

Language and Perception

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ABSTRACT

There are several factors that underlie language choice. Factors that are often discussed by the linguist is sociology factor. This article assumes that there is a factor that are also very influential in the choice of language. Perception is one of the reason why people choose the language or change the language. This article presents a concept where language and mind collaborate. This work provides a short explanation of a fundamental cognitive process of the brain and the effect created. This work demonstrates that the choices of human language is the effect of human perception. This perception is going to be a consideration for someone when he should utter low or high intonation, choice appropriate language level, or replace his dictions. Understanding how language can change as the effect of human perception is important in linguistics. Therefore this article explore how a person interprets and responds based on his perception through the language.

Keywords : language, perception, cognitive process

INTRODUCTION

People in choosing language is influenced by many factors. Some theories argue that this case mostly in the study of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society.

David (2001) argues that language choice is triggered by factors such as social status, gender, educational attainment, ethnicity, age, occupation, rural and urban origin, speakers, topic, place, media and formality of the situation. These findings are supported by Fasold (1990). Coulmas (1997) explains that people make linguistic choices for various purposes. Individuals and groups choose words, registers, styles, and languages to suit their various needs concerning the communication of ideas, the association with and separation from others, the establishment or defense of dominance. People are endowed with the ability to adjust their linguistic repertoires to ever new circumstances and construct their languages for certain purposes.

From the perspective of a sociologist who is interested in searching for language use through the study of social structure, Fishman (1968) posits domain analysis. Under domain analysis, 'domains' are regarded as institutional contexts in which one language is more likely to be

appropriate than another and are to be seen as constellations of other factors such as topic, location and participants. In other words, what language an individual chooses to use may depend on whom he/she is speaking, about what he/she is discussing and where the conversation is taking place.

The main factor of choosing a language element is caused by perception. Perception is very complex cognitive process that yields a unique picture of the world, a picture that may be quite different from reality. A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object or target being perceived or in the context of situation in which perception is made.

The emergence of the language used by a person is the result of the decision of the cognitive process. This cognitive process is also a process in which the perception arises. Cognitive processes is the process of acquiring knowledge through experience in life. Cognitive process involves a wide range of our senses of sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing awareness and feelings.

The effect of this process is the language change. In sociolinguistics this case is called code switching and code mixing. In selecting language, sociolinguists decide three categories. First, by selecting a variation of the same language (intra-language variation). If a Javanese language speakers to talk to other people by using the Javanese language manners, for example, he has made the choice of language of this first category. Secondly, by transferring the code (code switching), meaning that it uses one language at the purposes and use a different language to the other purposes in the event of communication. Thirdly, by performing code-mixing (mixing code) means using a specific language with a mix snippets of other languages. Besides 3 kinds of those language change, Perception also causes intonation and meaning change.

PERCEPTION

In very simple explanation, perception is the way we try to understand the world around us. We gather information through our five sense organs, but perception adds meaning to these sensory inputs. The process of perception is essentially subjective in nature, as it is never an exact

recording of the event or the situation. What one perceives can be substantially different from objective reality (Robbins, 2000, p. 121). Perception can be defined as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information. Perception also includes how we respond to the information. We can think of perception as a process where we take in sensory information from our environment and use that information in order to interact with our environment. Perception allows us to take the sensory information in and make it into something meaningful.

According to Wang (2007: 2) “perception is a set of internal sensational cognitive processes of the brain at the subconscious cognitive function layer that detects, relates, interprets and searches internal cognitive information in the mind”. Our perceptions of people differ from the perception of inanimate objects like tables, chairs, books, pencil, etc. Mainly because we are prone to make inferences regarding the intention of people thus form judgment about them. The perception and judgements regarding a person’s actions are often significantly influenced by assumption we make about the person’s internal state.

Psychologist have explained the process of perception via sensations of input stimuli (receiving and selecting the stimuli, here phenomenal component is prominent, that is, based on fee; selective perceptions are due to some striking characteristics of the stimuli); cognitive mental process-perceptual mechanisms or throughput processes (selecting, organizing, interpreting and checking; here psychological component is prominent; selective perception are due to perceiver’s biases or subjective reasons) and perceptual outputs (reacting) resulting from perceptual input and throughputs like one’s attitudes, opinions, feelings, behaviour, etc.

The Concept of Language And Perception

Human mind and language had been long discussed and correlated. Linguists call it as psycholinguistics. But the issues about language and perception are not well discussed by a linguist. In fact, this study is also part of the linguistics. The relationship between language and the human mind are studied in the field of psycholinguistic. Psycholinguistics investigates the mental mechanisms underlying language processing. The reason why this study due in the area of

psycholinguistics is because the relationship between perception and languages change is happening as a cognitive process.

How mind influences in producing language and how language has effected on the way of thinking is one of cognitive science which Stilling et al defined it as “ interdisciplinary venture that draws upon the insights of psychologists, linguists, computer scientists, neuroscientetists and philosophers to study the mind and mental process. Kneka & kenechi (2012) stated that *“psycholinguistics stresses the knowledge of language and cognitive processes involved in ordinary language use, the social rules in language use and the brain mechanisms associated with language”*.

The works of psycholinguistics according to Carroll (2004) are to dig the knowledge of language needed to use the language and to reveal the cognitive process that are involved in the use of language. In cognitive process the discussion is about perception, memory and thinking which automatically considered while the speaker or listener is communicating.

Person says something based on his mind. Mind has a big role in deciding what wods are used, how the intonation should be, and what meaning wants to share. In our mind there is what we call it perception. How far perception influences the language change?

The examples of the relationship between perception and language is when someone uses a particular language as the effect of their perception that appears. Suppose that when we want to ask something to someone, and before that we have perception A about him , then when we meet the person, and suddenly our perception to that person turns into B then we will change our language into B, or C or D, and so on. This obviously happens to most people. Their perception is very influential in the choice of diction that they will use to communicate with their interlocutors.

A child who perceived that their mother would be upset when they find that he is going home too late, then consciously the child will use more subtle language than the language they usually use, or he will use a different intonation than usual.

Although in reality the perception is not always true, but the effect of it is considered as a matter of right. Such as when an A perceived that B is B when B actually is c, then the A will

adjust or even changes the language that he used. The language component that change can include in the matter of intonation, language level, diction or language style.

Intonation changes occur when a person wants to use proper intonation as what a friend talk to, and when he suddenly has a different perception about the friend then he will suddenly changes his intonation more slowly or fast, with higher or lower intonation. While the examples of language-level changes occurs in an area where a languages has language level such as javanese language. When a person, for the first time, meets B and perceives that B is from a better position in job or B is from higher social status than A, as the effect of his perception A will change his language. In javanese language the change is kromo to kromo inggil. In addition the choice of diction also changes due to the changes of language level. Or maybe diction changes occur by using words that really do not have the same meaning when they are arranged into sentences. It also happen when a child, who perceived that his mother was feeling bad on something, is forced to change the language he wants to use to become more refined.

The explainantion above describes how perception influences languages. On the other hand language also shapes the way we think about space, time, colors, and objects. Other studies have found about the effects of language on how people construe events, reason about causality, keep track of number, understand material substance, perceive and experience emotion, reason about other people's minds, choose to take risks, and even in the way they choose professions and spouses. Taken together, these results show that linguistic processes are pervasive in most fundamental domains of thought, unconsciously shaping us from the nuts and bolts of cognition and perception to our loftiest abstract notions and major life decisions. Language is central to our experience of being human, and the languages we speak profoundly shape the way we think, the way we see the world, the way we live our lives.

Language as a means of communication in general also provides information about somethings that happened in the past. In addition it leads something (the effect of language) to do in the future. Language as a signal of the past is where language as a prediction tool or a reason why an utterance is selected. As an example in the Java language there are several levels of

language ngoko, krama madya, krama inggil. The word 'you' in Javanese language is kowe,, sampean, panjenengan. When an 8th-15th year child choses a word 'kowe' to communicate with a person who is 10 years older than him, in Java, and always uses that word when communicates, then it can indicate about the child social culture.

Cognitive information will provide role in perceptual processes, but, at the same time, determined by perceptual cognitive processes incoming information (Goldstone and Barsalou, 1998). Perception will affect on language choice and also affect on the meaning. Perception is in is influenced by social, culture, or past experience. For example, Someone is going to speak very fluently when he is dealing with the listener by his perception gives him a sense of security.

Speaker A will use different language both in vocabulary or intonation, stress and dialects to the listener B who is considered more knowledgeable. When speaker A talks to his boss who is often angry at his office, A would be very cautious when talking. On the other hand she would be very easy to tell to her husband at home who quietly listened to the story of his wife. In this case A has a bad perception about the boss and a good perception about her husband

A child A will easily and freely use informal language with his mother (B) who always listens and never be angry. On the other hand an employees will use more formal language when they want to say the same thing as what the child (A) says to his mother.

The human sensor senses that creat perception either visual or auditory, will stimulate the language which appropriate to be used. Suppose someone said A, which means A1, and was heard by the listener B which may mean A2. Person B will respond as what B`s perception, use language that for B is appropriate language.

For example:

A accustomed to speak in a high tone

B used to talking in a low voice and not so well know A

A: where is the key (high-pitched, and not intended to be angry, mean simply asking key)

B: I do not know!! (with high tone, intends to be angry because in his perception B is angry because B uses high intonation).

A perceives that Person B was upset because he was using a high note, therefore, A responds by using a high tone and short words. The choice of intonation, diction, and sentence that A uses in responding to B's utterance is the result of perceptions that influence how A interprets B's utterance. From the description above it is pretty clear that language a person uses is the influence of the speaker's perception in interpreting.

CONCLUSION

Language and perception are both rooted in the brain. These elements influence each other. Because of language one's perception can change. On the other hand perception will effect on our language. One sentence that a person hears will effect on some perceptions, it depends how humans interpret.

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