

THE PROMINENT ISSUES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL AL-ITTIFAQIAH

Retno Indri Yustika

Dosen STIT Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiah Ogan Iir Sumatera Selatan

e-mail: retnoindriyustika@gmail.com

Abstract

The importance of studying the language leads many people, especially students to become masters in understanding the language which demands an advanced second language which is very prevalent today. Second language acquisition is the realm in which students not only understand their first language, but they also must be proficient in their second language (English and Arabic). SLA coverage in this case is its implementation in Islamic boarding school Al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya, where the issues are so prominent in the implementation of the second language (English and Arabic) that is related to the theory, the types of approach and crucial factor affecting the success of students in the second language acquisition itself.

Keywords: *Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Second Language (L2), Theory, Type, and Factor Affecting*

1. Introduction

Language is the initial framework in fostering successful communication in a community. This is a bridge in which one can establish a unifying thought and purpose in the environment. When talking about the language, of course it refers to the first language of the individual and the second language as language use besides the first language. Nowadays, having a second language as a language companion to the first language as a supplement seems to be an imperative necessity. Thus, it is not undeniable need for a second language importantly in many ways. The need for understanding of a second language is compulsory indeed, in the academic field, especially its application in schools as one of the facilitators of the second language acquisition. According to Ellis (2008), second language refers to any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue, thus it becomes its own demands in the era of globalization and the thoroughness of achievement especially in educational field such as in public school, private, and boarding school.

Acquiring a second language is in fact experiencing obstacles in its acquisition process. This happens because the second language is usually within the scope and specific system within certain constraints as well. This leads to the understanding and the deepening of a second language becomes obstructed and difficult to develop in accordance with the demands. School as one of providers of educational facilities for acquiring a second language is considered lacking in the provision of time. Thus, either limited time or a narrow scope can be one of reasons for the low competence of language acquisition. However, it does not become a major factor why a second language is not easily absorbed by the students as objects that acquire the second language.

In Indonesia, especially in the fields of education, second language refers to learning foreign languages such as English, Arabic, and Japanese others. Each school has the right to fasten those foreign/second languages learning into subjects. Yet another case with English lessons which became one of the compulsory subjects exist in all educational institutions, whether public schools, private schools, foundations, or specific institutions and similarly Arabic for Islamic schools.

Regarding to the paragraph above as well as the scope of this study refers to the use of a second language implemented in an Islamic boarding school in which the second languages are English and Arabic. Islamic boarding school as a second/foreign

language acquisition media has a role in overseeing the acquisition and use of the second language within the scope of the boarding school itself.

In this case that is the focus of this study is Islamic Boarding School of Al-IttifaqiyahIndralaya students who use their second language (L2) ie English and Arabic in the scope of learning in classroom, and also the use of a second language is also applied within the scope in dormitory and extracurricular class. The using of L2 in the contexts based on the mission of the school, it is expected that students are able to familiarize themselves with a foreign language (second language) other than their mother tongue and Indonesian, considering the students come from different and areas in South Sumatra province, and even from outside of Sumatera Island. The second language is considered as an integral tool, and also as a tool to compete in the sphere of education and a lot of things.

However, students often do not use English and Arabic within the scope of the boarding school. Another thing is also that many of them use the language of both the wrong pattern and the wrong use of both grammar, and writing grammatically and literally. Even among them are forced and deliberated taking of their mother tongue (language village) because they are lazy to use a second language and do not know how to use it in right way.

In this regard, even if the students are already in the scope of a second language reinforcement and have more time to apply, but many students are still low in the achievement of their second language. Based on the observations, it is difficult for the students to understand the material presented to them even though the material is often repeated. Certainly the factors are the reason why the absorption and acquisition of this second language has many obstacles.

This study is conducted to see the prominent issues of SLA which occur in L1 environment and context in school especially in Islamic Boarding School Al-IttifaqiyahIndralaya. It is a descriptive qualitative study which shares the writer opinion related to the strong stuffs which possess the second language acquisition of students in boarding school context.

2. Theory of Second Language Acquisition

2.1 Theory of Behaviorist

In the view of the behaviorist theory, the language will be acquired and mastered because of habit. A kid will be able to master the language when the more often he gets

outside stimulus that makes him/her interested in trying to communicate with to provide a response through his own style. The stimulus given to infants younger than 3 months, for example, may initially have only a gesture. This is because the process of language acquisition of baby in this period is only at the stage mere introduction, so forth for the period's subsequent language acquisition. In terms of second language acquisition, behaviorist theory suggested by Ellis (2008) who assumes that language acquisition is a factor that habit through stimulus-response process spawned several methods of language acquisition in its efforts to acquire and master a second language.

The view of behaviorist theory is to master a second language that a person must be a lot given the opportunity to develop themselves through exercises to speak directly with a community of users. For instance, in New Zealand a foreign student today no longer required to have a TOEFL test scores, but the students were not garrisoned to avoid them hanging with friends from one country or users a common language with him (Krashen, 1982). They assimilated with the local community that force students it would not want to communicate with English used in New Zealand as an everyday language.

Because habits are accustomed with public places communication, in the end the students are able to perfectly master the English language. It also indicates that in addition to the factors habits, environmental factors have very big influence on the success of someone acquiring and mastering a second language.

What it is meant by the environment here are included such as the atmosphere of the restaurant, cafe, language newspapers, television and other places. In addition Krashen (1982) also divided the community of SLA into two parts, namely a formal environment like in the classroom or that is provided a process of learning and informal or natural environment. In the case of the two concepts about the kind of environment language acquisition was initiated by Krashen.

In accordance with the environment created in the lives of students in boarding school where the second language acquisition applied not only in the classroom but also in the environment outside the classroom is a dormitory environment and outdoor activities. They try to experience SLA of English and Arabic language in order to master L2. By applying the speaking terms frequently of L2 on the context eventhough there some lacking of in grammatical terms, but theory of behaviorist suggested by Ellis is implemented by the students in this context. The stimulus of theory of behaviorists

in this context is that the students will get punishment by the competent supervisor if they don't use L2 in dormitory and class environment.

2.2 Theory of Mentalist

This theory reveals that the newborn child has had the potential to speak. Its potential will determine the structure of the language that will be used next. According to this theory, the speech of children could be affected by the rules that heard.

According to Ellis (2008), humans have faculties of the mind for learning language which is a kind of intellectual plot in his brain. One is for the language acquisition called as Language Acquisition Device. It is different from other faculties.

Chomsky (1998) claims that within each human child has been provided by ability to speak in her stored as congenital birth. During development, the human living has actually practice what he had in his brain, which is the language. In the first language acquisition usually a child will obtain it in the first developmental period (0-3 years). Within this time the child will continue to strive remembering and practicing what has been owned by himself and from the process of communication and interaction with the people closest. After the age of 3 years or more, the child will begin to accept the presence of other speakers, that may also be carrying other languages.

In terms of second language acquisition in adults according to this understanding, that is actually a second language can only be learned and cannot be obtained with only the customs process or communicates and interacts with the community only. LAD essentially will be able to master their second language through several stages of learning. However, the adults usually are fewer difficulties in terms of memorizing vocabulary because the ability of the brain that are no longer growing as fast as children and also because human memory is no longer as sharp as the memory of the children. But in other respects, such as mastery of grammar and a few other things, adults are more superior compared to children.

Based on the definition proposed above it is quite hard to define and conceptualize this theory into students of SLA in boarding school and their dormitory. It happens because most of the learners or students come from different places and remote areas in South Sumatra province even outside Sumatra Island. Every body has different background in learning language since they have different L1 (mother tongue/*village language*).

It could be said this theory indicates that learners will more easily absorb a language if they had the same ideas and background in understanding the initial concept SLA itself. So no wonder, in these theories of boarding school students can say they have not reached the criteria. However, it is also the foundation for deploying L2 since the beginning students enter the boarding school environment, all students are considered equal in terms of its SLA base.

3. The Type of Language Acquisition

The experts believe that every child is also using the same strategy or the way in obtaining the mother tongue. This similarity is not only based on the biology and neurology same man, but also by the mentalist view stating that the child has been equipped naturally. In line with that, in second language acquisition, Ellis (1986, p.215) states that there are two types of language acquisition, namely the type of naturalistic and formal type

3.1 Naturalistic Type

It is described as a type of the language acquisition occurs consciously because the happen in the environment. Naturalistic mode is natural, without teachers and without intent. This type is generally encountered within the community bilingual (multilingual). While informal environment usually are natural or natural, not artificial, which is included in an informal environment, among other languages spoken peers, language caregivers or parents, the language of the members of the ethnic groups of learners, who used the mass media, language teachers, both in class and outside of class. In general it can be said that this environmental impact in the process of learning a second language. This can be proven by several studies conducted by experts, as research conducted showed that the influence of peers language greater influence than language teachers. And many more studies that prove that informal environment also influence on learning a second language.

3.2 Formal Type

This type usually occurs in the classroom, the course, with the guidance of a teacher, materials, media and learning tools which have been prepared as well, in other words a more formal type refers to learning by providing facilities instructional-specific. But nowadays many once encountered, mainly in Indonesia is a fact that even after learning a second language (English) since from the primary school, but in reality

the child is still very difficult to be able to apply when the child should be using it to interact, either in the classroom especially outside the classroom.

Formal environment typically lasts in the teaching and learning environment in the classroom, and the environment formal languages that have artificial characteristics and also an overall environment of language teaching is done in the school and in the classroom who directs the learner to master the rules of language he had learned.

Actually, formal language environment is not limited only in class. Because the most important in this formal environment, learners can consciously know the rules of the second language learned from teachers in the classroom, on the books, as well as from other people outside the classroom. The important is that these matters emphasize the mastery of language rules in learning consciously.

This is also likely to occurs to the students at the boarding school, although the teaching of English and Arabic is very intensive inside and outside the classroom, but not a few of them have difficulties in the language acquisition.

4. Factor Effecting Second Language Acquisition

There are several factors that affect second language acquisition in terms of the acquisition are derived

4.1 Motivation and Attitude

Motivation is one of the most important factors in second language acquisition. It is quite clear that the learners who want to learn and have a high motivation tend to achieve more than those who do not want to learn it. In second language acquisition there is an assumption that people in her desire, impulse or purpose and appropriate attitudes to be achieved in learning a second language tend to be more successful than people learn without guided by an impulse, purpose or motivation. Brown (1980) and Ellis (1985) also support the notion that learning the language would be more successful if the learner himself no particular motivated and accompanied with a positive attitude that follows.

According to Ellis (1985), there are two motivations to work in language acquisition. First, integrative motivation that students are motivated to learn a second language because the interest in the culture and its people, while the second is motivation instrumental where learners are motivated to The work that a second language is because want to get a job or a demand for something.

Stern (1983, p.376) divides attitudes into 3 types: 1) attitudes towards the community and people who speak L2, 2) attitudes towards learning and language concerned, 3) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general.

4.2 Intelligence and Aptitude

Intelligence is defined and measured in terms of specific abilities, one of them is linguistic competence. Someone's success in his/her learning process and competence should correlate with IQ (Intelligence Quotient). The study of intelligence showed a strong relationship between intelligence and foreign/second language acquisition but only to the extent that the relevant academic skills alone (Edmundson, 1999, p.131). Learners with high IQs are able to achieve better results on tests of language. This proves that intelligence can predict the level and success of the SLA in formal language classes. "The ability to perform well on standardized intelligence tests correlate with school-related learning a second language, but is unrelated to learning a second language for informal and social functions" (Spolsky, 1989, p.103).

It is assumed that some people who have talent and they were able to learn a foreign language with ease. This talent is mostly called aptitude in SLA. It has been observed that learners acquire the language with different results despite the fact that they were the same age and equally motivated. And it can be assumed, even though students have the same time and treatment in the language acquisition, but in the end the resulting output will certainly vary. It is not only concerned about the intelligence alone that can explain these differences. Students need aptitude - some special abilities, which are responsible for language learning, which is concerned here a second language.

4.3 Age Acquisition

Popular opinion regarding the SLA is that children are better than adults in all matters within the SLA, especially with respect to the achievement of the final result. Children seemed to be rapidly affected in acquiring new languages, while adults seem to experience difficulties in acquiring a second language proficiency level L2.

Lenneberg (1967) argues that the natural language learning can take place only during the critical period for language acquisition, which is between the age of 2 years and puberty. Before the age of 2 years of learning a language is not possible due to the

power of competence is not stable and ready yet. While at the time of puberty the dominant language function has been completed, so that, after puberty language must be taught and learned through conscious effort and hard work.

Rosansky (1975) and Krashen (1975) argues that the beginning stages of formal operation marked the beginning of the end of the critical period, at this stage, a person has the ability to think more highly of the concept of abstract and hypothetical in addition to the concept of the concrete, so as to enable a person to have the ability to think abstractly about language; conceptualized the linguistic generalization, manipulating linguistic categories, constructing and understanding theory of language. Moreover, Hurford (1991) states “there is a critical, or at least a sensitive period for language acquisition, which ends around puberty. They are (a) linguistic ability is in principle (if not in practice) measurable, and (b) the amount of language controlled by an individual conferred selective advantage on it”.

Thus it can be concluded that there is a common assumption that states in learning a second language, children will be better and more successful than adults, but the results of research on the age factor in learning a second language shows that:

- 1) In terms of acquisition, the age factor seems not too plays a role, because the order of acquisition by children and adults seem the same.
- 2) In terms of speed and success of the study, it can be concluded: a. children are more successful in acquiring the phonological system or pronunciation, even many of those who can reach the pronunciation as native speakers; b. adults more quickly master the morphology and syntax, at least in the beginning of the study; c. The end result, children are always more successful than adults, although not always faster.

4.4 Personality

Personality is defined as a set of components that characterize a person individually that distinguish towards another individual within a certain scope. Cook (1996) reports that personality influences the SLA of individual’s performance. Many studies that suggest the trait of the personality itself is referred not only the cognitive abilities of its course, but an also affective ability is how the process a second language was derived. Regarding to the type of personality itself, Jung (1976) divides personality into 2 types which are extroversion and introversion. Those types have different implementations related to SLA of students.

Analogy of this personality type is the experience of the writer during she has been a teacher at the Islamic boarding school. For example, some introvert students and extrovert personality of the students in engaging against their environment in boarding school/dormitory and class. Extroverts students tend to be eager to learn a foreign language in groups, practice, and implement the foreign language (SLA) they have learned directly (English and Arabic), whereas introvert students cover interestedly to learn something individually through reference books.

The difference of this personality type determines the level of mastery of their language (Cook, 1996). Most of the extrovert students are superior in speech and language skills compared with introvert personality of students. However, somehow introvert students have a better grammatical knowledge than extrovert ones. This is because the individual's personality is more like regularity closed. Surely this is not an ultimate verifiability. Regarding to the point proposed by Cook (1996), Johnson (2001) found a significant correlation between SLA (English) with one's personality in this case the boarding school pupils. Furthermore Rahmat (1991) also agrees, he reported that a person with an extrovert personality has a good understanding of the Arabic language.

4.5 Learning Styles

Learning style is a personal attitude that tends to settle in perceiving a particular stimulus from the environment further utilize the unique and personal interaction with the stimulus and source of stimulus. It tends to persist for individual interest unchanged (Tjundjing, 2003). Learning styles are various approaches or ways to learn; in this case learning styles tend to be accomplished in the process of learning and acquiring a second language itself. It includes the methods used by the individual to get the best learning process. This factor indicates that if an educator has a match type and teaching strategies that suit the learning styles of students, it is not impossible the achievement and success of second language acquisition through formal or instructional learning environment will be more successful.

Learning style is an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way absorbing, processing retaining new information and skill in acquiring second language. Perceptual Learning style:

- 1) Visual learning style, learner who prefer to study visually or by seeing something related through their eyes, such as: watching, reading, and illustrating

- 2) Auditory learning style, learners who prefer to study auditorially or by listening something related through their ears, or instruction, such as: listening music, interacting through speaking, singing.
- 3) Kinesthetic learning style, learner who prefer to study by moving their body or related to the body movements, such as: dancing, moving while learning
- 4) Tactile learning style, learners who likely learn by touching or manipulating object, such as: playing Lego, repairing tools, and creating craft.
- 5) Haptic learning style, learners who learn mostly by combining two style at once , kinesthetic and tactile

4.6 First Language Factor

The first language has an influence on learning a second language. At the time of using the second language learners sometimes consciously or not has shifted elements of the first language is causing interference, code switching, code-mixing, and mistakes (errors). According to Banathy (1972) that knowing first linguistic state is very important for determining the business strategy of second language learning, because learning a second language is none other than the transfer of new language on top of an existing language. Lightbown and Spada (1999) argue that the first language does have influence in the process of learning a second language, but the study shows that the errors found in the language of a second language is not caused by the first language. Instead, the difficulties that are predicted to arise because of differences in language systems first and second language is not always to be found.

Thus, the influence of the first language in the form of transfer when the second language will be immense, if the learner is not continuously given stimulus of a second language. Theoretically, this effect cannot be eliminated as a first language is already an intake or already inside the learner. However, with habituation-conditioning and a continuous stimulus in a second language, the effect can be reduced (Chear, 2003, p. 257). Furthermore, it can be explained through the theory of contrastive. This theory states that success in learning a second language is determined by the linguistic situation that has been dominated previously by the learner.

Through this analysis, it will note the similarities and differences between first language and second language. Then it can be determined the most appropriate learning strategies to be used. Contrastive of analysis can be seen that the first language has an influence on the process of second language acquisition. Knowing the state of first

language learner is very important for determining the commerce strategy of second language learning, because learning a second language is none other than the new language transfer over existing languages (Banathy, 1972).

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

From the above explanation, a number of conclusions can be drawn then. Regarding second language acquisition is often the issue in the L1 in Islamic boarding school which is applying the use of a second language in class and life in the dorm. Among the common issues that arise, some of which are often directly related to the students at the boarding school environment that is the theory which is often a major reason of language acquisition in this context that the theory of behaviorist and mentalist.

Not only theory, this type of approach is also discussed in this regard. Type of this approach is often the reason whether acquiring a second language is applied or not by the students accurately in the context, the types called formal and natural approach. Considering the issues that allegedly play a major role in the SLA, there are factors that support SLA success of students (English and Arabic) named motivation and attitude, intelligence and aptitude, age, personality, learning style, and the influence of the first language itself.

Since it is only based on the writer opinion, experience and observation as a teacher towards the Islamic boarding school, it is expected that the next study can do some survey, and quantitative studies using authentic data collection to analyze accurately about the students' second language acquisition in this school as the population and sample objectively. Thus, it will be found the reason about students' factor to succeed in SLA and it can be very beneficial for other further study especially for this school in improving students' mastery in their second language both English and Arabic.

References

- Banathy, B., H. (1972). *A design for foreign language curriculum*. Washington, DC: Heath.
- Brown, D. H. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New Jersey, NJ: Prentice Hall
- Chaer, A. (2003). *Psikolinguistik, kajianteoritik*. Jakarta: PT. AsdiMahasatya.
- Chomsky, N. (1980). *Rules and representations*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Cook, V. (1996). *Second language learning and second language teaching (2nd ed.)*. New York, NY: Arnold.
- Edmondson, W. (1999). *Twelve lectures on second language acquisition: Foreign language teaching and learning perspectives*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag
- Ellis, R. (2008). *Second language acquisition*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1986). *Understanding second language acquisition*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hurford, J. R. (1991). The evolution of the critical period for language acquisition. *Cognition*, 40, 159-201. Retrieved from <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/~jim/crit.per.pdf>
- Johnson, K. (2001). *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Krashen, S., D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Lenneberg, E.H. (1967). *Biological foundations of language*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Lightbown, P., M., & Spada, N. (1999). *How language are learned (2nd ed.)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rahmat, A. (1991). *Pengaruh pendekatan pengajaran dan kepribadian terhadap kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Arab*. PPS IKIP Jakarta.
- Rosansky, E. J. (1976). Methods and morphemes in second language acquisition research. *Language Learning*, 26, 409-425.
- Spolsky, B. (1989). *Conditions for second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Tjundjing, S. (2003). Keandalan VARK: Instrumen modalitas belajar baru yang unik dan menarik. *Indonesian Psychological Journal*, 18(4), 342-343.