

Metalinguistic Awareness and Individual Language Learners in Foreign Language Learning

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Abstract: Individual differences in language learning are an interesting object, as well as those found in foreign learning. Individual differences defined as diverse characteristics and personalities. Metalinguistic awareness becomes an internal factor in the process of second language acquisition and foreign language learning. It's two perspectives as declarative aspect and procedural aspect of metalinguistic awareness defining. Declarative aspect claimed that language as an object of thought but emphasize the aspects of knowledge and awareness. Procedural aspect claimed that metalinguistic awareness is the operations used in comprehension or production. Do the differences in individuals develop metalinguistic awareness in second language acquisition and foreign language learning or metalinguistic awareness help individual differences in second language acquisition and foreign language learning? Both questions or statements above become the formulation of the problem in the article to answer about the role of metalinguistic awareness and individual differences in the process of foreign language learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of delivering a product called a message delivered by the speaker and received by the listener or writer to the reader. So in language learning, there are two items to learn: to learn a system and to learn a skill. learn a system mean that we have to learn grammar, and pronunciation and learn a skill mean that we have to learn four skills in language are listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill, and writing skill. So what we have to do to learn a system and learn a skill? Began with understanding, use, and drill to learn a system and to learn a skill you just have to practice it. It's mean that language is what you understand, use and practice it.

Language behavior is a social event that increases as the human mindset in language. In Linguistic studies also known an acquisition and language learning. Both have different definitions but are related to each other. the acquisition based on natural situations and learning based on artificial and planned situations. (Syahid, 2014)

Language is an accumulative process in obtaining language that occurs on various levels. That makes it

capable of obtaining language learning goals. Among the goals of language learning is to carry out different levels of language activities. Various levels of language learning interpreted by the levels one has to go through when learning a language, both from the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. (Albantani, 2018)

Skinner and Barlow said that learning is a behavioral adaptation. Chomsky said that language behavior based on indigenous skills, not behavior adaptation. (Syahid, 2014) Debatable between both theories based on the problem that language (language ability) considered as '*tabula rasa*' in the view of behaviorism. So it takes stimulants to fill it. Whereas in the view of nativism theory that language is innate.

Syahid (Syahid, 2015) said in his research on personality models in Arabic acquisition that personality affects language acquisition and language learning too. In his research also concluded that personality models such as extroverts and introverts have implications for the acquisition of the second language. Both personalities affect increased creativity and conclude that more extrovert or more

introvert, easier to learn a language. In this paper, both personalities like extrovert and introvert mean individual differences in language learning. But before the show about language learning, Skinner and Barlow said that learning is a behavioral adaptation. Chomsky said that language behavior based on indigenous skills, not behavior adaptation. (Syahid, 2014) Debatable between both theories based on the problem that language (language ability) considered as 'tabula rasa' in the view of behaviorism. So it takes stimulants to fill it. Whereas in the view of nativism theory that language is innate.

Based on the discussion about acquisition and language learning focused on foreign language, the study of metalinguistic has attracted a lot of attention from developmental psychologists, linguists, and educators. (Pratt and Grieve, 1984) Metalinguistic can be defined at the general level as a skill or ability to think about and reflect the nature and function of language. The definitions about the term (metalinguistic awareness) feel difficult when defining more specific. It seems complicated when defining the term. While the definition of linguistic awareness based on language use in daily conversation or when writing something in the article.

The article will focus on metalinguistic awareness and individual language learner in foreign language learning. Based on the introduction above, this paper discusses "Metalinguistic Awareness and Individual Differences in Foreign Language Learning" with descriptive analysis and neuro-psycholinguistic perspective.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Metalinguistic ability is a consequence of developing children's language skills or producing language ability. Metalinguistic is often interpreted as exposure awareness in language. This means that metalinguistic has functions like how to achieve, reciprocate, create ideas, knowledge of the structure and the functions of the language and rules of language in using it. (Tunmer and Herriman, 1984)

Hahn said that vocabulary learning is an important to learn to realize second or foreign language acquisition. He said that metalinguistic awareness is the process between oral and written. the oral form (speaking) means that language learner is able to recognize the word when he speaks and be able to express the meaning of the word in his speech. And knowing the writing means that the language learner is able to recognize words when he is reading and be

able to use the word when writing properly. (Hahn, 2009)

Research conducted by Schmidt who spoke about "Attention, Awareness and Individual Differences", concluded that personality can influence language acquisition both in the first or second languages. He also said that this could happen in adulthood. As with Julie, a Native Speaker of English. Julie who immigrated at the age of 21, because of her marriage to an Egyptian. In a review conducted by IOP, Boustagui, El Tigi, and Moselle, that Julie is a unique individual who acquires her second language naturally which does not require formal instruction in mastering Arabic language skills. At that time she was only 26 years old. So only about 5 years, she learned Arabic naturally. She also has good pronunciation and excellent communicative abilities. Schmidt explained that Julie noted what she had to do to master Arabic (in this case) by looking at the needs factor. (Schmidt, 2012)

Advantages of reflective style are more accurate speaking, more accurate reading and think carefully. Advantages of impulsive are more willing to speak in class, faster reading, better in time test. Disadvantages of reflective are wait too long to speak, read more slowly and slower timed test. Disadvantages of impulsive are less accurate in speaking, less accurate in reading and act without thinking enough. (Brown, 2001)

Metalinguistic awareness regard as a single ability. The age which children very different to shows metalinguistic awareness, and depends on factors or studies such as knowledge that has been tested and how far is needed for explicit matters. Researchers tend to make claims from a study in general that focuses on one aspect, its metalinguistic awareness. In this section explain why there are variations in metalinguistic awareness of children. In fact. that metalinguistic awareness may be too general to be of much empirical use - it might be more appropriate to think of metalinguistic awareness as an area of knowledge and research that focuses on certain types of metalinguistic understanding. (Homer, 2000) It's like in Indonesia has an own language character which consists of Indonesian as a national language and regional language as the native language of each region. Indonesian language cannot be said as a mother tongue or the first language for the Indonesian people, because almost Indonesian people have a mother tongue which is their own regional language like Sunda, Java. and the others use Indonesian as their mother tongue.

Before a child can learn to use the label "word" correctly, he must be aware of the word as a unit of

language, larger than phonemes and smaller than phrases, and syntactically distinct from bound morphemes. Research into the development of the "word unit" concept suggests generally that this insight may not be easily attained. (Bowe and Tunmer, 1984)

Bohn (1914), Snyder (1914), and Weir (1962) suggests that several language acquisition studies have reported that children appear to play with language by trying out different sentence types, by repeating newly acquired words, by repeating sentence frames, substituting one word for another, and so on. Word substitution play has been observed by several researchers. (Bowe and Tunmer, 1984)

Differences in metalinguistic awareness also appear in individuals with monolingual and bilingual. Ellen (Bialystok, 1991) said that there are differences between monolingual and bilingual children in metalinguistic awareness. Bilingual children certainly have advantages compared to monolingual children. This is due to the two processes of language acquisition. (Malakoff and Hakuta, 1991)

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This study is mainly intended to develop language learning models, especially in foreign language learning with individual differences factor. And it is to develop foreign language ability for students until they can speak well and get the foreign language quickly. This paper use descriptive analysis to describe the phenomenon of metalinguistic awareness and individual language learners in foreign language learning. The major question prepared as a reference for the hypothesis thought in this study. Therefore the major question in this paper is how metalinguistic awareness and individual differences impact to foreign language learning?

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Metalinguistic Awareness on Language Learning

Metalinguistic research, especially about metalinguistic awareness for children, has attracted a lot of attention, especially from psychologists and educators. Pinter explained that foreign language learning for students at the elementary level (young language learners) has the purpose and purpose of one of them is to develop metalinguistic awareness. (Pratt

and Grieve, 1984) At the age of children, the development of metalinguistic awareness is considered slow. At this age, the ability to think about language as a system arises gradually. (Pratt and Grieve, 1984)

Metalinguistic abilities also defined as explicit awareness in language. This explicit awareness includes how to achieve, reciprocate, create ideas, knowledge of the structure and the functions of the language and rules of language in using it. In the development of metalinguistic abilities that have been debating in long ago that the linguistic intuition based on psychological processes and these processes have been involving metalinguistic abilities. Both have a difference both logically and psychologically in understanding and producing language. (Tunmer and Herriman, 1984) This meaning that metalinguistic ability is a consequence of developing children's language skills or producing language ability.

Schmitt suggests that metalinguistic awareness is the process of language learning. Is it identical to the process of acquisition or language learning? And in the theory of language acquisition, vocabulary is very important to learn. (Hahn, 2009) This paper claimed that a word comes from two forms, oral and written. Nation claimed that knowing the oral form (speaking) means that language learner is able to recognize the word when he speaks and be able to express the meaning of the word in his speech. And knowing the writing means that the language learner is able to recognize words when he is reading and be able to use the word when writing properly. (Hahn, 2009)

According to Ryan and Ledger, metalinguistic developments involve the gradual shift of attention from meaning to structure in tasks that require deliberate control over forms of language. It's mean that someone in the age of children will learn his language by acquiring the language. An important feature of the beginning of linguistic awareness seems to be the flexibility of the strategy — the ability to decide, to shift one's focus from the most prominent message attributes (meaning and contextual settings) to the structure (vehicles that are usually transparent to which meaning is conveyed). (Birdsong, 1989)

Starting from an early age, most children are part of a competent linguistic community. Even under the age of one can produce two simple words and understand more complex sentences. Although this initial competence shows an understanding of language, which is an implicit understanding. While an explicit understanding of language as language, or metalinguistic awareness, is not found in children until they grow up - usually around 6 to 8 years. (Homer, 2000)

Thomas said that the study of metalinguistic awareness and language learning have a relationship. The relationship between metalinguistic awareness and language learning is the development of multilingualism studies. He also said the study of metalinguistic awareness was related to student's choice of language learning strategies. (Thomas, 1992)

Thomas also explained that metalinguistic awareness is referred to the ability of individuals to see language with a focus as an object in itself, to reflect the language, and to evaluate it. (Thomas, 1992)

Chaney said when the children were three years old, their language development just as strong or more strongly than seven years old and it correlated with their reading scores. He claimed when the children were three years old, metalinguistic skills and awareness made significant contributions to read something outside of what made by tacit language development. (Chaney, 1998)

Research studied by Cromdal concluded that metalinguistic skills were more easily applied in weaker language subject. He said that several scholars claimed that bilingualism may enhance development linguistic awareness. Bilingualism is commonly found in tasks that require high control in processing and acquiring linguistic. This replicates the previous findings. (Cromdal, 1999)

4.2 Individual Differences in Language Learning

We know that individual differences. It's mean that language ability development differences. Because acquiring and learning language form differences till the language ability differences too. According to Gleitman et al. study, metalinguistic sophistication that children have is often surprising. 5th years old appear as little mediators in the form of language, in one case, you might want to say the word "X" but you say the word "Y" long before you get grammar training in a formal institution While evaluations are carried out on their own and in fact, the words corrected by others are considered normal or common. and we also find children who are unable to make corrections to deviant words or sentences. (Birdsong, 1989)

Individual differences in language learning means individual language learner. Individual differences or invidual language learners also show differences in learning strategies and learning styles. This will be explained below.

4.2.1 Learner Strategies

Researchers in 1970 explored the techniques of collecting data from students to enable a good profile of language learner behavior to be identified, and then may be used as a basis for training less effective students. Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) used a semi-structured interview technique to encourage highly successful students to reflect on what they gained in the previous learning process. In this case, there are five general strategies that they identify: (1) active duty approach; (2) knowing the language kind of system; (3) knowing the language is using for communicating each other; (4) ability to deal with an affective problem in language learning; and (5) ability to see self-progress.

the researchers (eg, Rubin, 1981) propose a related strategies list of learning, in Rubin's case the emphasis is on the learning process, including deduction, practice, concluding, and so on. Rubin (1981) said that there are differences in language between direct and non-compliant strategies. As for one example of the wake-up strategy like concluding. and most importantly in terms of preparing students to be able to develop learning experiences in a more effective direction later such as doing field experience.

During the 1980s, strategies continued to be worked out but changed character. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) made a questionnaire designed to assess how many students used a particular strategy this was based on previous research strategies. Strategies carried out by students such as those carried out in the classroom, independent learning and the interaction process carried out in the learning process. In this case, they found very little relation between questionnaire-based learning and the results of subsequent language learning. This "incompatibility" basically requires an assessment from another group of students. this can indicate that describing the results of previous strategy research with questionnaires is not an easy matter. O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzares, Kupper, and Russo (1985a), used a less structured data collection technique in conducting interviews with a group of students in ESL secondary schools which were considered the most effective techniques. the results they get from their studies are many strategies than they expected. O'Malley et al. (1985a) said the strategies obtained from the results of their studies into three main categories namely metacognitive, cognitive, and social. O'Malley et al. find that common strategy is a strategy that only requires shallow material processing, such as recurrence; while the strategies of inference and elaboration

which are considered by them to be more demanding, are rarely used. O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzares, Kupper, and Russo (1985b) also observe skills training strategies and make reports on the benefits of short-term training.

4.2.2 Styles of Learner

Rebecca L. Oxford said that learning style or learner style is an all about pattern that develop and create broad direction to learning. Learning style make the same instructional method which one beloved by some students and hated by others. (Oxford, 2003)

Of course differences in learner style are also influenced by individual differences. Each individual must have a different style, even with the same individual. Two extroverted people may have the same personality but have different ways and styles of learning. It may be that among us are individuals with high concentration but weak in expressing something. on the contrary, it may also be that we are individuals with weak concentration but are very good at expressing something. (Oxford, 2003)

Language learning style is a general approach to language learning, while strategy is the specific behavior chosen by students in learning and using their language. So, differences in style will include visual, auditory, or hands-on; become more abstract and intuitive. (Cohen, 2003)

The concept of learning styles does not suggest attention to individual variables or is limited, but rather a general, voluntary or not tendency towards processing information in a certain way. Until now, the emphasis in learning style research was only on the differences between the field (FD) and independent field students (FI). Although the discussion of FD-FI differences shows that each extreme has advantages (FD students are more people-oriented, and must do better with interaction-based learning; FI students are more analytical and object-oriented, and learning is more effective when faced with material body to be assimilated), most actual studies have found results that support FI learning. Several researchers report relationships around the 0.30 level. However, this finding must meet the requirements because, when intelligence effects are partly from the correlation in question (IQ being an established correlation of field independence), relationships are reduced to only marginal significance. (Hansen, 1984; Hansen & Stansfield, 1981).

Recently, Spolsky said (1989) the study of learning styles has surpassed simple FI-FD differences. Reid (1987) collected data on perceptual

learning styles which showed that many students had different preferences for auditory, visual, or presented kinesthetic material. Willing (1987) concludes in his research that active combinations depend on empirical experiences that are associated with concrete learning styles. while students who are passive in the learning experience are characterized by an authoritative orientation. he uses two dimensions in conducting this research to describe learning styles. the first is a dependency on the field and the second with active-passive dimensions. by combining these two dimensions, he determines four quadrants. he also said that active students are oriented towards communicative learning and passive students are considered to have analytic and separate learning styles. The four different types of students each contributed 40%, 10%, 10%, and 30% of the Willing student population in the Australian Migrant Education Service. Willing uses questionnaire-based data and factor analysis techniques to identify these types of students. Assuming the validity of this procedure, the items that determine the scale that characterizes different learning styles imply different class orientations and activity preferences for various types of students. What Willing is doing is identifying possible types of learners based on information processing modes and class responses. Further research is needed to determine what the consequences will be when students of various types are placed in well-organized classrooms and students who are placed in classrooms that are not right or well-organized. Some links allow you to explore learning styles. Aptitude research has suggested that there may be types of analytic students and memory dependent (with a perception type one third, relatively unexplored possibilities), with these types characterized by the performance of the talent score and with both types being a feasible route to success. Student style research is much based on opposition to field independence (with active vs. passive dimensions of Willing, following Kolb [1976], becoming more of a personality trait).

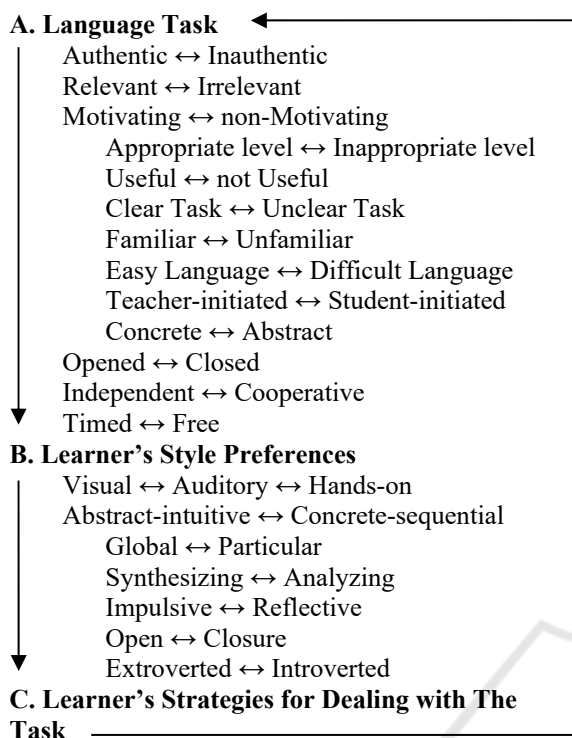


Figure 1: The Interaction of Style, Strategy and Task (Cohen, 2003)

4.3 Metalinguistic Awareness and Individual Differences Impact on Foreign Language Learning

Metalinguistic performance is seen as somewhat narrower in linguistics because it is most often understood in response to the subject of experimental tasks such as paraphrasing speech or judging the synonymity of two sentences. The performance of prototypical metalinguistic in linguistics is the rendering of grammar judgments of sentences or acceptance. (Birdsong, 1989) Kellerman (1983) says that metalinguistic performance can reflect intuitive and implicit knowledge too. For example, Dutch English students have been found to consider sentences that do not fit grammar as *John is easy to convince* and *the cup broke*. They reject these sentences even though they never receive explicit instructions about sentences like them and, strangely, even though there are matching words in their mother tongue. (Birdsong, 1989: 2-3)

during the early phases of linguistic and cognitive development in children, metalinguistic abilities appear quite a lot. According to Clark (1978), children at the age of two years can correct speech by themselves spontaneously, word form, and word order; they ask about word choice, pronunciation, and

proper speech; they comment on other people's speeches; they pay attention to linguistic structures and functions (meaning, suitability, politeness, grammar, etc.); and they ask about language. When children develop cognitively and linguistically, their metalinguistic abilities can be increased and expanded. (Birdsong, 1989: 15) This is what the researcher see when her daughter conveys one thing but she paused at the moment because what she explained was not so understood and she repeated it again by trying to assemble the correct sentence. Even she did not understand well the true or false sentences.

Observations made by the researchers to the two sisters, Mehr and Mahira. Mehr and Mahira are sisters who have different learning styles. In the observations, Mehr tends to be impulsive and Mahira reflective. Impulsive is someone who likes to do things quickly or spontaneously and reflective otherwise requires time to think before doing something. Advantages of reflective style are more accurate speaking, more accurate reading and think carefully. Advantages of impulsive are more willing to speak in class, faster reading, better in time test. Disadvantages of reflective are wait too long to speak, read more slowly and slower timed test. Disadvantages of impulsive are less accurate in speaking, less accurate in reading and act without thinking enough. (Brown, 2001)

an Explanation of the individual differences that are reflected in the reflective and impulsive personality in the learning process, it appears that Mehr responds to something spontaneously and quickly, and does not think about whether the response is expected or not, but Mehr enjoyed it and didn't bother too much whether her response to something was right or wrong. When reading it may be that Mehr ignores some difficult words and guesses roughly what they mean and will continue reading the text, but is often good at guessing those words.

In contrast to Mehr, Mahira tends to be quieter. He also prefers to think before making a decision or responding to something. As if he needs to make sure that her decision, her opinion, the answer is correct. Mahira will think for a while to conclude, including reading. She needs more time. But the result she will get more information and tend to be precise.

One time both of them had the opportunity to visit abroad for ten days, something unexpected happened. Mahira, who usually does not keep quiet, seems to communicate more with strangers. Though it is very rare for him to speak or practice English while at home. Abroad, Mahira seems to enjoy and fluently speak and explore information from native speakers.

The English language is also neatly structured with accurate pronunciation. On the other hand, the usually spontaneous Mehr was seen several times hesitant to talk to strangers. Mehr was worried that the language she used was not well organized. This makes it difficult to find ideas or ideas to talk about. Though usually, Mehr is spontaneous in speaking, fluent in expressing her heart and opinion. It is precisely Mahira who tends to be quiet and be a good listener.

If seen from the achievements in elementary school, both have achievements that are not much different. Both have experienced entering the top three and the top ten. However, in daily life, Mehr prefers to tell stories and share jokes with family members to make family members laugh. While Mahira will listen and tend to be quiet and not talk much but likes to read.

The description above is a description of individual differences that affect the way of learning a foreign language (in this case English) and expressing language. As explained in the sub-literature review about Julie. She obtained her second language even in a very natural way and only lasted 5 years from the first age she learned her second language. In the conclusion that Julie is a naturalistic learner / person who learn the second language it's mean foreign language for her without formal situation. Julie is a unique individual who acquires her second language naturally which does not require formal instruction in mastering Arabic language skills. At that time she was only 26 years old. So only about 5 years, she learned Arabic naturally. She also has good pronunciation and excellent communicative abilities. Schmidt explained that Julie noted what she had to do to master Arabic (in this case) by looking at the needs factor. (Schmidt, 2012)

5 CONCLUSION

According to the discussion above that metalinguistic awareness and individual differences it's mean individual language learner have a role in the growth of language skills in children and it's impact on foreign language learning. There are two individual in this research that have been an object on this paper, reflective and impulsive. Impulsive is someone who likes to do things quickly or spontaneously and reflective otherwise requires time to think before doing something. But in some case that reflective is quieter and impulsive is quickly but some times that reflective more quieter than impulsive and impulsive more quicker than reflective. Therefore basically

every individual has different potential and different ways to learn a foreign language.

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