

Phonology, Morphology, and Parents Role in Language Acquisition (A Comparative Study)

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ABSTRACT

Language acquisition is influenced by both internal and external factors, including cognitive and IQ development. External factors arise from environmental influences, such as age, gender, intelligence, environment, economy, and social issues. Previous studies have looked at this type of study. However, no one had undertaken a research on this issue, such as morphology and phonology, in the contexts where the current study was conducted, and the comparative ages were only three years old children. This paper fills one of these gaps. This study aims to analyze the stages of phonology and morphology experienced by two children aged 3 years and above, focusing on the role of parents, particularly mothers, in influencing children's language acquisition. The descriptive qualitative method is used, and data is collected from children's utterances in natural context. Findings show that F.A. (a 3-year-old girl) pronounced more phonemes and morphemes than M.A (a 3-year-old boy) and produced clearer utterances. Parental factors also play a role in child language, with both mothers using technology like YouTube animated videos to support language acquisition. This research fills a gap in previous studies on language acquisition in children of different topic and ages.

Keywords: Language Acquisition, Morphology, Phonology

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication that involves individual or group interaction to achieve linguistic goals and reach mutual agreement. Speech is phonetic symbols with specific meanings resulting from expressions by various human linguistic tools; speech expresses the intention or purpose of the interlocutor (Wibowo, 2014). Therefore, speech enriches speech, especially when interact with it, because the sounds we hear cannot be separated from the acquisition of

language. It is also an utterance intended to convey what language is. What the speaker intends is understood by other speakers through the language being expressed. Everyone learns languages, so the most important function of language is communication (Kurniati, 2017). In addition to the idea that language communicates something, it is also a means of communication that conveys the intentions and purposes of the speaker of the language.

Between the ages of 0 and 6, children go through what is called the

"Golden Age". At this time, stimulating all aspects of development is very important for the next stage. Language is an important developmental aspect for children. Fitriyani states that language is a communication which used in all scientific processes (Fitriyani et al., 2019). In other words, language is a tool for thinking and a communication tool for communicating those ideas to others. Additionally, Yogatama mentioned that language is a system of rules and symbols designed to adapt to and communicate with the environment through the exchange of opinions, ideas, thoughts, and feelings (Yogatama, 2011). Language has five systems namely phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. According to Chomsky, every human being has an intellectual stream in his mind or brain, therefore, one of them is responsible for the use and acquisition of language (Subyakto-Nababan, 1992). Language acquisition begins at an early age.

The term 'acquisition' refers to the process of acquiring a (first) language as part of human development from birth. The process of language acquisition occurs in the language centers of the child's brain. It happens when the child acquires the mother tongue. Language acquisition is the process by which people acquire language skills in the form of comprehension and natural expression, without formal learning activities (Tarigan, 2009). Brown states that humans are endowed with the innate ability to interact with a language acquisition tool or device called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in the womb (Brown, 2000). Early childhooders usually learn language by looking at the original grammar of those around

them, especially their parents. The child then creates or creates a new simplified language with its updates (Tarigan, 2009). A child's first or mother tongue acquisition is the same everywhere in the world. The similarities in acquisition processes are caused not only by similar elements of language biology and neurology but also by the presence of aspects of language psychology.

Therefore, language acquisition continues to develop as the child grows. They acquire languages from their parents or anyone who is close to them (in the form of second, third, and foreign languages). Language acquisition varies on the social environment and personal cognitive level. Language acquisition of a child is continuous and consists of a series of units, starting with simple one-word utterances, and working through more complex word-sentence combinations (Ellis, 2021).

Language acquisition is usually distinguished from language learning. Language acquisition tends to occur naturally and unconsciously as part of everyday life. Meanwhile, language learning is acquired after formal learning, by adhering to the concept of general language rules (Chaer, 2015). According to Troike, when acquiring a second language, all the important functions necessary for the second language are already learned in early childhood. Second language acquisition usually begins at the age of three, when he learns the language from those around him who speak to him (Saville-Troike, 2016).

This has also been pointed out by Ardiana and Sodiq, state that two factors influence the process of language acquisition (Adriana & Sodiq, 2008). The first component is internal factor which includes

cognitive and IQ development; the second one is external factors which arise from environmental influences. Language acquisition seems to vary from child to child. This is caused by several factors such as age, gender, intelligence, environment, economy, and social issues (Dardjowidjojo, 2003). The role of language in early childhood is to enable listening, speaking, writing, reading, and thinking. Chomsky states that there are several competencies in grammatical elements namely syntactic, semantic, and phonological (Chaer, 2015).

In addition, there are several previous studies discussing early childhood language acquisition. First, a research entitled Language Mastery in Early Childhood was conducted by Indah Permatasari Suardi, Syahrul, and Yasnur Asri (Suardi et al., 2019). In this study, the researchers found that children have good control over the vowels [a], [i], [u], [e], [ə], and [o]. Meanwhile, there is another research on 3-year-old children conducted by Indah Lestari in 2021 with the results indicating that subjects were unable to express the test at the phonological level (Lestari, 2021). They correctly recognize the phonemes /r/ and /s/. At the syntactic level, subjects were able to test four types of sentences: statements, imperatives, questions, and exclamations. The language that a child acquires is the language that is closest to the child's environment. Based on that theory, at the semantic level, all child utterances contain referential meaning.

However, researchers focus not only on children's ages but also on gender differences between boys and girls. Gender was chosen based on previous observations. Researchers have found that boys tend to talk less

than girls and there are certainly reasons for this. According to Chaer, the female brain is bigger, superior, and more balanced than the male. Men tend to have more language problems than women. Chaer explains that the male brain shrinks faster than females when aging. It is also said that the female brain can regulate the metabolic rate of the brain while the male brain cannot do that (Chaer, 2015).

First language acquisition differentiates boys and girls in terms of stages, comparisons, and influencing factors. Fenson argues that gender accounts can affect language development (Fenson et al., 1994). Mushaitir states that cognition is related to the introduction of intellectual foundations (Mushaitir, 2016). Its meaning is related to expressions, thoughts, and ideas. According to the theory of behaviorism, there are three mechanisms of language acquisition (Skinner, 1948). The first is the imitation process of language acquisition, in which children imitate the language patterns and vocabulary of those around them. The second is the process of getting used to observing and listening. The third is the process of social cognition. Children become able to understand words (semantics aspect) because they cognitively understand the human purpose of generating phonemes through joint attention mechanisms.

Gardner mentions that several factors influence a child's language acquisition; natural factors, biological factors, intellectual factors, social interaction factors, and motivational factors (internal and external factors) (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). On the other hand, the role of parents in the

language development of boys and girls is also important. Parents are the children's first adults in the family, and children depend on their presence to help them grow and develop to maturity. Parents are the first and most important figures and educators of their children. According to Papalia, parents play an important role in all language development (Papalia et al., 2008). Language is a means of communication (Chaer, 2015). Language education at home is one of the most important things for children. Physical proximity can disrupt interaction and communication for parents, especially mothers who are closest to their children. Mothers can do several things to stimulate their child's brain and language development. Mother can ask children to tell a story or listen to a favorite song. The child's closeness to the mother, or other family members, determines the quality of the child's language development. If the family shows enough affection and the child feels happy and comfortable in the environment, communication will go well and the child will quickly become fluent in that language. In contrast, if the child's relationship with parents or family members is not close and healthy enough, the child may speak slowly, stutter, slur, or feel embarrassed, even afraid to communicate with others. Six types of parental involvement, including parenting, communication, volunteerism, home learning, decision-making, and community cooperation (Epstein, 2018). Steps parents can take to support their child's language skills development from an early age include: (1) Introduce good and correct greetings to the family, (2) practice pronunciation of short or simple

sentences, (3) get children to recognize surrounding objects, (4) have children talk, (5) Reading stories, storytelling, etc.

Several previous studies related to language acquisition were conducted in several years. First, a research by Fathma Hamiidah, Reisa Nurrahman, and Dona Aji Karunia Putra in 2022 (Hamiidah et al., 2022). The title of the research is Comparison of Language Acquisition of Girls and Boys Aged 2-4 Years. The results of this study indicate that girls acquire more languages and produce better speech sounds than boys. Second, a research by Wenny Aulia Sari and Tri Dina Ariyanti in 2021 with the title 'Language Acquisition (Types of Sentences) for Children Aged Three to Four Years' (Sari & Ariyanti, 2022). The results of this research indicate that all types of sentences in the form of declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, and exclamations can be uttered by children aged three to four years. Sentences uttered by children aged three to four years are declarative. Third, research by Nofita Anggraini in 2020 entitled The Role of Parents in Early Childhood Language Development, describes the importance of parents' role in early childhood personal development (Anggraini, 2021). Stimulus to improve children's language skills as social skills must be done by parents from an early age.

Based on several previous studies above, this study aims to analyze the stage of acquisition (phonology and morphology) experienced by two children of different genders but the same age. The processes and differences will be analyzed through observation. In addition, the researchers will elaborate on mothers'

roles, factors, and methods that influence children's language acquisition through interview.

METHOD

This research uses the descriptive-qualitative method. Descriptive designs and methods are used to study groups, problems, and current thoughts of people (Nazir, 2009). This method allows us to describe the results of the data collection. Researchers collected data by observing, taking notes, and interviewing. The subjects of this study are two children; M.A. (a 3-year-old boy) and F.A. (a 3-year-old girl). These two children live in the same neighborhood. The data analysis technique performed by the researchers consisted of three phases. In the first phase, researchers perform data reduction. Then, the second phase is the data presentation, and the last is, conclusion. A revalidation process of the data is also conducted (Miles & Huberman, 1992), (Agustina & Zulfi, 2022).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

It covers the findings and discussions of the study in which there is no separation within. It is expected that in the discussion, the author investigates his/her findings and refers back to the theoretical or empirical study which is written systematically, critically, and informatively. In this part, collected data analysis is described. The data are audio records containing the first language utterance that was described in the table how the acquisition of phonology and morphology of three-year-old children with different gender, then the mechanism of language acquisition compared. The

data was obtained from observation results through interaction activity from two subjects. Chomsky describes five stages of language acquisition in children (Chaer, 2015). However, this research will focus on the stage based on observation results.

The Stage of Phonology

In the pronunciation sound, M.A. cannot pronounce the phonemes /s/, /l/, /r/, /c/, /t/, /k/. As the consequence, some phonemes change because they cannot be pronounced properly. It shows that there are even some phonemes that are omitted in pronunciation. For example:

- a. /t/ on the word "tau" (know) becomes /c/ on "cau".
- b. /l/ on the word "lagi" (again) becomes /y/ on "yagi".
- c. /s/ on the word "bisa" (can) becomes /c/ on "bica".
- d. /c/ on the word "coba" (try) becomes /o/ on "oba".
- e. /j/ on the word "jadi" (so) becomes /t/ on "tadi".
- f. /l/ on the word "lain" (other) becomes /y/ on "yain".
- g. /r/ on the word "gerak" (move) becomes /y/ on "geyak".
- h. /c/ on the word "capek" (tired) becomes /t/ on "tapek".
- i. /k/ and /r/ on the word "sekarang" (now) becomes /t/ and /y/ on "tayang"; he removes the first silable se- on the word "sekarang" into "tayang".

It is clear that, based on the pronunciation results above, 6 phonemes that cannot be uttered well, all of which are phoneme consonants. Meanwhile, F.A. shows different data:

- a. /r/ on the word "sekarang" (now) becomes /l/ on "sekalang".
- b. /r/ on the word "harimau" (tiger) becomes /l/ on "halimau".
- c. /s/ on the word "satu" (one) becomes /c/ "catu".

However, F.A. is more proficient in pronouncing many phonemes such as /s/ on the word "bisa"(can), /t/ on the word "takut" (scared). Furthermore, F.A. can correctly pronounce /l/ on the word "lagi" (again) and /c/ on the word "cicak" (lizard). She's also good in pronouncing /k/ from the word "boneka"(doll).

Table 1. M.A. Utterances

Utterances	Meaning
Cau	Tahu (know)
Yagi	Lagi (again)
Bica	Bias (can)
Tayang	Sekarang
Oba	(now)
Tadi	Coba (try)
Yain	Jadi (so)
Geyak	Lain (another)
Tappek	Gerak (move)
	Capek (tired)

Table 2. F.A Utterances

Utterances	Meaning
Sekalang	Sekarang
Catu	(now)
Halimau	Satu (one)
	Harimau (tiger)

The Stage of Morphology

M.A. can produce vocabulary correctly. Some of the words pronounced by M.A. include free and bound morphemes. For example, /lum/ for "belum" (not yet); /num/ for "minum" (drink); and /tini/ means "di sini" (over here). In addition, in

pronouncing words, he tends to cut words and only mentions the final syllable of the word. Nevertheless, M.A. can mention words well that he often says, such as "aku" means me, "ini" means this, /cau/ for "tau" means know, and "capek" means tired.

F.A. lack with words: /dah/ for "sudah" (done), /gak/ for "enggak", or "tidak" (no). However, F.A. was able to produce many words. Some of her pronunciations that are correct and often pronounced are "makan" (eat), "kakak" (brother), "tetek" (sister), "ayah" (father), "minum" (drink), "mandi" (bath), "di luar" (outside), "ke rumah" ((to) home), "ke mana" (where). These words are both free and bound morphemes.

Table 3. M.A. Utterances

Utterances	Meaning
Lum	Belum (not yet)
Num	Minum (drink)
Tini	Di sini (over here)
Aku	Aku (I/me)
Ini	Ini (this)
Cau	Tahu (know)
Capek	Capek (tired)

Table 4. F.A Utterances

Utterances	Meaning
Dah	Sudah (done)
Gak	Tidak (no)
Makan	Makan (eat)
Kakak	Kakak (brother)
Tetek	Tetek (sister)
Ayah	Ayah (father)
Minum	Minum (drink)
Mandi	Mandi (take a bath)
Di luar	Di luar (outside)
Ke rumah	Ke rumah (to home)
Ke mana	Ke mana (where)

Parents Role on Children Language Acquisition

The following table shows the results of interviews with the two mothers. M.A.'s mother works as a businesswoman while F.A.'s mother works as a housewife. The purpose of this interview is to find out the role, factors, and methods of children's language acquisition.

7. What learning methods are used to improve children's language acquisition?	7. The method is just to communicate often, play and watch animation.
8. Are there any media used to help develop children's language acquisition?	8. For media, I usually use toys and YouTube Kids.

Table 5. Interview with M.A Mother

Utterances	Meaning
1. What is your child's mother tongue?	1. Indonesian
2. What is the role of parents in the development of children's language acquisition?	2. I have invite him to talk while playing about anything.
3. How is the process of language acquisition in children?	3. It's going well although there are many words that are not yet clear in pronunciation.
4. What are the factors that influence the development of language acquisition in children?	4. Environmental factors and technology factors such as YouTube and sometimes playing games.
5. Are there any obstacles and challenges in developing language acquisition in children?	5. For obstacles, he usually has difficulty pronouncing some letters such as S from the word "can" to "bica".
6. What efforts can be made to overcome these obstacles and challenges?	6. I only invite him to talk, practice for correct pronunciation.

Table 6. Interview with F.A Mother

Utterances	Meaning
1. What is your child's mother tongue?	1. My child's mother tongue is Indonesian.
2. What is the role of parents in the development of children's language acquisition?	2. Usually I try to chat in daily life such as stories and also learning to read.
3. How is the process of language acquisition in children?	3. The process goes smoothly as usual, since FA is an active child so she likes to talk.
4. What are the factors that influence the development of language acquisition in children?	4. I think environmental factors, her playmates use Indonesian too.
5. Are there any obstacles and challenges in developing language acquisition in children?	5. FA often pronounces words clearly and rarely makes mistakes.
6. What efforts can be made to overcome these obstacles and challenges?	6. The only way to overcome this is to do daily activities; chat and read.

7. What learning methods are used to improve children's language acquisition?	7. There is no special method so it's just from daily chatting and learning to read.
8. Are there any media used to help develop children's language acquisition?	8. I think only storybooks and YouTube.

Discussions

Based on the results and observation, the researcher concludes that, in phonology, M.A. still cannot pronounce these phonemes: /s/, /l/, /r/, /c/, /t/, /k/, for example: /t/ on "tau" (know) turns into /c/ and becomes "cau". Meanwhile, F.A. has trouble in pronouncing /r/ and /s/. However, F.A. is more proficient in pronunciation with many phonemes like /t/, /l/, /c/ and /k/. Comparing to Fitriyani (Fitriyani et al., 2019), our finding shows a major difficulty that children on their age (3 years old) have trouble in pronouncing most consonant, especially /r/ and /s/. It shows similar result with what Hamiidah found in 2022 (Hamiidah et al., 2022).

In the morphology aspect, the researcher concludes that M.A. can create several good vocabularies. Some of the words pronounced by M.A. include free and bound morphemes such as /lum/ for belum (not yet), /num/ for minum (drink), /di sini/ for di sini (over here). Nevertheless, M.A. can mention words well that he often says like aku (me), ini (this), tahu (know), and capek (tired). F.A. has troubles with /dah/ for "sudah" (done), and /gak/ for "enggak" or "tidak" (no). However, F.A. was able to produce many

words. Some of her pronunciations that are correct and often pronounced are the words: "makan" (eat), "kakak" (brother), "tete" (sister), ayah (father), "minum" (drink), "mandi" (bathe), "di luar" (outside), "ke rumah" (to home), "ke mana" (where). These words are both free and bound morphemes.

Based on the results of the interviews above, it can be concluded that in Table 1, both children have Indonesian as their language. Besides, there are similarities and differences in Table 2. M.A.'s mother invites him to talk and play while introducing the names of objects. In contrast, F.A.'s mother is not only talking to her but also teaches her by reading from storybooks. In Table 3, it is found that the language acquisition process of M.A. and F.A. is going well; It's just F.A. who is more capable of pronouncing many words than M.A. In Table 4, both mothers explained that the factor that affects language acquisition is the environment. M.A.'s mother said that technology is also included in the cause. Meanwhile, in Table 5, M.A. usually has difficulty pronouncing words like bisa becomes /bica/ means (can), unlike F.A. who often pronounces sounds clearly with fewer mistakes. In Table 6, both mothers stated that the way to overcome this problem is only by continuing to practice, talking. However, F.A.'s mother also teaches reading to F.A. to get better. In addition, Table 7, M.A.'s mother uses methods such as talking, playing, and watching animated videos, while F.A.'s mother uses similar methods but by inviting communication, learning to read, and watching YouTube. Finally, Table 8 shows that M.A.'s mother uses toys and YouTube as media, while F.A.'s

mother uses storybooks and YouTube to improve her child's language acquisition development. The results are in line with Dardjowidjojo, that there are several factors of language acquisition including age, gender, intelligence, environment, economy, and social (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

CONCLUSION

There are two factors that influence the process of language acquisition (Adriana & Sodik, 2008). The first component is the internal form, which includes cognitive ability and IQ development. External factors, on the other hand, are those caused by environmental influences. Language acquisition seems to vary from child to child. This is caused by several factors such as age, gender, intelligence, environment, economy, and social issues.

Based on the researchers' observations of two kids living in the same environment, F.A., a 3 year old girl, pronounced phonemes and

morphemes more and more clearly than M.A. (a 3 year-old boy). Parental factors also influence child's language acquisition. Based on the results of the interviews, it can be concluded that F.A. has no language impairment, but M.A. has some pronouncing difficulties. However, both M.A. and FA mothers have many similarities in their efforts and teaching methods, including talking continuously or watching YouTube animated videos. The difference is that MA's mother has more items to carry around when playing. F.A. mothers, on the other hand, rely more on learning to read stories. It shows that reading story is effective for acquiring language learning in Indonesia (Purnawati, 2021), (Siregar, 2023).

There are more distinctive aspects that have not yet been discussed in our paper, such as sex and cultural background. These aspects are interesting to be researched in the field of language acquisition.

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