



Contrastive approach study on second language acquisition as a method in teaching English for 2nd semester students of electronics engineering study program at kupang state polytechnic

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Abstract

A massive use of English can be seen in the commercials on television programs, in universities, offices, and others places. English is also seen as an added value in the job field because it functions as the complementary language for the employees. An employee who has good English skills can be prioritized in job interviews. Second semester students of the Electronics Engineering study program, of Kupang State Polytechnic, do not all possess the same level of English skills. They all have different English skills. Many students are not confident in speaking English in class and some of them cannot speak English at all. Realizing the current condition, questions arise, such as What are the students' first language? How does the students' first language affect English learning? What are the students' problems in comprehending English or in acquiring it as their second language? The objective of this study is to identify the first language of the students and to describe the problems that the students face in learning English. The significance of this study is to improve English skills of students. Descriptive method is used in this study. The data was collected by use of a questionnaire. Fifty students participated in this study. The result of the analysis showed that Indonesian was the unanimous student first



language. Students stated that Indonesian had no relation and effect on English learning. The problems they faced varied, such as pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. Further, some factors had positive effect on learning, such as schools or universities that provided English subject and made it compulsory learning. Another important factor was the teacher or lecturer. The lecturer should deliver the material in a more interesting way to make the students motivated to learn English. The Environment and hobbies practiced by students, also played important roles. The practice of listening to English songs or watching English movies could be one way to improve English learning.

Keywords: *Contrastive, English, Electronic student*

Introduction

Learning English is a compulsory and important practice. If someone doesn't understand English, he/she cannot compete in the globalization era. English in Indonesia is taught generally as a foreign language, i.e. a language that is not used as a communication tool in the specific country where it is taught. English is used as a foreign language in Indonesia, in which it isn't used as daily working language, but merely as a working language in specific fields.

A real example is the students of Electronics Engineering Major of Kupang State Polytechnic (PNK). Each of the students has to learn English. Students who went to schools in big cities, or who come from good education backgrounds, have better English speaking ability over those who went to school in smaller cities. This may happen as the result of the teaching and supporting facilities in schools; facilities in big city are better than those in district cities.

The 2nd semester students, of Electronics Engineering Study Program of PNK, are commonly from different educational backgrounds. There are distinct differences in students'

confidence levels in speaking English during classroom interactions. Some students cannot speak English at all.

Realizing this situation, some basic questions occur. 1) What is the students' first language? 2) How does the students' first language affect English learning?; and 3) What are the students' problems in comprehending English or in acquiring English their second language? These questions motivated the researchers to study the factors that affect English learning capabilities and to better understand the impact of a first learned language on English mastery.

The objective of this study is to identify the first language of the students, then to identify and describe the problems that the students face in learning English. The significance of this study is to improve the English ability of 2nd semester students of Electronics Engineering Study Program, and all students of Electronics Engineering major generally. This study can also be used as an additional reference for linguistic researchers on complementary studies.

Research Method

This study is a descriptive qualitative study. Moleong (2003) define qualitative methods as a research procedure that is in the form of descriptive data, through written words or oral data, from behavior that can be observed. The characteristics of qualitative research are 1) natural setting: showing factual data that matches the socio-cultural reality; 2) human are used as the instrument; 3) the qualitative method is easier to apply and presents live data; 4) the analysis of the data is conducted inductively; 5) the submission of the data is in forms of words and graphs; not numbers; 6) there is a limitation of the study regarding the focus of the problem.

It took 6 months (July-December 2018) to finish this study, starting from the research proposal to the result. The subject of this study was the 2nd semester students of Electronics Engineering Study Program of Kupang State Polytechnic (PNK).

In gathering the data, the researchers needed as much data as could be obtained. The data was taken from the questionnaires. On the data analysis, the following steps were implemented: 1) asking basic questions related to the questionnaires, 2) editing the data, 3) classifying the data, 4) connecting and analyzing the data, 5) analysis of each question on the questionnaire, 6) inductively concluding the method that could help the students to learn English.

Discussion

Data Tabulation

The data was tabulated, along with the answers of the respondents, though questionnaires that cover:

- A. The effect of the Indonesian (L1) towards English (L2) learning
- B. The main problems faced in learning English (L2)
- C. The level of Indonesian (L1) and English (L2) comprehension

Table 1 shows that the answers of the respondents on Indonesian mastery towards L2 learning can be explained as follows:

- a. Is L1 is the students' first language? This question was dominated by 50 respondents (100%) who answered yes.
- b. Do students face some problems in learning L1? It was also dominated by "no" answers with 50 respondents (100%).
- c. Does L1 affected L2 learning? 50 respondents (100%) answered no significant effect of the mastery of L1 towards L2 learning.
- d. Does L1 trigger L2 mastery? 50 respondents (100%) answered no.

Table 2 could be explained as follows:

- a. The first question was the main factors that affected L2 mastery. 15 respondents (30%) answered school as the main factor, and 8 respondents (16%) stated that the teacher/lecturer affected the L2 mastery. 5 respondents (10%) stated that family was the motivation to learn L2, while 15 respondents (30%) claimed that their hobby was a main factor in learning L2.
- b. The second question was the problems faced in learning and mastering L2, which included pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, lack of listening practice, lack of speaking practice, lack of reading practice, and laziness towards study. 9 respondents (18%) stated that they had problem with pronunciation and 15 respondents (30%) stated that vocabulary mastery was the problem that they faced in learning and mastering L2. 6 respondents (12%) stated that listening was their biggest problem in learning L2. 10 respondents (20%) stated that speaking was their biggest problem in learning L2. Besides that, problems in reading was faced by 5 respondents (10%). 5 respondents (10%) stated that they encountered a lack of motivation to learn L2 (laziness).
- c. The next question examined the importance of learning L2, for the students. 50 respondents (100%) answered that it was quite important for them to master L2.
- d. The fourth question was the effect of L2 on the educational outcomes of the students. “yes” answer dominated the questionnaires, in which 50 respondents (100%) agreed with it. It showed that L2 has a great impact on their education.
- e. The last question concerned the Joining of additional courses, to help the students comprehend and master L2. 28 respondents (56%) said that they took some additional courses, while 22 respondents (44%) said that they did not take any courses.

From the result of table 3 it can be seen that, in question 1, the respondents answered L1 more than L2.; 50 respondents (100%). Question 2 concerned the level of comprehension of L2, whether it was on the elementary, intermediate, or advanced level. 25 respondents (50%) stated that they were on the elementary level, 24 respondents (48%) stated that they were on the intermediate level, and only 1 respondent (2%) stated that they was on the advanced level of comprehension.

Data Analysis

Regarding the data analysis of table 1, 2, and 3, it could be detailed as follows:

1. Table 1 showed that Indonesian (L1) mastery did not significantly affected English (L2) learning. Table 1 explains that English is not the students' first language, L1 presents no difficulties for students in learning L2 and that there was no significant difference between L1 and L2 mastery.
2. Table 2 showed the main problems faced in learning English (L2). Questions 5 and 6 showed the main factors that affected learning L2. The data of the respondents showed that school, teacher/lecturer, family, environment, and hobby were the significant factors. 30% of the respondents stated that school played a role in learning L2, 16% of the respondents stated that the teacher/lecturer affected L2 learning. 10% of the respondents stated that family played an important role in supporting L2 learning. 14% of the respondents stated that the environment affected L2 mastery, and 30% of the respondents stated that their hobby supported their interest in learning and mastering L2. Question 7 on table II showed that 100% of the respondents agreed on the importance of L2 mastery. Question 8 showed that 100% of the respondents agreed that L2 affected the students' education. Question 9 shows

data about additional courses that students undertook to increase their L2 comprehension and mastery.

3. Table 3 shows the comprehension level on L1 and L2. Questions 10 and 11 covered higher comprehension levels of L1 and L2, with 100% of the respondents stating that their L1 comprehension level is higher. L2 comprehension varied as 50% of the respondents stated that they were on the elementary level, 48% of the respondents stated that they were on intermediate level, and 2% of the respondents stated that they were on the advanced level of understanding L2.

Conclusion

Regarding the data tabulation and data analysis, it can be concluded that:

- a. 50 respondents showed that their first language is Indonesian (L1). This is the case because of influences such as family, environment and schools that use Indonesian as a daily language. Further, students are taught to speak Indonesian from birth.
- b. Indonesian (L1) does not play a significant role in English (L2) learning. The data suggests that L1 and L2 do not have any connection. L1 is a national language that is used in daily conversation, while L2 is an international language that is taught in school or on campus.
- c. The problems faced by the students in learning and mastering L2 vary. The problems range from pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, lack of listening practice, lack of speaking practice, and a lack of reading practice. Some students also express a laziness towards learning L2.
- d. There are also some supporting factors that have a positive effect on L2 mastery. Those factors are 1) Schools, which provide English subjects and makes it compulsory for the students, 2) Family, 3) teachers/lecturers, 4) environment; and 5) Student hobbies; hobbies,

such as watching movies in English and listening to English songs, can be alternative methods in mastering L2.

- e. Students need to minimize their problem in learning L2 by utilizing current technology facilities. For example, they can utilize the use of internet (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) in L2 learning. Besides that, students can also learn by themselves through their hobbies, such as watching movies, listening to music, and reading magazines or journals.

All the answers from 50 respondents strengthen that there is no correlation between learning L1 and learning L2. This article does not discuss contrastive analysis studies that identifies the similarity and difference on the linguistic systems of both languages.

Table 1. The effect of the Indonesian (L1) towards English (L2) learning

No	Questions	Total of Respondents Answer			
		Yes	%	No	%
1.	Indonesian (L1) is the first language of the students.	50	100 %	-	-
2.	There are some problems in comprehending Indonesian (L1)	-	-	50	100 %
3.	Indonesian (L1) affects English (L2) learning	-	-	50	100 %
4.	Indonesian (L1) triggers English (L2) mastery	-	-	50	100 %

Table 2. The main problem faced in learning English (L2)

No	Questions	Total of Respondents Answer			
		Yes	%	No	%

1.	Main factors that affect L2 mastery				
	a. School	15	30 %	-	-
	b. Teacher/lecturer	8	16 %	-	-
	c. Family	5	10 %	-	-
	d. Environment	7	14 %	-	-
	e. Hobby	15	30 %	-	-
2.	Problems faced in learning and mastering L2				
	a. pronunciation	9	18 %	-	-
	b. vocabulary mastery	15	30 %	-	-
	c. lack of listening practice	6	12 %	-	-
	d. lack of speaking practice	10	20 %	-	-
	e. lack of reading practice	5	10 %	-	-
	f. lazy to study	5	10 %	-	-
3.	Do you think it is important to master L2 for you?	50	100 %	-	-
4.	Does L2 affect your education?	50	100 %	-	-
5.	Do you join any additional courses to comprehend and master L2?	28	56 %	22	44 %

Table 3. Level of comprehension on both L1 and L2

No	Questions	Total of Respondents Answer			
		L1	%	L2	%
1.	Which one do you comprehend more, L1 or L2?	50	100%	-	-

2.	Level of comprehension on L2				
a.	elementary	25	50 %	-	-
b.	intermediate	24	48 %	-	-
c.	advance	1	2 %	-	-

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