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Making Use of Students' Native Language Potential Strategy to Increase Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

Alternative learning strategies, in the concept of second language acquisition (SLA), concern more on the identification of second language students' characteristic. One of the alternative learning strategies that will be discussed in this paper is about the role of native language (L1) with a demonstration of Papuan Malay language possessive pronouns and noun phrases in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (FL) in Jayapura, Papua. The discussion about the structure of Papuan Malay language possessive pronouns and noun phrases might give insight for second language (L2) teachers in Papua on making use their students' L1 as a potential strategy to help them to increase their second language acquisition.

Keywords: alternative learning strategy, second language learners, role of native language

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1. Introduction

Many people believed that first or native language (L1) is one of several obstacles for a second language (L2) student to acquire a target language and is also viewed as one of several sources of error in learning a target language (Krashen, 1981:65-7). Meanwhile, no matter how long a non-native speaker (NNS) studied a second/foreign language is believed will never be able to fully acquired the second/foreign language, and all they usually do when struggling with that issue is adopting or modifying the second/foreign language in a variety of ways such as reduced or simplified the language, avoid some difficult expressions, deliver the speech in a slower rate than normal speech and also articulate the second/foreign language more clearly (Long & Porter, 1985:213). In that, all this interference of one's L1 should then viewed not as one's low acquisition or as one's imperfect learning, but it might be helpful if it is viewed as a potential strategies that can be used to increase their second language acquisition. It is proposed that L2 teachers should be able to creatively making use of their students' L1 structure as a tool for the learners to understand a new language system. As Gass and Selinker (2001:78) claimed that errors L2 students made showed their attempt in understanding a new language system, and, therefore, L2 teacher should help their students to gain the knowledge by making a relation with the students' L1 that already establish with.

This paper focuses on showing the description of how the eastern variety of standard bahasa Indonesia can be used as a potential learning strategies in teaching English

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as a foreign language (FL) in Jayapura, Papua. The description of the structure of Papuan Malay language possessive pronouns and noun phrases will be compared with the English language as a new system and is hopefully might inspire foreign/second language teacher in viewing and making use of students' L1 as a potential learning strategies.

2. Discussion

Although students' native language is believed as one of the sources of errors, students' native language also believed plays important role in the development of L2 students' foreign or second language acquisition, especially in the context of teaching and learning. Not only that it provides an easy way to understand the content of the subject matter, it is also useful in getting L2 learners understanding on the classroom activities, as well as to make sense their valuable knowledge and experience in the past (Marzano, Gaddy & Dean, 2000). From the non-academic view point, getting involved L2 students' native language in the process of teaching and learning would allow L2 teachers to have some respect and value toward the learners' language and cultures, and at the same time build up L2 students pride toward their native language and cultures, including accept differences on other people language and cultures. The same things happen with L2 students from Jayapura, Papua, who speak Papuan Malay and live quite far away from the central of the capital of Indonesia, and have quite different way of communication to each other, including different way of perceiving the world. They also have valuable background of experience and knowledge to take with to school that teachers need to be able to make use of it in teaching new concept or many other things.

Papuan Malay refers to the easternmost varieties of Malay belong to the Malayic sub-brach within the Western-Malayo-Polinesian branch of the Austronesian language family (Kluge, 2015). The Papuan Malay varieties are spoken in the coastal areas of West Papua, the western part of the island of New Guinea, see Map of below.

Number of speakers of the Papuan Malay language is about 1,100,000 or 1,200,000 and the term Papuan Malay used here refers to the language used along the north coast of the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua (Donohue & Sawaki, 2007:254). This local language is not used in a formal government or in educational setting, as well as for religious preaching, but it is used in unofficial formal setting or sometimes in public media. Papuan Malay can be considered as kind of a different variety of Indonesian language.

Papuan Malay has two sets of pronouns; independent and bound pronouns. The independent pronouns can occur independently without any given context, typically as a single-word response to a question, objet of a preposition or a verb and as the independent subject of a verb; while the bound pronouns can only found in bound context and are used in a phrasal possessive construction, to show agreement with the subject of a clause, and as the object of preposition, or as the object of a verb for some pronominals (Donohue & Sawaki, 2007:256). The use of bound pronouns consists of two classes; they are to show possession and agreement. Both of the use of bound
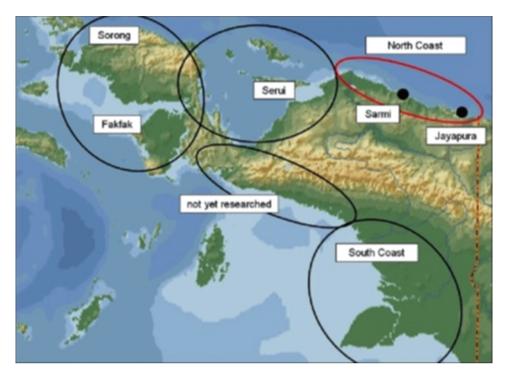
Figure 1: Papuan Malay varieties (based on Donohye and Kim et al. 2007).

	bapa 'father'			ruma 'house'	
1S	sa=pu=bapa	sa=bapa		sa=pu=ruma	sa=ruma
	'my father'			'my house'	
2S	ko=pu=bapa	ko=bapa		ko=pu=ruma	ko=ruma
	'your father'			'your house'	
3S	de=pu=bapa	de=bapa		de=pu=ruma	de=ruma
	'his/her father'			'his/her house'	
1P	tong=pu=bapa	tong=bapa		tong=pu=ruma	tong=ruma
	'our father'			'our house'	
2P	kam=pu=bapa	kam=bapa		kam=pu=ruma	kam=ruma
	'your father'			'your house'	
3P	dong=pu=bapa	dong=bapa		dong=pu=ruma	dong=ruma
	'their father'			'their house'	

TABLE 1: Pronouns in Papuan Malay used to indicate the possessor of a noun can be used with or without the use of the possessive clitic *pu=* :

in possessive and agreement function are the focus of this article and as the example how learners' native language potentially to be used as learners learning strategies in mastering a target language here are some examples taken from Donohue and Sawaki (2007).

Although there is no further research about whether the use of learners' local language in teaching foreign/second language might be more effective than the use of official or standard language in a region, it is believed that the use of a familiar pattern of a system or structure of language might helpful for the learners to understand the

Pace=tu	de=guru
man=that	3S=teacher
'The man's a teacher.'	
pace=tu	guru
man=that	Teacher
'the man's a teacher'	

TABLE 2: Pronouns in Papuan Malay used to indicate the agreement found in a nominal functioning as a predicated used with a clitic showing agreement 'tu' :

Guru	de=ada	di	ruma
teacher	3S=exist	Loc	house
'the teacher is currently in the house.'			
Guru	de=di	ruma	
teacher	3S=Loc	house	
"the teacher's in the house.'			
Guru	di	ruma	
teacher	Loc	house	
'the teacher's in the house.'			

TABLE 3

differences and from there they can use that new structure confidently since they already fully understood about the new system. The pattern of possessive pronoun in Papuan Malay clearly show the distinction on how to show to express a possession of someone or something in English, as the new language system or structure, compare to their local Papuan Malay language that they usually used in their daily speaking among each other in Jayapura, Papua.

There is also a preposition phrases that serve as predicative in Papuan Malay without a verb that eligible to receive agreement marking (Donohue & Sawaki, 2007:261).

The optional use of the verb *ada* show that there is a contradiction in terms of the normal use of prepositional phrases in bahasa Indonesia with no verb *guru di rumah* but it is accepted as grammatically correct in the concept of Papuan Malay language structure. Although the use of 'ada' in standard bahasa Indonesia may be unaccepted grammatically correct, it represents the variation of speech of the bahasa Indonesia used by the people from east of Indonesia, Jayapura, and some other places in Papua and West Papua Province. All these information about the structure of possessive pronoun in Papuan Malay can be used for L2 students in Jayapura, Papua, as a potential learning strategy in terms of helping students to understand new language system. Learning strategy, itself, is something that needs to be develop by the students themselves since it is something individual and personal.

According to Ellis, there are three types of strategies: production, communication, and language learning strategy (1994:329). She said that learners determine their own

learning strategies based on their beliefs about language learning, ability to concentrate on learning, emotional, situational factors and also specific tasks that learners are asked to perform. What it means by a language learning strategy here is an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language such as memorization, initiation of conversation with native speakers, and inference. These all support the idea of the relationship between learning strategies and L2 development, whereas learners who use learning strategies more often might be more successful compare to students who use less strategy. The selection of strategies that are appropriate in a particular learning task might be different to each of L2 students, since individual differences and students' native language quite often seen as one of the source of error. To be similar with Corder (1967), Gass and Selinker stated that errors should be seen as a creative process of language transfer, and, therefore, L1 should also be seen as an important factor that would determine the successful of one's acquisition process (2001:118). In that, how L2 students used their L1 as a potential strategy in acquiring L2 becomes crucial since it might influence the successful of the process itself.

3. Conclusion

It is important to understand that students' native language would become a potential strategy in increasing their acquisition in foreign or second language teaching and learning, whereas students become the decision makers on which forms and functions of their native language are appropriate to be used as a potential strategy in the process of language transfer. In doing so, second language teachers need to be able to encourage the second language students to know well the knowledge of both structure of the native language and the target language. This knowledge can also be used as language potential strategies in acquiring second language while at the same time it would build the students non-academic things by getting to know their native language and cultures.

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