

Language Socialization between Two Different Non-Native English Speakers through Conversation Analysis

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Abstrak

Artikel ini menyajikan bukti bahwa setidaknya ada tiga fenomena sosialisasi bahasa yang penting dalam percakapan diadik Non-Native English Speaker (NNES). Dengan melakukan analisis percakapan kedua NNES dalam situasi non formal, ditemukan bahwa; (1) Latar belakang pengetahuan tidak lepas dari proses pemerolehan bahasa dalam memediasi penemuan konsep baru (2) Nilai toleransi yang dimiliki oleh individu yang lebih ahli memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap keberhasilan proses belajar anggota baru dan (3) Proses sosialisasi yang diperoleh tidak hanya melalui pengalaman langsung tetapi juga proses tidak langsung yang mungkin masih memberikan dampak yang sama bagi kesiapan calon anggota baru sebelum benar-benar terlibat dalam suatu komunitas.

Kata Kunci: Analisis percakapan, Non-Native English Speaker (NNES), sosialisasi bahasa

Abstract

This paper presents evidence that there are, at least, three important language socialization phenomena within a dyadic Non-Native English Speaker (NNES) conversation. By doing conversation analysis of the two NNES in a non-formal situation, it is found that; (1) Background knowledge cannot be separated from the language acquisition process in mediating the discovery of a new concept (2) The value of tolerance owned by more expert individual contributes positively to the success of new member learning process and (3) Socialization process earned not only through direct experience but also an indirect process that may still give the same impact for the readiness of a potential new member before actually engaging in a community.

Keywords: Conversation analysis, non-native English speaker (NNES), language socialization

A. Introduction

Some literature indicates that the study of conversational analysis (CA) has been started since 1960's. Through the collaborative work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, CA is meant to investigate participants' point of view about social and cultural constructs which in turn seek to provide a description of interactional rules, procedures, and convention to intelligible social interaction (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Similarly, Whetherel (1998) argues that CA is employed to derive a more natural description behind a conversation. It is derived from the idea that conversation is the place where culture and social occur (Schegloff, 1997). In doing CA, researchers might gain opportunities to see an in-depth picture of how social and cultural interaction is operated and being maintained in the flow of talking within a conversation.

Similarly, language socialization is probably not a new term among linguists. This is a theoretical framework that provides a relatively new paradigm about language as a process of interaction. Duff (1995) argues that language is used by individuals as a tool to gain

knowledge, beliefs, affects roles, social identity and representation to enter a community. This tool is employed in order to understand any meaningful code of conduct within a community of practices. On the same side, Ochs (1991) identifies the inseparability between language and interaction process. Inspired with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky about Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), she argues that the learning process of becoming a member of society is facilitated by interaction in which language is used as the medium. Then, through the interaction, individuals might construct their view about the surrounding reality throughout the language that they use (Schieffelin, 1986). In addition, Morita (2000) synthesizes arguments from some studies such as Schieffelin and Ochs that in terms of socialization, processes of gaining social and cultural knowledge are bi/multi-directional process. She explains that during the early years of language exposures a child and the caregivers do learn. In conclusion, once individuals have gained all knowledge of the social codes and rules, of a particular community they might be able to socialize and gain membership status indicated by the language of the community.

Language socialization also has its own style foci. One of them proposed by Friedman (2010) that language socialization is not merely about a description of a practice of community rather it investigates the process of novices to becoming and achieving acceptance within a community. This paradigm also suggests that not all socializations end up with success but also a failure. Furthermore, as the aim of socialization is not limited to only the language but also how the language itself helps to acquire social competencies (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), either the results indicate success or failure, both are useful for the researchers as to determine what are appropriate and what are rejected in a community. Moreover, departing from the findings that experiences and expectations influence the way individuals define the world through language, language socialization also looks for language connection in which forms and functions play significant roles that construct individuals' lens for viewing reality (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). A person can have his own uniqueness when using a language as their experiences and expectations might pose a great influence in constructing their identity (Vickers, 2007, Kramsch, 2000). It can be tentatively concluded that in socialization phenomena language as the medium cannot be separated from the interaction.

Some researches regarding language socialization have been conducted. For example, Morita (2000) analyzed language socialization into an academic discourse community and found that the result of language socialization might come to unpredictable results. Some students tried alternatives ways to be able to present an academic topic within an academic presentation, either a native speaker or non-native speaker had the same psychological nervousness about being the presenter. Vicker (2007) conducted a study of language socialization among engineering students. She found that a student needs to have the experience of an expert first before being able to speak like an expert. However, the research provides no space for analysis of language socialization among non-native English speakers.

The research question of the research was what were the language socialization phenomena within the dyadic conversation between Non-Native English Speaker E and S? Therefore, this mini research was conducted with the focus of the analysis on the socialization in a conversation between Non-Native English Speakers (NNES). By doing this, the researcher might be able to investigate how language as the medium of interaction poses a significant role in the learning process. Choosing NNES as the subjects of the research might give different values and a new perspective for language socialization different from what have been found in the previous studies.

B. Method

Respondents

The respondents of this research were a Japanese and an Indonesian student who were enrolling in the Department of Language and Linguistics and Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching, Lancaster University 2015/2016 academic year. Both of them were Non-Native English Speakers (NNS) who graduated from English Department in Universities in their home countries. The Indonesian one was 24 years old and the Japanese one was 23 years old. At that time, both of them could be considered as advanced English Learners as commonly known that the standard requirement to apply and become postgraduate students in Lancaster University is proven to have at least 6.5 IELTS score. In addition, the language used as the medium of instruction in the University is English where both of them had used since the first time arrived there. In the transcription, for the purpose of accommodating the concerns of the subject of both of the students were given initials with S for the Japanese and E by the researcher.

Instruments

The researcher recorded a conversation between J and E and transcribed their dyadic conversation (Mackey et al., 2012). The kitchen was chosen as the place to conduct the record because it was often used by flat members do chat, talk about schools, or share knowledge about culture. The kitchen was not only used as a place to cook the food but also as space for social and cultural interaction in which language socialization process can be found and investigated. In order to get consent from his partner, the researcher asked it personally to him. The data was recorded on November 24th, 2015 at 17.39 pm with duration of 19 minutes and 46 seconds.

Data analysis

The data analysis of the research was done through Conversation Analysis (CA) method. CA was employed as the method in analyzing the interaction between the participants through conversation transcript analysis. This method allows the researcher to make interpretations of the subject actions when involving in a conversation (Seedhouse, 2005; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). However, the researcher focuses only on the language socialization process.

C. Findings and Discussion

Some phenomena of language socialization can be found within the conversation. As the followings:

1. Background knowledge as a bridge to introduce a new concept

S: Ferment is what?

E: Like if you want to (pause) make a...

S: Aaaaghhh! it is this one !? no?!

E: No!,

S: Sorry,,

E: I am sta, I am thinkin. **If you want to make sake.**

S: Uhu

E: **What do you what do you do?**

S: We store for a long time.

E: You store

S: Yeah.

E: **You store it, it means you ferment it.**

S: Aaaaaa..."

In the dialogue above, S does not know about the definition of the word 'ferment' which is "to (cause something to) change chemically through the action of living substances, such as yeast or bacteria" (see Cambridge Dictionary). In there, it seems that E knows about a Japanese product that has a similar concept to the term that he is explaining to S which is sake. E tries to explain that term to S by referring to the cultural knowledge that he has about Japan in which S might know as Japanese. Therefore, he then asks S about the process of making sake as "if you want to make sake what do you do?" and S replies "we store for a long time". The question that E proposes does not represent his lack of knowledge of sake, instead he knows the answer. He wants S to answer the question because the answer leads to the meaning of 'ferment' that S asks before. In addition, to be more certain that S has gotten the idea E repeats the answer again and directly tells him the meaning by saying "You store it, it means you ferment it".

The excerpt above is a strong evidence of a stage in which a more knowledgeable person scaffolds the novice in order to grasp one specific term or concept similar to what Duff (2007) explains about language socialization that experts help the novices to "think, feel, and act in accordance with the values, ideologies, and traditions of the group" (p. 311). By directing S to the concept that he has known, he might be able to think, feel and act in accordance with the value behind the word 'ferment' which is very similar to the concept of 'store for a long time' for sake that he already knows. Referring the meaning of 'ferment' to the alternative description in order to get the same ground of the concept (Clark and Brennan, 1991), not only E but also S who contributes to discovering the meaning of 'ferment'. They actively act to create a common ground of understanding as Schober and Clark (1989) argue that to reach an understanding in a conversation each speaker has to collaboratively interact. Therefore, it can be concluded that language socialization opens a way to learn a new linguistic item by doing scaffolding that utilizes the knowledge of culture as background knowledge to understand a concept.

2. Language and other semiotic tools as a medium of learning the language and culture

E: You know, it's not enough. Aaaaaa I can show you. I believe you know it (tempe)! (googling)

E: **This is it S!**...you know it right?!, You know it don't you!?

S: **Wooow!**"

[...]

S: But you call it, soy beans!?

E: Tempe

S: ooh, "Tem be"

E: "Tempe!"

S: "Te emphe"..

E: Yeah!"

In the excerpt above, it can be observed that E introduces S to a new term which is *tempe*, a traditional food from his country (see full transcription in the appendix). At this time, instead of using a reference like in the previous example, E uses a tool to give a clear description of the object (*tempe*). He uses his handphone to find the picture of the object and show it directly to S. Then, E also helps S to practice a proper pronunciation of the word *tempe*. Although he finds it difficult at first, but S can successfully pronounce it at the end.

In doing socialization, individuals might encounter many problems. However, the most important thing to pay attention to is not the problem but the strategy (Morita, 2000). In the conversation above, the problem is how to get S to a clear meaning of the object that E wants to share. According to Duff (2007), “Language and other semiotic systems and tools mediate not only communication in general but specifically the learning of language and other cultural knowledge”. As a result, E uses a handphone to demonstrate the picture of *tempe* to S and this act is a part of the language socialization initiative. Moreover, E also helps S the way to pronounce the word correctly. The picture functions as a semiotic tool to induce the meaning of the word and he also uses his pronunciation to correct the mispronunciation that S makes. In this process, S gains a competence of the term as a concept and a skill for the goal of his interaction (Vickers, 2007).

More importantly, in the second excerpt when E is helping S to pronounce the word *tempe* he finally pronounces it, but in a bit different way from E. S adds sound h like in *Tempe* at his final try. Probably, this is a unique way of pronunciation that S has as a Japanese. Instead of taking this as a problem because S cannot do it 100% similarly as E does, he tolerates this. Probably, E does not want to put a hardship on S and make the conversation stops at that moment or he knows that S might not be able to pronounce it as exactly the same as him because of different linguistic repertoire that they both have or S might want to preserve his identity by pronouncing it the way he does (Bronson, 2004 in Duff 2010). On the other side, it can also be deduced that E has tolerance value by accepting S unique pronunciation. This way helps both of them make the conversation flow and the interaction sustained. Hence, it is not only identity preservation necessarily to be counted in socialization but also tolerance from the more expert one for some uniqueness from whom he is scaffolding.

3. *Indirect Teaching of Community of Practices*

“E: Do you make preparation first before you and enter the class and teach them?

S: **Hmm, aa, Honestly I prepare for some like PPTa Powerpoints**

E: Hmmmmm

S: For teaching

E: Okay

S: But it's so I mean it's not so tough just

E: Just give them same, some

S: Yeah like some

E: Phrases

S: **slides of PPT and introduce my country because it's culture society so it's include like learning of course learning language and learning culture also we need to do**

E: Uuuhm.

S: **So I just introduce some parts of Japan I mean my home town or some famous sports in Japan or something like that**

E: Yeah

S: It's it's interesting”

In the excerpt above, S tells E about what he does while engaging in his community (Lancaster University Culture Society). For further information, S is a teacher of Japanese Language Class in that community. E wants to know what he does as a teacher. S then

explains about his preparation before and when entering the class to teach Japanese Language in the society.

This is the part of Language socialization where the novice learns from the expert about a community of practices. The novice gets some important information about practices that are acceptable and can be done within a community from the expert (Duff, 2010). Even though E does not experience of becoming a teacher at that moment, he can still get a clear description of that situation from the explanation given by S. It is an important step for E before coping with that community and able to get socialized. He should know what the community members do in there. Once he knows that he would be able to speak the same discourse as the community (Vickers, 2007). Hence, in here, language is used as a medium of interaction to develop competence and construct membership for entering the community (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). However, this process happens actually before E is directly exposed to the community. Therefore, one new perspective might be drawn that language socialization as a facilitative medium into a community of practice does not necessarily require the participants to engage directly in the community. Having some exposures through an explanation from the expert might also be a good way as well.

D. Conclusion

From this research, some conclusions can be drawn as potential objects for further studies: 1) Background knowledge cannot be separated from the language acquisition process as it might help someone to discover a new word meaning by relying on his/her background knowledge; 2) Many alternative tools are available for teaching a new term or a new concept. However, the tolerance value in which the expert can accept the uniqueness of the novice plays a significant role in the process of acquiring a new term; 3) Socialization should be brought to a wider perspective. It does not necessarily view the socialization process as a direct experience only, but also as an indirect process that may still give the same impact for the readiness one a potential new member before actually engaging within the community.

Since the limited scope of the research, it is recommended to conduct further studies with the wider context of NNES conversation. Investigation of the impact of indirect language socialization to an individual before the on-going process of interaction in a community will give a brighter view on this specific area.

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