

A STUDY CASE OF FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A TWO-YEAR-OLD CHILD

Ayu Nirmala Luhur*, I Nyoman Tri Ediwan, Luh Putu Laksminy

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia
putunirmala.kc@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The acquisition of language involves multiple cognitive and linguistic processes. In this process, children learn the sound system of their language, how words are used to represent meaning, and how words can be combined to form sentences. This study discussed first language acquisition in a child aged two years old based on phonological, morphological, and semantics aspects. This study aims to determine how children develop as they acquire the first language and to analyze the vocabulary and simple sentences mastered by two-year-old children based on linguistic features, i.e., phonology, morphology, and semantics. The descriptive qualitative method and theory of cognitive development by Chomsky were used to analyze the data in this study. The data source was obtained by using observation and note-taking techniques to observe and note the utterances of a girl named Anastasia Gabriella Putri Wahyudi. Based on the research results, Anna's language acquisition is significantly influenced by the family environment. In addition, Anna's linguistic development is progressing well, with phonological, morphological, and semantic features that are typical for a two-year-old child.

Keywords: Child, Psycholinguistics, First Language Acquisition

I. Introduction

Children's language acquisition is undoubtedly closely related to the study of psycholinguistics. According to Simanjuntak, as cited by Harras and Bachari (2009:1), psycholinguistics is a science that describes the psychological processes that occur when a person produces and understands the sentences he hears when communicating and how humans acquire language skills. First language acquisition is a complex and fascinating process that occurs naturally in young children, typically starting from birth and continuing through early childhood. Lyons (Mudini et al., 2017) state that language acquisition is the process through which language speakers acquire a language without qualifications. It is common knowledge that someone may require comprehensive grammatical understanding at any time. Kids learn their first language in stages, with each step getting closer to the adult language's grammar. (Suardi et al., 2019). Darjowidjojo, cited by Suardi et al. (2019), Children will naturally pick up language

to communicate with those in their immediate environment. A child's mother tongue, also known as their native language, is the first language they learn and eventually become proficient in.

The social environment strongly influences the first language acquired by children. Especially in the family environment, where they know and acquire language naturally and unconsciously through interactions with their mothers and other family members. So, it cannot be denied that parents are the primary teachers in language development in children. Therefore, the role of parents is vital in the family, especially at the stage of cognitive development. Furthermore, when a child is learning a first language, there are two processes: competency and performance. The two processes are performance and competency. Competence means indirectly understanding grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics). These two processes are not the same. Although this competency is innate in all children, it still needs to be coached in order for children to perform at a deep level in language. The child's performance is their capacity for language-based communication. The two processes that make up the performance are the comprehension and sentence-making processes. While producing one's own sentences is a requirement of the publishing process, the comprehensive process calls for the ability to observe and interpret the sentences heard. (Kusuma, 2016).

Based on the explanation above, the problems that will be the focus of this study are as follows:

1. How does Anna acquire her first language?
2. How is her language development based on phonology, morphology, and semantics?

The purposes of this study are to find out how children develop as they acquire the first language and to analyze the vocabulary and simple sentences mastered by two-year-old children based on linguistic features, i.e., phonology, morphology, and semantics. The scope of this study is related to the research problems mentioned above. The discussion is limited to linguistic features, especially the phonology, morphology, and semantic aspects of the utterances produced by a two-year-old child.

II. Methods

The methodology of this research is descriptive-qualitative research. The object or participant of this study is a child named Anna. Her full name is Annastasya Gabriella Putri Wahyudi, and she was two years old. Anna comes from a family with different cultures and values. Her mother is Balinese, and her father is Javanese. The language used by this family is Indonesian. Anna is a healthy and active girl. Physically, mentally, and socially, she loves singing, running inside and outside the house, and playing with her friends. She also likes to ask her parents about the names of things or ideas she observes inside and outside the home. The place of this research was Anna's house.

As has been mentioned previously, this research used a descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research addresses issues that are primarily social or human in nature and affect individuals or groups. The data was taken in April 2023. The data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques of Anna's utterances. Next, we analyzed the collected data in this study, starting by identifying the utterances and then analyzing the utterances by using Comsky's theory based on phonology, morphology, and semantics acquisition. The last step is to a conclusion based on the analysis that has been done. Data analysis was presented using formal and informal methods.

III. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the researcher presented data based on observation and analysis. This is the data of the development of Anna's first language acquisition based on phonology, morphology, and semantics aspects as follows:

Phonology Development

The vowel and consonant sounds that appear based on the observation of the data obtained for three weeks are as follows:

Table 1. List Utterances of Phonology Development

No	Utterances	Meaning
1	Tuyun	Turun
2	Geyas	Gelas
3	Macak	Masak
4	Joyok	Jorok
5	Idung	Hidung
6	Papa	Papa
7	Mama	Mama
8	Uduk	Duduk
9	Susu	Susu
10	Nyamuk	Nyamuk

At the phonological level, Anna has mastered the basic vowels /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, and /o/. She also produces a variety of phonemes and can distinguish the meaning of the words she speaks. Anna also masters most consonants, such as [r] and [l]. She can barely pronounce the perfect [r] and [l] phonemes in the middle of a word; "jorok" becomes "joyok", "turun" becomes "tuyun", "gelas" becomes "geyas". Anna cannot pronounce the phoneme sound [s] in the middle of a word; for example, "masak" becomes "macak". However, she can pronounce the sound [s] at the end of words and in front of words; for example, "susu" becomes "susu" and "gelas" becomes

"geyas". The number of phonemes is still incomplete and perfect because the incomplete number of teeth influences it, and the tongue is rudimentary.

Morphology Development

In the morphological aspect, Anna obtained some words that could already be mastered. She was able to produce words, although still not clear in articulation, such as the word "kayon" which has meaning "krayon" (noun), "uning" means "kuning" (noun), "jajak" means "jajan" (noun), "nayik" means "naik" (verb), "ujan" means "hujan" (noun).

Table 2. List Utterances of Morphology Development

No	Utterances	Meaning
1	Kayon	Krayon
2	Uning	Kuning
3	Jajak	Jajan
4	Nayik	Naik
5	Ujan	Hujan

Based on Table 2, Anna already knows several types of words, and the most frequently used are nouns. Her vocabulary has also increased because it is influenced by concrete experiences, as the child receives experiences that are directly related to those words that occur every day.

Semantics Development

In semantics acquisition, the researcher found Anna's utterances to be as follows:

Table 3. List Utterances of Semantics Development

No	Utterances	Meaning
1	Ni apa ni ma ?	Ini apa ini ma ?
2	Adek bayi	Adik bayi
3	Ma ayok tidur lagi	Ma ayo tidur lagi
4	Ni siapa ma ?	Ini siapa ma ?
5	Main yok	Main yuk
6	Mama mau maem	Mama mau makan
7	Mama mau pup	Mama mau buang air besar
8	Onti oca	Tante Rosa
9	Mama jalan, jalan yok	Mama jalan-jalan yuk
10	Mama mau jajak	Mama mau jajan

Based on the observations, Anna could communicate well and express her thoughts. The results found several words that have meanings, such as "mama mau maem" and "mama mau makan" (she wants to eat). Even she could ask something that she did not know, like "ni apa ini ma" means "ini apa ini ma" (she wants to know what is the name of the picture in the book) and "ni siapa ma" means "ini siapa ma" (she asked who that person is). She could say if she wanted to go to the toilet, like "mama mau pup," which means "mama mau buang air besar. (She asked her mother to bring her to the toilet.)

According to Table 3, it can be concluded that Anna was able to communicate. Even though there were despite the words in her speech that had phoneme errors, she was able to communicate and convey her wishes from the conversations that occurred.

The findings from Anna's case align with established theories of first language acquisition, particularly in the context of early childhood development. According to Chomsky's theory of cognitive development, language acquisition is an innate ability, and Anna's progress in phonology, morphology, and semantics reflects this natural process. The errors in articulation are typical for children at her stage of development and are expected to resolve as she continues to practice and refine her language skills.

In addition, the role of the environment, particularly the family, is crucial in shaping her language acquisition. Anna's exposure to language at home, through interactions with her parents and surroundings, provides the necessary input for her linguistic growth. This supports the idea that the social environment plays a significant role in the development of a child's first language

IV. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that children's language acquisition is significantly influenced by their environment especially family. It can be concluded from the data that Anna has good communication skills. She is phonologically capable of pronouncing all vowels and most consonants. Nouns are the most commonly used word type, and Anna is already familiar with a variety of word types morphologically. Her ability to communicate and comprehend the meaning of the discourse is based on semantics. However, due to the tongue's primitive nature and the insufficient number of teeth influencing it, some of these words have pronunciations that may be complete and perfect. While there are still some areas for improvement in articulation, her overall communication skills show that she is on track to master her first language and this is normal for a child of her age. Further observations as Anna gets older, will most likely show continued improvement in her speech along with her cognitive and physical development.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of my requirement in filling the Bachelor degree from the English Department in Udayana University where it is by I Nyoman Tri Ediwan, S.S., M.Hum., and Dr. Dra. Luh Putu Laksminy, M.hum. Thank you for your patience, guidance, and supervision throughout the writing process of the paper

References

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. California: Sage publications
- Friska, Y., & Syafi'i, M. T. (2021a). First Language Acquisition On A Three-Year-Old Child. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*, 3(2), 267–279. <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v3i2.2234>
- Friska, Y., & Syafi'i, M. T. (2021b). First Language Acquisition On A Three-Year-Old Child. *Acitya*, 3(2), 267–279. <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v3i2.2234>
- Heryani, K. H. (2020). Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini. *Aktualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 10(1), 75–95. <https://ejournal.an-nadwah.ac.id/index.php/aktualita/article/view/163>
- Hidayani, S. (2021). An Analysis Of First Language Acquisition Of A Three Years Old Child: A Case Study. *JEELL (Journal of English Education, Linguistics and Literature) English Departement of STKIP PGRI Jombang*, 8(1), 103. <https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v8i1.1986>
- Kusuma, A. B. (2018). Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Sebagai Dasar Pembelajaran Bahasa Kedua. *Al Manar*, 5(2), 117-141.
- Natsir, M., Fazalani, R., Maldin, S. A., Suhartiwi, S., & Yanti, I. (2023). Children's Language According to Phonological and Morphological Aspects in Vocal Learning at PAUD Al-Karimah. *Qalamuna*, 15(2), 1079–1088. <https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v15i2.3560>
- Rafiyanti, F. (2021). Pemerolehan Morfologi Dan Sintaksis Pada Anak Usia 2-4 Tahun (Kajian Psikolinguistik). *Jurnal Pendidikan Konfiks*, 7(2), 53–62. <https://doi.org/10.26618/konfiks.v7i2.4524>
- Rohimajaya, N. A., & Hamer, W. (2020). An Analysis of Dilara's First Language Acquisition: A Three-Year Child. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(2), 117. <https://doi.org/10.30870/jels.v5i2.7720>
- Salamah, S. (2022). Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 7(1), 27–34. <https://doi.org/10.32696/jp2bs.v7i1.1214>
- Suardi, I. P., Ramadhan, S., & Asri, Y. (2019). Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Obsesi*, 3(1), 265. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v3i1.160>

- Suharti, S., Khusnah, W. D., Ningsih, S., Shiddiq, J., Saputra, N., Kuswoyo, H., Jalal, N. M., Dhari, P. W., Susanti, R., Purba, J. H. (2021). *Kajian Psikolinguistik*. Aceh: Yayasan Penerbit Muhammad Zaini.
- Suhartono, Shodiq, S., & Setiawati, L. (2014). *Psikolinguistik*. Tangerang Selatan: Universitas Terbuka.
- Yanti, P. G. (2016). Pemerolehan Bahasa Anak: Kajian Aspek Fonologi Pada Anak Usia 2-2,5 Tahun. *Jurnal Ilmiah Visi*, *11*(2), 131-141.
<https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/259956-pemerolehan-bahasa-anak-kajian-aspek-fon-b4431941.pdf>