

CREATIVE LANGUAGE USE IN THE MOTHER TONGUE: A CASE STUDY OF A FOUR-YEAR-OLD INDONESIAN CHILD IN THE FAMILY SETTING

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Abstract

Language acquisition is the process of acquiring the mother tongue, beginning with crying, cooing, and babbling, and eventually progressing to speaking. Between the ages of two and four, children demonstrate a noticeable development of language creativity. This study aims to provide example of the evidence of language creativity of a four year old Indonesian child. This research is a qualitative method with case study approach. The subject of this research is a four year old Indonesia child. The data were collected through observation and note-taking, and then analysed descriptively to draw conclusions. The result of the observation in this study revealed 17 utterances that serve as evidence of the child's language creativity. The result of this study can be concluded that childish creativity in language acquisition is a kind of speaking ability of a child for overcoming his/her limitation for words they still do not have to describe new things then, he made the mistake when he independently try to use his language. As for the creative use of language, based on the data of this research, it can be caused by the child's syntactical problem: misuse of adjective to make adverb, time concept confusion, semantical problems: failure to combine nouns with correct adjectives to make the opposition of particular words and morphological problems: the use of suffix for words to form verbs, which are caused the absence of diction to describe new things but his intended meanings can be easily understood. It also happened because of generalization made by the child in order to overcome his limitation in speaking result in improper word selection.

Keywords: Child, language acquisition, language creativity.

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Introduction

Language is a means of communication that humans use to interact with one another from birth. It serves to express thoughts and feelings. Every human being certainly will not be separated from language. Thus, language becomes the underlying foundation that enables humans to live as social beings. Everyone inevitably goes through stages that lead to fluency in their mother tongue. In psycholinguistics, these stages are referred to as language development, which is part of the broader process of language acquisition.

There have been many studies on the development of children's language acquisition that confirm the development of extraordinary cognitive abilities in children and have sparked renewed interest in uncovering the origins of their early capacities. Developmental research over the past decade has documented children's

extraordinary cognitive abilities. children and has sparked renewed interest in uncovering the origins of their early capacities (Waxman & Kosowski, 1990:1-46).

Children in acquiring their language, indeed, go through certain stages so that they are finally able to speak like adults. Language acquisition is a long process starting from zero ability to complete fluency in a language. Mastery of language for a child begins with acquiring his or her first language which is usually called the mother tongue (Fatmawati, 2015). The processes of how language development is able to make a child communicate his desires even with the limited vocabulary expressed to how complex sentences can be produced. Many theories have tried to explain how the language acquisition process occurs, in the course of acquiring language, every child experiences a

linguistic process from crying which is a spontaneous reaction until it finally produces a perfect sound form. There have been many explanations in many studies of language acquisition. The process has been examined by previous linguists from various perspectives, resulting in several theories that have made significant contributions to the field of linguistics, particularly psycholinguistics. These theories include the nativist theory, the behaviourist theory, and the constructivist theory.

In relation to the process, Chaer, Abdul (2009, p.167) states that the competence process and the performance process are two processes that children experience when they acquire their mother tongue. The process is a process that is not the same. Competence is a process of mastering grammar that takes place unconsciously. The performance process usually takes place if the child has experienced the competency process. Therefore, the competency process is an initial process which is a requirement before the child is able to go through two processes in the performance process: the understanding process and the publishing process or the process of producing sentences. Anything that is part of the understanding process is a process that involves the ability or intelligence to observe or the ability to perceive sentences that are heard. While publishing involves the ability to produce or publish your own sentences or briefly this process is related to comprehension skills and production skills. If the two competencies are already owned by the child, the child will automatically have the linguistic ability of the child. So, the linguistic skills in generative transformation linguistics are called treatment, or language implementation or performance.

Children's language acquisition is very dependent on the environment, but as creative wordsmiths children are able to produce sentences that have never even been heard so that children are relatively independent from the influence of their environment. Bloom, 2000, 2002; Anglin, Miller, & Wakefield, 1993 in Wellwood, Gagliardi, & Lidz (2016) that learning new words is a domain in which young children

become experts: as one conservative estimate say, they are busy learning about 10 words per day since they are 1 year old, reaching lexicon of about 12,000 words by the time they are 6 years old, all with almost no effort or explicit instruction. The statement above reveals that children are called experts in learning new words because they have never been given direct orders to learn the language or they can be said to acquire it almost without effort. In other words, everything flows as normal in their development until they are able to acquire almost 12 million words by the age of 6 years.

In his book *Psycholinguistics*, Thomas Scovel (1997) gives an example of a short dialogue between a 2 year old girl and her mother which he took from P. Reich's 1986 book *Language Development*. Prentice Hall, page 142. The following is an example of the dialogue:

Daughter: Somebody's at the door.

Mother: There's nobody at the door.

Daughter: There's yesbody at the door

Scovel (1997, p.19) wrote that "from about two to four, children produce all kinds of expression like this which they have never, or rarely heard in their environment, but which they create on their own in their attempt to construct or reconstruct their mother tongue". The above statement states that from around the age of two to four years, children produce all kinds of expressions like these that have never been, or are rarely heard of in their environment, but create their own in their attempts to construct or reconstruct their mother tongue. In addition, Scovel also stated that in children whose mother tongue is English, children aged 2 to 4 years make mistakes in using more than one noun, such as *mans* for the word *men*, or *knives* for the noun *knife*. Those mistakes are the examples of childish creativity in using language.

In relation to the above, the novelty of this research lies in the fact that no prior study in Indonesia has specifically focused on explaining children's creativity in language acquisition namely, how a child constructs their mother tongue. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by providing

examples of expressions that reflect a child's creativity in acquiring his or her mother tongue.

This study aims to examine the forms of language creativity exhibited by four-year-old children in constructing words and sentences, and to describe these expressions in order to draw meaningful conclusions.*9 Thus, this study tries to make an explanation in answering the existing formulation problems, namely how are sentences produced by a 4 year old Indonesian child so that it forms a sentence that is considered as the evidence of childish creativity in using language? How is the childish creativity in LA related to the. This study is expected to contribute to psycholinguistics related to the language acquisition process as mother tongue about childish creativity and to provide examples based on available empirical data for Indonesian children aged 4 years. From the statement above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled **Creative Language Use in the Mother Tongue: A Case Study of a Four-Year-Old Indonesian Child in the Family Setting.**

Literature Review

Many theories of language acquisition have been developed and continue to be applied today. These theories have made significant contributions to the field of psycholinguistics, helping researchers analyse the process of language acquisition. Among the most influential theories of language development are the nativist view, the behaviourist view, and the cognitive view.

The theory of nativism was developed by Noam Chomsky who is an expert from America. This theory explains that children acquire their language skills naturally. In this case, nativism believes that during the stage of first language acquisition, young children have been gifted with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) so that with their development they are gradually able to access their language skills.

Next the behaviorism theory developed by an expert from America named B.F. Skinner argues that children's language acquires language because of

outside contribution as an individual or is a nurture. This theory believes that the environment plays an important role in children's language acquisition. It starts with how children listen, understand and imitate using language

Furthermore, the cognitivist theory emerged from the ideas of Jean Piaget, a European scholar. He argued that language acquisition is an ability that arises from cognitive maturation. The term *cognitivism* itself is derived from this emphasis on cognition. This theory divides cognitive development into four stages: the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage.

Mackey in Iskandarwassid, & Sunendar (2008) explain the capability of children using language based on age can be seen as following: at the age of three month, a child starts recognizing human voice who has been close to them (mother's, caretakers's, sisters', father's), is no clear coordination between sound output and its meaning and starts to smile and make irregular sounds. When a child is in the age of 6 months, the child is able to distinguish soft voice from not soft voice and start making vocalic sounds like aA,aEm aEEEEaEE. In the age of 9 months, child Starts to give a reaction toward clues, sign, hints and starts producing the varieties of sounds that are frequently sound like the combination of unique sound. Next when a child is in the age of 12 months, he/she Starts to give reactions towards requests, or order and he/she is fond of producing sounds reflecting to the existing things to get something. Next, the child starts following some hints when she/he is in the age of 18 months. The ir vocabulary is about 20 words. In this stage, it seems that the use of language starts to be used in communication since one word utterance blossoms into two-three word utterances. In the age of 2-3 years old, a child is able to understand both simple questions and orders and to communicate feeling, message or intentions with a simple sentence. The number of vocabulary (passive and active) is approximately about more than hundred. In the age of 4-5 years old children understanding are more stable, although still

gets confused of temporal concept, the active vocabulary is more and less 2 thousand words, the passive vocabulary becomes uncountable, starts to learn how to count and start to use and produce complex sentences. When the child reaches 6-8 years old, he or she has no obstacles in comprehending daily adult people utterances, starts to be able to learn how to read and to do various activities in which are helpful in expanding mental lexicon, and starts getting used themselves to using complex sentences. The First language in this age is primarily mastered as a means of communication.

Method

This research is qualitative method with a case study approach. The data were taken based on observation. This research was conducted for 4 months starting from August 15, 2021 to 25 November 2021. The number of research sample was only a child aged 4 years. Observations were carried out in the family domain. In this study, the researchers observed the research subjects in terms of speech production in language acquisition, which was called childish creativity in Scovel's statement. Language acquisition related to childish creativity is a form of speech produced or in other words this is at the level related to syntax, semantics, and morphology. The data obtained were collected and then the researchers draw conclusion from them. Data analysis technique is to describe all the data obtained to draw conclusions. The data collected in this study is qualitative data which is then analyzed using several steps of the Miles and Huberman flow model such as reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions (Sugiono, 2013: p.246). The conclusions drawn are adjusted to the problem formulation that the researchers determined in the introductory part.

Slameto (2013 : p.115) writes that two factors influencing learning readiness are maturation and intelligence. The former can be defined as a process that causes changes in behavior as a result of growth and development. Growth underlies development, while this development is related to functional functions (body and soul) so that differentiation occurs.

Exercises given to a child before reaching cognitive maturity will not yield optimal results. This is explained by Piaget's four stages of intellectual development: the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage.

Findings

Based on the results of the observation, the researchers identified 17 instances that can be classified as manifestations of the language creativity of an Indonesian child named Algrand. The data were collected over a period of four months, from August 15, 2021, to November 15, 2021. In this study, the researchers coded the participants as follows: Algrand as A, the mother (*Bunda*) as B, the father (*Abi*) as AB, and the sister as C, to facilitate clarity in the analysis and presentation of the data.

(1) A: *Bunda. Adek belum tinggi*
(mom, I am not tall yet)

B: *adek mau ambil ini (You want me to take this for You)*

A: *ya bunda. (yes, Mom)*

Context:

The child points to the toy on the cupboard when the child is unable to reach the toy or something he has not picked up himself.

(2) A: *Dia sombong dengan mainannya* (He feels proud of his collection of toys.)

Context:

When a child watches a child's YouTube show where a child in the show only shows off his toys without lending his toys to his sister

(3) A: *Sedikit lagi rumah kita jadi bagus* (Our house is almost looking nice now-)

Context:

When the child's mother was moving some of the piles of clothes that were on the sofa to another room. So the house looks neat.

(4) A: *Adek mau sekolah, bunda.*
(Adek wants to go to school, mother)

B: *Ya, nanti ya dek* (Yes, later, ok)

A: *Kalau adek masih besar ya, bunda* (If I am still big, right?, mom)

Context:

When the child is writing on the new book that his mother bought.

(5) A: *Dimana mainan gelas adek?*
(where is my glass toy, mom?)

B: *Ga tahu* (I don't know)

A: *Ini pasti bunda meletakannya salah.* (You must put it in a wrong place, mom)

Context:

In the morning, the child's mother bought food that had an egg as a gift. The contents in the egg were a small yellow glass. In the afternoon, after waking up, the child says the sentence to his mother. In this context, the child tries to say that his mother did not put the toy in its place or carelessly.

(6) A: *Bunda, Adek pinjam hp bunda banyak banyak ya.* (mom, I borrowed your cellphones a lot, huh?)

Context:

The child takes the mother's cellphone which is being discharged on the table and meets her mother. In this context, the child tries to explain the duration of time. The intended meaning is that he wants to borrow his cellphone for a long time.

(7) A: *Siapa hamilin bunda?*
(who made you pregnant, mom?)

B: *Siapa?* (who?)

A: *Mama Nining* (Grandmother)

Context:

Mama nining is Algrand's nickname for grandmother. (Nining is a muaraenim language which is used to address grandmother). The child and mother were at their grandmother's house and while they

were eating the child asked this question. In this context, the child wants to ask who gave birth to the mother?

(8) A: *Kakak Keen. kok Abi sudah sayang kita. Kan abi belum minta maaf sama kita.* (Sister, how come our father already loves us. He has not apologized to us yet).

K: *ya ga papalah, dek* (It is no problem, brother)

Context:

Aproximately 30 minutes before this child issued the speech. The child was asked who is throwing the chocolate he ate on the floor and then when Algrand take some drinking water which is near to his father. Then his father called him in a soft tone.

(9) A: *Bunda. Tunggu* (mom, wait)

B: *Ada apa dek?* (why?)

A: *adek mau cari apa apa.*

(I want to look for something)

Context:

The child asks his mother to wait for him or still near him because he is looking for his own thing or toy. It is possible that at this time the child concludes from the stimulus given, often when I want to go out and quietly look for the hijab in the room or bag and the child often asks "Mom, what are you looking for?" I often say "I'm not looking for anything."

(10) A: *Bunda, Adek mau eek (BAB), ya.* (Mom, I want to take a poo, huh.)

B: *Ya dek. Pergilah ke WC.*

(Yes, go to the toilet, then)

A: *Tapi, bunda janji, kalau adek panggil bunda, bunda jangan jangan Enggak denger* (But mom, promise me, if I call you, you don't-don't hear me, mom)

Context:

The child and mother were in the room when the conversation took place. The child wants to say that if he is calling his mother from the toilet, he hopes that his mother will

immediately approach him to help him clean up the hadas after Taking poo.

- (11) A: *Bunda. kalo adek sudah kecil adek boleh makan kerupuk banyak banyak ya.* (Mom. if I was a kid already, I can eat a lot of crackers, okay?)
 B: *Ya dek (yes)*
 A: *boleh ya bunda (sambil memeluk bundanya. (just let me, mom. (while hugging his mother)*

Context:

The child is eating the crackers that are obtained as a complement to the gado gado meal. There are only a few crackers available.

- (12) A: *Bunda.. lihat es krim ini.. nanti kita suruh abi beli es krim ini ya bunda, Klo abi ada uang. Es krim gambar spiderman* (look at this ice cream, later we will ask my father to buy this ice cream, Mom, if my father has much money. Ice cream with Spiderman Picture)

B: *Ya dek (yes)*

A: *Tapi bunda boleh juga klo mau belin adek ini* (but, you can buy

it

for me mom if you want)

B : *Hehe.. iya dek* (Lol, ok)

Context:

The child is watching a movie from you tube and an ice cream image ad appears

- (13) A: *Abi. tadi bunda dijarumin.* (Dad, Mom was given a needle).
 AB: *Oh disuntik?* (Oh, injected?)
 A: *Bukan loh..di Jarumin.* *Darah dimasukin di plastik* (No.. to be needled. The blood is put in the plastic)

Context

The child sees his mother having acupuncture and fasdu done during the day

- (14) A : *Bunda.. tonton ini* (mom, watch it)
 B : *mana dek* (where?)
 A : *kok anak besar nangis bunda?* (why does a big child cry?)

Context:

The child asks his mother to see a video on tiktok. There was a man crying

- (15) A: *Wah kamar mandi kita jadi bagus bunda* (Wow, our bathroom looks great, mom)

Context:

Mom just cleaned the bathroom.

- (16) B: *Dek, jangan pegang dan angkat anak kucing itu.* (don't touch and carry the kittens)
 A: *Kalau kucingnya masih besar. Adek boleh pegang ya* (If Kittens are still big, I can hold it, right?)

Context:

There are 3 kittens in a box which are in front of the house.

- (17) B: *dek .. adek harus rajin sikat gigi ya* (son, you must brush your teeth routinely)
 A : *Bunda ,gigi depan adek ga ada lagi, dulu gara gara main sama kakak waktu yang temanin bunda yang lama itu dulu loh, Adek jatuh jadi gigi adek terbuka.* (Mom, I do not have teeth, long time ago, it is caused when playing with my sister , so my teeth are opened)

Context:

The mother asks her son to brush his teeth.

Discussion

The data from the observation results for four months explained that at the age of 4 years, children who are considered creative wordsmiths already have a tendency to independently make utterances with their reasoning power because they are able to string words even though they have not heard directly from the environment (Scovel, 2007). Sometimes the correct grammatical output does not necessarily make the resulting right sentence in the choice of words. But the meaning to be conveyed can be understood by adults easily. He made mistakes in constructing his own sentences. This construction error is referred to as the evidence of childish creativity Scovel (2007). Barner & Snedeker (2008,607) in other words expresses “creative language use depends on understanding compositionality—how the meanings of complex expressions are a function of their syntax and the meanings of their constituent parts. In addition, Barner and Snedeker (2008) also reveal at the age of at least 4 years, children utilize compositional knowledge to interpret new adjective-noun combinations. Without being told which pinwit is tall or short, children can apply these adjectives systematically based on some experience. Moreover, research shows that knowledge of this composition is associated with sensitive statistical representations. Even small shifts in the object's average height (say, 2 inches) can be detected by children and license changes in how they apply adjectives to new circumstances. Thus, at 4 years of age, children appear to be using compositional semantics to interpret subcessive adjective expressions such as high pinwit, suggesting that at this age at least, adjective-noun combinations involve rich syntactic and semantic understanding for their interpretation.

The statement above explains that the use of creative language depends on understanding composition—understanding how the meaning of complex expressions is a function of its syntax and the meaning of its constituent parts.

1. Morphological Problems: Inappropriate Suffix in Several Words

For empirical data obtained which is a form of children's creativity in producing this utterance, in addition, children tend to use the final suffix -in for a number of words that can change the meaning as a whole in one case but still have a semantic relationship (semantic network). This is in line with what was said like data 7 and data 13. As for the form of children's creativity as wordsmith here, children tend to add affixes behind the wrong type of word class.

Hamilin instead of *melahirkan* (deliver a baby)

Jarumin instead of *diakupunktur/disuntik* (being acupunctured and injected)

Even though the words are not correct, there is a direct semantical relationship with the selected word. The impact of the change in meaning is very clear for the word "pregnant", because it changes the overall meaning directly. but if we look back at the meaning of the child, it is like the word Pregnant, which means having sex so that you get pregnant and finally give birth (birth). Or hamilin in his context becomes to have negative connotation. The use of nouns used as verbs occurs because according to Waxman and Toby D. Kosowsk (1990, 1471) that a sensitivity to the relationships that link the linguistic and conceptual systems is well developed from the age of 2 years. Children expect new nouns to refer to categories of objects and expect words from other syntactic form classes to have different referent functions. These expectations guide children in their rapid acquisition of conceptual and linguistic knowledge.

If in what Scovel (1997) says the child makes mistakes in more than one noun such as woman becomes women. So an example that can be taken in this study is that children make mistakes in making verbs. Children tend to look at objects they see to form verbs. They, then, make it directly from the object you see is a needle so it become jarumin. Maybe in English if this study, the researchers may make an analogy “needle” becomes “needling” The intended meaning is “injected or

acupunctured” However, if it is applied to the right noun, it may not be wrong, such as: *baju* becomes *dibajuin*. In colloquial language, indeed in Indonesian there are some word rules that are not used in accordance with Indonesian Standard such as *dibajuin* means get somebody dressed. A research done by Dardjowidjojo (2018,159) also found the same thing when the sample of his research”Echa” needs a verb that means to give or to make as words “*dibedakin*” and “*dibunderin*”. Then, the child created the word “*dibajuin*”.

It is quite the same if in English when “I want to broom the floor or She is brooming the floor “ it will be strange because it will be correct if I want to sweep the floor.

2. Semantical Problems: Mismatching nouns and adjectives to make opposite words (Antonym)

Research conducted by Barner and Snedeker (2008) shows that at the age of at least 4 years, children use compositional knowledge to interpret combinations of adjectives with new nouns. Without being told which one is tall or short, children can apply these adjectives systematically based on some experience. Based on the data obtained in this study, this opinion is correct but the child is still have difficulty in using it in the apt context. It explains that the child is smart to make comparisons, but in its application there are still mistakes in mixing and matching nouns with adjectives appropriately. As in the research observation data 14, in this expression, the child tries to apply the phrase *anak kecil* is the opposite of *anak besar*. Although the opposite of the word *kecil* (small) is the word *besar* (big) is correct in Indonesian. *Anak Besar* (A big child) is not the opposite of *anak kecil* (a small child). The antonym of the word *anak kecil* will be correct if he say *orang dewasa* (adult). This is also similar to the data in the observation data 8 and 9. In the expression *tidak mencari apa-apa* was assumed by the child having the opposite: *cari apa-apa*. *Cari apa apa* will be correct if the child say *sesuatu* (something). *Those are quite the same what is exemplified by* Scovel (1997) in dialog in introduction part of this article

about word “*nobody*” is assumed having antonym: *yesbody*.

In addition, in data 14, there was a word “*kok*” before *anak besar menangis*. According to Dardjowidjojo (2018,170) word “*kok*” is one of the smoothers or seasoning words (*kata-kata penyedap* in Indonesia).

3. Inappropriate use of adjectives after some adverbs

Besides, This research found that there are misunderstanding of the use of some adverbs

Children try to use words that are often used by parents, such as the word already. Already in Indonesian which also means already (see data 5 for c, data 8 for a and data 11 for b)

a. *Kalau adek sudah kecil* (If Adek has been small) – If adek has grown up

b. *Abi sudah sayang kita lagi* (Abi already loves us) - Abi is not angry at us

c. *Kalau adek masih besar ya, bunda* (If I am still big, right? , mom)- – If adek has grown up. From those examples, it can be seen that eventhough the forms of those sentences above are correct. In addition, children are still confused about using the word *Sudah* (already). *Sudah* Already in the KBBI is included in the adverb class which means it has been done; is ready; done: after -- , send the clothes quickly; won't -- just talk, won't finish; 2 finished, ended: not already(-already); promise -- , promise expires (dead); 3 has been (past, happened); earlier: what is the use of troublesome things that --; times that -- will never come back; refers to the letter that --; 4 has (stated an action that has taken place): he -- good at reading; 5 this is enough: -- do not bring up the matter again; 6 it is (that is, the circumstances, etc.); that's the way it was from the start: -- merchant, skipper too; 7 after; after: -- it was then called by his father;; 8 caks take sides: -- over there, side with the opponent; already has v has an end; there is an end; ended: in the umpteenth meeting, there was always a conversation that didn't -; have already ended or broken up (about family relationships, husband and wife, friendship, etc.);

In the KBBI (Indonesian dictionary) the word still (*Masih*) is a word class which is an adverb which means that it is (1) in an unfinished or ongoing state: as in the example: The lesson is still in progress, He is still green the exhibition -- underway, will close in a week; his door -- open; (2) other meanings of still (*masih*) are exists; stay; remaining: the money -- one thousand rupiah; *se·ma·sih* is an adverb while still; while still.

Although in Indonesian the grammatical structure for sentence a is correct, the use of the adjective: *kecil* (small) after *sudah* (already) cannot be considered appropriate. It would be true if the child said *Kalau adek sudah besar* (If Adek is already big that means If adek has grown up). This finding supports the statement explained about the child in this age is still confused of using word related to future (Atance, 2015) since sentence (a) above indicates something doesn't happen yet or for something which is expected for the future.

In this case, although syntactically the use of adverbs is correct in explaining adjectives. However, the use of the word used by the word is *masih besar* (still big) is considered wrong. It will be correct if the child say "Sudah besar" (already grow up). After the child is taught to say not *masih besar* but *sudah besar*. When he tried to say something with this expression with another context. He is able to produce the correct way

The use of word "*Sudah*" (Already) in sentence (b) above means the child is tend to be able to overcome his limitation in speaking . It quite the same as **data 10**

Thus it can be said that children aged 4 years are still confused in using the right adjective after the word "already". This happens because according to Sandhofer & Smith, L. B. (2004: p.378) that adjectives are the most difficult type of word class for children to learn. In addition, the errors that appear are such as errors in choosing the opposite word.

Adjective selection error

This is because the child tries to apply the combination of one word to another which is actually different in its use.

Child's inability to use words that can be used in other ways. Children have understood exchange in conversation where children already know when it is time to wait their turn to speak.

In addition to the above, the child is also wrong in using the word "Masih" (still) as in the data. When the child say if I The word (*sudah kecil*) (already small) which means it is big. Here the child equates the use of the word already (has) as in the sentence "I have eaten". The failure of children to make sentences because they are made based on the child's logic as said above explains that there are syntactic errors made by children because they try to use the understanding they have is a form of children's creativity as good at words like what is said.

In this observation **data 5**, the sentences formed are construction sentences that try to generalize the use of the word *masih (still)*. As *masih kecil* (still small) is equated with the word *masih besar* (still big).

6. Multiple meanings for a word

The findings from **data 3** dan **data 15** indicate that the child tend to define a word with multiple meanings. The word "bagus" means good according to the child has many meanings such as *rapi* (neat) or *bersih* (clean). The child assumed that the results of action that result in something better can be described by the one word.

4. Time Concept Confusion

According to Mackey, children aged 2 to 4 years have problems related to the concept of time. The data obtained in this study showed that in the utterance of *Pinjam banyak banyak* (see **data 6**) means here borrow for a long time. This finding confirms the cognitive theory presented by Mackey about (see. Observation data 5 and observation data 7 and observation data 12) This study thus confirms the cognitive theory said by Mackey. It is also relevant to Zhang, & Hudson (2018, 122) that young children still have difficulty in constructing the meaning of tomorrow or children's future thinking. Despite the fact that children may hear terms used by adults, and children

sometimes use the terms themselves, researchers should not assume that young children understand the term tomorrow correctly when generating future thinking through language. 3 and 4 year olds' limited understanding of tomorrow can contribute to poor performance on episodic foresight tasks.

5. Misuse of adjective as an adverb

The finding shown in data 5 for "meletakkannya salah" ("put it wrong") gives us insight that the child still does not understand how to use an adverb. In that utterance, the child wanted to say "meletakkannya sembarangan (put it carelessly).

Based on the explanation above, the researchers assert that although the child makes sentences that sound unique but whose meaning can be easily guessed or understood. So the form of mistake made is a misunderstanding that results from the process of producing speech from the performance process. Poor performance in the age of 4 (Zhang & Hudson, 2018) explains a child is still immature in the process of understanding a word with a variety of contexts that exist until the failure of this understanding process is reflected in the child's production process called childish creativity. It can be said that the child's creativity conveyed is because the child tends to generalize the use of words based on his prior understanding in order to overcome his limitation in speaking. The tendency of children to reason based on their assumption that a word can be used in the same context they have experienced and can be applied to a new context. It also proved that child understanding process is reflected in the child's production process, thus, can be called as childish creativity in using mother tongue. The creative use of language based on the data of this study is not related to syntax errors but is more related to semantic and morphological problems or related to diction but can be understood easily, because researchers directly observe the subject of research and understand the context when the utterance is produced. From the examples described in this study, it can be said that the childish creativity in language acquisition by children in English

is also experienced by Indonesia children. Then, this study is hoped can enrich the examples related to the theme of language creativity in language acquisition.

Conclusions and Suggestion

Based on the research findings and the preceding discussion, the researchers draw the conclusion that the phenomenon referred to as *childish creativity* in first language acquisition is authentic and can be observed in children around the age of four. This phenomenon reflects the natural linguistic behavior of young children as they attempt to articulate ideas and describe unfamiliar objects or experiences, despite having a limited vocabulary. In this study, such linguistic behavior was observed in an Indonesian child, which supports the notion that *childish creativity* is not culturally or geographically bound but rather a universal characteristic of early language development.

The essence of childish creativity lies in the child's ability to construct novel linguistic expressions by generalizing from known language rules or patterns. This ability enables the child to communicate meaning even when they do not possess the appropriate words. In doing so, the child often produces errors morphological, syntactic, or semantic which are not random, but stem from an internal logic grounded in their current stage of cognitive and linguistic development. These creative constructions demonstrate the child's linguistic resourcefulness and flexibility, as well as the dynamic process of language acquisition.

The study identified several types of linguistic deviations that exemplify this creativity. Syntactically, the child was found to misuse word classes, such as using adjectives to function as adverbs or misapplying tense and time expressions. Semantically, the child occasionally failed to pair nouns with the correct adjectives or misconstructed oppositional word pairs, indicating underdeveloped understanding of lexical relations. Morphologically, the child demonstrated a tendency to overgeneralize suffix usage to create new verb forms, as in the example of using *melahirkan* (to give birth) in place of *to be pregnant*, or saying

being injected into needles instead of being injected by needles.

Despite these errors, the child's intended meaning was usually interpretable. The researchers were able to understand the utterances due to the natural setting of the observation and their direct engagement with the child, which provided contextual support. This highlights an important aspect of childish creativity: although formally incorrect, the child's utterances are functionally communicative and contextually appropriate, revealing a sophisticated use of limited linguistic resources.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes the influence of environmental exposure and cognitive development in shaping a child's linguistic generalizations. The surrounding linguistic input, social interactions, and the child's own interpretative strategies all play a role in how language is acquired and creatively used. Thus, the study affirms that childish creativity is not simply a collection of language errors, but a meaningful process of language construction during early childhood.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that this study was limited in scope, involving only one subject. Therefore, while the findings offer valuable insights into the nature of childish creativity, they cannot be generalized without caution. The researchers recommend that future investigations be conducted with larger and more diverse samples to validate these findings and explore additional dimensions of this phenomenon. Further research may also consider longitudinal methods to examine how childish creativity evolves over time and how it contributes to language mastery.

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