LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE

Language transfer (also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference, and cross meaning) refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language to a second language. Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Lott (1983: 256) defines interference as ‘errors in the learner’s use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue’. Ellis (1997: 51) refers to interference as ‘transfer’, which he says is ‘the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2’.

When an individual’s understanding of one language has an impact on his or her understanding of another language, that individual is experiencing language transfer. There can be negative transfers, otherwise known as interference, when the understanding of one language complicates the understanding of another language. Alternatively, there can be positive transfers such that knowing one language can aid in developing skills for a second language. Language interference is the effect of language learners’ first language on their production of the language they are learning. It means that the speaker’s first language influences his/her second or and his/her foreign language.

The effect can be on any aspect of language: grammar, vocabulary, accent, spelling and so on. Language interference is considered as one of error sources (negative transfer), although where the relevant feature of both languages is the same it results in correct language production (positive transfer). The greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative the effects of interference are likely to be. It will inevitably occur in any situation where someone has not mastered a second language.

Corder outlines one way in which interference can be recast as a learner strategy. He suggests that the learner’s L1 may facilitate the development process of learning an L2, by helping him to progress more rapidly along the universal route when the L1 is similar to the L2. Krashen when he suggests that the learners can use the L1 to initiate utterances when they do not have sufficient acquired knowledge of the target language for this purpose.

B. FACTORS THAT CAUSE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE

Interference is a general problem that occurs in bilingualism. There are many factors that contribute interference (Weinrich, 1970:64-65):

First, SPEAKER BILINGUALISM BACKGROUND. Bilingualism is the major factor of interference as the speaker is influenced by both of the source and the target language. Indonesia’s student who is Javanese and is studying good Bahasa tends to put his Javanese language into Indonesia. Look the example, ‘Andi, apakah kamu bisa mengerjakan soal
matematika ini?” tanya guru. Then Andi answered, “Tidak bisa, Bu Guru, lha wong itu angel.” The impression of ‘Lha Wong’ is usual in Javanese cultural insight. The word ‘angel’ means difficult in Bahasa, the student should reply his teacher with “Tidak bisa, Bu Guru, soalnya sulit’. Regarding this condition, the student is a second grade of elementary school.

This also occurred on the interference of Indonesian structure into English sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDONESIAN STRUCTURE</th>
<th>STUDENT’S JOB</th>
<th>THE CORRECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saya ingin berkonsultasi dengan anda</td>
<td>I want consultation with you</td>
<td>I want to consult with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada dua grup yang hanya diam</td>
<td>There are two groups which are</td>
<td>There are two groups which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>just silence</td>
<td>keep silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mengandung vitamin</td>
<td>Pregnant vitamin</td>
<td>Contains vitamin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengkajian perbaikan kemampuan mahasiswa</td>
<td>Analyze of the students improvement.</td>
<td>Analysis of the students’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspek penting yang harus ditingkatkan</td>
<td>Important aspect which should</td>
<td>Important aspect which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be increased</td>
<td>should be developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, DISLOYALTY TO TARGET LANGUAGE. Disloyalty to target language will cause negative attitude. This will lead to disobedience to target language structure and further force the bilingualist to put uncontrolled structure of his first language elements to output in practicing words utterances both oral and written. Students whose language background of TL is limited tend to put words in sentences or oral in structure and sense of first language. For example is occurred in Facebook status made by an Indonesian, “So I must spirit.” While the correct sentence is “I must keep my spirit.”

Third, THE LIMITED VOCABULARIES OF TL MASTERED BY A LEARNER. Vocabularies of certain language mostly are about words of surroundings connected to life. Thus, a learner who is willing to master another language will meet new words differ from his native words. In order to be able to speak as natives of TL, vocabularies take a big role. The more vocabularies someone has, the better he masters TL. Foreign language learner will try to put deliberately his native word to state some points when he cannot find the best words of TL. For example, when an Indonesian wants to mention ‘rambutan’, he stills mention ‘rambutan’ when he speaks in English. Since there is no English word for ‘rambutan’. It is also similar to translate the cultural words like “Mitoni”, “Slametan”, “Tahlilan” and “Ngruwat”.

Fifth, PRESTIGE AND STYLE. Applying unfamiliar words (foreign words) during a communication practice which dominant words are languages of both speaker and receiver is something else. Those unfamiliar words usage is aimed to get a pride. Interference will appear
as there are certain words even though the receiver probably cannot catch the real idea of the speech. The usual unfamiliar words usage will become a style of the user. Unfortunately, the user sometimes does not understand the real meaning whether the meaning is denotative or connotative. The common feature is that many language users put derivational affix –ization in every word. To note, affix –ization is an adopting and borrowing process from English to state nouns.
According to Lott (1983: 258-259), there are three factors that cause the interference:

1. The interlingual factor

Interlingual transfer is a significant source for language learners. This concept comes from contrastive analysis of behavioristic school of learning. It stresses upon the negative interference of mother tongue as the only source of errors. The construction – ‘I LIKE TO READ’ is uttered as ‘I READ TO LIKE’ by many Hindi speakers. In Hindi, the verb is pre-positioned while in English it is post positioned. This type of error is the result of negative transfer of L1 rules to L2 system.

Commonly, errors are caused by The Differences Between The First And The Second Language. Such a contrastive analysis hypothesis occurs where structures in the first language which are different from those in the second language produce the errors reflecting the structure of first language. Such errors were said to be due to the influence of learners’ first language habits on second language production (Dulay et. al, 1982: 97).

Corder in Richard (1967: 19) says that errors are the result of interference in learning a second language from the habits of the first language. Because of the difference in system especially grammar, the students will transfer their first language into the second language by using their mother tongue system.

2. The over extension of analogy

Usually, a learner has been wrong in using a vocabulary caused by the similarity of the element between first language and second language, e.g. the use of cognate words (the same form of word in two languages with different functions or meanings). The example is the using of MONTH and MOON. Indonesian learners may make a mistake by using MONTH to say MOON IN THE SPACE.

3. Transfer of structure

There are two types of transfer according to Dulay et.al (1982: 101), positive transfer and negative transfer. Negative transfer refers to those instances of transfer, which result in error because old habitual behavior is different from the new behavior being learned. On the contrary, positive transfer is the correct utterance, because both the first language and second language have the same structure, while the negative transfer from the native language is called interference.

Interference is the deviation of target language as a result of their familiarity with more than one language. Dulay et.al (1982: 98) differentiates interference into two parts, the psychological and sociolinguistic. The psychological refers to the influence of old habits when
new ones are being learned, whereas sociolinguistic refers to interactions of language when two language communities are in contact. Therefore students will find it difficult in mastering the second language due to the interference, which is influenced by old habit, familiar with mother tongue and interaction of two languages in the communities.

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