



# Psycholinguistic: Child Language Acquisition At The Phonological Level

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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pemerolehan bahasa anak pada tataran fonologi dalam kajian psikolinguistik. Metode penelitian ini bermanfaat untuk menuntun peneliti dalam penelitian yang dilakukan. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan tujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pemerolehan bahasa anak. Data ini bersifat deskriptif yang berarti bahwa pemerolehan fonologi menjadi data terpenting dalam penelitian ini. Peneliti akan memaparkan pemerolehan bahasa di bidang fonologi pada anak. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif karena sesuai untuk mendeskripsikan secara sistematis, faktual, serta akurat mengenai pemerolehan bahasa tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode observasi. Observasi atau pengamatan langsung atas objek penelitian dimaksudkan untuk mendapatkan gambaran yang jelas tentang keberadaan objek penelitian dan kegiatan yang dilakukan. Hasil pemerolehan bahasa anak berdasarkan tataran fonologi yaitu bunyi-bunyi yang diucapkan oleh anak, banyak memperoleh dan memproduksi berbagai fonem yang dapat membedakan arti kata-kata yang dapat diucapkan. Fonem-fonem konsonan dan vokal adalah [a], [b], [c], [d], [e], [i], [k], [l], [n], [o], [s], [t], dan [u]. Ada beberapa konsonan tersebut yang belum bisa diucapkan apabila konsonan tersebut berada di awal, di tengah dan di akhir. Untuk konsonan [t], anak menghilangkan konsonan tersebut jika konsonan tersebut berada di awal.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study for this study was to determine children's language acquisition at the phonological level in psycholinguistic studies. This research method is useful for guiding researchers in the research conducted. This research was conducted with the aim of describing children's language acquisition. This data is descriptive which means that phonological acquisition is the most important data in this study. Researchers will describe language acquisition in the field of phonology in children. This research is a qualitative research because it is appropriate to describe systematically, factually, and accurately about language acquisition. This study uses the observation method. Observation or direct observation of the research object is intended to get a clear picture of the existence of the research object and the activities carried out. The results of acquiring children's language based on the phonological level, namely the sounds spoken by children, acquire and produce many phonemes that can distinguish the meaning of the words that can be spoken. The consonant and vowel phonemes are [a], [b], [c], [d], [e], [i], [k], [l], [n], [o], [s], [t], and [u]. There are some of these consonants that cannot be pronounced if the consonants are at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. For consonant [t], the child removes the consonant if the consonant is at the beginning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool acquired by humans from birth. At the beginning of the baby born do not have the ability to talk to other people. Mastery of a language by a child begins with the acquisition of the first language which is often called the mother tongue. Language acquisition is a very long process since the child does not know a language until he is fluent in the language. After the mother tongue is obtained, at a certain age the child acquires another language or a second language that he knows as a new body of knowledge. Mother tongue is the first language that is mastered by humans since the beginning of their life through interactions with families and the community around children.

Language for children is sometimes difficult to translate, because children generally still use language structures that are still confused and are still experiencing a transitional stage in speaking so that it is difficult for their speech partners to understand. mastering the conditions or the surrounding environment, meaning that when small children speak they use the media around them to explain what they want to convey to their speech partners in speaking. In addition to using language structures that are still chaotic, children also tend to still master limitations in vocabulary (lexicon) and in pronouncing the phonemes correctly. The environment greatly influences children's language development. So that the results of the language spoken by children are based on their ability to interact directly with the languages around them (Bawamenewi, 2020).

Learning is a system. That is, learning is a unit consisting of various components that support each other. Therefore, the success of learning will be determined by the components involved in the learning. These components are teachers, students, learning objectives, learning materials, learning methods and techniques, evaluation, and the required facilities. Likewise in language learning, for language learning to be successful, these components must be considered.

In a sense, language is vocal sounds used in utterances or written symbols of these vowel sounds, a means of communication used in the environment of certain human groups, manners, good behavior (KBBI). Soenjono Dardjowidjo said that Language is a system of arbitrary spoken symbols used by members of a language community to communicate and interact among themselves based on the culture they have in common. The system in the definition here refers to the existence of elements that are related to one another which eventually form a consistent, hierarchical nature (Soenjono Dardjowidjojo, 2005).

Language material can be understood through Linguistics as stated by Yudibrata, Andoyo Sastromiharjo, and Kholid A. Harras (1997/1998: 2) that linguistics is a science that studies language, usually produces language theories; not so with students as language learners. Students as organisms with all their behavior including the processes that occur within students when learning a language cannot be understood by linguistics, but can only be understood through other related sciences, namely Psychology (Lisnawati, 2008).

In further developments, children are able to add vocabulary independently in the form of good communication. When children learn language through interaction with adults, children do not only learn the word and sentence editorial but also the structure of the words and sentences themselves. If a mother says the wrong sentence, early childhood not only imitates and interprets the meaning of the sentence, but also "learns" the sentence structure. Therefore the process of acquiring and mastering children's language is a matter that is quite amazing for researchers in the field of psycholinguistics.

Language which is the object of linguistic study must be distinguished from language, namely human activities in producing and perceiving language. The language process starts from semantic encoding, grammatical encoding, and phonological encoding. Semantic encoding and grammatical encoding take place in the brain, while phonological encoding starts in the brain and then continues its implementation by the speech organs involving the brain's nervous system (neuromuscular) speech from the throat muscles, tongue muscles, lip muscles, mouth, palate, nasal cavity, vocal cords, and lungs (Abdul Chaer, 2005).

Language acquisition (language acquisition) is a process that takes place in a child's brain when he acquires his first language or mother tongue. Language acquisition is a process of mastering language that is carried out by children naturally when they learn their mother tongue (Native Language) (Dardjowidjojo, 2014). The maximum acquisition of a child's language can be obtained from the environment, and the maximum acquisition can affect the output of the language that is issued from the child. The scope of components included in the environmental category is the active role of parents, supporting facilities in language acquisition, the people closest to the child, for example siblings, relatives, and siblings who are above the child's age.

Competence is the process of mastering grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics). This competence is brought by every child from birth unconsciously. Although brought from birth, competence requires coaching so that children have performance in language.

Phonology is a part of grammar or the field of linguistics which analyzes the sounds of language in general. Meanwhile, according to Kridalaksana (2007:2) says that phonology is the science of sounds in general phonetics while the sounds of language are researched or described in phonology. The term phonology, which comes from a combination of the Greek words phone 'sound' and 'logos', order, word or science' is also called sound system. This field includes two parts. Phonetics, namely the phonology section that studies how to produce language

sounds or how a speech sound is produced by human speech organs. Phonemics, namely the phonology section which studies speech sounds according to their function as a differentiator of meaning. Speech sounds that are neutral, or are still not proven to distinguish meaning are called a phoneme, while a phoneme is the smallest unit of speech sound that differentiates meaning. The variation of a phoneme due to the influence of the environment it enters is called an allophone. The image or symbol of a phoneme is called a letter. So, a phoneme is different from a letter. To produce a sound or phoneme, there are three important elements, namely (1) Air, (2) Articulator or the moving part of the speech organ, and (3) Point of articulation or part of the speech organ which is the touch point of the articulator.

Based on the description above, the purpose of this study was to determine children's language acquisition at the phonological level in psycholinguistic studies.

## **2. METHOD**

Researchers used a qualitative descriptive research design. This research method is useful for guiding researchers in the research conducted. This research was conducted with the aim of describing children's language acquisition. This data is descriptive which means that phonological acquisition is the most important data in this study. Researchers will describe the acquisition of language in the field of phonology in children. This research is a qualitative research because it is appropriate to describe systematically, factually, and accurately about language acquisition. This study uses the observation method. Observation or direct observation of the research object is intended to get a clear picture of the existence of the research object and the activities carried out. Through this method, researchers can see directly the activities carried out by children in communicating with the people around them.

This study uses the observation method. Observation or direct observation of the research object is intended to get a clear picture of the existence of the research object and the activities carried out. Through this method, researchers can see firsthand the activities carried out by children in communicating with people who are in surrounding.

Data analysis activities in this study include data identification, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In data identification, the researcher assigns a code to the appropriate data. The next stage is data presentation. The data is presented in phonetic form.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Acquisition of Children's Language at the Phonological Level of Psycholinguistic Studies**

Phonology at the level of linguistics is divided into two parts, namely phonetics and phonemics. Phonetics is the science of language which discusses speech sounds used in speech and how these sounds are produced by human speech organs. Furthermore, phonemics is the science of language which discusses sounds language that functions as a differentiator of meaning or phoneme. Phonemes are two sounds that are phonetically different in a different environment, which has the effect of distinguishing different words.

Language acquisition is a process that takes place when children learn to master their first language or mother tongue, while language learning is related to the acquisition of a second language, where language is taught formally to children.

The first language acquisition stage is related to the child's language development. This is because a person's first language is acquired when he is a child. The first language acquisition stage is divided into four stages, namely the acquisition of competence and performance, the acquisition of semantics, the acquisition of syntax and the acquisition of phonology.

Language acquisition in children is certainly an important concern. Babies who cry when they are hungry (want to ask for milk) or children who can say [milk] when the child is hungry. It goes through a process. This process needs guidance in order to achieve perfect goals, in other words being able to interpret as well as pronounce words, sentences, to be able to speak.

At birth, children only have about 20% of their adult brains. This is different from the animals that Sudan has about 70%. It is because of this difference that animals can do many things immediately after birth, while humans can only cry and move their bodies. At the age of 6 weeks, children begin to make sounds that are similar to consonant or vowel sounds. The shape of these sounds cannot be ascertained because they are not clearly

audible. Meanwhile, at the age of 6 months, children begin to mix consonants with vowels to form what is known in English as babbling or babbling.

Based on the results of phonological acquisition research, it can be seen that 3-year-old children simplify complex language sounds. There are several consonant sounds such as /r/ which changes sound to /l/, and /s/ to become /c/ or sometimes to /t/. This often appears in children aged 3 years, but as they get older this will gradually disappear and the child will be able to speak the language more fluently. From the results of this study it was also found that in the language of children aged 3 years there was a change in double vowel sounds such as /ai/ became /e/ and /au/ became /o/.

In language acquisition, input is a very important and very decisive factor. Humans will not be able to master the language if there is no comprehensive input. The mentalistic view which states that children have been provided with natural provisions at birth. Besides that, in language there is also a universal concept so that children mentally already know universal natures.

### **Semantic Acquisition Stage**

Syntactic acquisition depends on semantic acquisition. The first thing children get is not syntactic structure but meaning (semantics). Before being able to say any words at all, children diligently collect information about their environment. Children compose semantic (simple) features of the words they know. What the child understands and collects becomes knowledge about his world. Understanding the meaning is the basis of utterance utterances.

First language acquisition is closely related to cognitive development. Such as thinking, forming concepts and remembering. Language development is a reflection of cognitive development, and it is cognitive development that demands proficiency someone's language. So, cognitive development is one factor that can affect children's language development. If the child's cognitive development is fast, then language acquisition will be fast, as well as the acquisition of abilities other.

Children have been able to master various forms of nouns. The forms of these nouns are as follows. First, nouns belonging to members body totals eleven words. Second, nouns belonging to surrounding objects sixty-three words in total. Third, there are four nouns classified as fruits say. Fourth, nouns that are classified as animals total twenty-six words. Fifth, nouns which are classified as greeting words totaling fourteen words. Sixth, classified nouns to substances excreted by the body totaling three words.

### **Syntactic Acquisition Stage**

The first syntactic construction of normal children can be observed at 18 months of age. However, some children have started to appear at the age of one year and other children over two years. Syntactic acquisition is the child's ability to express something in the form of construction or sentence structure. The construction starts from a series of two words. The construction of these two words is an arrangement formed by the child to express something. The child is able to produce the target language to represent what he means. The use and replacement of certain words in the same position shows that the child has mastered word classes and is able to creatively vary their functions. An example is 'father is coming'. The word can be varied by the child to 'father is going' or 'mother is coming'.

### **Competency Acquisition and Performance Stage**

In acquiring the first language, children take two abstract things in linguistic theory, namely competence and performance. Competence is knowledge of the grammar of the mother tongue which is mastered by the child unconsciously. The grammar consists of three components, namely semantics, syntax, and phonology and is obtained gradually. At this competency level, an analysis process occurs to formulate solutions to semantic, syntactic, and phonological problems.

### **Phonological Acquisition Stage**

Phonologically, newborn children have very striking differences in language organs compared to adults. The brain weighs only 30% of the size of an adult. The narrow mouth cavity is almost filled with the tongue. Increasing age will widen the oral cavity. This growth provides greater space for children to produce language sounds.

The acquisition of phonology or language sounds begins with the acquisition of basic sounds. According to Jakobson in Ardiana and Syamsul Sodik 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/. After the child is able to produce sound, over time, the child will be more proficient in producing sound. This is influenced by the environment, cognitive and speech tools.

The original word	Child	Missing phonemic units	Phoneme change
Eat	Matan	/k/	/t/
Drink	Yum	/m/i/u/	/his/
mumbled	Hmmmm		
Buy snacks	Eli please	/b/j	/b/h/

From the results of the research described above, the sounds uttered by Ajay at the age of 3, Ajay has acquired and produced many phonemes that can distinguish the meanings of the words that can be spoken. The consonant and vowel phonemes are [a], [b], [c], [d], [e], [i], [k], [l], [n], [o], [s], [t], and [u]. There are some of these consonants that cannot be pronounced if the consonants are at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. For consonant [t], the child removes the consonant if the consonant is at the beginning is a branch of micro-linguistics whose scope discusses the sounds of language in terms of its function, and phonetics is a branch of linguistics whose scope discusses the sounds of language which is more focused on its acoustic or pronunciation properties (Verhaar: 2001). At this phonological level, there are several irregularities in researching Ajay's language acquisition because there are some sounds of language that are incomplete or unclear when Ajay utters them.

Language acquisition in children certainly an important concern. Baby who cries when he's hungry (want to ask for milk) or the child can pronounce [milk] when the child is feeling hungry. It experienced a process. This process is necessary guidance to achieve that goal perfect, in other words capable interpret also pronounce the word, sentences, to be able to speak. Language first in children will affect next process in language. This first language is often referred to as mother tongue.

Referring to the observations, children aged 3 years have some difficulties in pronouncing real phonemes or original phonemes, such as phoneme /s/ becoming phoneme /t/, phoneme /r/ becoming phoneme /l/. It is natural for children aged 3 years to experience this, because the speech apparatus produced is not perfect, if it continues into adulthood then it can be said that the child has problems pronouncing these phonemes. Disorders can occur in medical factors and social factors. Firmansyah (Dariah, et al. 2018) explained that speech errors in children aged 3 years in the pronunciation of phonemes usually include changes in the sound that is spoken, but the meaning that arrives is the meaning that the child means, spelling at the age of 3 years is not perfect and there are phonemes omitted in the pronunciation.

In pronouncing a lexical meaning or the real meaning, if it is spoken by a 3 year old child it will have a different sound or meaning because a 3 year old child does not necessarily know the real meaning, but it does not rule out the possibility that what a 3 year old child utters has the same meaning as what is understood by others.

From the results of phonological acquisition research, it can be seen that 3-year-old children simplify complex language sounds. There are several consonant sounds such as /r/ which changes sound to /l/, and /s/ to become /c/ or sometimes to /t/. This often appears in children, but as they get older it will gradually disappear and children will be able to speak their language more fluently. From the results of this study it was also found that in children's language there is a change in double vowel sounds such as /ai/ to /e/ and /au/ to /o/. This occurs due to the habits of parents and the people around them who often say The same.

In general, children in Indonesia receive formal education after they are 6 years old and at that time the language learning process begins. Between the ages of 0 and 5 years, children have more contact with their families and their environment and the process of acquiring language occurs in that period. In the language learning process, the child knows a second language after knowing his first language.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the data above, it can be concluded that the acquisition of children's language is based on the phonological level, namely the sounds spoken by children, many acquire and produce various phonemes that can distinguish the meaning of the words that can be spoken. The consonant and vowel phonemes are [a], [b], [c], [d], [e], [i], [k], [l], [n], [o], [s], [t], and [u]. There are some of these consonants that cannot be pronounced if the consonants are at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. For consonant [t], the child removes the consonant if the consonant is at the beginning.

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