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AN ANALYSIS OF FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF A THREE YEARS OLD CHILD: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The process of acquiring language in a child occurs when the child is learning a mother tongue (native language). Language acquisition is the process of children getting the ability to capture, produce, and use words for understanding and communication. In this case, the researcher presents how the child acquires the language. This research discusses the first language acquisition on a three-years child based on phonological, semantic and syntax aspects. This research will conduct with descriptive qualitative research. The objectives of descriptive qualitative study are obtained from the utterances of her boy named is Mu'ammarr Syauqi Idris. The researcher also took the data by observation and video recording. Based on the research, the researcher concluded that Mu'ammarr able to communicate appropriately.

Keyword: *analysis, first language acquisition, phonology, syntax, semantic*

Abstrak

Proses pemerolehan bahasa pada anak terjadi ketika anak sedang mempelajari bahasa ibu (bahasa ibu). Pemerolehan bahasa adalah proses anak mendapatkan kemampuan untuk menangkap, memproduksi, dan menggunakan kata-kata untuk pemahaman dan komunikasi. Dalam hal ini, peneliti menyajikan bagaimana anak memperoleh bahasa. Penelitian ini membahas tentang pemerolehan bahasa pertama pada anak usia tiga tahun berdasarkan aspek fonologis, semantik dan sintaksis. Penelitian ini akan dilakukan dengan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Tujuan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif diperoleh dari



tuturan anak laki-lakinya yang bernama Mu'ammam Syauqi Idris. Peneliti juga mengambil data dengan cara observasi dan perekaman video. Berdasarkan penelitian, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa Mu'ammam mampu berkomunikasi dengan baik.

Kata kunci: *analisis, pemerolehan bahasa pertama, fonologi, sintaksis, semantik*

Introduction

Human communicate through language and require a process that develops in stages of their age. The way of human to acquire language as a way of communicating is always an interesting subject to be discussed thus giving many theories about language acquisition. Chaer (2015) gives the understanding that language acquisition or acquisition is a process that takes place in the brain of a child when he gets his first language or mother tongue. First language is obtained in several stages and each subsequent stage is closer to the grammar of an adult language. Obtaining first language, or what is often called mother tongue, is a creative process in which language rules are learned by children based on the input and they receive from the simplest form to the most complex form.

Schutz (2014:1) explains that language acquisition is "the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire reviews their first language. "Acquisition is the process to get a language without deliberate action (unknowingly), usually unstructured, taking place in society, informal, referring to the demands of communicating, and have social consequences (related to the community or neighbourhood). That will be different with learning. Learning is the process of getting a language which is deliberate, structured, formal, competency as a major capital, took place in the class, referring to the educational demands, and the knowledge. Children are born and are involved in linguistic environments; they immediately start to develop a language.

Meanwhile the acquiring of language is affected from the environment. The acquisition of a child's first language that starts from the development of phonological components is not only influenced by genetic factors, such as the development of spoken devices but is also influenced by the environment. The more children grow into adults it is hoped that their language development will also improve and become productive in using language. Like the opinion put forward by Traxler (2011) that when a child's skills develop, then children become more flexible in using language properly. From the description above it can be said that children get their first language in almost the same way and are influenced by genetic and environmental factors.

Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting this research to find out the problems and to analyse the children acquire the first language

based on linguistics features, i.e. phonology, semantic and syntax. The researchers formulate the research question as follows: how can Mu'ammad acquire her first language based on phonology, semantic and syntax aspects?

Language acquisition

According to Chomsky (2009:101-102) language acquisition is a matter of growth and maturation of relatively fixed capacities, under appropriate external conditions. The form of acquisition and use of language the language that is acquired is largely determined by internal factors; it is because of the fundamental correspondence of all human languages that a child can learn any language. Child language acquisition happened through an activity of speaking. The speaking ability develops in a child's life, which is preceded by a period of listening skills and then continued to speaking skills. Talking is very closely linked with the development of the vocabulary of the child obtained through listening and reading activities (Tarigan, 2008). In this case the person's ability to speak is certainly influenced by memories of the past. More and more of experience in accepting the vocabulary, then he will be able to do a good talking to.

Language acquisition at age 1-3 years old occurs naturally. It is meant that a child is insensibly acquiring the language but the fact he/she can produce the language for communication. The process of acquiring the language at the age before 5 years old is called as golden age. This period show the progress of language development from one stage to another.

The Stages in First Language Acquisition

When a human is born, he does not have suddenly the grammar of his first language in his brain and is completed with its rules. The native language is acquired through some stages, and every stage is passed near an adult's language. There are six stages in children's first language acquisition, namely:

1. Pre-talking stage / Cooing (0-6 months)

According to Bolinger in Bertharia (2015), pre-talking stage or cooing is the vowel-like sound responding to human sounds more definitely, turns head, eyes seem to search for speaker occasionally some chuckling sounds. For example, Miles (at the age of 4 months) demonstrating the cooing stage of language acquisition. He is producing vowel-like sounds (especially, the back vowels [u] and [o]) in the sounds of "oh", "uh", and "ah", typical of "cooing". He still finds difficulties in producing the vowel sound [i] except when he is screaming in "hii". Moreover in producing the consonant sounds like [b], [p], or [m], she is not able to produce them yet.

2. Babbling stage (6-8 months)

Babbling is the sounds that infants produce as consonant-vowel combinations (Steinberg in Bertharia, 2015). The sounds which are produced by infants but not all the speech sounds are the same with

language of the world such as [ma-ma-ma] or [da-da-da] and [ba-ba-ba] or [na-na-na].

3. Holophrastic stage (9-18 months)
Fromkin in Bertharia (2015) defined holophrastic from holo "complete" or "undivided" plus phrase "phrase" or "sentence". So holophrastic is the children's first single word which represents a sentence. Children use one word to express a particular emotional state. For example, Debby's mother recorded the words she had pronounced during the 8 months after the appearance of her first word at 9 months (this was [adi], used both for her "daddy"). During the two weeks from 17 months - 17 months and a half, she more than doubled her vocabulary.
4. The two-word stage (18-24 months)
Two-word stage is the mini sentences with simple semantic relations. As Fromkin in Bertharia (2015) states that children begin to form actual two-word sentences, with the relations between the two words showing definite syntactic and semantic relations and the intonation contour of the two words extending over the whole utterance rather than being separated by a pause between the two words. The following "dialogue" illustrates the kinds of patterns that are found in the children's utterances at this stage. Basically, a child at this age is already able to produce the consonant sounds like [j], [p], [b], [d], [t], [m], and [n].
5. Telegraphic stage (24-30 months)
Telegraphic is merely a descriptive term because the child does not deliberately leave out the no content words, as does an adult sending a telegram (Fromkin in Bertharia, 2015). When the child begins to produce utterances that are longer than two words, these utterances appear to be "sentence-like"; they have hierarchical, constituent structures similar to the syntactic structures found in the sentences produced by adult grammar.
6. Later multiword stage (30+months)
According to Bolinger (2015), this later multiword stage is the fastest increase in vocabulary with many new additions every day; no babbling at all; utterances have communicative intent. There is a great variation among children, which seems to understand everything said within hearing and directed to them.

Acquisition in language acquisition is generally known that there are three mechanisms in language acquisition. They are presented as follows:

1. Imitation, imitating or copying, here children are more likely to imitate what's there and witnessed on the environment, in this case, the parents and the environment are very important.

2. Conditioning, in this mechanism, children are more conditioned to the environment so that children initially know about what is around them, such as the introduction of the sound of the voice of his master to the introduction of the sound of the meaning of an object that the mechanism habituation to speech heard children and are associated with objects or events. Therefore the initial vocabulary that children have is a noun.
3. Social Cognition, in this case, the social cognition is strongly related to the process of imitation, because here, children acquire language through meaningful word or directing something, here the process of understanding the semantic cognition already works because he has understood the person of interest in saying anything.

Children aged three years begin to recognize and learn to say simple words even though their pronunciation is not yet perfect and are able to compose words and convey their communication in a sentence like adults. At age three children also understand much spoken words. Some children can understand as many as thousand words and produce or say several hundred. They are able to recognize verbs and pronouns, they can also convey their wishes in the form of sentences such as "I want to watch TV", "I want to play", and so on. Not only can convey their wishes, at this age, children are also able to ask questions, protest, reject, or convey feelings

Research Methods

The methodology of this research is a descriptive qualitative research. According to Moleong (2005), descriptive qualitative research is a research based on data collected in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers (Nainggolan et al, 2021; Situmorang and Herman, 2021).

The object of this study was a child named Mu'ammarr Sauqi, three years old. As physically, mentally and socially, he is a healthy boy. He loves singing, running inside and outside the house and watching cartoon movies. He also like to ask his parents about the names of things, actions, or ideas he observes inside and outside the house. The other participants in this research were Mu'ammarr's parents. And the place of this research was his house. The language used by this family is Indonesian.

Data collection and analysis consists of several stages. First, the data is taken by recording the child's conversation by the researcher in a short conversation. The recorded data is then transcribed. Second, after the transcript process, the data is then classified based on the acquisition of phonology such as vowels and consonants. Third, the writer identifies the sound substitution that occurs in words and the omission of sounds in words. Fourth, observations in the form of data or findings can be analyzed and confirmed with language acquisition

theory in children. And after collecting the data, the researcher would like to transcribe the recording data and analyzed it based on phonology, syntax and semantic acquisition theories

Results and Discussion

Acquire the phonology

The acquisition of phonology, the acquisition of human language sounds follows a sequence (Dradjowidjojo, 2000). Sound acquisition goes in harmony with the nature of the sound itself. The first sound that comes out when the child starts talking is the contrast between consonants and vowels. In the case of vocals, only the sounds / a /, / i /, and / u / will come out first. These three sounds, namely / a / will be pronounced earlier than / i /, or / u /, or referred to as a minimal vocal system. The acquisition of the contrast consonant aspect that first arises is the opposition between oral sound and nasal sound (/p-b/ and /m-n/) and then followed by contrast between bilabial and dental (/ p / - / t /), or called the minimal consonant system. The involvement of phonological components as described is more related to human neurobiology. However, the acquisition of human language based on biological systems requires input from the environment as a trigger towards the development of language acquisition.

In the phonology the researcher found the utterances of Mu'amar as follow:

No	Utterances	Meaning
1.	Ekim	Es krim
2.	Bate	Baterai
3.	Ain	Air
4.	Panggin	Panggil
5.	Ulay	Ular
6.	Jewuk	Jeruk
7.	Maah	Marah
8.	Tebang	Terbang
9.	Cokat	Coklat
10	Abis	Habis

At the level of phonology, Mu'amar had already mastered the basic vowel/a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/. He was also produce various phonemes and can distinguish the meaning of the words that he spoke. For consonants, Mu'amar also mastered most of consonants except [r] and [l]. He almost cannot say phonemes [r] and [l] perfectly in the end of word and also in the middle of word, like "panggil" become "panggin", "ular" become "ulay", "coklat" become "cokat". Then Mu'amar cannot pronounce the sound of phoneme [s] if it in the middle of word for example "es kim" become "ekim". However he was able to utter sound [s] at the end of the word, for example "habis" become "abis". The

number of phonemes was still not complete and perfect as it was influenced by the growing canine teeth. In addition, it was also influenced by concrete experience the child received for nearly all phonemes obtained directly related to the experience that happens every day, especially concerning the primary needs of the child.

Acquiring the semantic

According to Verhaar (2008), semantics is a branch of linguistics that examines meaning (Sinaga et al, 2020; Thao et al, 2021). Semantics are divided into grammatical and lexical semantics. Grammatically, elements that carry the smallest grammatical meaning are morphemes like affixation. Meanwhile, the lexical aspect of the elements is lexicology. This includes a large number such as meaning and reference, denotation and connotation, extensional and intentional analysis. According to Dardjowidjojo (2000), semantic refers to the study of interaction meaning which includes the meaning and contexts in which the speeches are produced.

In the semantic the researcher found the utterances of Mu'ammad as follow:

No	Utterances	Meaning
1.	Ini jewuk siapa mi?	Ini jeruk siapa mi?
2.	Hayo maah buya.	Hayo, marah buya.
3.	Umi, abg mau tido	Umi, abang mau tidur
4.	Ini dah abis.	Ini sudah habis.
5.	Abang mau makan pake telon	Abang mau makan pakai telur
6.	Ini namanya pesawat terbang kan mi?	Ini namanya pesawat terbang kan mi?
7.	Mana bate mainan abang ni mi?	Dimana baterai mainan abang ni mi?

Based on the observation the researcher concluded that Mu'ammad had been able to communicate well, the rules regarding the speech turns can be controlled well. The researcher had found some words with the meaning such as "ini jewuk siapa mi" means "jeruk siapa ini", (whose orange is this). "umi, abang mau tido" means "umi, abang mau tidur" (he wants to sleep), "abang mau makan pake telon" means "abang mau makan pakai telur" (he wants to eat with egg). Even he could ask something that he couldn't understand like "ini namanya pesawat terbang kan mi" means "ini namanya pesawat terbang kan mi" (he wanted to make sure that it is plane), "mana bate abang mi?" means "dimana baterai abang mi?" (He asked where his battery did").

Based on the data above, the researcher conclude that Mu’ammam was able to communicate appropriately (connected). Even he researchers found that there were words of his utterances that have error phonemes but he had been able to communicate and got the meaning or the message of the conversation occurred.

Acquiring the syntax

In syntactic level, one-word utterance actually is a simple sentence for the child. They still learn how to use the language and try to produce it. Children will acquire the language from birth. They will pass some stages till they master the language. It starts from cooing stage, babbling stage, holophrastic stage, telegraphic stage, and multiword stage. In syntactic level, children start to speak with one-word utterances. One-word utterance is a very simple sentence. In the case of the research subject, the research subject also passed the same stages like other children in acquiring the first language. He started acquiring the syntactic from one-word utterance, two-word utterance to three-word utterance and multiword utterance.

In the syntax level the researcher found the utterances of Mu’ammam as follow:

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Ummi | : | Abang, kalau sudah besar mau jadi apa? (What do you want to be when you grow up?) |
| Mu’ammam | : | mau jadi pesawat (I want to be plane) |
| Ummi | : | maksudnya mau jadi pilot? (Do you mean be a pilot) |
| Mu’ammam | : | iya piyot (iya, pilot) (yes, pilot) |
| Ummi | : | Abang ga mau jadi ustad? (Don’t you want be “ustad”) |
| Mu’ammam | : | utad tu apa mi (what do you mean “ustadz”) |
| Ummi | : | ustad itu penceramah (ustad is a speaker) |
| Mu’ammam | : | ooh, penceamah (ooh,penceramah) (ooh, a speaker) |
- Abang jadi piyot aja, adek jadi doten (Abang jadi pilot aja, adek jadi dokter) (I want to be a pilot, my brother wants to be a doctor)

From those conversation, Mu’ammam had mastered the relationship between the subjects with the objects case, also the relationship between the subject cases with the act, and so on. Based on Chaer (2015) who has formulated the theory of language acquisition in cognitivist theory scope. According to this hypothesis, language is acquired based on structure. These structures are acquired by children by interacting with the environment. The cognitivist hypothesis believes that language is mainly cognitive, mental process and rule-governed (universal grammar) in deep and surface structures (Green, 2016).

Conclusion

Language acquisition is a complex event and process experienced by children until they get the second language learning. Language acquisition is strongly influenced by physiological and psychological functions. Physiologically articulation functions due to the incomplete articulation of three years old child so that the words spoken were not perfect. Then, psychologically, the child experiences something tangible or concrete, either the nature of objects or actions that are going to help in the process of language acquisition quickly and spoken words become meaningless.

In this case, the researcher found that Mu'ammad was able to communicate well. Phonologically he had been able uttered all vowels and most of consonants. The number of phonemes was still not complete and perfect as it was influenced by the growing canine teeth. Semantically he had been able to communicate and got the meaning or the message of the conversation occurred. And the syntax level he had mastered the relationship between the subjects with the objects case, also the relationship between the subject cases with the act, and so on.

The researcher conclude that linguistic environment greatly contributes to the language acquisition. The acquisition of a child's first language can develop rapidly in line with the intensity of the process of children being exposed to the language itself in an environment that is indeed supportive, for this requires awareness of parents, teachers and the community so that it is not easy to judge a child's ability in language. In addition, parents' role is important to develop the children's language. The parents should build interaction with their children to know their child's language development. The parents is the most part important in developing children language acquisition because family takes place during daily routines in life as parents, children and family members use language at home and in his community.

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