

PHONOLOGY FOR CHILDREN LANGUAGE UNTIL THE AGE OF 24 MONTHS

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ABSTRACT

This study is done due to the writer's interest to observe and to imitate children's language. It leads the writer to be closed with them, then it is found that the production of children language is different each other. In fact, there are children at the age of 18 months (1.5 years old) who can utter many words. However, this ability does not develop well until the age of 24 months (2 years old). Besides, there are children who fluently utter words and understand the meaning at the age of 20 months. On the other hand, there are 5 years old children who are not able to utter and to understand words. For this matter, the writer intends to observe how these children have different improvement even though they live in the same culture and environment. Basically, parents take roles in children's growth and ability to comprehend language since they are always with their children. Thus, it is possible for a child not to be able to speak Javanese even though he lives in Java if his family speaks in Bahasa. It means that semantic aspect is as necessary as phonology, morphology, and syntactic.

This study is aimed at discussing language acquisition on a child, named Aim until the age of 24 month the (2 years old). The writer observes his language development since he was born. Some points to observe are: 1) phonology aspect to observe the formation of children's speech organ 2) semantic aspect to observe children understanding toward the used language 3) children's speech development because it should not be complete before the age of 36 months (3 years old). The technic used in this study is visual and audio involvement, done for 24 months by using qualitative descriptive method. The result of the study shows that Aim is able to utter 11 vocal sound, 3 diphtong sound and 20 consonant sounds. Aim is also able to understand more than 110 words.

Keywords: *phonology, semantic, children*

INTRODUCTION

A new-born baby is like a blank paper. He has no capability to understand language uttered by people around him and to utter this language. It is for his incomplete speech organ and his incapability to have a clear sight. He is just able to listen, then he learns to have language so that he can differentiate human and non-human languages. In short, a child produces language based on his surroundings. Thus, child ability to speak a certain language can be indirectly taught through a habit.

Basically, child's habit to have speech encourages the growth of his organ. Because of a habit, an English speaker is not able to pronounce /r/ in the way of Indonesian pronounce it, a Balinese is not familiar to pronounce /t/ as pronounced by most Indonesian. It indicates that the growth of one's speech organ is influenced by his first language. However, there is no a perfect language as well as there is no a perfect speech organ. For example, even though Sundanese can speak /t/ better than Balinese in the perspective of Indonesian, but Sundanese cannot pronounce /f/, /v/, and /p/ well.

Jacobson via Subyakto and Nababan (1992:72) divides the development of child's language acquisition into three stages. First, a child learns his first language in the first years of his life, which is, until the age of 5 months. Second, it is in his puberty phase, at the age of 12-14. Third, it is when he is adult, at the age of 18-20. In these stages, there is a possibility for the child to have more than one language as his first language if he has bilingual parents. Unfortunately, there have been found numerous problems on the development of child's language acquisition. These problems include child's language acquisition, child's first year speech, and child's disruption to speak. In reality, parents tend to blame his child or mystical creatures if these problems occur. They have no idea that the problems can be prevented since the child is under 5 years old. At this age, parents can teach any language to their child through numerous ways, such as special programs in internet. This knowledge will lead each parent to comprehend child's development in language acquisition.

Related to the idea above, this study focuses on the ability of children to produce sound of language at the age of 0 to 24 months. This study was done in 24 months, from November 12, 2015 until November, 12, 2017. The material object in this study is a child, named Aim. He was born in a Javanese family who speaks Bahasa in their daily life. It implies that Aim has two languages as his first language. Moreover, the goals of this study are to describe: 1) phonology aspect to observe the forming and the development of children's speech organ, 2) semantic aspect to observe children's understanding toward language they use, 3) to observe the development of his speech because it is an important phase under the age of 5.

Besides, the writer expect that this study can be a reference for the development of children's language because there are a lot of parents have no idea about the influence of children's language to the growth of their brain. However, Aim's language development is just an example of children language. It may be different for other children, but it is expected that this study helps parents to get more understanding on children language.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies qualitative descriptive method that functions to describe the data found in the analysis process. In this process, the writer described, made notes, analyzed, and interpreted the data found. As stated by Mardalis, (2008:26), this method is aimed at getting information from current condition. Meanwhile, the techniques of audio-visual noting and involvement were done to conduct this study. The way of these techniques is by listening and looking to collect the data. The techniques are appropriate because the material object in this study is a child who has his own way to speak.

ANALYSIS

Lust (2006:1) states that the acquisition of the first language is unpredictable. Added by Tarigan (2009:135), those who activate language are doing phonology activity at the same time because they listen and utter a bunch of sounds. This process has been starter when someone was born. Indirectly, babies try to imitate the sound and then to utter it perfectly.

Children face to phases in phonology acquisition. They are pre-language and first language acquisition (Jacobson via Chaer, 2009:202). In the first phase, children just practice their vocal organ so that their utterance has no meaning. The phase occurred to Aim at the age of 0 to 6 months. He produced vocal sound, such as /e/, /a/, /u/, and /o/ and consonants sound /h/. At her 7 months old, he was able to utter /m/, /n/ and /w/. A month later, he had /b/, /p/, /i/. Even though the sounds produced have no meaning but it contributes to produce sound of a language in the next phase. In the pre language, when the child utters the sounds, it is found that there is beginning unit of linguistics occur to him.

Aim came to the second phase at the age of 10 months. He was able to utter word <apa> to ask an object and the word <mam> to ask for food. However, it should be remembered that not all children are able to run the phase at the age of 10 months. Mosowitz (via Chaer, 2009:206) says that children create their own way phonology formula since the beginning of their phonology acquisition which are different with adults'. This idea is strengthened by Chomsky who states that children create and repeat the formula many times to create language. This language acquisition continues at the age of 11 months. Aim uttered <ayah>, <babah> to call mother and <eta> for a train. This ability was still on progress in the next months. In his 24 months, he had 110 words to utter in 11 vocal sounds, 3 diphthong, and 20 consonants.

Stampe (via Chaer, 2009:208-210) points out that children phonology naturally occurs along with suppression, limitation, and controls by adult's phonemic representation. In this study, it is found that Aim tried to imitate what uttered by adult. However, his incomplete speech organ makes his utterance imperfect. Aim had no idea about this but his listeners experienced it. For example, when Aim uttered <owa> which means a ball, the writer imitated by saying "ini owa" (this is a ball). Then, Aim replied "Tan, owa" (no, it's not a ball). From this scene, it can be seen that the imperfect utterance was only felt by the speaker. This also happened to another child, named Zein. The writer drew a helicopter and Zein uttered <eliotel> for that. To confirm it, the writer also uttered "Iya, ini eliotel" (yes, it's helicopter) and Zein argued by uttering <bukan, ni? eliotel> which means, no, it's not helicopter.

The imperfectness as explained above influenced the meaning of the words uttered, especially for similar words which have similar meanings (not classifies as homonym). As experienced by Aim who uttered <a?> for train and open, <nanax> for where and there, <wan> for money and <soang> for goose, <ɨlx> for this, in here, and to be here, <ɨUx> for that, there, to be there. These multi-meaning happens for children when they are at the age of (1:1) to (1:9).

Furthermore, almost 100 words mastered by Aim were uttered in one syllable, only 13 words uttered in more than one syllable. Some words began with consonant were uttered with allophone of /n/ and /m/. For example, kata <bam> for *pinjam* (borrow) became <mbam>, <di> for *mandi* (bathing) became <ndi>. Other words such as <num> for *minum* (drink) became <ɨum>, it indicates that /n/ transforms to <ɨ>.

From this point, it is point that children learn language by listening, so he utters based on what he listens. It implies that the sound structure uttered by children is influenced by their audio organ. It is shown by Aim at the age 0 to 9 months. For example, the word *kereta* (train) is uttered <eta> and transformed to <a?>. For word *pesawat terbang* (plane), Aim imitated it as <ap> and transformed to <ap ban> at the age of (1:4), it transformed again to <wat ban> at the age of (1:10). The word *es* (ice) was uttered at the age of (1:1), it transformed to <es> at the age of (1:11). The change of phoneme /l/ to /ɛ/ is not because of audio organ, but for his speech organ is incomplete. Another example was found when Aim wanted to say <uta> for the word *buka* (open) at the age of (1:2) which transformed to <a> at the age of (1:5). In this case, the change did not occur for the incomplete speech organ but for children's interest.

The factor of children's interest in uttering a word in their own way give impacts on the structure of sounds they utter. In fact, even though they imitate adult in uttering, but they can create in their own way. This also happened to Aim. The word *balon* (balloon) was uttered <tUn>. There were a change from /b/-/a/-/l/-/o/-/n/ to /t/-/U/-/n/. The word *tabrak* (hit) was uttered <ban>. The word *jijik* (disgust) was uttered <ɨls>. In these examples, it can be seen that there is a change of sound. This children way to utter actually lead them to be creative. They can create new sounds, like diphthong. For instance, the word *bebek* (duck) was uttered <bey-bey>, the word *main* (play) was uttered in one syllable, which was /ay/, it was from phoneme /a/ and /i/.

CONCLUSION

Children language is unique to listen, to understand, and to observe. Their incomplete speech organs makes the words uttered have multi meaning. Based on this study, the writer concludes that there is a significant development happened to children's speech organs until they are 20 months old. They develop their phonology as well as syntactic and semantic. For syntactic, it was started by uttering one and two syllables words. For semantic, it was shown through the meaning they got when uttering a word which was understood by the listeners. Besides, the children were not aware when they utter a word correctly. Thus, adults do not need to imitate children so that their syntactic and semantic develop well.

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