



An Analysis of *Dilara's* First Language Acquisition: A Three-Year Child

Nur Azmi Rohimajaya^{a*}, Welliam Hamer^b

^aDepartment of English Education, University of Mathla'ul Anwar Banten

^bDepartment of English Education, University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa Banten

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*Correspondence Address:

nurazmirohimajaya030@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of the research was to analyze the first language acquisition on a three years child based on phonological, morphological, and semantic aspects. This research was conducted with descriptive qualitative research where the subject and object were taken from the child at age 3 years old. The researchers took their daughter named Truly Dilara Tenderly Wellaz as the subject and got the data by observation and video recording. Based on the analysis, the researchers concluded that Dilara was able to communicate appropriately. Finally, the parents' role is important to develop the child language. The parents should build interaction with their children to know their child's language development. Besides that, the researchers suggest the parents say the right pronunciation to their children.

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is a complex event and process experienced by children until they get the second language learning. 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 they receive from the simplest form to the most complex form.

Children will master language faster if they acquire language in the golden period or the ideal period (critical age), which is 6-15 years of age. According to Fromkin (2010), the critical age ranges from 0-6 years. Every normal

child whose mind grows will learn the first language or mother tongue in the first year of his life, and this process occurs until about the age of five years. When a child is getting his first language, two processes occur, namely the competency process and the performance process. The process of competence is the process of mastering grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics) that goes unnoticed. This competency process becomes a condition for the occurrence of a performance process that involves the process of understanding and the process of producing utterances.

Hypotheses in Language Acquisition

Innateness or Nativism Hypothesis

This theory arises from the observation conducted by Lenneberg and Chomsky in Otto (2015). The results of the observations are elaborated as follows; (a) Every normal child exactly acquires his mother tongue if his or her mother introduces it and he or she is not exiled from his mother. (b) Language acquisition has no relation to the cognitive aspect of a child. It means that sooner or later all children either smart or not they can acquire their mother tongue. (c) Sentences uttered by children sometimes are grammatically incorrect, incomplete, or view in numbers. (d) Language cannot be taught to other creatures. In other words, only human beings have it. (e) The stages of language acquisition are gradually in the same stages though it depends on the process of the maturity of children. (f) The structure of language is very complicated but children can acquire it completely within only a short period (3 to 4 years). Based on the observation results above, it can be concluded that a newborn baby is equipped with a device that can help people to acquire language easily and quickly. There are two kinds of innateness hypothesis. They are language and mechanism theories. Language theory has an assumption that language is not learned but it is determined by special features of the conscience of human beings. On the other hand, mechanism theory believes that the process of language acquisition experienced by human beings determined by the cognitive development which interacts with experiences.

This theory is believed as the most appropriate theory dealing with language acquisition. It is believed that human beings are equipped with an amazing thing or device which makes them produce or acquire language easily and quickly. This theory believes that all human beings have it. Miller and Chomsky in Otto (2015) call it LAD (Language Acquisition Device). They state that every child

has LAD even since he or she was born. LAD is an intellectual conscience device that is for acquiring mother tongue easily and quickly. Then the results are linguistics abilities including phonology, syntax, and semantics. The way LAD works is when a certain language such as Javanese, Arabic, English, or Indonesian is given to LAD. Then a child will save them in his LAD as an input. After that, LAD will form a certain rule grammar as an output.

Behaviorism Hypothesis

This theory is also called *tabula rasa* hypothesis. It means a blank paper that represents a newborn baby's brain. When a baby is born, his brain is like a blank paper then it will be filled with experiences of knowledge about lingual phenomena. This hypothesis was discovered by John Locke, a well-known empirics figure. Then it was spread widely by John Watson, a famous figure of behaviorism hypothesis on psychology. The experts believe that "infants learn oral language from other human role models through a process of involving imitation, rewards, and practice. Human role models in an infant's environment provide the stimuli and rewards," (Otto, 2015).

Cognitivist Hypothesis

Cognitivist hypothesis is introduced by Jean Piaget. This hypothesis in fact has been applied by Piaget as a base to explain language acquisition on children. Piaget did not particularly issue the theory of children language acquisition. He regards that language is a part of common cognitive development. However, Piaget only studies about this common issue. He only issues a hypothesis about cognitivist hypothesis which includes language. However, his followers in Geneva have broadened Piaget's view. Chaer (2015) 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).

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 in Bertharia (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.

Mechanism in Language

Early childhood is children with no more than 5 years old, where they still need stimulation and guidance from their environment to acquire the knowledge, and in this age they can be called linguistics period (Meniado, 2016). Language is alive in any stage of children's acquisition, so the environments become a fundamental aspect to influence their knowledge of morpheme and syntax. 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.

Therefore, the researchers are very interested in writing this research to find out the problems and to analyze the children acquire the first language based on linguistics features, *i.e.* phonology, morphology and semantic. The researchers formulate the research question as follows: how can *Dilara* acquire her first language based on phonology, morphology and semantic aspects?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research was a descriptive qualitative approach. The main subject of this research is Dilara. Her full name is Truly Dilara Tenderly Wellaz. She was 3 years old. She is a daughter of a couple who lives in Pandeglang, Banten. Dilara has parents with a different culture. Her mother's tribe is Sundanese, Banten, while her father is Palembangnese. Therefore, her first language is Bahasa Indonesia. She has a brother. As physically, mentally and socially, she is a healthy girl. She loves playing cat dolls, singing, running inside the house and watching cartoon movies. The other participants in this research were Dilara's parents. And the place of this research was Dilara's house. For this research, the data gathered through observation and the conversation recording of Dilara and her parents. The data were recorded when Dilara did some activities in her house, such as singing in the living room with her father, talking with her mother in her bedroom. And after collecting the data, The researchers would like to transcribe the recording data and analyzed it based on phonology, morphology and semantic acquisition theories.

DISCUSSION

In this research, the researchers observed and analyzed the first language acquisition in the form of phonology, morphology and semantics. In the *form of phonology*, the researchers found some Dilara's utterances as follow:

No	Utterances	Meaning
1	Antel mamih	Diantar mamih
2	Walnanya	Warnanya
3	Melah, muda dan biru	Merah, muda dan biru
4	Kaco	Kacau
5	Hijo	Hijau

Based on analysis of phonological aspect, especially in phonemes acquisition, Dilara had mastered vowels [a], [i], [u], [e], [o] and some consonants

such as [b], [d], [h], [j], [k], [m], [n], [t], [u]. 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. It is suitable for the theory from Suwandi (2010) that by the age of three, most children can utter at least 50 different words and start forming a simple sentence. And Dilara has mastered it.

In the form of morphology

No	Words	Meaning
1.	Minyum	Minum
2.	Stobeli	Strawberry
3.	Bitsa	Bisa
4	Main	Bermain
5.	Lenang	Berenang

In the morphological aspect, Dilara obtained some of the types of words that could already be mastered. She was able to produce words although still not clear in articulation, such as the word "minyum" it has meaning "minum" (verb),"stobeli" means "strawberry" (noun), "bitsa" means "bisa" (adjective), "main" means "bermain" (verb), "lenang" means "berenang"(verb). The number of words that were still not complete and perfect as it was influenced by the canine teeth that have not been grown as much as and tongue are rudimentary. Children's language competence regarding their morpheme and syntax knowledge rapidly increases in the second year of their age. Children regularly use morphological encoding in their early childhood, so they prefer to use regular and irregular modifiers in production (Budd *et al.*, 2015). Morphological and syntactical knowledge is important for the success of their speech production correctly and understands adult speech.

In addition, it is influenced by the concrete experiences that the child received because most of the words are obtained directly related to the experience that happens every day, especially concerning the primary needs of the child. Then, the acquisition of child language from parents who are multilingual or bilingual can master two languages directly and alternately because his father's mother tongue is Palembangnese, while the mother's mother tongue is Sundanese. They communicate with each other by using Indonesian and sometimes Sundanese so the child can imitate both languages. The child acquired

Sundanese and Indonesian simultaneously. Therefore, it can be said that the child goes to the category of simultaneous bilingual, but they are still in the developmental process of language acquisition. The stage of acquisition can be categorized as this stage of linguistic one. And it is relevant to Traxel (2012) that children will acquire the words started from the smallest unit, such as one word, two words, and they will start to string words at the age of two years.

In the form of semantic

No	Utterances	Meaning
1.	Beli nanti	Nanti beli
2.	Pake tangan	Menggunakan tangan
3.	Main sama Ean	Bermain dengn Reyhan (her brother)
4.	Jajan eskim	Mau membeli es krim
5.	Nonton Diva seris	Mau nonton film kartun Diva the Series

According to Jucker in Dardjowidjojo (2010), semantic refers to the study of interaction meaning which includes the meaning and contexts in which the speeches are produced. Concerning the definition, based on the observation of the little child, the researchers concluded that Dilara has been able to communicate well, the rules regarding the speech turns can be controlled well. The researchers had found some words with the meaning such as "beli nanti" means "nanti beli", (she wanted to buy something next). "pake tangan" means "menggunakan tangan" (using hands), "main sama Ean" means "bermain dengan Reyhan" (playing together with Reyhan, Dilara's brother), "jajan eskim" means "mau membeli es krim" (she wanted to buy ice cream), "nonton Diva seris" means "mau nonton film kartun "Diva the Series" (she wanted to watch cartoon movie with the title "Diva the Series"). Based on the data above, the researchers believed that Dilara was also able to communicate appropriately (connected). She had been able to communicate or got the meaning or message of the conversation occurred. Her attitude was different from most children in her age that tended to focus on their own world, without caring the surrounding.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the results of this research, the researchers can conclude that child language acquisition is strongly influenced by physiological and psychological functions. Articulation functions due to the incomplete articulation of a child aged 3 years 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 addition, because in the family, *Dilara* has a bilingual language environment, it makes child aged 3 years master two languages at once, or so-called simultaneous bilingual because both languages are acquired simultaneously from time to time.

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. Besides that, the researchers suggest the parents say the right pronunciation to the children.

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