

When Foreign Language Spells Conflict in the Brain: The Use of English in the Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

English, a foreign language used as an everyday conversation in the Islamic boarding school, has created new language conflict in the brain. This article explores the language conflicts experienced by students when producing English. The data of this article taken from in-depth interviews with thirty senior Islamic high school students. This research shows that language competition in the brain has created language conflict. This article's main limitation is that it relies solely on students' perspectives from the lower motivation and does not consider the whole level of the students. Further research, thus, should use a more comprehensive approach that integrates a view of the entire students' level, thereby enabling it to formulate a more comprehensive solution.

Keywords: Language conflict in the brain, language competition, language production, Islamic boarding school.

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Inggris, bahasa asing yang digunakan sebagai percakapan sehari-hari di pesantren, telah menimbulkan konflik bahasa baru di otak. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi konflik bahasa yang dialami siswa saat memproduksi bahasa Inggris. Data artikel ini diambil dari wawancara mendalam terhadap tiga puluh siswa SMA Islam. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa persaingan bahasa di otak telah menimbulkan konflik bahasa. Keterbatasan utama artikel ini adalah hanya mengandalkan sudut pandang siswa dari motivasi yang lebih rendah dan tidak mempertimbangkan seluruh tingkatan siswa. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya sebaiknya menggunakan pendekatan yang lebih komprehensif yang mengintegrasikan pandangan seluruh level siswa, sehingga memungkinkan untuk merumuskan solusi yang lebih komprehensif.

Kata kunci: Konflik bahasa di otak, persaingan bahasa, produksi bahasa, pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

Although English is used as one of the obligatory daily means of communication, research by Kartini and Sahidin (2021) shows that English was at the third level intensity after national and Arabic languages in interaction. Similarly, although English is used as a daily means of communication, many students keep silent on English days. Therefore, English remains problematic, often failing to meet institutions' hope.

Studies of the link between English and communication have investigated such topics as the rejection of English in Islamic boarding schools (Mohd-Asraf, 2005) (Ahmad Rifa'i 0000 (<https://www.republika.id/posts/14030/kh-ahmad-rifai-arief-ulama-santun-pendidik-umat>), English is taught in Islamic boarding school (Sumitro, 2012), and English's usage as a means of communication (Saepullah, 2021). Initially, English was rejected by Islamic boarding school stakeholders, who feared that students would be infected by western culture (Alfarhan, 2016; Qureshi et al., 2021). More recent studies have investigated English's contribution to education, including its potential influence on students' learning results (Mohd-Asraf, 2005). Since the modern era, as shown by (Bukhory, 2016; Fatimah & Purwanti, 2020), English has been used as a means of communication for the students in the Islamic boarding school. English has been positioned as an objective force to determine daily communication in these studies. Subject's perspectives of subjects, including their conflict in the brain to use English and their implications, were less thoroughly analyzed.

This article investigates students with language conflict in the brain during English language production, focusing on the students' experiences from a lower motivation background. Besides identifying language conflict in the brain, this article also maps the implications of English usage. The incorporation of English and communication imposes a significant burden on students. In other words, this article seeks to examine the influence of English usage on students' communication.

This article departs from the argument that English does not always make proud and happy; it may create new issues that require consideration. Students have to comprehend and be aware of the position of English. English usage requires specific facilities, awareness, and competencies (Ahmad, 2016). At the same time, English imposes a new system upon the practice (Nurjaman, 2013), precipitating a shift from local language to international language (Crystal, 2003; Lauder, 2008). It thus requires students to adapt and thus creates new problems for students.

LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN THE BRAIN

The term "language conflict in the brain" when producing the language was used by Heuven et al. (2008) and Christoffels et al (2013) used for language production in translation. The language conflict in the brain is used as one of the language production activities of the brain in selecting the desired utterances in the target language. These activities can be seen from the language which the speakers produce. Some speakers can easily produce the purposed language, but some have trouble producing the intended utterances in the target language. Even some speakers could not control the interference of un-intended utterances from non-target language. The words from the un-intended language in non-target language intrude, make errors, and hesitate to produce those intended words (Alrasheedi, 2020; Elumalai et al., 2021; Heuven et al., 2008). On some occasions, the speakers experienced unconscious code-switching from one code to another.

Competition means a situation when somebody is trying to win someone else (Brown & Miller, 2013). Meanwhile, language conflict in the brain is language competition when bi/multilingual speakers speak the intended words in the target languages. (Heuven et al., 2008). This definition refers to the presence and activation of the first, second, and languages which speakers have acquired. The activations of previous languages lead to the competition when producing the intended language (Hermans et al., 2011). It can be seen from speakers' hesitation when they desire to produce the word "table." To produce the word "table", other

words that have the same reference to the word “table” will automatically be activated and competed to be selected (Marian & Spivey, 2003a).

LANGUAGE PRODUCTION

Language production is the process that involves expressing and creating messages through spoken language (Burridge & Stebbins, 2020; Taylor, 2009) and written language (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 321) predominantly spoken utterances (Bussmann, 2006, p. 651). It closely relates to how speakers or writers produce a single word and utterance in a specific language (Burridge & Stebbins, 2020). Producing utterances means converting the speakers’ ideas into understandable spoken and written utterances (Burridge & Stebbins, 2020). The idea-expression from the brain into the words and then utterances is known as language production (De Bot, 1992). This language production process is indicated by the presence of speech errors or slips of the tongue (Carroll, 2008), false start, lengthening, repetition, and pauses (Clark & Tree, 2002).

LANGUAGE NON-SPECIFIC ACTIVATION

Lots of evidence shows that planning speech in an intended language alone is not limited to activating the intentional language. It can be seen in figure 1 below.

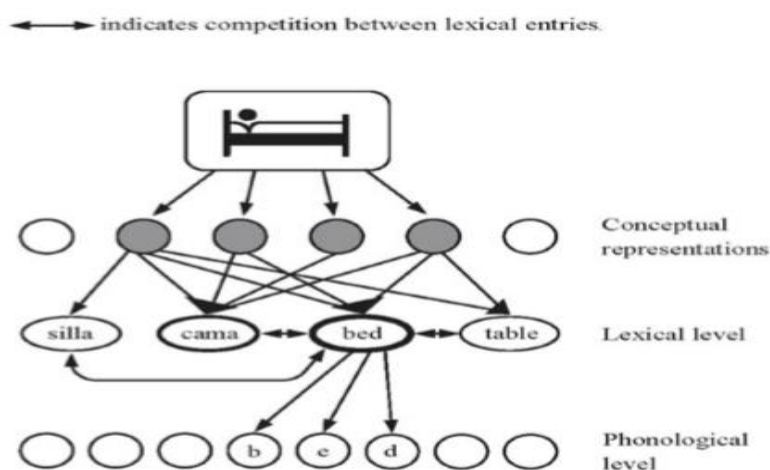


Figure 1. Illustration of the non-language specific selection (Costa et al., 1999)

These theories and models support non-selective language models in bi/multilingual speakers. Studies have been conducted to determine how lexical access happens in bilingual/multilingual speakers and how the specific properties of the first language (L1) affect and influence linguistic processing in the second language (L2) (Kroll & Groot, 2005). There are pieces of evidence to produce language from various sources revealing that activation spreads to the two lexical systems of the bilinguals (Costa, 2005; Costa et al., 1999; Costa & Caramazza, 2000; Hanulová et al., 2011; Hoshino & Kroll, 2008; Ju & Luce, 2004; Kroll et al., 2012; Kroll & Stewart, 1994). Second language processing is not autonomous, but it is affected by the previous and earlier acquired L1 at the different levels of representation (Bordag & Pechmann, 2007; Costa & Caramazza, 2000; Hermans et al., 1998; Macizo & Bajo, 2006;

Paolieri et al., 2010; Salamoura & Williams, 2007). Accordingly, most models postulate that a shared semantic system spreads activation to the lexical representations of both languages of a bilingual (Costa, 2005; Costa et al., 1999; De Bot, 1992; Green, 1986, 1998; Hermans et al., 1998; Poulisse & Bongaerts, 1994).

Non-selective language activation allows the competition for selection of the candidates within and crosses languages actively compete with alternatives in the undesired languages that are inhibited to allow accurate production to proceed further (Green, 1998). Different cues for language membership may bias the access to distinct candidates in the target language or permit the non-target language to be inhibited. Kroll (2006) stated that the possibility that the degree of the unintended language activity depends on some factors such as (1) language production, (2) proficiency, (3) the context in which speech production happens, (4) feature of those two languages, (5) and the tasks which are being performed. Kroll et al. (2008) give an example that during the production of the native language (L1), there can be little evidence of the second language (L2) interferences or influences because the speakers are more skillful and they have a quicker time course (Bloem et al., 2004; Bloem & La Heij, 2003). In contrast with the second language production, during L2/L3 production, multiple interferences/influences of L1 towards L2/L3 are possible (Costa, 2005; Costa & Caramazza, 2000; Hermans et al., 1998; Hoshino & Kroll, 2008).

In addition, language non-specific means that this is not only the intended language that is active in producing the desired words in the target language. The non-specific language assumption said that the process of lexicalization is through competition. The selection of the intended words is conducted through a competitive process among the activation of the target and non-target utterances. During the lexical access, the speaker experiences simultaneous activation of the languages in the speaker's brain. This parallel activation may increase as the competition from irrelevant language. The lexical selection is conducted through a competitive process before finding the intended utterances in the target languages. The language non-specific means that there is not only one language that appears in the bilingual or multilingual's brain when he/she is going to produce the intended utterances in the intended language (Costa & Santesteban, 2004; Kroll et al., 2008; Persici et al., 2019).

The assumption of language non-specific came from (Abutalebi & Green, 2007; Chambers & Cooke, 2009; Dijkstra et al., 1999; Green, 1986, 1998; Hermans et al., 1998; Kroll et al., 2006, 2014; Marian & Spivey, 2003a; Mickan et al., 2020; Persici et al., 2019; Piai et al., 2014). Marian and Spivey (2003a) stated that when producing the language is through a competitive process. Lexical access in producing the language is language non-specific. Before the speakers produce the intended words in the target language, the words that have similar meanings to the intended words also will be activated. The activation of these words would compete with each other that finally resulted the selective words. This competition can be within the same language (within-language competition), other languages (between-language competition), or both languages at the same time (simultaneous language competition) (Finkbeiner et al., 2006; Weber & Cutler, 2004).

Another evidence of language competition was shown by Hoshino and Thierry (2011) who conducted the research using Event-Related Potentials (ERPs). This research was to investigate the length of time-course of cross-language activation during second language word production. Spanish-English bilinguals were asked to name the pictures in English that were visually presented with the pictures. The participants could mention the names of the picture more slowly when the distractors were semantically related or phonologically related to either the English name of the picture or the Spanish name of the picture than when the picture and

distractor words were not related one. This indicates that both languages from Spanish and English are competing with each other.

Mickan et al. (2020) contributed to the existence of language competition in the bilingual/multilingual speaker's brain when producing certain words in specific languages. Weber and Cutler (Weber & Cutler, 2004) said that a non-native language has more language competition than a native language speaker. Native language speakers have been familiar with the words they use for communication. They always use their language most of the time. Two participants were asked to listen to the name of the picture. They are natives of the Dutch who learn the English language and English who know the Dutch. The Dutch were given the word that contains the vowel that the Dutch felt difficult. In this case, the Dutch were given the picture, and they were asked to listen to the target word is "PENCIL".

METHOD

The study of experiences with language conflict during English language production employs a qualitative approach, with data collected from students' observations and interviews. Sources were collected randomly, based on the research theme: students' language conflict during English language production, including their language conflict with the words forming, words pronunciation, factors affecting language conflict, and implications of language conflict in the brain to students' English performance. Stories were also selected to highlight the direct experiences of students and cases that reflected their language conflict.

Data collected from these observations were subsequently verified through consultations with students. Participants were limited to Islamic senior high school students who, despite limited prior experience with English mastery, had language conflict in the brain when asked to speak English. Although some participants had language conflict in the brain, and their English ability remained limited, they were required to use these skills to communicate with their friends in Islamic boarding schools.

Twenty-three students were selected for in-depth interviews. Islamic senior high school students were chosen purposefully. Students were selected based on their language conflict in the brain situation, which correlates with students' familiarity with English. Students were selected from different parts of Indonesia: western Indonesia (illustrating the case of Sumatra), central Indonesia (illustrating the case of Java), and eastern Indonesia (illustrating the case of Sulawesi).

During the data collection process, interview questions were formulated per interview guidelines. Questions used an open-ended design and sought to collect data on three elements. First, students' language conflict forms, a crucial factor in their involvement in communication. Second, students' language conflict factors, which shows students' diverse abilities to access the mental lexicon. Third, implications of language conflict to the use of English in communication.

The research was conducted between March and May 2024, when the students are in English days in Islamic boarding school. At this time, Islamic boarding schools implemented English as means of communication, thereby providing students with an entirely new experience. Participants were interviewed with permission and consent and asked questions openly either at home or in a public setting. Students were interviewed online, using Zoom, WhatsApp, and another platform, as face-to-face interviews were impossible. Students were asked to detail their experiences with English usage, and further information was sought through probing following Singarimbun and Effendi (2000).

Data collected were analyzed through three stages: restatement, description, and interpretation. The restatement was conducted with reference to interviews with students and used to obtain their perspectives. Description, meanwhile, was conducted to identify patterns and tendencies in the data, including students' language conflict with English language production. Interpretation, finally, was used to understand the individual, social, and institutional context of students' language conflict. This analysis enabled the researchers to draw conclusions through inference.

FINDINGS

English as the means of communication in the Islamic boarding school spells conflict in the bi/multilingual students' brains. The students had various language conflicts in the brain when producing English as a means of communication. These language conflicts include (1) brain language conflict forms, (2) factors affecting language conflict in the brain, and (3) the implication of language conflict in the brain towards students' communication. These language conflicts are explained in the following sections.

LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN FORMING ENGLISH WORDS

English language, like other languages, has different words forms. It is not easy to change English words from one word to another. These various forms make the students experience language conflicts in their brains. The language conflict in the students' brains is due to the speakers' languages' competitive words. It is from English and non-English words. It happens when they want to retrieve and produce the English words from the mental lexicon. It starts from the verb, noun, adjective, and other forms. The students have to change from one format to another formats. The students experience language conflict when they change from one English form to another. These language conflicts were experienced by respondents as follows.

VERB FORMING

A verb is a word to show an action. English verb base forms such as to write, open, close, and other terms can be identified by students of Islamic boarding schools. But the students had language conflict when they wanted to form a verb from different parts of speech. They have language conflict to change adjectives to verbs. The following respondents narrate this language conflict. For example, the respondent (1) said:

"For me, speaking using English is hard. I cannot produce English words as easily as the Arabic language. I cannot change English nouns to English verbs. I do not know about the pattern and formula to form those words. When I want to speak English, I always remember my language. It appears in my brain. I have no idea to form English words. Forming English words is very difficult". It happened when I wanted to form the adjective "sharp" verb. I cannot change the adjective to verb form".

Respondent (2):

I feel that English forms are very complicated. There is no specific guidance in forming the English words. It is not the same as the Arabic language, which has a specific platform in creating Arabic words into various forms. For example, when I want to make the verb form of the English word "memperpanjang," I cannot say this word in the

English word. It appears in my mind the Arabic word “athoola – yuthiilu”. I do not know how to say “memperpanjang” in English. The term “memperpanjang” appears in my brain before finding its English word.

ABSTRACT NOUN FORMING

An abstract noun is a noun that cannot be seen but can be felt. Abstract nouns can be formed by certain affixation to the original words. These affixations are put at the final of the words such as “ment”, “ure”, “ation”, “tion” and so forth. This affixation makes students experience language conflict in their brains. The following respondents felt this experience.

Respondent (3):

“I cannot form the abstract noun. I feel that there is no consistent rule in making abstract nouns. It can be seen from the word “divide”. To make this word in abstract noun form, it should be changed into “division”. It is not the same as the word “develop”. “Development” is the abstract noun of the word “develop” but the word “organize” becomes “organization”. Other forms often appear in my brain when I make an abstract noun from a verb. These additions of affixation appear in my brain. It also happens when I want to make other abstract nouns such as “appropriate”. The affixations “ment”, “ition” compete in my brain.”

Respondent (4) also had the experience to form an abstract noun. Respondent 1 said in the following statement:

“To make abstract noun needs high effort. I have to think harder before producing the abstract noun. There is no exact pattern in making abstract nouns. It happens to me when I want to say “failure” from the verb “fail”. The competitive words in my brain are “kegagalan” (national language as the second language), “failition” and “failization”.

BRAIN LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION

English construction is not the same as the students’ regional and national languages. This difference causes language conflicts in their brains. It happens when the students will produce the English construction.

ENGLISH PHRASES

English phrases and arrangements are different from the students’ first and national language. The students’ phrase constructions consist of headwords and modifiers. Meanwhile, the English phrases consist of modifiers and headwords. It is in contrast with their language. The students feel language conflict when they want to produce the English phrases. They have to think harder in constructing English phrases. Respondents have specific experiences in arranging the English phrases and sentence constructions.

Respondent (5):

“I have to think twice and even more when I want to make English construction. It is in contrast with my language as the national language. This makes me very hard to think. I feel that the English construction does not appear in my brain. I have to start with my

language. It is very often to say English construction using my language construction. For example, when I want to say, "good book", I say, "book good" instead. This construction is similar to the Arabic language".

Another respondent also experiences this language conflict in constructing the English construction.

"Respondent (6): Constructing English words needs more attention and concentration. My brain cannot say the English construction without helping Indonesian language construction. I feel hard to construct English construction in speaking. I have to focus my concentration when I want to create orally. I often hesitate when speaking English".

VERBAL AND NOMINAL CONSTRUCTION

Verbal and nominal have a different construction. Verbal construction is a sentence that consists of subject and predicate. The predicate of this construction is from a verb. For example, the teacher goes to school on workdays. Meanwhile, nominal construction is a sentence arranged by subject and complement. For example, the teacher is in the school on workdays. The students experienced language conflict in their brains when constructing intended utterances in nominal and verbal sentences. It can be seen in respondents' narration as follows. Respondent (7) narrated:

"I have not understood yet about verbal and nominal English structure. The most important thing for me is I use English. It is ok though I do not understand them. I know jumlah ismiyah (nominal sentence) and jumlah fi'liyah (verbal sentence) in the Arabic language. For example, I am study here".

This experience is also felt by the respondent (8). "You are sit here ya". This sentence consists of the auxiliary verb "be" in verbal sentences without changing the form of the verb, like in present continuous tense and passive construction. Respondent (9) also has experience concerning nominal and verbal construction. For example, "I am come to school with my friends. I cannot differ nominal and verbal sentences".

LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN PRONOUNCING ENGLISH PHONEMES

Many English pronunciations are different from other languages. The same vowels can be pronounced differently and the same consonant also can be pronounced differently. This discrepancy makes the students think hard when they want to pronounce the intended words. The students experience language conflict in their brains. There is language competition in pronouncing the same phonemes in different places. The following respondents narrated this language conflict in pronouncing the English phonemes. For example, respondent (10):

I feel hard to pronounce English words. The same vowels are pronounced differently. When my teacher asked me to read English words, I equalized the pronunciation. The way how to pronounce is different. I found the "blood" in the reading text. I read the word "blood" in the way the word "cook" has. These two words have double vowel /o/ but they have different pronunciations. It also happens when I find similar English spelling in the same vowels. This situation makes me very hard to say English words. When I want to pronounce a similar phoneme, it always comes to my mind.

This difficulty is also experienced by respondent (11), who said that she felt language conflict when she said certain English words.

"She said, "It is easier to construct Arabic construction than English. Moreover, when we use it in speaking. I felt that I had to mention Indonesian when I wanted to talk in English. It makes me very hard to speak the English language".

It also occurs when pronouncing English consonants. Some consonants have the same pronunciation and some of them are pronounced differently. This inconsistency in pronunciation makes the students have language conflicts in their brains.

Respondent (12) said:

"Oh my God. How to pronounce English consonants makes me very stressed. Phoneme "c" is pronounced "k" like in the word "cable" and "carpenter," but on some occasions, it is also pronounced "s" in the word "certain." This phoneme is also pronounced "k" and "s" in the word "successively". Therefore, when I find the phoneme "C" in other words, it appears in my brain when the pronunciation "k," "c" and "s." This makes me unconfident to speak English."

This language conflict is also experienced by the respondent (13) as follows:

"I feel frustrated when communicating in the English language. My brain is complicated with pronunciation. The phoneme /i/ is sometimes pronounced "ai," but sometimes it is pronounced "i". There is no difference between the spelling and its pronunciation. I do not know the regulation of using "ai" and "i." The word "like" is pronounced "ai" but it is different from the way how to pronounced in the word "think". When I find the phoneme "i:, the pronunciation "ai" and "i" are present in my brain."

Respondent (14) said," When I want to pronoun phoneme /g/, I feel that there is any debate between sound /dʒ/ and /g/. The words "go", "goat", "God" are pronounced "go". There is no difference in pronunciation. But the words "giraffe" and "gentle" are pronounced /dʒ/. It is difficult for me to decide whether to pronounce /g/ or / dʒ/ when I find the words started with phoneme /g/. Another respondent (15) experiences the same case. It happens when the respondent wants to pronounce phoneme /u/. She had language conflict in producing the phoneme /u/. The sound /ʌ/, /ə/ and /u/ appears in her brain when she finds the words with phoneme /u/ such as the word "but", "put", "cut", "until", "turn" and other words that have phoneme /u/.

FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE CONFLICT

Language conflict in the brain which is experienced by the students are due to several factors.

DOMINANT LANGUAGES

The students have acquired their first, second, and also third languages. They have been usual to use those prior languages for their communication. They use their first and second language when communicating with their father, mother, and family. It has happened since they were a child. The following respondents felt this experience.

The respondent (16) narrated as follows: *“I started to learn English when I was in the fourth grade. I do not understand English because it is complicated for me. This makes my English score is bad. The way the teacher teaches English is not interesting. The teacher always gives the assignment to the class, so it makes me boring. When I graduated from elementary school and continued studying in this Islamic boarding school, I felt stressed. I cannot speak the English language. I have tried to study hard but I still feel difficult to study English. I always use my national language when I communicate with my friend. It is easy to communicate in my national language but I have to be careful when I use this language. The language section will punish me when they know I use national language when communicating with my friends in Islamic boarding school”*.

Respondent (17) also admits that she has been usual to communicate using her national language, so it is a problem when she asked to speak in English.

INVERTED CONSTRUCTION

The inversion construction makes the students have language conflict in the brain. This is what the following respondents can narrate.

Respondent (18): *English structure is the opposite of the Indonesian language. It is in contrast with the Indonesian language. I have learnt Indonesian and Arabic languages with the same structure, so it is difficult for me to construct the English construction. I often experience a slip of the tongue when I say in the English language. I use Indonesian language structure to communicate English language structure.*

Another respondent also experiences this narration.

Respondent (19) said, *“When I want to make the construction in English, I remember my Indonesian language construction when speaking English. I felt unconscious to say the Indonesian language. English is difficult for me. It is very complicated.*

THE IMPLICATION OF LANGUAGE CONFLICT

CHOOSING OTHER LANGUAGES

Language conflict in the brain has implications for English as a means of communication. This implication leads students to choose other than English and use non-standard English. Language conflict in the brain makes the students change the language in communication. The students do not use English as the obligatory language used to communicate. They chose Arabic and the national language as their daily means of communication in the sleeping room. The following respondents narrate this narration.
Respondent (20):

“Because English is very hard for me, I use my national language to talk to my friends. I always remember my national language when I say in the English language. I feel difficult to recall English words from my brain”.

This admittance is also expressed by respondent (21):

“I often use the Indonesian language when I speak to my friends. I cannot speak the English language. I always slip of the tongue when speaking English. I use Indonesian when I am only together with my friend”. Besides, the language conflict in the brain makes the students use their local and national language in constructing English. The following respondents narrate these experiences. This admittance is also felt by the respondent (22). She felt afraid of being mistaken when using English in communication.

USING NON-STANDARD ENGLISH

Language conflict in the brain makes students use non-standard English. They use English terms and construction, which their friends understand. These constructions are based on students' minds. It can be seen in the respondents' narrations as follows.

Respondent (23):

“In the Islamic boarding school, we use English without following the English construction. The most important thing is the language section does not punish us due to language use. For example, I want washing washing. It is safe from punishment”.

LOSS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

When communicating in English, language conflict in the brain makes the students feel unconfident. They feel ashamed to speak to their friends in Islamic boarding schools. Their friends laughed at them when they used English. This experience came from the respondent (24). She said that I feel unconfident about speaking the English language. I am aware that my English is not good. I seldom use English as means of communication. I used the Arabic language when asking my friends.

DISCUSSION

This study has shown that bi/multilingual speakers experience language conflict in the brain when they want to produce English. The speakers cannot avoid language conflict. This language conflict in the brain has significantly affected students' access to the mental lexicon with hesitation during English language production. When students come from high language conflict, they cannot easily access the mental lexicon, and as a result, they have delay achieving the desired intended words. This result supports the view that both words from target and non-target languages are automatically activated during language production and that blocking one of them is impossible (Heuven et al., 2008). Indeed, as shown by Amirudin and Jannah (2019), most students' English interaction in the Islamic boarding schools was very low. They were rare to use English to interact with their friends and teachers.

The study also has proved that language conflict in the students' brains is due to the discrepancy between their local, national and English language construction. The students' English construction used their local and national language construction. The result of this research supports the research conducted by Sultan (2015). Based on Sultan's research, Pakistani undergraduate students had problems in producing written English constructions due to literal translation from their mother tongue. It also supports the research conducted by Mammeri (2015) that the students have problems in word orders and subject-verb agreement in composing English syntax and morphology. Their native language influences their target language (English) Fauziati (2017).

The result of the study showed that the students feel hard to make English construction. They use English phrases based on their native language construction. English phrase construction is formed by modifier – headword such as “good book”. Meanwhile, their native language phrases construction is headword – modifier such as “*buku bagus*”. It means that their brain had language conflict. They cannot avoid the automatic activation of the word in target and non-target languages when producing intended words in the purposeful language. This research supports the research of (Marian & Spivey, 2003b) that there is language competition between and within languages. Between language means there is language competition from target and non-word in a different language. Meanwhile, within language competition, the word competition comes from the same language. This language conflict leads the speakers to use dominant language rather than less dominant language (Marian et al., 2017).

Students with language conflict in the brain reflect the broader disparities in the Islamic boarding school, which could threaten the quality of Islamic boarding school students as Indonesian human resources in the future. Their experiences provide essential testimony regarding the Islamic boarding school’s mission to provide Islamic generation. In such a situation, language conflict in the brain contributes to the reproduction of personality disparity. At the same time, English is regarded as the self-representation of prestige. It is also perceived as developed countries and economies (Akynova et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Though often written to be a crown of Islamic boarding schools and a means of communication during the study, English in Islamic boarding schools has proven problematic for many students. They had language conflict when producing the English language. Words from target and non-target language are activated automatically in the brain. Dominant languages consisting of the students’ local, national, and Arabic languages have dominated their brains. It is already known that English comes after acquiring their dominant language. They have been more familiar with those languages. They feel easier to produce those dominant languages. Consequently, they cannot produce English as quickly as their dominant languages. This research has shown that many of the obstacles experienced by students trace their roots to the lower self-unconfident, lower motivation, awareness, and lack of English mastery that structure the learning process and its results. Lower motivation, awareness, and lack of English competencies limit students’ ability to access the lexicon from the mental lexicon to produce English as a means of communication.

This study has limited itself to students' perspectives, and as a result, it has not yet investigated the views of all students and their teachers. Recognizing that teachers and educational institutions are fundamental parts of the educational system, integrating their perspective with students would provide a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamically evolving situation. Similarly, a study that integrates students, teachers, and schools could potentially provide better solutions for ensuring the continuation of English communication in Islamic boarding schools. To accommodate all involved students, teachers, and schools, further research is necessary. Only with such research could comprehensive solutions be identified.

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