Title: The Use of *Aku* and *Saya* among Children and Teenagers

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Introduction

Terms of address are believed to have a close relationship with relationship and formality. Holmes (2007) & O’Grady et.al. (2001) used the term ‘solidarity’ to show the social distance of the participants in communicating. Indonesian has two general expressions referring to the first singular personal pronouns i.e. *aku* and *saya* which have different usage. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (1999), mentions that *Aku* is used when the participants have a close, informal relationship or belong to similar level such as between friends or younger or in the informal situation, while *saya* is used when the participants have a formal relationship or to address elderly people.

The purpose of this research is to examine the use of *aku* and *saya* among children and teenagers from the lower class and middle/upper class of society. The questions to be answered are as follows:

1. Is there any difference of perception between students and teachers regarding the shift of the understanding concept between *aku* and *saya*. If there is, is it significant? The analysis of this question will cover the difference in concept, family education, TV influence, the teachers’ expectation, and the ‘modern’ point of view of *aku* and *saya*. The overall analysis will use a Chi – square with the following assumption:

   Hypothesis ($H_0$): There are no significant differences between students and teachers regarding the shift of the expressions *aku* and *saya*

   Alternation ($H_1$): there is a significant difference

2. Based on students in real situation, how do they use the word *aku* and *saya*?
The data were obtained by distributing questionnaires to the students and teachers from two different backgrounds i.e. low class and middle and upper class citizens. The low-class is represented by students and teachers at HIMMATA, an institution established to help and educate the poor people living in the slum areas and street children at Plumpang, North Jakarta, Indonesia. While the upper and middle classes are those from various schools.

**Discussion**

The first issue to be analyzed in this research is whether there is a significant difference between students and teachers regarding the shift of *aku* and *saya*. The questions are regarding the concept of *aku* and *saya*, the proper use of *saya* and *aku* to friends and parents, the family background, the influence of TV, and the modern concept of usage of *aku* and *saya*. From the analysis it shows that students in both the HIMMATA and SCHOOL indicates that they understand the rule of *aku* and *saya* although the percentage of the latter is a bit higher. However, there are only 60% from HIMMATA who assumed that the students knew, compared to 16.1 % from SCHOOL. In terms of family education, teachers who understand the difference in both groups is lower than that of the students'. It means that students seem to be sure that their parents educate them about the difference while the teachers tend to doubt it.

Students seem unaware that the TV programs could influence them. The percentage of the teachers who identify the difference is higher compared to the students. Most teachers who are from the older generation and who used to be taught strictly about the use of *aku* and *saya*, have expected to hear the word *saya*.

In terms of the usage of *saya* and *aku*, it is revealed that there are similarities in values between students in both groups who understand the concept.

In the statistical analysis using the chi square technique, it is found that value of is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the perspectives of teachers and students in terms of the shift from the expression *saya to aku* (H₀ is accepted).

To analyze the use of *aku* and *saya* in practice, four questions were given to the students to check how they address themselves when talking to their teachers, friends, and parents. From the analysis, it is clear that most of the students in both HIMMATA and SCHOOLS use *saya* when
communicating to their teachers. When talking to friends, not many students from HIMMATA and SCHOOLS used *aku*. When talking to parents, students at HIMMATA use *aku* or *saya* interchangeably, while at SCHOOLS, most students use *aku* in communication with their parents and never use *saya*.

**Conclusion**

The results of this research show that conceptually, there is no big different of understanding between the lower class and middle, upper class students and society. In both groups, students know when to use *aku* and *saya* but the middle and upper class teachers doubt it. Regarding the family education, most teachers think that TV plays a role in giving influence. By using chi-square formulas, although it is not significant, it is proved that there is a difference between the students and teachers’ perception regarding the shift of the understanding between *aku* and *saya*.

In reality most students said that they use *saya* when they talk to teachers. Interestingly, most teachers in both groups do not say so. There are not many students who use *aku* to their friends. Regarding the communication with parents, in HIMMATA, most students use *aku* and *saya*. However, in the middle and upper classes, the SCHOOL group, most of them never use *saya*.

**References**

Alwi et.al. (1998) *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka


Biodata:

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