

THE ANALYSIS OF THE WORD CLASSES ACQUIRED BY TWO – FOUR YEARS OLD INDONESIAN CHILDREN IN THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract

The objectives of the research are to show other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, what the other word classes are uttered by children and also what the word class is the most frequently uttered by them in their first language acquisition. The participants of the research are five children whose age ranges from two to four years old and whose parents are native speakers of Indonesian. The conversations of the five children or subjects had with their parents in Indonesian were observed and video-recorded for two – three months. Some of the subjects also had the conversations with their auntie, brother and sister in their same native language. The subjects' conversations were transcribed for the necessary data. The qualitative method was employed to syntactically analyze the collected data by categorizing the words uttered by the subjects into word classes or word category. The research findings reveal that the other word classes uttered by the five children or subjects of the research in their conversations are adverbs (125 words), pronouns (116 words), particles (77 words), and numerals (15 words), and that adverbs are the most frequently uttered by the subjects. Based on the above research findings, it is concluded that other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, the five subjects can also utter adverbs, pronouns, particles, numerals, and that they utter adverbs most frequently.

Key Words: *Word Classes, Utter, Child's First Language Acquisition*

Introduction

Humans use language to communicate and interact with others. Everyone knows at least one language, their native language. In one language, there are a lot of words. A word is a single distinct meaningful unit of speech and writing, used with other words (or occasionally alone) to form a sentence or to make an utterance. It is important for people to have the knowledge of their language, for instance vocabulary and structure to form or make their sentences or utterances meaningful and understandable; communication breakdown can be avoided. However, in fact to do so, it is not easy for people, particularly children who are in the process of acquiring their native language. Those children have difficulty forming or making meaningful and understandable sentences or utterances due to lack of the knowledge of their vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, it is necessary for an adult to understand the context in which the words are used by children, in order to be able to grasp the meanings of the words which they utter. A baby or a child, for example the one aged between one to four years old also happens to undergo limitations in his vocabulary, and his pronunciation is sometimes less accurate. Further, the child knows and uses the language used in the environment in which he lives. He tries to copy the language adults utter, particularly his parents, even though he does so hesitantly. In addition, he sometimes utter words incompletely.

Parent's language in the child's language acquisition plays an important role (Suparman, 2011:13). The role of parent's language in child's language acquisition is as measurably important as the parent's influence on the child cognitively and affectively (Brown, 1980). It happens when the children acquire their first language in which they copy the words which they hear from other people, particularly their parents and utter them (the words) on their own way. As such, a mother is the good teacher for her baby or child since she helps her baby or child in the process of learning the native language or first language naturally.

In the language acquisition, a child's linguistic production is his first words. It is his first words which the child utters. According to Clark (1993: 1), words make a language; words come first in language acquisition. In his language acquisition process, a child learns his native language naturally. Dardjowidjojo (2003: 225) states that the process by which a child masters his native language naturally. The process of a child's first language acquisition is different from that of his language learning in the classroom, and being taught by a teacher. Chaer (2015: 167) states that language acquisition is a process which occurs in a child's brain when the child acquires his first language or native language. Children are able to acquire their native language or learn a language because they are born with their innateness abilities in their brains to do so. Chomsky (2004: 17) in his innateness theory argues that children's ability to learn language is due to a genetically programmed organ that is located in the brain. The genetically programmed organ is called Language Acquisition Device or LAD which enables children to learn a language.

Observing the development of children's ability in acquiring their native language is interesting because the different age of the children affects their ability to master their native language or their language developments. Uttering single words for children, for instance, actually means uttering a full sentence. The children just take a single word for the whole sentence since they are possibly unable to utter more than one word. For example, when uttering the word "drink", the children might want to drink milk or water. Within a few months when they are 24 months old or two years old, the children start to combine two or more words to produce longer utterances. For instance, "mommy sing", means mother sings, the mother has sung, or the mother will sing a song. The word "stage" is possibly the most used term in language acquisition (Ingram, 1989: 32). In acquiring his or her first language, a baby undergoes linguistic development stages. There are four main stages of language: the babbling or the pre-linguistic stage (0-11 months), the holophrastic or the one word stage (approximately 11-18 months), the two-word stage (around 30 months) and the telegraphic stage (around 30 months onwards). Hence, it is essential that people, particularly parents understand the stages of their children's language development. Failure of the parents to comprehend their children's language could result in mis-communication.

With regard to the research of first child language acquisition, some related previous studies have been reviewed. Clark and Wong in 2002 conducted research on first language acquisition. The goals of his study are to find new words, in the case of nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. In their research finding, Clark and Wong identified as offering new words in fact offered new nouns (84 %). Among the remaining offers, 4 % were adjectives, 5 % verbs, and 5 % prepositions. Sudiana (2016) in her thesis "*The Analysis of the Word Classes Acquired by Two-Four Year Old Children*" examines the words uttered by five children whose age ranges between two to four years old

and whose native language is Bahasa Indonesia in their conversations with their parents, aunt, brother and sister in their native language. She focuses her research on the three word classes – nouns, verbs and adjectives in the syntax of Bahasa Indonesia. The research findings reveal that the five children uttered nouns, verbs and adjectives and that they uttered the nouns most frequently.

Referring to the above previous studies, this research focuses on what other word classes the two to four years old children are able to utter in their conversations in Bahasa Indonesia with their parents, auntie, brother and sister. The study analyzes the adverbs, the pronouns, the particles, and the numerals uttered by the five two – four year old Indonesian children as the subjects of the research. Hence, the words uttered by the five children in their conversations with their parents, aunt, brother and sister in their native language are syntactically analyzed. Due to time and other constraints, this paper is limited to the discussions on the word classes to which the words belong, uttered by the said five children. Further, the problem formulation of the research is as follows:

1. Other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, what are the other word classes uttered by the two-four-year old children?
2. What the word class is the most frequently uttered by the children in their first language acquisition.

The research is aimed at showing other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, what the other word classes are uttered by the two-four-year-old children and what the word class is the most frequently uttered by them in their first language acquisition. Further, the benefits of the research are to provide the information on other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, what the other word classes are uttered by the two-four-year old children and the most frequent word classes uttered by the children as well as to serve as a reference to those who would like to conduct further research on the same topic. The other word categories on which this study focuses are adverbs, pronouns, particles, and numerals, uttered by the five subjects. Adverbs are words which add information or qualify the meanings of other words, clauses, or sentences. Thomas (1993: 23) states that as far as meaning is concerned, adverbs often add information in relation to circumstances of manner, time, or place; in other words, they answer the questions ‘How?’, ‘When?’, ‘Where?’. Adverbs are words which are used to modify a sentence or a part of a sentence (Chaer, 2011: 162). Pronouns are words which substitute for nouns or noun phrases in a sentence. Their name implies that they replace nouns (Quirk et al, 1985: 335). Particles are words which only have a grammatical meaning but do not have a lexical meaning. They do not belong to any main word categories such as nouns and verbs. Particles are the word classes which only have a grammatical meaning but do not have any lexical meaning. The word classes belong to particles are prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, articles and confirmation (Rahayu, 2012). Numerals are words which designates numbers. Numerals are words that designate amount, number, number order, or a collection or a set (Chaer, 2011: 113).

Finding And Discussion

This study focuses on discussing child language acquisition in the syntax of Bahasa Indonesia acquired by the subjects or the participants of this research. The subjects of the participants of this research are five children whose native language is Bahasa Indonesia. The first

subject (Subject-1) is a two-year-old female child (2;0). The second subject (Subject-2) is a three-year-and-eight-month-old male child (3;8), and the third subject (Subject-3) and the fourth subject (Subject-4) are three-year-old male children (child 3;0). The fifth subject (Subject-5) is a two-and-half-year-old male child (2;5). The subjects' conversations with their parents, auntie, brother and sister in Bahasa Indonesia were observed and video-recorded. The participants' topics of the conversations or the dialogs and the process of the activities were not directed by the researcher. They were up to the participants' wishes. Further, the Indonesian words uttered by the five subjects in their conversations or dialog with their parents, auntie, brother and sister were transcribed as the data to be analyzed in terms of word categories.

The data analysis employs descriptive qualitative method. The analysis focuses on what the other word classes, other than nouns, verbs and adjectives, uttered by the five children as the subjects of the research, in their conversations they had with their parents, auntie, brother and sister. In this regard, special attention is paid to the words which belong to adverbs, pronouns, particles and numerals, uttered by the said five subjects. In addition, it also focuses on what the word class is the most frequently uttered by the children in their first language acquisition.

Based on the data analysis, the following are the research findings on the adverbs, the pronouns, the particles and the numerals uttered and the word class most frequently uttered by the five subjects in their conversations or dialogs they had with their parents, auntie, brother and sister.

The Adverbs uttered by the five subjects

Subject-1, a Two-Year-Old Female Child (2;0)

Subject-1 uttered 43 adverbs. The said subject one time or once uttered *tadi* and *dapat*. She uttered *gan*, *boleh* and *aja* twice. She respectively uttered *udah* for four times, *dulu* for five times, *lagi* for six times, *nggak* for seven times, and *mau* for 13 times.

Subject-2, a Three Year-and-Eight-Month-Old Male Child (3;8)

Subject-2 uttered 50 adverbs. The said subject one time or once uttered *pas*, *pernah*, *mah*, *aja*, *ngapain*, *mang* and *bareng*. He uttered *belum*, and *tidak* twice. He respectively uttered *mau* three times and *udah* four times and *boleh*, *jangan* and *ngga* for five times. He respectively uttered *dulu* for five times, *lagi* for six times, *nggak* for seven times, and *mau* for 13 times. Further, he also respectively uttered the *nggak* and *lagi* for seven times and 10 times.

Subject-3, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-3 uttered 13 adverbs. The said subject respectively uttered *lagi*, *sendiri* and *udah* twice. He uttered *mau* for three times. He uttered *ngga* for five times.

Subject-4, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-4 uttered 10 adverbs. The said subject one time or once uttered *lagi*, *jangan* and *udah* respectively. He uttered *mau* twice. He uttered *ngga* for five times.

Subject-5, a Two-and-Half-Year-Old Male (2;5)

Subject-5 uttered nine adverbs. The said subject once uttered *ngga* and *aja* respectively. He uttered *mau* for seven times.

Pronouns uttered by the five subjects

Subject-1, a Two-Year-Old Female Child (2;0)

Subject-1 uttered 47 pronouns. The said subject one time or once uttered *gimana*, *apa*, *dia*, *kamu* and *mana*. She uttered *nya* for 14 times. She uttered *cono*, *itu* and *kenapa* twice. Further, she respectively uttered *cini* for nine times and *ini* for 13 times.

Subject-2, a Three Year-and-Eight-Month-Old Male Child (3;8)

Subject-2 uttered 40 pronouns. The said subject one time or once uttered *dia*, *sini*, *mana*, and *sana* respectively. The said subject uttered *nya* for 24 times. He uttered *apa* twice. He respectively uttered *itu* and *situ* for three times and *ini* for four times.

Subject-3, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-3 uttered 18 pronouns. The said subject once uttered *itu* and *kau* respectively. He uttered *ini* for three times. He respectively uttered *mana* for six times and *nya* for seven times.

Subject-4, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-4 uttered eight pronouns. The said subject one time or once uttered *nya*. He respectively uttered *kau* and *kita* twice. He uttered *ini* for three times.

Subject-5, a Two-and-Half-Year-Old Male (2;5)

Subject-5 uttered three pronouns. He uttered *kau* for three times.

Particles uttered by the five subjects

Subject-1, a Two-Year-Old Female Child (2;0)

Subject-1 uttered 18 particles. The said subject one time or once uttered *kayak*, *yang*, *kalo*, *duh*, *kepada* and *dong* respectively. She also uttered *iya* and *di* each for six times.

Subject-2, a Three Year-and-Eight-Month-Old Male Child (3;8)

Subject-2 uttered 43 particles. The said subject one time or once uttered *dong* and *kalau* respectively. He respectively uttered *yang* twice and *sama* for three times. Further, he also respectively uttered *ke* and *ya* for six times, *iya* for 10 times and *di* for 11 times.

Subject-3, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-3 uttered seven particles. The said subject one time or once uttered *ke* and *sih* respectively. He also uttered *iya* for five times.

Subject-4, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-4 uttered seven particles. He respectively uttered *di* twice and *iya* for five times.

Subject-5, a Two-and-Half-Year-Old Male Child (2;5)

Subject-5 uttered only *ayo* twice.

Numerals uttered by the five subjects

Subject-1, a Two-Year-Old Female Child (2;0)

Subject-1 uttered only one numeral – *atu*.

Subject-2, a Three Year-and-Eight-Month-Old Male Child (3;8)

Subject-2 uttered seven numerals. The said subject one time or once uttered *satu*, *dua*, *tiga*, *empat*, and *lima* respectively. Further, he also uttered *nol* twice.

Subject-3, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-3 uttered two numerals. He uttered *satu* and *tiga* once.

Subject-4, a Three-Year-Old Male Child (3;0)

Subject-4 uttered three numerals. The said subject uttered *satu*, *dua* and *tiga* once.

Subject-5, a Two-and-Half-Year-Old Male Child (2;5)

Subject-5 uttered two numerals. He uttered *satu* twice.

Table 1

The Total Number of the Adverbs, the Pronouns, the Particles and the Numerals Uttered by the Five Subjects

Adverbs	Pronouns	Particles	Numerals
125	116	77	15

Table 1 reveals that the five subjects respectively uttered 125 adverbs, 116 pronouns, 77 particles and 15 numerals. The table also shows that all of the subjects uttered the adverbs most frequently.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the five subjects uttered adverbs (125 words), pronouns (116 words), particles (77 words) and numerals (15 words). Further, the five subjects most frequently uttered adverbs in their conversations or dialogues.

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