

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is a human need, the function of language should fulfill the human need. Considering that fact, it is important to relate linguistics as the study of language with another knowledge. Then, the development of language come to the relationship of language and sociology, language and psychology, and language and culture. The interrelationship of those disciplines invited the linguist interest in forming new terminologies for each relationship, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and ethno linguistics. The concentration of this thesis is discussing the relationship between psychology and language or what is called as psycholinguistics.

Psycholinguistics is the study of language as a human activity. It is the study of what people acquire when they acquire a language, of how they acquire it, and of how they use it when producing and understanding message (Foss:1996:4). Psycholinguistics comprises to three domain of language, namely language comprehension, language production and language acquisition. The three domains above stand for the questions; how language is comprehended, how language is produced and how language is acquired? And the researcher will be interested In discussing language acquisition domain.

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The study of child's language acquisition has engaged the interest and fancy of those who have wanted either to better understand the development of the children or to better understand the nature of language, and this study has been going on for centuries. The latest research in book version is conducted by Sunjono in his book ECHA: Kisah Pemerolehan Bahasa Anak Indonesia (2000). In his book, he presents the linguistic aspects in language acquisition. Reading that book is the inspiration to the researcher in discussing and continue the research with different participant in limited linguistic aspect. Language acquisition is one of the central topics in cognitive science. Every theory of cognition has tried to explain it; probably no other topic has aroused such controversy. Possessing a language is the quintessentially human trait: all normal humans speak, no nonhuman does. Language is the main vehicle by which we know about other people's thoughts, and the two must be intimately related. Every time we speak we are revealing something about language, so the facts of language structure are easy to come by; these data hint at a system of extraordinary complexity. Nonetheless, learning a first language is something every child does successfully, in a matter of a few years and without the need for formal lessons. With language so close to the core of what it means to be human, it is not surprising that children's acquisition of language has received so much attention. Anyone with strong views about the human mind would like to show that children's first few steps are steps in the right direction.

Nativist linguistic theories hold that children learn through their natural ability to organize the Jaws of language, but cannot fully utilize this talent without



the presence of other humans. This does not mean, however, that the child requires formal teaching of any sort. Chomsky claims that children are born with a hard-wired language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains. They are born with the major principles of language in place, but with many parameters to set (such as whether sentences in the language(s) they are to acquire must have explicit subjects). According to nativist theory, when the young child is exposed to a Language, their LAD makes it possible for them to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles, because the principles are innate.

Non-nativist theories include the Competition model and Social interactionism. Social-interactionists like Snow, theorize that adults play an important part in children's language acquisition. However, some researchers claim that the empirical data. On which theories of social interactionism are based have often been over-representative of middle class American and European parent-child interactions. Various anthropological studies of other human cultures, as well as anecdotal evidence from western families, suggests rather that many, if not the majority, of the world's children are *not* spoken to in a manner akin to traditional language lessons, but nevertheless grow up to be fully fluent language users. Many researchers now take this into account in their analyses- Furthermore, as any parent knows, children often pay scarce attention to what they are told to say, instead sticking to their own ungrammatical preferences.

Outside of both theories, Learnability theory offers that language is learned. In this case, learning is not defined as the activity of searching and exchanging knowledge in institution such as school or university. Based on the

Oxford Dictionary, the notion of learning is to gain knowledge or skill by study, experience or being taught. The researcher takes the term experience as the indication of learning. It means that Learning in this term *is* taking out the knowledge From the environment. Thus, the process of acquiring language is derived from learning. Even has its own name, the researcher regards that it is the follower or development of empiricism. This is to say that, in this case, the researcher is eager to see the language acquisition of children who were sent to school and who were not sent to school.

In this research, the researcher will focus on the effect of the application of learnability theory on language acquisition. The meaning of application is that language acquisition is divided into two categories; artificial (school) and natural (non school). This topic is chosen because this research have never been conducted in Indonesia. This idea come from the tendency of parent who tends to send their children to school with the expectation the children are able to acquire the language well. The interesting question is, is there any effect of sending their children to school with the ability in acquiring the language. Then, learnability theory gives the different views of language acquisition. For instance, one of the application of learn ability theory is stimuli and respond activity. It means that the process of acquiring language can be faster. In other word, children who live in communicative society (the society which always full of communication) such us market, retail market will acquire the vocabularies from adult. And children who are often being asked to communicate, will get more vocabulary than the silent child. For instance, when the child says *mamam* instead of *makan* (eat), adult will



give correction with *makan* and as the result the child finally will say *matan* which close to the word *makan*.

Therefore, the researcher is eager to investigate it by taking 'The Effect of the Application of Learnability Theory on language Acquisition by Children two Years Old' as the title of this thesis. The title means finding out that whether the learnability theory can affect the child in acquiring the language or not. In this case, treatment will be given to the children. The treatment means giving stimulies and ask the children to respond that stimulies as explained in the previous paragraph. Then the child will be guided to pronounce the word that They have been acquired. It is based on the researcher's observation in attending child language development in daily life. All children is taught how to remember words, how to pronounce that words and even how to construct the words. And this research will be conducted by giving some treatments to subject of the research.

### **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the above background, the problems of this study are

1. Is there any effect of application of learnability theory on language acquisition by children two years old ?
2. What is the dominant input influencing the language acquisition by children two years old ?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the problems, the researcher aims;

1. to investigate the effect of application learnability theory on language acquisition by children two years old , and
2. to investigate the dominant input influencing language acquisition by children two years old.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This study deals with the acquisition of language by children. The age of the children is limited on two years old children. Considering that language acquisition is a wide area, the discussion is limited on the speech function acquisition treated by applying learnability theory. The choosing of speech function is based the consideration that language can be seen by the expression of its language function. Speech function comprises to statement, question, offer, and command.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The findings of this research are expected to be useful for:

1. The university students, as their input in learning the aspects of the Language, and to invite them in discussing the interrelated study of language and other aspects.
2. Lecturers of psycholinguistics, as an input in giving examples and illustrations in teaching psycholinguistics especially in discussing Indonesian children acquisition cases, and
3. The members of the society who are interested in linguistics to be the reference of doing further research.