

AN ANALYSIS OF A 1.6 YEAR OLD BOYS' LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESS (A CASE STUDY ON BILINGUAL FAMILY)

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Abstract

In this case, the writer presents how the child (a boy) acquires the language. The natural process of language acquisition takes place since birth. This study will focus on language acquisition process of a 1.6 year old boy who becomes the object of the observation. In a fact, human language skills can be improved through two ways, namely acquisition and learning. The methodology of this research is descriptive qualitative approach. The techniques of collecting data used are documentation and observation. The objectives of descriptive qualitative study are obtained from the utterances of a 1.6 year old boy, his name is Fati. On the discussion part the analysis will focus on syntax, vocabulary and the factors that affect him in acquiring language. As the object, the boy is obtained four languages as simultaneous languages, namely Indonesian, English, Mandailingnese and Javanese. In conclusion, the object of this case is able to produce words and phrases based on he usually heard.

Keywords: *language acquisition process, syntax, vocabulary, bilingual family.*

INTRODUCTION

Language as a communication tool is acquired by human from birth until the age of five years, which is known as language acquisition. The language is acquired by the stages, and, it is suggested, every successive stage more closely near to the grammar of the adult language. They are the cooing stage, the babbling stage, the holophrastic stage, the two word stage, and the telegraph stage. Human language skills can be improved through two ways, namely acquisition and learning. 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 neighborhood). 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.

The first language is a language that is firstly received since the children born. The first language commonly called the 'mother tongue'. While a second language is a language that is obtained after mastering the first language and in general this type of language is a foreign language. Varshney (2003:307) Language acquisition is the process whereby children achieve a fluent control of their native language. Children learn a language, not because they are subjected to a similar conditioning process, but because they possess an inborn capacity which permits them to acquire a language as a normal maturational process. This capacity is universal. The child has an innate language acquiring device. Language acquisition is divided into two main periods, namely Pre-linguistic Period (0 – 1 year old) and Linguistic Period (1 – 5 years old). In

the periods of infant, the movement appears from his/her instinct. In the age of 7-8 months, his/her feeling and emotion begins to appear, although his/her ratio and mind has not got the function at all. At the age of 12-14 months, a baby knows its environment socially and physically.

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. The writer assumed that every children have different ability in developing and expressing their language. It depends on the individual, environment and family support. As the preliminary data, tiny babies can differentiate between “mi” and “tu”. By the end of their first year, they understand a few frequently repeated words and are able to produce a word or two words. By the age of one until two, most children produce at least fifty different words and some produce many more and they also start to combine words into phrase, for instance, “ummi tutu” , “ummi num”etc. The way a child uses the language and chooses or combines words to be a sentence or phrase is the process of how a child understands and begins to create a sentence. At around two years old, a child already understands to combine two words even though it is not clear. At the age up two years old, a child will try to make a sentence in two or three words and sometimes we just hear the last words or sounds. All of those words have meanings, but they are not like sentences they are just words.

1. First Language Acquisition

Gentner & Namy (2006) Language acquisition is one of humankind’s most impressive cognitive feats. A 6-month-old can do little more than babble, but by 2 or 3 years of age, children show generative knowledge of the patterns of their language, that is, they can extend the words they hear to new situations, and they can use grammatical constructions in new contexts. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2010) contend that first language acquisition among children is fast but not instantaneous. Normally, the pattern is that children / babies start with babbling, then acquiring first words, and then putting words together in sentences until they reach the virtual adult competence which takes around three to five years. They also noted that observations of children acquiring different languages reveal that the stages are similar, possibly universal.

First language acquisition is the process of children acquiring their first language. The process takes place naturally in a child. Parents and the environment are very important and influential in the process of child language acquisition. Children usually listen and respond to the utterances produce by people around them, especially their parents. The mother is a person that allows an opportunity for baby to participate in communication with him.

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.

In particular, language acquisition as the speech of children aged 1 year and 6 months was also influenced by various factors, first by means of articulation or physiologic function and subsequent factors related through listening experiences through activities that will be stored by the memory. When a word or phrase that is heard is always pronounced and directly related to the needs and immediately saw significantly then the word will go on long-term memory (long term memory). Carroll (2008) explains that long-term memory is a memory structure that stores

knowledge permanently originally sourced from a real human experience that comes from episodic memory. When we are in a position of long-term memory can be regarded as child language acquisition.

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1957, in the Field, 2004) in behaviorism theory suggests that language acquisition account first by operant conditioning. His view is that a child acquires language through imitating the utterances of adults. Parents provide language model. They also provide reinforcement through the sign of approval, through the implementation of the child or through a desire to recognize, respond to, and produce child's speech. Then, Noam Chomsky explains that the language acquisition obtained through habit or imitation that is generative and theories of language acquisition must take into account the way in which infants acquire the capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatical utterances infinite through the potential development that has taken birth (Field, 2004).

Children in obtaining first language quite varies, there is a slow, moderate, and some even faster. This is very influenced by several factors, such as natural factors, cognitive development factors, social background factor, and hereditary factors (gender, intelligence, personality/style acquisition) (Slobin, 1985). A child does not suddenly have a grammar first in the brain (neurology), complete with all the rules. The first language was gained with several stages, and each subsequent stage closer to the grammar of the language of adults.

2. The Stages of Children Language Acquisition

Piaget argued that children construct their own knowledge of his own experiences with the environment. While Vigotsky provide different views with Piaget, especially his views on the importance of social factors in child development. Vygotsky looked at the importance of language and others in the world of children. According to Piaget (in Hutahuruk, 2015) classifying language development into seven stages.

- (a) Phase I felt (pre-linguistic 0.0 to 0.5) first and phase fingered (pre-linguistic 0.5-1.0) second.

According to Bolinger (2002:283) 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. Then, Babbling is the sounds which infants produce as consonant-vowel combinations, Steinberg (2003:147). From the moment of birth, a child discriminate speech from other sounds. Start discovering phonemes. 1 month: start crying or producing sounds in order to convey several information like hunger cry, angry cry, and pain cry. Cooing. 6 months: babbling stage, producing syllables like ma-ma-ma and pa-pa-pa. 9-10 months: start using intonation patterns and also rephrase babble that seems as if they are words e.g., papa, mama etc.

- (b) The linguistic stage I holoprastik; sentence one word (1.0-2.0)

As Fromkin (1983:329) 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. Communication done with single words in order to convey complex message.

For instance: a word "tutu" could mean: „I want my susu (milk), make me a bottle of milk, where is my milk?“ Naming person, object, and places. Vocabularies move to 30 or 50 words. Improved pronunciation. Says „no“ meaningfully. Start understanding what is being said like, „no“, „stand up“, „stop it“, „don't do it“, etc.

(c) Phase II the Telegraphic period or linguistics sentence two words (2.0-3.0)

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 (1983:330). 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. Child uses minimum words to convey meaning of a whole sentence. Lack of function words in communication. At two years, a child's vocabulary contains 200 or more words. Utterances become longer; combinations of words are used in a variety of ways Pronunciation is very close to adult. Children in this stage can participate in turn-taking and more complex interactions with others. They are inventive and can use their imagination to describe things which cannot be seen. 30 months: start acquiring rules of syntax. Demonstrating semantic relations with two words.

For instance:

Agent + Action : Abi duduk

Agent + Object : Abi bum bum (Abi motor)

Action + Object : Matang nacik (makan nasi)

Action + Location : pigi koyah (pergi sekolah)

Object + Location : Umi bobok (tempat tidur ummi)

(d) Phase III linguistics. Development grammar (3.0 to 4.0), phase IV grammar linguistics pre-adults (4.0-5.0) and phase V linguistic competence full (5.0-...). it refers to The Complex Period.

I specialized in linguistics stage around 1-2 years old children have started using a series of speech sounds that produces single speech sound meaningful. By 5 years: acquisition becomes slow but vocabulary continues to grow. Developing morphology: start using functional words. Developing syntax: start forming complex sentences. Forming wh-questions and negative sentences, e.g., I was not drink milk. Developing semantics: ever extend the meaning of word on the basis of shape and size.

For instance, use ball to refer all round things like a tomato or an orange.

3. Bilingual Family Simultaneous

The occurrence of the phenomenon of bilingualism when the baby's condition is equally acquire a second language and words that are attached to a set of central concepts in real-world baby. Coordinate bilingualism occurs when the baby's condition to support one language from another language. The consequence is that the baby is developing two independent lexical systems, although overlapping meanings. Weinreich, 1968 (in the Field, 2004:33) proposed three types of bilingualism are subordinate bilingualism, bilingualism simultaneous and sequential bilingualism. Subordinate bilingualism occurs when a second language acquired sometime after the first language, and so they depend on the language first. The simultaneous bilingualism both languages are acquired simultaneously. While the sequential bilingualism occurs when a second language acquired in childhood, but the other precedes language.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is descriptive qualitative approach. The writer presents how the child (a boy) acquires the language. The subject of this study is Muadz Tutta Al Fati Siregar (son's writer). For the identity of the subject below:

Name : Muadz Tutta Al Fati Siregar
Place,Date of Birth : Kotapinang, 11 January 2019
Age : 1,6 months
Father's name : Ahmad Rifa'i Siregar, S.TP (Abi)
Mother's name : Sartika Dewi Harahap,M.Hum (Ummi)
His Babby Sitters : Sri Utami (Mbak) and Siti Fatimah Siregar (Bou)
Address : Prof. Dr. Andi Hakim Nasution kel. Pidoli Lombang kec. Panyabungan kab. Mandiling Natal Sumatera Utara

A physically, mentally and socially healthy boy, he loves playing toy cars, running inside the house, watching Youtube videos, and touching every strange thing he sees. Still on his way of acquiring his first language, he always tries to ask his mother, father or his baby sitters (mbak and bou) the names of things, actions, or ideas he observes inside and outside the house. Though his father speaks a Bahasa (Indonesia) and mandailingnese is the main language spoken at home. Then his mother is English lecturer in STAIN Mandailing Natal try to speak English at home but her main language is Bahasa. Additional language that influence him at home is Javanese from her baby sitter (mbak) also her aunt (bou) use mandailingnese as her main language.

In this research, to collect the data the writer applies observation method and video recording of conversation between child and parent. In analyzing the data, the writer conducts some procedures. The data are collected from video recording of the conversation between her child, parent and baby sitter. The writer transcribes the recording data and analyzes it based on syntax, vocabulary and the factors that affect him in acquiring language.

FINDINGS

1. The Process of 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.

Based on data has been collected from the video recording when the subject was taking the conversation between the subject's mother, father and baby sitters in daily activities. At that moment, he just could utter the last sounds of the word that he uttered. His utterances sometimes made some ambiguities for the people in his environment who heard him because his utterances were not clear and complete. He still focuses on what he sees, hears and interact with the environment surround him. His mother, father and also baby sitters helped him and taught him so much to acquire the language.

His cognitive development increase rapidly. It shows from his ability to represents the objects or places by using the words.

Table 1. Boy's Daily Word Utterances

One-word utterances	Two-word utterances
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- <i>Mi</i> = <i>ummi</i>	Num mi = minum ummi
-bi = abi	Au tutu = bou susu
Mbak = mbak	Brum brum mbak = sepeda motor mbak
Au = Bou	Hah... ana = hah mana
Tutu = susu	Bi dindin = abi hp
-mbik = ambil	Mbik ndok = ambilkan sendok
Oa = Bola	Pi abang = topi abang
Kukuk = ayam/burung	Num bi = tempat minum abi
Dindin = dinding	
Kakak = kakak	
Bang = abang	
Nenek = nenek	
-tok = atok	
Tuang = tulang	
Wak = uwak	
Brum brum = sepeda motor/ mobil	
Akang = makan	
Nik = naik	
Piyang = piring	
Tang tang = pegang	
Ganggung = ganggu	
Duduk = duduk	
Ai = air	
Tidak = tidak	

Gak = Nggak

Tuis = tulis

In accepting acquiring language, the child takes time to identify the word to several times the listening process. While the words that usually fall into the category of rapid language acquisition are words which are directly related to the daily routine, the main requirement of everyday life, and nouns such as people who are constantly interacting with the child. In this period, his vocabularies increased rapidly. For that phase, he just could utter the last sounds of the word that he uttered. His utterances sometimes made some ambiguities for the people who heard him because his utterances were not clear and complete. Basically, it was normal for the child at the same age as him because children at around 1.6 years old are not yet able to produce the word completely and clearly. Based on the Piaget’s cognitive development theory, at around 1.6 year old the research subject is still on the sensory-motor stage (from age 0-2 years old). He still focuses on what he sees, hears and interact with the environment surround him. He learned to produces the words and communicates with single word to convey his feelings or ideas, naming person, object and places.

2. The Child Vocabulary Mastering

In this period, his vocabularies increased rapidly. He learned to produces the words and communicates with single word to convey his feelings or ideas, naming person, object and places. He also could mention his name when someone asked “what is your name” to him. By the time, he started to combine one-word to two-word to produced utterances in the form of sentence. At around 1.6 years old, the subject research can produce two-word utterances, but it took place for the certain words e.g. when he wants drink milk, he asked his mom or his baby sitters to make milk by saying *tutu mi* (milk, mi) or *tutu, mbak* (*susu, mbak*) and *tutu au* (*bou* (*susu, bou*)).

The writer observed the vocabulary mastering of the boy observed for a few days. Here are some conversations conducted by the boy observed in daily life for the subject is in 1.6 years old.

Table 2. The Conversations of 1.6 Years Old Boy

Observations Date	Data
Saturday, 11 th July 2020	<p>Fati and ummi was playing vehicle puzzle</p> <p>Ummi : <i>ini apa nak?</i> What is that?</p> <p>Fati : <i>tut tut tut (kereta api)</i> (he meant train)</p> <p>Ummi : <i>itu nama ny kereta api.</i> Train. <i>Mana lagi nak?</i> Where are the other mang?</p> <p><i>Satu satu ya nak,</i> one by one</p>

	<p>Fati : <i>ni da (ini sepeda)</i> (it is by cycle)</p> <p>Ummi : <i>mana pesawat</i>, where is the plane? Where is the plane?</p> <p>Fati : <i>hah, ana? (hah mana?) ni (ini)</i></p> <p>Ummi : iya, good job baby, ok</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Ballon dimana nak?</i></p> <p>Fati : <i>ana (sana)</i></p> <p>Ummi : eh, no... <i>dimana yang betul nak?</i> Here (showing to fati) here is</p> <p>Bum bum blue <i>mana nak? Yang warna yellow,</i> <i>Mana nak?</i></p> <p>Fati : tu (pointing the picture)</p> <p>Ummi : <i>iya..... smart boy, mana dua lagi nak,</i> <i>itu dibelakang abang.</i> Take it! Take it!</p>
Wednesday, 15 th July 2020	<p>When Fati was taking time with Mbak</p> <p>Mbak : merene le</p> <p>Fati : mok</p> <p>Mbak : ngopo le?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Merene la le, mbak ke i susu, gelem</p> <p>Fati : tutu</p> <p>Mbak : iyo, susu, gelem le</p> <p>Fati : eh eh.... Tutu</p>
Thursday, 16 th July 2020	<p>Fati, Ummi and Abi sat on terrace of the house</p> <p>Ummi : sini nak duduk</p> <p>Fati : au duduk</p>

	<p>Abi duduk</p> <p>Ummi : mana abi nak?</p> <p>Fati : tu..... (pointing toward Abi)</p> <p>Abi : son bo ho amang, juguk juguk mang</p> <p>Fati : oyo (olo), guk (juguk)</p> <p>Abi : Anak nise do oonnn.....???</p> <p> Anak nise do on.....?</p> <p>Fati : Abi</p>
<p>Tuesday, 21th July 2020</p>	<p>Ummi : Tulis nama abang, Muadz</p> <p>Fati : Tutta</p> <p>Ummi : Al fa....</p> <p>Fati : Ti</p> <p>Ummi : Sire....</p> <p>Fati : Gar</p> <p>Ummi : Abang tulis apa nak?</p> <p>Fati : B (alphabet)</p> <p>Ummi : (singing alphabet) A, B, C, D, E, F....</p> <p>Fati : G</p> <p> Abi (asking his father to sing the alphabet song together)</p> <p> Kua...kua....kua.....</p> <p>Ummi : kok malah jual aqua nak</p> <p>Fati : (laughing and giving the book and pen to Abi</p> <p>Abi : makasih saying</p>

	<p>Fati : ma.... (sama-sama)</p> <p>Ummi : tutup lemarnya nak!</p> <p>Fati : tu...tuk</p> <p>Ummi : ok... good job baby</p> <p>Fati : yeeeeee.....</p>
Sunday, 26 th July 2020	<p>When Fati was taking the time with Bou</p> <p>Fati : au, nik (bou naik)</p> <p>Bou : Mandakkit ho yak? Na malo ho sada ho</p> <p>Fati : au, nik abang nik</p> <p>Bou : olo olo hu padakkit</p> <p>Satu, dua, ti.....</p> <p>Fati : ga</p> <p>Bou : dohot de au mandakkit yak?</p> <p>Fati : ngak yeh</p> <p>Bou : ah, na holit ma ho yak, dohot bou da yak</p> <p>Fati : (little cry) no</p> <p>Bou : tong tong, inda mandakkit au bek</p> <p>Fati : hehehehheh</p>

Based on the nativist theory, the research subject can acquire the first language because he was born with faculties of the mind which know as Language Acquisition Devices (LAD). LAD allows him to acquire the language so he can acquire the first language by the time. By the time, a child (boy) started to combine one-word to two-word to produced utterances in the form of sentence. In vocabulary mastering, one-word utterance actually is a simple sentence for the child. They still learn how to use the language and try to produce it. At around 1:6 years old, the subject research can produce two-word utterances, but it took place for the certain words e.g. when he wants drink milk, he asked his mom to make milk by saying *tutu mi* „milk, mi“. The more words that are directly visible or concrete by the child so quickly he will be an additional

acquisition of language can be stored in the organs of the brain form long-term memory that can be used at any time of the child to interact with the opposite of play.

Keep in mind that there are two terms in the mastery of two languages, namely the terms bilingualism, bilingual, bilinguality, and multilingualisme. Bilingualism or better known bilingual is the use of two or more languages a speaker in communicating with the partner said in turn. Bilingual is a person or a speaker who uses both languages. Bilingualitas is related to the ability to use two languages in communicating. Then multilingualism is a state or situation that is used more than two languages by someone in association with others in turn. If bilingualism criterion refers to Bloomfield's (1976:56) opinion as the ability to master two languages that have the same degree of good, then the results of this study is bilingualism children aged 1 year 6 months in the process of mastering both languages namely Indonesian, English, Mandailingnese and Javanese. To that end, marriage between regions or between nations has led to a decrease in the language speakers used by family members or one of the family members who will gradually lead to the extinction of a language. In fact, to maintain a language, especially the local language is to use it in the context of family or at home. For that, parents should help in maintaining the mother tongue using one of his mother tongue in communicating in the family. It is aimed for the next generation of children starting not only starting from 1.4 years of age but starting from giving birth children are invited to speak and be heard mother tongue from their parents.

3. The Factor that Affected Language Acquisitions

His sentences are very basic that consists of subject with action, action with subject, subject with object, subject with location and location with subject. He still uses a simple sentence to convey a message and he is able to use the language well and more clearly. He imitates the words and the sounds around him both from the people around him (parents, adults, and other children), electronic devices (Videos and smartphone) and animal sounds also. He tries to produce and create simple sentences in his communication with his own way.

The subject of the study on observing this first language acquisition is a 1.6 year old boy. He is acquiring four languages as well as a first language. Those three languages are, Bahasa Indonesia, Mandailingnese, Javanese, and English. Those four languages he got from the language used by the baby sitters speech. He obtained Bahasa Indonesia and English from his mother, Mandailingnese from his father and his aunt (one of his baby sitter). He call her "Bou". The last is Javenese when she communicates with another baby sitter (he call her "*mbak*"). In terms of the first language acquisition, especially English, he has been able to understand and pronounce words or simple phrases, such as up, thank you, stand up, please, sit down, around, alphabets, numbers, and so forth.

The form of the input is sounds and the input also influenced by the intensity. The intensity means how often the research subject exposed by the input so he familiar with the input that he gets. The research subject imitates the words and sounds around him. He interacts with other people because there is stimulus response between him with his environment. Sometimes he acts like someone he knows and speak adults like. Based on the behaviorist theory language is a result of stimulus response so that's why the research subject also needs the stimulus to support him.

In this discussion, the role of the factors related to language acquisition which has been mentioned on the theoretical review will be discussed in relation to the first language acquisition experienced by the boy observed. The first factor that affects the research object's first language acquisition is environment. He acquires the first language through informal environment (the

natural environment or without planning as in a formal environment). He acquires the first language from the baby sitter speech and by utilizing the linguistic environment in the form of media, such as listening to songs in English from Youtube. An important thing that can be noted based on the observation; the boy who is being observed was able to quickly communicate/capture the intent conversation with others. Unlike most children at his age who tend to still fun to play and have its own world, so they less readily in responding their interlocutor.

CONCLUSION

The syntactic acquisition process of the research subject started when he could utter one-word utterances. The research subject was able to produce one-word utterances when he was 1.6 year old. His vocabulary increased rapidly so he could produce two-word utterances, three-word utterances and sometimes multiword utterances.

It is associated with this writer's experience, it can be concluded that the linguistic environment greatly contributes to the language acquisition. First language acquisition, especially for the little girl observed, can be seen more contributed by informal environment. In addition, the first language acquisition process in children tends to be fast and children are able to pronounce the language they acquired native likely.

Those inputs helped research subject to increase his vocabulary. Besides that, social background of the research subject also affected him in acquiring the first language. Mostly the people around the research subject were educated people, so he could get a good language. The research subject imitated the words, sounds, and some action of the people around him. He also learned something new and practice his language skills by interact with people around him.

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