

HOW AN INDONESIAN CHILD LEARNS ENGLISH

Santi Chairani Djonhar, Rosihin
University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka
djonharsanti@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Chomsky (1999) states that “ ... language learning is not something that a child does; but it is something that happens to the child if he is placed in an appropriate environment. ... ” To prove this statement, I conducted a study on how an Indonesian young boy, named Reno (aged 4.1) acquires English through watching English cartoons on TV (Disney's Junior). Data collection is based on naturalistic corpus, a quite large sample of his spontaneous speech. The data was collected at a regular basis (once a week) in one year through audio-recording. The data then was transcribed and analyzed to see the development of English. This study focuses on one major question, does Reno's English learning adopt the universal principles of language acquisition, especially as they are applied to English? To be precise, first, how Reno develops and uses his English grammatical morphemes: the ending -ing, regular plural ending -s, possessive ending 's, third person singular present tense -s, copulas/auxiliary verbs: are are ('re), am ('m), is ('s), regular past tense ending -ed, articles, a, an, the and how he constructs sentences starting from simple forms to the most complex ones: want-, negative-, interrogative-, passive-, clause-, conjoined-, and relative- constructions. This study shows that within one year, Reno's development and uses of his English grammatical morphemes and syntactic constructions a relatively significant since in only one year, Reno could produce various linguistic elements and sentence constructions accordingly. The findings of this study, therefore, have proven that the acquisition of English in a foreign setting like Indonesia can be similar if not the same as that of English children. This boy, Reno, is a native Indonesian who learns English just by watching English cartoons; or he got exposure to the real use of English through cartoons (English films). The process of his English development follows the same path as that of English children. This is because there are liable universal principles apparently underlying this condition, namely, Universal Grammar (or Language Acquisition Device) in the child's brain, critical period in learning language, and most of all sufficient exposure and opportunities to use English (language).

Keywords: acquisition, grammatical morphemes, syntactic constructions, exposure

REFERENCES

- Abuzahra, N, Abdel-Hakim Farrah, M and Zalloum, S. (2016). Using Cartoon in Language Classroom from a Constructivist Point of View. Arab World English Journal.
- Brown, Douglas. (2000). Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (4th edition). New York: Logman.
- Benson and P. Voller. (1997). Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning. London: Longman. 18-34.
- Boori, A. (2009). Article of Second Language Acquisition. boori@mshdiau.ac.ir or aaboori@gmail.com
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research – 4th ed. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Chomsky, N. (1999). On Nature, Use, and Acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie and T. K. Bathia (eds.), Handbook of Child Language Acquisition. New York: Academic Press.
- Clark, C. (2000). Innovative Strategy: Concept Cartoons. Instructional and Learning Strategies, 12, 34-45.
- Djonhar, S. C. (2016). An Indonesian Child Learning Sentence Construction. Journal of ELT Research. Jakarta: UHAMKA.
- Djonhar, S. C. (2014). Fundamental Principle of Learning English. Journal of ELT Research. Jakarta: UHAMKA.
- Djonhar, S. C. (2012). Language Acquisition: Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language. Jakarta: UHAMKA Press.
- Diessel, H. (2004). The Acquisition of Complex Sentences. Cambridge University Press.
- Danan, M. (and subtitling: 2004). Captioning Undervalued Language Learning Strategies. Meta, 49(1), 67-77.
- Hoff, E. (2001). Language Development. Belmont: Thompson Learning, Inc.
- Hakuta, K. (2001). A Critical Period for Second Language Acquisition? In D. Bailey, J. T.
- Harley, B., & Wang, W. (1997). The Critical Period Hypothesis: Where are we now? In A.M.B. de Groot & J.F. Kroll (Eds), Tutorials in bilingualism: Psycholinguistic perspectives. (pp 19-51). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Krashen S., Long, M. and Scarcella, R. (1979). Age, Rate, and Eventual Attainment in Second Language Acquisition. TESOL Quarterly 13, 573-82 Reprinted in S.
- Krashen, S. D. (2013). Second Language Acquisition: Theory, Application and some Conjectures. Cambridge University Press.

- Lichtman, M. (2010). *Qualitative Research in Education, A users's*. California: Sage publication, inc.
- Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *Biological Foundation of Language*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and Developing Autonomy in East Asian Contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, 20(1), 71-94.
- McNamara, C. (1999). General Guidelines for Conducting Interviews. Retrieved 4 August 2002 from <http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/interview.htm>
- Munoz, C. (2010). On How Age Affects Foreign Language Learning. *Advances in Research on Language Acquisition and Teaching*, 39-49. Retrieved from <http://www.enl.auth.gr/gala/14th/Papers/Invited%20Speakers/Munoz.pdf>
- Oshima, Alice and Hogue, A. (2006). *Writing Academic English* (four addition). New York: Longman.
- Rule, A. C., & Auge, J. (2005). Using Humorous Cartoons to Teach Mineral and Rock Concepts in Sixth Grade Science Class. *Journal of Geosciences Education*, 53(3), 548-558.
- Singleton, D. M., & Ryan, L. (2004). *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Schensul, Stephen L.; Schensul, Jean J. & LeCompte, Margaret D. (1999). *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaire* (Book 2 in *Ethnographer's Toolkit*). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Suryoputro, G & Warni, S. (2014). Online Peer Feedback and Learner Autonomy in EFL Writing Class. *International Conference on Computers in education*.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. United State of America. New York: Cambridge University Press.