

# INDIRECT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE INFLUENCE THROUGH JAPANESE KIDS TELEVISION PROGRAM\*

Sonnya Heliantina Dewi  
Japanese Literature, FISIB, Pakuan University Bogor  
[sonnyaheliantina@unpak.ac.id](mailto:sonnyaheliantina@unpak.ac.id)

Hanif Eka Cahyono  
Japanese-Indonesian Freelance Translator and Interpreter  
Member of Association of Indonesian Translator  
[me@hanifcahyono.com](mailto:me@hanifcahyono.com)

## ABSTRACT

*Penelitian ini berkaitan dengan anak yang mampu menerima masukan dari lingkungan. Pada umumnya, tahap pertama bagi anak adalah dengan menyerap nilai-nilai sosiokultur dengan cara meniru. Subjek penelitian adalah seorang anak perempuan berusia 3:7 dari sebuah keluarga Indonesia. Anak ini menerima bahasa dan budaya Jepang melalui program tayangan anak-anak di saluran televisi NHK. Fokus penelitian adalah pengaruh tayangan ini kepada anak, terutama penggunaan bahasa Jepang dan kiasan yang dilakukannya. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara mengobservasi keluarga subjek (Dewi, 2017). Kami menemukan bahwa anak dapat memahami dan menggunakan bahasa Jepang secara tepat.*

**KEYWORDS:** *language socialization, language use, child language, gestures.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, it is not a coincidence if we found a married couple with different language and cultural background. This causes many children to grow by acquiring more than one mother tongue in their family. Foreign languages also began to teach by parents to their children at home, one of them is the Japanese language.

Children are active learners who can receive inputs from their environment. Generally, children were acquiring cultural knowledge by reproducing language and culture by imitating it in a process called language socialization (Ochs and Schieffelin 2012). Implicit and explicit cultural applying of values through the exercise process will make it a habit to establish an output that called identity form (Burke 2009).

The subject is a 3;7 aged daughter (hereinafter referred to as AN) of a bilingual family. The father (hereinafter referred to as AY) speaks Japanese to AN while the mother (hereinafter referred to as IB) speaking Indonesian. Both parents learn Japanese from their parents as children. AY had lived in Japan for 9 years. Meanwhile, IB has a degree Japanese literature. AY works as a Japanese freelance translator and mother is a housewife. They lived in West Java.

Based on observation, the parents are using Japanese kid's television programs on NHK television such as *Inai Inai Ba!* and *Okaasan to Issho* since AN was six months old.

The programs were used as inputs for AN to learn Japanese language and culture. We were observing AN's output of language use and attitude. The aim of this study is describing AN's Japanese language use and gestures.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Data from this study is derived from observation of family daily activity about three years, especially when AN watched the *Inai Inai Ba!* And *Okaasan to Issho* on NHK television. We also taped the conversations between AN and her parents when they were having dinner to record AN's Japanese language use and gestures. However, AN usually did it spontaneously off the record. The recordings are taken in seven days (Dewi, 2017), transcribed into orthographic transcription. Each utterance in conversation and participants' turn are put in different lines and marked with numbers. We also described AN's gestures in additional notes.

We focus on AN's language use and gestures when she was talking to her parents. However, the contexts, namely the parent's utterance in interactions with AN are taken into account. We were using Hamiru-aqui (2004) as the reference of Japanese gestures.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observation, we found that AN can fully understand AY's Japanese speech, even though she gives her reply in Indonesian. This can occur as she lives in an environment which is dominated by Indonesian. Moreover, we found that AN can understand very well Japanese when she watched Japanese children's television programs.

Further, we also observed that the attitude of AN looks like Japanese children. This is because AN is imitating what she saw in *Inai Inai Ba!* and *Okaasan to Issho* program. The descriptions below explain about the show that affect AN, namely the Japanese children's song and Japanese children's behavior in daily life.

### 3.1 Japanese song for children

We found AN often sing the Japanese song for children from Japanese children's program on NHK television. In the following conversation segment, it is shown that AN sang *Umi ni Ikou* spontaneously, which she knew from *Inai Inai Ba!* show.

(1) (AN, IB, and AY are ready to have dinner. AN and IB are washing hands in kitchen. AY watched *Detective Conan* series in living room.)

[...]

377 An: Buka aja.

'Just open it.'

378 Ib: Oh gitu.

'I see.'

379 An: Kepanasan.

'I'm feeling hot.'

380 Ib: Cieh yang kepanasan.

'Aren't you?'

{AN is washing hands with IB}

[...]

- 386 An: Umi ni ikou {sing}  
 387 Sakana sakana {sing}  
 388 Umi ikou {sing}  
 [...]

The segment above shows that AN is speaking to IB to tell her that she is feeling hot. Because of the heat, AN sang a Japanese song of sea and summer, which often she heard in Japanese summer special kid's program and reminds her about the hot weather in sea.

### 3.2 Daily attitude

We found some session in kids show can affect AN's attitude, as we noted below.

**Table 1**

No.	Session Title	Description	AN's attitude
1.	<i>Rin chan no Itadakimasu</i>	A 3-years-old child can eat food independently, without being fed. First, the child introduces the name and age, then says <i>itadakimasu</i> 'bon appetite' while facing palms on the chest. The child usually uses spoon and fork, or child's chopsticks. After finishing the meal, the child says <i>gochisousamadeshita</i> 'thank you for the food' and facing palms in front of his chest.	AN mimicked the eating attitudes of the children from the session, namely saying <i>itadakimasu</i> before eating, and <i>gochisousamadeshita</i> after the meal.
2.	<i>Rin chan no Tatameru Kana</i>	A 3-years-old child can tidy up their clothes without the help of parents. First, the child introduces the name and age then folds the shirt and pants from the laundry basket. When finished folding the clothes, the child says <i>dekimashita</i> or <i>dekita</i> , 'finished'.	AN mimicked and tried helping IB to fold clothes. After finish folding, AN said <i>dekita</i> .
3.	<i>Rin chan no Ittekimasu</i>	A 3-years-old child can wear socks and shoes without parents' help. Initially, the child introduced the name and age then took a pair of socks and put on shoes. Once the shoes are installed, the child says <i>ittekimasu</i> 'goodbye'.	Since the age of 2 years, AN was wearing shoes without parents' help. After wearing shoes, AN said <i>ittekimasu</i> aloud.
4.	<i>Pajama de Ojama</i>	A 3-years-old child can wear pajamas without the help of parents. Initially the child introduces the name and age then take the pajama pants to wear. After that, the child picks up pajama shirt, puts the right and left hand into it and then buttons the shirt. After the pajamas are neatly wear, the child says <i>dekimashita</i> or <i>dekita</i> 'finished'.	AN imitated the child in this session. So that she wore a shirt and buttoned her own clothes without the help of parents. Sometimes after finish wearing her pajama, AN said <i>dekita</i> .
5.	<i>Hamigaki Jouzu Kana</i>	A 3-years-old child can brush his/her own teeth. Initially, the child introduces name and age, then brushing teeth. When finished, the child will call his father or mother to help check and brush the child's teeth.	Before sleeping, AN asked AY or IB to take a toothbrush, then AN will brush her own teeth. After that, AN will ask for AY or IB assistance to check back on her teeth.

### 3.3 Japanese gestures

Hamiru-aqui (2004) noted that Japanese can communicate each other without speech. The author said that they are using gestures. Based on this book, there are 70 common gestures, which divided into general gestures, slang gestures, and children's gestures. According to our observation, AN did the common Japanese gestures spontaneously. We listed gestures that AN did the most.

#### 1. *Hai* 'yes' and *iie* 'no'

In Japanese culture, *hai* 'yes' followed by nodding head. Meanwhile, when they say *iie* 'no', they also waved palms quickly and shook head. In an informal situation, *hai* can be replaced with *un*, and *uun* can replace *iie*. The segment (2) below shows AN did the *hai* gesture.

#### 2. *Itadakimasu* 'bon appetite' and *gochisousamadeshita* 'thank you for the meal'.

Japanese will do this gesture before and after having meal. Put the palms facing each other in front of the chest with bowing head lightly, as AN did in this conversation segment.

(2) (AY, IB, AN are watching Detective Conan series while having dinner)

[...]

48 An: *Itadakimasu* {face palms in front of chest}

'bon appetite'

49 Ay: *Oishii janain kore?*

'Taste good, isn't it?'

50 Ib: Hehe {laugh}

51 Ay: *Oishii ne.*

'Taste good, huh?'

52 An: *Un.* {nod}

'yup'

[...]

#### 3. *Kocchi* 'come over here'

With the back of hand facing upward, shake the hand downward toward ourselves. AN usually did this kind of gesture when she call out somebody to get closer to her.

#### 4. *Ojigi* 'bow'

A movement when greeting someone by lowering head at least 30 or 45 degrees. AN did this gesture when she greeted someone or to apologize.

#### 5. *Warau* 'laugh'

Covering the mouth when laughing. When, AN is laughing, she covered her mouth with hand and lowering her voice.

6. *Kochira e douzo* ‘please come with me’

Show the palm of hand to the other person and motion with it to the place you wish to indicate. The fingers are together and the tip of the middle finger is directed at the person’s feet. AN did this gesture when she wanted to show places. We saw this when she showed her cousins her new bedroom.

7. *Dogeza* ‘kneel down on the ground’

Kneel with upper body bent over the knees, head bowed to the floor. A gesture of deep apology toward someone you have angered or when you are making a very serious request. We found AN did *dogeza* when she apologized to IB when making a big mistake. AY taught her the gesture to show a deep respect when made apology to someone.

8. *Yubikiri* ‘pinky promise’

This gesture is made while singing a song. Children sing while intertwining each other’s pinkies of one hand. AN did some pinky promise with AY or IB while singing *yubikiri* song.

9. *Oshiri pen pen*

Kids are done the gesture by showing the bottom to another person and patting it is used to ridicule. *Oshiri pen pen* is the sound of spanking the bottom lightly. AN were doing this when joking with her father and mother.

(3) (AN and IB are watching Japanese culture show in living room while AY had dinner)

[...]

{AN and IB came out of the bathroom}

245 Ib: Keringin dulu nih.

‘Dry it.’

246 An: *Oshiri pen pen* {sing}

247 Ib: Yeey..

248 An: Hahaha! {laugh}

[...]

260 An: *Oshiri oshiri* {singi}

261 *Pen pen* {sing}

262 *Oshiri oshiri* {sing}

263 *Pen pen* {sing}

[...]

10. *Janken* ‘rock-paper-scissor’

Commonly done when randomly selecting a person for some purpose, such as deciding the order of players in a game. There are three forms, which is *gu*, *pa*, and *choki*. AY taught AN *janken* and she often play this with AY or IB.

#### 11. *Banzai*

Throwing both arms up while shouting *banzai*. Initially, Japanese did the gesture to express good fortune or happiness. AN sometimes did the gesture when she felt happy. For example, when her mother granted her request.

Based on observation, we can summarize the language and attitude of AN clearly reflects Japanese culture. Based on the theory of language socialization (Ochs and Schieffelin, 2012), AN, who has acquired Japanese from AY since she was born, feels the same identity with Japanese children in the Japanese kid's programs she witnessed on NHK television. The language, acts, and gestures that AN imitating is a manifestation of the internalization of a culture that she does not realize. Moreover, both parents support the AN's attitude so that she feels this kind of behavior is accepted by the environment.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Useful inputs would be great for children because they are clever learners, just by simply following their environment. In this study, we found that kid's television shows in NHK channel were well received by the subject, namely AN. She can receive the input because she has acquired the Japanese language since birth in the family. The socialization of the language went smoothly and the effect made AN's attitude look like Japanese children and understood Japanese, although AN's language produced was still dominated by Indonesian. We can say that *Inai Inai Ba!* and *Okaasan to Issho* successfully affect AN.

This study is limited to one child, and to certain condition Therefore, further research can be done as the child is growing. This study can be conducted in other field such as social, psychological, and linguistic studies.

#### REFERENCES

- Burke, Peter J. dan Jan E. Stets. 2009. *Identity Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, Haruko Minegishi. 2012. Language Socialization and Stance-Taking Practices. Dalam *The Handbook of Language Socialization*. Ed. Alessandro Duranti, Elinor Ochs, dan Bambi B. Schieffelin, 296—321. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Limited.
- Dewi, S.H. 2017. Upaya Pembentukan Identitas Anak melalui Penggunaan Bahasa Jepang pada Sebuah Keluarga Indonesia. Master Thesis. Depok: Kajian Wilayah Jepang, Program Pascasarjana Universitas Indonesia. Unplished
- Hamiru-aqui, ed. 2004. *70 Japanese Gestures: No Language Communication*. Tokyo: IBC Publishing. Trans. Aileen Chang. Ed. Barbara Bayer 2004. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Holmes, J. 2009. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Third Edition. Essex: Longman.
- Ochs, Elinor, Bambi B. Schieffelin. 2012. The Theory of Language Socialization. Dalam *The Handbook of Language Socialization*. Ed. Alessandro Duranti, Elinor Ochs, Bambi B. Schieffelin, 1—22. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing.