

## Student Teacher's Language Ability and Its Effects toward Teaching and Learning Process

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to explain how a student teacher's language ability influences the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Data was in the form of sentences taken from written reflections written by a student teacher. The reflections were written during the student teacher's four-month practicum in a school of the Pelita Harapan Foundation. The approach used in this paper is qualitative descriptive in which data was gathered, analyzed and presented using words. The results show that there are 6 forms of language that show the student teacher's low language ability: phoneme, prefix, insertion, diction, indirect sentence, and repetition. Besides that, the effects of low language ability toward the teaching and learning process is in instruction and as a result, in classroom management.

**Keywords:** language ability, practicum, teaching and learning

### Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan kemampuan berbahasa mahasiswa guru yang mempengaruhi proses belajar mengajar di dalam kelas. Data yang dianalisis berupa kalimat-kalimat yang diambil dari refleksi tertulis mahasiswa guru yang ditulis selama empat bulan praktek mengajar kelas tiga di salah satu sekolah YPPH. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif dimana data dikumpulkan, dianalisis serta dipaparkan menggunakan kata-kata. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa terdapat enam bentuk bahasa yang menunjukkan rendahnya kemampuan berbahasa mahasiswa guru yaitu fonem, prefiks, sisipan, diksi, kalimat tidak langsung serta pengulangan. Selain itu, pengaruh kemampuan berbahasa yang rendah dapat dilihat pada instruksi mahasiswa guru yang pada akhirnya juga mempengaruhi manajemen kelas.



**Kata kunci:** kemampuan berbahasa, praktek mengajar, belajar mengajar

### Introduction

It was not until 17 years old that the writer met Papuan. Papuan are very friendly and kind. Another noticeable thing from Papuan friends was that they were smart and most of them who went to university came from cities in Papua. One of them took psychology major, graduated and became a teacher. One of writer's papuan friends' mother even took doctoral degree in one of top national universities in our country. Another Papuan friend worked for World Health Organization and even stationed in Singapore as a manager for several years. Thus, at that time writer did not really see the relevance of unequal education that government always says.

At the moment, being a lecturer for many Papuan gives writer different realities. Living proofs of unequal education are easy to be seen. Based on writer's personal observation, Papuans do not perform as good as students from other parts of the country. Most of them are slow learners with lack of initiative. Reasons behind this is because education is not an important thing for some Papuans who live in remote areas. Parents would rather have their children help them working in field rather than sending them to school. Although they send their children to school, not all remote areas in Papua have schools. If they have schools, they do not have enough teachers. Therefore the schools are forced to be closed (Wahyudi, 2011).

However, the issue which seems to be the result of family ignorance on education is not fully correct. During observation of internship in one of YPPH schools in Jakarta, writer found one of our student teachers struggled with her speeches. During observation, writer noticed that her instructions were not clear. Her sentences were not effective and her diction was confusing for her primary students. This student teacher came from Jayapura, Papua. She has 3 siblings and all of them go to school. She was born and raised in the city of Jayapura and her father works for the government. During the interview, the student teacher answered that education is one of the important things in her family. Her family encourages education until university level.

Her low performance in speech affected her teaching. Her choices of words and sentences prevented her from effective instruction. During observation, the students were confused by the student teacher's instruction. Thus, activities were not successful and most of the time students were busy asking what they should do. Because of this, learning objective might not be achieved. Not only that, class management was also affected. Since the student did not understand the instruction, it was hard to manage the class. Students were busy walking



around the class asking for clarification from the student teacher as well as from their friends.

Based on the problem explained above, there are two questions writer aimed to answer in this paper:

1. What are the forms of language that indicate student teacher's low language ability?
2. What are the effects of language ability toward teaching and learning process?

### **Theoretical Review**

Students' performance in study is not shown only by their grades but also by their language ability. There is a strong relationship between language and thought. Human express their thoughts through speech and by trying to understand the speech they will find a mean to provide meaningful speech (Steinberg et.al., 2001). Therefore, our thoughts is shown by our speech. Someone who can speak in a clear and structured way has a structured way of thinking. Those who have extended vocabularies or knowledge will have much more complex speeches. Someone's speech will show whether they are well educated or not.

There are four fundamental language abilities for speakers (Chomsky in Steinberg et.al., 2001). First, speakers of a language are able to produce and comprehend sentences of no fixed length. Second, speakers of a language will be able to produce and comprehend unlimited sentences. Third, speakers of a language are able to produce and comprehend novel sentences. Lastly, speakers of a language are able to produce and comprehend grammatical sentences. Someone is considered to have language ability if he has the fundamental abilities.

These fundamental language abilities are seen as linguistics knowledge by Fromkin et.al. (2003). She argues that knowing a language means to be able to produce new sentences which never spoken before and to understand sentences never heard before. She emphasizes that such ability is creativity. Someone's creative language ability is not only reflected by what someone says but also by his understanding of new or novel sentences. Language knowledge makes it possible to understand and produce new sentences.

As *Imago Dei*, human being is able to speak just like the Creator. They speak in many languages – there are 6,909 languages now in the world (Lewis, *n.d.*) and human have been using them in such creative ways. Creativity is God's gift as it is clearly stated in Exodus 35:30-35 how God filled Bezaleel "with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with allcraftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze,



in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft". Not only Bezaleel, God also chose Aholiab and inspired him to teach. God chose every one with a purpose and granted them with different ingenuity. The word 'creativity' came from the Latin word *creates* "to make, bring forth, produce, beget". Creativity in human being exists in almost every part of life including language.

In doing this small research, it is also essential to understand that someone's second language (L2) will be influenced by his first language (L1). In the beginning stage of acquiring L2, someone seems to rely on his L1 grammar. This is shown by errors made which often involve the transfer of grammatical rules from their L1 (Fromkin et.al., 2003, p. 381). According to Fromkin et. al., L2ers generally speak with an accent because they may transfer the phonemes, phonological rules or syllable structures of their L1 to L2. However, Fromkin clarified that not all of errors made in L2 are derived from L1 and this idea is still not well understood.

As the subject of this research is a Papuan student, it is important to take a look at Papuan Colloquial Indonesian (PCI). Fields (2010) presents the forms of Papuan colloquial language such as the vowel change, differences in affixation, prefix, as well as vocabulary (adjective and verbs). He also clearly identifies the pronouns in PCI. There are some results from Fields research which are relevant to this paper such as the dropping of 'h', differences in affixation, and the use of prefixes. In PCI final 'h' is dropped:

- (1) *sudah* → *suda* 'already, past tense'
- (2) *masih* → *masi* 'still'
- (3) *kasih* → *kasi* 'give'

As for the affixation, PCI tends to drop prefix *meNG-*, *me-* and *ber-* such as:

- (4) *mengambil* → *ambil* 'take'
- (5) *membantu* → *bantu* 'help'
- (6) *mencuci* → *cuci* 'wash'
- (7) *merasa* → *rasa* 'feel' (emotion)
- (8) *membeli* → *beli* 'buy'
- (9) *mendekati* → *dekati* 'approach'

Finally is the use of prefixes in PCI. According to Fields, there are factors influencing the use of prefixed in PCI. The first one is social situation that is conditioned on the topic of conversation. If the topic is more formal such as politics or religion, more prefixes are expected. Disambiguation is the second factor. If a verb is preceded by an auxiliary, then prefix is more optional since the presence of the auxiliary automatically disambiguates.

- (10) *Boas suda jalan.*  
'Boas (has) already left.'



The third factor is lexical conditioning. The use of prefixes *meNG-* and *ber-* is conditioned on properties within the lexicon (Fields, 2010, p. 5). The next factor is grammatical rules and tendencies. There are some rules and tendencies presented by Fields such as imperative verbs almost never take a prefix (Ikranagara in Fields, 2010) and that some verbs functioning as auxiliary verbs never take a prefix. The last factor is phonological tendency that is a tendency of PCI to drop *meNG-* before certain initial sounds.

Another research on PCI was conducted by Uncen from University of Cendrawasih. Different from Fields, Uncen referred to Bahasa Indonesia which is influenced by Papuan local languages as Malay Papuan. The title of his research was *The Linguistic Features of Malay Papuan in Indonesia; its History and Distinctive Peculiarities with Malay Indonesian*. In his research, Uncen presented characteristics of MP including consonant and vowel deletion. Consonant deletion mainly caused by speakers' difficulty in producing fricative sound such as *hampir* → *ampir*, *hutan* → *utan*, and *hancur* → *ancor*. While vowel /ə/ was deleted such as *terus* → *trus*, *seperempat* → *sprampa* and *sepuluh* → *spool*. Writer believes that this vowel deletion happened because local languages do not have such vowel. Uncen (2014) validated this by displaying cases where vowel /ə/ was changed into vowel /e/, /o/, and /a/.

Gau also conducted a research on Malay Papuan in 2011. In his research, Gau displayed historical connection between Malay Papuan and Malay Maluku including politics, commercial, religion and education aspects behind Malay Papuan. Moreover, Gau added linguistics aspect in his research. He presented Malay Papuan characteristics such as word order, phrase marker, clause marker and lexicon. Different from Bahasa Indonesia, MP's word order is *determiner + head* instead of *head + determiner*. For example *anak itu* in MP is *itu anak*. Moreover, there are several phrase marker in MP such as *ada* 'ada', *bekin* 'bikin', *kase* 'kasih', *dan puṅa* 'punya' while *sudah, su* or *so* 'sudah' and *baru* 'baru, hanya, masih' are examples of clause marker. The last characteristic of MP Gau displayed was lexicon. MP has unique lexicon such as *sa* 'saya', *deṅ* 'dengan', *pu* 'punya' etc.

Based on several theoretical review above, it can be concluded that language ability is creativity given by God. This creativity in language shown by someone's ability in producing and comprehending complex sentences with unlimited length. Also, someone's language ability especially L2 ability is affected by his L1 in term of grammar, phonology and syllable structure. Furthermore, PCI or MP has characteristics which are linguistically influenced by local languages. As a results, this may affect speakers' utterances in Bahasa Indonesia.

## Method



The writer observed student teachers during their internship in XYZ school Daan Mogot from August to November 2016. There were 6 student teachers consist of 1 male and 5 females. However, this paper is focusing on one female student teacher who came from Jayapura, Papua. After observing their teaching, writer focused on the student and observed her language ability during thesis consultation process. To support the observation result, the writer consulted to mentor's observation sheets and her written reflections. Also, writer interviewed the Papuan student teacher in order to know her family background. The data of this research is in form of sentences taken from student teacher's reflection during internship. There is no correction or editing act in processing the data, all of them are written exactly the same with the real reflection.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the data, there are 6 forms that show student teacher's language ability.

### 1. Phoneme

#### 1.1. 'b' and 'p'

- (1) "*Walaupun matapelajarannya perbeda akan tetapi karena tema yang diajarkan sama...*"  
'although the course is different, but because the theme taught is the same...'
- (2) "*Pada saat itu juga hari pertama dimana mentorsaya baru beradab tasi dengan siswa-siswa yang baru saja naik kelas.*"  
'at that time was the first time when my mentor just adapt to the new students that just get into the new grade.'
- (3) "*Kekhawatiran dan kegugupan membuat saya tidak fokus akan apa yang sudah saya belajar sebelumnya.*"  
'my worry and nervousness make me not focus on what I learned before.'

Data above show student teacher's confusion in the use of phoneme 'b' and 'p'. The position of the phoneme confusion is not consistent as it happens in the beginning and middle of words. In bahasa Indonesia, both phoneme sound similar as both are bilabials. Therefore it might be hard for her to differentiate these two phoneme however, other person might be able to differentiate them easily since the three words '*berbeda*', '*beradaptasi*' and '*pelajari*' are regular and easy words for university student level.



## 1.2. 'j' and 'y'

There are confusion in the use of phoneme 'j' and 'y' which is clearly shown in the student teacher's reflection. Bahasa Indonesia used to have old spelling which was changed in 1972. Before that year, Indonesia used *Republik* spelling or *Soewandi* spelling. In the old spelling, today's 'y' was 'j' such as the word "saya" was spelled as "saja" in old spelling. However, writer suspects the student teacher's confusion on these phonemes is not because of old spelling experience.

(4) "Hal ini membuat saya keletihan sendiri karena harus menyelaskan satu-satu kepada setiap siswa yang datang kepada saya."

'this makes me tired because I have to explain to each of my students one by one who came to me.'

(5) "ketika saya menyelaskan masih saja ada siswa-siswa yang bermain permainan yang dibuatnya..."

'when I explained there are some students who played games they made...'

## 2. Prefix

From Fields' research, writer finds that in PCI, prefixes tend to be dropped. Writer believes that this is the reason why the student teacher is confused in using prefixes in bahasa Indonesia. There are several prefixes found in the data.

### 2.1. pen-

(6) "pada hari itu saya sungguh senang dengan sikap siswa menjelaskan yang saya berikan dapat di mengerti..."

'that day I was very happy with my students' attitude that they could understand my explanation...'

(7) "...siswa-siswa duduk dengan tenang dan mendengarkan menjelaskan yang saya berikan."

'...the students sat calmly and listened to my explanation.'

(8) "...mau mendengarkan menjelaskan yang saya berikan hal tersebut terjadi hingga akhir pembelajaran."

'...wanted to hear my explanation until the end of the class.'

(9) "...kepada setiap karyawan yang bekerja di SDH Daan Mogot mulai dari security, OB, maupun menjaga kantin."

'...to all the employee working in SDH Daan Mogot, from security, OB as well as canteen attendant.'



The student teacher is not able to differentiate the prefix *men-* from prefix *pen-*. In bahasa Indonesia, prefix *men-* indicates verbs while *pen-* indicates noun. The word “*menjelasan*” does not exist in bahasa Indonesia, it is supposed to be “*penjelasan*” or ‘explanation’ because it is a noun. While “*menjaga*” or ‘watch over’ is a verb in bahasa Indonesia while in data (9) it is supposed to be a noun “*penjaga kantin*” or ‘canteen keeper’.

## 2.2. *ber-*

Besides prefix *pen-*, the student teacher also struggles in differentiating prefix *ber-* with other prefixes. The word “*mendiskusi*” in data (10) does not exist in bahasa Indonesia, what we have are “*diskusi*” or ‘discussion’ the noun and “*berdiskusi*” or ‘discussing’ the verb. The student teacher failed to use verb in data (10) and decided to use prefix *men-*. As for data (11) she was not able to use the prefix *ber-dampak* that is a verb in this data. She uses prefix *ter-* which constructs passive or adjective. In data (11) the word “*terdampak*” means that something/someone experienced an act accidentally.

(10) “*para guru yang mengajar juga mendiskusisatusama lain sebelummengajarsehingga...*”

‘Teachers who were teaching also discuss with each other before teaching so that ...’

(11) “*...jikasayakhawatirhaliniakanterdampakkepadapersiapan yangsudahsayalakukan...*”

‘...If I am worried, this will affect my preparation that I have done...’

## 2.3. *pem-*

(12)

“*Selamapembelajaranberlangsungsiswatertibmengikutimembelajaran, merekasangatantusiasketikanamamerekadipanggilanuntukmembacaberi tadidepankelas.*”

‘During the lesson students were following the lesson and they were enthusiastic when their names were called to read in front of the class.’

(13) “*Pada saat saya mengjaar saya menjelaskan bahwa siswa-siswa harus mengikuti mebelajaran dengan tenang...*”

‘When I was teaching, I explained to the students to follow the lesson calmly...’

(14) “*...saya membiarkan hal tersebut terjadi sehingga mempelajaran yang saya lakukan dihari itu tidak sesuai dengan ekspetasi saya.*”

‘I let it hapenned that the teaching that I did that day was not like what I expected to be.’





Other confusion in the use of prefix is shown in data (12) to (14). The student teacher was not able to differentiate the prefix *mem-* that indicates verb with *pem-* to indicate noun. She even mixed phoneme 'b' and 'p' in data above as explained earlier in 1.1.

### 3. Insertion

(15) "...yang sayalakukanbegitu juga dengankondisittumbuhsaya yang kurangbaikpadaaatitu..."

'...what I did as well as my body condition was not really good at that time...'

(16)

"...sayaberharapbesoknyasayadapatmengajardenganbaikdalamkondisitu mbuh yang siapuntukmengajar."

'I hope I could teach better tomorrow in a good condition to be ready to teach.'

(17) "Ketikasayaberistirahatdanmeminumobattumbuhsayakembalipulih."

'When I rest and took some medicine, my body got better.'

Another case noticed from the data is the phoneme 'm' insertion. Data (15) to (17) should use the word "*tubuh*" instead of "*tumbuh*" although both words exist in bahasa Indonesia with different meaning. "*Tubuh*" means 'body' while "*tumbuh*" means 'grow'. Mixing up the two words is not possible as they have two different meaning, therefore insertion of the phoneme 'm' is the most possible explanation for this case.

### 4. Diction

(18) "...makasemuamatapelajaran yang diajarkandikelastigasalingmenyambungsatusama lain."

'..so all subjects taught in grade 3 are related to each other.'

(19) "Akan tetapi, usaha yang sudahsayalakukan yaitubelajarsemuanyaterkalahkandengankekhawatiran dankegugupansaya..."

'However, the effort that I did in learning everything was defeated by my worry and nervousness...'

(20) "Hal ini memperlambat saya mengajar karena harus mendiamkan sebagian besar siswa..."

'This thing slowed down my teaching because I have to ask most of students to be silent.'



Diction in the data also shows student teacher's language ability. The phrase "*saling menyambung*" in data (18) does not match the context. The phrase is more appropriate to be used to describe two tangible things connected to each other such as string. Another data shows that she dropped prefix in the word "*belajar*" and add the word "*semuanya*" without clear reference. Data (20) presents student teacher's failure in choosing appropriate word for the sentence. The word "*mendiamkan*" has extremely different meaning with "*menenangkan*" which writer believes she tries to convey. The first word means not talking to someone, usually because of a dispute or problem. The latter means to make someone calm.

(21) "*Padasaatdisampaikansiswahebohsayamelihat rasa senangdalamdirimereka.*"

'When it is informed, students were noisy and I saw happiness in them.'

(22) "*Sehinggapadasaatsayamengajarsayaterlihatenjoydenganapa yangsayalakukan.*"

'So when I am teaching I enjoy what I do.'

(23) "*Saya berharap kedepannya saya dapat mengajar dengan enjoy dan memberikan yang terbaik kepada siswa-siswa terutaman untuk kepada Allah.*"

'I hope I can enjoy my teaching in the future and give the best to my students especially to God.'

Data (21) to (23) show how student teacher chooses informal and English words in her sentences. They are "*heboh*" or 'noisy' and "*enjoy*". The data were taken from her reflection which is supposed to be formal or even academic.

#### 5. Indirect sentence

(24) "*...saya bertanya kepada salah satu siswa mengapa teman-temanmu menangis, kemudian siswa tersebut menjelaskan dengan demikian.*"

'...I asked one of the students why is your friend crying, and then the student answer with.'

The use of possessive pronoun in above indirect sentence is another case. Since it is an indirect sentence, the possessive pronoun should not be referring to "*siswa*" as it is in direct sentence. As an indirect sentence, the possessive pronoun should be "*-nya*" because the pronoun is changed into 'she'/'he' instead of 'you'.

#### 6. Repetition



The last form of confusion found in the data is repetition. Student teacher repeated similar words or prefix unnecessarily. The word “*antar*” and “*setiap*” in bahasa Indonesia have similar meaning in data (25). It is the same with data (27) where “*lebih*” and prefix *mem-* in “*membalik*” both mean ‘better’. In data (28) the words “*untuk*” and “*kepada*” or ‘to’ are simply the same and should not be used together side by side. Lastly, data (26) shows repetition of word “*menunggu*” or ‘waiting’. Repetition of words in bahasa Indonesia or “*reduplikasi*” is only appropriate if it is a root word. Although in some case, words with prefix may be reduplicated, the prefix in the second word will not be repeated such as “*bermeter-meter*”.

(25) “...*terjalinalahkerjasamaantarsetiap guru.*”  
‘...there is cooperation among teachers.’

(26) “*Siswamenunggu-menunggugambardanimasiapaselanjutnya yang terjadiketikasayamenggantimelanjutkan slide.*”  
‘students wait in anticipation the next picture and animation when I moved to another slide.’

(27)  
“*Keesokanharinyasayamerasalebihmembalikh dibandingkankemarinsehingg asayadapatmengajardenganbaikdanbenar.*”  
‘The next day I feel much better compared to yesterday that I was able to teach well.’

(28) “*Saya berharap kedepannya saya dapat mengajar dengan enjoy dan memberikan yang terbaik kepada siswa-siswa terutama untuk kepada Allah.*”  
‘I hope I can enjoy teaching in the future and give the best to my students especially to God.’

### Conclusion and Recommendation

From the discussion, it can be concluded that there are 6 forms of language that represent the student teacher's language ability. These 6 forms are phoneme, prefix, insertion, diction, indirect sentence and repetition. All of these show how student teacher struggles in producing correct sentences verbally and non-verbally. Her struggles were also noticed by her mentor during the internship. She always gets comment on instruction and class management due to this issue. Her limitation in language prevented her from giving clear instruction therefore hinders her from managing the class well. During the writer's observation in student teacher's class, students were generally confused



about the instruction therefore they always approached the student teacher personally in front of the class to ask her to repeat the instructions. This cost the student teacher a great amount of time. Moreover, she failed to control this situation which led into a chaotic classroom. There was a time when 3 students were lying on the floor doing their task.

It is undeniable that being a firm teacher has a great effect on managing the class well. However, being clear in giving instruction also helps in being a firm teacher. Although the mentor noticed improvement in student teacher's instruction by the end of the internship, continual improvement is still needed.

Student teacher's struggles, writer believes, has been facilitated by Teachers College. However, the assistance from TC by giving bahasa Indonesia class will not be enough without the student's effort. My recommendation for this issue is to give extra hours for students with such issue to learn bahasa Indonesia outside their schedule with tutors or lecturers. This requires not only student's effort but also TC's effort. Moreover, this recommendation is not only for Papuan students but for all TC students who struggle with bahasa Indonesia. Encouraging writing academically in bahasa Indonesia is also a good way to practice. Lecturers or tutors must be ready to guide the students in improving their language ability. Not only that, encouraging the students to talk more in class and outside the class will boost their confident in talking and giving opinion.

As the supervisor, writer was not embarrassed for her but embarrassed that as a lecturer, writer should have been able to help her more. After observing her class writer immediately talked to her, as to other internship students, and gave her suggestions on how to improve her instructions in class. One of them is to carefully think about what she is going to say in class including instructions, write them down, and memorize them. It is my prayer for the lecturers and TC as the place where our students learn and get to know more of God to help and guide them to be better Christian teachers.

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