

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS ON LANGUAGE DISORDER OF THE MAIN CHARACTER WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME IN “PLEASE STAND BY” MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

This study dealt with the language disorder of the main character in "Please Stand By" movie. The aims of this study were to describe the symptoms and the types of language disorder of the main character who suffered Asperger Syndrome. Descriptive qualitative method was used in this study and supported with psycholinguistic approach by using Carrol's theory in describing the symptoms and the types of language disorder faced by the main character in the movie. The study found out that the main character of the movie experienced two types of symptoms of Asperger Syndrome. The first was social communication and social interaction and the second one was restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities. It was also found two types of language disorder; they were expressive and receptive language disorder.

Keywords: asperger syndrome, language disorder, movie, psycholinguistic

ABSTRAK

Studi ini berhubungan dengan gangguan bahasa pada tokoh utama dalam film “Please Stand By”. Tujuan dari kajian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan gejala dan tipe gangguan bahasa pada tokoh utama yang menderita Sindrom Asperger. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam kajian ini dan didukung dengan pendekatan psikolinguistik menggunakan teori Carrol dalam mendeskripsikan gejala dan tipe gangguan bahasa yang dialami tokoh utama dalam film. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa tokoh utama dalam film mengalami dua tipe gejala Sindrom Asperger. Pertama adalah komunikasi sosial dan interaksi sosial dan kedua adalah pola tingkah laku yang berulang terhadap ketertarikan atau aktifitas. Ditemukan juga ada dua tipe gangguan bahasa yaitu gangguan bahasa ekspresif dan reseptif.

Kata kunci: sindrom asperger, gangguan bahasa, film, psikolinguistik

A. Introduction

This study aimed to analyze the phenomenon of the symptoms of Asperger Syndrome and problems of language disorder found based on the types of language disorder produced by Wendy as the main character of the movie "Please Stand By". The study was conducted by applying the psycholinguistics approach since the study of language disorder is under this subject.

According to Chaer (2003) Psycholinguistics tries to explain the nature of language structure and how the structure is obtained, used when speaking, and at the time understanding the sentences in that speech. But some of us couldn't do it well. Some people have difficulty in communicating particularly in spoken/oral communication. This makes them experience difficulties in interacting socially in society. They may be able to hear, but cannot speak well, produce words or sentences correctly; even sometimes they do not understand what they or others say. This is a disorder of the speech system or better known as language disorder.

According to van Dulm (2002) in Suherman (2015), language disorder is disorder that involves the processing of linguistic information. Problems that may be experienced can involve grammar (syntax and/or morphology), semantics (meaning), or other aspects of language. These problems may be receptive (involving impaired language comprehension), expressive (involving language production), or a combination of both. Lanier (2010) says that a language disorder concerns on a person's ability to understand, form, or use words correctly. Language disorders are communication disorders which are characterized by an impaired ability to understand or use words in their proper context whether verbal or nonverbal according to Tatman (2005). Field (2003) argues the problems of language disorder may be receptive (impaired language comprehension), expressive (language production), or combination of both. According to Simms & Schum (2011)

language disorder in children refers to problems with either: a) getting their meaning or message across to others (expressive language disorder) and, b) understanding the message coming from others (receptive language disorder).

One of the cases is Asperger Syndrome. It was a class of autism that developmental disorder characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, along with restricted and repetitive pattern of behavior and interest.

Like other adults on the autism spectrum, adults with AS have core difficulties or differences in two areas:

1. Social Communication and Social Interaction – lack interest in or have difficulty forming relationships; interpreting communication literally, such as jokes and sarcasm; difficulty making conversation ('small talk'); difficulty using and understanding social cues (such as eye contact, gesture and turn taking, vocal intonation, personal space) and difficulty with understanding another person's perspective or appearing to lack empathy (understanding and responding to other people's thoughts and feelings).
2. Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behaviors, Interests or Activities – restricted, repetitive patterns of thinking that can impact on situations such as coping with change or coping with new situations; difficulty responding to changes in a conversation, preferring routines, difficulty in planning ahead or predicting what might happen next, engaging in repetitive behaviors, having very strong interests.

Asperger Syndrome can be found in reality. In Indonesia, the number of children with autism increases every year. Patients with this syndrome are often the target of bullying, especially in the age of children and adolescents because someone who has Asperger Syndrome is lack of social interaction skills, unusual speech patterns, and other special behaviors. People around them must support them fully because people with Asperger Syndrome tend to

have talent. They will continue to talk about the things they like. Support is needed to help them learn to face the world with limitations. Therefore, it is important for us to know how their characters and symptoms and how they communicate.

For example in a movie named "Please Stand By" that the main character experienced the syndrome. The interesting point about Wendy as the main character was her courage to fight the fear that she possessed. Even though she suffered from Asperger Syndrome, she still proved her tenacity to achieve her desires. The limitations that she had did not make her hopeless. This movie can motivate other children who suffer from Asperger Syndrome or other types of Autism to learn and face the world in terms of different glasses. It means, even though they experience difficulties in their daily live, it does not mean the syndrome can burn their enthusiasm in reaching their dreams.

There were several previous studies related to language disorder and Asperger Syndrome. Firstly was belonged to Octavia (2018) who focused on the use of expressive language by Autism Sufferer. Secondly, a study was conducted by Dewanti (2013). Her study focused on verbal and non-verbal language problems in Asperger Syndrome patients in the "Adam" film. Thirdly, the study was conducted by Levia, Jufrizal, and Marlina (2019) entitled "The Study of Language Disorders of an Autistic Savant Portrayed Levinson's in The Rain Man Film". This current study is analyzing language disorders from movie, but this current study focuses on expressive and receptive language disorders.

B. Research Method

This study was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative research because it analyzed and described language disorders that focus on expressive and receptive language disorders. The movie titled "Please Stand By" was used as the source of data in this study which was aired in 2018. The movie's duration was 1 hour 33 minutes. In addition, the movie scripts were also used to

analyze information about Wendy's language used as the main character in the movie who suffered Asperger Syndrome. In collecting the data, the researcher had searched for the movie and downloaded along with subtitles. Then watched carefully and made some notes related to the data required for the analyzing. Carrol's theory was used as the reference in analyzing expressive and receptive language disorder as quoted by Levia et al. (2019) and quoted earlier by Sa'diyah (2008). The symptoms of the syndrome experienced by the main character as well as the habits and the physical appearance were observed and noted during the watching of the movie. Then checked the result and made the conclusion.

C. Result and Discussion

There were 12 data found to support the symptoms analysis of Asperger Syndrome and 15 data to support the types of Language Disorder in total. The data were displayed by codes which were used to refer some points such as D as datum, M as minute on which the time was taken by the scene in the movie.

1. The Symptoms of Asperger Syndrome

There were found two symptoms: social communication and social interaction. Three particular characteristics/behaviors of the first symptoms were also found. They were having difficulty in forming relationships or making conversations, difficulty in using and understanding social cues, and difficulty in understanding and responding to other people's thoughts and feelings.

Whereas in the second symptoms it was found five characteristics/behaviors namely restricted, repetitive patterns of thinking that can impact on situations such as coping with change or coping with new situations, difficulty in responding to changes in a conversation and preferring routines, difficulty in planning ahead or predicting what might happen next, engaging in repetitive behavior, and having very strong interests.

a. Social Communication and Social Interaction

In this symptom, there were three characteristics/behaviors observed. First was difficulty in forming relationships or making conversation, second was difficulty in using and understanding social cues and the third was difficulty in understanding and responding to other people's thoughts and feelings.

Datum 01

Audrey : "Hi, Wendy."

Wendy : "Hi, Audrey."

Audrey : "You look nice."

Wendy : "Thank you."

(D 01, M 18m:54s)

In Datum 01 Wendy pointed out that she had difficulty starting a conversation or finding a conversation topic.

Datum 02

Scottie : "Okay. Can we try three seconds of eye contact? Let's try...three seconds."

Wendy : (Do eye contact for three seconds)

Scottie : "Great. Three seconds of eye contact."

(D 02, M 03m: 40s)

In Datum 02 Wendy had difficulty in using and understanding social cues such as eye contact, gestures, facial expressions intonation or voice volume.

Datum 03

Wendy : "I can take care of myself now. So, I'm ready to go home with you, and I can help you take care of Ruby."

Audrey : "Wendy, you can't. You can't take care of a baby."

Wendy : "How do you know? How do you know I can't?"

(D 03, M 20m:56s)

In Datum 03 Wendy insisted on going home with her sister with the belief that she could take care of herself and her niece. But Audrey didn't allow it because Wendy often experienced tantrums and Audrey was afraid of not being able to control her or look after her. This scene showed that Wendy was difficult to understand and respond other's thoughts and feelings.

b. Restricted, Repetitive Patterns of Behavior, Interests or Activities

In this symptom, there were five characteristics/behaviors to be pointed out about the Asperger Syndrome. First was restricted, repetitive patterns of thinking that can impact on situations such as coping with change or coping with new situations, second was difficulty in responding to changes in a conversation and preferring routines, third was difficulty in planning ahead or predicting what might happen next, fourth was engaging in repetitive behaviors, and fifth was having very strong interests.

Datum 04

Wendy : "Your completed, properly formatted, printed script must be received by February 16th, 5:00 pm."

"Your completed, properly formatted, printed script must be received by February 16th, 5:00 pm."

"Your completed, properly formatted, printed script... must be received by February 16th, 5:00 pm."

(D 04, M 58m:57s)

In Datum 04 Wendy appeared to be talking to herself. Like trying to solve the problem through self-suggestion that repeatedly say the same sentence.

Datum 05

Scottie : "Okay, now it's time to work on your "Names and Places"."

Wendy : "Names and Places" sucks!"

Scottie : "Well, it's not my favorite activity either, but we need to do it."

Wendy : "Can I watch TV?"

(D 05, M 06m:30s)

In Datum 05 Wendy showed difficulty in responding to changes in a conversation, preferring routines because she did not like the discussion with discussion.

Datum 06

Wendy : "How much will a bus to Los Angeles cost? Probably the same as the 321 bus, because it is also a bus. How long will it take to get there? I don't know. What if I forget where I am? What if I have to pee?"

(D 06, M 25m:12s)

In Datum 06 showed Wendy's difficulty in planning ahead or predicting what might happen next.

Datum 07

Wendy : "My everyday schedule... Wake up. Make bed. Get towel and toiletries. If my towel smells funny, put it in the hamper and get a new towel. Go into bathroom. Check to see if I'm having my period. If I am having my period, remember that I am having my period."

(D 07, M 04m:23s)

In Datum 07 Wendy was seen doing routine activities in the morning.

Datum 08

Wendy : "I put one thumb up to help me remember. If I am having my period, put on a Kotex maxi pad, and put my thumb down. Put on an outfit. Monday, orange. Tuesday, lavender. Wednesday, blue. Thursday, dots. Friday, yellow. Saturday, purple. Sunday is red. Go into the kitchen to make toast."

(D 08, M 04m: 41s)

In Datum 08 Wendy had a strange way to find out her menstruation is by raising her thumb and then lowering it when she was wearing pads. For normal people it certainly has no effect. Even we don't to choose clothes without having to give a schedule.

Datum 09

Wendy : "Go to work. Turn right into Page Street. Turn right into Buchanan Street. And when I get to Market Street, stop. Because I'm not allowed to cross Market Street under any circumstances. Wait for the 321 Bus to Stonestown Galleria. Remember to smile at work, while I say... Welcome to Cinnabon! Would you like a Cinnabon? But don't repeat the words too quickly. And make it sound different each time."

(D 09, M 05m:10s)

In Datum 09 Wendy showed that she was obedient; obedient to traffic and obedient to Scottie.

Datum 10

Wendy : "Three pm, study."

Scottie : "Yeah, see how his mouth goes down?"

Wendy : "Four pm, take Pete for a walk. When you see the man with the legs, it means you can walk. When you see the red hand, it means that you have to hold up your hand before you can walk. Six pm, watch "Star Trek" on TV Land." (space sound effects). 7:00 pm, dinner. 8:00 pm, chores. And then I have free time before I go to bed."

(D 10, M 05m:53s)

In Datum 10 there was a Wendy's scene while study expressions through photographs, Wendy was also seen teaching her dog about traffic signs. Wendy also seemed to be watching Star Trek with her pet dog while knitting. Again and again Wendy did not look at Scottie as she explained it all.

Datum 11

Wendy : "Light. It can travel for millions of years before finally reaching its destination. It goes lonely and alone... hoping that it will reach someone. But what if it never arrives? What if it never finds a home? Because space is so vast... and time is so long...and out here, it's so easy... to get lost."

(D 11, M 41s)

Wendy also had a very strong interest on something-Star Trek. Datum 11 appeared in the first seconds of the movie. Wendy seemed to make and write the script. In the next dialogue she said her routine was watching Star Trek. Wendy really liked Star Trek. Wendy was looked very eager to focus on writing the script (using earphones).

Datum 12

Rose : "Are you going to Paramount Pictures to be an actress? You're pretty enough."

Wendy : "No I'm a writer. I wrote a script. It's 427 pages long."

Rose : "Oh, my goodness! What's it about?."

Wendy : "It's about two old friends who are separated and one of them, Spock, is a Vulcan. He discovers how to have a sense of humor. He makes a special study of the anatomy of jokes which were a part of old, or primitive, Vulcan culture. He relates different parts of a joke to different facial expressions according to old holographic

archives... and he figures out a scientific equation for a sense of humor.”

(D 12, M 48m:11s)

Datum 12 also emphasized the interest of Wendy about writing and Star Trek movie more deeply. This was shown when she talked to an old woman named Rose in a bus to Los Angeles. Wendy said that she was a writer and had written 427 pages of scripts about Star Trek in detail.

2. The Types of Language Disorder

During the observation of the movie, it was found there were two types of language disorder experienced by Wendy as the main character with Asperger Syndrome. They were expressive language disorder and receptive language disorder. Both of them owned characteristics which were shown in the data.

a. Expressive Language Disorder

In this movie, there were five characteristics/behaviors observed from Wendy as the Asperger Syndrome sufferer related to the types of language disorder.

Datum 01

Wendy : “Go into the kitchen to make toast unless Richard "the Fuck Face" is hogging the toaster.”

Scottie : “Wendy.”

Wendy : “Unless Richard is hogging the toaster.”

(D 01, M 05m:04s)

In Datum 01 Wendy showed word-finding difficulties. Wendy added the word "The fuck face" after Richard's name. The word was supposed a bad word.

Datum 02

Wendy : “Does this bus go to Los Angeles?”

Driver : “No, you need to go to the Transbay Terminal on Fremont Street.” That's on the other side of Market Street!”

Wendy : “Okay, thank you!”

Driver : “Whoa, whoa, whoa! The other way, the other way!”

Wendy : “Okay, thank you!”

(D 02, M 30m:18s)

In Datum 02 Wendy experienced a limited vocabulary. Wendy said the same thing to

the driver. Wendy did not do improvisation on her sentence.

Datum 03

Wendy : “I've got a ticket. It's a round-trip ticket because I'm coming back.”

Bus driver : “Great. Can I have it?”

(D 03, M 33m:01s)

In Datum 03 Wendy experienced overuse of non-specific words. In the sentence "It's a round-trip ticket because I'm coming back", Wendy explained two words that did not change the perception of others at all.

Datum 04

Wendy : “Piece of shit... Do you know how hard it is to write something? Do you know how hard it is to write something? Do you know how hard it is to write something? Do you know how hard it is to write something? All the thinking and planning and re-writing of everything you already wrote for somebody else to read? All the nights and days spent thinking? Thinking about the right words to say... thinking about the best way to say them? Because the story you wanna tell means so much to you? All those people that wrote those scripts, somebody's going to read them. And I just want a chance! Just like everyone else got!” (D 04, M 78m:30s)

In Datum 04 Wendy used more than reliance on stock phrases. It seemed that Wendy was having a hard time expressing her sentence.

Datum 05

Wendy : “Today is the last day to send it in, but I didn't want to send it in until it was absolutely ready. So, I double-checked and triple-checked, and quadruple-checked, and it's ready to go to the post office now. So, if we mail it, it'll get there right on time. It's ready to go. So, we can go to the post office and then I can go home with you.”

(D 05, M 20m:13s)

In datum 05 Wendy had difficulty of coming to the point. This was shown from the wordy of Wendy's sentence. Wendy made a very long sentence to her sister Audrey which was not the subject of conversation.

Datum 06

Ticket Seller : "Well, I can't stop you. But you be careful, okay?"

Wendy : "I am careful. I don't walk when the sign says, "Don't walk", and... I only crossed Market Street one time."

Ticket Seller : "Okay"

(D 06, M60m, 06s)

Datum 06 scene showed other Wendy's difficulty of coming to the point. Wendy explained what she had been doing in detail.

b. Receptive Language Disorder

The types of receptive language disorder showed six characteristics/behaviors of Asperger Syndrome by Wendy.

Datum 07

Driver : "You need a ticket."

Wendy: "What?"

Driver : "You need a ticket to ride the bus."

Wendy: "Oh."

Driver : "You...need... Hey, little missy... Go buy a Ticket!"

(D 07, M 32m:02s)

In Datum 07 Wendy showed a lack of auditory and attention in the conversation. In this case, Wendy was not deaf or hearing impaired physically but she had limitations in active listening. Active listening involves listening to all the senses. Wendy was looked like not appearing to listen. This did not mean that Wendy had a hearing loss. The state of her brain made it difficult for Wendy to receive information from speakers.

Datum 08

Ticket Seller : "That'll be 22 dollars. That's not going to be enough money."

Wendy : "It's \$7.52, I counted it."

Ticket Seller : "Next!"

Wendy : "But it's almost enough. I need to get to Los Angeles today because today is the contest deadline. \$7.52 is not enough, I know, but is there some way that..."

Ticket Seller : "Next customer, please!"

Wendy : "Can it be enough? Please...Just for today?"

Ticket Seller : "You're holding up the line. Let's keep moving!" (moving the money)

(D 08, M 67m:58s)

In Datum 08 Wendy had difficulty following verbal directions. The ticket seller has explained that Wendy's money was not enough to buy ticket. But Wendy still counted her money in the queue line.

Datum 09

Man : "Where are you going?"

Wendy : "I need to drop off my script."

Man : "Ah, yeah, you 't drop that off here."

Wendy : "Your script must be received by February 16th at 5:00 pm."

Man : "Yes, and we only accept entries by mail. Okay?"

Wendy : "But this is the mailroom."

Man : "Look... We don't accept personal deliveries. All scripts must be postmarked and mailed. No exceptions, okay?"

(D 09. M60m:17s)

In Datum 09 Wendy showed that she had difficulty in following other people's directions as well.

Datum 10

Ticket Seller : "One way or round-trip?"

Wendy : " What?"

Ticket Seller : "Are you staying there or are you coming back?"

Wendy : "Coming back."

(D 10, M 32m:25s)

In Datum 10 Wendy showed that there was a limited vocabulary in the receptivity. This occurred when a sufferer has difficulty to interpret a new word that she had never heard of.

Datum 11

Nurse : "You are going to Ward C."

Wendy : "I don't want to go to Ward C. I want to go to Paramount Pictures."

Nurse : "Well, I'm sorry, little lady it looks like you are going to Ward C."

Wendy : "Where am I?"

(D 11, M53m:54s)

Datum 11 also described the data concerning the limited vocabulary. Wendy did not seem to understand what Ward C. Plainly; Wendy said "I don't want to go to Ward C. I want to go to Paramount Pictures." Ward C was a

room in the hospital for patients who will be hospitalized.

Datum 12

Rose : "You mean you're out here all by yourself?"

Wendy : "No, I have Pete with me."

Rose : "Yeah, but who's taking care of you?"

Wendy : "I am."

(D 12, M 47m:18s)

In Datum 12 Wendy tended to have difficulty in understanding complex sentences. Wendy did not understand the meaning of Rose's saying. As normal people, we surely know that what Rose meant was the human of someone who had gone with Wendy.

Datum 13

Audrey : "Wendy, I've been thinking... And... I've been trying to figure out... what Mom would have wanted for us."

Wendy : "Well, Mom's dead. So, she doesn't want anything anymore."

(D 13, M 82m:31s)

In Datum 13 Wendy had limitations in interpreting the word, Wendy considered her mother had passed away along with her dreams. Wendy did not have to be what her mother wanted because her mother was no longer with her.

Datum 14

Wendy : "Have you read my script yet?"

Scottie : "I'm working on it."

(D14, M 17m:24s)

In Datum 14 Wendy tended to show her disinterest in the topic discussed by Scottie. She performed a behavior which showed lack of interest on something she disliked.

Datum 15

Audrey : "So, Wendy, I came to visit today because there's something I need to tell you. Um, Jack has finally found a new job and..."

Wendy : "There's a Star Trek script-writing contest."

Adrey : "Oh, okay, cool."

(D15, M20m:03s)

Datum 15 was still about demonstrating lack of interest. It was very clear that Wendy was not interested in what she discussed

with her sister. Wendy diverted their conversation with a Star Trek script writing contest that she participated in.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

There are some conclusions that can be drawn from this study. First is about the physical appearance. Asperger Syndrome (AS) sufferer might look like a normal person in the appearance (face looking and way of walking). There was nothing that can distinguish someone who suffered from Asperger Syndrome (AS) with people in general. The sufferer only had difficulty when communicating and interacting with others. Showing facial expressions and better in word choices but having tendencies not to see the face of the interlocutor. Having routine habits and might strictly obeyed the rules.

The second conclusion is about the types of symptoms and the types of language disorder found. The first symptom was social communication and social interaction and the second one was restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities. The second symptom was accompanied with five particular characteristics/behaviours; they were restricted, repetitive patterns of thinking that can impact on situations such as coping with change or coping with new situations, difficulty in responding to changes in a conversation and preferring routines, difficulty in planning ahead or predicting what might happen next, engaging in repetitive behavior, and having very strong interests. It was found two types of language disorder. The first was expressive language disorder with five particular characteristics/behaviours. The second type was receptive language disorder with six particular characteristics/behaviours.

This study shows the information and knowledge about the symptoms and the types of language disorder of Asperger Syndrome based on the movie titled "Please Stand By". It is also expected that this analysis can give more explanation and understanding about Asperger Syndrome to the readers especially for other researchers.

When people recognize the syndrome earlier, they can find the solution immediately to anticipate.

It is realized that this study is still lack of more complete data which might still confuse the readers to know more about language disorder. It is hoped that other researchers who want to examine language disorder can develop other and latest theories and more detailed descriptions to make easier for other researchers. Some other new movies regarding language disorder also can be used with other cases besides Asperger Syndrome to add more research. In addition, it is hoped that we can give more attention and understanding as normal people to those who have certain limitations so that they do not feel alienated.

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