THE POSSIBILITY OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

It is known that there is a general concern for those who must leave their original language and original culture to adjust to the surroundings and mastering a new language. For Indonesian, English is known as first foreign language and not as second language. There are some problems as Indonesian to regard English as second language. This paper is trying to discuss the problems and also the possibility of English as second language in Indonesia.

Key words: English, ESL, Language, Children Language Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Studying a second language in the world happens due to various reasons such as immigration, trade and science needs and also education. Learning another language may be important in human intellectual activity after mastering the mother tongue. Therefore it is not surprising that research in this area became very attractive in cognitive science because the complexity in second language acquisition is not possible to examine it from one perspective only.

It is known that second language acquisition (SLA) or second language learning is the process by which people of a language can learn a second language in addition to their native language. ("Second Language Acquisition": 18 December 2010) Second language acquisition is the process of learning a new language after the acquisition of a learner's native language. It can also incorporate the learning of third, fourth or subsequent languages as well as heritage language learning. Bilingualism is not usually seen to be within the field of second language acquisition. Most SLA researchers see bilingualism as being the end result of

learning a language, not the process itself, and see the term as referring to native-like fluency, which second language learners rarely achieve. Writers in fields such as education and psychology, however, often use bilingualism loosely to refer to all forms of multilingualism.

This paper will be focused on the difficulties for learners to learn English as second language in Indonesia. It will be focused on the children when they learn language because the possibility to make English becomes the second language depends on the children when they acquire a language. There are five proposals for classroom teaching; provide examples from classroom interaction to illustrate how the proposals get translated into classroom practice. The researcher in this case myself who writes this paper- will give example based on the researcher's experience when teaching in the classroom. For each proposal, a few relevant studies will be presented, discussed, and compared with one another. Those proposals are:

1. Get it right from the beginning;
2. Say what you mean and mean what you say;
3. Just listen… and read;
4. Teach what is teachable;
5. Get it right in the end.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sumardiono (2007) states that some language experts support the view "the earlier the children learn a foreign language, becomes easier child to master the language." For example, McLaughlin and Genesee claimed that children acquire language more quickly without much difficulty as compared with adults. There is an assumption, the young age children learn languages easier than adults. While others say, the success of learning a foreign language is determined by the motive or the need to communicate in their environment. Language acquisition by children is the greatest human achievements and amazing. That's why this issue gets attention. Language acquisition has been studied intensively for a long time. At that time we have learned a lot about how children talk, understand and use language, but very little of what we know about the actual process of language development. One thing we know is that language acquisition is very much

determined by the interaction of complex aspects of biological maturity, cognitive and social.

In the development process of children language acquisition, all normal human children acquire at least one natural language, he explained every child is normal or reasonable growth to obtain a language that is the first language or mother tongue in the first years of life in the world (Suryadimulya, 2008: 1). To train reading skills in first language will support the capability in reading the children in English as all the skills in one language would be useful also in other languages. Children who tend to maintain the first language tend to be more understanding of language systems in general. In addition, they can learn similar words, spelling, or grammar. Even if much different from the English language, there are similarities and differences musty useful, such as phone systems or sentence structure. A child typically will retain only the first language if there is a genuine effort from them and the family. This does not mean that both parents must be fluent in two languages or able to translate word for word. One effective way is if one parent speaking or reading in Indonesian, while other parents to use English for a child to make him/her familiar to use two languages at once with his/her parents.

DISCUSSION

There are five proposals for classroom teaching; provide examples from classroom interaction to illustrate how the proposals get translated into classroom practice. For each proposal, a few relevant studies will be presented, discussed, and compared with one another. Those proposals are:

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Get It Right from the Beginning

The "Get it right from the beginning" proposal for second language teaching probably best describes the way in which many of students were taught a

second language in school. It includes the traditional approaches about grammar translation and audio-lingual approaches. The emphasis is on the oral language, but students rarely use the language spontaneously. Teachers avoid letting beginner learners speak freely because this would allow them to make errors. The errors could become habits, so it is better to prevent these bad habits before they happen.

Example 1

(A group of 15-year-old students involved in an exercise based on the simple present of English verbs.)

S1 And uh, in the afternoon, uh, I come home and uh, uh, I uh, washing my dog..

T I wash.

S1 My dog.

T Everyday you wash your dog?

S1 No.

S2 Dia tidak memiliki anjing! (= He does not have a dog!)

S1 Tidak, tapi kita kan bisa bilang kalau kita punya! (= No, but we can say we do!)

Clearly, in this case, the student's real experience with his dog (or even the fact that he did or did not have a dog) was irrelevant. What mattered was the correct use of the simple present verb!

Example 2

(Agroup of 12-year-old learners of English as a foreign language)

T Repeat after me. Is there any butter in the refrigerator?

Class Is there any butter in the refrigerator?

T There's very little, Mom.

Class There's very little, Mom.

T Are there any tomatoes in the refrigerator?

Class Are there any tomatoes in the refrigerator?

T There are very few, Mom.

Class There are very few, Mom. (etc.)

It is pure repetition. The students have no reason to get involved or to think about what they are saying. Indeed, some students who have no idea what the sentences mean will successfully repeat them anyway, while their minds wander off to other things.

Some researchers said that errors are a natural and valuable part of the language learning process. Furthermore, they believe that the motivation of learners is often stifled by assistance on corrections in the earliest stages of second language learning. These opponents of the proposal argue that it is better to encourage learners to develop "fluency" before "accuracy". (Spada, 1999: 119)

Second Language learners receiving audio-lingual or grammar-based instruction are often unable to communicate their messages and intentions effectively in a second language. Experience has also shown that primarily or exclusively grammar-based approaches to teaching do not guarantee that learners develop high. Learners benefit from opportunities for communicative practice in contexts where the emphasis is on understanding and expressing meaning.

According to the researcher's experience as a lecturer of English, the researcher ever found one of the students make a comment of English lesson at the first day of English Lesson. He said "*I think* ***selama*** *we are study English today I know that English language is very important in* ***dunia bisnis****, so I* ***harap pak Radit*** *can give me motivation to study hard*". In this case, I write his sentence on the whiteboard. And then, I give him the correct English words which are suitable to substitute the first language usage in his sentence. The result is amazing, he could practice it again next week and become more fluently than before.

Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say

The "Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say" proposal emphasize the necessity for learners to have access to meaningful and comprehensible input through conversational interactions with teacher and other students. The learners are given some task and then they work together to accomplish it. This will lead learners to acquire the language form such as the words and the grammatical structures which carry the meaning they are attending to.

Example 3

(a group of 12-year-old- students are discussing with their teacher a questionnaire about their pets)

S The fish is difficult to wash?

T Fish is difficult to wash?

S Yes.

T Fish… Oh, not so difficult. Fish are difficult to wash?!? What's your uh… [question]?

S Do you have an animal? Yes, I do. Do you ever feed it? Yes. r----

T Do you know what "feed" means**?**

S Ah, no. It's uh…?

T To give food to it.

Example 4

(Students doing a morning warm-up activity)

T How are you doing this morning?

S1 I'm mad!

S2 Why?

T Oh Boy. Yeah, why?

S1 Because this morning, my father say no job this morning.

T Your father has no more job this morning or you have no job?

S1 My father.

The differences of these examples are from the essentially meaningless interaction often observed in classroom where the emphasis is on "getting it right from the beginning". Such genuine exchanges of information must surely improve students' motivation to participate in language learning activities.

In the second language classroom, teachers' reclassify are not usually focused on only one form. Furthermore, when the instructional focus is on expressing meaning through subject-matter instruction, the teachers' reclassify may not be perceived by the learners as an attempt to correct their language form but rather as just another way of saying the same thing.

According to the researcher's experience as a lecturer of English, I ever asked the student in the class about the word ***party*** in a sentence: *Kafalah is akad's*

guarantee of one ***party*** *to another* ***party.*** Then, I asked them according to the sentence, what does the party mean? Some of them say *pesta*; and some others say *partai politik*. Then I correct their answer by saying: the suitable meaning depends on the context is *pihak*. They are still remembering the word when I asked them again next week. So it works.

Just Listen… and Read

This proposal is based on the assumption that it is not necessary to drill and memorize language forms in order to learn them. However, unlike the interactionists' emphasis on providing opportunities for interaction of the kind, it is seen in some of pieces in the "say what you mean and mean what you say" proposal, the emphasis here is on providing comprehensible input through listening and/or reading activities.

Example 5

It is the English lecture which are participated by students (aged 17-20). The class looks very much like a miniature language lab, with individual work spaces arranged around the perimeter of the room. They go to the shelves containing books and audio-cassettes and select the material which they wish to read and listen to during the next 30 minutes. For some of the time the teacher is walking around the classroom, checking that the machines are running smoothly. The teacher does not interact with the students concerning what they are doing. Some of the students are listening with eyes closed; others read actively, pronouncing the word silently. The classroom is almost silent except for the sound of tapes being inserted or removed or chairs scraping as students go to the shelves to select new tapes and books.

"Just Listen… and read" is one of the most influential and most controversial approaches to second language teaching because it not only says that second language learners need to drill and practice language in order to learn it, but also that they do not need to speak at all, except to get other people to speak to them. According to this view, it is enough to hear and understand the target language. Furthermore, as be seen in the classroom description above, one way to do this is to provide learners with a steadiness of listening and reading comprehension

activities with no (or very few) opportunities to speak or interact with the teacher or other learners in the classroom.

In summary, comprehension-based programs appear to be beneficial in the development of basic comprehension and communicative performance in the early stages of learning (particularly in situations where learners have no other contact with the target language apart from in classroom situations). But it may not be sufficient to get learners to continue developing their second language abilities to advanced levels. In particular, comprehension-based instruction may make it difficult for learners to discover and eliminate patterns already present their interlanguage that are not grammatical in the target language.

According to the researcher's experience as a lecturer of English, this proposal had ever been applied in my class. I gave the students a simple text and then I read whole text clearly in front of the class. I watched some of them followed to read it whispering, some of them just listening, and some of them are sleepy. So in my opinion, this type of proposal is a little boring for university students (aged 17-20).

Teach What is Teachable

In the example 6 below, the students is using "fronting" strategy which is typical of stage 3 learners (Spada, 1999: 77-78). The student simply places something (in this case "is") at the beginning of the sentence but does not change the rest of the sentence. The teacher correction leads the student to imitate a stage 4 question. In example 7, the same situation appears. However, the correction leads not to an imitation or a reformulation of the question, but simply to an answer.

Example 6

(the same group of students engaged inn "famous person" interviews.)

S1 Is your mother play piano?

T 'is your mother play piano?'? OK. Well, can you say "is your mother play piano?" or "is your mother a piano player?"?

S1 "Is your mother a piano player?"

S2 No.

Example 7

(Interviewing each other about house preferences.)

S1 Is your favourite house is a split-level?

S2 Yes.

T You're saying 'is' two times dear. “is your favourite house a split-level?”

S1 Asplit-level.

T OK.

In example 8 the students asks a stage 3 question, the teacher provides a stage 4 correction, and the students is able to imitate the stage 4 question. However, the student still does not pronounce the possessive *'s*, something which French speakers find very difficult.

Example 8

S Where the teacher books are?

T Where are the teacher's books?

S Where are the tea---- the teacher books?

This proposal helps teacher to set realistic expectation about the ways in which learners' interlanguage may change in response to instruction. According to the researcher's experience as a lecturer of English, the researcher ever found one of the students make a comment of English lesson at the first day of English Lesson. She said “I sure English is important because it's international language”. I realize there is a grammatical error; there is no *be “am*”. So I correct her statement by saying “Do you mean: I ***am*** sure ***that*** English is important because it's international language? So my answer is absolutely.” I give a little pressure in those two words to make a correction of her statement.

Get It Right in the End

Proponents of the 'get it right in the end' position recognize an important role for form-focused instruction, but they do not assume that everything has to be taught. Like advocates of the 'say what you mean and mean what you say' and the

'just listen… and read' positions, they have concluded that many language features- from pronunciation to vocabulary and grammar- will be acquired naturally if learners have adequate exposure to the language and a motivation to learn.

Example 9

(The students are playing 'hide and seek' with a doll in a doll's house, asking questions until they find out where 'George" is hiding.)

S1 Is George is in the living room?

T You said 'is" two times. Listen to you---you said "is George is in?" Look on the board. 'Is George in the' and then you say the name of the room.

S1 Is George in the living room?

T Yeah.

S1 I win!

Note that the teacher's brief correction does not distract the student from his pleasure in the game, demonstrating that focus on form does not have to interfere with genuine interaction.

The emphasis of this proposal is primarily on meaning, but those who hold this position argue that there is a role for form-focused instruction and correction. The research relevant to this proposal has shown that second language learners benefit from form-focused instruction which is provided within communicative context. The challenge is to find the balance between meaning-based and form-focused activities. The right balance is likely to be different according to the characteristic of the learners.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the description above, the writer conclude that all possibility is possible. It is possible to make English becomes the second language in Indonesia. However it depends on the role of parents in using English for social interaction at home, only if it is applied to the entire families in Indonesia although in a long period of time.

The second language teachers should provide guided, form-based corrective feedback in certain circumstances. Teachers should not hesitate to correct persistent errors which learners seem not to notice without focused attention. The teacher should also be aware of errors that the majority of learners in a class are made when the students share the same first language background, and the students should not hesitate to point out how a particular structure in a learner's first language differs from the target language.

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