

Integrating Contrastive Analysis into Classroom in English as Foreign Language Context

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Article Info

Article History

Received:
30 April 2022

Accepted:
22 July 2022

Keywords:
Second Language Acquisition, Contrastive Analysis, English as Foreign Language.

Abstract

In English as Foreign Language (EFL) countries, learners mostly gain their English knowledge in the classroom and in the limited time. Without strong intrinsic motivation of acquiring English, it would be hard for the learners to reach the language acquisition. Historically, second language acquisition was begun from the contrastive analysis in which the learners compare their first and the second language. Though the study is quite old, however, it is still useful for the truly beginners especially in EFL context. The current conceptual study aims to view the contractive analysis applied in EFL classroom. The implementation of the contrastive analysis in Indonesia cannot be separated from the students' characteristics, classroom environment, and length of input.

Introduction

In EFL countries, English is not used widely in the community. It is taught formally at school but not used as an instructional language (Fernandez, 2012; Kridalaksana, 2011)(Fernandez, 2012; Kridalaksana, 2011). The learners do not have sufficient communication exposure and context (Brown, 2001). Consequently, students suffer various things in learning, such as anxiety, reluctance in speaking English, far from self-regulated learning (Wilang & Duy, 2021). In Indonesia, for instance, those problems exist among the English learners. Thus, it is understandable if the English learners in Indonesia frequently produce incorrect structures of the target language.

The main goal of learning a language is the target language acquisition. To achieve the language acquisition, the learners have to gain their language competences and perform the language naturally. Through second language acquisition (SLA) approaches, the language competence as well as the language performance can be measured. The SLA can be viewed from various disciplinary perspectives such as the contrastive analysis in comparing the first and second language (Fries, 1945; Odlin, 1989), error analysis as the creative process of the language acquisition (Corder, 1967), interlanguage analysis which coins the independent language knowledge system of the learners' first and target languages due to the learners' efforts in producing the target language (Selinker, 1972), morpheme order studies as the initial view on the language learner developmental patterns (Bailey et al., 1974; Dulay & Burt, 1974; Ellis, 2014)(Ellis, 2014), the interactionist theories with cognitive perspectives in multidimensional

model and processability theory, and socio-cultural perspectives (J. H. Schumann, 1978). Each perspective provides different characteristics. However, for the beginners, contrastive analysis is mostly applied.

The contrastive studies went ahead in discovering and predicting the learning difficulties by conducting systematic comparisons between the native language and the target language of the learners (Fries, 1945). The comparing process between the first and the second language leads to language transfer (Odlin, 1989). The contrastive hypothesizes that second language acquisition is conditioned by either positive transfer or harmful transfer/interference between the first and second language differences (Klein, 1986). If the learners find the corresponding structures of the second language with the first language, the learners perform positive language transfer. Conversely, if the second language structure does not coincide with the first language, the learners commonly produce frequent errors. Due to the mistakes, learners frequently tend to avoid the problematic structure in producing the target language. It means that the learners' second language acquisition success depends on the earlier language they acquire. The contrastive theory provides a strong claim on its hypothesis that errors produced by the learners seem to be bad habits as what behavioristic ideas. Moreover, the errors issue leads to the weakness of the contrastive theory prognostic as it only sees the interlingual transfer. It means that the learners' knowledge of their first language impact their target language production.

The present study aims to concept the integration of the contrastive analysis perspective into classroom in Indonesia. Mostly, the students in Indonesia only learn English for around two to four hours a week from secondary school to the university level. Moreover, they have less practice in producing English speaking (Amir, 2018). At the same time, the high frequency of getting exposure to English is positively correlated to the production performance (Arfah & Zam, 2017). For reaching the English acquisition, the learners need to gain sufficient input and practice in limited time.

Method

The present conceptual study applied a literature study on the second language acquisition, especially on the contrastive analysis. By collecting data on contextual, theoretical and empirical studies, the result of the study was formulated into alternative suggestions on the current issue of second language acquisition among English learners in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

The contrastive analysis is laid under the comparison of the first and second language system (Fries, 1945; Odlin, 1989) by investigating the learners' errors in the process of the second language acquisition (Khansir, 2012). The analysis focuses on the searching and analyzing the similarities and differences between the first and second languages rather than searching the strategies on how to acquire the second language. It also cannot be denied that the first language affects the target language acquisition (Duskova, 1969). It means that the learners have to acquire their first language structure before they start to learn the second language. In other words, understanding the structure of the first language helps the learners in understanding the target language. The strong, moderate and weak interference of the first language to the process of acquiring the second language varies depending on the structures of both languages. Gaining the target language through fully immersion of living in the target language country is more effective than partial immersion of getting input only from the classroom. In fully immersion, learners have massive opportunities in receiving input from both classroom and society. Furthermore, their motivation of acquiring the target language is also influenced by the need of survival and reaching the future dream in the target language country. Differently, in the EFL setting where the learners cannot get sufficient input of the

target language from the society, teachers should facilitate in providing massive input in the classroom. Overall, the contrastive analysis serves more on the practical framework in acquiring the target language.

Practically, in applying the contrastive analysis, teachers as well as researcher follow some procedures: 1) describing the two languages, 2) selecting the language structures, 3) comparing by identifying the areas of comparison, and 4) predicating the errors and learning difficulties (Mishra, 2005). The contrastive analysis lets the learners compare their first language and the target language regarding to the micro- and macro-linguistics.

The integration of contrastive analysis cannot be separated from the national curriculum which mandates the communicative approach with the scientific-based learning approach. The language as systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994) becomes the bedrock of the current curriculum in this nation. Based on systemic functional linguistics, language is divided into two levels, namely internal and external/extralinguistic. The former refers to semantics/meaning, grammar/form, and phonology/expression. At the same time, the latter consigns to language as social semiotics, which is related closely to the contexts used, such as situation, culture and ideology (Halliday, 1994). The cultural context and situational context determine the uses of those texts. The earlier context is depicted in genre texts such as descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure, etc. These texts are acceptable among society as those own specific language function, generic structure and language features (Ariyana et al., 2018). The situational context or discourse refers to a field (communication topic), tenor (communication participants) and mode (communication mode and media) (Halliday, 1994; Matthiessen, 2014). These three language register or discourse competence strongly affect Indonesia's national curriculum (Depdiknas, 2004).

In the classroom, teachers frequently start from the smallest internal linguistic to be compared. The similar phoneme, sounds, and written words between English and Bahasa Indonesia, for example, assist the English learners in Indonesia in improving the learners' speaking capabilities (Ulfayanti & Jelimun, 2018). The phonemic structure similarity between the first and target language, for sure, is essential in teaching and learning phonology course. In uttering sound /eɪ/ (letter a) and /i:/ (letter e), for English learners from Indonesia is quite challenging as in Bahasa, letter a is pronounced /a/, while the letter e is uttered /eɪ/. Recognizing the different phoneme pronunciation is effectively taught in the beginning when the students start to learn alphabet. Though the spelling difference is likely slight, it belongs to moderate contrastive analysis as learners frequently generalize in word pronunciation (Oller & Ziahosseiny, 1970). The word papaya /pəˈpaɪə/, for instance, will be pronounced pepeye if the learners stick on the rule that the sound /eɪ/ is spelt out as /i:/.

The syntax difference between Bahasa and English lays on the order. In noun phrasal structure, for instance, Bahasa places the head noun in front of the its modifiers. Conversely, in a pre-modifier noun phrase, the head noun of the noun phrase is located at the end of the phrase. In Bahasa, the English noun phrase of beautiful girl (girl = head noun; beautiful = modifier) is translated into gadis cantik (girl beautiful). It means that there is a different order between Bahasa and English noun phrase structure. The difference, though, does not interfere strongly on the learners' English acquisition. The learners simply translate and move the order. In other words, the noun phrase formation is belonged to the weak contrastive analysis.

The clause of I read and she reads requires understanding on verb inflection depending on the subject. In Bahasa, however, there is no a such inflection: saya membaca (I read) and dia membaca (she reads). The verb word membaca is not changed even though the subject in in plural or singular form.

Table 2. Contrastive Analysis on Sentence Types between Bahasa and English

Bahasa	English
SP= Subject – Predicate (intransitive verb) e.g. <i>Dia tidur</i>	SV=Subject-Verb (intransitive verb) e.g. <i>She is sleeping.</i>
SPO= Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Object e.g. <i>Dia telah menyelesaikan tugas-tugasnya.</i>	SVO= Subject-Transitive Verb-Direct Object e.g. <i>He had completed his assignments.</i>
SPC = Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Complement e.g. <i>Kamu menjadi sekretaris kelas. (You are the class secretary.)</i>	SVC= Subject - Linking Verb - Subject Complement e.g. <i>They look exhausted.</i>
SPA = Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Adverb e.g. <i>Saya tinggal di Yogyakarta.</i>	SVA=Subject-Verb-Adverbial Complement e.g. <i>I live in Yogyakarta.</i>
SPOC= Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Object – Complement e.g. <i>Dia telah membawakan aku beberapa makalah.</i>	SVOO= Subject - Transitive Verb - Indirect Object-Direct Object e.g. <i>She has brought me some papers.</i>
SPOA= Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Object – Adverb e.g. <i>Dia menyandarkan kepalanya di bahunya.</i>	SVOA= Subject – Transitive Verb – Direct Object – Adverbial Complement e.g. <i>She lays his head on my shoulder.</i>
	SVOC= Subject – Transitive Verb – Direct Object – Object Complement e.g. <i>The baby has made everyone very excited.</i>

The table above shows that in the sentence level, the prominent difference is on the number of sentence forms. Bahasa only has six sentence forms while English has seven forms. The subject-verb agreement, in fact, becomes the most difficult among learners in Indonesia as in Bahasa, there is no verb inflection as on English. The examples of SPA and SVA on the table above show the verb inflection.

Table 2. Contrastive Analysis on Subject-Verb Agreement between Bahasa and English

Bahasa	English
SPA = Subject – Predicate (transitive verb) – Adverb e.g. <i>Saya tinggal di Yogyakarta.</i> <i>Pamanku tinggal di Yogyakarta.</i> <i>Dia tinggal di Yogyakarta.</i> <i>Mereka tinggal di Yogyakarta.</i>	SVA=Subject-Verb-Adverbial Complement e.g. <i>I live in Yogyakarta.</i> <i>My uncle lives in Yogyakarta.</i> <i>She/He lives in Yogyakarta.</i> <i>They live in Yogyakarta.</i>

The table shows that in Bahasa, the predicate (transitive verb) is not inflected though the subject is singular or third person singular form. In contrast, in English, the verb is inflected depending on the number of the subject. From the table above, it can be seen that the subject I and they (plural) do not impact on the form of the verb. However, the singular subject requires inflection -s on the verb. On other examples, the addition of the verb can be -es (e.g. wash → washes) and -ies (e.g. study → studies). The different structure of the verb formation between Bahasa and English is categorized as strong contrastive analysis in which the learners find it

difficult to acquire. Consequently, the learners frequently tend to generalize the structure as their first language rule. In other words, the generalization in producing the target language due to the first language rule commonly exist in the process of acquiring the target language.

Regarding to the meaning, the contrastive analysis can be applied by examining the translation as well as the pronunciation. For example, the word blue is translated as biru in Bahasa. Though the written forms of both are different, both pronunciations are similar so that it is easier for the learners to recognize. Another example is the word cricket which has a similar sound on jangkrik in Bahasa.

Besides dealing the micro-linguistics, the contrastive analysis also coins the macro-linguistics. The integration of the macro-linguistics is by emphasizing the vocabulary differences between the first language and the target language which are used in the socio-cultural contexts. In junior high school level, for example, the formulaic expressions on greetings, are delivered by showing the contexts. In Bahasa, the expression of “good afternoon” (selamat siang) is used to greet people in between 11 AM and 2 PM; (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). Apparently, in English “good afternoon” is used from 12.01 – 5.59 PM. The significant different is in evening greeting. In Bahasa, evening is depicted from 3 PM to sunset and night is from sunset onwards (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). While, in English, evening greeting is started from sunset until night, and “good night” is only used for saying goodbye before going to sleep. Thus, in delivering the formulaic expressions to the students, the teachers need to provide the meaning as well as the socio-cultural context around.

The socio-cultural context is prominent in succeeding the practice of the communicative approach in the learning English. During the learning process, the students perform transactional communication in asking and giving information related to time, for example. Through this practice, the learners show their communicative competence. Communicative competence refers to language use in effective communication (Geeslin & Long, 2014), which covers grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). In other words, the functional linguistics practices offer the language function into social life (Daalder & Musolff, 2012).

Conclusion

As an EFL country, Indonesia also faces same problems in learners’ English acquisition. Contextually, English learners in Indonesia have limited input and practice in English. Many teachers and researcher focus on searching appropriate teaching and learning techniques and strategies, however, rare concern the language acquisition. Philosophically, the main goal of learning language is the ability of the learners in producing the language either in written or spoken form. It means that in learning and teaching the target language, the learners as well as the teachers should pay attention on factors and developmental stages in acquiring the target language.

The contrastive analysis is one of second language perspective is commonly used practically to supply the understanding of the first language interference towards the target language. The contrastive analysis is categorized into strong, medium and weak types in which the micro- and macro-linguistics are reckoned. In Indonesia, the integration of both micro- and macro-linguistics is closely embedded to the socio-cultural context and communicative approach.

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Aura Victoria Noersadono is a story artist, an animator, and a passionate storyteller currently pursuing a BFA in computer animation at Ringling College of Arts and Design, Sarasota, FL. Her pursuit in animation began from a young age when she started doing 3D animation as early as when she was still 11 years old. Her works display a wide range of compositional skills, camerawork, and exceptional storytelling. She is now exploring more about feature animation and storyboarding more emotional scenes.