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PERUBAHAN BAHASA DALAM PERSPEKTIF PRE NEOGRAMMARIAN DAN NEOGRAMMARIAN DAN PENGAJARAN BAHASA DALAM KONTEKS EFL

PRE-NEOGRAMMARIAN AND NEOGRAMMARIANS' LANGUAGE CHANGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY IN EFL CONTEXTS

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Abstrak

Artikel ini menjelaskan dua perspektif yang berbeda dalam menanggapi perubahan dalam bahasa, dan memadukan dua perspektif tersebut dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang dilakukan dalam konteks bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL context). Pra-Neogrammarian dan Neo-grammarians yang masing masing menjelaskan bahwa perubahan pada bahasa dapat mengarah ke perusakan atau peningkatan eksistensi bahasa akan diuraikan dalam artikel ini. Selain itu artikel ini menjelaskan bahwa teori berasal dari kedua perspektif dapat diterapkan untuk menganalisa bahasa apapun. Jika terjadi kontak budaya antara dua bahasa, bahasa yang dominan akan cenderung menekan bahasa non-dominan. Oleh karena itu, selain fokus pada perubahan yang terjadi dalam bahasa Inggris dan efek perubahan dalam bahasa Inggris, artikel ini juga menjelaskan bahwa bahasa bahasa local juga mengalami perubahan sebagai akibat dari interaksi penggunanya dengan bahasa Inggris. Kemudian, artikel ini juga menawarkan tindakan yang harus dilakukan oleh guru dalam menyikapi berbagai akibat dari perubahan bahasa tersebut dan menguraikan dilemma yang dirasakan oleh guru atas pergesekan dua bahasa tersebut.

Kata kunci: EFL konteks, variasi bahasa Inggris, Neogrmmrianns, Pre Neogramarian, perubahan bahasa, pengajaran bahasa.

Abstracts

This article describes different perspectives in response to language change, and aligns the perspectives of language change to English language pedagogy in non-English speaking contexts. The Pre-Neogrammarian and Neo-grammarian linguists that believe the change leads to respectively language decay or language existence will be outlined. This article suggests that the theories derived from both perspectives can be applied to any language. Once there is cultural contact between languages, the dominant language tends to suppress the non-dominant language. Hence, besides focusing on changes that happen in English and the effect of the changes into this language, this article also considers that other language—in this case EFL teachers'

"local language"—experiences an adverse change as the result of the speakers' interaction with English. Then, this article also describes how the changes might lead to EFL teachers' adaptation in their practice and cause teachers' dilemmas.

I. Introduction

Languages undergo continuous change for its existence. No one can halt the alteration in language since language is an element of culture that always changes (Carter, 1997). Some perceive that the changing which includes disfiguration and mutilation affects adversely on languages, while some other argue that such kind of changing leads to language's efficiency. The author of this article agrees that such phenomenon is inevitable and reflecting the fact that language is as dynamical as its users. Before presenting the two different perspectives, this article suggests that such changing—particularly in English—must also influence teaching practice in EFL (English as Foreign Language) context. This idea will be described in section entitled 'non-english speaking teachers as non-dominant group'.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Perspectives on language change

Two different views outlined as responses to this issue are pre-Neogrammarian and Neo-grammarian linguists. Pre-Neogrammarian historical linguists viewed that languages were an organism which born, getting old, and dies (McMahon, 1994). In this view, changing on language was associated with the decay of languages. As the phases preceding its death are complex, the change is seen as a mechanism that affects to loss of "linguistic vitality" (Jones & Singh, 2005). Additionally, Dressier (1988, p.313), claimed that there are "inherent principles of language change" that cause the way that languages decay, especially when there is contact with the language of dominant ethnic group(s). In this perspective the less dominant language become worse and even dead because of threats from other language which is more dominant and powerful. From this stance, in terms of EFL pedagogy, this could lead tensions to non-dominant language speaking teachers when they have to teach and promote the use of the more dominant language.

On the other hand, Neogrammarian linguists argued that the changing in languages might also have a good impact on languages' existence. In this perspective, languages were not totally decaying but simply evolving themselves to adapt their changing environment (McMahon, 1997). Therefore, changing is the way for languages to survive themselves. Similarly, Aitchison (2001) believed that language transfers itself over centuries. What people wrote several hundred years ago sounds strange to us. For example, the history book which was written in very simple way so that people in the mid of fourteen century understood well is barely understood in this century.

For Neo-grammarians, languages develop along with modifications, disruption and therapy. Aitchisson (2001) believed that alteration in languages can be seen as both therapy and disruption. These two opposing pulls are an essential feature of language. However, Aitchisson argued that when a certain language seems to be not intelligible for their speakers, the standardization is required.

As mentioned earlier, despite the debate on whether languages decay or progress, this article synthesize the two perspective. I agree to a certain extent that particular language are progressing while some other languages decay and become worse though time or even dead. The former might be illustrated by the dominant languages that are mostly considered as lingua franca such as English—in spite of mutilation done by its users. Meanwhile, the latter is based on the fact that local languages in many different parts of the word have been extinct and lost.

To figure out how languages are progressing or becoming worse, we need to consider cultural interaction—in which dominant languages make a contact with the less dominant ones—as the important factor causing either languages progress or decay. Such cultural interaction leads to the changing on languages and causes pressures on local languages, the emergence of pidgin and creoles, and the widening gap between standard and non-standard varieties.

B. Cultural interaction resulting in pressures on local languages

Cultural interaction between ethnic groups can cause the decay and loss in non-dominant ethnic's languages. Since different groups have different power, the less dominant group encountered more pressures from the dominant one (Swurn, 1986). Furthermore, as the cultural contact inevitably affects the changing habit of the users, the vocabularies related to the tradition of less-dominant group are removed from daily lives of the speakers. Therefore, many vocabularies were lost since they were no

longer associated with things / activities which used to exist in the past. For example, several indigenous African languages are also endangered by the dominance of European language (Adegbija, 1994). The local languages are considered unworthy for use in official circumstance and lacking the capacity for expressing ideas in this particular field. The dissemination of information in these geographical areas—especially in the print media—is also widely dominated by European language. As a consequence, the indigenous languages cannot be 'the master' in their own countries

In addition, the domination of particular culture over the other that leads the extinction of local languages in many parts of the world can be the proof of the premise that the languages could become worse and loss. This can be illustrated by the fact that colonization in terms of cultural domination of powerful countries has worsened the local language and even made the actual loss in local languages of third world countries (Adegbija, 1994, Swurn, 1986). Here, we need to focus on the processes or stages preceding their death instead of discussing why they dead. The loss of local languages must be initiated by the decay of the languages. This means, before being extinct these languages encountered any structural decay (McMahon, 1997). Structural decay in language that happened in South Western pacific area, for example, was preceded by grammatical decay and loss of vocabularies of the local languages (Swurn, 1986). Swurn (1986) stated that if the decay of the non-dominant languages continues, it may lead to the disappearance with the non-dominant language are taken over by the dominant one(s).

Hence, the perception that views languages were evolving themselves rather than decaying appear to me ignores the decay of local languages in many parts of the world. The situation encountered by local languages is different to what happen languages of dominant groups like English. The mutilation and disfiguration in English for example might be the process of language's progress since this language become more efficient for its users. On the other hand, local languages become worse and decay for being mutilated and disfigured as these might lead to their death.

C. Englishes and the emergence of pidgin/creole

The cultural contact between two ethnic groups might cause not only decaying the non-dominant language but also worsening the dominant language. Pennycook's term of *Englishes* (2003) reflects different varieties of English since the language spreads in many different places. It is the case that dominant language—like English—might experience distortion in terms of pidgin and creole. Pidgin is a simplified language

which is created for limited purpose such as trade and commerce. Pidgin occurs after speakers of English or other dominant languages have come into contact with speakers of languages which have different in structure (Todd, 1990) and develops into different direction in different areas. Pidgin can also be seen as a threat to the dominant language (Adegbija, 2003). A variety of Nigerian Pidgin English is referred to as "Broken English", or "Rotten English". Meanwhile, Pidgin such as English-based-pidgin of Tok Pisin—which is an English-based-pidgin spoken in Papua—has been accepted as a national languages (Adegbija, 2003). Pidgin might turn into Creoles. When Pidgin changes to become Creoles or "full-fledged language" for use in all communication contexts, this possibly becomes a new language (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1998). However, as there is a strong motivation to learn the super-strata language (or to which language it is based on), people tend to introduce language features of the Standard one into their speech.

D. Widening gap between Standard and Non-Standard varieties.

Languages have varieties, and certain varieties have emerged as standard languages (Cheshire *et. al*, 1989). Once whole population has accepted one particular variety as standard, it becomes a strong unifying force and often a source of national pride (Aitchison, 2001). Regardless to the debate on the process of the standardization which includes power, dominance, political force, or devaluing other dialect, standard variety is considered as an intelligible dialect and a grammatically correct. Then, when its users start to use the language variety with ignorance (influenced by other dialects), some concern that the language is getting worse.

As a response to the use of English, an English columnist in British newspapers in 1960s argued that there was significant degradation in English (Aitchison, 2001). Ogden Nash in his poem of 'Laments for a dying language' (1962 as cited in Aitchison, 2001) concluded that English was spoken so bad that it was analogized with orangutan's language. In 1980s, many columnists regretted the use of English in among native speakers. They found that Grammar English is "becoming simpler and coarser", declined, "slop English for the mauling and misusages" (p. 76).

In addition, the discrepancy between standard and non-Standard English has also made language teaching practitioners concern about how to teach British students the Standard English (Carter, 1997). Language teachers in Britain found that students' writing style has disrupted by their spoken language. So that they attempt to find what kinds of language teaching approach which foster competence in and awareness of

the uses of Standard English. More importantly, such concern does not apply to language teaching and learning in British only. The attempt (to promote Standard English) is also initiated by theorists of language pedagogy for teachers in EFL context where English as perceived as 'other people' language.

E. Non-English speaking Teachers as non-dominant group

In language pedagogy, research on EFL teachers' engagement with language change and variety of English remains absent. Despites absence, this article presents two issues that might be encountered by such teachers. The first issue is a preliminary argument that requires further research. The other is empirical evidences taken from my previous studies.

First, EFL teachers' awareness over the English varieties is more required in today's classrooms. Such varieties of English must be acknowledged by the teachers since students today might be more critical than students in the past. The massive development in information technology has made today's EFL students be more critical to almost whatever their teachers tell them. Students who have more opportunity to access to the internet and learn English through the internet might recognize such difference (different pronunciation or spellings between British English and American English) and ask their teachers for confirmation. Also, they might ask their teachers regarding the new terms/colloquial that they found in certain discussion forum in which laypeople interact to each other. Those laypeople often use mutilated but considerably intelligible English. In this way, it is necessary for teachers to always update their knowledge otherwise they teach such English expressions that were less appropriate to be spoken in particular situation: for example formal English as opposed to informal English expressions/colloquial in informal situation or otherwise.

Another problem is informal English colloquial between varieties such as British, American, or Australian English has different in meaning and therefore required teachers' exploration. Today's EFL teachers need to know regarding what variety of English they are actually teaching to their students. When teachers have decision to make regarding what variety to teach, it is necessary for them explain about what rationale behind the decision. At least teachers understand the

characteristics of such variety so that they can explain to their students about the difference between the varieties.

Secondly, the domination of English language over the other will also impact on dilemmas for non-English speaking teachers. My previous study (Qoyyimah, 2015) indicates that teachers working in Indonesia had tensions in their professional identity. In one hand, their professional identity requires them to teach and promote the use of English in classes (as triggered by communicative language approach), on the other hand they felt regret that the local language (in this case Javanese language) was threatened by the massive domination of English. According to my teacher participants, the influence of English on Javanese language was so evident that they felt unease when teaching English as a subject. In this case, a teacher suggested that EFL is a much less important subject to learn, as reflected in the interview excerpt below:

> *Researcher: You just said that English is less important as a subject to teach, can you tell me more about this?*
>
> *Teacher: For me, students would be better off learning Arabic or local languages*
>
> *Researcher: What do you think about English?*
>
> *Teacher: English is not really important to teach, it is such penjajahan (colonialism) to our nation. Students are really proud if they could speak English, but MasyaAlloh (oh my God!) it is embarrassing if they could not even understand Javanese.*

In above excerpt Edi explained how he would prefer students learning Javanese language rather than learning English as a subject. There is also indication that he found conflict when he had to teach English. Interestingly, my study found that such conflict impacted adversely on teachers' practice. Teachers in the study who had such conflict and could not overcome their tensions were identified as less professional ones (Qoyyimah, 2015).

In addition to the dilemmas, the introduction of communicative language teaching in many contexts, for example, has left teachers' difficulties in classroom practice (Qoyyimah, 2009). Therefore, despite difficulties, EFL teachers were required to negotiate with the methods or approach developed by the Western literature rather than developed their own (Razmooj & Riazi, 2006; Manggubhai, Dashwood & Howard, 2006, Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Teachers should have made

their own teaching methods and should not have relied on the methods developed by the English native speaking scholars. Hence, beside positioned as less dominant group in terms of language, EFL teachers in EFL contexts also regarded as being dominated in terms of language pedagogical approach.

III. Conclusion

Languages change overtime and different perspective has different opinion toward the changing of languages. Some believe that the changing brings to the decay of the languages while others perceive that changing is a natural phenomenon that makes languages become more intelligible. What Aitchison argued that language is shaped through therapy and disruption is appear to me to be true.

Language decay or progressing depends on the position of the language in society. When we take other local languages into account, I come to the conclusion that languages, more particularly the non-dominant ones, might get worse through time and end up with its decay and lost. Hence, the language of non-dominant groups decay overtime as they are oppressed by the dominant one.

In terms of language pedagogy, the overtime changing in language, including English, leave language teachers' adaptation in classes. They are required to be more aware of varieties in the language they are teaching. This includes the formal and informal English, standard English, by accessing to the forum in the internet to learn about how the language is used formally or by its lay-users.

In addition, non-English speaking teachers might feel dilemmas since they are encountered in two different positions: they promote other people language while realizing that the local language might not be able to be the master in their context. Besides, non-English speaking teachers in EFL contexts tend to become the consumers of the language teaching approach developed in the English native speaking context rather than creating their own methods.

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