

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Young children use and understand different kinds of speech acts from their beginning of communicative development (Rackoczy & Tomasello, 2009). Children develop their understanding to speech acts along with their age development. They also use various kinds of speech acts during their interaction with different people in different situations. According to Arani (2012) children tend to use directive speech act to peers and less to adult. Children, in his study, apparently realize the distance among addressees and that they see the status of the addressees.

Similarly, Anita (2009) who observed 3 – 5 year old children's speech acts found that children who are different by their age have not used the declarative speech act yet and they use the directive more often. She highlighted it from the point of view of the children's egocentric thinking predominates.

Besides directive speech acts, in another particular setting, children also use more representative speech acts during solitary play with peers, as shown in the following conversation:

Affan : *Yuk manjat yuk* (Let's climb)

Nisa : *Nggak, nggak mau aku* (No, I don't want to)

Affan : *Nisa nanti sekolah?* (Will you go to school, Nisa?)

Nisa : *Iya nanti aku sekolah di belakang* (Yes, I will go to school of the rear block of the house)

Affan : *Affan nanti mau sekolah di belakang juga lah.* (I also want to go the school in which you do)

Nisa : *Rumah Affan jangan di sini, baru nanti sekolahnya di belakang* (your

house is supposed not to be located here, then you can go to my school)

Affan : *Yang kecil-kecil di situ (belakang) yang besar-besar di depan (sekolahnya), ya kan* (young children go the school in the rear block, adults go the school in the front)

Nisa : *Semalam aku diapain sama abangku. Ditepuknya aku. Nggak diajak main-main.* (My brother did something to me yesterday. He hit me after I refused him to pla 1

The conversation above shows that during solitary toy-play (the children are together but play their own toys), children use more representative (assertive) speech act, as most of the utterances produced by the children are informative. The utterances like (a) *Iya nanti aku sekolah di belakang*, (b) *Yang kecil-kecil di situ (belakang) yang besar-besar di depan (sekolahnya), ya kan* and (c) *Semalam aku diapain sama abangku, ditepuknya aku, nggak diajak main-main* are expressed in direct way. The type of speech acts is representative because they tell the speakers' belief. Mey (2001) states that representative represents subjective state of mind, the speaker who asserts a proposition as true, does so in force of his or her belief. In this case, the children seem to be very eager to tell information to their addressee as they must feel that they have the knowledge about it.

From their early age, children express their intentions by shouting, crying, pointing, etc. for communicative purposes. In the case of possession, children desire to take possession of an object and to maintain it for all the time to explore it (touch it, move it, displace its pieces, suck it, etc.). Children can also respond by act to a request like "*Where's the door?*" by typically pointing to the door or opening or shutting the door (Clark, 2003).

However, the communicative aspect is not limited only in those kinds of action. Tomasello (2003) asserts that during conversation, children in the second year of life make statements, issue requests and ask questions. Also, Dore (1988) suggests that children under five years old use primitive speech acts. The primitive speech acts are labeling, repeating, requesting an action, requesting an answer, calling, greeting, protesting, and practicing.

When children grow up and they are involved in conversation with many levels of addressees, they learn that with different people different games to be played, they also use different kinds of speech act. They become skilled to differentiate the language use to different addressees. Interactions with siblings are different from the ones with parents.

The researcher believes that in other settings of conversation with different addressees such as conversation with peers in different settings, conversation with parents and conversation with siblings will also result various findings. All kinds of Speech Acts Theory suggested by Searle (1969) namely assertive, declarative, commissive, expressive and declarative predictedly occur in those conversations, although one kind of speech acts, in particular situation can possibly occurs dominantly.

Children's speech acts analysis will provide a lot of information about the behaviour of the speech acts production. Speech act analysis also involves identifying the goal behind a speaker's utterance, gesture or sign, and provides a useful starting point for the analysis of communicative intent. When one speaks with listeners with intentions (directly or indirectly), the listeners would responds differently the way they understand the utterances. One's tradition contributes the

way of people speak in the conversation, whether they speak clearly, wordy or indirectly (Rahardi, 2005). This situation then results various responses in the way they want to affect others.

Observing Indonesian four-year-old children's utterances in producing speech act is very much interesting as the researcher will find that the children will produce more kinds of speech acts and how environments contributes to the way the children produce speech acts. Conversation with various sets of addressee, allow children the opportunity to try out their skill in the challenging, but familiar setting. Children, in the present time produce unpredictable utterances that adult never imagine, if compared with children in the past. A four-year-old child who produce an utterance such as "*Udahlah, kalian berdua pergi aja*" (*Both of you just go now*) which is addressed to his parents has become very interesting portion to have deeper investigation because for eastern people, such an utterances is so unpredictable and is considered to be rude. However, many factors contribute to cause such an unpredictable utterance.

Children's ability in producing speech acts should, however, be followed by listeners' understanding about intended function by the producer so we will be able to form the position of the speaker in the conversation. A communicative conversation happens when speakers and listeners have sense in common that both sides understand each other. Therefore, speakers and listeners are supposed to respond each other in their turn and exchange with the needed information that benefit both of them in the conversation (Crowley and Mitchell, 1994).

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

In relation to the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as the following

- 3 What types of speech acts are produced by four-year-old children to different addressees?
- 3 How are the speech acts produced?
- 3 Why do the children produce the speech acts in the ways they are?

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

In relation to the problems of the study, the objectives of the study are

1. to describe the kinds of speech acts produced by children of four years old,
2. to elaborate how the children produce the speech acts, and
3. to reason for the reasons of speech acts produced by the children.

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

This study will investigate speech acts used by children who live in Jalan Rel Bandar Khalifah Tembung. The focus is on the types of speech acts produced by the children proposed by Searle (1969) namely representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative, the ways the children use the speech acts and the reasons of the occurrence of the speech acts. The utterances are obtained from the children's conversations with parents, siblings and peers.

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

Theoretically, findings of the study will add up more horizons in theories of language acquisitions, specially pragmatics acquisition. The findings can also be references for further studies.

Practically, the research findings can be made as a guideline for adults, teachers, and especially parents who are concerned with early childhood education in relation to speech acts production. It can be references in understanding, assisting and facilitating children with appropriate language use process in accordance with the children's age.

