

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Bilingualism is a multi-faceted phenomenon, opening to a variety of descriptions, interpretations and definitions. Bilingualism is the ability to use two languages. Bilingualism is a topic which has been studied from many perspectives. Broadly defined, bilingualism refers to knowledge and command of two or more languages, albeit to different degrees. Due to the variety of factors that define dual language speakers and hearers (some of which do not play a role in monolingual acquisition) bilingualism comes in many shapes and sizes (Grosjean, 1998). Two common parameters that distinguish bilingualism are: (1) Age of acquisition (early in childhood versus late after puberty) and (2) Order or sequence of acquisition in childhood (two languages being acquired simultaneously versus one language being acquired successively, after the other).

Early bilingualism takes place before puberty and can be simultaneous or sequential. Simultaneous bilingualism occurs in early childhood, before the linguistic foundations of the languages are in place. It is also referred to as bilingual L1 acquisition (Genesee, 2000) because the two languages develop together as first languages (two L1s). Sequential bilingualism, on the other hand, happens after the individual has acquired basic command of the first language, which for monolingual acquisition is typically taken to be roughly the age of 3-4.

In this situation, there is a first language(L1) and a second language(L2) sequentially ordered.

Simultaneous bilingual children are exposed to two languages since birth or before the age of 3, the latter being the approximate age when basic syntactic knowledge is assumed to be in place. In other words, simultaneous early or infant bilingual when the child develops two mother tongues from the onset of language, which called LA and LB. LA and LB are the two languages acquired simultaneously by the bilingual children, as for example; the child who comes from a mixed-lingual family that each parent speaks almost exclusively his/her native language to the child.

Recent research has found that bilingual children (around two years old) know which language to speak “to whom” and in “what situation” (Quay, 1999; De Houwer, 1995). Very young children easily switch languages and differentiate their two languages, but there is much individual variation.

Two other parameters along which bilinguals vary greatly are proficiency and relative balance in the two languages. Proficiency and balance are related to the degree of ultimate attainment in the two languages. Although balanced proficiency (with native-like command of two languages) is a possible outcome of bilingualism, it is indeed rarely (Grosjean, 1998). The reality is that most bilinguals are linguistically unbalanced, both functionally (in their language use) and representationally (in their linguistic knowledge). Bilingual speakers typically possess a stronger and a weaker language. The stronger language is more native-like than the weaker language. However, the relative strength of the two

languages fluctuates along the life span depending on a variety of factors, such as age and order of acquisition, as well as what language is most often used and preferred in the community (i.e., the sociolinguistic status of the languages as majority or minority languages), and the contexts for use of each language (home, church, school, work, etc.). The developmental stage of language acquired by the bilingual children is the difference between the uses of two languages of bilinguals in terms of the domain, skills used, aspects of language acquired. This is based on the theory of Hoffmann (1991) saying that: (1) The use of the languages may be unbalance, one is use more than one the other and (2) Dominant bilingual is a bilingual whose competence in one of the two languages, usually his or her mother tongue, is higher than his or her competence in all of the four language skills in his or her dominant language.

The example for this phenomenon can be seen by the following. Annabelle and Sarah are bilingual children. They become bilinguals because their parents speak in two languages to them which is their father speaks in English and their mother speaks in Indonesian from birth. They are bilinguals because there is also an exposure from their mother that the mother speaks in Indonesian since they are in pregnant and till now. And also one of them, Annabelle has ever lived in Indonesia for two years but after she grows up she moves to Australia, Annabelle cannot speak in Indonesian fluently as like as her sister Sarah and indeed Sarah has never lived in Indonesia before.

Annabelle should master speaking in Indonesian because she has ever lived in Indonesia for two years and she gets the exposure is not only from the mother but

also from the community which support her when she lived in Indonesia. It is quite different from her sister, Sarah who is a three years old child. In fact, she never lives in Indonesia but she gets an exposure with Indonesian language from her mother for 24hours. Therefore, she speaks more fluently in Indonesian than English in responding to mother's utterances than Annabelle. Because of this phenomenon, the researcher is interested to investigate what makes the difference of the developmental stages of language acquired by the children. The researcher is also interested to investigate whether there is influence of the community where they live to acquire the languages which in turn makes Sarah speaks Indonesian language better than Annabelle. The process of acquiring a language is regarded as a very complex and interesting to be studied.

1.2 Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of language acquisition acquired by Annabelle and Sarah above, the problems of the study are formulated by the following:

1. In what developmental stage is the acquisition of Indonesian by the three and five years old English-Speaking child?
2. Why do the three and five year old English- Speaking child used Indonesian the way they do?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In the relation to the problems, the main objectives of this study are :

1. To find out the developmental stages of Indonesian from the three and five years old English-Speaking child.
2. To find out the reasons of the three and five year old English-Speaking children used the way that they did.

1.4 Scope of the Study

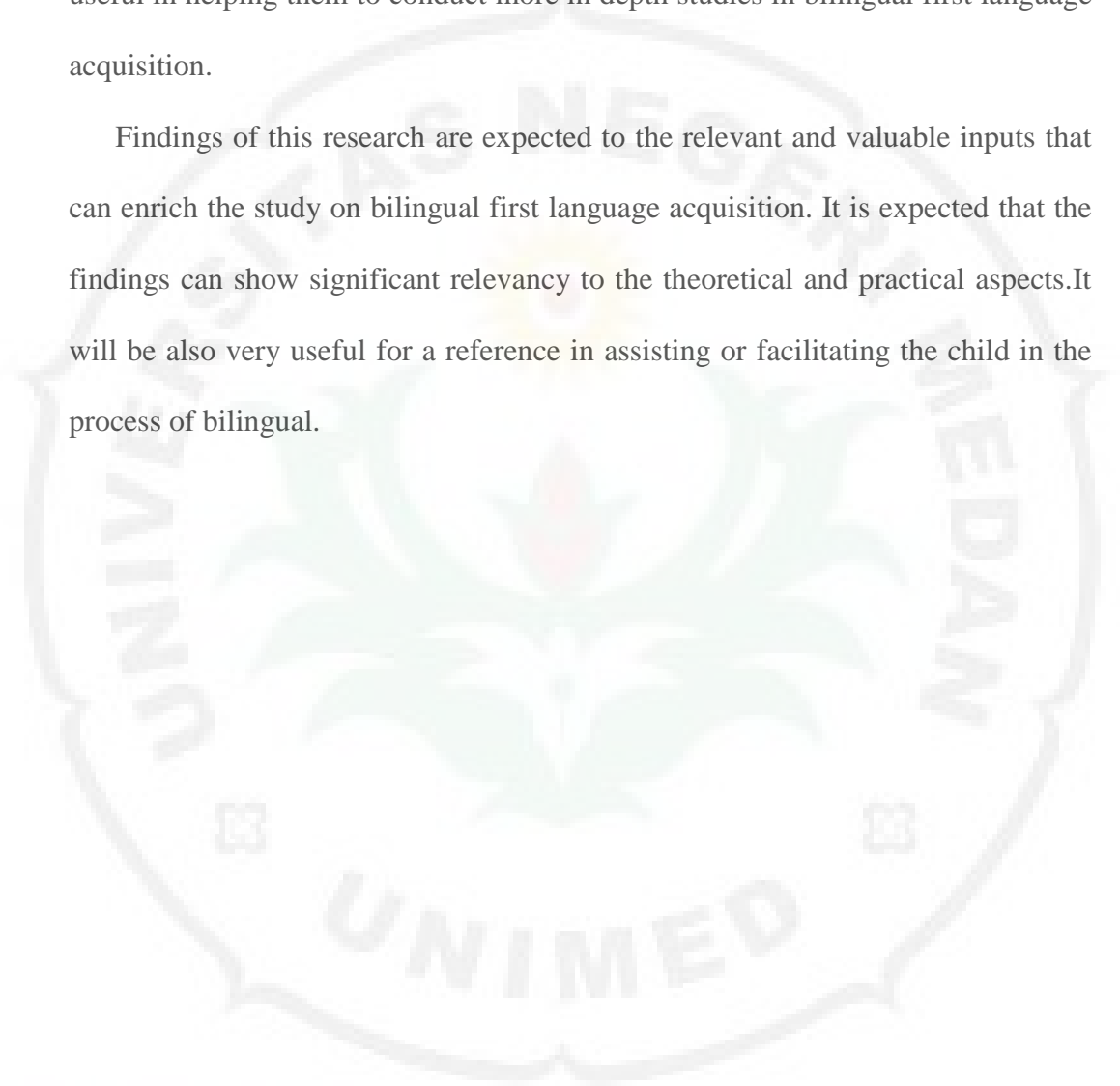
The process of a child being a bilingual is a broad area to be studied because there are so many aspects to be covered. In this research, the researcher limits her observations only on the developmental stages of language acquired by the bilingual children. The children who will be observed are the five years old child and three years old child that have an exposure from the mother and environment.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the research findings can provide a basis for a further research on different stages of the children's bilinguality in language acquisition. Practically, on the other hand, this research can be made as guidelines for adults, teachers, especially parents who do the intermarriage and who are interested in the bilingualism and second language acquisition to young children to rely on the theory of bilingual first language acquisition. In addition, this research will be an answer to some of the problems that occur in the process of bilingual acquisition, especially the three and five year old English-Speaking child in bilingual first language acquisition. While for the future researchers, this research result will be

useful in helping them to conduct more in depth studies in bilingual first language acquisition.

Findings of this research are expected to the relevant and valuable inputs that can enrich the study on bilingual first language acquisition. It is expected that the findings can show significant relevancy to the theoretical and practical aspects. It will be also very useful for a reference in assisting or facilitating the child in the process of bilingual.



THE
Character Building
UNIVERSITY