CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of the Study

People are predestined to talk. It is a normal and natural thing that people have a language. As they breathe, people use language without thinking. According to Clark & Clark (1977: 3), "language is a basic ingredient in virtually every social situation". Language keeps social relationships among people since by using language, people can communicate information and messages to social members. Therefore, language holds a main role in human affairs.

In acquiring language, children pass through some stages to reach complexity in language- from child language to true speech, that is, adult language. They begin with various simple actions to communicate with other people around them, such as waving their hands, grasping parents' clothes or pointing at something. By those actions, they can convey their wants, needs and intentions. The first vocal option that they can do is crying (Ziajka, 1981: 108). However, the vocalizations can achieve certain ends and have meaning in the functions they serve. Furthermore, Christine Howe (1981: 1) strengthens the statement above that " the vocalizations are also a miscellany of sounds that seem like the elements of sounds of natural language".

Children start to speak in a high methodical way; they break the language down into its simplest parts and develop the rules they need to put the parts together. However, they do not merely imitate adult's model around him,

handicapped by limited attention, memory deviation or other psychological deficit. They speak their own language, with its own characteristic patterns. Of course, their language is not as perfect as the adult's model. Thus, it is very interesting to study a child as a speaker of "exotic language", to describe its structure, that is, the sentence patterns or rules of the language and to describe the successive changes in the child's language as he/she brings it into the complexity of language.

Here, the writer wants to study the child's language acquisition in its syntactic structure. Around the age of two years, the children's vocabulary begins to expand rather rapidly, and their syntactic repertoire consists of simple two-word or even more than two-word sentences, i.e. three-word sentences or more-than-three-word sentences. However, sometimes the children utter one word to represent a complete thought. Their utterances are produced very definitely and they are an unstructured combination of words; however, they are very meaningful. They can represent what the children want to do or convey.

Children's language continues to develop for many years. They learn the simplest structure and functions first, and step to more complex ones later. According to Braine, Brown & Fraser, Miller & Ervin and McNeill, there are two most common types of language that can be distinguished in the period of the two-word sentences. They are pivot class and open class. The pivot class occurs only in a fixed sentence position. Pivot words occur neither alone nor in combination with other pivot words; pivot words are usually function words which support another word but do not support their own. While, open class is the complement of the

pivot class. It can occur both in the initial and final positions. Then, it may occur alone or together with other open-class words or pivot-class words. Most of the words that are produced by children belong to this class. For example:

Ndak enak   Ada uwa
P   O   P   O

Hama ketek   Di hana
P   O   P   O

Brain, W. Miller and Ervin, R. Brown and Fraser formulate a child's grammar may be described by the rules (Clark & Clark, 1977: 310) :

$$S \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} P_1 + O \\ O + P_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

(S= sentence; P= pivot; O= open; $\rightarrow$= "consists of"; the brackets close alternatives).

To complete her study, the writer also analyzes the language functions that are found in the subject's utterances as formulated by Geoffrey Leech (1990). There are five functions of language which appear in people's utterances, they are expressive function, informational function, directive function, phatic function and aesthetic function. For instance, when a child says "Ndak enak", it reflects expressive function since the child expresses his/her feeling or opinion about something.

A child's learning language is an exciting matter to be observed all the time. The writer finds that child's language is unique. She is curious that a child can

convey his/her intentions, wants and needs only in some words. Furthermore, linguistic theory is universal; therefore, the writer is curious to know whether the existed theory can be applied to two-year-old Indonesian children. There are many studies which observe foreign children but there are still a few linguists studying/observing Indonesian children. Therefore, the writer tries to apply the existed theory to Indonesian children.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In line with the background of the study, and in order to answer the writer's curiosity about a two-year-old Indonesian child's language production in its syntactic structure, the questions investigated are formulated as follows:

a. What kinds of sentences are produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child in her one-word utterances, two-word utterances, three-word utterances, and more-than-three-word utterances?

b. What syntactic patterns of sentences are produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child in her one-word utterances, two-word utterances, three-word utterances, and more-than-three-word utterances?

c. What are the language functions produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to answer the above formulated research questions:

a. To find out the kinds of sentences that are produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child in her one-word utterances, two-word utterances, three-word utterances, and more-than-three-word utterances.

b. To find out the syntactic patterns produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child in her one-word utterances, two-word utterances, three-word utterances, and more-than-three-word utterances.

c. To find out the language functions produced by a two-year-old Indonesian child.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are most likely to enrich the varieties of psycholinguistic studies because the child's language production in its syntactic structure can be a good input in learning Psycholinguistics and to contribute to other observers in studying child's language acquisition.

Furthermore, the findings are intended to answer the writer's curiosity and help parents to communicate with their children well.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Concerning with the subject under observation, the writer decided to choose her subject from her own niece. She is Tracy Amelia Oentoro. She was 22 months old when the observation was being done. The data were taken in the subject's house when she was doing something; moreover, the data was collected

for approximately five months. In this case, the writer examines the kinds of sentences, the syntactic patterns and the language functions that are produced by the subject.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer finds it is useful to define several key terms used in this study. They are:

1. Syntactic structure (Bussmann, 1996) sequence of linguistic elements formed by segmentation which can consist of sound, words, phrases, clauses, or entire sentences.

2. The function of language (Clark & Clark, 1977) is intimately bound up with the speakers' and listeners' mental activities during communication, in particular with the speakers' intentions, the ideas speakers want to convey, and the listeners' current knowledge.

3. A sentence (Taylor & Taylor, 1990) is a processing unit in two senses: (1) at the end of one sentence, the interpreter can integrate information sufficiently to extract a gist, and (2) soon after gist extraction, he purges from working memory most individual words as well as syntactic structure, to make way for a new sentence.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, which is divided into seven sub topics: background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II is the review of related literature which is divided into two: underlying theories and previous related study. Chapter III is the research methodology, Chapter IV is about findings and discussion of findings. Chapter V is the conclusion and suggestion.