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FAKULTAS KEGURUAN
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(FKIP)
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NUSANTARA
AL WASHLIYAH

- **Hamidah Sidabalok**
The Students Problems In A Genre News Comprehension
- **Rosmawati Harahap**
Sitogol dan onang-onang:
Tradisi lisan angkola mandailing
- **Sri Juriaty Ownie**
Contribution of Language and Culture
In Character Building
- **Sri Wulan**
Building Character By Improving Student Motivation
- **Gustiningsih**
Kindergarten Children And Indonesian Compound
Sentence : The History Of Acquisition At Medan

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Alamat : Jl. Garu II No. 02 Medan
Sumatera Utara

e- mail : info@fkipumnaw.ac.id

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Secara Institusional, Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan pihak pemangku kepentingan (Stake holders) atas kinerja Jurusan Bahasa dan Seni FKIP UMN Al Washliyah dalam hal akademik atmosfir, yang mendukung akreditasi dan profesionalisme dosen fakultas .

Salam Kami

Drs. M. Ayyub Lubis, M.Pd. Ph.D

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CONTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN CHARACTER BUILDING

Sri Juriaty Ownie
Faculty of Languages and Arts,
State University of Medan

Abstract

Language is a set of phonological, syntactical and other systems that is aimed to ease human beings in communication and interaction. In relation to the functions, language is a sign of civilized culture.

Language is a social stipulation in many aspects. It is owed by a certain society. It is very essential since it plays important role in our social life. Whenever language is used in communication context, language becomes the cultural developer in complex and various ways.

In building character, the language role can't be doubted anymore. It is supported by the active role of teachers as the real sample of correct language user.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings have had the ability to perform language from the day we were born. We use language to transform a form of ideas into movement and sound which is aimed to provide information for the listeners. It is

an activity that we do when we are unconscious. Even we are sleeping, we still can use language. Human beings can automate the ability to perform language similar with the ability to see or listen which has the natural process and doesn't need to be thought

anymore. We tend to consider that performing language is a normal activity, however if we live when no languages exist, perhaps our identities as *homo sapiens* will be gone. It is an essential character that differs human with other creatures.

The ability to perform language can create a civilization. The existence of language defines us as a civilian (social creature). It also gives identity to a group of community because language creates, trains, develops the community. Broom and Selznik (1973) calls it as a defining factor in the creation of the society. Nababan (1984:38) states that language is a culture developer and relates to the function the language itself.

2. THE SENSE AND FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE

As it is mentioned above that the main function of language is to exchange information either it is oral or written. On the other hand, language also has different functions, that we can classify into 4 points as follows: (1) the cultural function, (2) societal function, (3) individual function, and (4) educational function. These four functions also relate each other, because each individual is the member of the community which lives in the society according to the "cultural" patterns that have been inherited and developed through education (Nababan, 1984:38).

The scope of language in reliance with the functions is broadly explored, however, according to Markam (1991), language in limited

scope means the tools of communication between individuals. In a wide definition, language is a tool of communication between individuals which commonly covers the aspect symbols, gestures and other codes.

Language can also be defined as a system of arbitrary symbols as a tool to interact and cooperate between speakers (Gleason and Ratner, 1998:5). Words in a language are symbols to replace things for example, 'table'. We don't know the origin of how a four-legged thing and with board on the middle is called as 'table', not 'tuble' or 'teble'. It may happen because the existence of arbitrary convention by the language user. They add the human language is characterized by its hierarchy structure. It can be seen that the message is defined in the smaller units.

It also encourages human beings to think something in their mind though the object is not around them. Human beings with the ability to perform language can also trigger them to keep thinking about a certain problem.

Human beings are not only able to think organizedly but also to communicate what they think to other people. It can also help to express attitude and feelings. By the existence of language, we live in two worlds, the real experience, and symbolic experience.

The ability to perform language is different in every human. It can be more developed by learning the other languages beside the mother language. The natural or mother language is the language that is used by a certain community to communicate and spoken to children since they were born. This also

depends on the ability of each individual to add one set of new language to the function.

Based on the above study, we can grasp an idea that the sense of language to human beings is very important. All languages are the results of old tradition, there will be no clear and scientific explanation on how the process of each language is formed, even the letters used. It may also encourages each individual to make new languages because there is no certain rule about how it must be formed.

3. THE NATURE OF CULTURE

Culture is anything that bonds a person with another and all the behaviors that are accepted and patterned from human beings. (Brown, 1963:46)

Naturally, culture is defined as an entire aspect covering faith,

knowledge, art, moral, law and customs with the abilities that human being achieved as the part of community. In details, culture can be classified into some elements which consist of religious system and ceremonies administration system, societal organizations, knowledge, languages, arts, sources of income and technology / system (Kuntjaraningrat in Suriasumantri, 1983:261)

We can also develop the ideas of culture by its relation to nature. Nature refers to something that is born and grown organically, while culture refers to something that is developed and maintained (Kramsch, 1990:3).

By the use and teaching of languages, culture can be classified into two categories, namely *formal culture* and *deep culture*. *Formal culture* sometimes refers to "culture

with a capital 'C' covering manifestations and human contribution, such as art, music, literature, architecture, technology and politics.

Deep culture or "culture with a small c," focuses on behavioral patterns or human lifestyles. What and when to eat, attitude and behaviors of human with friends and family, how we express, which we use in accepting and refusing something.

Duranti (1997:24) states that, "A common view of culture is that of something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in the form of face-to face interaction, and, of course, through linguistic communication."

From this study, we can conclude that culture is the aspects that have been inherited through

human actions by linguistic communications.

4. THE RELATION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Language is not only used to express experiences but also to create ones. Nowadays, the society members and social groups use language not only for interface communication but also via technology such as talking on the phones, writing messages, reading magazines and interpreting graphics. The ways of people using written and oral media create the meanings that can be understood by the community, for instance, through the caller voice, accent, conversation style, body language and facial expression. Through all verbal and non verbal aspects, language can

realize the cultural points (Kramsch, 1998:3—4).

The action of performing language can't be apart with the social life aspect. Language plays active role in developing culture including the ideas of knowledge. The use of language is very important to explain the understanding natural exploration. The absence of language influences to the incapability of exploring and understanding nature.

5. TEACHER'S ROLE IN CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH LANGUAGE

Language is a social stipulation that the most important thing of social contact is the use of language. Through language, human beings can exchange information, asking questions, assigning tasks, expressing appreciation, warning

each other, and other social interactions.

Language is an indicator to figure out the image and intelligency of a person. Certainly, we have ever heard the term of 'slang' language which means informal and tends to be used by the society rather than the formal and correct form of the language. It becomes worse when it is supported by the sophisticated technology. Language is frequently used incorrectly especially in the sentence structure or function in the communication. We often see or use the words that are shortened and changed even though have the same meanings. Language is also often used as a tool to provoke in the societies.

In this reliance, the duty of teachers are very needed to ensure the function of the language will be used correctly because the character

building is one of the main focus in education. Of course, the teacher has to be a role model for the students.

According to Yoesoef (1980), teachers have three important duties namely, professional duty, humanity duty, and societal duty. If it is related to the discussion of culture, the first duty is correlated to logics and esthetics, the second and third with ethics. The entire multifunctional duties are combined and have to be possessed by teachers.

Teachers are hoped to transform the science and to be caretaker of the values systems. At least, teachers can perform the real actions on how to practice the communication skills correctly. Teachers are also to empower the use of language in the realize the civilized and cultural communication.

6. CONCLUSION

Language is a set of phonological, syntactical and other systems that is aimed to ease human beings in communication and interaction. In relation to the functions, language is a sign of civilized culture.

Language is a social stipulation in many aspects. It is owed by a certain society. It is very essential since it plays important role in our social life. Whenever language is used in communication context, language becomes the cultural developer in complex and various ways.

In building character, the language role can't be doubted anymore. It is supported by the active role of teachers as the real sample of correct language user. It is hoped that the teachers could preserve the language values and

grow the love to Indonesian language. Therefore, language can be the perfect media to build character.

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