CULTURAL VARIATION IN LANGUAGE AND CONVERSATION
By: Dyah Kurniawati

ABSTRACT

Across cultures variation in the ways of speaking reflects important differences in beliefs, practices, values, and norms. These differences enter into the organization and systematic use of language at many levels in every community. Cultures vary along many dimensions; their ways of organizing groups, their ways of growing and distributing food, their beliefs and practices with regard to health and illness and so forth. Another major area in which cultures differ is their ways of speaking. It follows then, that when children are acquiring their language they are being spoken to and are learning to talk to others according to ways of speaking that reflect the beliefs and values of their particular speech community. Keywords: Cultural variation, language, speaking, conversation.

Introduction

―Cultural diversity‖, that is the most prominent feature of the Indonesian nation.Yet, what kind of _cultures' do they, through what is called as _education', transmit, sustain, and change in the midst of such a complex and dynamic Indonesia? In a nation like Indonesia National education serves to develop and shape the character and the civilization of the nation's dignity in order to develop the nation's life, aiming to the development of potential learners in order to be faithful and righteous man to God, have good, healthy, knowledgeable and had, ably, creative, self-sufficient, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible (UU Sisdiknas). Whereas culture is the values, morals, norms and beliefs (belief), thoughts shared by a society/nation and underlying the behavior of a person as himself, a member of the society, and citizens. The culture set someone's behavior regarding something that is considered to be true, good and beautiful.

Across cultures variation in the ways of speaking reflects important differences in beliefs, practices, values, and norms. These differences enter into the organization and systematic use of language at many levels in every community. Cultures vary along many dimensions; their ways of organizing groups, their ways of growing and distributing food, their beliefs and practices with regard to health and illness and so forth. Another major area in which cultures differ is their ways of speaking. It follows then, that when children are acquiring their language they are being spoken to and are learning to talk to others according to ways of speaking that reflect the beliefs and values of their particular speech community.

Cultural variation in Conversation

Children all over the world acquire their conversational skills in the context of social interaction. In these contexts they are learning not only the structure of their language, but also the culturally preferred conventions of interaction and language use.

These conventions, and the child's ability to follow them, in turn help guide the acquisition of additional linguistics forms. These conventions generally reflect the values, attitudes, and beliefs held by members of the culture, in other words, the beliefs and values of members are implicit in the conventions they choose to follow. In addition, member's attitudes may also be conveyed by more explicit means during the course of an interaction.

An important issue to explore is how the beliefs held by the adults in a given society affect the types of interactions in which young children are involved. There are several determinants of cultural variation in children's conversation to be considered in any study of the development of communicative competence. These determinants include: (1) beliefs about the status and role of the child in society; (2) the social organization of caregiving; and (3) folk belief, about how children learn language.

In ways of speaking in different cultures, Gumperz and Hymes (1972) called attention to an approach used in sociolinguistics and ethnography, which they called the ethnography of communication. The ethnography of communication came into being at a time when the main focus of linguistic description was on grammar narrowly conceived and where there was a lack of correlation between ethnographic and linguistic findings. An appreciation of the ethnography of communication will potentially affect the language teacher's methodology by providing conceptualizations which will open up new approaches. If the methodology and descriptive apparatus of the ethnography of speaking are relevant to the way in which the language teacher teaches, the findings of research into the ethnography of speaking are relevant to what the language teacher teaches.

One of the most important implications is that, even when members of different ethnic groups speak the same language, they do not neccesarily share the same assumptions concerning what constitues appropriate language use (Gumperz, 1977). The rules of language use are culturally specific and largely out of our awareness, but individuals use their knowledge of these rules to interpret utterances (Silverstein, 1981). In order for human beings to coordinate their behavior with that of their coparticipants, in the midst of talk participants must display to one another what they are doing and how they expect others to align themselves toward the activity of the moment. The term participation refers to actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk.

Participation as an analytic concept focus on the interactive work that hearers as well as speakers engage in. Speakers attend to hearers as active coparticipants and systematically modify their talk as it is emerging so as to take into account what their hearers are doing. Within the scope of a single utterance, speakers can adapt to the kind of engagement or disengagement their hearers display through constant adjustments of their bodies and talk.

The notion of participation provides one framework for investigating how multiple parties build action together while both attending to, and helping to construct, relevant action and context. There are two appraches to the study of participation. Firstly, Goffman's model of particupation in footing. It offers first, the basics of a typology capable of describing many different kinds of participants that could be implicated in the act of speaking, and second, a most important deconstruction of the speaker into a complex, laminated entity capable of not only animating a theater of characters and action, but also rapidly displaying consequential stances toward these characters and the talk in progress. Despite the analytic power of this model, and the way in which it formed the point of departure for a line of important work in linguistic anthropology on participation, it has a number of crucial liabilities.

The speaker is analyzed separately from all other participants, and only the speaker is endowed with rich cognitive complexity. The categories provided for other participants essentially locate them as points on an analytic grid. More importantly, because of the way in which the speaker and the hearer(s) inhabit quite separate analytic worlds, study of their reflexive orientation toward each other, the way in which each takes the other into account as they build relevant action together is lost. The cognitive, reflexive life of the hearer can be recovered by focusing not on the construction of category systems for types of participants, recovered but instead on the practices actors use to participate together in the endogenous courses of action that make up their lifeworlds. Finally, by linking the details of language use to embodiment, culture, social organization, and material structure in the environment, participation provides one framework that can link the work of linguistic anthropologists to that of our colleagues in other fields.

In recent work within anthropology, scholars interested in how societies reproduce social order, critics of traditional perspectives in psychological anthropology and learning theory, and linguistic anthropologists attempting to rethink basic issues in reference, pragmatics, and context have all converged in their recognition of face to face interaction as a strategic site for the analysis of human action. Conversation analysis is a generic approach to the analysis of social interaction that was first developed in the study of ordinary conversation

but which has since been applied to a wide spectrum of other forms of talk in interaction ranging from courtroom, and news interview conduct to political speeches.

Conversation Analysis (C.A.)

Conversation analysis (CA) developed within a sociological context in which the dominant sociological approach to the analysis of action was the product of a classical interdisciplinary synthesis. This approach was essentially preoccupied with analyzing the social motivation of action in terms of a set of socially conditioned dispositions that would tend to establish social cooperation. CA developed as an approach to the analysis of the practices of reasoning and inference that inform the production and recognition of intelligible courses of action.

Conversational action is treated as both displaying an understanding of prior and projecting subsequent conversational actions has enabled simultaneous analysis (a) of the organization of action and (b) of understanding in interaction. The application of this approach has permitted students of interaction to determine empirically the functions of many types of conversational objects and to unlock the interior organization of a wide variety of conversational sequences.

The approach to conversational data has been informed by a number of broad methodological precepts. First, because language —is a vehicle for living real lives with real interests in a real world,‖ interaction is studied using data drawn from —real life‖ situations of action. The data are collected by audio, and where the parties are physically co-present, video recording rather than through methods in which the details of behavior will be lost (e.g. the legal process note taking, or on the spot coding of behavior). Second, CA has focused primarily on ordinary conversational interaction. This emphasis is informed by the following considerations. First, conversation constitutes the primordial site of language use in the natural world and is central medium for human socialization. In addition, CA‘s focus on conversation between acquaintances, friends, and siblings offers an opportunity to determine what is distinctive about interactions involving asymmetries as status, gender, and ethnicity.

The term ‗participant‘ is used here to refer to anyone engaged in an interaction. In describing participants it is useful to distinguish three different levels of organization. First, the activity of conversation provides a set of positions for the participants, the most salient being speaker and hearer. Second, distinct from the positions proveided by the activity are the actions of individual participants displaying incumbency or nonincumbency in these positions.

Mutual interaction between speaker and hearer is the most basic social alignment implicated in spoken interaction. In order to build most types of conversational action a speaker needs a hearer. In sum, CA has made two major kinds of contribution to the analysis of participation frameworks. The first, already an important field of research for anthropological linguists focuses on how basic participant roles, such as speaker, hearer, overhearer, target, etc., are categorized, constituted, deployed, and transformed. The second contribution, exemplified by the types of analysis, focuses on the multifaceted ways participation in an ongoing course of action demonstrates in fine detail an understanding (or misunderstanding) of what others are engaged in, while helping to shape the future course of those same events.

The recent appearance of two ethnographies that use CA as their primary theoretical framework demonstrates how such work can be incorporated into ethnographic practice. As ths is done, the insistence of CA on the absolute relevance of interactive context to the analysis of both structure and action moves ethnography in new directions.

However, speech produced for an outside researcher, even though spoken by a _native,' is not the same as talk addressed to fellow participants as part of the process of building the events that constitute the social life of a society. CA and linguistic anthropology have a great deal to contribute to each other as the analysis of the social life of language and action turns increasingly to the constitution of such events within human interaction. The study of linguistic anthropology is the study of language and identity. The field's concern with the linguistic production of culture entails a concern with the variety of culturally specific subject positions that speakers enact through language. Thus classic linguistic anthropological studies performance and ritual, of socialization and status, describe not merely kinds of speech but kinds of speakers, who produce and reproduce particular identities through their language use. Recent theoretical work in linguistic anthropology creates the conditions for achieving the development of new research frameworks by foregrounding the complex social and political meanings with which language becomes endowed in specific contexts.

The study of identity has also led anthropology to greater reflexivity, as indicated both by scholars fuller consciousness of their own positionality in the research process and by the increased attention to the anthropology of late modern societies and the identities that emerge from them. In linguistic anthropology, studies of identity have addressed questions of contact, colonialism, and power between societies as well as political and social inequities within a given culture. Even when ethnicity is not the focus of analysis, social identities have often been represented in scholarship as clearly delineated from one another,

internally homogeneous, and linked to distinctive linguistic practices. In particular, this perspective dominated much early work on language and gender, which for many years viewed the categories of female and male as dichotomous and the corresponding linguistic practices of each gender as vastly different.

 Practice is habitual social activity, the series of actions that make up our daily lives. However, the specific practices in which one engages, and which in turn constitute the habitutes, are not the same for everyone: gender, social class, age, and many other dimensions of life experience are culturally refined as the basis for the inculcation of differentiated practice, and these are associated with differential values as _symbolic capital‘, that is, as resources that may be drawn upon to build social and economic success. The beginnings of identity forming through the sedimentation of habitual action. The process of socialization into our first community of practice is particularly significant for the acquisition of both communicative and other cultural competence, such socialisation is not a one time event but a phenomenon that happens throughout our lives.   Important sociolinguistic changes can be set off by ideological interpretation of language use, although because they derive only from a larger social dialectic, such changes are likely to take an unintended direction, as in the historical case of second person pronoun shift in English. To the extent that speakers conceptualize language as socially purposive action, we must look at their ideas about the meaning, function, and value of language in order to understand the extent and degree of systematicity in empirically occuring linguistic forms.

Cultural Variation in Language

There is as much cultural variation in ideas about speech as there is in speech forms themselves. Notions of how communication works as a social process, and to what purpose are culturally variable and need to be discovered rather than simply assumed. Ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language. Linguistic/language ideologies have been defined as _set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use‘ with a greater social emphasis as self evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group.

 The ethnography of speaking has long given attention to ideology as neutral, cultural conception of language. The ethnography of speaking was chartered to study ways of speaking from the point of view of events, acts, and styles. Linguistic ideology is not a predictable, automatic reflex of the social experience of multilingualism in which it is

rooted, it makes its own contribution as an interpretive filter in the relationship of language and society. The failure to transmit may be rationalized in various ways, depending on how speakers conceptualize the links of language, cognition, and social life.

Conclusion

Many populations around the world, in multi various ways suggest fundamental linkages among such apparently diverse cultural categories as language, nation, knowledge, development and tradition. Language use is embedded in a complex cultural system and it has culturally specific communicative functions and meanings. In order to understand the meanings behind cultural variations in conversation, careful attention must be given to the ways of speaking in each society and to the acquisition of both linguistic and cultural knowledge.

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