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Interlanguage as An Oral Communication Strategy Used by The First Graders of English Education Study Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan

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Abstract

This study describes the communication strategies in English used by first-level students of the English Education Study Program at STKIP PGRI Pacitan, which can be seen in their interlanguage production. The research data is in the form of Interlanguage, which they produce when performing oral communication. Data collection techniques are elicitation and documentation. Data were analyzed qualitatively. The results of the study show that there are three main types of communication strategies used by learners, namely: over-generalization, first language transfer, and simplification. Students intend this strategy to maintain that communication using English as the target language can continue despite the limitations of their language skills. This research implies that mistakes are inevitable in learning a foreign language, so it needs to be addressed positively. Appropriate training needs to be provided to learners to understand better the differences between the target language and their mother tongue to help them develop their interlanguage system.

Keywords: *Interlanguage, communication strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Mastering a foreign language for those who learn the language in a different setting is not easy. In the case of English as a foreign language, it is hard for second-language learners from various first-language backgrounds to understand the use of verbs, prepositions, word classes, and other elements in a short time. Take the example of Indonesian learners, and it is difficult to master English since the learners do not get enough exposure to the language input and do not have enough people who are native English speakers to practice with.

In a second language acquisition process, a term called 'interlanguage' is conceived as the product of interaction between two linguistic systems, the Native Language and the Target Language. The sentences produced by students which cannot be classified as a native language (NL) or target language (TL) in Second Language Acquisition are called Interlanguage (IL). The term Interlanguage (IL) is first introduced by Larry Selinker (1972) to suggest the intermediate stages between the native and target language observable in the learner's language (Richards, 1974, p. 29). Thus, Interlanguage is considered a language with its system and other natural languages in terms of acquiring the target language.

Adnyani (2011) stated that when learning a second language (L2), the EFL learners' language production has a high possibility of being interfered with by their first language (L1). The language they produce may be in a second language, but it follows the rules of the first language. The learners are more likely to create a new system of language that is different from their L1 and L2 (Aziez, 2016). Besides creating a new method of language,

language learners also tend to mix both languages as a sign of lacking English proficiency. Language learners tend to produce lexical items from two languages in one sentence (Hadisaputra & Adnyani, 2012)

Interlanguage is an inevitable process that shows learners' progress in learning the language before they properly master the target language (TL). Language learners' inadequate knowledge of the target language, their poor memory of the target language's system or pattern, and teachers' language teaching methods may influence the language learners' errors in producing sentences (Whardani & Margana, 2019).

Dealing with Interlanguage, some relevant studies were done by researchers. Most of them had done studies about learners' Interlanguage in writing since it provides accurate data. Besides, learners' writing is chosen to be analyzed because it gives them more time and opportunity to think thoroughly about the sentences they are about to produce. Al-khresheh (2015) conducted a review study of Interlanguage theory aiming at the role of Interlanguage in learners' errors in L2 acquisition. Another study was conducted by Chachu (2016), who studied French students writing composition to find the factor influencing the Interlanguage.

The first-year students of English Education of STKIP PGRI Pacitan also experience English communication errors. The errors made by the students can be both in speech and writing. The utterances that the students create can be observed as neither those of the native language (Indonesian) nor the target language (English) influences. Among the question dealing with Interlanguage here is what encourages learners to produce Interlanguage.

This study focused on analyzing interlanguage in speaking produced by the first graders of English Education students of STKIP PGRI Pacitan as a strategy to maintain communication flow. Investigating students' Interlanguage is intended to be a consideration for creating appropriate techniques to assist students in mastering the target language more quickly.

METHODS

The qualitative approach is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and is utilized to comprehend people's experiences and express their viewpoints (Johnson & Christensen, 2005). This aligns with this research because it focuses on errors in oral production experienced by students during second language acquisition.

This research was carried out on students of the first grade, English Education Study Program STKIP PGRI Pacitan. The research question is " What strategies are used by the first-grade students of the English Education Study Program STKIP PGRI Pacitan shown in their Interlanguage in speech production?" To achieve the research purposes, this research was conducted in three steps: collecting the data by conducting a guided interview using the English language and recording the students' responses; data analysis by classifying the data and discussing them; and conclusion.

The data for this research were gathered through guided interviews with the students and recordings of students' responses. The interview was conducted using the English language. The questions were designed to prompt the students to produce English speech that was then analyzed. The questions in the interview were about the student's daily routines, interests, English learning activities, and other things related to everyday context. The depth analysis was conducted on students' responses that have been recorded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selinker (1972) states that there are three main learning strategies used by students, namely: mother tongue transfer strategy, over-generalization, and process

simplification.

1. Native Language Transfer

Data finding shows several native language transfers at various linguistic levels, namely the level of words, phrases, and sentences. At the word level, students use lexicons or particular Indonesian expressions in their English sentences. Fauziati (2017) stated in her article taht the development of the second language or foreign language (target language) of the students may be interfered with by the students' mother tongue. The data showe that some students had difficulty finding English equivalents for certain Indonesian words or phrases. They are trying to solve the problem with a literal translation. It seems that this problem arises because of the gap between the two languages, the native language (Indonesian) and the target language (English). They use the easiest way to bridge the gap by finding special terms from the mother tongue, namely literal translation. They build English sentences using Indonesian sintactic pattern. This is the communication strategy they use. The data of research also shows that students use first language transfer at the phrase level. They try to overcome the problem of expressing their ideas in English through word-for-word translations. The strategy has led to a particular result, namely, an interlanguage error, as seen in the example below:

- **I *am very* like cooking.**
  NL: *Saya sangat suka memasak*
- **I will *presentation* in front of the class.**
  NL: *Saya akan presentasi di depan kelas.*
- **I like wear dress color black.**
  NL: *Saya suka memakai baju warna hitam.*

The examples show that in oral communication, students try to compose sentences in English but they used Indonesian pattern, which is unacceptable in English. They translate directly, Indonesian words into English without considering whether it was grammaticaly or lexicaly acceptable or not. The word "very", which means '*sangat*', in the Indonesian context, can be followed by a verb. However, in the English context, 'very' is an adverb that cannot be followed by a verb. The student meant to say: 'I'm very like cooking'. The second data is "I will presentation in front of the class". This sentence is grammatically wrong. In this case, they translate "*presentasi*" into "presentation". However, the word "presentation" is a noun that cannot be placed after auxilary 'will'. They should say "I will conduct a presentation in front of the class" or " I will present it in fron of the class" They also produced utterance "I like wear dress color black" for they directly translate word for word of native language (Indonesian) sentence: "*Saya suka memakai baju warna hitam*" in the second example.

The next native language transfer is the use of Indonesian acronym within English sentences. Purnamasari (2016) claimed that language learners tend to mix lexical items from L1 and L2 in one sentence. The following are the examples of utterances produced by students:

- My favorite subject *is **IPA.***
- My brother studies at ***SD** 2 Gunungsari.*

The data show that students used some Indonesian acronyms in building English utterances. Some possible factors may lead them to use this kind of strategy in oral communication. They either do not know proper English terms equivalence to those acronyms in English, or the words do not exist in the target language. Thus, they use Indonesian acronyms to keep the speaking flow. The students also use Indonesian structures to express something in English. It is essential to highlight similarities and differences between the form of Indonesian and English. On the one hand, when there is a similarity, they can produce the proper sentences, and this is called a positive transfer,

as in the sentence "I went to Jogjakarta with my mother." On the other hand, when differences occur between two languages, the result is wrong or often called negative transfer.

2. Overgeneralization

Contrary to the native language influence, where the speakers tend to think in Indonesian pattern, in other cases, the students have an English pattern mindset. The data shows an over-generalization of the primary learning strategy students use. They have activated their previously learned or acquired linguistic knowledge of the target language (Selinker, 1977 Saville-Troike, 2006). This kind of strategy is sometimes quite helpful, but in other cases, it is misleading or not applicable due to superficial similarities. As in the following data:

- I *am* go to school at 7 a.m.
- Last holiday, I *goed* to Batam.
- I go to *the* school to study.
- I like *the* Mathematics.

The use of BE which is overgeneralized by the students are found in the data above. They thought that all the sentences should be added with BE, as it is seen in "I am go to school at 7 a.m.". Thus, some students add BE in the sentences that they produced, which are incorrect in a particular context. They also do overgeneralization of the past form –ed. From the data collected, there are found several examples where the students used the past form –ed in verbs that do not require the form, like in the sentence "Last holyday, I goed to Batam." It can be assumed that the students know that they should add –ed at the end of the verbs in past tense. However, they fail to notice that the irregular form in English does not require the ending – ed. Thus, they used the rule of regular form -ed and applied it in all verbs. They also overgeneralize the use of 'the', where they thought that 'the' should be added before nouns, without noticing that 'the' should be used only before particular nouns.

3. Simplification

The last learning strategy is a simplification. This refers to simplifying the target language grammar or applying it imperfectly by reducing it to a more straightforward system. Two types of simplification strategies are used by students, namely removing BE and bound morpheme {-S} as possessive markers. As in the following data:

- She very clever.
- I borrow my father motorcycle.
- I have two brother.

In Indonesian syntactic pattern, to be (is, am, are, was, were) is not required in a sentence, whether the subject is singular or plural, nor the tenses used. However, the English pattern has a strict rule in composing sentences. Be should be included when a subject is followed by a noun or an adjective or V-ing. Such construction does not exist in Indonesian. It can be seen in the data above "She very clever." where the student omitted BE. They also omitted bound morpheme (-s) as possessive marker in the sentence"I borrow my father motorcycle" that it should be added "'s" after "father". They also omit (s) as plural marker in the sentence "I have two brother".

From this fact, it can be interpreted that students tend to activate their linguistic knowledge previously learned from the target language (English) and the first language (Indonesia). Kusumawardani (2020) confirms that the students' oral speech influenced by the native language, Indonesian resulting the interlanguage production. In this case, the students use this strategy to keep communication in the target language (English) running even with their limited language skills.

CONCLUSION

5 The results of this study indicate three kinds of communication strategies used by the first-grade students of the English Education Study Program of STKIP PGRI Pacitan in speaking English, namely strategies of over-generalization, first language transfer, and simplification. From this fact, the researcher can interpret that learning a foreign language is a creative process. With this view, interlanguage errors should be considered an inevitable part of the process. Therefore, it is necessary to have a positive attitude towards interlanguage errors. Errors should be seen as a reflection of the stages in which students develop their interlanguage systems. Interlanguage errors provide essential clues about the foreign language learning process. In this case, it can be said that their linguistic knowledge is still limited. Mistakes are also crucial in the learning process. With proper feedback, mistakes made by students can be a reminder to improve their abilities.

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