

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Human being is born with the capacity to communicate with others. They communicate by using language to express their feelings and opinions. Language is very complex. It has sound system that allow the production of words and sentences. A language has not only a structure what linguistic try to capture with their rules but also a function to which that structure is put. It is the medium through which the manners, moral, and mythology of a society are passed on to the next generation.

Human language is really distinct from other beings, which its capacity to acquire and use language. Human being's capacity to communicate with others relates to his/her innate capacity language environment from others make people, adults and children are able to communicate. In fact, how children acquire their language is a very amazing process. It is believed that by the time children are 3 or 4 year old, they typically have acquired thousands of vocabulary words, complex grammatical and phonological system, and equally complex rules for how to use their language appropriately in many social settings (Gleason and Ratner: 1998:348). The study of language acquisition can tell us much information of child language development

psychologically and intellectually. The children's relationship and surroundings effect on them of using language.

In addition to, Krashen (1989) says that acquisition is a subconscious process that is identical to the process used in the first language acquisition in all important ways.

Moreover, a range of theories of language acquisition have been occurred in order to explain the process of acquiring the language. The conflict between the nativism and behaviorism has become the serious debate. The nativism maintain their nature that language is innateness. Goodluck (1991:3) The linguistic system involves rules too abstract and complex to be learnt without the aid of innate knowledge about the nature of the system children are born with an innate capacity for language acquisition, and that this makes them acquire language easy and discover the grammar of a language automatically. Even since an infant, a baby begins to use a language to communicate his/her happiness, unhappiness, hunger and so on. On the other side, the behaviorists believe that language acquisition is a process of experience. Language is a conditioned behavior that the stimulus response process. According to Piaget (1965) as quoted by Piattelli-Palmarini (1980) argued that the action of a stimulus presupposes the presence of a scheme, which is the true source of the response.

Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that children-before the age 5—learn most of the intricate system we have been calling the

grammar of a language. Before they can add $2 + 2$ children are conjoining sentences, asking the question, selecting appropriate pronouns, negating sentences, using the syntactic, phonological, morphological, and semantic rules of the grammar. Yet, children are not taught language as they are taught arithmetic (Fromkin and Rodman 1983:325). This is possible because since the birth, they have been equipped with such a device, called Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The Language Acquisition Device guides them to understand the rules and principles governing the language they expose.

In addition, Clark (2003: 1) added that babies are not born talking. They learn language immediately from birth. They hear sounds and words, meaning and construction. They need to know what to use, where and when, how to integrate language with other modes of communication. How to make them understand and how to understand others. During the infancy, children learn to express things by speech sound, as the time goes by they have progress in language development. But their ability and speed in acquiring the language differ one another.

The stages of children language development has its own characteristics within in the five year period. Goodluck (1996 : 75) argues that that by the end of the third year, the child may be producing a range of complex sentences types (complements verbs and relative clauses) and a four-year-old frequently gives the impression of being a fully fluent of a language comparable to the adult language he is learning, if not identical to it. Further, Goodluck (1996: 106) argues that from early age (two or three

years) children have syntactic system that it turn to the syntax of the language around them and reflects principles adult grammars, such as the principles of binding theory. By the end of the third year, the child may be producing a range of complex sentences types (complements verbs and relative clauses) and a four-year-old frequently gives the impression of being a fully fluent of a language comparable to the adult language he is learning, if not identical to it.

In line with that, Radford (2009:1-2) stated that syntax is the study of the way in which phrases and sentences are structured out of the words. Within traditional grammar, the syntax of a language is described in terms of a taxonomy of the range of different types of syntactic structures found in the language. The central assumption underpinning syntactic analysis in traditional grammar is that phrases and sentences are built up of a series of constituents (i.e. syntactic units), each of which belongs to a specific grammatical category and serves a specific grammatical function. For example, in relation to the syntax of a simple sentence like:

(1) Students protested.

It would traditionally be said that the sentence consists of two constituents (the word *students* and the word *protested*), that each of these constituents belongs to a specific grammatical category (*students* being a plural **noun** and *protested* a past tense **verb**) and that each serves a specific grammatical function (*students* being the **subject** of the sentence, and *protested* being the **predicate**). The overall sentence *Students protested* has the categorial status

of a **clause** which is **finite** in nature (by virtue of denoting an event taking place at a specific time), and has the semantic function of expressing a **proposition** which is **declarative** in **force** (in that it is used to make a statement rather than e.g. ask a question). Accordingly, a traditional grammar of English would tell us that the simplest type of finite declarative clause found in English is a sentence like (1), in which a nominal subject is followed by a verbal predicate.

Further, Clark (2003 :25) states that language is a central factor in the social life of infants. The user of language they are exposed to provide the context in which children , themselves become proficient at communicating wants an desires, affect and interest, requests and instructions, questions and observation, and commentary on all the other contents of everyday life. It means that children elaborate language function. They extend their repertoire of speech act beyond the representative and directives and expressives. They also add to their repertoire for conveying each speech act and learn how to express them indirectly in more and more ways. As they get older, they also become more sensitive to what their listener knows when deciding what to present as given and a new. Children have to build up structure and and function at the same time. As they learn more devices with which to convey different functions. And as they learn more about function, they extend the uses to which different structures can be put.

There are some explanations about the main points which are acquired by the children of three to four years of age:

1. Children hear more speech from both familiar and unfamiliar people, they must add to their memory store of words form. (Eve Clark, 2003: 75).
2. Children learn the systems of grammar, phonology, syntax, semantics, lexicon, and pragmatics breaking each system down into its smallest combinable parts and then developing rules for combining the parts (H.H Clark, 1977: 80).
3. A child of 3; 4 begins to pick out details or actions that are incoherent without the picture as accompaniment in learning to tell stories (Clark, 2003: 358).
4. Children at the age of four are normally full of , power, enthusiasm and curiosity. (Borden, 2001: 224)
5. Grammatical morphemes are morphological forms based on grammatical rules including inflection. Children begin to produce grammatical morphemes properly at the age of about 3;0 years (Clark, 2003).
6. Children acquire all the major, syntactic structures of their language very early by the age of three.

The development of children's language is influenced by adults. In children's language development, the role of the input is simply to trigger the innate knowledge that is encoded in the genes and to allow the child to map this innate knowledge onto the language that she/he is hearing (e.g. Hyams, 1986). In others, the input is given a more substantial role. For example, in constructivist theories of syntax development, the child's task is to learn how different words behave in sentences, and to categorise words in

similar ways. (Tomasello, 2003). Thus, the amount and type of input that child hears has a crucial role to play in her/his ability to build the syntax of her/his language (Rowland, 2014). While agreeing that human children are endowed with abilities that make possible certain kinds of linguistic knowledge not demonstrable in other species, the focus is less on innate abilities and more on the process of acquisition of the whole of a language. Starting with as few assumptions as possible about innate availability of linguistic categories and knowledge of linguistic structure, one approach to early syntactic development is to see how much of it can be described with a series of frame-and-slot grammars, each successive one of which has a larger number of linguistic categories .

Normal children progress through a predictable sequence of stages and master the basic syntactic relation of simple sentence at a relatively early age. Despite the commonalities, however, there is evidence of individual differences in syntactic growth among children. Most of this work concern the early stages of syntactic development where variation have been found in the rate and course of acquisition (Fenson et al., 1994).

The idea that children can use syntactic information to acquire meanings rests on a number of premises. Children must be able to build some kind of structural representation, parse sentences, categorize words, and figure out the grammatical function of arguments. Only in this way can they map grammatical functions to thematic roles and infer a plausible meaning for each words in sentence. But how can children acquire all this knowledge?

This question in turn raises another: how do children break into syntax? The answer is important for understanding how they can access the kind of structural representation that linguists attribute to sentences.

In Indonesia, Darjowidjodo (2000) has conducted his distinguished research of children language acquisition. Echa, his own granddaughter, who lives in Java Island is observed for her five years of the Indonesian acquisition. It is found that Echa's sentences at the age of four has develop, where she has acquired the simple, complex, compound and compound-complex sentences. Echa has acquired simple sentences successfully at aged four. Her formal language at school had influence on her language acquisition. Her syntax acquisition has two parts, they are phrases and sentences. She has acquired phrases such as: harus sudah pernah nonton dulu (sebelum eyang bisa bercerita)-(Umur 4;3), dengan cepat, dengan hati-hati and dengan senang. And her simple sentences such as -Hanoman sukanya didepan, - Power rangers terbangnya pake pesawat, -Hanoman yang baca, -Echa yang nulis.

Moreover, according to Gustanti (2013) that Declarative sentence patterns in terms of syntactic spoken children at age 4 are Subject (S), The Subject-Predicate (S-P), Predicate-Object (P-O), Predicate-Subject (P-S), Subject-Predicat-Object (S-P-O), Subject-Predicate-Compliment (S-P-Pel), Subject-Adverb (S-Ket) and Subject-Predicate-Adverb (S-P-Ket). It means that the four-year-old children has mastered the syntactic rules governing simple sentence like adult knowledge of grammar. Viewing this

phenomenon, the writer has curiosity of his own child and her friend' child whether the two children has the same patterns of their declarative sentences they produce. Based my observation over the children, here are some their utterances.

My own child's utterances:

Aku yang bikin susu,

S P O

Cuma kita yang di rumah,

S Ket

Mami bisa makan sayur,

S P O

Aku pegang perut

S P O

Meanwhile, my friend's child utterances:

Mobil besar itu di kamar Gres

S Ket

Nanti aku pulang

Ket S P

Aku bisa terbang kayak pesawat

S P Ket

Aku main robot

S P O

Therefore, the writer realizes that the acquisition of declarative sentence patterns of the children are really different which inspires her to conduct a research on language acquisition. How do children learn the syntax of their language?

Moreover, Rowland (2014:4) states that it is also important to note that differences across languages are not the only differences between children. There are also individual differences between children acquiring the same language: some children are faster and others are slower, and some children are born with cognitive impairments that prevent them from acquiring language without a lot of specialist help. This phenomenon has led the writer to make a small observation on children at the age of four year old. Despite any possible weakness, this point of view the writers intends to focus on the declarative sentence patterns and to find out the factors which support it. It will give a great deal of knowledge about the psychological and intellectual functioning of the children as they have been born with some form of innate knowledge.

To expand this, Hoff (2003) also says that individual differences in language acquisition could be the result of several factors including (a) biological based different in children ability caused by genes or health; (b)

global effects of differences in family functioning and home environment; (c) specific effects of differences in language learning experiences.

Moreover, the researcher is curious whether the surroundings support their Bahasa Indonesian as their first languages. In this period of children,

each of them comes from different background which influence to their language. This study will be focused on the acquisition of Indonesian declarative sentences patterns by the four-year-old children and supporting factors on it.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the previous explanation on the background the research problems are formulated as follows.

1. What Indonesian declarative sentence patterns are acquired by the four-year-old children?
2. Which type of the Indonesian declarative sentence patterns are dominantly acquired by the four-year-old children ?
3. How do the four-year old children develop Indonesian declarative sentence patterns the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. to discover Indonesian declarative sentence patterns are acquired by the children.
2. to find out the Indonesian declaratives sentence patterns are dominantly acquired by the children
3. to elaborate how the four-year-old children develop the declarative sentences patterns the way they do.

1.4 The Scope of the Study.

The process of child's language acquisition is a large area to be studied because it has many aspects to be discovered such as morphological, phonological, syntactical and pragmatical aspects. To narrow this study the researcher does not include all of them. However, this study is focused on the acquisition of Indonesian declarative sentences patterns by the children of four year old in acquiring their Indonesian language as the first language. The two factors, the health and mental factors are also influential to the development of language acquisition, however she does not include them.

As long as they do not have any serious disease or mental problems, she considers that they have physical and mental health. In short, the subjects of this study are the only healthy children.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

A study is academically conducted to enrich on the development of knowledge. The findings of this research certainly will have valuable inputs that can enrich the study on the language acquisition. It is hoped, that the findings would have valuable contributions to the theoretical and practical aspects.

- a. Theoretically, these findings can be made as guidelines for adults especially parents who pay serious attention to their children's language acquisition. These findings will be very useful for references in assisting the children in the process of acquiring the sentence. And other language researchers who has interest in conducting further-depth study on language acquisition by comparing the result of this study they can enrich the knowledge of language acquisition.

- b. Practically, the findings will be valuable for parents who pay serious attention to their children's language acquisition. These findings make them more active and creative in presenting language to their children. And for the babysitters, they will have awareness introducing a new

language so that children can acquired sentences in nature way whatever they want to speak.