



## First Language Phonological Acquisition on a Two-Year-Old Child

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### Abstract

This paper discusses mainly the development of the language phonological acquisition of a two-year-old child during the linguistic period, especially on vowels and the factors that influence phonology acquisition. This study looks at the following questions: 1) How does a two-year-old acquire vowels? 2) What factors influence a child's phonological acquisition? First language acquisition (FLA) is the process of mastering a first language by children. In the early stages of development, humans begin to acquire their mother tongue or first language, which usually occurs between mother and child, other family members can follow, and it is done orally in the family environment informally. This study employs a case study approach to qualitative research because it displays the research findings based on facts found in the speakers' everyday lives and the process of language acquisition in the phonological features of the subject. This was gained through observation and diary notes. According to the findings of this examination, the subject has learned the vowels [a], [u], [e], [I], and [o]. Child's phonological components of language acquisition are impacted by environmental variables, shown by the amount of vocabulary he obtains from family members, caretakers and surroundings.

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## INTRODUCTION

A language is a communication tool acquired by humans from birth. The ability of mastering a language by a child begins with acquiring the first language, which is often called the mother tongue. Language is essentially an arbitrary sound symbol system used by members of social

groups to work together, communicate, and identify themselves (Kridalaksana, 2002).

Language and all the rules are not suddenly and completely acquired in the human brain. The first language is acquired in several stages, and each following stage is closer to the grammar of the adult

language. The term First Language Acquisition is used in mastering the first language as one of the developments in a human being from birth (Dardjowidjojo, 2012). Naturally, children will recognize language as a way of communicating with the people around them. The first language that is known and subsequently mastered by a child is called the mother tongue (native language) (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

From an early age, babies interact in their social environment. A mother often allows the baby to participate in social communication, so that is when the baby first gets to know the socialization that this world is a place where people share feelings. Through the first language, a child learns to be a member of society. L1 becomes one of the means to express feelings, desires, and opinions in forms of language that are considered to exist.

Children also learn that there are unacceptable forms to members of their community, and children should not always express their feelings openly. The first language or mother tongue acquisition of children worldwide is the same. The similarities in the acquisition process are caused by the similarities in the biology and

neurology of language and the existence of aspects of language mentality (Arifuddin, 2010). So, it can be concluded that the first language (B1) or mother tongue is the first language acquired by an individual in his life.

The studies on language acquisition include, among other things, the acquisition of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. However, as one of the language acquisition studies, phonological acquisition is an important research area because it can determine or influence linguistic theories. Phonological studies that discuss the complexity, regularity, and limitations of sound systems, in general, can a support and determinant of linguistic theories produced by experts (Yanti, 2016).

This study explicitly discusses phonological aspects of children aged two years and one month and covers the acquisition of vowels. This age is in a critical period, which is very important in language acquisition because children are very active in speaking and always curious about something at that age.

## **Language**

Language mastery by a child begins with acquiring the first language, which is often called the mother tongue. A language is acquired by humans from birth to enable them to communicate with each other. Language is essentially an arbitrary sound symbol system used by members of social groups to work together, communicate, and identify themselves (Kridalaksana, 2002). Furthermore, Owen explains that language can be defined as a socially accepted code or conventional system for conveying concepts through the use of desired symbols and combinations of symbols regulated by provisions (Solehan, 2011).

## **Language Acquisition**

Language acquisition is a process of mastering language that is carried out by someone unconsciously, implicitly and informally (Maksan, 1993). First language acquisition is highly related to social development and social identity formation. Learning the first language is one of the overall developments of a child becoming a member of society (Yogatama, 2011). Regarding language acquisition or language

acquisition, there are several meanings. In addition, language acquisition is the process of acquiring language skills, either in the form of understanding or natural expression, without going through formal learning activities (Tarigan, 1988).

## **Child First Language Acquisition**

Language acquisition is a process of mastering language that is carried out by children naturally when they learn their mother tongue (Dardjowidjojo, 2003). Language acquisition in children has continuous characteristics, is a continuum, and starts from simple one-word utterances to more complex combinations of words and sentences (Salnita, 2019). Language acquisition is usually different from language learning. Language acquisition occurs in a natural and unconscious manner within the scope of everyday life. In contrast, language learning is the condition where language is obtained after being studied formally by complying with the applicable grammatical rules (Chaer, 2003).

First language acquisition is divided into four periods (Igram in Palenkahu, 2005). First, the preliminary stage is characterized by three behaviour types: imitation, imitation,

and initial understanding. Second, in the first period (1-1.6 years), children get several sounds with particular meanings that express the idea of a sentence as a whole. However, there is no evidence that in this period children understand grammar. Third, in the second period (1.6-2.0), the child realizes that everything has meaning and they are in successive bursts of acquiring words and questions about the names of objects. Fourth, period (2.0-2.6), children begin to make sentences well because they contain words for the primary grammatical relations of subject and predicate.

### **Child Phonological Acquisition**

Phonologically, compared to adults, newborn children have striking differences in language organs. The brain weighs only 30 per cent of the size of an adult. The baby's narrow mouth cavity is almost filled with the tongue, and increasing age will widen the oral cavity. This growth provides greater space for children to produce language sounds (Suardi et al., 2019).

The acquisition of phonology or language sounds begins with basic sounds. According to Jakobson the basic sounds in human speech are /p/, /a/, /i/, /u/, /t/, /c/, /m/, and so on. Then at the age of one year, the

child begins to fill in these sounds with other sounds. For example, /p/ combined with /a/ becomes pa/ and /m/ combined with /a/ becomes /ma/ (Ardiana & Sodiq, 2000). After the child is able to produce sound, the child will be more capable of producing sound over time. This is influenced by the environment and cognitive and speech tools.

### **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative approach and case study as the design. The descriptive method is a method that examines a group of people, a subject, or current thoughts (Nazir, 2011). The case study is used to give an overview of the results of data collection carried out by researchers, through interviews (parents, children) and direct field observations, regarding the utterances spoken by research subjects.

This researcher applies the engaged listening technique. The researcher listened to the words that the children could say after that. The researcher also interacted with and encouraged the research subjects to say the words. Data were collected by observing and understanding the language the research subjects spoke. Every word and utterance uttered by

the research subject was recorded. This study was conducted for approximately 2 months.

There are three stages in the data analysis, namely, reduction, presentation, and re-verification. Firstly, the reduction is made in four ways, namely:

1. carrying out the process of transcription of speech data into written form,
2. identifying the data that has been transcribed
3. carrying out the classification process,
4. interpreting data that has previously been classified.

Secondly, is the presentation stage. At this presentation stage, the data that has been classified is presented in tabular form. Lastly, a re-verification process is carried out on the initial data that has been collected (Miles and Huberman, 2014).

## RESULT

Based on the 2 months' observation, it is obtained that the vowel sounds that appear are as follows. The sound of the first letters that are completely mastered by the child is the vowel sound [a]. The sound uttered and is pronounced clearly,

both at the beginning and middle at the end of the word.

The vowel sound [a] at the beginning of a word occurs in the following words:

[a] [ama] 'same' and [apa] 'what'

The vowel sound [a] in the middle of a word occurs as in the following words:

[a] [mama] 'mommy' and [papa] 'daddy'

The vowel sound [a] at the end occurs in the following words.

[a] [ada] 'exist' and [buka] 'open'

The vowel sound [i] occurs and is well pronounced at the beginning, middle and end of a word.

The vowel sound [i] at the beginning of a word occurs as in the following words.

[i] [ini] 'this' and [itan] 'fish'

The vowel sound [i] in the middle of a word occurs as in the following words.

[i] [mimi] 'drink milk' and [mbim] 'car'

The vowel sound [i] at the end of a word occurs as in the following words.

[i] [tadi] 'just now' and [beyi] 'buy'

The vowel sound [u] occurs and is well pronounced at the beginning, middle and end of a word.

The vowel sound [u] at the beginning of a word occurs as in the following words.

[u] [udah] 'done' and [udan] 'rain'

The vowel sound [u] in the middle of a word occurs as in the following words.

[u] [buyan] 'moon' and [buta] 'open'

The vowel sound [u] at the end occurs as in the following word.

[u] [itu] 'itu' and [mau] 'mau'

The vowel sound [e] occurs and is well pronounced at the beginning, middle and end of a word.

The vowel sound [e] at the beginning of a word occurs as in the following words.

[e] [emeng] 'cat' and [emam] 'eat'

The vowel sound [e] in the middle of a word occurs as in the following words.

[e] [cenana] 'short' and [dedek] 'younger'

The vowel sound [e] at the end of a word occurs as in the following words.

[e] [pake] 'wear'

The vowel sound [o] appears and is well pronounced, at the beginning, middle and end of a word.

The vowel sound [o] occurs at the beginning of the next word.

[o][olang] 'person' and [om] 'uncle'

The vowel sound [o] in the middle of a word occurs as in the following words.

[o] [bobo] 'sleep' and [bola] 'ball'

The final vowel sound [o] occurs in the following words.

[o] [toko] 'shop' and [poto] 'picture'

The description and data above showed that the child has mastered all Indonesian vowel consonants. She can pronounce the vowels [a], [i], [u], [e], and [o] well at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. The child has mastered all the Indonesian vowels at two years and one month. It is in line with Dardjowidjojo (2003) who said that the first vowels he mastered were minimal, namely [a], [i], and [u].

## DISCUSSION

The observations show that several variations in phonological acquisition are mainly caused by the immaturity of the child's speech organs. Children follow non-negotiable biological and physical development. If a child's physical abilities have not allowed him to say something, he cannot be forced or encouraged to say it. In reverse, we cannot prevent a child to pronounce something if he is biologically able to

say something. Another influencing factor in child phonology acquisition is the stimulus from the parents, outer family or the surrounding environment where the child is exposed to language use. The author managed to obtain some data that shows that certain sounds appear through imitation (mimicking speech).

## CONCLUSION

In general, early childhood phonology acquisition follows a universal sequence following the theory of language acquisition. Jakobson's universal concept (in Dardjowidjojo, 2012:238) is found in children's phonological acquisition, both in the acquisition of vowels and consonants. In terms of vowel sounds, it reveals that three central vowels appear first, namely [i], [u], and [a]. Such a contrast system is known as a minimal vowel system and is present in all languages. The acquisition of early childhood phonology is strongly influenced (in line with) its biological development. For example, because of the speech apparatus or position condition, her tongue is still limited (incomplete), so he has not mastered the vibrating sound [r]. In addition, phonological acquisition is also

influenced by stimuli from the family or environment.

Based on these conclusions, there are several suggestions. First, the acquisition of children's language, apart from physical factors, is also determined by stimuli from the family and environment. Therefore, parents who want their child's language acquisition to be by physical development, even beyond, must always be given a stimulus by parents and the environment. Thus, the influence of external factors plays an important role. Second, this research is still wide open to be carried out by other researchers because each child's language acquisition is unique. In addition, research aspects of children's language acquisition also vary, namely from phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, and others.

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