CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The study of children's language acquisition is always interesting to be investigated. There are still many puzzles found by the researchers. It's about how they acquire the very complex system of language such as phonetics, syntax, semantics and pragmatics which are related to each other and interwoven in a single unity. It becomes a miracle for humans and it makes a big question for the scientists. It is only a gift given by God or in other words it is innate or it is acquired through processes which engage many factors such as the children biological aspects, children's learning and environmental influences. All of these views are debated year by year since the exact answers of this milestone have not been found yet.

Dealing with pragmatics acquisition, especially about conversational implicatures, the phenomena about what types of conversational implicatures have been acquired and how they are used by children become actual researches. It is in line with the different subjects with different ages investigated and also different approaches applied so it results different findings by those researchers.

For example about the phenomenon of conversational implicatures acquisition can be seen on Fahmi, a five-year-old Indonesian child, the writer's own son. One day, suddenly he approached his mother and said '*Mi…gak usahlah*

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sekolah ya.' (Mom. I do not want to go to school). Her mother at first was confused with her son's expression because during two weeks after registering her son in Kindegarten School, Fahmi looked very happy and was eager to begin to study at school. But the writer's surprise did not emerge any more since Fahmi answered her mother's question by saying '*Iya. Lama kali pun sekolahnya. Makanya gak usah daftar aja.*' (Yeah. It's so long to enter the school. So, it's better to not registering soon). Fahmi's utterances are known as conversational implicature since the utterance is not the same with the speaker's intention. The words '*gak usah – do not want*' does not mean as the literal meaning of the words but actually is influenced by the context that the speaker, Fahmi, is not patient any more waiting for the time for starting school at kindegarten. So, what is said by Fahmi is not the same as what is meant by Fahmi himself actually.

Explaining the definition of conversational implicatures as it occurs on the child above, Grice (1975:158) as the first person who introduces the term of implicature gives the notion of a conversational implicature as one kind of implicature beside a conventional implicature to account for the fact that sentences can imply things that are not directly encoded as part of their meaning. Instead, the implicatures are computed as a relation between what is said and what could have been said based on general principles of cooperation between participants in a conversation.

In addition, according to Brown and Yule (1983:31), conversational implicature is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers nomally obey. Peltridge (2000:7) adds that it is any

meaning by or understood from the utterance or sentence, which goes beyond what is strictly said or entailed. The meanings depend on how the reader or the hearer interpretes a certain utterance or sentence. Then, conversational implicature refers to the inference of the hearer which makes about the speaker's intended meaning that arises from their interpretation of the literal meaning of what is said.

Further, Rohrig (2010:10) says that conversational implicature is as pragmatic inference which is not based on the semantic value of a word but on the Cooperative Principle as well as the Conversational Maxims and the context.

From all of the definitions above, the writer tends to take the last explanation which says that conversational implicature is one kind of implicature in which the speaker's meaning or intention can be gotten from the Cooperative Principle as well as the Conversational Maxims and the context.

Grice (1975:158) formulates the Co-operative Principle as mentioned above as 'Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs', and the Co-operative Maxims or known as the Conversational Maxims as the principle which consists of four maxims, namely; quality maxim, quantity maxim, relation maxim and manner maxim. Mulyana (2001:58) adds that the Co-operative Principle has a character as the regulation for the Conversational Maxims. That's why, normatively, in every conversation, both the speaker and the hearer have to obey it. However, sometimes this regulation is not obeyed. There are many cases of violation of the cooperative principles. It does not mean that it is the destruction or the failure of the communication but precisely as a deliberate

effort from the speaker to affect the certain implicature such as for lying, making funny and just kidding.

The example of conversational implicature and the violation or the flout of the maxim can be seen in the conversation between A and B in the context of office, A : "Do you have any Decolgen?", B : "I have some Bodrex, but at home". In this example, it can be seen that the answer of B to A does not exist expectedly. There is flout of the maxim, namely relation maxim. The expected answer is 'yes', 'there is Decolgen in my shelf' (in the office), but unexpectedly, the answer is 'there is the other medicine namely Bodrex and it is at home.' However, the speaker A can understand that actually the interlocutor B just intends to make a joke by saying that he has no Decolgen but Bodrex as the same kind of medicine for headache but it is at home. So, the implicature of this dialog is that 'B does not have any Decolgen in his hand or in the office.'

Grice divides conversational implicature into two subcategories; particularized implicature and generalized implicature, and the generalized implicature itself is divided into two, namely scalar implicature and clausal implicature. The explanation so far about these divisions will be discussed in the next chapter.

Several previous studies prove that children's acquisition of implicature in different ages have different ability in using implicature. For example, as investigated by Lande (2003), in her thesis about pragmatics acquisition, she finds that a four and half-year-old child has acquired implicature, that is conversational implicature even in the very simple way. The other one is a study by Pessy (2006)

which focuses on the speech acts and implicatures, she also has the same assumption as Lande's that the types of implicature acquired by a four year-old child still in very limited concepts and just got in the purpose to express what the child wants.

In accordance with the explanation above, in this research the writer is interested in studying about conversational implicatures acquisition by a child of five-year-old as a case study on Fahmi, the writer's own son. The topic of conversational implicatures itself is chosen due to the reason as Levinson (1983:97) states that the notion of conversational implicature is the single most important idea in Pragmatics.

Unlike the previous researches which are not detailed in discussing the types and the processes of implicatures acquired, this study further wants to analyze the implicature types acquired by the subject, Fahmi, by using Grice theory (1975) of implicatures with the cooperative principle and conversational maxims analysis. In additian, this study also wants to analyze how the child uses those types of implicature in his daily conversation with the others around him.

The only one subject or one child is decided in this research since this study is language acquisition and conducted as a case study, so it must be investigated personally and can be done on an individual. Further, the age of five chosen in this study is based on the study of Bates (1976) in Rohrig who describes in her work that children go through three stages when acquiring pragmatics before their linguistic behavior reaches the same level of linguistic competence as adults. The three stages of pragmatic acquisition are the Sensorimotor Period,

which applies to 18 month-old babies; the Preoperational Period, which describes the pragmatic competence between the age of 18 months and 4 years and the Concrete Operational Period, which refers to four- to six-year-old children. In line with this description, the writer decides to investigate what, how a-five-year old child who includes in the Concrete Operational Period acquires conversational implicatures. As we know that children in this period are considered to be active speakers with good speaking to communicate his mind. That's why the writer is interested in observing the child in this age.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are formulated in questions as the following:

1. What types of conversational implicature are acquired by a five-year-old Indonesian child?
2. How is the conversational implicature used by the child ?
3. Why is the conversational implicature used in the way it is?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the problems of the study, the objectives of this research are:

1. to identify the types of conversational implicatures found in the utterances acquired by a five-year old Indonesian child;

2. to describe how the conversational implicatures are used in the utterances produced by the child and

3. to give the reasons of conversational implicatures used in the child's utterances.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The writer conducts this study in the scope of first language acquisition, particularly the conversational implicatures acquisition as one of the acquisition field in Pragmatics. The data is limited to the Indonesian words produced by a five-year-old child in his daily activities.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected theoretically and practically to give much contribution in the world of children language acquisition research.

1. Theoretically, this study becomes the basic of the further research which is also interested in investigating the same area with different focus and object.

2. Practically, findings of this study become some sort of guidelines for the teachers, adults, and particularly parents who directly touch this area, in order to be able to guide their children in having good language development specifically in conversational implicatures.