Language and culture Transfer

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To start the reflection, the writer wants to restate a statement which is coined by Duranti. He says that language is in us as much as we are in language, (1997: 337). This implicitly means that there is a close relationship between language and its users. Regarding to this, EFL learners, including Indonesian learners, tend to speak or write in Engish while thinking in their own first language.

For further illustration, below are examples reflected from Indonesian learners who have an assumption that the target language operates at the same level as their L1 or native language.

"*Does Rony can play soccer?*"

In the mind's eye of learners, what they say is absolutely correct and acceptable, even though in fact, from the standpoint of English speakers, it is not correct. This happens because of systematic forms and underlying rules of L1, "*Apakah Rony bisa bermain bola kaki?*". What has been settled in Indonesian learners is transferred negatively. This then, cannot facilitate learning of L2 or the target language.

In fact, the transfer process does not only occur on phonological, morphological and syntactical aspects but also on culture. Language and culture are intricately intertwined. Any time you successfully learn a language, you will also learn something of the speakers of that language, (Brown 2000: 64). This implicitly means that the process of transferring is definitely influenced by the culture its speakers. This is highly considered as the same coin of having two different sides. One cannot be separated from the other. The transferring process of L1 goes together with its culture.

This dialogue shows how language and culture of L1 are transferred into the target language.

Student: Good morning father

Professor: Morning, how are you

Student: I am fine, father.

The data show that the student is concerned much with the concept of politeness in Indonesian culture. He or she respects the professor by saying "Bapak" emphasizing much on intimacy. Addressing with the word "Professor" is highly considered of being formal. It would

suggest keeping up a social distance. The student does not want to put the audience in a far distance. In this point, politeness is seen as a language strategy to maintain the relationship among interlocutors. In other words, politeness reflects the language and/or social norms of the student as EFL learners. The use of terms of address and greetings turn out to be culture-bound and language specific. There is a possibility to have a misunderstanding, annoyance, or even intrusion and offense resulting from carrying them over into communication with English native speakers, (Kadarisman, 2015:193).

To conclude this reflection, besides knowing the causes and the way how the linguistic and culture of L1 are transferred to L2, the most important issue is how to deal with such language phenomena. ELT materials, technique, and approach should be constructed with the sensitivity to verbal conventions in English. This might help the learners stay away from experiencing negative transfer in pragmatic or sociolinguistic domains in their utterances both written and spoken.

Convergent, Divergent and Politeness

The errors are highly concerned much with the deviation of form and meaning in the target language. Regardless other types of errors, (Effendi, 2015:48), socio cultural errors are the errors in which context of the language user definitely involved. Unlike pronunciation, grammatical and lexical errors, which focus much on sound, lexeme and sentence order or any syntactical pattern, socio cultural errors are considerably influenced by and focused much on the real practice within the society. The main objective of this essay is to describe briefly the socio cultural errors, particularly, in the case of convergent, divergent and politeness with simple examples and solution as well.

With respect to the concept, the socio culture norm is regarded as something universally recognized. However, in spite of its universal recognition, the socio cultural norms is somewhat incorporated differently accross cultures for it does not express the same value to the society. What we accept as a good might be not for others, something which is more valuable in certain group of cummunity might be considered as a common thing for others.To sum up, context plays a vital role in determining what and how socio culture errors are.

Having pointed out the variety of socio culture practices among different language users, some linguistic phenomena have emerged as an interesting issue that is so-called convergent, divergent and politeness. Interestingly, these three terms, in fact, overlap in the sense of its coverage and real practice as well. Although the term divergent and convergent are interpreted differently in different sense, it nevertheless reflects the language strategy among

interlucutors as in politeness. Yet, it is just like two different sides of the same coin. Along this line of comparison, it is necessary to put the context, as previously mentioned, as the key-concept of this overlap.

With regard to the different sense of seeing divergence an convergence, the terms explicit and implicit are considrably used. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to note that the terms are closely related to the so-called narrow and broad sense. The former refers to and is specifically seen as the explicit used of a word of certain language lexically. The later, on the way other around, deals with the social practice and norms which can be revealed through an implicit interpretation.

A problem arises when one interprets such language phenemena and does not know whether it belongs to convergent or divergent. The word *rice and ritual,* for instance, are lexically considered to be as convergent in English word and yet, they go divergently as translated to bahasa Indonesia: *beras, padi, and gabah and tata cara, ritus, upacara, urutan, rangkaian.* Thus, this is seen in the narrow sense which is explicitly emerged along with its proliferation in lexical use.

By contrast, in the broad sense, the convergence and divergence rely more on the language strategy and interpretation among interlucutors. Placing on the same position or status, following other's accent, dialect, jargon or any stylistic words in conversation are the examples of convergent. In a meeting an employer says to his employee, *we have to work hard for the sake of our profit.* A lecturer greets his students by saying *hello guys, where are you*? This, indeed, is done for the sake of having close intimacy and keeping the status equally by using the pronoun *"we"* and the word "*guys*". And yet, as one wants to stay on his or her accent, dialect, jargon and status distinctively without considering the equal level, he or she is going to be divergent. By and large, broadly sensed, the terms are regarded as social meaning which is implicitly stated in social and norm practices.

Similarly, politeness is seen as a language strategy to maintain the relationship among interlucutors. To certain extent, politeness goes with the concept of convergent and divergent as it goes with the intimacy and status. Moving ahead closer, politeness strategy, indeed, has something to do with the concept of face which is so – called positive and negative face. Thus, as in convergent and divergent, both in narrow sense and broad sense, the inability to understand the context might lead to socio cultural errors. The relevant question is: what is the solution of toward this problem?

Refering to the vital role of culture as a context, the answer of the question might be in the way how we teach the target language to our students. Since language is a part of culture (Duranti,1997:26) and they are interelated, teacher should also be able to teach the target culture by utilizing some textbooks, teaching materials or even teaching activities in which target culture is embeded. In this case, teacher has to be more resourceful in terms of and with respect to the sense of language and culture than the students.

To sum up, socio cultural errors could be in the area of convergent, divergent and politeness. Having sufficient knowledge and good understanding of target language and culture would be of benefit to avoid such errors. The knowedge of target language and culture must be taught conviniently in the sense of its sensitivity and awarness of the teching learning process.

References

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