adam.
Adam: SHUT UP, PAUL! You poisoned my brain.

It shows Adam's perseveration in the form of sentences. This data points out when Adam was frustrated because he could not go to the prom night event. It started with Adam being forbidden to come to prom events and start hearing words from his hallucinations. Adam felt that everything his mother and Paul did was a plan to poison and damage Adam's head, with that Adam said "nothing else work" which was repeated four times. This will happen when schizophrenia sufferers cannot control their minds and give out unorganized words.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be drawn from the schizophrenia phenomenon in the Words on Bathroom Walls movie is in the first objective of this study was to identify the speech impairment conveyed by a schizophrenic in the *Words on Bathroom Walls* movie, speech impairments appear, to consist of weakening of goal, poverty of speech, looseness, peculiar logic, distractibility, and perseveration. Adam as a schizophrenic character experiences frequent looseness because it was very difficult to focus on reality and is often carried away by his hallucinations. This phenomenon can be clearly seen while the conversation is taking place but at the same time, Adam is hallucinating to see Rebecca and his other hallucinatory friends.

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