SOCIOLINGUISTICS:
A Language Study in Sociocultural Perspectives

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Sociolinguistics: A Language Study in Sociocultural Perspectives

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Alhamdulillah, we have accomplished this book entitled “Sociolinguistics: A Language Study in Sociocultural Perspectives”. It took a long time to accomplish this book. The writing process of the book has been started since February 2017. We are indebted to the Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat University, for providing necessary facilities in accomplishing it.

This book is a total revision of “Sociolinguistics: An Introduction”. It was originally our teaching material of “Sociolinguistics Course” in English Department of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat. The teaching material consisted of ten chapters. The whole contents of the chapters are adopted and adapted in –and to be- almost all parts of this book. Some other parts are adopted and adapted from the manuscripts by the other writers for completing this book into 14 parts.

Having accomplishing this book, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Dr. Chairil Paif Pasani, Dean of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lambung Mangkurat University for providing us the chances to use the office facilities and Prof. Dr. Wahyu, M.S, our senior lecturer of for motivating us write a book. Also, we are thankful to all lecturers of English Education Study Program for their help and support.

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Banjarmasin, 2019
The Writers
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Culture is the word for the collective general ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society. These influence how those people within the society act and form decisions.  

4.1 Introduction

A language is a part of culture; it in some cases, a culture is manifested in a language. The relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted. Language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Communication is meant to present and to get meaning. That is why we must avoid misunderstanding among speakers and listeners. Their understanding of something is prone to interpretation. The meaning is closely related to in cultural context, even it is bound in the cultural context itself. We do not only depend on the meaning of the language we use, but also on its cultural context where and when it is used. Often meanings are lost because of cultural do not allow such ideas to persist.

4.2. Language and Culture

4.2.1 Language in Cultural Perspective

Language is a specific thing to human beings. An ability to speak a language is culturally transmitted by the older generation of human beings. This is of course different from animals’ ability to use their means of communication. This is

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21 https://literature-affects-culture.weebly.com/historical-literature.html
22 https://www.tefl.net/elt/articles/teacher-technique/language-culture/
because animals’ means of communication (e.g. animal’s ‘language’) is genetically transmitted by their older generation.

By using a language, human beings can communicate many things in their environment. The use of language is not only limited to their biological needs, but also their other needs such as needs of safety, social belonging, esteem, self-actualization, and self-transcendence.

As have been known, animals also have ability to communicate by using noises (sounds produced by the mouth) or by using other means, but they can only cover their biological needs. A certain animal has some ways to give a warning to the other members of the same species of danger, or inform availability of food, or threaten others for protecting their territory. The most essential feature to differentiate human language from the means or modes of animal communication is in the productivity and creativity of language. Productivity refers to the limitless ability to use language, to say new things. Creativity refers to the aspect of language that enables a user to use the language in new ways or enables him to create new linguistic forms.

4.2.2 Culture

According to Kluckhohn (1951) suggesting that “Culture is constructed in the patterned ways to think, feel and react; it is mainly acquired and transmitted through symbols; it constitutes the distinctive achievements of groups of people; and it includes their embodiments in artifacts; and also its essential core consists of traditional ideas and their cultural values.”

Human cultures are classified into three parts. These are Perspectives, Practices, and Products.23

Firstly, cultural perspectives refer to the beliefs, ideas, meanings, values, and attitudes control and influence the society’s

23 carla.umn.edu/cobaltt/modules/.../Practices_Products_Perspectives_Examples.pdf
cultural practices and products. They represent the world cultural view. They also refer to what are thought, felt, and valued by the members of a given culture.

Secondly, cultural practices refer to patterns of social interactions, behaviors. Cultural practices will involve the uses of cultural products. The cultural practices will represent the knowledge of “what is done, when it is done, and where it is done” and how people conduct an interaction within a given culture.

Thirdly, cultural products refer to the human’s creations of a certain culture. They reflect the cultural perspectives. There are two types of cultural products: (1) tangible cultural products covering: literature, painting, cathedral, and a pair of chopsticks; whereas (2) intangible cultural products include: dance, oral tale, sacred ceremony, educational system, and law. These are the things that are created, shared, and then transmitted to the next generation. 24

Furthermore, culture may be classified into two types: (1) formal culture, and (2) deep culture. Formal culture covers humans’ manifestation and contribution, namely: arts, music, literary work, architecture, technology, and politics. Deep culture refers to humans’ behavioral patterns or living styles. It covers eating time and food, humans’ attitudes and behaviors towards friends, colleagues, and family members, ways to communicate (e.g. to accept or to ignore the others’ ideas). Similar to products in the model of 3P, the formal cultural components are easily observed through cultures. However, as the label suggests, components/elements of deep culture are frequently hard to identify, because they tend to be value-based and deeply rooted in the psyches of individuals who make up a specific culture. 25

Duranti states that culture is said to be something learned in a human community, then transmitted, and inherited
by one to the next generation, via human activities, frequently in the direct interaction, and all of those are conducted using a language as a means of communication (Duranti, 1997:24). This view on culture is meant to clarify why any new-born child, without regarding his genetic origin will grow up based on the cultural patterns belonging to the people around him. A child, who is separated from his parents or family and then brought up in a different society from that of his old generation, will be a member of the culture belonging to his adoptive family. Largely through socialization using a language, he will acquire the culture (and of course, language) used by the people he lives together with (Duranti, 1997).

4.2.3 Relationship between language and culture

Language boundaries which and culture are two sides of the same coin. This means that both language and culture cannot be separated from one and another. Language is used by its users to convey and -at the same time- to accommodate all the aspects of culture; whereas (one of the elements of) culture is a system of symbols known as a language. This is also in the sense that culture includes rules, norms, thoughts, attitudes, manners, etc. based on which people communicate and interact.

Furthermore, there are some relationships of language and culture. One of these relationships is that social structure (aspect of culture) may both influence and determine linguistic structure (aspect of language). This can be elaborated more based on the age-grading phenomenon. For instance, young children many speak in different ways from older children, and also children in general speak in different ways from adult persons.

Based on the various definitions on culture as stated above, it can be concluded that culture has been present in the forms of perspectives, practices, and products (e.g. ideas, activities, and artefacts). It covers knowledge, belief, arts,
morality, laws, customs, habits, language, technology, and the other competence-performance acquired or learned by human beings as members of a given society, inherited from one to the next generation through human actions or activities and interpersonal communication by using a language as a medium.

4.3 Summary on Language and Culture

The relationship between Language and Culture can be summarized as follows: (1) Language is part of culture. Language is both a component of culture and a central network through which the other components are expressed, (2) Language reflects culture. Language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural background as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking, and (3) Cultural features vary not only synchronically from speech community to speech community, they also change diachronically within the same speech community, and this change also reflects change of language, which will cope with the change of society actively.


Nurhayati in eprints.unsri.ac.id/.../fungsi-bahasa-sebagai_pengembang_budaya_bangsa....., assessed at 05/05/2018, 11:13 PM


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Religious Language in https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/
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