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## Identification of Speech Acts Performed by a 25-26 Months Old Kholosi-Persian Bilingual Child

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Salah Addin Rahimi

Department of Foreign Languages & Linguistics, Shiraz University  
Iran

### ABSTRACT

Language acquisition is the process whereby child being exposed to hearing how language is employed within its environment. (Vygotsky, 1986). Nino and Snow (1988) stated that the prominent aspect for communicative speech is when the individual has particular purposes of conducting various social communicative act which speaker performs through verbal means. This study aims to give description on the types of the speech acts. To this end, the corpus data is taken from kholosi child. The family was living in village, Kholos is located in kookherd district of Bastak region in the western part of Hormozgan province, southern Iran. This research was single cases study, when he was between 25 and 26 months. The researcher selected case study method due to achieve in – depth understanding of single aspect of the subject under investigation, because the aims of an investigation are understanding, extension of experience and rise the knowledge regarding the research (Stake, 1978). Data was collected with method of observation and note taking. The researcher tried to gather the data through the stimulating technique. Data gathering was done for 1 month from June-July 2017. Data collecting processes carried out regularly that is every day. The analysis of data indicates that the child had verbalized 34 speech acts when he was between the ages of 25-26 months. Moreover, the child verbalized two languages of Kholosi and Bastaki either singly or as mixed utterances. The classification of the 9 speech acts represents that of child's 34 speech acts recorded when he was between 25-26 months, the child mainly employed the speech acts for the purpose of request, imitation, naming referent, complaints, rejection, identification of place or position, question, claim and drawing attention.

**Keywords:** *Speech Acts, Language Acquisition, Bilingual, Kholosi, Bastaki*

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### 1. Introduction

In the domain of language acquisition, we know that infants are born somehow helpless and unequipped, but within two or three years of age, we are surprised by their ability to use language almost in the same manner and the same quality an adult speaker does. Most theories of language acquisition try to find out the various possible and potential reasons which could be seen as an explanation of such an achievement. Among various theories proposed, one of them argues that the child's ability to use language is due to exposure to hearing how language is used within its environment (see Vygotsky 1986). This theory or argument, undoubtedly, refers to the context where the child consistently hears language being spoken and used by the adults and siblings in the environment where he is developing. The same theory also maintains that the sounds of language are heard over and over again by the child and it

is this consistency that enables the child to learn to differentiate the various sounds from each other and as he grows up, he also develops the ability to make sense of those language sounds and how to use them appropriately. Generally, children are able to acquire language, without being specifically taught by their two years of age. Regarding linguistic theory development, Owens (1992:15) believed that language is not only built from form and meaning but also pragmatic aspect, i.e. language use. His insight is related to Morris' linguistic subdivision that language is seen as a symbol system comprised of syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic aspects. Syntactical component examines relations between symbols; semantic aspect refers to interaction between symbols and their meaning. Finally, pragmatic aspect examines relation between symbols and their use (Nababan, 1987:4). Children conversation comprised of semantic feature

'here and now' and they are able to acquire language through interaction with individual around them. (Owen, 1992; Dardjowidjojo, 2003) and child with age of 2, children would have had ability to respond to short conversation. Chaer (2003:228) explained at the of sensory motor period children would be able to think about world to state their experience and simple action that in this phase, children are assumed to be able to comprehend and produce indirect speech acts. The research was conducted to investigate and give empirical explanation to the hypothesis on children speech acts development. Thus, the study aims to discover beyond grammatical and semantic that children language generally can be comprehended through and based on empirical data.

### *1.1 Significance of the Study*

Generally speaking, there is a finite number of scientific information on the languages of western Hormozgan province and none of languages and dialects documented in Hormozgan province. Recently, the number of documentations of work on language in the western area of Hormozgan has revealed especially on the dialects of Bastak and Buchir (Rashidi, 2008). However, little documentation conducted for the Kholosi language. It should be noted that Kholosi language is one variety that is separated from all the dialects of western area of Hormozgan. Accordingly, Anonby (2011) suggested that Kholosi is known as an Indo-Aryan language that has some similar properties of dominant Iranian languages through intense contact. Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-Iranian language has not examined and investigated especially regarding linguistic landscape of Iran such as Kholosi language. Thus, in acquiring language, there are various limitation to generate words and sentences in every stage in Kholosi language. Therefore, significance of this study stems from the issues how to use of language can be employed as a basis for comprehending Kholosi child's cognitive and social development, where both components generally produced through characteristic of language used by children

### *1.2 Objective of the Study*

The current case study has examined the different speech acts produced by Kholosi child through observation. Due to all limitations the researcher had in data collection, this study is narrowed down to give description on the types of speech acts. The child was living in bilingual setting of Bastaki and Kholosi languages. The data

was collected in an intimate family setting through interaction between child-parent conversations in intimate environment. Data was collected through method of observation and note taking. The researcher tried to gather the data through the stimulating technique. The study included detailed transcription of the child's conversation with his parent, specifically with the mother. The age intentionally was selected in order to capture early language development with pre linguistic communicative forms such as gesture and vocalization.

Thus, based on the above objectives, the tries to address the following question: How are speech acts performed in the utterances of a Kholosi child?

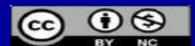
## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Speech Acts and Pragmatics*

Pragmatics deals with how language is used in context and the relationship between language use and language form. It is to do with various aspects of non-literal meaning, aspects of meaning which are not taken into account by the code/conduit model of communication. These aspects of non-literal meaning are dealt with under designations such as: speech acts; conversational implicature; the Cooperative Principle, politeness and relevance. This paper focuses only on speech acts.

### *2.2 Definition of Speech Acts*

Yuniarti (2010) reported comprehension of directive speech act at pre-school ages. It was found that when refusing or accepting, children used verbal and nonverbal methods followed by minimizing negative face threat strategies. Prayitno (2011) reported on technique and strategies of directive politeness acts of elementary school students with a Javanese culture. The research found that (1) directive politeness acts tended to be realized through acts of ordering and requesting; and that (2) directive politeness act realization tended to be expressed with direct and indirect method and non-literal modus better than direct method or literal modus; and also (3) that directive politeness acts was made up of loss and benefit scale and direct and indirect scale so that it could not cover scale of choice and option; and (4) social harmony as a cultural principle used by elementary school students with Javanese culture had shortage of interaction on politeness strategies of Javanese culture. Handayani (2012) found that elementary school students made refusal acts by verbal language and gesture. Refusals were done by



direct and indirect speech acts both literally and non-literally.

### 2.3 Speech Act Taxonomies

Speech act taxonomies have been developed specifically for language teaching syllabus design (van Ek & Alexander, 1989; Wilkins, 1976). Wilkins (1976), in his work on *Notional Syllabuses*, presented a framework similar to that of Austin, as follows:

1. Judgement and evaluation – for example, approving, disapproving, estimating;
2. Suasion – for example, persuading, commanding, and warning;
3. Argument – for example, reporting, asserting, rejecting;
4. Rational enquiry and exposition – for example, comparing, defining, explaining;
5. Personal emotions – for example, pleasure, displeasure, sorrow;
6. Emotional relations – for example, greeting, flattering, thanking.

There is also a set of categories developed by the Council of Europe for the Threshold syllabus (van Ek & Alexander, 1975), a syllabus designed to be applied to the teaching of the languages of the various Council of Europe member countries.

- imparting and seeking factual information (e.g. identify, report, correct, ask);
- expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes (e.g. agree, disagree, deny, accept, offer, express capability);
- expressing and finding out emotional attitudes (e.g. express pleasure/displeasure, surprise, hope, satisfaction);
- expressing and finding out moral attitudes (e.g. apologies, forgive, approve, regret);
- Getting things done (suasion) (e.g. suggest, request, invite, advise, warn, instruct);
- socializing (e.g. greets, introduce, take leave, attract attention).

Using this taxonomy as a framework, the Council of Europe applied it to anticipate particular linguistic realization patterns that might be expected of learners at this Threshold Level of learning, stating that they are selected according to the ‘most likely and urgent needs’ (van Ek & Trim, 1998: 27) of the target learners.

Studies on children language acquisition have been undertaken in different languages. Brown and Ursula (1964) investigated the process of mastering English sentences; Tantra (1992) researched comprehension and production of children Balinese language directive speech act at age of six to eight years; Oesterreich (1999) studied the development of English language in children; Dawdjowidjojo (2000)

investigated the acquisition of Indonesian at five years of age; Sankaranarayanan (2003) analyzed the use of language in adult children interaction in India; Pinker (2003) researched acquisition of language with a focus on syntax; and Arnawa (2005) researched children’s semantic development of Balinese language at age four to six years of age.

Language Acquisition is a process in which children achieve a fluent control of their native language (Varshney, 2003:307). The ability to acquire and understand the language is inherited genetically but the particular language that children speak is transmitted to them by their culture and environment. Children all over the world are not taught their first language, they acquire it. While a child exposed to language in an English-speaking community begins to speak English fluently, the other one exposed to a community of some other language, begins to use that language fluently. Language acquisition thus seems to be different in nature from the acquisition of other skills. Every normal human child learns one or more languages unless he is brought up in linguistic isolation, and learns the essentials of his language by the age of three.

### 2.4 The Kholosi Language

The Kholosi is an apparently Indo-Aryan language spoken in two villages Kholos and Gotāw in the Zagros Mountains of western Hormozgan Province. The villages of Kholos and Gotāw are located in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains of southwestern Iran. The villages are 35 km from the coast in a direct line, but because of the ribbed form of the mountains, the coast is over 100 km away by road. Kholos and Gotāw are located in the Kukherd District of Bastak Region (P. *shahrestān*) in the western part of Hormozgan Province, southern Iran. Kholosi has structures, which are typical of Southwestern Iranian dialects in general, and some, which are similar to specific features of the neighboring Southwestern dialects in Hormozgan Province. However, there are numerous structures, including a large proportion of basic vocabulary and important phonological features, which are different from the Southwest Iran languages. Speakers’ own stories suggest that their origins go back to India, so most differences from Iranian dialects can in fact be related to origins in the Indo-Aryan family, even though Kholosi is hundreds of kilometres away from any other known Indo-Aryan

languages. The Kholosi language was first brought to our attention by an M.A thesis (Rashidi, 2008) on Achomi dialect in the village Buchir.

In 2006, Mohebbi Bahmani (2006) first made contact with a Kholosi speaker attending university in Minab. At this time, he gathered an initial Kholosi wordlist: it showed that the language is clearly different from other languages in Hormozgan Province and that it might not, in fact, belong to the Iranian family of languages.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Participants**

This research is limited to give a description on the types of the speech acts used based on the analysis of corpus data taken from a Kholosi child whose name is Mohammad (25 months) of a family with a 31-year-old father and a 26-year-old mother. The family also has a grandmother of 60 years of age. The family is multilingual; they speak Kholosi, Bastaki and standard Persian languages proportionally. The family lives in the village Kholos that is located in Kookherd district of Bastak region in the western part of Hormozgan province, Southern Iran. This research is a single case study of actual utterances of the bilingual child when he was between 25 and 26 months. The child was living in the bilingual setting of Bastaki and Kholosi languages. The data was collected in a natural environment through interaction between child-parent conversations in an intimate environment.

#### **3.2 Instrument**

The researchers selected a case study method in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of a single aspect of the subject under investigation, because the aims of an investigation are understanding, extension of experience and rising the knowledge regarding the research (Stake, 1978). A case study is a research study that aims at investigating a phenomenon in its real-life context. Observation was used as the first data collection technique in this study. The case study highly depends on multiple sources of evidence and multiple data collection techniques. Yin (1994) offers six major items of evidence: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. The researchers use observation in order to achieve real situation facts rather than on second hand accounts. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Gorman and Clayton stated that observation is represented by those studies engaging

systematic recording, employing senses, of the characteristics and transformations of the studied object (2005, p. 40). Becket and Geer believed that the observation is a hidden or obvious participation in which the researcher takes part in the daily life of the observed individual observing, listening certain components, investigating them within a period of time (1970, p. 133).

#### **3.3 Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected through a method of observation and note taking. The researchers tried to gather the data through stimulating technique. Data gathering was done for 1 month from June to July 2017. Data collecting processes were carried out regularly on an everyday basis. Additionally, there was a 24 hour observation for child utterances in order to obtain data. Then, the collected corpus was analyzed through pragmatic comparison method. The researchers carefully examined each unit of utterance or speech act. The data was collected according to Clark (1999) by following the subject through naturalistic observation to record and transcript what the child was using to transfer purpose to other people and took notes regarding his interaction in the environment. The data was examined based on rich context of utterances and each utterance was interpreted based on the meaning in the context. The case study includes a detailed transcription of the child's conversation with parent (mostly with the mother). This age was intentionally selected in order to capture early language development with pre-linguistic communicative forms such as gesture and vocalization. According to Searl (1965), there are illocutionary points. Thus, according to Searl (1965) the researcher classified speech acts as follows: assertive (deny, declaim, accuse, complain and insist), commissives (promise and accept), directives (request and permit) declarative (declare, confirm, name and call), expressive (apologize, thank, and greet). The obtained data were analyzed through variety of descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, and means. SPSS version 16 was used to perform all the analysis. Then, the categories of collected data were classified based on the interview transcriptions; the researchers have used the methodology proposed by Duff and Polio (1990), which is known as the 'method of sampling'. Analysis of qualitative data such as observation results is time consuming. First, the categories of collected data were classified from the observation



transcriptions, and then each category was further analyzed to determine major emerging themes.

**4. Results and Discussion**

**4.1 Vocabulary Production by a Child at the age of 25-26 Months**

Children utterance properties are classified into two parts. Vocabulary and utterance length variability are seen as semantic representations. It should be noted that language development that occurs in children is necessary. Additionally, Maksan (1993) stated that, children prior to their speech devices are able to convey utterances and it reveals semantic aspect. Children development at the age of 25-26 months is normally represented with one syllable production. Nevertheless, the word is represented going to be polysyllabic when they are under 25 months, after children are 25 months he started to produce two syllabic words, such as Ambeh ‘mother’, Bamay ‘father’. Child is able to produce two syllabic words. However, child still uttered monosyllabic words regarding lexical and vocabulary production. The following table shows the child language production.

*Table 1: Vocabulary production by a Child at the age 25-26 months*

Sr. No.	Classification	Words
1	Terms in relatives	<i>Ambeh</i> mother, <i>ba</i> father, <i>dazo</i> brother, <i>dada</i> sister
2	Daily activities	<i>Kete</i> where, <i>konji</i> want, <i>zood jo</i> hurry up, <i>vargare</i> it's late, <i>ved</i> sit, <i>ache</i> come, <i>make</i> mine, <i>khatiy</i> punishment, <i>ete</i> here, <i>van</i> go, <i>ho</i> that
3	Things	<i>Kelem</i> pencil, <i>sahn</i> plate, <i>kashokh</i> spoon, <i>shirdooni</i> baby bottle <i>pesoni</i> pacifier
4	Colors	<i>Gahro</i> red, <i>nilen</i> blue
5	Food	<i>Pooni</i> water, <i>moon</i> bread

**4.2. Speech Acts Production by the Child at the age of 25-26 Months**

The researchers divided speech acts into two categories. First, production of speech acts and second, comprehension of speech acts. Tantara (1992) stated this division is required for comprehending and producing process of utterances engaging different cognition. Child pragmatic development normally occurs in the environment and conversation with people. The analysis of data indicates that the child had verbalized a total of 34 speech acts when he was between the ages of 25-26 months. According to table 2, the child verbalized two languages (dialects) of Kholosi and Bastaki either singly or as mixed utterances. The language was employed to convey various speech acts that have been shown in table 2.

*Table 2: Types of Speech Acts*

No	Intentions or Meaning	Actual words or interpretations	Language used and the speech acts performed
1	Child asks mom where the baby-bottle is	Shirdooni kete?	Question Mixed utterances
2	Child wants mom to give him the pacifier	Pesoni konji!!!!	Request Mixed utterances
3	Mom says hurry up its late	Zood jo vargare!	Imitation Mixed utterances
4	Child cries because he cannot find the gum	Korat haloochow!	Complaints Mixed utterances
5	Child looking for the dolls	Vazaki konji?	Question Mixed utterances
6	Child calls his mom	Ambemay! Ambemay !	Naming referent Kholosi
7	Child calls his dad	Ba may! Ba may!	Naming referent kholosi
8	Child asks mom to bring him water	Pooni konji! Pooni pooni konji	Request kholosi
9	Dad says come and sit here and child repeats	Ete ved!	Imitation kholosi
10	Child wants mom to give him pacifier	Pesoni konji?	Question Mixed utterances
11	Child cries because he is punished	Khatiy he punished me	Complaints kholosi
12	Child is hungry and asks mom to bring him food	Khorak konji na! Konji na!	Request Mixed utterances
13	Mom says I love you and child repeats	Khele khaterav konji	Imitation Mixes utterances
14	Mom declines to give him the toy	Asaboy khord kov	Complaints Mixed utterances
15	Child sees the pet and points to the cat	He eteh! He eteh!	Identification of place or position
16	Child asks mom come seat next to him	Ache! Ache!	Request kholosi
17	Mom asks the child whose doll it is?	Makeh Makeh	Claim kholosi
18	Child ask mom to give him cellphone	Hoow! Ho0w!	Identification of place or position
19	Child shows an object to a mom by calling mom	Hoow vazaki Hoow vaaki	Identification of place or position Mixed utterances
20	Child draws attention by calling dad clapping to attract the attention	Ba may! Ba may! Ba may!	Drawing attention kholosi
21	Mom tries to feed the child	Mani! Mani!	Imitation kholosi
	mani ( bread) and child repeats	Moni Moni	Imitation Kholosi
22	Child points to the bread and says	Moni! Moni !	Naming referent kholosi
23	Child sees the mom's scarf and says its colour	Gahro! Gahro !	Naming the referent kholosi
24	Child sees the cereal pocket and he says open it!	Vaz ke ! Vaz ke!	Request Mixed utterances
25	Declining the wrong plate and asking for one's own plate	Neh! Neh! Neh !	Rejection Kholosi
26	Child declines the new milk bottle	Neh ! Neh!	Rejection kholosi
27	Child declines to give him kiss	Ne chembi!!	Rejection kholosi
28	Child eats the chicken soup and says good	Change! Change!	Appreciation kholosi
29	Child points to TV commercials and says	Cheng! Cheng!	Appreciation kholosi
30	Child asks for a spoon	Kachok	Request Mixed utterances
31	Child asks mom to give him pencil for drawing	kelam	Request Mixed utterances
32	Child sees the plate and he points to it	Sahn	Naming referent Mixed utterances
33	Child asks grandma to turn on the TV	Vaz ke!	Request Mixed utterances
34	Child sees the cake in the fridge and he savs good	Change! Change!	Appreciation kholosi

**4.3 Break down of the 9 Speech Acts**

The classification of the 9 speech acts summarized in table 3 represents the child's 34 utterances recorded when he was between 25-26 months. The child mainly employed the speech acts for the purpose of

request, imitation, naming referents, complaints, rejection, identification of place or position, question, claim and drawing the attention. Its results revealed that the child tended to make a request and he does so by using more requests that are direct and he often imitates them from his mother. Accordingly, child acquired linguistic forms and communicative strategies from his mother by imitating the ways he made requests. Moreover, the child at this age responded to speech acts with actions, the fact that proves the child was able to respond to and comprehend speech acts.

*Table 3: Classification of Speech Acts*

No	Type of speech acts	Percentage	Frequency of occurrences
1	Requests	27.20	8
2	Imitation	14.70	5
3	Naming referents	11.76	4
4	Complaints	8.82	3
5	Rejection	8.82	3
6	Identification of place or position	8.82	3
7	Questions	5.88	2
8	claim	2.94	1
9	Drawing attention	2.94	1

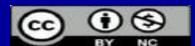
## 5. Conclusion

The current case study examined nine different speech acts produced by a Kholosi child through observation and the researcher had many opportunities to observe and record data. The child was living in the bilingual setting of Bastaki and Kholosi languages. The data was collected in a natural context of interaction between child-parent conversations in an intimate environment. Kholosi speakers are multilingual. They speak Bastaki and standard Persian outside of their own village. Based on observations, the child sometimes employed two languages or mixed utterances. In addition, he behaved differently in different situations. Child was observed as he engaged with his family and on home visits. He was observed during routines and as he would speak individually, in pairs or child and adults' activities. Child and adult activities are prominent aspects of interaction in order to provide proper opportunities for child to acquire the structure and conveying meaning of language. The information data was examined based on the rich context of utterances and utterances were interpreted based on their meaning in the context and assumption. Children's development at the age of 25-26 months normally represented one syllable productions. Nevertheless, the word is represented as being polysyllabic when they are over 25 months. In addition, when the Kholosi child was 26 months he

started to produce two syllabic words. The analysis of data indicates that the child had verbalized 34 speech acts when he was between the ages of 25-26 months. According to table 1, the child verbalized two languages of Kholosi and Bastaki either singly or as mixed utterances. The classification of the 9 speech acts indicated in table 3 represents the child's 34 speech acts recorded when he was between 25-26 months. The child mainly employed the speech acts for the purpose of request, imitation, naming referent, complaints, rejection, identification of place or position, question, claim and drawing attention. The results revealed that the child tended to make a request and he used more requests that are direct and he often imitated them from his mother. It should be noted that, it is only an initial study on various components of the data. This study gives a first scholarly examination of the Kholosi language and linguistic structures in the southwestern part of Hormozgan province. The findings of this study could be a road map for conducting the research to multiple children of different cultural backgrounds in Iran.

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