

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Human language is a remarkable way to communicate. No other form of communication in the natural world transfers so much information in such a short period of time. It is even more remarkable that in three short years a child can hear, mimic, explore, practice, and finally, learn language.

Every infant has been equipped with a capability to understand languages that are spoken by people around him. Wherever an infant born he must be able to understand and to communicate the language that is spoken by adults surrounding him, and the process of acquiring a language by an infant is called as language acquisition.

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate. This capacity involves the picking up of diverse capacities including syntax, phonetics, and an extensive vocabulary. This language might be vocal as with speech or manual as in sign. Language acquisition usually refers to first language acquisition, which studies infants' acquisition of their native language rather than second language acquisition, which deals with acquisition (in both children and adults) of additional languages.

Input hypothesis states that input is a determinant factor of how well the children acquire the language. While input refers to the amount of language exposed to them (Krashen, 1987). So, in other words if there is no input there will be no acquisition. The sources of input are the people around the children. The more people around the children, the more input the children will have, the more talkative the people around the children, the more input will be exposed.

Meanwhile, nowadays introducing English to the young children becomes a very challenging thing in Indonesia since English is regarded as a foreign language. The importance of English in this global era is one of the reasons why many people around the world are encouraged to learn English. Firstly, English is an international language. It is spoken by many people all around the world, either as a first or second language. Secondly, English is also the key which opens doors to scientific and technical knowledge. It can be seen from many guides and instructions of many devices written in English. This transfer of science and technology is needed for the economic and political development of many countries in the world. Thirdly, English is a top requirement of those seeking jobs. Applicants who master either active or passive English are more favorable than those who do not. From the fact above, it is obvious that everybody needs to learn English to greet the global era.

In some big cities of Indonesia English has got a special position in which it is exposed to the young children through Pre-school and Playgroup school even though it is only for certain schools such as IEC, Prime one School, Tumble Tots School, etc. The importance of English has pushed many parents to realize that they need to introduce English earlier to their children. Parents all over the world put their children in language schools at an early age, convinced that the earlier they start learning, the better. Most of parents who push their children to totally immerse to the English language will send their children to those schools which provide teaching learning with full of English. Children who are sent to this school are expected to be able to speak or communicate by using English language.

The children who study at IEC are expected to be able to speak or communicate in English. Those children who study at IEC playgroup are come from different ethnic. They are Chinese, Batak, Javanese and Indian. The children are taught by using full of English language during teaching learning at school. As the result, all of the children from different ethnic who study there will acquire the English words. From the researcher observation, the problem dealing with language acquisition here that most of the different ethnic children of IEC has different ability in acquiring English words. Chinese children tend to be able to speak English earlier rather than Batak children and Javanese children whereas Batak Children will speak English faster if compared to Javanese children. In fact they are exposed and taught with the same language that is English at school.

They are also having the same chance to improve their English toward teacher and friends. So, in here the difference ethnic might contribute to the different ability of those children in acquiring the English words. In line with that, Dixon (2010) also finds that cultural differences among the childrearing in Singapore may contribute to home language and literary practices that differ by ethnic group leading to differences in English vocabulary.

In addition, the difference among the three ethnic is also influenced by different character among them. Erlangga in Kompas (2012) found that Chinese characters are diligent, tenacious and hard worker. Whereas Geertz (1961)) describes that Javanese is identical with their indirect speech. Geertz adds there are two principles which motivate Javanese people to avoid being direct those principles are harmony and respect. Beside that Javanese people also identical with their politeness and shy character. On other hand, Kuntjara (2003) explains that Batak often stereotyped by other as rude person, usually speak frankly and tend to be aggressive

So it is assumed that the difference ability of different ethnic children at IEC in acquiring the English words is due to the differences of cultures and cultural values that applied in their daily lives and it is considered to be the reason why this study should be done in order to describe the acquisition of English words by Chinese, Batak and Javanese ethnic children.

1.2 The Problems of the study

Based on the background above, the problem of the study can be formulated as following questions.

1. What type of English words is dominantly acquired by different ethnic of IEC?
2. What ethnic children of IEC is the most dominant in acquiring the English words?
3. How do the different ethnic children of IEC acquire the English words?
4. Why do the different ethnic children of IEC acquire the English words in the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In line with the research problem, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to find out the type of English words acquired by different ethnic children of IEC.
- 2) to find out what ethnic children is the most dominant in acquiring English words.
- 3) to find out how do the different ethnic children of IEC acquire the English words.
- 4) to find out why the different ethnic children of IEC acquire the English words in the way they do.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study is concerned with the field of acquisition and psycholinguistics. This study focuses on the English words acquisition of different ethnic children in IEC Playgroup. The types of English words that will be analyzed are limited based on part of speech classification. The different ethnic children that will be analyzed here are Chinese, Batak and Javanese ethnic children. This study is limited to the students of IEC playgroup on Jalan Hayam Wuruk no.17 Medan.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are expected to contribute significantly to different parties theoretically and practically.

- a. Theoretically these finding will be helpful for;
 1. Language teachers, to enrich teacher's knowledge in the process of English language acquisition and as guidelines for them in the process of introducing English words to the students.
 2. The second language acquisition researchers who are interested in knowing whether there are differences among different ethnic children in acquiring English words.
 3. Parents, to enrich their horizon in case of English language acquisition.

b. Practically these findings will be helpful for;

1. Language teachers, to enable the teachers to recognize the student's ability from different ethnic in acquiring English words.
2. Parents, who want to know how they can help their children learn English as quickly and effectively as possible.



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