



Children's Production of Interlanguage in Speaking English As The Foreign Language

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Abstract

Acquiring English as a foreign language and using it as a second language (L2) in early years (children up to six years old) at immersion education happen to some process. In that process, the children tend to use L2 spontaneously and produce interlanguage as stated by Selinker (1977). This study aimed to describe children's production of interlanguage through the features, strategies used by the children in anticipating the influence of native and target language, and the causes. It was a qualitative research of SLA in English-speaking environment. The research subjects were two non-native teachers and fifteen Kindergarten I Integrity students of Bina Bangsa School Semarang. The data were obtained by recording their daily conversation at school for about three months and having interview with the class teachers. The audio and video recordings were transcribed then analyzed based on SLA frameworks proposed by Brown (1973) and Ellis (1985) and interlanguage frameworks drawn on Selinker (1972), Adjemian (1976) and Faerch & Kasper (1983). The interview result were used to get more opinions regarding the interlanguage phenomenon. The results indicated that the students produced interlanguage systematically, permeably, and dynamically. They used strategies of L2 learning and L2 communication to anticipate the influence of their native and target language. Moreover, the students produced interlanguage for some reasons. It was because of language transfer, overgeneralization, and their development of grammatical morphemes, negation, interrogation, and reflexive pronoun in the process of SLA. Language transfer was the main cause of interlanguage happened among the students.

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INTRODUCTION

English is considered as a universal language because it is the most spoken language worldwide. As stated by Safari and Fitriati (2016, p.87) that English becomes a medium in every domain communication, both in local and global context. In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language as explained in in Act of Republic of Indonesia No. 20 (2003) Article 37 Verse 1 concerning National Education System. Learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia usually begins at junior high school since the independence of Indonesia up to the beginning of 2000. In those era, the main objective of learning English were to develop the students' reading ability that was useful for them to read English references when they are in the univeristy or other tertiary (Agustien, 1997, p. 1-2). In line with new era, the main purpose of learning English in the era since the independence of Indonesia up to the beginning of 2000 has not accomplished the needs of some Indonesian societies and the education development. They think that learning English as a foreign language in junior high school is too late. Moreover, Kalisa (2014, p.100) added that learning a foreign language in early years is seen as a milestone to encourage children's lifelong learning. Therefore, some Indonesian societies take more attention to English in their daily life such as using English as foreign language in the families or sending their children to a school which uses English as a medium of instruction both inside and outside the classroom.

For this reason, the immersion education where English is used as a medium instruction was built. When children are immersed in this English-speaking environment, there is a need to use English as a mean of communication. Through the plenty amount of communication, the children tend to use English as their L2 frequently. Furthermore, the children also have more chance to interact naturally with many kinds speaking partners of different age and in different social context. Therefore, this school may fulfill the need of some Indonesian societies that think the importance of speaking English in

global era. Bina Bangsa School Semarang is one of immersion education where English is used as students' second language. It is an International School that asks the students to speak English inside and outside the classroom, during and out of school hour. In the process of acquiring English as the second language in that school, the students produce the language that is not identic to those produced by native speakers of the target language (TL), nor exact "translation" from Indonesian as the native language (NL) of the learners. That language system contains elements of both NL and TL that is called interlanguage as stated by Selinker in Mitchell et al. (2012).

There are some studies supported the existence of interlanguage in SLA process. Ningrum (2009), Devenci (2010), Harakchiyska (2011), Aziez and Yelfiza (2016) and some researchers who conducted their studies in 2013 such as Sutopo, Khorsidi, Mahardhika, and Resturini investigated interlanguage studies by using oral production as their data. The data can be in the form of daily conversation, speech, interview results, reading aloud, and casual conversation. Some researchers such as Chen (2016), Fauziati and Darussalam (2015), Wedananta (2017), M. Lestari (2016), and Maftuhin and Fauziati (2016) used written data for their interlanguage studies. The data can be in the form of students' free compositions, students tasks, and English textbook. Meanwhile, Yusuf (2012) and Sutopo (2014) used the mixture of oral and written production as the data of their interlanguage studies. Some studies also related to interlanguage are the studies with errors as the topic such as studies done by Ratnah (2013), Pandarangga (2014), Ismail and Harono (2016), Sari (2016), Tandikombong, Atmowardoyo, and Weda (2016), Asikin (2017), Nurani (2017), and Sukendra (2018). They mostly used written texts as the data for analyzing the errors happened among the students. Error analysis were also used as their frameworks to examine the data.

Some studies above used error analysis to analyze the data, especially studies that used written data. Meanwhile, in this study,

the researcher did not use error analysis for analyzing students' interlanguage because the interlanguage was described as a part in the process of second language acquisition rather than an error. It develops along students' L2 learning. Considering those reasons, this study tried to find out the interlanguage of four or five years old children in English speaking environment by describing the features, explaining the strategies used by the children to anticipate the influences of native and target language, and clarifying the causes of interlanguage. Hence, this study could provide empirical evidence that IL happens in the process of SLA as a result of learners' effort to speak English as L2. It was also able to give more information and understanding for immersion education teachers that their students produce interlanguage. Moreover, it helped them to make teaching and learning process more effective and efficient by assisting them with appropriate strategies, media, and activities, so that fossilization will not happen. Finally, this study also could give the information about interlanguage study that focus on children's interlanguage in speaking English as a foreign language for other researchers.

METHOD

The present study was a qualitative case study of SLA in English-speaking environment. The subjects were two non-native teachers and fifteen Kindergarten I Integrity students of Bina Bangsa School Semarang. All of them are native Indonesians who speak Indonesian as their L1. The data were taken by recording their daily conversation at school for about three months and having interview with the class teachers. The daily conversations were recorded inside and outside of the classroom, during teaching and learning time, playing time, and break time. Interview with the class teachers was done after the data conversations gathered. It was used for getting more informations and opinions from others' view in line with interlanguage phenomenon happened among them. The

recorded data were transcribed then classified into SLA and interlanguage frameworks by using observational sheets. Moreover, the data were also gained from the class teachers by using question list of free guided interview to get more perceptions from the teachers regarding the interlanguage phenomenon happened among them. After collecting the data, the researcher transcribed the recorded data based on turn (Paltridge, 2000). Then, the interlanguage production were identified and classified based on the features, the strategies, and the cause. Adjemian's framework (1976) was used to classify the interlanguage features. Selinker's (1972) and Faerch and Kasper's (1983) frameworks which were strategies of L2 learning and strategies of L2 communication were used in classifying the strategies used by the students in anticipating the native and target language influence. Furthermore, Brown's (1973) framework of grammatical morpheme in SLA, Selinker's (1972) theory of five central process of interlanguage, and Ellis's (1985) theory of negation, interogation, and reflexive pronoun in SLA aimed to explain the cause of interlanguage. Next, the researcher analyzed the data after classifying them based on some frameworks to get the findings. Finally, the explanation of findings and interpretation of data analysis were done by the researcher to answer the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results and discussions explain Kindergarten I Integrity students' interlanguage production through its features, strategies, and causes.

The Description of Kindergarten I Students' Interlanguage Production

The description of interlanguage production that happen among Kindergarten I students of Bina Bangsa School Semarang in speaking English as the foreign language can be seen through the clarification of its features. The clarification was based on Adjemian's (1976) framework of interlanguage features. The

example of the categorization can be seen in Table 1 of the Appendix.

It is found that the sistematicity in interlanguage happened because of its spontaneity as one characteristic of spoken language. When the students wanted to say something, they just say it as their language to communicate to others without worrying about the mistake. From the interlanguage features tables, it can be seen that the students used verb one sistematically. It supported the previous studies done by Resturini (2013) that the children do not use past verbs when they want to talk about past in their interlanguage. They used verb one form influenced by interference of their native language that is Bahasa Indonesia to their target language that is English as children's second language. Not only used verb one sistematically, the students also used the word 'this' or 'this one' and their gestures sistematically when they wanted to say the English of the word that they did not know. Moreover, most students also sistematically produced 'no' or 'not' as a negative particle in their sentences. Besides, they mostly used declarative word order for their interrogation sentence.

From the interlanguage features tables, it also showed that permeability also happened among the students. It was caused by the infiltration of Indonesian as students' L1 and the infiltration of English as their L2. The students also produced the interlanguage dinamically, especially when new knowledge of L2 is added, the language competence of learner will be developed.

Finally, from the four interlanguage features proposed by Adjemian (1976), only three of those features were found in the interlanguage production of Kindergarten I Integrity students which were sistematicity, permeability, and dinamicity. Fossilization did not exist since it usually happens in adolescence. The students were the four to five years old children which still had longer period of learning English during their process of acquiring it as second language. For that reason, the students' language competence developed along their

efforts in learning the target language and new knowledge they get during the SLA process.

The Explanation of Strategy Used by the Students in Anticipating the Influence of Native and Target Language

Analyzing the strategies used by the students in anticipating the influences of native and target language were done after researcher analyzed their interlanguage features. The example of table in analyzing the strategies used by the students based on Selinker's (1972) and Faerch and Kasper's (1983) frameworks presented in Table 2 of the Appendix.

From the tables, it seems that the students used strategies of L2 learning and L2 communication for anticipating the influences of native and target language.

Oxford (2002, p.36) refered language learning strategy as specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning. She classified the strategies into some categories. However, strategies of L2 learning that mostly used by the students were cognitive, compensation, and social strategies. The cognitive strategies used by the students happened firstly through recognizing the English words, then practising them in natural settings eventhough they were not able to apply the formulas and patterns to the correct L2 rules yet. Another strategy of L2 learning used by the students in anticipating the influence of native and target language is compensation strategy in the forms of switching to mother tongue, getting help, using mime or gesture, coining words, and using circumlocation or synonym. Beside cognitive and compensation strategies, the students also used social strategy. These strategies include asking question to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, and asking for help in doing a language task.

Selinker (1972) identified the use of communication strategy as one of the processes affecting SLA. In addition, Faerch and Kasper's (1983) classified the communication strategies usually used in L2 acquisition. Based on this classification, the Kindergarten I Integrity

students used strategies of L2 communication by switching to mother tongue, asking help from teachers and peers, using gesture, coining words, paraphrasing the word or synonym and using time gaining strategy. As explained by the teachers in the interview result that when the students could express their intended meaning in English, they automatically switched the words to Indonesian. They added that the students also used gesture in some occasion such as pointing to the objects they meant. It supported the explanation of Morett et all (2010) that when children speak interlanguage, they usually do the gesture to express their meaning. Furthermore, the students also used other words when they could not express their intended words in English. By looking at the findings of strategies used by the students tables, strategies of L2 learning were the strategies that mostly used by the students since they absolutely used strategy in learning new language. Code switching was the second strategy mostly used by the students. It was because the students had better knowledge of their L1, so that they easily switched the language to Indonesian when they did not know the term in English.

The Clarification of Interlanguage Causes that Occured Among the Students

After analyzing students' interlanguage through the features and strategies, researcher clarified the causes of interlanguage by adapting Brown's (1973) framework about the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in SLA, Ellis' (1985) framework about the development of negation, interrogation and reflexive pronouns in SLA, and Selinker's (1972) framework of language transfer and overgeneralisation as process in five psycholinguistic processes of SLA. The example of table that describes the causes of interlanguage can be seen in Table 3 of the Appendix.

Findings in tables of interlanguage causes showed that interlanguage mostly caused by language transfer. Then, it was followed by overgeneralization, development of grammatical order of negation, interrogation, and reflexive pronouns. Language transfer that occurred

among the students was the result of interlingual and intralingual interference. It supported Allen and Corder's (1974) opinion in Sari (2016) that language transfer happened as a result of interlingual and intralingual interference. Interlingual interference was in the form of mother tongue interference which applied students' L1 rule that is Indonesian when they were speaking English. As supported by the teachers through the interview result that when the students do not know the knowledge of L2 or the English word, they will switch to Indonesian or Javanese automatically. They also added that the students also applied Indonesian rule to speak English. Meanwhile, the intralingual interference occurred among the students was in the form of generalization of English rule as their L2 that caused by students' lack of L2 knowledge. The generalization of English rule as L2 included overgeneralization, incomplete rule application and simplification as stated by Fauziati (2017).

Besides language transfer and generalization of L2, development of grammatical morpheme has important role in the occurrence of interlanguage. As told by Brown (1973) in Owens (1992) that children acquire certain grammatical structures or morphemes before others in first language acquisition and there is a similar natural order in SLA. This natural order of grammatical order also occurred among Kindergarten I students. It influenced the students in producing English as their L2. The following is the example of the natural order of grammatical morpheme in pronouns that influence the students interlanguage production.

Beatrice : Davin, I want to borrow **you**. (pointing to red crayon).

According to natural order of grammatical morpheme proposed by Brown (1973), the children initially acquire 'you' then 'yours' in the next stage. Therefore, Beatrice use 'you' than 'yours' and it was not a mistake or error. It is the process of the students in acquiring English as L2. Other examples of natural order of grammatical morpheme that influenced the students interlanguage production

were occurred in the form of plural, present progressive, possessive, preposition, irregular past tense, and article development.

Furthermore, a student who is still learning English might say for example: 'Why you no come?' or 'I no lesson'. These imperfect sentences indicate the development of students's negation, interrogation, and reflexive pronoun as proposed by Ellis (1985). He told that children go through a number of key steps before mastering a structure. These kind of developments also happened among the Kindergarten I Integrity students. Some of them used 'no' as external negation such as in the sentence "No eating". Then the negation developed to internal negation by using 'no' and 'not' as the negative particle such as in the sentence "I no can swim". Some students also had negation development with the attachment of modal verb as in "Ms, I can't open this". Moreover, their negation development also reached to target language rule eventhough the used the rule inappropriately as in "He don't know, Ms."

Besides having the development of negation, the students also have progress in their interrogation stage. Initially, some of them had yes/no questions that sought confirmation or nonconfirmation as in "You ever go to Singapore?" by adding rising intonation to the end of the sentence or by adding auxiliary verb in the front of the subject as in "Do you like it?". The use of questions with wh-word with the omission of auxiliary verb also happened among the students as in "Why you push the buton?". The students also had development of wh-questions with the inversion of to be and auxiliary verb as in "Are you a boy?" or "Where is my friends?". The development of interrogation that occurs in embedded questions with a subject-verb inversion did not exist in students' process of SLA. Their development might reach the third stage that is the use of wh-questions with the inversion of to be and auxiliary verb.

Lastly, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1977) explained that reflexive pronoun development occurs in the process of acquiring L2. This

development also happened among the Kindergarten I students. The following are the examples of the development.

Beatrice : Davin, I want to borrow **you**.
(pointing to red crayon).

According to sequences in acquiring reflexive pronouns proposed by Brown (1973), the children initially acquire 'you' then 'yours' in the next stage. Therefore, Beatrice use 'you' than 'yours' and it was not a mistake or error. It is the process of the students in acquiring English as L2.

Davin : Ms, can **I** open? (giving the snack to the teacher)

Ms. Destria : Can you open it, please?

Davin : Can you open? I want to celupin the biskuit to the chocolate.

Based on Brown (1973) theory of stages in acquiring reflexive pronouns, the acquisition of *I* as a subject comes initially than *you*. It is the reason Davin used I in his sentence to express his intended meaning.

CONCLUSION

It concludes that the students of Kindergarten I Integrity produced interlanguage sistematically, permeably, and dinamicly through their daily conversations with the teachers and peers. Fossilization did not exist there because the students were in the process of acquiring L2 where their language competence developed along their efforts in learning the target language and new knowledge they get.

The students used strategies of L2 learning and L2 communication as proposed by Selinker (1972) in anticipating the influences of native and target language. Strategies of L2 learning occurred through cognitive, compensation, and social strategies. Meanwhile, strategies of L2 communication appeared by switching to mother tongue, asking help from teachers and peers, using gesture, coining words, paraphrasing the word or synonym and using

time gaining strategy. Strategies of L2 learning were the strategies that mostly used by the students since they must use strategy in learning new language. Code switching was the second strategy mostly used by the students. It was because the students had better knowledge of their L1, so that they easily switched the language to Indonesian when they did not know the term in English.

Interlanguage that occurred among the students was caused by some reasons such as language transfer, overgeneralization, development of grammatical order, and development of negation, interrogation, and reflexive pronouns. Language transfer was the cause that mostly happened. It occurred in the form of interlingual and intralingual interference. Those were because of the good mastery of L1 that was Indonesian and the lack of English as L2 knowledge. Overgeneralization had a second place for a factor that caused the interlanguage among the students since it was part of language transfer process.

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