

AN ANALYSIS OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AT PAUD HARAPAN INDAH

Tiara Eliza¹, Dhaniella Rattu Intani²,
Palembang University¹, Palembang University².
tiaraeliza90@gmail.com, Dhaniella@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how young children at PAUD Harapan Indah in Kenten Laut Village, Banyuasin Regency, are learning Indonesian as a second language. The study's main goal is to comprehend how kids who were raised speaking Palembang as their first language start learning and using Indonesian in a classroom. The findings show that children go through different phases of learning a second language, which are impacted by things including age, exposure to the language, and instructional strategies. Play-based learning and the use of visual media are key components of effective learning methodologies. The native language's interference and the absence of support for Indonesian outside of the classroom are major obstacles. This research has important ramifications for the creation of successful second-language acquisition techniques for young children in multilingual areas.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana anak-anak usia dini di PAUD Harapan Indah, Desa Kenten Laut, Kabupaten Banyuasin, mempelajari bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa kedua. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami bagaimana anak-anak yang dibesarkan dengan bahasa Palembang sebagai bahasa pertama mereka mulai belajar dan menggunakan bahasa Indonesia di kelas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak melewati berbagai fase pembelajaran bahasa kedua, yang dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor termasuk usia, paparan terhadap bahasa, dan strategi pengajaran. Pembelajaran berbasis bermain dan penggunaan media visual merupakan komponen kunci dari metodologi pembelajaran yang efektif. Interferensi bahasa ibu dan kurangnya dukungan untuk bahasa Indonesia di luar kelas merupakan hambatan utama. Penelitian ini memiliki implikasi penting untuk menciptakan teknik pemerolehan bahasa kedua yang sukses bagi anak-anak usia dini di daerah multibahasa.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most essential activity in human life. Every aspect of human life is connected to language. It is inherent that language is inseparable from human life. Every human being must master a language in order to live in their environment. Therefore, language acquisition is absolutely essential for humans. A child first acquires language by hearing it directly from their mother upon being born into this world. Then, as time goes on

and the child grows, they will acquire languages other than the one taught by their mother whether a second, third, or subsequent language a process known as language acquisition. This language acquisition depends on the social environment and the individual's cognitive level through the learning process.

Language acquisition is categorized into two types: first language acquisition. It is more commonly known as the mother tongue, and second language acquisition. In first language acquisition, a child learns by imitating the language first encountered within their family; during this process, the child is unaware that they are learning the language. First language acquisition occurs unconsciously as the child goes about their daily life with their family. After mastering their first language, a person requires broader communication skills to further develop their life. Therefore, a person will strive to learn a second language. A second language is acquired through conscious learning. Second language acquisition involves a conscious process of language comprehension. Essentially, a child's language acquisition involves two skills: the ability to produce speech spontaneously and the ability to understand others' speech. In this context, language acquisition refers to the process of acquiring language proficiency whether in understanding or expression naturally, without formal learning activities. Language acquisition is a process used by children to align a series of hypotheses with their parents' speech until they can select the most appropriate and simplest grammatical rules of the language in question.

Thus, the acquisition process is a subconscious process. Language mastery occurs unconsciously and is not influenced by explicit instruction regarding the grammatical system of the second language. In contrast, the learning process is a deliberate or conscious effort undertaken by the learner to master a language. Generally, the first language of Indonesian children is their respective regional language because Indonesian is only learned when children enter school and after they have mastered their mother tongue. Compared to first language acquisition, the process of second language acquisition is not linear. A second language is something that is learned rather than acquired. When considering the process and development of a second language, there are two approaches explained by the hypotheses of differentiation, acquisition, and language learning, namely

(a) the first approach to second language development is language acquisition, which is a process that parallels the way children develop proficiency in their first language. The result or outcome of language acquisition is competence acquired subconsciously. Other ways of describing acquisition include implicit learning, informal learning, and natural learning. In non-technical language, this is often referred to as “picking up” a language. (b) The second method of second language development through language learning, which refers to conscious knowledge of the second language, knows the rules, being aware of the rules, and being able to speak about those rules commonly known as grammar.

Based on the results of a preliminary study, data indicates that children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten primarily use a regional language or their mother tongue in their daily lives, making Indonesian their second language. Indonesian is only learned once the child enters school and has already mastered their mother tongue. In this process of second language acquisition, there are certainly several strategies utilized by children and many factors that influence it. Based on the above description, research on second language acquisition among young children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten is important to conduct. This study focuses on the sequence and stages of second language acquisition, second language acquisition strategies, and the factors influencing second language acquisition in young children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten.

METHOD

This study aimed to describe second language acquisition among children at Harapan Indah. In line with this research objective, the approach used in this study was a qualitative approach. According to Syamsudidin and Vismaia S. Damayanti (2007:74), the qualitative approach is essential for understanding a social phenomenon and the perspectives of the individuals being studied. Its primary objective is to describe, study, and explain the phenomenon. Understanding of this phenomenon can be obtained by describing and explore them within a narrative. In this way, the researcher must be able to demonstrate the relationship between events and the meaning of those events. In qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the situation or phenomenon being studied. The type of research selected is phenomenological research. According to Creswell (2015:105), “... phenomenological studies describe the general meanings attributed by a number of

individuals to their various life experiences related to a concept or phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what is common to all participants when they experience the phenomenon.” Thus, it can be said that this study aimed to reduce individual experiences of the phenomenon into a description of its universal essence.

Population and Sample

The data in this study consists of two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data pertains to second language acquisition among children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten, covering the sequence and stages of second language acquisition, second language acquisition strategies, and factors influencing second language acquisition in children. Secondary data consists of field notes related to the process of children’s language activities. Field notes include descriptive field notes and reflective field notes. The data sources are the students/children and teachers at Harapan Indah Kindergarten.

Instruments

The data in this study were collected using several techniques, namely (a) observation, (b) interviews, and (c) document analysis.

a. Observation Technique

Observation was conducted by directly observing phenomena related to the research problem. The types of observation used here were participant and non-participant observation. Here, the researcher directly observed second language acquisition strategies among children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten.

b. Interview Technique

In addition to using the observation technique, data collection in this study also employs in-depth interviews. Technically, these in-depth interviews are conducted by combining two types of interviews: structured and unstructured interviews. Interview had presented in a casual conversational style while still addressing issues related to the research. Interviews in this study were used to obtain data on the stages or sequence of second language acquisition,

strategies for second language acquisition, and factors influencing second language acquisition in young children at Harapan Indah Kindegarten.

c. Documentary Study Technique

A documentary study was used to obtain data in the form of documents related to the topic, including books, articles, journals, papers, and other official documents.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using the spiral analysis model proposed by Creswell (2015), following the steps below. In the initial stage of the analysis process, the researcher organized the data regarding children's second language acquisition including the sequence and stages of second language acquisition, second language acquisition strategies, and factors influencing second language acquisition into folders and index cards. This process involves moving from the reading and recording circle toward the description, classification, and interpretation circle. In this circle, codes or categories are formed. Here, the researcher describes in detail, develops themes or dimensions through various classification systems, and provides interpretations. During the process of description, classification and interpretation, researchers develop codes or categories and sort texts or visual images into these categories. In the final phase of the analysis, researchers present the data, whether in the form of text/descriptions, tables, or charts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the researchers identified several interesting findings that were analyzed to address the research focus. These findings are based on observations, interviews, and documentation. The research results presented and analyzed include (1) the sequence and stages of second language acquisition in early childhood, (2) strategies for second language acquisition in early childhood, and (3) factors influencing second language acquisition in early childhood at Harapan Indah Kindergarten. The findings of the study

regarding the sequence and stages of second language acquisition in early childhood at Harapan Indah Kindergarten include: the transition from single words to two-word phrases and the stage of acquiring complex sentences.

a. The One-Word to Two-Word Speech

This transition from one-word to two-word speech is divided into two stages: (1) the two-word utterance stage, and (2) the sentence stage with compound words. In the two-word utterance stage, the nature of children's sentences reveals that they possess two main characteristics. First, children's sentences appear simple. This simplicity follows consistent rules. Several types of words are present in utterances at this stage. Generally, content words or main words namely nouns, verbs, and adjectives have already appeared; whereas other word types, such as function words (articles, conjunctions, prepositions) and bound morphemes have not yet appeared. The second was the fact that children's sentences are purely the children's own creations. This means that children's speech is not the result of omitting certain elements from adult speech or simplifying adult speech. According to Dawud (2008), this characteristic of children's sentences is called telegraphic speech, which refers to the short sentences used by children: containing only key words, and omitting certain words (prepositions, auxiliary verbs, etc.).

Children's speech at this stage is difficult to understand because, as mentioned above children often omit certain sentence elements. For example, children often omit prepositions that indicate location. A child might say "bapak sekolah" to mean "Dad is at school." Thus, if one relies solely on the child's utterance, the sentence could be interpreted as "Dad is (at) (going to) (from) (at) school. In addition, children also often create their own word order. For example, a child says "maen mama." That sentence can be interpreted as a statement or a request. This occurs because the child only emphasizes the meaning of the utterance according to the child's own understanding. The next stage is the stage of sentences with compound words. At this stage, combinations of root words with bound morphemes begin to appear. There are two interesting aspects regarding the emergence of these combinations of root words with bound morphemes. First was the order of acquisition. The second was the process of acquisition. In the process of acquiring language rules, language learners use

an interference strategy, whereby the child infers grammatical rules by forming hypotheses and then testing them. In employing this strategy, children often engage in overgeneralization. The findings of this study were consistent with the theory proposed by Dawud (2008: 114) that the transition from one-word to two-word speech is divided into two stages: (1) the two-word utterance stage, and (2) the sentence stage with compound words.

b. The Stage of Acquiring Complex Sentences

After a child has gone through the stage of inflectional development, the child acquires complete and complex sentences. The results of Bellugi's research in Dale (1976: 104–136) show that there is a sequence in the acquisition of interrogative sentences. The sequence of acquisition is: (1) interrogative sentences are formed by adding interrogative intonation to declarative sentences, (2) the emergence of modifier articles, inflections, and the construction interrogative sentences using an auxiliary verb in a declarative sentence, followed by the addition of interrogative intonation, (3) the emergence of transformations involving do-insertion, (4) wh- and wh-not questions, sometimes supplemented by verbs in the non-question form, (5) yes/no questions with the auxiliary verb placed before the noun phrase, and (6) wh-questions with the auxiliary verb present without subject inversion. Strategies for Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood Based on research findings, there are two strategies or methods for second language acquisition in early childhood: (a) guided second language acquisition, and (b) natural second language acquisition.

a. Guided Second Language Acquisition

Guided second language acquisition refers to the process of teaching a second language to students by presenting material that is already understood. The characteristics of guided second language acquisition are: (a) the material is based on criteria determined by the teacher, and (b) the strategies employed by the teacher are also tailored to what is deemed most suitable for the students. Based on research findings, at Harapan Indah Kindergarten, guided second language acquisition has been implemented by teachers through language development learning activities. Language development learning activities at Harapan Indah Kindergarten are integrated with other developmental activities. Before

implementing learning activities, teachers at Harapan Indah Kindergarten make preparations. One form of preparation is designing learning activities that align with the physical and psychological developmental characteristics of preschool-aged children, the surrounding environment, and the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure. Among the various types of learning activities that teachers need to design, language-based learning activities are one of them. Language skills are one of the areas of basic skill development that teachers focus on to enhance children's abilities and creativity in accordance with their developmental stage.

Language development is aimed at enabling children to use and express their thoughts through words. In other words, language development is primarily aimed at enabling children to (1) process words comprehensively, (2) express those words through body language (speech and actions) that can be understood by others, (3) understand each word, interpret it, and convey it fully to others, and (4) argue a point and convince others through the words they speak.

Language development for children at Harapan Indah Kindergarten emphasizes (1) listening and speaking, and (2) early reading. In general, through listening and speaking activities, it is hoped that children will be able to (a) listen attentively and respond appropriately, (b) speak with confidence, (c) use language to obtain information and for effective communication and social interaction with others, (d) enjoy books, stories, and rhythm, and (e) develop phonological awareness. Furthermore, generally through early reading activities, it is expected that children will be able to (a) establish reading habits, (b) develop some basic comprehension skills, and (3) develop letter awareness.

In guided language acquisition, if the presentation of material and the methods used in learning are appropriate and effective, this will be successful and benefit learners in acquiring both languages. However, there are often inconsistencies in the presentation of this guided material; for example, memorizing sentence patterns without providing exercises on how to apply them in everyday communication.

b. Natural Second Language Acquisition

Natural or spontaneous second language acquisition is the process of acquiring a second language that occurs in everyday communication, free from formal instruction or

teacher guidance. This type of language acquisition lacks uniformity because each individual acquires a second language in their own way. The most important aspect of this process is interaction and communication, which drive second language acquisition. The characteristics of natural second language acquisition are (a) it occurs in everyday communication, and (b) it is free from systematic, intentional guidance.

Based on research findings at Harapan Indah Kindergarten, natural second language acquisition is applied in everyday communication, whether with peers or with teachers. Thus, children acquire a second language through the process of interacting with their environment.

Factors Influencing Second Language Acquisition in Young Children Second language acquisition is a rather complex process. Many factors influence second language acquisition in young children. Based on research conducted at Dewi Masyithoh I Kraton Kencong Kindergarten, it was found that second language acquisition in young children is influenced by (a) environmental factors, (b) first language factors, and (c) age factors.

a. Environmental Factors

The quality of the language environment is crucial for a learner to succeed in learning a new language (a second language). The language environment refers to everything a learner hears and sees in relation to the second language being studied. The quality of this language environment is essential for learners to achieve success in learning a second language. This environment includes both formal and informal settings. The formal environment is a school setting that is specifically designed, artificial, part of the learning process, and geared toward rule-oriented activities. The informal environment is a natural setting that allows children to interact with the language. The formal environment is one that is intentionally created to facilitate the language acquisition process. One of the formal setting is a learning process guided by a teacher. Thus, in such a formal setting, children acquiring a second language are guided and directed by the teacher to master the systems and rules of the language being studied. In addition, there are other formal settings, such as conversational situations or dialogues designed to explore the language structures the child is learning. Situations like these involve the child consciously, meaning the child is fully engaged. In this regard, it can simply be said that the conscious aspect of second language acquisition is closely related to formal language acquisition.

Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that there is a connection between the conscious aspect and the formal environment. We can observe this connection in the formal language acquisition process, which always involves the conscious aspect. The formal environment is always associated with things that are not experienced firsthand or are artificial; in this context, everything is linked to things that are man-made or engineered. In addition, the formal environment generally involves a great deal of guidance or direction, whether through teachers or language-learning guides those children must follow. Furthermore, second language acquisition in early childhood is also influenced by informal environments. An informal environment is a natural setting or situation that is not deliberately structured. The informal environments observed in this study are those that occur spontaneously and as they are, without any artificial manipulation. Language acquisition in informal environments occurs naturally and is more frequent compared to language acquisition in formal environments. This results in informal environments playing a more dominant role in the second language acquisition of young children. Informal environments, particularly peer environments, teacher language environments, and parental environments, have a significant influence on the language acquisition process. The peer environment is the informal setting that exerts the greatest influence on second language acquisition. Their daily interactions with peers, which involve language communication, greatly influence children's language development. The teacher's language environment indirectly serves as a model for the second language the child is learning in the classroom. However, the influence of the teacher's language is not the same as that of the peer environment. Furthermore, the role of the parental environment in second language acquisition is limited to the caregiver's language role.

b. First Language Factors

Second language acquisition in young children is also influenced by first language factors. The first language has a significant influence and is even considered an interference in the second language learning process. This is because learners typically unconsciously transfer elements of their first language when using the second language. This aligns with Ellis's (1986: 19) view that the first language influences the learner's process of mastering a second language in second language learning. There are several relationships between the first

language (FL) and the second language (SL) that a person is learning, including similarities and differences in linguistic elements as well as language structure. Chaer (2009:246-247) states, “These similarities lie in the sequence of language structure acquisition, such as interrogative modes, negation, and grammatical morphemes. ... Certain linguistic elements are acquired first, while others are acquired later.” Sofa (2008) notes that one difference between first-language and second-language acquisition is that first-language acquisition is an integral component of a child’s cognitive and social development, whereas second-language acquisition occurs after a child’s cognitive and social development has been completed. In terms of pronunciation, children are better able to master the pronunciation of L1, whereas for the pronunciation of L2, they tend to have more difficulty and are less proficient.

c. Age Factor

In addition to environmental factors and the first language, which influence second language acquisition in young children, age is also a significant factor in second language acquisition and learning. The findings of this study indicate that children are better at and more successful in learning a second language than adults. Children seem to find it easier to acquire a new language, while adults appear to have difficulty achieving proficiency in a second language. This assumption has led to the hypothesis regarding a critical age or critical period for second language learning.

CONCLUSION

Second language acquisition refers to the acquisition of a language that is learned and mastered by a child after they have mastered their first language. The sequence and stages of second language acquisition in early childhood include: the stage of progressing

from single words to two-word phrases and the stage of acquiring complex sentences. Strategies or methods of second language acquisition in young children include (a) guided second language acquisition, and (b) natural second language acquisition. Several factors influence children's language acquisition. The success of language acquisition/learning is influenced by several factors, including (a) environmental factors, (b) first language factors, and (c) age factors.

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Declarations

I hereby declare that the disclosed information is correct and that no other situation of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest is known to us. I undertake to inform you of any change in these circumstances, including if an issue arises during the course of the meeting or work it (2026)