VARIABLE RESEARCH JOURNAL
Volume 01, Number 02, July 2024
E-ISSN: 3032-4084
Open Access

PHONETIC AND SYNTACTIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF 3 YEARS OLD CHILDHOOD

Elsa Alyani[1], Ika Shakila Maharani[2], Siti Wulandari[3], Nargis[4]
[1,2,3,4,] English Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Tangerang, Indonesia
Email: elsaalyani01@gmail.com, ikashakila26@gmail.com, sitiwulandari281@gmail.com, nargis@umt.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received May 07, 2024
Revised June 10, 2024
Accepted July 05, 2024
Available Online July 15, 2024

Kata Kunci:
Akuisisi Bahasa, Perkembangan Bahasa, Fonetik, Sintaksis, Masa Kanak-Kanak Awal

Keywords:
Language Acquisition, Language Development, Phonetic, Syntax, Early Childhood

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menganalisis perkembangan fonetik dan sintaktik bahasa pada anak usia 3 tahun menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Dengan mengamati dan merekam interaksi verbal anak selama beberapa minggu, tujuan penelitian ini adalah menangkap detail perolehan bahasa dini. Analisis ini menitikberatkan pada pola pengucapan, pertumbuhan kosa kata, dan pembentukan kalimat yang secara sintaksis benar. Peneliti mencatat bahwa anak menunjukkan kemajuan signifikan dalam artikulasi fonetik, dengan peningkatan yang nyata dalam kejernihan suara konsonan dan vokal. Secara sintaksis, anak menunjukkan kemampuan yang semakin meningkat dalam membentuk kalimat sederhana, menggunakan struktur tata bahasa dasar, dan menata kata dengan urutan yang tepat. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga mengenai tonggak perkembangan bahasa yang khas pada anak-anak usia ini, menekankan pentingnya lingkungan linguistik yang mendukung dan interaktif.

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the phonetic and syntactic development of language in 3 year old children using qualitative descriptive methods. By observing and recording children's verbal interactions over several weeks, the aim of this study was to capture the details of early language acquisition. This analysis focuses on pronunciation patterns, vocabulary growth, and the formation of syntactically correct sentences. Researchers noted that children showed significant progress in phonetic articulation, with marked improvements in clarity of consonant and vowel sounds. Syntactically, children show increasing ability to form simple sentences, use basic grammatical structures, and arrange words in the correct order. This research provides valuable insight into typical language development milestones in children of this age, emphasizing the importance of a supportive and interactive linguistic environment.

INTRODUCTION

In general, people do not consider language use to be a difficult skill. Since birth, children have attempted to interact with their environment. In interactions, children use language as a protective tool. The use of language feels natural because a baby will develop along with language development without being formally taught. A baby begins to develop the forms of language we recognize as words between the ages of one and one and a half years. By age four or five, these one-word utterances develop into two-word utterances and, eventually, into complex phrases. We have been gifted with the gift of language since infancy, even though we do not yet know how to use it well. Every child in the world has

a language acquisition device in their brain that functions to acquire language. Children first learn language in their family environment, which includes mother, father, grandmother, and siblings, so first language acquisition is also known as mother tongue because it is usually the mother who tells stories and interacts with them as babies. Language acquisition is the process by which a child learns his first language as stated by (Ismahani et al., 2024).

One of the most delightful and joyous moments adults spend in life is the moment they get engaged in a conversational exchange with toddlers as highlighted by (Chendeb, 2020). Their innocent curiosity, imaginative responses, and fresh outlook on the world bring a unique and heartwarming perspective that can brighten any ones day. The childhood period between the ages of one and three is of particular interest because of the rapid development of vocabulary, which allows them to move from single-word expressions to more complex ones. Toddlers aged 1-3 years develop cognitively and linguistically intelligently, even though some of them already understand everything before they can pronounce words. This rapid development not only demonstrates their extraordinary ability to absorb and process language, but also highlights the important role of interaction, play, and environmental stimulation in supporting their overall development.

Language acquisition as a subconscious process akin to how children naturally acquire their first language. Acquisition involves obtaining language unintentionally, often informally within society, driven by communication needs, and with social implications related to the community or neighborhood. In contrast, learning is a deliberate process involving structured formal education, where language competency is a significant focus. Children are born into a linguistic environment where they begin to develop language from their perspective according to (Hidayani, 2021)

During this stage, children begin to form more complex sentences, experiment with grammar, and enhance their communicative skills, laying a robust foundation for future learning and social engagement. This inner speech cannot be voiced in some cases because at this stage, children can formulate less than what they intellectually understand and imagine. Children's ideas change from the unspoken to the spoken level through the transition of images and brain schemata into verbal speech. In the process of language development, 3-year-olds have difficulty in pronouncing words that they conceptualize intellectually. This is due to their limited ability to formulate more complex words. These children are unable to say the words they conceptualize intellectually because they are still in the process of language development. They experience the transition from unspoken ideas to spoken words through the process of transforming images and schemata in the brain into verbal utterances. Therefore, 3 years old need help and support to improve their language abilities and develop better syntax skills.

(Carroll & Snowling, 2004) Suggested that the phonological awareness profiles of children with speech impairment are comparable to those of children who have been identified as being at risk for dyslexia but who have no diagnosed speech impairment. (Carroll & Snowling, 2004) findings are of particular clinical importance as they confirm in a controlled research design that it is not just the obvious

speech output difficulties of children with speech impairment that place them at risk for reading disorder. although showing marked breakdown when their expressive phonological system was stressed in the nonword repetition task, did not have any overt speech disorder that required intervention. This finding highlights the intricate connection between phonological processing and broader language development issues. At the age of three, children are at a crucial stage in both phonetic and syntactic language development. Phonetic development involves the ability to recognize and produce the sounds of their native language accurately, which is foundational for future reading skills. When children experience speech impairments, their difficulties in sound production can mirror the phonological deficits seen in dyslexia, suggesting that early speech issues could be indicative of later reading challenges.

In addition to phonetic development, syntactic development is another critical aspect of language acquisition for 3 years old children. Syntactic development involves the ability to construct and understand sentences, which requires a grasp of grammar and vocabulary. Children with speech impairments might also exhibit delays in syntactic development, as the ability to form and understand sentences is closely tied to their phonological skills. Therefore, monitoring and supporting both phonetic and syntactic development in children with speech impairments is essential. Early interventions that target these areas can help mitigate the risk of later language and literacy difficulties, ensuring a more robust language foundation as they progress into formal education.

In this research, 3 year old Rafif was the subject of research on language acquisition. This research focuses on the relationship between phonology and syntax in the language acquisition process. This child's language acquisition was determined based on the age range usually used by researchers, which was generally obtained through interviews with Rafif's mother. Although some words are still difficult for Rafif to pronounce correctly, overall his linguistic development shows good progress for a child his age.

METHOD

Qualitative methods are methods used in this research. (Creswell, 2018) describe are essential for understanding phenomena from participants' perspectives and are particularly useful when exploring complex issues or processes. For studying the phonetic and syntactic language development of 3-year-old children, a qualitative approach allows for an in-depth examination of the language acquisition process. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing transcripts of conversations recorded on June 12 and 19, 2024. The research focuses on a 4-year-old boy named Rafif Rizkiansyah, residing in BSD. Its aim is to examine his acquisition of his first language, particularly Indonesian, during the syntactic development stage at the age of 4. The study includes the formation of simple sentences, questions, and commands.

Rafif Rizkiansyah, born on June 16, 2024, in BSD, is the third child of Mr. Hendrianyah and Mrs. Meri Kristiana. He lives with his family and is actively using Indonesian, his mother tongue, in daily communication. Data collection involved observation, interviews, transcription, and analysis of interview data. Common qualitative designs for such studies include case studies and phenomenological

approaches (Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, 2016). Participants typically include 3-year-old children and their parents or caregivers, with detailed selection criteria based on factors like age and language background. (Patton, 2015) emphasizes the use of purposeful sampling to select information-rich cases. To enhance credibility, qualitative research often employs multiple data collection methods, such as observations of children's language use in natural settings, semi-structured or open-ended interviews with parents or caregivers about the children's language development. (Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The researcher shows that three-year-old children usually learn around 10 words with unclear pronunciation. They pick up language from their surroundings, particularly from their parents. Families play a crucial role in shaping children's vocabulary development. In the study, participants are encouraged to use everyday words like "egg," "road," "ice cream," and "vegetable." They listen to these words and repeat them spontaneously.

Children Personal Data

Name : Rafif Rizkiyansyah
Place and date of birth : Tangerang, June 16th
Age : 3 Years old
Address : BSD

Discussion

Table of Observation Results of 3-Year-Old Children's Speech Styles

The correct words	The spoken words	Phonological Errors	Explanation
Pisang	Picang	Substitution	The child replaces the consonant /s/ with /c/.
Telur	Teyoy	Substitution and Distortion	The child replaces the consonant /l/ with /y/ and the vowel /u/ with /o/.
Jalan	Alan	Omission	The child omits the initial consonant /j/.
Awas	Awah	Substitution	The child replaces the final consonant /s/ with /h/.
Eskrim	Ekih	Omissions and Substitutions	The child removes some middle phoneme /skr/ and replaces the final

			consonant /m/ with /h/.
Susu	Tutu	Substitution	The child replaces the consonant /s/ with /t/.
Rumah	Lumah	Substitution	The child replaces the initial consonant /r/ with /l/.
Bola	Bowa	Substitution	The child replaces the final consonant /l/ with /w/.
Sayur	Sayul	Substitution	The child replaces the final consonant /r/ with /l/.
Goreng	Goyeng	Substitution	The child replaces the middle consonant /r/ with /y/.

Types of Phonological Errors

1. Substitution: The child replaces one phoneme with another phoneme that is easier to pronounce. Example: /s/ becomes /c/ in the word "pisang" becomes "picang".

   This phenomenon is explained by the concept of differential substitution in L2 phonology. It involves learners from different L1s attempting to acquire the L2 phoneme, often substituting it with a phoneme from their native language. For instance, speakers of Japanese may substitute the English interdental fricative /θ/ with [s], while speakers of Russian may substitute it with [t]. According to (Archibald, 2023) This substitution is influenced by the formal representation of the entire segmental inventory, which is represented as a contrastive hierarchy of phonological features.

   Differential substitution in L2 phonology happens when learners from various native language backgrounds try to learn phonemes in a second language. The difficulty emerges because second languages often have sounds that don't exist in the learners' native languages, making these sounds unfamiliar and hard to produce or recognize accurately. This substitution process is affected by how childhood mentally organize phonemes in their first language. Each learner structures and prioritizes phonological features based on their L1 background, which provides a foundational framework for dealing with unfamiliar L2 phonemes. Additionally, (Archibald, 2023) stated that learners establish a hierarchy of phonological traits that guide their production and perception of phonemes in a second language (L2). This hierarchy assists in identifying similarities and differences between L2 sounds and those in their native language (L1). Consequently, learners might replace unfamiliar L2 sounds with phonetically or phonologically similar sounds from their L1. This concept of differential substitution underscores how L1 phonological systems shape the acquisition of new phonemes in an L2.

Understanding this phenomenon is crucial in the context of three-year-olds' phonetic and syntactic language development. During this stage, children rapidly expand their vocabulary and begin constructing more complex sentences. Recognizing the impact of their native language phonology can aid educators and researchers in addressing specific challenges encountered by young learners. By grasping how children substitute unfamiliar sounds and the influence of their L1 on L2 development, language instruction can be tailored to enhance learning effectiveness and overcome phonological obstacles

2. Omission: The child omits one or more phonemes from a word. Example: /j/ in "jalan" becomes "alan".

The omission of phonemes is a common challenge in language learning, influenced by the complexity of mapping between orthography and phonology in the language. Some languages have intricate relationships between phonemes and their written representations, which can make it easier for learners to omit phonemes. For instance, research on Arabic phoneme errors among non-Arabic speaking students has highlighted environmental factors, interference, and performance as contributing factors to such errors, including omissions (Muslimin et al., 2021).

In the context of the phonetic and syntactic language development of three-year-olds, understanding these challenges is crucial. As young children expand their vocabulary and begin forming more complex sentences, issues related to phoneme omission can affect their language acquisition. Educators and researchers can improve language instruction by addressing these specific phonological difficulties early on, ensuring a more robust foundation for language development as children progress in their linguistic skills.

The way a language connects its written symbols (graphemes) to its spoken sounds (phonemes) greatly influences language learning challenges. Languages vary in how they represent phonemes, with some having more intricate mappings between sounds and their written forms than others. In languages with complex mappings, learners may struggle to consistently produce or recognize all phonemes, leading to errors such as phoneme omissions in speech. Therefore, understanding the complexity of phoneme-grapheme relationships in a language is crucial for understanding why learners face difficulties in accurately pronouncing phonemes as they develop their language skills, especially during the phonetic and syntactic development stages of three-year-olds.

3. Distortion: The child pronounces a phoneme in an unusual way so that the sound becomes difficult to recognize. Example: /r/ in "telor" becomes /y/ in "teyoy".

Distortion of phonemes is another common error in language learning. This phenomenon can be explained by the interference of the learner's native language phonology on the target language. For instance, in the study on Buginese students' interference in pronouncing English phonemes, it was found that students had difficulty pronouncing front vowels correctly, leading to substitutions and distortions. This interference is due to the dialectal differences between the Buginese language and English (Hasnawati et al., 2021).

While native language interference is important in understanding phoneme distortion, various other factors also contribute to this phenomenon. These include individual differences in articulation, varying exposure to the target language, and the teaching methods employed. These factors collectively influence how accurately learners reproduce phonemes in their second language. Therefore, while native

language phonology is a significant factor in phoneme distortion, it is not the only factor determining it. A comprehensive understanding of these influences is crucial for addressing challenges in language acquisition, especially during the phonetic and syntactic language development stages of three-year-olds.

Factors Affecting Phonological Development

1. Physiological: Such as the development and function of a child's speech organs like the tongue, teeth, and palate, significantly impact their ability to pronounce sounds correctly. If these organs are not fully developed, children may encounter difficulties with certain sound productions.
2. Environmental: Such as interactions with adults and peers, play a crucial role. The more children engage in conversations and practice different words, whether at home or on the playground, the quicker they learn and develop their language skills.
3. Cognitive: Involve a child's increasing ability to process and comprehend language sounds as their brain matures. As children grow older, they become more adept at understanding and mimicking the sounds they hear, which supports their language development.

Syntactic Development in Children

Based on (Siti Ismahani et al., 2024) syntax, which examines how sentences are structured, is a vital aspect of children's language development . This section surveys existing literature on how children acquire syntax, focusing on prominent theories, developmental milestones, and influencing factors. Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory suggests that children are born with innate linguistic abilities, including an understanding of the grammatical structures common to all human languages. According to UG theory, exposure to language input triggers these innate principles, guiding the acquisition of syntax. In contrast, usage-based theories emphasize the role of language input and usage patterns in shaping syntactic development. These theories propose that children learn language through exposure to language use in social interactions. By observing and internalizing patterns in language input, children gradually develop syntactic knowledge and skills.

Syntactic development progresses through stages marked by the acquisition of increasingly complex structures. Initially, children produce simple sentences with basic word order and few grammatical markers. As they develop, they acquire more intricate syntactic forms, such as subordinate clauses, passive voice, and complex sentence constructions. Futhermore, understanding syntactic development in children involves exploring theoretical perspectives and observing how children progress from basic to more sophisticated sentence structures as part of their language acquisition journey.

At the age of three, children start forming sentences that involve combining words to express their thoughts. While they may make grammatical errors like omitting auxiliary words or using basic word order, they can effectively communicate ideas. For instance, they can construct sentences such as "Mama makan roti," demonstrating an understanding of subject (Mama), predicate (makan), and object (roti). Another example, "Papa pergi kerja," shows their grasp of using a verb (pergi) with an object (kerja), while "Nenek tidur siang" indicates their ability to use a verb (tidur) and a time adverb (siang) correctly.

Rafif demonstrates excellent syntactic development, as observed from the data. Similar to Shakir in the previous datasets, Rafif shows the ability to combine multiple words to form complete sentences with a simple structure appropriate for his age. This development in Rafif's sentence construction is largely influenced by his imitation of his first language, Indonesian, or his mother tongue. This imitation plays a crucial role in shaping Rafif's syntactic skills at his young age.

In summary, the syntactic language development displayed by Rafif is robust, reflecting his ability to construct coherent sentences through imitation of his mother tongue. This development is a significant aspect of the phonetic and syntactic language development observed in three-year-olds. Their language development is influenced significantly by social interactions, exposure to language, and cognitive growth. With appropriate support, children will continue to improve their ability to construct accurate and meaningful sentences as they progress in their language development journey.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the period of being three years old is a crucial phase in children's language development, characterized by significant strides in both pronunciation and sentence formation. Children at this stage begin to form basic sentences despite encountering typical speech errors like substitutions and omissions. These errors highlight the complex interplay of physical, environmental, and cognitive factors in how children learn to articulate words accurately. Furthermore, syntactic growth involves children starting to construct sentences with subject, verb, and object structures, though they may still make occasional grammatical mistakes. Their ability to communicate effectively is fostered through interactions and exposure to language, emphasizing the importance of supportive environments in nurturing their language skills. Overall, three-years-old demonstrate notable advancements in language acquisition, laying a crucial groundwork for future linguistic and cognitive development. Understanding these developmental milestones informs strategies to enhance children's language abilities early on, ensuring they develop strong communication skills vital for their ongoing learning and social interactions.

REFERENCES

Archibald, J. (2023). Differential substitution: a contrastive hierarchy account. *Frontiers in Language Sciences*, *2*. https://doi.org/10.3389/flang.2023.1242905

Carroll, J. M., & Snowling, M. J. (2004). Language and phonological skills in children at high risk of reading difficulties. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, *45*(3), 631–640. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00252.x

Chendeb, H. (2020). *From Incomprehensibility to Fluency : 1-3 year-old Children ' s Language Development Hiba Chendeb El Mourad*. *November 2019*, 2–3.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed method. In *Research Defign: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed M ethods Approaches*.

Hasnawati, H., Abdul, N. B., & Darlina, D. (2021). The Interference Made by Students to Pronounce English Phoneme in Wajo Buginese Context of South Sulawesi. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, *9*(2), 401–412. https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v9i2.2321

Hidayani, S. (2021). An Analysis Of First Language Acquisition Of a Three Years Old Child: A Case Study. *JURNAL STKIP PGRI JOMBANG*, *08*, 102–112. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.32682/jeell.v8i1.1986

Ismahani, S., Afifah, N. Y., Putri, R., Khairani, Y., Nasution, N. F., & Anggini, N. (2024). *Phonology,*

Semantic, and Syntax Acquisition in Child 3 Years Old (Case Study on Kamila). *8*, 2710–2714.

Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, e. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). In *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation (4th ed.)*.

Muslimin, Hamid, M. A., Bahruddin, U., & Mochammad Sahid, M. (2021). An Errors Analysis of Arabic Phoneme in Non-Arabic Speaking Students at Junior High School. *Izdihar : Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, *4*(2), 225–242. https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v4i2.16230

Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. 4th Edition*.

Siti Ismahani, Budiman, Khairul Azmi, Hazri Fikri, & Gilang Hizbullah. (2024). Syntax Aspects In Children Development Of Sentence Structure. *Fonologi : Jurnal Ilmuan Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, *2*(1), 198–206. https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i1.420