ABSTRACT

Language is more than symbols to communicate. Behind those symbols, language carries certain emotion. It can comfort or hurt. The meaning behind language can make people happy, sad, be motivated or boil in anger. However, to send its meaning, these symbols cannot operate independently, it is tied to context and media of communication. Recently, the rapid development of ICT, as one form of communication media, contributes to the growth of language varieties and evolution/changes of language. ICT may soften or harshen meaning of certain language and arise one's emotion. One of many issues relating to ICT, language and emotion occurs in everyday life of teachers, especially when they communicate with their students through online. Some of students’ short messages may hurt teachers’ feeling, stir their emotion or lead them to think “what’s wrong with my students, why they do this?” this indicates that how students communicate with their teachers, what languages they use may affect how their teachers feel, think and respond. To be able to communicate appropriately and maintain social relationship with their students, teachers should be able to manage their emotion. Thus, this study aims to examine how ICT-mediated interaction and its communication context may affect teachers’ behaviour, how teachers feel, think and respond to their students’ technology-mediated messages. This study is underpinned by phenomenology stance and grounded on sociocultural perspective on interrelatedness of human’s social and individual nature of Vygostky (1978, cited in John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). The language/communication context is viewed from implicational perspective which considers language as having implied meaning depending on the hearer (Schweder, 1991, cited in Kövecses, 1995.). The data are collected from our teaching practices, daily communication with our students. The data show that language and context of communication plays significant impact on teacher-student interaction. Through language/communication, teachers can assess their students’ character, values, social character and cognition (understanding). Students’ ICT-mediated communication may stimulate teachers’ certain emotion which lead them to respond by answering the message even silencing. The teachers are expecting that today’s students should display appropriate online language behavior. Teachers’ language behavior may also influence students’ feeling, relationship with their students and students’ social capital and competencies. How teachers’ respond to their students’ ICT-mediated language/communication can also be part of students’ learning process and teachers’ emotion regulation.

Keywords: emotion, ICT-mediated language/communication, teacher-student relationship, teachers’ behaviour

I. Introduction

Language is not just collection of symbols/signs which carry certain meaning, but it contains underground aspects which cannot be seen on paper. These underlying features just can be sensed/felt on people who get the message and interpret meaning of that language and exert certain impact outside the boundaries of paper. This indicates that language always has social dimension. Certain language/way of communication can not only strengthen social relationship,
but also ruin or destroy interaction. When a speaker say something rude or impolite to other people, this other people may get hurted, sad or angry. However, when a speaker convey delightful words to other people, this other people can be pleased and happy. Thus, language/way of communication also has emotion element. It is vital to view language within the frame of how language/communication can work within the domain of social and emotional functioning.

The rapid development of ICT can change the nature of communication. People must not directly see each other to communicate. Technology can send words, sounds or images instantly and faster. This allows wide networking, sharing, engaging in social media interaction, wide promotion, asking open help through internet or spreading important information very quickly. This wide communication mediated by technology can also be used by irresponsible people to commit mass crime. Different from face to face interaction which carries paralinguistic: facial expression, body language and automaticity/directedness, technology can allow the speaker modify their language and way of communication. They may conceal improper body language, select and rethink which words/language they want to use or soften too high intonation into desired level.

This types of communication mediated by technology also infiltrates into campus life. It can potentially affect the nature of teacher-students social relationship. The students do not have to see their teachers directly to submitt assignment, asking clarification on lecture meeting or other important information. The teachers also can effectively and efficiently spread important information, coordinate their classroom very quickly and contact their students very easily. However, technology does not always support social interaction positively, it can obstruct the teacher-students interpersonal relationship. An example which may frequently happen is teachers feel that their today’s students cannot communicate politely or they tend to use their slank (westernized) language which should not be used to communicate with their teachers. This situation encourages teachers to respond according to their feeling and thinking. Thus, this study aims to explore what some teachers’ view and feeling relating to their interaction with their students and what they can learn from their experiences. This study adopts the sociocultural perspective as its grounding view. Within this perspective language and language learning is viewed from its social and cultural context of happening.

II. Problems of the Study

There are several issues which we intend to explore. Those are:

1. How the teachers feel/think and how are their responses/behaviour/perspectives when they get undesired/unfavoured messages which are sent electronically by their students?
2. What the teachers can learn from their interaction and what the teachers expect their students learn from their technology-mediated communication?

III. Theoretical Framework

A. Language and Technology

Currently, the use of technology in education/classroom can facilitate students’ learning process. Technology (mobile phone in classroom) can disturb students’ concentration if the technology used unorganizedly, but if it is implement structurally it can increase students’ learning outcome (Beland & Murphy, 2016). Today’s easy access of internet allows communication: speech and writing runs faster and is different from face to face communication (Klimova, 2012). Moreover, internet induces the development of written language through various social media or social communication (Klimova, 2012). Today’s students are digital generation. They are growing surrounded by technology. They are playing and learning using
ICT. Thus, they are very familiar and embrace ICT closely in their life. Today’s young learners learn communication through technology available around them (İlter, 2015). Furthermore, technology can introduce language to young learners, develop their cultural consciousness and communication across different social and cultural setting (İlter, 2015). Thus, digital literacy is urgently required in today’s education. Students’ digital skills are not only external need for students’ success in the future, but it is also internally required by students. Learners become more alive in learning when they learn with technology (İlter, 2015). The 21 century education demands students to develop their digital competence including communication skills (Siddiq, Scherer & Tondeur, 2016). Ünal and Yagci (2014) identify that mobile phone become students’ preferred tool for oral and written communication. However, during their communication students may not care about using language inappropriately or misuse their language (Ünal & Yagci, 2014).

B. Socio-Cultural Perspective

Sociocultural perspective is used as the underpinning view of the study. Language and its development is resulted from human social activity. It is rising when certain society live together (Aksoy, 1991, cited in Ünal & Yagci, 2014). Sociocultural approach of examining an issue emphasizes on the need to examine socio-cultural context (around) human to understand human internal state (van der Veer, 2007, p. 21, cited in Lei, 2008, p. 219). Vygotsky (1979, cited in Lei, 2008, p. 219) mentions that human interaction is intervened by two things: “technical tool” and “psychological tool.” This indicates that technical tool can be selected by human to control their behaviour externally and psychological tool is used to regulate their action internally (Lei, 2008, p. 219). This indicates that human learning cannot be separated from other people contribution. Sociocultural theory highlights the relationship of an individual to his/her social environment (Vygostsky, 1978, cited in Simeon, 2016, p.3). Language has significant roles in mediating interaction which allows human to socialize and learn (Coyle, 2007, cited in Simeon, 2016, p. 4). This implies that the meaning of language is not only residing on features of the symbols, but it also depending on its social function and interpretation of the interlocuters. Since it is depending on social and cultural context, language meaning is dynamic (Gee, 1999, cited in Luk & Wong, 2010). This is relevant to Vygostky’s concept, as follows:

“From this [Vygotskian] perspective, the activity of teaching and learning language is not focused on language as a stable, rule-governed linguistic system that must be acquired before people can engage in communication. Instead, it is concerned with enhancing language learners’ communicative resources which are formed and reformed in the very activity in which they are used-concrete linguistically mediated social and intellectual activity” (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007, p. 878, cited in Luk & Wong, 2010, p. 211).

C. Language, Social Interaction and Teacher-Student Communication

Language has significant role in human development through interaction. It mediates learning by allowing learners to communicate their feelings or ideas (Barak, Watted & Haick, 2016, p. 50). This implies that it facilitates certain social functioning and relates people. Because it connects many diverse people, languages exist in diverse forms. These groups of people tend to create, modify, transform and transmit their language. As mentioned by Maynard and Peräkylä (2003, p. 235) “once individuals have learned the group’s language, they have acquired the symbolic means for having emotions, beliefs, perceptions and so on and transmitting them to one another.” This is relevant to sociologists believe that communication relates to the “problem of meaning” (Maynard and Peräkylä, 2003, p. 234). Since language operates within certain society, it contains and reflects social values, social
structure/arrangement and social interpretation (Maynard and Peräkylä, 2003). Similarly, Bernstein (1964, cited in Gumperz, 2011, p. 138) mentions “between language and speech there is social structure.” This implies that language has social rules or pattern of relationship. An individual cannot select his/her own language freely since he/she is tied to social constraint (Gumperz, 2011, p. 138). This is because language also has social convention which ensure that there will be no misunderstanding among the interlocutors and they are following the established social etiquette (Gumperz, 2011). This indicates that some words choice can be suitable, while other words are not allowed. This “appropriateness” tends to obey to culture and social understanding (Maynard & Peräkylä, 2003, p. 241).

This social rules also occur in classrooms. Classrooms are small social unit which interact and develop shared normativity among classroom members (Iurea, 2015, p. 368). Within this environment/unit, it is expected that teachers and students develop reciprocal, active, adapting to situation and teaching learning objectives (Iurea, 2015, p. 370). This is because good communication is expected to result in teachers and students’ success (Duţă, 2015, p. 625). Several studies highlight the significant roles of teachers’ communication capacity to create conducive learning climate, develop positive students’ behaviour and increase students’ learning outcome (Iurea, 2015; Leung, 2014; Urea, 2013; Yusof & Halim, 2014). This indicates that teachers have key position in managing their classroom through their communication style. Teachers’ position in classroom enable them to decide how communication will run (Yusof & Halim, 2014, p. 472). Teachers communicate to their students for three main basic things: knowing students’ knowledge, reacting/replying and telling situation in the classroom (Farrell, 2009, cited in Yusof & Halim, 2014, p. 472). To establish and develop effective communication, teachers should handle several communication barriers: physical, perceptual, emotional, cultural, language, gender and interpersonal obstacles (Smith, 2013, cited in Duţă, 2015, p. 627).

D. Language and Emotion

Language can stimulate one’s emotion through social interaction. This is because emotion is the result of social relationship (Cernea & Kerren, 2015, p. 70). Language has another function, that is “eliciting emotion” (Braun, 2015, p. 36). Emotion is defined as an internal state which is generated by external stimulant (Cernea & Kerren, 2015, p. 71). Emotion is also generated from context in which people has experiences on the same emotion (Braun, 2015, p. 37).

Teaching is a social process. It is possible that teachers feel angry, dissapointed, sad, exhausted or bore with their activity. This emotion usually arouses when there is a mismatch between what people want and the real fact (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 102). In order to develop their professional capacity, teachers should be able to regulate their emotion and see emotion as resources for learning (Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 110). Emotion can increase teachers’ cognition and indicate their identity (Golombek & Doran, 2014). This is because human development is the outcome of the dynamic process between their selves and social surrounding (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 73, cited in Golombek & Doran, 2014, p. 104).

Teachers are key figures in classrooms. Their emotion can be bring powerful impact. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to handle their emotion. Teachers’ capacity to manage their emotion is crucial, since it is not only affecting teachers’ development, but also students’ learning process. Desired teaching is teaching which is filled with constructive emotion and energize students with that positive feeling (Jiang, Vauras & Wang, 2016, p. 22). Positive emotion encourages students to participate more actively (Rahimi & Bigdeli, 2014) and reach academic success (López & Cárdenas, 2014; Buric, Soric & Penezic, 2016). Gross (1998, cited in artikel Jiang, Vauras & Wang, 2016, p. 23) defines emotion regulation as “the process by which individuals consciously or unconscious influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them.” Reek, Ames and Ochsner (2016) propose two distinct approaches to regulate emotion: self regulation in which the regulator (an
individual) uses his/her own self to manage his/her emotion, tends to be intrapersonal and social regulation in which the regular (an individual) involve other people (target) to manage his/her emotion, tends to be interpersonal. Similarly, Gross (1998, cited in Jiang, Vauras & Wang, 2016, p. 23) lists several ways to regulate emotion: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment and cognitive change.

Emotion is closely related to language. Emotion can be expressed through language: body language/expression (Lindquist & Gendron, 2013) or spoken and written language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989; Cernea & Kerren, 2015). Besides functioning for conveying information, language can be used to express feeling (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989, p. 9). Moreover, Ochs and Schieffelin (1989, pp. 12-14) believes that language has internal features (grammatical, lexicon and discourse structure), which can affect emotion: pronouns, reflexive (determiners, mood, tense, verb choice, casemarking, number/gender/animacy marking, affixes, reduplication), phonology (intonation, voice quality, sound repetition), sound symbolism (lexicon), verb variants which include graded sets (word order) and discourse structure (code switching, affective speech acts/activities). Differently, Barrett, Lindquist & Gendron (2007) believes that language can only stir emotion through perception. How an individual interpret/perceive certain meaning of language depend his/her social context (López & Cárdenas, 2014).

IV. Research Method

This study adopts qualitative-case study research methods. This study is based on our teaching practices. Today, our students are very familiar with mobile/smart phone. They frequently communicate with us through messages. This happens in our teaching-learning daily contexts. Some of them use polite/appropriate language, but we also frequently find students who may be feel too free with their languages. This situation requires us, as teachers to respond in some ways. The data from our teaching practices indicates the application of everyday cognition in which we (teachers) are becoming aware of issues around them, discover meaning on that issue and reflect. In this study, we (teachers) focus on teachers’ perspectives by looking at what may happen to the students, feel what is happening to us and what we can learn from communication with the students. Since teacher and students communication/interaction is bidirectional and intertwined, we (as the teachers) also expect that the students can take valuable lesson which can enhnace their learning process. The data are collected through interview communication and written responses of some colleagues which are integrated, mirrored and reflected with our interpretation/reflection.

The following figure describes the process of the study.

Figure 1. Process of the study
V. Data Presentation and Discussion

A. Samples of The Data

This section contains some samples of the collected data. There are two main points that we intend to cover. The first point is what/how the teachers feel or think about their students and their students’ way of communication mediated by technology and what are the teachers responses. The second point relates to what the teachers can learn from their interaction/communication with their students and what the teachers expect their students learn/understand from their responses/interaction/communication.

The data show that the teachers develop various/different perception on their students which is detected from their students’ language. Below are some samples of data from Teacher-1.

Student : Assalamualaikum, selamat pagi. Saya Sidik hari ini ada kelas tidak?
Teacher : Ada, emang kenapa?
Student : Selamat siang pak.Maaf menganggu, mau tanya format lapporan pklnya bagaimana ya pak? Terima kasih
Teacher : Lha, ini siapa?
Student : Tugas Wasbang kelompok 5 Angkatan 2015
Teacher : (no reply)
Student : Pagi bapak, hari ini jadi ada kelas bapak?
Teacher : Jadi

From the above interactions, Teacher-1 can see what happens to his students behind their languages/questions. From the communications, Teacher-1 feels annoyed since he perceives that the student does not pay attention to what he explained (communication-1), send unclear message (communication-2), there is no reasons why submitting assignment late (communication-3) and the students do not communicate with his/her other friends (communication-4). This indicates that Teacher-1’s emotion and perception can be generated from his students’ undesired academic neglect.

Differently, Teacher-2 feels that his student may unconsciously violate social rule of respect.

Student : Assalamu’alaikum pak...Mohon maaf baru mengingatkan pak. Pak...hari ini bisa menilai presentasi kelas wasetk 40 kah? Oh ya pak nanti saya ngambil LCD dan kabel di TU UPMS lagikah? Terima kasih.

Teacher-2 feels that his student displays positive language attitude (by using greeting, apology and gratitude expression). However, he also senses that his students break the norm of showing respect to other people since the student does not use capital P to address other people (male older people).

Distinctly, Teacher-3 feels that her student judges her by making mistakes in evaluating the student, just from the students’ prejudice (perspective).

Student : Assalamualaikum miss..., maaf menganggu. Saya ......ingin memprotes nilai saya miss...saya mendapat nilai C padahal saya selalu membuat tugas, masuk kelas dan presentasi...saya juga mengikuti uas...jadi saya mohon tolong dicek kembali nilai saya buk, soalnya yang lain dapat A dan AB...terimakasih atas perhatianny miss
Teacher: ....tdk ikut presentasi reading strategy dan nilai uas nya 54. Itu yang membuat nilainya c
Student: Hmmmmm, gak bisa dibantu miss...saya gak tau kalau ada gak ikut presentasi
miss...tolong bantu miss...
Teacher: (No reply)

Teacher-3 gets annoyed because the student does not use polite word (e.g. memprotes, hmmmmm, gak, buk), does not pay attention to his assignment and try to negotiate his final grade.

From their interaction/communication with their students, the teachers can learn three main things: the students’ aspects (all assessments about their students), communication/interaction approach (including language education, social relationship values) and teachers’ aspects (role of teachers). Below are several samples of data on what the teachers can learn/reflect from their communication.

“Yang biasanya saya refleksikan adalah berkaitan dengan karakter seseorang ketika berkomunikasi dengan orang lain. Bagi saya, ungkapan bahasa memperlihatkan sifat dan cara berpikir seseorang. Dan ini bagi saya sekaligus tentang cara seseorang memandang orang lain pula” (Teacher-1).


“...dalam berkomunikasi, kita harus memperhatikan sisi orang yang diajak berinteraksi juga, pertimbangkan hatinya, apakah hatinya akan terluka atau sekiranya marah dengan perkataan yang kita sampaikan. Jadi dalam berkomunikasi harus juga memperhatikan emosi orang lain serta konteks atau situasi” (Teacher-3)

Teacher-1 uses language as the window to learn his students’ character, understanding and how an individual will behave to other people. Teacher-2 sees language as part of cultural and value internalization/education and teachers should lead their students to not only transfer information but educate them to implement values. Teacher-3 sees language as part of emotional learning, in which teachers and students should consider their communication’s heart.

B. Discussion

This section contains the conceptualization of the collected data and the answers of the research problems. The first part is discussing teachers’ responses/perspectives/feelings about their students’ technology-mediated communication. The second part covers the teachers’ learning and teachers’ expectation on their students’ learning.

The data indicate that through their communication with their students, the teachers can understand aspects behind students’ language. They can assess students’ cognition (comprehension and attention), psychological aspect (motivation, affection, character), sociocultural aspect (politeness, value of respect, peer relationship). This implies that language has multi-functions which relate to culture, social relationship, learning facilitation and behavior mirroring.
Technology mediated communication activates the other role of language, that is language as a mask. By sending short message to their teachers, the students can hide their real emotion. They have time to re-check their language before they send it. They can control which word they send. Technology can buffer (soften) the real impact of language. By softening or reducing the impact of language, it is possible that the students intend to maintain good relationship with their teachers. Some students show that they are still using their spontaneous language to communicate, which is indicated by the insertion “hmmmmmm,” or “ok.” This may due to impact of pop-culture or other culture values to today’s generation. These students tend to use language of friendship to communicate with their teachers. This friendship language implies informality and equality values in social relationship. The teachers feel that this type of language is not appropriate and display value of no-respect. The teachers still use Indonesian culture which highlights hierarchical relationship in which the younger people should show respect to older people.

The teachers respond their students’ communication in some ways. They understand that as teachers, they should be able to regulate their emotion. Moreover, Teacher-2 believes that teachers should not only manage their emotion to maintain good relationship with their students, but also become role model by showing proper communication. By replying in polite and appropriate manner, teachers can show their students how to interact, educate students’ character through communication and internalize values of social relationship. Teachers should be able to be facilitator for students’ knowledge construction and their capacity for problem solving (Silver & Barrows, 2006). By replying their students’ communication appropriately, unconsciously, teachers facilitate students’ communication learning which happens in authentic learning environment. The other teachers, Teacher 1 and Teacher-2, sometimes do not reply their students’ communication. This is one way to handle emotion. These teachers try to suppress their emotion, by not showing how they feel through written language (by replying). This indicates that they are performing individual regulation. Self-regulation of emotion occurs when an individual regulate their own emotion by not involving others (target) to reduce emotional impact (Reeck, Ames & Ochsner, 2016). An individual who is productive in regulating his/her own emotion tends to feel fewer interpersonal disputes and has big chance to produce effective relationship (Lopes, et., al., 2012, cited in Reeck, Ames & Ochsner, 2016, p. 49). They are also performing attention deployment. Attention deployment of emotion regulation is applied when the individual moves away their attention (Jiang, vauras & Wang, 2016, p. 23). Moreover, teachers are expected to know the social rule/convention which brings their identities as teachers. An individual’s social identities is mediated by linguistic elements and apprehension on social pattern (Ochs, 1993).

From their communication with their students, teachers can reflect and be aware of what they can learn. They understand that language or communication cannot be learnt just by doing language assignment, but through natural and authentic context by giving them model of behavior. Authentic learning facilitated by technology enables students to learn by doing and engage in problem solving instead of just listening (Lombardi, 2007). They understand that teachers should be able to be learning facilitator. They also learn that language is influenced by their character. It is reflecting their inner quality. Thus, it is not sufficient to just educate their students’ language, but they should also develop their students’ character and their own character. Different people may use different way to communicate depending on their experiences, character and concern (Oberlander & Gill, 2004). The teachers perceive that they should be democratic and emancipative and should not make their students be afraid of them. To educate students’ communication, teachers also feel that they should insert cultural education. This is because how they communicate tends to be affected by their meaning/interpretation on cultural values. When children learn language, they are not only learning language, but they are also processing semiotic which is defined by their culture (Halliday, 1993). Even though sometimes they feel that their students’ language/word selection is not appropriate, the teachers should manage/regulate their emotion. This is because teachers’ emotion is very impactful on classroom climate, effective/quality of teachers-students relationship and students’ learning.
outcome. The students’ successful learning process can be a reward for teachers. Effective emotion management can be an indicator for social competence. Emotion competence exerts long-term impacts on social competence (Denham, Blair, DeMulder, Levitas, Sawyer, Mayor & Queenan, 2003). This is as mentioned by Teacher-2 as follows.

“…komunikasi itu tidak hanya berdimensi isi, tetapi juga berdimensi hubungan. Bahasa tutur mahasiswa sebagai penerus peradaban, baik terhadap dosen maupun terhadap siapapun wajib memperhatikan dimensi hubungan. Membentuk, mngembangkan hubungan kea rah yang positif-produktif itu sangat vital karena itu menyangkut seni bergaul, seni membangun kerjasama dalam tim, eni membangun dan merawat tali persaudaraan. Ujung-ujungnya jika komunikasinya baik: disini senang, disana senang dan dimana mana senang. Benar benar kaya raya secara sosial. Itulah modal sosial yang penting dicari dan dimiliki oleh setiap manusia muda, seperti mahasiswa.”

The teachers also expect that their students can learn many things from their interaction with their teachers. The teachers expect that when they interact, they should take account cultural values and the ethics of communication. They are expected to understand language diversity and know when they should use certain words/language to communicate. The teachers expect that their students should be aware of relationship content instead of just informative content in their communication, since communication contains social relationship element. They should feel language they use. The teachers also see students are still learning to develop their language/communication competence. This is as conceptualized from Teacher-2’s statement, as follows.


The students are still in their process of learning. It is expected that the students can learn from their experiences. The rapid development of ICT can influence students’ way of communicating because behind those rapid advances of ICT, our values are changing.

The following figure encapsulates some main points from teachers and students’ learning in their communication learning process.
VI. Conclusion

The infiltration of technology in education field is inevitable. One of some impacts is the communication between teachers and students which is mediated by technology. Technology can activate language’s role as a mask, in which it does not reveal the real language competence of the students. The students also tend to be more open and more free to communicate with their teachers. However, some of them are still using their friendship language which is more appropriate to be used when they communicate with their peers. The teachers feel that they should be able to regulate their emotion by showing how to communicate politely with other people. There are several aspects that the teachers learn from their interaction with their students. The first is the need to develop students’ positive character instead of only fixing their language since language can be reflection of students’ character. The second is inserting cultural values in students’ language education since these values provide rules on how to communicate appropriately. Third is it is vital to educate students’ language/communication within authentic/natural context with teachers’ facilitation. The teachers also learn that it is vital for learn how to regulate their emotion since it may affect classroom climate and teacher-students relationship quality. They also expect that the students are not only prioritizing information in their communication, but also relationship dimension.

References


