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The Parental Interaction Effects to Early Child Language Acquisition in Indonesia

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Abstract

Early childhood is a very important period for humans to acquire language. This research was conducted during the social prohibition policy period during the Covid-19 pandemic which had an impact on increasing the intensity of parent-child interaction. This affects language acquisition in early childhood which requires the environment as part of the driving force for language acquisition. The role of the mother in providing stimulation to children in mastering the language is very important. This study aims to describe how the influence of parental stimulation interactions given by mothers to their 28-month-old children has on language acquisition during social restrictions. Stimulation is given to children by telling stories, singing together, and playing together. The subjects and objects in this study were sounds, word forms, and sentences for children aged 28 months who were initially only able to pronounce a few vowels and consonants. The case study method was used in this study. Data collection was carried out using participatory observation methods. The data was then analyzed using the grammatical match method. The results showed that the stimulation technique given by the mother had an optimal contribution to the language development of early childhood. The stimulation technique given by the mother showed that the child could pronounce all vowels clearly and only a few consonants could not be pronounced (f, g, k, r, q, z, v). Morphologically, children can pronounce nouns, verbs, adjectives and numbers. Syntactically, children can say telegraph sentences from the two words stage utterance.

Keywords: *The Parental Interaction; Early Child; Stimulation; Language Acquisition*

Introduction

The development of psycholinguistic studies related to children's language acquisition is indeed an interesting topic to study. This can be proven by the existence of a debate between nature and nurture, which is still an interesting debate. The view of behaviourism emphasizes that the process of acquiring language (first) is determined by the stimuli that are presented in the environment. The easier and more often a child sees and hears speech sounds from other people, the faster the child will save these references in his memory (Steinberg, Nagata, and Aline (2001). This opinion makes it clear that one of the determining factors of children acquiring language is the input stimulus from the environment interaction.

Hörman (1975) emphasized that there is a response stimulus between children and their environment in obtaining language. The stimuli and responses are mentally processed through language

acquisition tools in the brain. The environmental stimulus can be in the form of a family environment, geographical environment, and socio-economic environment. Stimulus factors from the family, especially the child's parents also affect language acquisition.

Researchers see the importance of parental involvement during social restrictions in stimulating children's language acquisition. The period of social restrictions is the right time for parents to clean their children at home. These long periods of social distancing can be very effective times for parents to play and study together. This time can be used as a means for parents to provide various stimuli for children's growth and development, including the acquisition and development of children's language.

Parents can carry out various activities that trigger the stimulation of language acquisition. The results of Bennet's (2002) study show that parents who regularly read books to young children have a significant effect on improving children's language mastery. This was also confirmed in Peterson and Slaughter's 2003 study. The study concluded that children whose mothers often explain the terms around them can understand other people more quickly (Zufferey, 2010). Knauer (2020) conducted a study on the impact of parents telling stories on the language acquisition of two-year-olds. Knauer (2020) shows that parents who tell storybooks to their children have an impact on increasing their vocabulary. Music and singing with children are also stimulus activities that parents can do. Vidal (2018) examined the impact of music experimentally on 44 children aged 3-4 years in Portugal. The results of this study indicate that music training in children can improve early childhood language skills, especially in the field of language sounds (phonology).

Playing with children is also a part of the parental stimulus to accelerate language acquisition. Play can improve children's language development because play is the basis for language acquisition in every child (Lindfors, 2008; O'Grady, 2005). Play is described as a way for children to show themselves. Through play, children benefit from social and cognitive interactions that improve their language acquisition. (Oates and Grayson, 2004; Menn, 2017).

This is confirmed by research by Toub (2018). Toub (2018) conducted research on role-playing and developing vocabulary in early childhood with low-income parents. Toub conducted two studies at once. Both studies were conducted by reading books to children. The first study is reading books, then children are directed to play freely and play guided by toys related to stories in the book, free play. The second lesson is done by reading a book then inviting us to play with guidance and reviewing it with picture cards. Both studies show increased vocabulary during games. These results indicate the existence of the benefits of play supported by adults, the development of early childhood said age.

The vocabulary development of early childhood enters a critical period at the age of 2-3 years. At that age, children are in the fastest period as the fastest period of increasing vocabulary (Jalongo, 2007). In that period the brain is in a very sensitive condition to accept and process language input so that children's natural ability to language will be obtained very well (Ellis, 2003: 67-68). By around 2 years of age, children can master 50-200 words and sentences telegraphically with two or three words. By the age of 3 years, children have mastered 200-300 words and show expressions of frustration if the communication is not implemented by adults. This is in line with some of Lock's (1995) opinion which state that at the age of 1.6 years to 1.8 years a child masters about 50 words. As for Dardjowidjodo, who has conducted research on his grandson Echa, the number and types of words that Echa mastered were sent to the input he received, Echa, who was 2.6 years old, received 500 words (Dardjowidjodo, 2014). Furthermore, Dardjowidjoyo found that Echa's grandson's language mastery was 328 nouns, 215 verbs, 106 adjectives, and 85 function words. The quality of children's language acquisition is also measured by three factors, namely: (1) individual maturity, (2) experiences or individual interactions of children as learners (Musfiroh, 2017). In line with individual maturity, young children begin to string words together into multi-word utterances starting about age 2 (Traxler, 2012).

This study focused on Althaf, a 28-month-old child. Researchers will focus on the form of stimulus in children and the number of sounds, vocabulary, and sentences obtained. Children approaching 2 years enter the “golden age”, this period is believed to be the golden age of children to learn various things. Furthermore, the researcher used sequential multiple activity techniques. The Multiple Sequential Activities technique is a combination of one activity with another. The activities in this technique are 1) telling stories with picture books, 2) playing guessing pictures with flashcards, 3) reading stories, 4) playing hide and seek, 5) playing train stacking, 6) telling stories with character dolls, 5) sing. Activity (1) can be combined with activity (5) in one time.

Previous research used only one form of stimulus technique, telling stories or singing alone. This study combines several forms of stimulus in one time. On the other hand, if previous research has entered into the development of only one aspect of language. This research will look at language mastery in three aspects, namely phonology (sound), morphology (types of words), and syntax (sentence form) that are mastered.

Methodology

The case study method is used in this research. Subjects and objects in this research were sounds, word forms, and sentences of 28 months old children who initially were only able to pronounce a few vowels and consonants. The research period was carried out for 6 months, from January to May 2021. The data were collected using participatory observation methods. The data were analyzed using the grammatical match method then presented descriptively.

Result and Discussion

Althaf is a 28 months old child, after being stimulated using multiple sequential activities for five months during the social distancing period experienced an increase in language acquisition and was able to show intended references to the language spoken. The rapid increase in children's language mastery can be seen from the increase in aspects of vowel and consonant mastery (phonology), the addition of word mastery (morphology), and the progress of the ability to pronounce sentences (syntax).

From a phonological aspect, Althaf has been able to pronounce all vowels [a], [i], [u], [e], [o]. This can be seen from the words spoken by Althaf such as [meja] pronounced [meja] means ‘table’, [ular] pronounced [ula] which means "snake", [mobil] is pronounced [mobi] means "car". For consonant sounds, Althaf still has difficulty pronouncing consonants [f], [g], [k], [r], [q], [z], [v]. This can be seen in the mention of consonants in words. The consonant [f] in [fajar] 'dawn' is called [aja]. The consonant [g] in [gajah] 'elephant' is called [ajah]. The consonant [k] in [kuda] 'horse' is called [uda]. The consonant [r] in [*roti*] 'bread' is called [oti]. The consonant [q] in [Quran] 'quran book' is called [owan]. The consonant [z] in [kaka] [Zafran] 'brother Zafran' is called [tata] [Apan]. The consonant [v] in [vas] 'vase' is called [pas].

In terms of morphology, Althaf experienced a significant increase in word mastery. Althaf, who previously only mastered no more than 15 words, added 215 words in the five months since the stimulus was given. This is shown in the following figure 1.

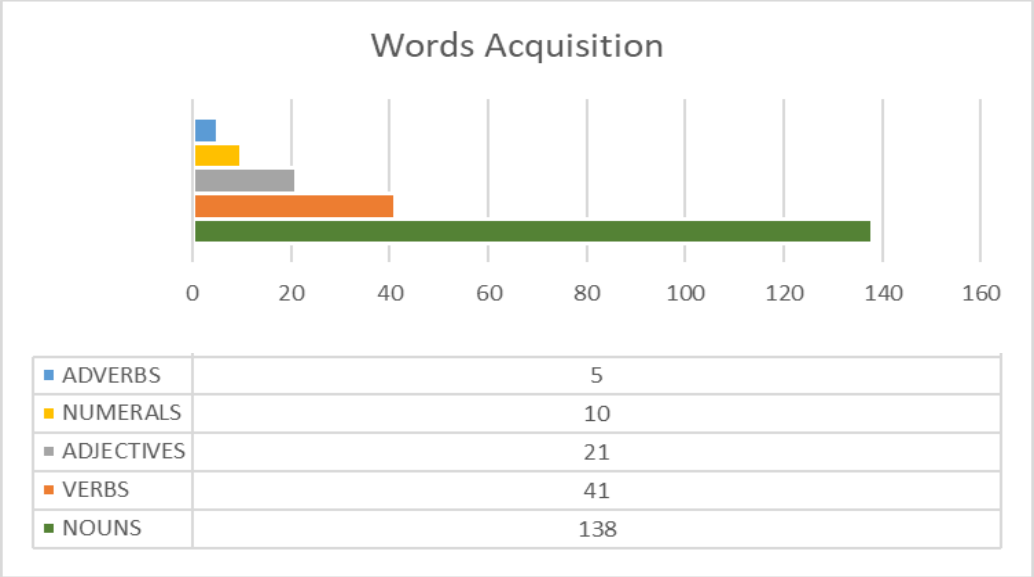

Figure 1. Types of Words Acquisition

Graph Figure 1 above shows the new words the child has acquired. Children can pronounce words classified as types of nouns, verbs, adjectives, numbers, and adverbs. Adverbs can be mastered, there are 5 words. In the numerals words, children can pronounce numbers from 1 to 10. In the type of adjective, the child has increased by 21 words including mentioning top-down position, pain, and the taste of food. For this type of verb, the children's mastery is increased by 41 words which are related to the activities that the children do themselves. In the type of noun, the children's mastery increased by 138 new words. The number of noun mastery additions was the highest. The various types of nouns that have been pronounced by children are shown in the following figure.

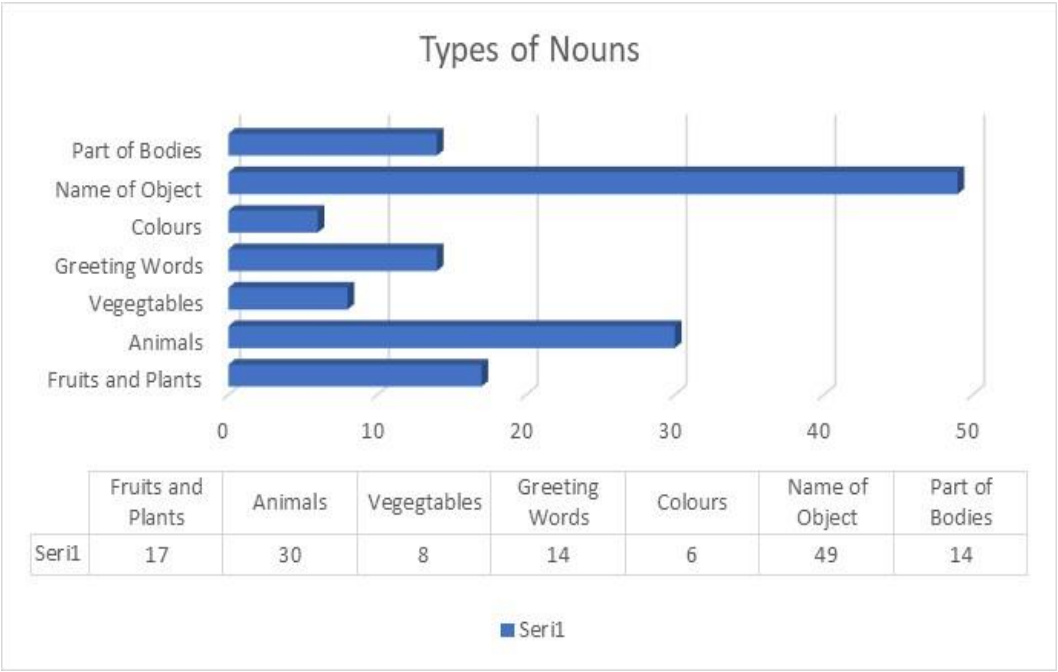

Figure 2. Types of Nouns

Figure 2 of the graph above illustrates the addition of a child's noun mastery of very varied types. Variations of nouns consist of the type of body part, the name of the object, color, greeting words, types of vegetables, types of animals, names of fruits and plants. The child is able to show and name body parts such as eyes, head, *ambut* for *rambut* "hair", *tewinga* for *telinga* "ears", *peyut* for *perut* "stomach", and *tati* for *kaki* "legs". Children are also able to show and name objects around them such as mobil for 'car', *woneka* for *boneka* 'doll', *eta* for *kereta* 'train', and *bowa* for *bola* 'ball'. Regarding noun names, this variant dominates the number of nouns controlled by children. Next, the child is also able to name the color of the object but its nature is limited to the main colors, such as *mewah* for *merah* 'red', *nuning* for *kuning* 'yellow', *ijau* for *hijau* 'green', *biyu* for *biru* 'blue'.

The mention of variant types of nouns appears in the mention of vegetables that are eaten daily by children, such as *tomat* 'tomatoes', *wote* for *wortel* 'carrots', *botoli* for *brokoli* 'broccoli'. Children are also able to greet other people according to their form of greetings, such as the *tata* for *kaka* 'brother', *nini* for *nenek* 'grandmother', *ayah* 'father', and ibu 'mother'. Children are also able to show and introduce the names of these animals such as *ajah* for *gajah* 'elephants', *jeyapah* for *jerapah* 'giraffes', '*bewuang* for *beruang* 'bears'. Finally, children are able to show the types of fruit and plant parts, such as *pisang* 'bananas', *jeyu* for *jeruk* 'oranges', *daung* for *daun* 'leaves', and *bunga* 'flowers'.

Syntactically, children are also able to pronounce telegraphic sentences. The child has been able to combine two words referring to the words he conveyed to others. Word orders in telegraphic sentence structure consists of NOUN + VERB; NOUN + ADJECTIVE; and NOUN + ADVERB. The sentence of the NOUN + VERB arrangement appears in *ayah puwang* for *ayah pulang* means 'dad came home' that consist of to *ayah* (noun) and *puwang* (verb). The sentence of the NOUN + ADJECTIVE arrangement appears on *peyut Althaf atit* for *perut Althaf sakit* 'Althaf's stomach hurts' consist of *peyut Althaf* (noun phrase) and *atit* (adjective). NOUN + ADVERB form sentences appear in *eta mana* for *di mana kereta* which means 'where is the train?' the other NOUN + ADVERB sentence appear in *bewuang sana* there for *beruang di sana* which means 'bear is over there' consist of *bewuang* (noun) *sana* (adverb). Overall, the telegraphic sentences that can be pronounced by children are 47 sentences with 3 variants of the combination of two types of words.

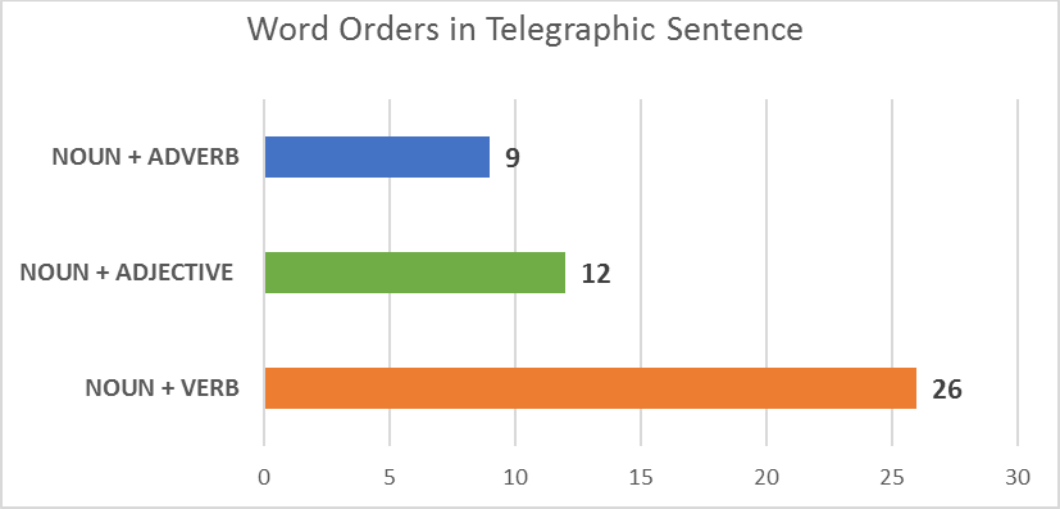

Figure 2. Word Orders in Telegraphic Sentence

Conclusion

The results showed that the mother's stimulus using multiple sequential activities technique on Althaf, 28 monthss old, had a significant effect on the child's language mastery. From the phonological

aspect, children are only able to pronounce a few consonant sounds and are not yet able to pronounce the vowel sound [e]. After the stimulus is given by the mother, the child is able to pronounce all vowels [a], [i], [u], [e], [o]. For consonant sounds, Althaf still has difficulty pronouncing consonants [f], [g], [k], [r], [q], [z], [v]. In terms of morphology, Althaf experienced a significant increase in word mastery. Althaf, who previously only mastered no more than 15 words, added 215 words in the five months since the stimulus was given. Children can pronounce words classified as types of nouns, verbs, adjectives, numbers, and adverbs. Also, syntactically, children can pronounce telegraph sentences. The child can combine two words that refer to the words he conveyed to others. Telegraphic sentence structure consists of NOUN + VERB; NOUN + ADJECTIVE; and the NOUN + ADVERB. Overall, the telegraph sentences that can be pronounced by children are 47 sentences with 3 variants of the combination of two types of words. Previously, children were only able to pronounce holophrastic sentences.

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