Cognitive Strategies on Language Learning

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Abstract. Learning the first language outside of school generally goes smoothly, children's language skills develop well but learning the first language in class, the child's language skills develop slowly. The same thing happens in learning a language and a second language. Learning a second language outside of school (the child is transferred to the culture and second language being studied, the child can master the new language within six months. Meanwhile, learning the language in the classroom (not in the culture and second language studied), for six years has not yielded satisfactory results. This study was designed in carried out using the deconstruction method. In this study, the deconstruction method was used to reveal implicit meaning. Some previous studies about learning acquisition strategies had been reviewed. The results of the study show that cognitive strategy is a suitable strategy for the children to be used in acquiring language. Children are guided to follow some activities, namely clarifying and verifying, guessing or doing inductive exploring, reasoning deductively, practicing, memorizing to remember, and monitoring.

Keywords: cognitive strategies · language learning · language acquisition

1 Introduction

Since birth, children learn many things. From the perspective of cognitive theory, children can learn from their real-world [1]. The learning process exists naturally, naturally, for example walking, and responding to the natural surroundings; there are also those that must be guided, for example, counting, dancing, singing, and others. If it is related to the two learning processes, which language learning is included? Based he Piaget's theory, children learn from the environment [2]. Children obtain information and knowledge based on what they have found in their surroundings [3]. On the other hand, based on Vygotsky's theory, children learn from the social and cultural context [4]. It can be seen that children have to interact with others in order to obtain information [5].

In reality, there are two language learning settings, namely outside school and in the classroom; and there are two language statuses that are learned by children, namely the first language and the second language. Learning the first language outside of school generally goes smoothly, children's language skills develop well but learning the first language in class, the child's language skills develop slowly. The same thing happens in learning the second language. Learning the second language outside of school (the child is transferred to the culture and second language being studied, the child can master the

new language within six months. Meanwhile, learning the language in the classroom (not in the culture and second language studied), for six years has not yielded satisfactory results. This fact gives us the impression that: 1) children have a special capability to learn the language, and 2) schools curb that capability unnaturally.

Some previous researchers have conducted studies on cognitive aspect. Studies on types of investigate the kinds of language learning strategies the merchant marine polytechnics students use in learning English [6]. It was found that metacognitive, compensation, social, memory, cognitive, and affective strategy. In addition, another study also found that there were some types cognitive, metacognitive, affective, compensation, and social strategy in learning a language. Metacognitive strategies can help the students to develop good thinking management ability. It also creates good academic achievement. In the other hand, the choice of lowest strategy seems to be affected by technology advances, curriculum, feelings, mood, and attitude of the students which is unpredictable [7].

The previous studies focus on the learning strategies used in language acquisition. There are limited studies focusing on cognitive aspect only. In addition, the problem, if humans are said to have a special capability in mastering language, how does the special capability operate/work? Can we give a detailed description of the special capability operation? Therefore, this study discuss the cognitive strategy on language learning.

2   Method

This study was designed in carried out using the deconstruction method. Method is more comfortably referred to as 'methodology' in order to avoid confusion [8]. Method implied an overall plan for systematic presentation of language, based upon the approach and implemented through techniques consistent with the method as well as the approach [9]. On the other hand, uses the term 'method' to refer "both to a set of activities to be carried out in the classroom and to the theory, belief, or plausible concept that informs those activities" [10]. In addition, method can be defined as "a single set of theoretical principles derived from feeder disciplines and a single set of classroom procedures directed at classroom teachers" [11]. In this study, deconstruction method was used to reveal implicit meaning. Some previous studies about learning acquisition strategies had been reviewed. It reviewed cognitive learning strategy in language acquisition. The instruments of the study were the researchers themselves and note. The data were obtained from reviewing some related articles about cognitive development. Then, the obtained data were analysed qualitatively.

3   Result and Discussions

What we know about living languages (there are still speakers) is the existence of lexicon, a sound system, and a set of structural rules [12]. Many people have studied the rules and elements of language, all of which we can only accept as an introduction to the science (linguistics) we are studying.

We can only see a vague relationship between language and thought as a result of the overlapping phenomena of language. The overlapping phenomena can be seen, for example in terms of:

1) One word can mean several things, for example:

   back can mean 'back', 'down', 'forward'.

2) One meaning can be expressed by several words, for example;

   payah (in Indonesian) it is often called '*lelah', 'capek', 'penat'*

3) One syntactic form can have multiple meanings, for example:

   The Door is Closed Can Mean:
   'closed door'.
   'do not receive guests from anyone'.
   'the room cannot be entered'.

4) Several syntactic forms can have the same meaning, for example:

   -That guy has a fake leg.
   -That person is wearing an artificial leg.
   -His legs are not original anymore.

5) Although it is not mentioned by words, but there is something that can be understood, for example:

Words   something can be understood:
"wear socks".   'you'
                 'on the feet'
                 'your feet'

This last description shows that the human interpretation system is so powerful that it can process unspoken utterances. The line between language and thought is blurred. The relationship between grammatical and semantic categories is difficult to be drawn. Consequently, descriptions of language itself are never satisfactory (can be proven by the emergence of reactions and revolutions of system or model of language analysis).

That never-satisfactory description of language can be returned to the following questions:

1) Where is the boundary between language and thought?
2) How is the relationship between semantic categories and grammatical categories?
3) Is it true that the category *noun* and *verb* includes grammatical category, while *animate* and *inanimate* includes semantic category?
4) What is speech "*The stone loved*" including utterances that are not grammatical or utterances that are not meaningful?

Hard to be sure. If we learn a language, what do we learn? The form or the internalization of operators? The latter obviously involves a cognitive strategy that is complex

not easy to describe. But it is this factor that is dominant in shaping linguistic competence and communicative competence. The place of learning outside of school or in the classroom (formal situation) doesn't really make an important difference in terms of location. The important difference is in terms of motivation. Outside of school, to learn a language is very high. This is what is important, but motivation itself is a complex psychological phenomenon.

When observed, infants learn language first by determining the meaning of the speech received, and then ensure the relationship between the meaning and the speech heard. Babies use meaning as the key to language, not language as key to meaning. This reality seems to provoke problems such as: 1) the relationship of language to the mind, 2) empirical evidence of how babies learn language. But for the moment, let us believe in the theory that language learning comes from the child's need to understanding and to express meaning. Let's try to compare between learning a language outside of school with in class. Outside of school children are required to understand the utterances addressed to him and respond to them clearly. If the child is able to do it, then the reward is very meaningful, otherwise the punishment is very torturous. For example, he is not allowed to play with his group, use his toys, and is not even considered a human child.

In the classroom, the teacher cannot create such an atmosphere. The teacher never says something "important" that will excite the students to guess what it means. Students rarely find things that are important to tell the teacher with their existing communication skills, so that the meaning is conveyed. A good language class is one whose activities fill a vital communication moment between teacher and student.

A baby can guess what his mother's words mean because around him there are many clues that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or can be felt including the activities he does himself or by his mother [13]. Intonation and speed that is designed (different from the usual), facial expressions, also provide an important key to the meaning or intent. Therefore, the teacher should also make as many demonstrations as possible to communicate meaning, and let students guess. This means that the teacher should not be in a hurry to give meaning to his teaching.

The child's efforts to express the meaning in words are greeted with pride by his parents. He received broken an imperfect speech, there was almost no correction of his speech or grammar as long as the meaning was understood. But, when the child engages in communication he needs, he gradually overcomes difficulties and leaves language errors, at least to a level that is acceptable to the language community. Thus, the urgent need to communicate which is supported by encouragement from parents (in the form of approval, praise, yes) spurs the child's progress. Clearly, the priority is the meaning, not the language aspect.

In learning psychology, there is a rule that only correct language utterances deserve to be rewarded, while here the parents make deviations in "giving" rewards for almost every utterance. Apparently, the motto held here is:

1) By making mistakes we learn.
2) Praise the child then he will do.

This motto that was never shared by parents turned out to be effective for children's language acquisition. This motto apparently needs to be an input for school administrators.

In the study of language learning and language acquisition, there are two assumptions, namely:

1) Children learn language informally; adults learn language formally.
2) The potential for language learning in children is much better than adults.

In the first assumption, the word formal has to do with the word formula (= rules/language system). Formal learning seems to mean learning through formulas (language rules). If language can be squeezed into formulas, it will be learned that way. But this idea is unlikely to be implemented. In the study of language there are indeed rules or language formulas (read language rules), but can only cover aspects of regular language only. This is the material for language lessons for adults that are not used by babies.

Learning is generally accompanied by theories or rules to facilitate learners [14]. They are introduced to the game of chess by being told the rules of games. But a person who is going to learn to ride a bicycle does not need the rules formulated to be understood. There may be certain rules in achieving cycling proficiency, but not necessarily those rules can be formulated explicitly. Learners who need rules as a guide do not always remember the formulation of the rules explicitly. The rules are used without remembering the form of formulation. Thus, there is always a gap between acting skills and the rules of the game. It seems that in learning a language the game is so wide.

Babies whose language skills continue to develop are not aware of the linguistic rules that they apply, although this is not entirely true [15]. Similarly, a proficient/successful second language speaker is not good at explaining the rules of the language he uses. He can only explain the form of an utterance that he uses, when he uses it in a skill that has penetrated (proficient and mastered).

Language learning capability in humans is ready to compile a set of rules (without a formulation that makes people able to talk). It can pick up the undefined rules from the corpus of the language being studied, or arrange them like the grammar rules we know from books. This process is not easy to understand. We are not against grammatical formulas, in fact we believe they are very helpful, but there are two things that must be considered, namely:

1) Don't expect to get rules that can apply to all aspects of language, you have to use linguistic reason and intuition!
2) The learner must be able to walk without having to wait for the introduction of language rules. He must be ready to activate his skills automatically. We can't expect language rules to be a reliable tool in language learning because language rules are always incomplete and inconsistent (imagine there are irregular forms in language rules).

The second assumption, namely that the ability to learn quickly declines after the person grows up. This assumption seems still doubtful. In a family indicated who moved to another language area, children and their parents could relatively quickly master the

language in the new area [16]. Labov's research also shows that there are no difficulties and significant differences in the acquisition of the "new" language between children and adults. Only admitted by Labov that in adults there is difficulty in adults with pronunciation. This may be due to previous language mastery (first language).

Another example that weakens the second assumption is the people who study abroad, whose foreign language is not good at the time of departure, but after being abroad for several years, their foreign language becomes quite good actively and passively. Apparently the "iron law" in learning language still applies here, namely "people will master a second language faster, if they live in the culture of the language they want to learn".

The capability of people in acquire language can be done through cognitive strategies. This strategy presents some activities, namely clarifying and verifying, guessing or doing inductive exploring, reasoning deductively, practicing, memorizing to remember, and monitoring [17]. It enables students to understand and produce new language by many different means[18]. Students recognized information from different means. In this strategy, students conduct several activities. They have to practice, receive, send message. In addition, they are also required to analyze and create structure for output and input. Those activities are repeated by the teachers to make students understand what they have mastered [20, 21]. By keeping students to practice in receiving information, it can also help students to increase their critical thinking. It is because students are asked to practice their cognition [22, 23, 24].

4   Conclussion

Critical issues in language learning and language acquisition should be studied more broadly. Detailed explanation of the human capability of language learning is not quite satisfactory, but we know that the capability is great and well established in the human mind as a communication operator. The functioning of that capability, if the learner needs and engages communication. Means that motivation is absolutely necessary. But the motivation itself is complex. Perhaps what needs to be explored is an important part of motivation in: 1) the implementation of communication, 2) the learner's effort to understand speech, 3) the effort to understand the interlocutor. For that the communication material itself must be from the topic that is absolutely necessary.

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