



Linguistics

Language Barrier: Theory of Truth in Intercultural EFL

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A B S T R A C T

This paper elaborates the explanation of an incorrect and misconception understanding of meaning in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. This research is conducted with a discussion consisting of logical reasoning about the detailed explanation as a method to deal with the issue. It was done by cross-checking and reviewing eclectically from dissimilar sources in the related field of study as well. Moreover, the discussion and result are affirmed and evaluated by utilizing the relevant existing studies and research. The scoop and limitation in this study are that the subject is referring to the Indonesian students that learn the English language as a foreign language in formal education school.

The study found that this phenomenon is happening because of the pedagogical need based on the standard formal education school curriculum in Indonesia that focusing English as a communication language rather than anything else. A teacher neither needs nor bother to explain the language in a deeper sense of meaning and only teaches what is necessary for the student requirement. This makes the English language used in Indonesian schools lose its true meaning and understanding because of the difference in intercultural understanding. This mostly happens in a school that uses localized English that has been adapted in our culture and habits as foreign speakers. Hence some vocabularies and phrases end up being simplified to reduce teacher time effort to explain further about language meaning and truth.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential part of our life. We use language to communicate, whether it is in a format of verbal or nonverbal language. If nonverbal language refers to body language, facial expression, and behavior, then verbal language is a complex language of oral and written that uses words as a tool to communication (Key, 2011). Unlike nonverbal language which is consistent with its meaning, verbal language has many variants around the world in a form of writing and sounds that represent words. Each verbal language has different 'truth' and 'reference' to make an idea. This phenomenon is also influenced by the language culture and background that every native has. Therefore, verbal language is also a form of identity and a sense of belonging in an individual (Tabouret, 2017).

When someone is learning a language it means that they also learn the native culture and ideology (Edwards, 2009). Therefore there may be a barrier of different cultures and ideologies that confuse the learner when they learn a foreign language. In this case, a foreign language here is referring to English and Indonesian (Indonesia language) as the native language.

In the Indonesian government's curriculum, English is input as a foreign language informal educational setting. Therefore, a student requires an understanding of the English language based on their

grade level. In the curriculum, English is taught as a language for communication. Hence, the teacher rarely gives students more knowledge outside the aim and does not bother to explain more understanding and knowledge about the language itself. Although it is important, language aspects such as linguistic diversity, native habits, and culture in the language are left untouched by the teacher because of this curriculum. This is consequent to a simplified of meaning in some vocabularies and phrases of English language which is taught by the teacher.

Therefore from the explanation above, I conduct this study as I notice there is a gap in understanding the meaning of language when educators teach the learner about English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The meaning of language here is referring to the 'truth' and 'reference' of words or phrase that has been shifted their meaning to be simplified.

Even though there has been a study that covers an intercultural understanding in learning a language (Diaz, 2013; Scarino, 2010; Short, 2009; Jackson, 2005; O'Dowd, 2003;), there is a little study of how this simplified the meaning and truth phenomena because of intercultural language barrier are explain. Therefore, this paper will elaborate the explanation of an incorrect and misconception understanding of meaning in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

Theory of Truth in Language

In the world of language theory of truth mean finding the real meaning of language. This theory is separated into five different aspects as Correspondence Theory, Semantic Theory of Tarski and Davidson, Deflationary Theory of Frege and Ramsey, Coherence Theory, and the Pragmatic Theory of language.

The correspondence theory of truth states that the truth or falsity of a statement is determined only by how it relates to the world and whether it accurately describes it or not (David, 2002). This indicates that for this theory to be valid, an agreement between judgments or assertions and an independently existing reality must be established by comparing and observing whether it is true or not. Metaphysical realism is frequently related to the correspondence theory of truth. Pragmatists, as well as coherentist, verificationist, and other epistemic theories of truth, are frequently connected with idealism, anti-realism, or relativism, as are its traditional adversaries. Most correspondence theorists would find it unreasonable and needlessly bold to claim that "true" and "corresponds with a fact" are the same thing (Fumerton, 2002).

Semantic theory of truth is a theory of truth in the philosophy of language which states that truth is a property of sentences (Tarski, 1944). The definition of True should be 'formally correct'. This means that it should be a sentence of the form. Semantic information is often left implicit, with correspondent interpretations representing the most popular, default option (Floridi, 2011). Semantic theory of truth is designed to define truth without circularity and to satisfy certain minimal conditions that must be met by any adequate theory of truth (Field, 1972).

The validity of a judgment is associated with its coherence with other beliefs in the coherence theory of truth. Different versions of the theory provide different descriptions of coherence, but the goal is to show the truth as an inherent relationship between beliefs in all of them (Walker, 1989).

A pragmatic theory of truth is based on pragmatism and pragmaticism ideologies. Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey were the first to propose pragmatic theories of truth. Reliance on the pragmatic maxim as a means of explaining the meanings of difficult notions such as truth; and an emphasis on the fact that belief, certainty, knowledge, or truth is the result of an inquiry are common aspects of these theories (Haack, 1976). Truth is described as the good of logic, where logic is a normative science that seeks knowledge of a good or a value as well as the means to attain it (Capps, 2017). Truth, in this perspective, cannot be addressed effectively outside of the contexts of inquiry, knowledge, and logic, all of which are taken in their broadest sense.

Contrary to correspondence, pragmatism, and coherence theories, deflationary theories interpret the truth predicate as having just a logical or grammatical purpose, rather than ascribing an attribute or relation to a truth bearer. Moreover, different from correspondence theory that able to ascribe truth to sentences in a language that speaker can understand (Tarski; 1972), deflationary theories are not.

Sense and Reference in Language Use

Truth is a meaning. And in meaning there are distinctions. Conceptual meaning covers the literal meaning used in the words. While in the other hand, associative meaning is a base of associate or connotation attached in the word, as in figurative language (Yule, 2020). In the language use the reference of a sentence is its truth value, whereas its sense is the thought that it expresses, while sense is something possessed by a name, whether or not it has a reference (Burge, Bell, & Cooper, 1990).

In pragmatic, a reference is an act by a speaker or writer when they use language to enable a listener or a reader to identify something (Yule, 2020). The reference here has three classifications of action. The inference is when interlocutor and reader have the same background knowledge. This is because the act of reference will be a success when the listener or a reader knows and have the ability and recognize the reference from the background knowledge “dictionary” that the speaker or the writer means. The second is anaphora. It is an act of distinction when we introduce a new reference and refer back to them. The last is Presupposition. It is the assumption that our listener or reader know and successfully understand the truth from our reference.

Current Language Literature Pedagogy

Pedagogy is a relationship between the technique of learning and teaching with culture. Pedagogy itself is different based on each educator’s beliefs about how to teaching or learning takes place, as it requires interaction between educators and learners, or teachers and students (Brown & Lee, 2015). It was all to help the learners to build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes. Therefore pedagogy in English is about how to teach the English language and literature that suit students in today’s situation.

Therefore, it is possible that the demand in the curriculum also affected pedagogy in the study field. What happens in this phenomenon is also like this. A teacher neither needs nor bother to explain the language in a deeper sense of meaning and only teach what is necessary for the student requirement. This makes the English language used in Indonesian schools lose its true meaning and understanding because of the difference in intercultural understanding. Hence some vocabularies and phrases end up being simplified to reduce teacher time effort to explain further about language meaning and truth.

II. METHOD

This paper uses a qualitative research method that this paper will elaborate on the incorrect and misconception understanding of meaning in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. In this case, a discussion will be consisting of logical reasoning about the detailed explanation as a method to deal with the issue. It was done by cross-checking and reviewing eclectically from dissimilar sources in the related field of study as well. Moreover, the discussion and result are affirmed and evaluated by utilizing the relevant existing studies and research. The scoop and limitation in this study is that the subject is referring to the Indonesian students that learn the English language as a foreign language in formal education school.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the first place, this phenomenon is happening because of the pedagogical need based on the standard formal education school curriculum in Indonesia that focusing English as a communication language rather than anything else. This is because pedagogy itself is different based on each educator’s beliefs about how to teaching or learning takes place. And the curriculum is educational programs consisting of educational objectives, content, teaching procedures learning experiences, and assessment. The curriculum is an interrelated set of plans and experiences that students need to finish under the guidance of the school (Richards et al, 1992).

A teacher neither needs nor bother to explain the language in a deeper sense of meaning and only teach what is necessary for the student requirement. This makes the English language used in Indonesian schools lose its true meaning and understanding because of the difference in intercultural understanding. This mostly happens in a school that uses localized English that has been adapted in our culture and habits as foreign speakers. Hence some vocabularies and phrases end up being simplified to reduce

teacher time effort to explain further about language meaning and truth.

For instance, the understanding of breakfast in our country means a first meal of the day eaten after waking from the night's sleep, in the morning, which is true. It does not change the conceptual meaning of the words. The literal meaning is still the same. However, it does not cover the associative meaning as it is changing because the concept of habit and culture has been localized in Indonesian.

In England or America where the native English speakers live, breakfast food is associated as a light meal in the morning. The food either consists of eggs, French toast, waffles, or pancakes, cereal and milk, bagel, or English muffin with cheese, or yogurt with fruit or nuts. However, because our eating habit is different from them breakfast is just simplified as a first meal of the day eaten after waking from the night's sleep, in the morning, and does not refer to those foods as a breakfast. Because Indonesian's diet food does not consist of those food and mainly eating heavy carbohydrates such as rice dishes or noodles. Hence the reference of breakfast in the Indonesian main set is an act of eating the first meal in the morning.

This makes the truth and meaning of breakfast change in the other aspect of reference because of the changes of its associative meaning, even when the conceptual meaning is still the same. Furthermore, this is also changing the mean in the theory of truth of semantic, pragmatic, and coherence understanding of the vocabulary. This is because the native speaker and the foreigner have a different background knowledge base on each habit and culture. Therefore, when a native and foreigner tries to elaborate on what is breakfast they will give a slightly different answer because of the change of its truth from different understanding.

Another case is when we greet someone using the English language. It is already normalized from an early age that when we greet someone we always use the same sentences and phrases such as "Hello, how are you," with the other answering "I am fine thank you," even though there are many greetings from beside those greeting. It is as if we just use those phrases over and over again without other options.

Therefore, if a native tries to greet us with a different form of greeting that we are unfamiliar we will be confused because we do not understand the reason and background of that greeting. This is because of the lack of reference and sense that cannot cover the meaning behind those greeting.

IV. CONCLUSION

Pedagogy is a relationship between the technique of learning and teaching with culture. Pedagogy itself is different based on each educator's beliefs about how to teaching or learning takes place (Brown & Lee, 2015). It was all to help the learners to build on prior learning and develop skills and attitudes. Pedagogy is usually based on a curriculum study that is used. However by using this concept cause a problem of incorrect and misconception understanding of meaning in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

This phenomenon is happening because of the pedagogical need based on the standard formal education school curriculum in Indonesia that focusing English as a communication language rather than anything else.

A teacher neither needs nor bother to explain the language in a deeper sense of meaning and only teach what is necessary for the student requirement. This makes the English language used in Indonesian schools lose its true meaning and understanding because of the difference in intercultural understanding. This mostly happens in a school that uses localized English that has been adapted in our culture and habits as foreign speakers. Hence some vocabularies and phrases end up being simplified to reduce teacher time effort to explain further about language meaning and truth.

However, as this topic is still uncovered it would be great if further research about this problem is conducted into a more detailed understanding that does not limit this research scoop. Future research can explore the change of truth and meaning in specific linguistic aspects in a context of intercultural English language teaching for foreign or second language.

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