

LANGUAGE AS A REFLECTION OF THINKING

Abdurrahman Hi. Usman¹, Adi F. Mahmud², Abdulhalim Daud³, Suratman Dahlan⁴

¹ Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ternate, Maluku Utara

² Program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara

^{3,4} Program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP Universitas Khairun, Maluku Utara

Email: manti2001@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study deals with humans' language performance connected to mind, thought, intelligence and way of thinking. The discussion was elaborated through ideas and argumensts explored in the work of library research design. The data were collected and presented in descriptive-qualitative way. The data were obtained from many sources concerning with the topic. Based on the research results, it was found that someone's language performance is also identified as the ability, quality, and activity of thinking. Someone can be known, recognized, and respected by other people through his/her intelligence and way of thinking. It is caused by the function and urgency of language in human's everyday life. In the process of thinking, someone requires language/languages to identify, characterise, communicate, and explain what he/she is thinking. It means that someone's ability of performing or communicating ideas in a language reflects his/her quality of thinking and intelligence. The better someone in thinking and producing ideas the higher quality of communication in language he/she performs. The degree of someone's intelligence and way of thinking can be measured through the quality of his/her communication in language. The fluency and accuracy of someone's language production is the reflection of his/her ability of mind and thoughts.

Keywords: language, communication, speaking, thinking, mind, thought, intelligence

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji performansi bahasa manusia yang dikaitkan dengan pikiran, gagasan, inteligensi, dan cara berpikir. Pembahasannya diuraikan melalui ide-ide dan argumen yang dikaji dalam bentuk desain penelitian pustaka. Data dikumpulkan dan dipaparkan dengan metode deskriptif-kualitatif. Data diperoleh dari banyak sumber yang terkait dengan topik. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan bahwa performansi bahasa seseorang juga diidentifikasi/disinyalir sebagai kemampuan, kualitas, dan aktifitas berpikir. Seseorang dapat dikenal, diakui, dan dihargai oleh orang lain melalui inteligensi dan cara berpikirnya. Hal ini disebabkan oleh fungsi dan urgensi bahasa dalam kehidupan manusia sehari-hari. Dalam proses berpikir, seseorang membutuhkan bahasa untuk mengidentifikasi, menmpericirkan, mengkomunikasikan, dan menjelaskan apa yang sedang ia pikirkan. Itu berarti bahwa kemampuan memperformansikan atau mengkomunikasikan ide dalam suatu bahasa rerefleksikan kualitas berpikir dan inteligensi orang tersebut. Semakin bagus/baik seseorang berpikir dan menghasilkan ide-ide, semakin semakin tinggi kualitas komunikasinya dalam bahsa yang sedang ia performansikan. Tingkat inteligensi dan cara berpikir seseorang dapat diukur melalui kualitas komunikasinya dalam bahasa. Kelancaran dan ketepatan produksi bahasa seseorang merupakan cermin kemampuan pikiran dan gagasannya.

Kata kunci: bahasa, komunikasi, berbicara, berpikir, pikiran, ide, inteligensi

INTRODUCTION

In our daily life, we need many things that should be fulfilled. One of them is language. Language is a means of communication and a vehicle to transfer our thoughts, mind and ideas in order to take and give information or other things to others. Language is the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country (Oxford Dictionary of English). Language is a system that allows people's immense creativity. Language is a special system that functions independently of speech, thought, and communication. Without language we cannot understand what other people want us to do and vice versa. Without language we cannot fulfill our daily need and wants as well.

All aspects of our life such as education, science and technology, culture and arts, business, social and politics, national defense and security, and international relation require a language or languages as

the means of communication in order to get what we need from other people or countries and what they need from us or our country. We also have to recognize the existence of other people in the world by appreciating them.

However, we may not show them our appreciation to them without our behaviors and speech acts with them. In order to communicate with other people about our appreciation to them and vice versa, we need a language or languages as a medium or media of telling our ideas and thoughts about the appreciation and other things.

Every language used by the people in their daily life is a system which consists of some subsystems such as the system of sound (phonology), the system of word formation (morphology), the system of sentence structure (syntax) and the system of meaning (semantics). All the subsystems work together systematically and form a unity of language both spoken and written language. They are acquired and learned systematically as the *scientific studies*. These subsystems are treated, recognized and grouped into one *scientific study*, named *linguistics*.

Linguistics is the study of language in general and of individual languages (Buchman, 1963: 1). In linguistics, these subsystems (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics) are called the *aspects of linguistics*. Historically, there was a striking decline in studies of linguistic method in the early 1950's as the most active theoretical minds turn to the problem of how an essentially close body of technique could be applied to some new domain (Chomsky, 1972: 2). One of the domains is technological advances, for instance, the process of developing and running computers (as a technological inquiry) requires language (the object of linguistics) to make them function. Briefly, we can say that linguistics has a great contribution to the world of science and technology.

Language as the object of linguistics has a practical function in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing (as the language skills) which are used as a means of communication in human's daily life. Language (linguistics) involves or relates to other kind of science such as sociology (sociolinguistics), anthropology (anthropolinguistics), psychology (psycholinguistics), ethnology (ethnolinguistics), and other kinds of sciences. Those are what we call *applied linguistics*. In learning sciences, the learners need language skills as mentioned above, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The process of practicing language skills in humans' daily communication reflects their intelligence and brightness. When someone is listening to another's speaking or speech, how deep he understand the speech, it depends on his mastery on listening skill. If someone is speaking to another, how fast and systematic he uses the language, it also depends on his mastery on speaking skill. How well someone can understand a text or discourse fast and accurately, it is a reflection of his good mastery on the language in terms of reading skill. Finally, the ability of someone to use language in writing a paper or article well, it represents his ability in the language (writing) skill.

When we find someone who comprehends a speech fast, speaks fast, accurately, systematically and clearly, comprehends a text book fast, and writes an article or story accurately and systematically, it indicates that he/she has a high level of intelligence. So, the ability of someone to apply the language skills indicates that he is intelligent. That is why; we can say that language is a reflection of thinking.

On other sides, there are some people who have high level of intelligence but they have low ability of language performance. It can be seen in the academic world in which many qualified mathematics and natural sciences academicians have low ability in language performance. It can be analyzed in the different perspectives. To get one statement and one theory of language in terms of the relationship between language of mind and thought. This study can would like to be conducted by exploring and collecting references from the library, then analyze, discuss, and conclude them as the theory of language to be learned by many people especially language learners.

The exploration of the study was started by elaborating some theories of language and linguistics consisting of the concepts of language, mind, thinking and thought, the relationship between language

of mind and thought, language and the process of thinking, and language, culture and arts in social group. In addition, the existence and roles of language in all aspects of life are elaborated in this study.

METHODS

The design of this research was a literature study or library research. In other words, the data collected were from any kind of references or literature. Library research is a research in which a researcher makes use of library sources to get the data (Zeid, 2004). This statement implies that literature or references become the main source of library research. Library research is a kind of research based on the place of data collection that employs library as the place of getting and searching references such as books, dictionaries, encyclopedia, scientific journals, magazines, newspapers, etc. (Hadi, 1990).

Based on the definitions above, it can be stated that library research is a kind of investigation in terms of research data collections from library to be elaborated as the research findings to be analyzed in descriptively and qualitatively. A researcher who wants to elaborate theories as the findings and discussions of the research is automatically connected to library research.

In this research, the researcher collected data from different references and explored them to discuss the relationship between language and intelligence or thinking ability of human beings. The analysis of the study was started by describing the definition of language, mind, thinking and thought. The data were then analyzed and concluded to be a theory of language.

FINDINGS

In this part, the researcher would like to display the data which have been collected in the library investigation activities through library research approach and analyzed qualitatively, then elaborated qualitatively. Based on the data collected in the process of library investigation stage, it was identified and found that there are some elements dealing with language and mind in order to be judge the ability of someone's language performance is the reflection of his/her thinking. In other words, there is a very close relationship between language and thought or the process of thinking in human's communication, both formally and informally.

Therefore, the researcher would like to display them in this part of the paper. They are concepts of language; concepts of mind, thought, and thinking; language mind, thought; the relationship among language, mind, and thought; language and the process of thinking; and language, culture and arts in social group. The following descriptions are the concepts of the terms above found from authoritative references

Language is a system of communication consisting of small parts and a set of rules which decides the ways in which this part can be combined to produce messages that have meaning (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1995). Mind is defined as the part of a person that makes it possible for him or her to think, feel, emotions, and understand things. When viewed as a noun, thought is defined as something that a person think. But, if it is viewed as a verb (preterite and past participle—irregular verb). It is defined as the act of thinking about or considering something, an idea or opinion, or a set of ideas about a particular subject. Thinking is defined as the activity of using your mind to consider something (Online Cambridge English Dictionary).

Based on this definition, it can be stated that mind is the place of thinking performed by a person. Mind is a vehicle to perform thought. Thought is the product of the activity of thinking. Thinking is the activity of recalling knowledge, information, ideas, emotions, etc by using mind. In other words, A person performs an activity of thinking by using mind as an organ of human being in order to produce ideas called thoughts.

When we connect the terms mind, thought, and thinking to the term language, we can find that there is a very close relationship among them. A person who wants to speak by using a particular language, he/she has to think by using mind. The quality of thoughts or ideas produced by him/her is determined by the quality of words, phrases, sentences, or expressions produced or spoken. The more brilliant or intelligent a person think through his/her mind, the more qualified the words, phrases, sentences, or expressions he/she produces in a language. In other words, brilliant mind reflects brilliant thoughts or ideas produced through words and sentences in a particular language.

Another thing to be paid more attention is about the grammatical sentences used to produce thoughts or ideas. Someone who is speaking or writing ideas by using grammatical and systematic sentences and phrases in a particular language is usually identified as a brilliant and an intelligent person. It is caused by the process of thinking performed by him/her. In other words, the ability of humans to express language correctly, accurately, systematically, grammatically refers the ability of humans themselves to think well and brightly.

Based on the research results, it was found that someone's language performance is also identified as the ability, quality, and activity of thinking. Someone can be known, recognized, and respected by other people through his/her intelligence and way of thinking. It is caused by the function and urgency of language in human's everyday life. In the process of thinking someone requires language/languages to identify, characterize, communicate, and explain what he/she is thinking. It means that someone's ability of performing or communicating ideas in a language reflects his/her quality of thinking and intelligence. The better someone in thinking and producing ideas the higher quality of communication in language he/she performs. The degree of someone's intelligence and way of thinking can be measured through the quality of his/her communication in language. The fluency and accuracy of someone's language production is the reflection of his/her ability of mind and thoughts.

DISCUSSION

The Concepts of Language

Talking about language is automatically talking about speech, sound, voice, thoughts, and feeling. These terms are always mentioned in every moment of discussion on linguistics. If we generate the process of interrelation, distinction, and categorization, we can find that they have very close relationship. They cannot be separated each other. The relationship can be seen in the definition of language as stated in the Advanced Oxford Learner's Dictionary as follow It is stated that language is the system of sounds, words, patterns, etc used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings. Language is words, etc used by a particular group of people (Hornby, 1989: 699 – 700).

The above definition implies language is formed by a set of speech sounds but they exist in the limited areas. The sound system of any language is performed in a small portion of all the speech sounds produced by human beings. It can be also stated that language is performed by only human beings in the form of speech sounds represented by some symbols of sounds. Based in the manner of articulation, the symbols of sounds can be produced in form of voiced sounds and voiceless sounds.

In this case, Aristotle states that speech is a kind of voice which are articulated by human beings (not animals). Speech and voice are differed by the articulation process, in this case manner of articulation as stated above (Qiu, 2014: 194). Based on this definition, it can be stated that speech is the part of language, sound is the form or implementation of language, and voice exist the the process of articulation of language performance.

Concepts of Mind, Thought, And Thinking

In this study, the writer does not relate the term *mind* to the other concept like the synonym of *object to*. He just stresses his study by relating the term to the nature of *human intelligence* or *intellectual*

ability. *Mind* is the ability to be aware of things and to think and feel. *Mind* indicates the ability to reason, intellectual powers, ability to remember, memory. *Mind* also means a person's thoughts and attention (Hornby, 1989: 786). Someone who has a *normal mind* means he gets something (especially ideas) by himself. He does not get all things from the others, but he can assist himself without any help of anybody. He will produce a thousand conceits without hearing from others, inventing and saying such things as he never heard from his masters, nor any mouth. The term *normal human mind* is the same as *normal human intelligence*, that is, capable of acquiring knowledge through its own internal resources, perhaps making use of the data of sense but going on to construct a cognitive system in terms of concepts and principles that are developed on dependent grounds; and it is capable of generating or producing new thoughts (Chomsky, 1972: 9).

The term *think* means using the mind in an active way to form connected ideas (Hornby, 1989: 1333). When we are *thinking*, we must use our *ability* of intelligence, intellectual apparatus or brain as the vehicle to perceive or to know something or someone.

Thought means (act, power or process of) thinking. *Thought* is the way of thinking that is characteristic of a particular period, class, nation, etc. *Thought* is also can be defined as an idea or opinion produced by thinking (Hornby, 1989: 1335). This definition states that *thought* is the output of *thinking*. When we are thinking, we will get a result from our process of thinking, and that is what we call *thought*.

After discussing the terms *mind*, *think*, and *thought*, the writer can conclude that these three terms have a clear relationship. It can be said that when we are *thinking*, we must use our mind (the ability to *think*, to feel or to remember something). After we *think* using our *mind*, we will produce a *thought*.

The Relationship among Language, Mind, and Thought

As being discussed above that language is a reflection of thinking. One's ability of thinking cannot be measured by the others. But if he is speaking to someone, his ability can be understood because of the language used, and the language itself is built up by many words mastered (vocabulary) and how words are formed and constructed (grammar). The more one masters the language components the more he is able to apply the language skills in his daily communication, and the better he thinks about many things.

The explanation above tells us that there is a relationship between language, mind and thought. There is a cause and effect between vocabulary and mental ability. The quantity and quality of one's vocabulary can determine the quality of one's mental ability. The mastery on vocabulary can reflect one's high mental ability, and the mental ability is reflected by the language he is using to communicate with others.

In discussing something, someone presenting his materials is recognized and considered as a good presenter if the quality of his presentation is high. And the quality of his presentation is determined by the rhetoric of language used. A good rhetoric of the presenter reflects his good thought in the process of thinking.

Someone can be categorized as a good writer if his rhetoric of using language in writing is very good. And the writer's good rhetoric in writing indicates that he has a good process of thinking. Therefore, it can be judged that he has a high level of intelligence.

Language and the Process of Thinking

Everyone who is thinking must have object/objects to think. The object must have a name or names as well as its characteristics. When the person who is thinking tries to recognize and characterize the object/objects being thought, he/she needs language as the medium of thinking. The more a person thinks the more language he/she employs as the medium of thinking. In other words, someone cannot think well without having enough words and elements of language.

The results of thinking performed by someone can be seen and observed through his/her language production (speaking and writing) and the action he/she performed. Besides speaking and writing as the indicators of someone's process of thinking, listening and reading indicate his/her process and results of thinking. When listening to other people speaking or reading a book, especially scientific book, there is a process of thinking in someone's mind. Without thinking, he/she cannot comprehend what is being spoken or what has been written. The process of comprehending and responding needs language to internalize the ideas being processed in the mind.

If someone has limited ability in language (components) such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence patterns, he/she finds it difficult comprehend the ideas spoken or written by other people. In addition, those language components have to be practiced simultaneously and continuously in the forms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as the language skills as well. Someone's mastery on the language components are still in mind, not in performance. In order to perform the language components in the real communication, he/she needs an intensive and continuous practice. Without practicing, those language components cannot function as well as possible. They keep on being knowledge that cannot be called a language because language is a system of communication.

The lack of communication practice can cause low intelligence and process of thinking because communication requires deep thinking to correlate ideas and the symbol system of communication. So, it must be performed in the active communication whether oral or written communication.

In addition, it is also different from communicating accurately and inaccurately. Accuracy here means grammaticality (accurate words, sentence patterns, and pronunciation) as well as good structure of ideas. In short, it can be stated that someone's fluent speaking in accurate grammar is the indicator that he/she is good in thinking and he has high intelligence. Speaking fluently and grammatically without thinking about the language is the reflection of high intelligence. Systematic thinking of ideas in the process of speaking or writing reflects someone's good thinking as well. In other words, when we see and hear someone is speaking or writing grammatically, it indicates that he/she is good at thinking that is identified as high intelligence.

Besides accuracy and systematic thinking in the process of speaking or writing, someone's ability to talk about abstract things in good language usage can reflect his/her high intelligence. People usually speak fluently because they deal with concrete things as the object of communication. If they speak abstractly, they cannot do it fluently. It shows that they do not have high intelligence.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there is a very close relationship between language and the process of thinking. Language as the medium of communication covers concrete and abstract things in the world. If we want to be good at thinking we have to be good at language. Therefore, mastering language as the medium of communication can help someone to think well, logically, systematically, critically, and creatively. It can improve our level of intelligence as well.

Language, Culture and Arts in Social Group

There are some different terms but they have a close and clear relationship, namely *language*, *culture*, *arts* and *Social Group*. Briefly, we can say that language and arts are the outputs of culture, or they are parts of culture. They are produced by human beings who live in the social group. Language, culture, arts exist because of the existence of social group where human beings are. The social group is willingness of human beings who have the same needs, wants, visions, missions, and aspirations to work together in a permanent group or organization, called *society*, *states*, etc.

Sapir said "*the content of every culture is expressible in its language and there are no linguistic materials whether as to content or form which is not left to symbolize actual meanings, whatever may be the attitude of those who belong to other cultures. New culture experiences frequently make it necessary to enlarge the resources of a language, but such enlargement is never an arbitrary addition to the materials and forms already present; it is merely a further application of principles already in*

use and in many cases little more than a metaphorical extension of old terms and meanings” (Sapir in Mandelbaum, 1949: 10). From Sapir’s statement we can have a conclusion that words and vocabularies of a language are derived from the culture of a society as their experience in exploring, discovering, and enquiring something useful for their daily life.

A social group (society) must have cultures in the forms habits, tradition, language, arts, etc. The cultures are related to the intelligence and creativity of the society. Some other linguists said that culture and language are two different things, but they are closely related.

Rhetoric of language contains culture of a society, or the cultural contents of a society are reflected in the language of the society. Sapir said that *“Language is a perfect symbolism of experience, that in the actual content of behavior, it cannot be divorced from action and that it is the carrier of a nuanced expressiveness are universally valid psychological facts”* (Sapir in Blount in Wahab, 1998: 37). Psychologically, language is social and universal facts that cannot be separated from culture and behavior of a society.

Language is a reflection of culture, intelligence, and creativity of a society. Something produced or created by a society has to be expressed in a language to be communicated in that society or, if possible, in other societies. The creativity of a society to produce or create many things is reflected in the varieties of vocabulary of language owned by the society. On the other hands, if there are only a few words or vocabulary owned by a society or a tribe as the symbols of what they produce, they are categorized as *ignorant people* and *savage tribes* ((Bloomfield in Blount in Wahab, 1998: 38). Therefore, we can say that the more productive and creative the members of a society are, the more they produce and create things, the more words and vocabularies they have in their language.

However, one more thing that should be remembered that something which cannot be produced and created by a society does not always indicate that they are not creative, productive and intelligent, but it is often caused by the geographical condition of the place where the society live. For example, the *sago trees* can only grow in certain place, and the people or society in that place can make the trees useful such as *dokko (Bajonese) means floor of house, popeda, sagu, sagu tumbu*, etc. Because the trees do not grow in certain places, so the people or society in that place cannot make the trees useful like what are made by another one.

CONCLUSION

In the process of communication, language is usually connected to mind, thinking, and thought. They are usually discussed together because they are closely interrelated. The interrelationship meant in this context is in terms of intelligence. A person who is able to use language accurately, systematically, fluently, and grammatically is assumed to have high level of tinkering. In other words, the accurate, systematic, and grammatical sentences and expressions in a language performed by someone is identified and assumed to reflect his/her level of intelligence and thinking ability. The quality of thoughts or ideas produced through the activity of thinking using mind and expressed through language is the reflection of the quality of intelligence owned by someone.

In addition, the intelligence is also connected to creativity. So, it can be assumed that the high quality of intelligence can be measured through the creativity to produce language elements and components, especially vocabularies of a particular language. In relation to social group, the creativity of people in a particular social group to produce cultures reflects their quality of mind and process of thinking. Because language and culture cannot be divorced one another, the product of cultures represented by their language are related to creativity and intelligence. The more creative the people are, the more cultures they produce and create, and the more words or vocabularies they have in their language. So, it can be said that language is the reflection of thinking.

However, every language has its own characteristics and nature which may be different from those ones of any other language in the world. It indicates that the creativity of people in a social group in creating cultures and producing language is mostly relative and limited by the geographical condition where they live. We can say that people in a social group are creative reflected by a great number of words in their language, but it does not mean that they are the most creative.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Buchman, C.D. (1963). *A Programmed Introduction to Linguistics: Phonetics and Phonemics*. Massachusetts: DC Health & Company.
- Chaer, A. (2003). *Linguistik Umum*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Chomsky, N. (1972). *Language and Mind*. Enlarged. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Crystal, D. (1985). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. (Second Edition, Updated and Enlarged). Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Crystal, David. (1985). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hornby, A.S. (1989). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. (1973). *Language and its Structure: Some Fundamental Linguistic Concepts*. (Second Edition). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Lenneberg, E. (1964). *Biological Perspective of Language*. New Directions in the Study of Language.
- Mandelbaum, David G. (1949). *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture, and Personality*. California: University of California Press.
- Qiu, Wen. (2014). Aristotle's Definition of Language. *Academicresearch Journal: International Journal of Literature and Culture* (Vol. 2(8), pp.194-202.
- Steinberg, Danny D. et.al. (1998). *An Introduction to Psycholinguistics*. (Sixth Impression). London: Longman.
- Steinberg, Danny D. et.al. (2001). *Psycholinguistics: Language, Mind and World*. (Second Edition). London: Longman.
- Sugiyono. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Hadi. (1990). *Metodologi Reseach*. Yogyakarta: Fakultas Psikologi UGM.
- Verhaar, J.W.M. (1978). *Pengantar Linguistik I*. Yohyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1973). *Thought and Language*. Massachusetts: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Wahab, Abdul. (1998). *Butir-butir Linguistik*. Surabaya: Airlangga University Press.
- Zeid. (2004). *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor.