

PHONOLOGICAL ACQUISITION OF A CHILD SUFFERING FROM LANGUAGE DELAY

Lamhot Naibaho
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
lnaibaho68@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study deals with language acquisition which investigates the phonological acquisition of a child suffering from language delay. A case study design with cross-sectional survey type is used and it was conducted at Jl. Ujung Serdang, Komp. Cendana Asri No 21 Tanjung Morawa Medan, North Sumatera Indonesia, where a five year old child was chosen to be the subject. In collecting the data, this study applies documentation with audio visual recorder as the instrument of collecting data and the technique of data analysis used in this study was descriptive technique, then the data were described through the process of transcribing and reducing the data by the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, transforming the transcripts of the data, then displaying the data and finally drawing the conclusions. The findings indicate that the subjects of this study who suffers from language delay in his five year old had mastered vocabularies covering noun, adjective, verb, and adverb, and the data show that he acquired more noun comparing to adjective, verb and adverb. In case of phonological acquisition, seven phonological processes were found: stopping process, fronting process, voicing process, clustering reduction process, deleting of final consonant process, deleting of unstressed process and reduplicating process. In expressing the language in his daily life, sometimes he used the body language to help him deliver the message.

Keywords: Language Acquisition; Phonology; Language Delay.

Language is a system of communication with other people in order to interact by using sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, an idea, a feeling or a thought. Language is used everyday face to face as a means of communication, and written language allows us to record and to hold on to our history across generations. Algeo (2009: 2) states “a language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. This definition has several important terms, each of which is examined in some detail... Those terms are systems, signs, vocal, conventional, human, communicate”. It has a sound system that allows us to use numerous distinct words, to express innumerable ideas, to describe events, to tell stories, to recite poems, to buy and sell or bargain in markets, to administer legal systems, to make political speeches and to do the myriad activities that make up the societies where we live in. As it is said by Sapir (2006: 10) that “language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are, in the first instance, auditory and they are produced by so-called organs of speech”.

Before somebody is able to speak, at the first time he has to acquire the language first, this acquisition process was started immediately from birth. Language acquisition is a specific case, because when children learn language they could built on preexisting notions of what to represent with knowledge as well as prior notions of communications. Simply, they could start from nothing and discover what is represented in language. Besides, the acquisition of children might also be affected

by the properties of each language. For example the type of language could influence the order in which children acquire each system of the language and could also make some parts of the language harder or easier to acquire. The acquisition could also be affected by the social interaction and cognitive development. Those factors could determine whether language learners follow the same path, detect and use the same patterns, and make the same inferences about meanings during acquisition.

This acquisition process should run as it is, and every child should have acquired the language in certain age. It is because, by the time he enter the first grade, he should be able to handle spoken language well enough to follow instruction, understand the detailed story, receive information, and use simple reasoning. They should be able to express themselves well enough to ask questions, give information, and make needs known, tell stories and events in proper order, describe schemes, choose, quests, and pretend. In short, they should be verbal children, using speech and language to satisfy a variety of needs.

In terms of acquiring the language, there are some problems that that are found in some children and it is called language acquisition disorders or language disability. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in Robert and Torry (2006: 3) states that “language disability is those children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations”.

Paul (2001: 78) stated that “learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities”. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, are presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perceptions, and social interactions may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other disabilities (for example sensory impairment, mental retardation, or serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences or insufficient/inappropriate instruction), it would not be a result of those conditions or influences.

There are some disorders that might be found on children during the process of acquisition, they are: a) language delay, b) speech and language disorder, c) specific language impairment (SLI), d) comprehension (or receptive language) difficulty, e) expressive language difficulty, f) speech difficulty, g) social interaction difficulties (pragmatics difficulties), h) stammering, i) selective mutism, and j) verbal dyspraxia (Department of Education, 2012: 9). But this article will only discuss the language delay.

It is chosen to be observed because the fact says that among those disorders, language delay is the most problem found on children during their language acquisition process. It is found that language delay is determined to be the second position with 190 total cases in a hospital. Due to that case, so a child was chosen on behalf of Candra Situmeang to be the subject of this research. He was chosen to be the subject of this research because his language acquisition is delay due to the theories and the result of the examination done by the neurology and the psychologist. Besides, the last is the study which focuses on the language acquisition

on five years old child suffers from delayed speaking is rarely conducted and even because the researcher has experience of living together closely with a child who is suffers from delayed speaking. These facts have motivated the researcher to conduct a study dealing with phonological acquisition of a child suffers from delayed speaking.

Language acquisition is the process of acquiring the language, or simply we can say that it is a process of acquiring the capacity to perceive, produce and use words in order to understand something or to communicate. Language acquisition usually refers to first language acquisition, which studies infants' acquisition of their native language, rather than the second language acquisition. Krashen (1982: 10) says that "language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring the language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. It means that, when somebody acquire the language, he does not know whether he is learning the language or not, he just wanted to try to use the language to communicate. Another definition is stated by Marriot and Torres (2009: 32) that "language acquisition is a natural developmental process of gaining knowledge and mastery of a speech system in a living environment". It means that language acquisition takes places naturally.

In acquiring the language, a child should have cognitive and social cognitive skills which covers; 1) the ability to share attention with other persons to objects and events of mutual interest, 2) the ability to follow the attention and gesturing of other persons to distal objects and events outside the immediate interaction, 3) the ability to actively direct the attention of others to distal objects by pointing, showing, and using of other nonlinguistic gestures, 4) the ability to culturally (imitatively) learn the intentional actions of others, including their communicative acts underlain by communicative intentions (Tomasello, 2003: 3).

In order children are able to acquire the language, they use some strategies like imitating and producing. Rosenberg (1987: 53) suggested that "The first step in the production procedure is to teach learners to imitate..." and Ghazali (2006: 1-16) also uttered the same thing that "in their first attempts to speak, children imitate the sounds and patterns they hear around them and receive positive reinforcement for doing so".

During the process of child's growth, his language is also developing. Usually the development of the language runs together with the development of his physic, mental and his intelligence which are influenced by several factors such as innate capacity and environment. Menyuk and Brisk (2005: 1) state "the home environment is of principal importance during these years since much of the infant's time is spent in that situation". Further they said "the social and economic situation of the family, and the culture and particular language(s) or dialect(s) in the environment seems to affect most markedly two aspects of language development for both monolingual and bilingual learners".

The development of the language period *starts with the baby, who spends much of the time sleeping, crying and cooing, and ends with the almost-3-year-old child who can engage in conversation with family members, peers and teachers in one or more languages*" (Menyuk and Brisk, 2005: 1).

Children whose language development lags significantly from the timetable may be considered developmentally delayed in language acquisition. A child with a language disorder may not use the language commensurate with her peers. He may

be delayed in acquiring the vocabulary, syntax, grammar and pragmatics of her age mates. The child may have some of the characteristics of the language expected for her age, say vocabulary, but may be behind in syntax. Another child may have difficulty understanding the pragmatics of language and not know what to say in a given situation, whereas vocabulary may be limited in yet another. These problems in language development may be correlated with problems in later developing language-related areas such as reading.

More frequent form of language deficit involves incomprehensible speech. Eventhough they child may have considerable comprehension of language, his or her limited ability to express language deficits communication with adult and peers. Common forms of severe language deficit involve poor conceptual development. The child may not may not comprehend or use the language appropriate to the context in which he speaks. This is delayed language in semantic sense.

Another level of inadequate language functioning is indicated by poor communication. Children may have considerable understanding of language and the ability to express language under optimal circumstances, overall they may be in effective communicators, volunteer information, or talk with their peers. In the other words, their language functions are not adapted to normal social and learning requirements.

Another type of problem of children is speech that is objectionable to the listeners. Phonological distortions are often subtly different. Area of concern may be articulation defects, voice problems and stuttering. Although the defect may represent only a small feature or segment of the total language of the children, this nevertheless may interfere with communication. There are minor problems than major ones. However, minor problems often lead to major consequences for the children. All these depict the deficits in the field of oral expression.

METHOD

This research applied a case study research design, in order to find out how the phonological acquisition which is produced by the subject of this research. Gay (2009: 426) states that “case study is a qualitative research approach in which a researcher focus in a unit of study known as a bounded system. While Creswell (2007: 73) said that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system”. Case study research design looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context. Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description. This design is chosen because of the subject matter of the study consist of a five years child which is suffer of delayed speaking. This research was done in Medan, exactly located on Jl. Bajak 1, gg. Paranginan no 201 Sisinga Mangaraja Medan. The sources of data are recorded and written utterances from direct observation during the language acquisition of Mr. Antonius Situmeang’s son whose name is Chandra Situmeang. This research is laid on the process of the acquisition and the problems occurred and also the vocabulary mastered by him in his five years old. The instrument used in this research is Audio visual recorder. The data were

collected through recording conversational of the child with the member of the family and his friends in some steps such as: a) recording the utterances or conversation, b) transcribing the conversation, and c) Confirming the data revealed.

RESULTS

Chandra as the subject of the study is the youngest child in his family. He has two brothers and his brothers are eleven years old and the other one is nine years old, he is five years old and he sits at kinder garden. His father works at *Pertamina* as a staff and his mother is a house wife. The economic condition of the family is middle-up. Chandra's daily activities are going to school, taking nap, playing with his brothers and friends, and studying at home. Sometimes his mother does not let them playing outside of the house so they just keep on staying at home.

The data were taken from the daily utterances which were produced by Chandra as the subject of the study through direct observation which was done by recording the utterances using audio visual recorder. This observation was done for two months. Then after finishing the observation, the data which had been taken were transcribed. The transcription of the data was analyzed in order to answer the problems of the study.

After all the data of the subject of this study are analyzed, some findings due to the title of this research have been found, and these findings are as follows.

Based on utterances produced by Chandra, the researcher tried to categorize the word class of the utterances and it was found that the classifications of the words produced by him are noun, adjective, verb and adverb. He produced more noun comparing to adjective, verb and adverb. The comparison among of the noun, adjective, verb and adverb that he uttered in his daily life as long as the observation was conducted shows a very big range one each other, from 211 words which were uttered by him there are 143 nouns. It is about 67,7% of the total words. Then there are 39 adjectives that he uttered out of 211 words, it is about 18,44% of the total words. And there are 26 verbs that he uttered out of 211 words, or it is about 12,3% of the total words. And the last, there are 3 adverbs that he could produce out of 211 words, it is about 1,4% of the total words.

Based on his phonological acquisition, there are some processes which are taken place, such as:

a) The substitution processes, there are: stopping, fronting, where in stopping process consists of five processes and in the fronting process consists of three processes found in the transcribed data which were taken from a five-year-old child's suffer from language delay utterances.

b) The second finding is in the assimilatory processes, in the assimilatory process there is only one process found, it is voicing, and in the voicing process, there are six processes found out of the transcribed data presented on this research.

c) The third finding is the syllable structure processes, in this process there are some sub processes which are covered in this study, they are: cluster reduction, deletion of final consonant, deletion of unstressed and reduplication.

DISCUSSIONS

Comparing to the theory of child's development of a normal child as it is written in the previous chapter says that at the age of five year, a child (1) can use many descriptive words spontaneously-both adjectives and adverbs, (2) knows common opposites: big-little, hard-soft, heavy-light, (3) has number concepts of 4 or more, (5) can count to ten, (6) speech should be completely intelligible, in spite of articulation problems, (7) should have all vowels and the consonants, m,p,b,h,w,k,g,t,d,n,ng,y (yellow) (8) should be able to repeat sentences as long as nine words, (9) should be able to define common objects in terms of use (hat, shoe, chair), (10) should be able to follow three commands given without interruptions (11) should know his age, (12) should have simple time concepts: morning, afternoon, night, day, later, after, while, tomorrow, yesterday, today; (13) should be using fairly long sentences and should use some compound and some complex sentences and (14) speech on the whole should be grammatically correct. But the reality he is out of the expected child's development. From the table also known based on the normal child development theory that Chandra is just the same with a three years old child in producing the language by his five years old. It means that he acquires the language two years later than his normal friends who are at the age of five year.

While the theory of child's development suffering from language delay that says a child who suffers from language delay cannot retell simple stories in an organized way and still makes mistakes in choosing words or organizing sentences. It means that the language acquisition by a five-year-old child suffering from language delay is just the same or in other word, Chandra has the same language acquisition with other children who suffers from language delay.

Based on his phonological acquisition, there are some processes which are taken place, such as:

a) The substitution processes, there are: stopping, fronting, where in stopping process consists of five processes and in the fronting process consists of three processes found in the transcribed data which were taken from a five-year-old child's suffer from language delay utterances.

The first is the substitution-stopping process of fricative sound [s] into [c] which occurs in the word '*pensil*', '*bakso*', '*kaset*', '*besok*', '*rusak*' and '*nasi*'. In pronouncing the word '*pensil*', '*bakso*', '*kaset*', '*besok*', '*rusak*' and '*nasi*' the subject replaces [s] with [c]. he pronounced it becomes [e:cin] instead of [pen:sil], and [a:co] instead of [bak:so], [a:cet] instead of [ka:set], [e:cok] instead of [be:sok], [u:cak] instead of [ru:sak] and [nasi] instead of [a:ci]. The second example is the substitution of fricative sound of [h] becomes [t] which occurred in the pronunciation of the word '*habiskan*'. The subject pronounced it as [Ta:bis:kan] instead of [ha:bis:kan]. The third example is the substitution of fricative sound [f] becomes [t] as it is found in the word '*foto*', where he pronounced the word as [to:to] instead of [fo:to]. The fourth example is the substitution of fricative sound [s] becomes [t] as it is shown in the word '*semen*' and '*masak*' where he pronounced the word as [te:men] instead of [semen] and [a:tak] instead of [ma:sak].

The substitution-fronting process, the substitution process of velar [k] sound, substituted by alveolar [t] sound. As it is occurs in the words '*makan*', '*kaki*', '*bakti*', '*kaka*', and '*rokok*' the subjects of the study pronounced the words as [a:tan] instead

of [ma:kan], [a:tik] instead of [ka:ki], [a:ti] instead of [bak:ti], [ta:ta] instead of [ka:ka] and [to:to] instead of [ro:kok]. Besides these processes, there are some new phenomena found in the substitution process.

b) The second finding is in the assimilatory processes, in the assimilatory process there is only one process found, it is voicing, and in the voicing process, there are six processes found out of the transcribed data presented on this research they are: 1) Voiced [d] sound is assimilated by voiceless [t] sound, it can be seen in the words 'duduk' and 'andre'. He uttered these words become [tu:tuk] instead of [du:duk] and [a:te] instead of [an:dre]. 2) Voiced [r] sound is assimilated by voiceless [k] sound. It is found in the word 'merokok'. He pronounced the word become [ko:kok] instead of [me:ro:kok]. 3) Voiced [m] sound is assimilated by voiceless [k] sound, as it can be seen in the word 'minum'. He produced the word become [mi:mik] instead of [mi:num]. 4) Voiced [r] sound is assimilated by voiceless [n] sound. As it is found in the words 'lapar', 'cangkir', 'mundur', 'gambar', 'bubur'. 5) The subject of this study produced the word become [a:pan] instead of [la:par], [a:kin] instead of [cang:kir], [dun] instead of [mun:dur], [a:ban] instead of [gam:bar] and [bu:bun] instead of [bu:bur]. But besides that there are also some new terminologies found in this process which are not familiar in the theory presented on the second chapter of this study.

c) The third finding is the syllable structure processes, in this process there are some sub processes which are covered in this study, they are: cluster reduction, deletion of final consonant, deletion of unstressed and reduplication.

In the cluster reduction process are found twelve processes, such as: Consonant cluster [kt] is reduced into [t] as can be seen in the word 'bakti' where he uttered the word as [a:ti] instead of [bak:ti], consonant cluster [nt] is reduced into [t] as can be found in the words 'bantal', 'pintu', 'untuk' and so on. He produced these words as [ta:tal] instead of [ban:tal], [i:tu] instead of [pin:tu], and [u:tuk] instead of [un:tuk]. Then the consonant cluster [mp] is reduced into [p] as can be seen in the words 'lampu', 'empat', and 'simpan'. The production of these word happened as [a:pu] instead of [lam:pu], [e:pat] instead of [em:pat] and [i:pan] instead of [sim:pan]. The next process is consonant cluster [mb] is reduced into [b] as it is found in the word 'gambar' where he pronounced the word as [a:ban] instead of [gam:bar], and then consonant cluster [nd] is reduced into [d] as it can be seen in the word 'dinding', the utterance was [i:din] instead of [din:din]. And consonant cluster [sk] is reduced into [k] can be found in the word 'baskom' as he pronounced it become [a:kom] instead of [bas:kom]. Then consonant cluster [rt] is reduced into [t] as found in the word 'karton' where he uttered the word as [a:ton] instead of [kar:ton]. And the next is consonant cluster [nj] is reduced into [j] as found in the word 'manjat' he pronounced it become [a:jat] instead of [man:jat], after that consonant cluster [st] is reduced into [t] as in the word 'plastik' the utterances was [a:tik] instead of [plas:tik], and consonant cluster [ny] is reduced into [n] as seen in the word 'monyet' he produced the word as [o:net] instead of monyet. Then consonant cluster [str] is reduced into [t] as it is seen in the word 'listrik' become [i:tik] instead of [lis:trik], and the last process is consonant cluster [ng] is reduced into [n] as in the example 'jangan' become [na:nan] instead of [ja:nga]

While in the deletion of final consonant process are found two processes. It is when the subject said 'dek' and 'the' where the production of the word was [de] instead of [dek] and [te] instead of [teh]. Subject is deleting a consonant [k] and [h]

which should be occurred in the end pronunciation of the word 'dek' and 'teh' but as it is observed this case is not only occurring on the subject's production, but also in adult's production. In oral speaking, an adult tends to say [de] instead of [adek], then it is concluded as a common problem.

Then in the deletion of unstressed syllable process are found seventeen processes and in the reduplication process are found eleven processes. They are [pa] syllable is deleted as it is found in the word '*patah*' where he pronounced the word as [tah] instead of [pa:tah], [me] syllable is deleted for example in the word '*menang*' the production of the word is [nang] instead of [menang], [ce] syllable is deleted as in the word '*celana*' he said [na:nan] instead of [ce:la:na], [le] syllable is deleted as can be seen in the word '*lemari*' where he tend to say [a:li] instead of [le:ma:ri], [ta] syllable is deleted as in the word '*tangan*' his production was [nga:ngan] instead of [ta:ngan], [ke] syllable is deleted as it is found in the word '*kepala*' become [a:la] instead of [ke:pa:la], [hi] syllable is deleted as can be seen in the word '*hidung*' the subject said [dung] instead of [hi:dung], [ku] syllable is deleted as in the word '*kuping*' he pronounced the word with [ping] instead of [ku:ping], [in] syllable is deleted as in the word '*indomi*' he preferred to pronounced the word as [o:mi] instead of [in:do:mi], [ci] syllable is deleted , [mun] syllable is deleted as in the word '*mundur*' as [dun] instead of [mun:dur], [du] syllable is deleted, [be] syllable is deleted as in the word '*berantam*' become [a:tam] instead of [be:ran:tam], [je] syllable is deleted as it is found in the word '*jemuran*' he pronounced it as [u:man] instead of [je:mu:ran], [de] syllable is deleted as in the word '*delapan*' he pronounced the word as [a:pan] instead of [de:la:pan], [sem] syllable is deleted as in the word '*sembilan*' his production was [i:an] instead of [sem:bi:lan], [se] syllable is deleted as it is found in the word '*sepuluh*' he uttered the word as [u:yuh] instead of [se:pu:luh], [ka] syllable is deleted as it can be seen in the word '*kalender*' where he pronounced the word as [en:den] instead of [ka:len:der]. But still there are some new phenomenon found which are not familiar in the theory.

And the last finding is the way he expresses the language in his daily life sometime use body language and sometime he does not need it, and he uses the body language only when his co-speaker does not understand what he said.

CONCLUSION

From the data and the finding presented in the previous part, it is concluded that the subjects of this study who suffers from language delay in his five year old had mastered vocabularies which is mostly covered by noun. Comparing to the normal child's phonological acquisition ought to his production should not be the way he is, or simply, his phonological acquisition is late, when it is compare to the theory of normal child's phonological acquisition.

From his daily language phonological acquisition, there are seven phonological processes found in the subject's language acquisition. They are stopping process, fronting process, voicing process, cluster reduction process, deletion of final consonant process, deletion of unstressed process and reduplication process. In expressing the language in his daily life, the child sometimes used body language or gesture in order to help his co-speaker to understand what he is talking about.

In line with the conclusions, suggestions are offered as follows: a) further research requires to be conducted to know more about the language acquisition of child in the field of language acquisition of child who suffers from disorder, b) the same research needs to be conducted to different subject of the study to enrich the researchers' and the readers' knowledge in the field of language acquisition, c) the same research needs to be conducted to the same subjects of the study in order to find the reason of the phonological acquisition as it is, because this research in only about describing the phenomenon experienced by the child without explaining or giving reasons of why it is so.

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