The Relationship between Language and Culture: a Sociolinguistic Perspective

by Widhiya Ninsiana

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Widhiya Ninsiana

English Department

State Islamic Institute of Metro, Lampung, Indonesia

widhiya.ninsiana@metrouniv.ac.id

Abstract—this study seeks to understand and describe the relationship between language and culture in a sociolinguistic perspective. Bearing in mind that this study is an exploration based-perspective, the framework is underlied by several factors, beyond the language itself. This has something to do with society. Social reality is an important instrument to comprehend the residing meaning. By this perspective, theory that describes the relationship between culture and language is divided into two categories, namely subordinate relations and coordinate relationship theory. The first relationship correlates with the view that culture is the main system while language is a subsystem. The second type of relationship or coordinative relationship is based on the understanding that language and culture are two different systems, which are used by humans. In this case, the writer wants to realize the challenge of culture as a system that has power over human interaction, while language is a system with its function as a means of carrying continuity from that interaction.

Keywords— culture; language; social relity; system

I. INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistics is a study that emphasizes and bases its approach on things that are outside the language, which is related to the use of language by speakers in their social groups. This external sociolinguistic study produces rules relating to the use and use of the language in all human activities in society. In his work, he uses theories and other disciplines related to the use of language, for example, sociology, psychology and anthropology. In the sociolinguistic perspective, language is not, therefore, seen as a language, as is done by structural / general linguistics, but is seen as a means of interaction in human society. Therefore, all formulations regarding sociolinguistics provided by experts will not be separated from the problem of language relations with the social aspect of activities.

There are four possibilities that describe the relationship between language and society, namely: (a). Social structure will influence or determine the structure of linguistic behavior; age, ethnicity, social status, sex, etc., (b). Linguistic structures will influence social structures (i.e., the Whorf hypothesis and Bernstein's statements), (c). Language and society will influence each other, (d). There is no relationship between the two, as Chomsky's asocial theory. However, this kind of analysis is weak and has many criticisms put forward by the linguists themselves.

The relationship between language and non-linguistic factors is very strong, which is caused by factors such as: dialect, idiolect, language variety (situation); formal, informal, lateral, age, groups of speakers; gang, register and others. Thus, a sociolinguistic study that has the character and method of work that is like this clearly distinguishes it from other linguistic studies that are patterned, for example, structural linguistics by Noam Chomsky. The theory or study emphasizes that linguistic knowledge only focuses on knowledge of language itself without the need to study language in its use by explicitly rejecting the relationship between language and society.

Representation of a language is essentially in the form of language use itself by the community in various purposes. Language value lies in the meaning symbolized by a language. Language may be seen by most experts as a form of culture, and on the other hand language as a vehicle for culture. In fact, language is perceived as a cultural symbol. This is evident in the fact that English is considered a symbol of modernism and technology, Arabic as a symbol of Islamic religion (Alwasilah, 2003). Therefore it can be recognized that language vitality lies in the language's ability to function as a cultural symbol. From the brief illustration, the link between language and culture can be strengthened. Language as part of culture and as a vehicle for culture. From the language he uses, one can guess the culture, the values he adheres to, or the religious beliefs he adheres to. From his language, one can also be known for his manners, his open attitude, his way of thinking, even his honesty (Kawulusan, 1998, p. 1). With such a description, it is understandable that there is a statement that "language shows the nation" (Kawulusan, 1998, p. 1; Samsuri, 1985).

II. METHOD

The research method used is library research. Data collection was complied using documentation method. The data analysis technique used is content analysis. In order to maintain the accuracy of the assessment and prevent misinformation in data analysis, the library/ relevant literature data is further scruitinized.The sociocultural and philosophical perspective of language.

The methodology approach used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach. The qualitative descriptive approach in this study is a research procedure with the results of descriptive data presentation of speech events and linguistic phenomena which also influence the overall culture of the studied community.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *The Essence of Culture*

Culture is essentially quite complex, so that experts always give a variety of understanding, understanding and limitations to it. In anthropological or cultural literature, there are various definitions of different cultures. These differences occur because they see culture from different aspects. Kroeber and Kluckhorm (1952) gave out a lot of definitions about culture, and classified them into six groups according to the nature of those definitions (cited in Chaer, 1995, p. 214). Descriptive definitions emphasize on cultural elements, the historical definition emphasizes that culture is inherited socially, normative definitions emphasize the rules of life and behavior, psychological definitions because of their usefulness in adaptation to the environment, problem solving and learning life. Structural definitions are based on the nature of culture, as a patterned and orderly system, genetic definitions emphasize the occurrence of human work.

Tylor suggested that culture is a whole field which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and abilities and other habits that are obtained by humans as members of society (Sibarani, 1992, p. 94). Wilson (1966, p. 51) said that culture is knowledge that is transmitted and disseminated socially, both in an extreme, normative, and symbolic manner, which is reflected in actions (act) and objects of human work (artifact) (Sibarani, 1992, p. 99--100). The description given by Tylor and Wilson above refers to culture in a special sense or commonly referred to as high culture. Goodenough firmly said that the culture of a society consists of everything that must be known and believed by humans in order to act in a way that is acceptable to members of the community and to be able to play a role in accordance with the roles received by members of society whose knowledge is acquired socially (Wardhaugh , 1986, p. 21). Useful behaviors must be learned and not from genetic traditions. Thus, culture is a way of knowing what a person must possess to live the tasks of everyday life and culture includes knowledge of music, literature, and art (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 211).

3.2. *The relations between language and culture*

Topics that discuss the relationship between language and culture can be seen in the writings of linguists, such as Steinberg (1982), Samsuri (1985), Alwasilah (1985), Hakuta (1986), Trugill (1987), Yule (1990), Hudson (1991)) The structure of the human brain is different from the brain structure of other creatures. The human brain can be used to think, and the means to think one of them is in the form of language. With language, humans do thinking activities. It can be imagined when people think or reflect without language what happens. Therefore, it is understandable that there is an opinion that human uniqueness does not lie in the ability to think but lies in language skills. Of course without language skills humans will not be able to think systematically and regularly. Ernest Cassirer called humans as homo symbolicum 'creatures that use symbols' whose scope is wider than homo sapiens 'thinking creatures'.

There are several theories regarding the relationship between language and culture. Broadly speaking, these theories can be grouped into two categories, namely stating a subordinative relationship, in which language is under the scope of culture, and a coordinative relationship, namely an equal relationship with the same position. Most experts say that culture is the main system, whereas language is only a subsystem, nothing or no one is said otherwise. In regard with the coordinative relationship between language and culture, Masinambouw (1985) state that language and culture are two systems that are "attached" to humans because culture is a system that regulates human interaction, while language or culture is a system that functions as a means of sustainability the facility (cited in Chaer, 1995, p. 217-218).

3.2.1. 3.2.1. Coordinative Relations

There are two interesting phenomena regarding this coordinative relationship. First, some say the relationship is tightly bound like a coin: one side is the linguistic system and the other side is the cultural system (Silzer, p. 1990 cited in Chaer, 1995, p. 218). So, this opinion is in line with the Masinambouw concept above, that language and culture are two different phenomena but the relationship is very close. Second, there is a very controversial hypothesis, namely the hypothesis of two well-known linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. This hypothesis is known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which is commonly called language relativity. Edward Sapir (1884-19-19) was an American linguist, while Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) was a Sapir student The two learned a lot about the languages of the Indians, and wrote extensive research results. In his hypothesis, it is stated that language not only determines the pattern of culture, but also determines the way and way of the human mind. Therefore, it also influences its actions (Chaer, 1995, p. 219).

Sapir emphasized the close relationship between language and culture and emphasized that language and culture cannot be separated from one another, so that one cannot understand one without knowing the other. Whorf, Sapir's student, expanded the idea. He not only said there was an influence, but the relationship between language and culture was determinative. Speakers of

different languages, according to Whorf, will view the world differently as long as the language they use is structurally different (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 212-213).

On the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, there are two statements that need to be considered. First, if speakers of a language have certain words to give objects while speakers of other languages do not have it in the same way, then the speakers of the first language will be easier to talk about the objects. This is evident if we pay attention to technical terms in trade, employment or profession. For example, doctors will be easier to talk about medical phenomena because they have vocabulary (terms) about it. Second, if a language has a concept of differentiation while others do not, those who use the first language will better understand differentiation in their environment, especially regarding concepts that are the center of attention for linguistic differentiation. If someone wants to classify snow, camels, and cars then in some way he will understand them differently from people who do not make that distinction. If certain objects must be classified according to their length, thinness or roundness, one will understand them in this way (Wardhaugh, 1986, p.213-214).

In a mass media (1971), a person named "Kang En" (perhaps a pseudonym) wrote a provocative article, based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The three issues raised were: greeting words, tenses and greetings. According to him, the language that borrows the word kinship (father, mother, brother) as a greeting, results in the user community being familiar. Languages that do not recognize tenses (when) result in people not appreciating time / lack of discipline. The language that greeting uses how do you do and "how are you", has a different impact on the user community.

3.2.2. Subordinate Relations

Some things that can be classified in this relationship pattern include:

The relationship between language and culture is related to changes in language caused by cultural change. This is more prominent in morphological aspects than other linguistic aspects. Morphological changes in language can be seen from several aspects, namely (1) omission, (2) Addition, (3) Expansion, (4) Refinement and (5) Exchange (Robert, 1992, p.111-112). For information and examples taken from Robert's book about the Toba Batak tribe.

Omission, for example Robert's study on some Toba Batak language vocabulary that was lost and he found when researching one of the Toba Batak manuscripts written in the mid-19th century, among others: - *Palias* 'antidote to disaster' - *Pokpang* 'sign of ceasefire - *Martaban* 'charming' - Mangobol 'got shot without injury 'and others. The extension of meaning related to vocabulary that is influenced by cultural change. The expansion of the meaning of words that say kinship is very high in intensity in the Toba Batak language, i.e. The word *lae* (formerly) → 'putra of a mother's father / brother' (now) → to greet all men who are about the same age and do not have genealogical relations and not as valuable. The word *tulang* (then) → 'mother's brother' nantulang (then) → 'the wife of that *tulang*' (now) → to greet all those who are not with him and who he respects – the word ompung (first) → 'father's parents or mother', (now) → to greet everyone who is old and others.

Submission of acts of communication to cultural norms

Language procedures should be in accordance with the prevailing norms in the community, life and the use of language. Language behavior or language ethics, has a close relationship with the selection of language codes, social norms, and cultural systems that apply in one society. This language ethics will "regulate" (a) what we must say at certain times and circumstances to certain participants regarding social status and culture in that society; (b) what kinds of languages are we most likely to use in certain sociolinguistic and cultural situations; (c) when and how we use our turn to talk and interrupt the conversation of others; (d) when should we be silent; (e) how our voice and physical qualities speak (Chaer, 1995, p. 226-227).

The study of language ethics is called ethnographic language, which in anthropology the term ethnography is used to describe culture. Especially for physical movements, item (e) concerns two things, namely: kinesik and proximik. Kinesik includes: eye movements, changes in facial expressions, changes in the position of the feet, head and so on. Proxymic is the distance of the body in communicating because in the conversation that is familiar between cultures one is usually different. Separately, kinesik and proximic are nonverbal / non-linguistic communication tools which in direct contact are used to achieve the perfection of interaction.

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Kinship system

This kinship system is universal in language because it is very important in a social organization. In one community, it has a system that is richer than others, because of sex, age, generation, blood and marriage (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 219). This kinship system is universal in language because it is very important in a social organization. In one community, it has a system that is richer than others, because of sex, age, generation, blood and marriage (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 219).

Taxonomy

Is a classification system in the world of plants and animals, as well as others. This term is commonly referred to as folk taxonomies from the scientific classifications term. The most famous study of folk taxonomy was that of Fruke (1961) about the Mindanao Subanun in the Southern Philippines. There are several terms used by Subanun especially types of skin diseases. Symptoms are one category that has very wide variations in various levels, such as nuka (a common skin disease) but can also mean eruption and so on. (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 223). Burling has conducted vocabulary research in relation to the pronoun "pronoun" system in Palaung, the language used in Burma. There are 11 pronouns in their entirety. Analysis such as this indicates that we can associate a phonology in the system of pronouns in terms of the meaning they contain, namely: ar (duality), Σ (more than two), and prefix Y, P, G containing varied combinations of inclusion and exclusion, and from speakers and hearers (Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 225).

Color terminology

Color terminology always draws attention in terms of different languages and cultures. Interesting question, is the color term arbitrary or based on general patterns? According to Belin and Kay, an analysis of color terminology found in varied languages expresses interesting patterns. If one language only has two color terms it means: black and white, if three patterns; plus red; if four and five; plus yellow and green; if six and seven; plus blue and chocolate (Wardhaugh 1986, p. 226).Various attempts have been made to find a connection between the extension of color terminology in certain languages and the cultural level of the complexity of the society in which language is used by them. Communities that have a slight level of technological development will have narrower color terminology, for example Jale of New Guinea has only dark and bright colors. Conversely, people who have high-tech developments have eleven color terms (Wardhough 1986, p. 226). Two important things related to the color terminology above, the first term is closely related to cognitive abilities. Because of the cultural and technological transformation that occurs, it forces people to understand color differences. Second, speakers of languages who have a lot of color terminology will more easily identify the spectrum of colors than others.

Prototype theory

Various experiments have proven that people tend to have classifications or concepts about objects consistently in various ways as they wish. For example classification of home furnishings, fruits, clothing and others. Hudson, believes that prototypes like this are closely related to sociolinguistics, because knowledge like this will make it easier for speakers of language to use language. Prototype theory allows us not only to find out how a concept will be formulated, but also to improve our social competence in the use of language. We can live in an environment in accordance with the prototype, so we can formulate our language so that it suits the situation and participants. (Wardhough, 1986, pp. 228-229).

Taboo and Euphemism

These two terms are related to how cultural meaning is expressed through language. Taboo in society is expressed by various prohibitions on actions because they are considered dangerous for society, both for supernatural reasons and morality codes. Consequences in language are prohibitions in certain utterances, whereas euphemism is the acquisition of certain words which were not allowed because of their indirect pronunciation (refined). The reality of the two things above is very diverse in society which ultimately leads to diversity in language terms (Wardhough, 1986, p. 230).

IV. CONCLUSION

In the sociolinguistic perspective, language is, theredore, not seen as a language, as is undertaken by structural / general linguistics, but is seen as a means of interaction in human society. Therefore, all formulations regarding sociolinguistics provided by experts will not be separated from the problem of language relations with the activities / aspect of social aspects. This sociolinguistic perspective which produces an analysis that the theories related to understanding the relationship between language and culture reflect a pattern of coordinative and subordinate relationships. Coordinative relations are characterized by the quality of the reciprocal relationship between the two, while the subordinative relationship reflects a quality of relationships that are only one-sided, meaning that cultural dynamics affect the dynamics of language, and not the other way around.

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