

# Acquisition Planning and Language Acquisition by Indonesian Four-year Old Children

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## Abstract

This study aims at describing of acquisition planning and language acquisition by four-year old children. The objectives of this study were to find out the characteristics of Indonesian language acquisition of four-year old children who study at kindergarten and who do not ones and acquisition planning in the kindergarten. To achieve the objectives, this study was conducted by applying qualitative research. It is a kind of multi-case study. The subjects of this study were the children who study in the kindergarten and who do not ones. And the objects of this research were the utterances which contained characteristics of language acquisition uttered by the children and the implementation of acquisition planning in a kindergarten. The data were collected by using content analysis technique. The data were analyzed based on the theory of characteristics of language acquisition and the interview was conducted to get the answer of how the kindergarten school implements the acquisition planning. Based on the results of this study, the children's utterances that study in kindergarten is better than children who don't study, in their language development and have more vocabulary and can use them more appropriately compared to the children who only stayed at home as the effect of the acquisition planning applied in the kindergarten.

**Keywords:** Language acquisition, Acquisition planning, Bahasa Indonesia, Kindergarten

## 1. Introduction

Language acquisition can be seen as a natural process that will occur to every children since their young age. Each child will follow similar stages in language development . It is believed that by the age of 3 or 4 year old, children typically have acquired thousands of vocabularies word, complex grammatical and phonological system, and equally complex rules for how to use their language appropriately in amny social setting (Gleason and Ratner, 1988: 348). However, there are also differences between children acquiring the same language. Some children are faster and the others are slower.

Individual differences in language acquisition could be the result of some factors including biological based different in children ability caused by genes or healths, global effect of differences in family functioning and home environment, and specific effects of differences in language learning experience (Hoff, 2003). Language acquisition of children are affected by their surrounding. The social interaction with the family member and the community around them affect the language acquired by the children.

Some parent choose to sent their children to kindergarten by the age of five. However, some parents choose to send their children to kindergarten by the age of four. As the education institution, there must be acquisition planning applied in the kindergarden. Aacquisition planning refers to describe planning processes that relate to organize efforts to promote the learning of a language. Aacquisition planning concerns the teaching and learning of language. It includes developing the overall strategy for managing the acquisition.

In this study, the researchers aim to analysed the characteristic of the utterances of four-year old children . The four-year old children in this study were divided into two groups; four-year old children study at kindergarden and four-year old children who do not study at kindergarden. This study wants to find out if there is specific characteristics which might different from the utterances between the two groups. This study also try to describe the acquisition planning implementation in the kindergarden where the children studied.

## 2. Review of Literature

### *2.1 Language Acquisition*

Language acquisition is defined as a natural progression or development in the use of language, typified by infants and young children learning to talk. It is an unconscious process that occurs when language is used in ordinary conversation. Language acquisition is distinguished from intentional study of a language by its informality. Krashen (2003) also states that acquisition is the unconscious process that occurs when language is used in real conversation.

Certain age seems to play an important role. As Goodluck (1991) criticizes that acquisition is easier for younger children in fact pronunciation is the only area where they hear around them. Successful acquisition of language typically happens by 4, is guaranteed for children up to the age of six. Shortly before their first birthday, babies begin to understand words, and around that birthday, they start to produce them (Clark, 2003). Words are usually produced

isolation. This one word stage can last from six months to a year. Children's first words are similar all over the world. About half the words are for object: food (*juice, cookie*), body parts (*eye, nose*), vehicle (*car, boat*), toys (*doll, block*), clothing (*sock, diaper*), animals (*dog, kitty*), and people (*mamma, daddy*). And words for actions such as *up, sit, eat, drink, go*, and as modifiers like *hot, cold, dirty, naughty*. There are words for routines used in social interaction, like *yes, no, bye, and hi*.

### *2.2 Language Acquisition of Four-year Old Children*

The children's first speech community is ordinarily their family. The children learn whatever kind of language the family speaks or more precisely whatever kind of language they speak to them. The children imitate what they hear. Children's daily lives are complex, unique and inherently spatial (Hart, 1978). Children explore the space around them even they are mobile. At the age of four, children are in the process of mastering their first language completely and have been literate in it. They are using full sentences, and have both vocabulary and grammar to engage in conversation about their day. Their words are usually fully comprehensible and understood by others.

Children are quite skilled by age of four in distinguishing among addressees. For example, four-year old speak to younger siblings differently from adult (Shatz & Gelman, 1983). They use short utterances, many attention getter in the form of the addressee's name or uses of *Look! Story!*, a lot of repetition and extensive imperative in giving instructions to younger children than them. When offering instructions about the same toys to the adults, their utterances are considerably longer. Three and Four-year old typically use a full Noun Phrase like the *little boy* or *the dog* in the frog story.

### *2.3 Characteristics of Four-year Old Children*

The most children begin to develop language with the first sounds they make as babies. Their first words are made up of simple sound such as *mamma, dada, or bye-bye*. Gradually children begin to use their speech skills, or sounds, to form language. Language refers to the use of words and sentences to convey ideas. And children begin to develop more complicated language, they produce longer words. They acquire language by learning from us and mimicking as we speak. Their language development moves from simplicity to complexity as they grow. Their language usually starts off as recall of simple words without associated meaning, but as they age, word acquires meaning, and connection between words is formed. As they grow older, new meanings and new association are created and vocabulary increases as more words are learned during their language development (Brown, 1973).

### *2.4 The Acquisition of Indonesian Language of Four-year Old Children*

Bahasa Indonesia is the language used in public, and a regional language is used for private, family, and local community life. As young learners, they have to acquire a language because it is there, a part of their environment. Children learn by absorbing information through daily interactions and experiences with other kids, adult, and the world. Four year old children are great askers of questions, and start using a lot of wh- words such as where, what, who, when.

There are some words in Bahasa Indonesia which are commonly acquired by Four-year old children. They are *ada, adalah, air, bagi, bagian, bagus, baik, cara, cari, cepat, cocok, cukup, dalam, dan, harga, hari, harus, hati, ini, itu, jadi, jalan, jangan, jauh, juta, kalau, kami, karena, lama, lampu, langsung, luar, makan, malam, mana, naik, nama, nanti, oleh, orang, paling, pernah, pertama, pulang, rasa, salah, sama, sambil, tapi, telah, tempat, tengah, tentang, terus, tiba, tidak, tinggi, uang, untuk, waktu, yang* dll. (Quinn, 2013).

### 2.5 Acquisition Planning

According to Cooper (1989), acquisition planning refers to describe planning processes that relate to organize effort s to promote the learning of a language. Acquisition planning concerns the teaching and learning of language. Acquisition planning is directly related to language spread. Choosing which languages will be used as mediums for instruction is particularly important in acquisition planning as one must not only learn the language but use it to learn.

Acquisition planning is sub-category of policy planning, which involves the users of a language and the teaching and learning of that language. The main goals of acquisition planning are set out by Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) are:

- To decide what language should be taught within the curriculum
- To determine the amount and quality of teacher training
- To involve local communities
- To determine what material will be used and how they will be incorporated into the syllabi
- To establish a local and state assessment system to monitor progress
- To determine financial costs

#### 2.4.1 Implementation of Acquisition Planning

Acquisition planning or sometimes called *language in education* planning, is one of four types of language policy and planning besides status planning, corpus planning and prestige planning. Kaplan (2003) stated there are a number of issues needed to be examined as part of any language-in-education implementation programmed. Each of these areas of policy development for language policy implementation may develop differently in a particular nation depending on how that nation's education system operates.

##### a) Curriculum Policy

Curriculum policy cannot be separated to access policy. Curriculum policy can not only discuss about the objective of language teaching or learning, but also who will learn language, what and when it will be learnt. Thus, there are more than one issue in curriculum policy.

The education sector determined which languages need to be taught (and also which languages do not need to be taught because of some reasons. It can be because other mechanisms already exist for the spread of those languages or because the languages do not

have value to the community, or there is simply no student interest in them, or it is not feasible to develop teaching strength in them within a reasonable time). These reasons then lead the education sector to turn its attention to a whole range of curricular issues.

#### **b) Personnel Policy**

No matter what the duration of instruction, a planning issue that needs to be addressed is the teacher cadre which will deliver the instruction. There is a need for a group of teachers trained in language pedagogy and reasonably fluent in the target language. There are essentially three problems in this context: the source of teachers, the training of teachers, and the reward for teachers.

It is clear that a policy undertaking to introduce a new language into the curriculum will be faced with a shortage of competent teachers, and there may be pressure to use untrained and limited competence teachers as a stop-gap measure. There are several different strategies which can be developed to augment the pool of qualified teachers—some short term, some long term. For example, market forces may pressure language teachers trained in one language to retrain in the new 'more popular' language to retain their teaching positions.

#### **c) Methodology and Materials Policy**

Language teaching must have some sort of content. The language itself may be the objective of instruction, but instruction must be taught over some content. This problem really consists of two related issues. On the one hand, what content will be used for language teaching; on the other hand, by what methodology will language instruction be delivered. The development of special purposes language teaching offers one approach to the content question, but is in a sense an extremely narrow answer. The objective of language instruction is not to limit the learner to a small set of registers in which to function in the target language, but rather to provide the learner with as wide a base of registers as possible.

#### **d) Community Policy**

Language education does not occur in a vacuum. Students and teachers live in the community beyond the classroom, and students have parents who are concerned about the education their students are exposed to. Funding for the support of educational systems comes from the larger community, whether it is derived from tax revenues, or voted by legislatures, or directed by a bureaucratized civil service. There are two primary issues here: on the one hand, the attitudes of the community toward language teaching in general, towards language teachers as a group, toward the particular target language, and toward the trade off discussed previously that has made room for language instruction in the curriculum at the expense of some other discipline.

#### **e) Evaluation Policy**

Evaluation mechanisms need to be developed to determine whether societal changes predicted in policy development are occurring and to determine whether they are occurring to the extent needed within the time permitted. Of course, evaluation needs to be designed in such a manner that the results can be fed back into the system in order to produce modifications to the system. This latter objective is difficult because systems quickly become impervious to change and because the time between implementation and perceptible change

is likely to be long.

Thus the five steps outlined in this section (curriculum, personnel, materials, community, evaluation) form the major considerations that must be taken into account in language-in-education policy and planning.

### **3. Research Questions**

1. What are the characteristics of the utterances of four-year old children (four-year old children study at kindergarten and four-year old children who do not study at kindergarten)?
2. How does the acquisition planning implement in Brigjend Katamso I Kindergarten Medan?

### **4. Methodology**

This study was conducted by using qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that qualitative design refers to researcher's plan how to proceed. How they proceed is based on theoretical assumptions (that meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behavior, that descriptive data are what is important to collect and that analysis is best done inductively).

This study was conducted as a case study. According to Meriam in Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 58), a case study was detailed examination of one setting or a single subject, or a single depository of document or one particular event. Therefore, a case study was chosen because. This research used the descriptive explanative, it means that it explained the characteristic of the utterances of four-year old children, the children are divided into two group (four-year old children who study in the Kindergarten and four-year old children who do not study in kindergarten).

Data in this study were taken from the utterances of four-year old children which is divided into two groups; four-year old children who study in kindergarten and four-year old children who don't study at kindergarten. Another data was taken from result of interview with the homeroom teacher which is about acquisition planning especially acquisition planning in TK Brigjend Katamso I Medan.

The supporting instruments of data collection in this research are tape-recorder, Transcription and interview. First, the researcher recorded the children utterances. The second, interviewing homeroom teacher which is about acquisition planning especially acquisition planning in Brigjend Katamso I Kindergarten Medan. Third, classify the children utterances based on characteristics. The last, describing of implementation of Acquisition planning.

### **5. Result and Discussion**

Language acquisition is defined as a natural progression or development in the use of language, typified by infants and young children learning to talk. It is an unconscious process that occurs when language is used in ordinary conversation. Krashen (2003) also states that acquisition is the unconscious process that occurs when language is used in real conversation.



### 5.1 The Characteristics of Language Acquisition of Children of Four-year Old Children

#### a) Children who Study in The Kindergarten

##### DATA 1

Shatz & Gelman, (1983) stated that they use short utterances, a lot of repetition and extensive imperative in giving instructions to younger than them.

A 8: *makan sayur, makan ayam, makan sayur.* (eating **vegetable**, eating chicken, eating **vegetable**).

A 6: *aku tadi makan nasik... sama ayam... sama nasik..* (I just eaten rice... with chicken.....and rice)

The children utterances above shows that the children are able to produce of repetition word, when they were being asked.

##### DATA2

They are using full sentences, and have both vocabulary and grammar to engage in conversation about their day. Their words are usually fully comprehensible and understood by others (Hart, 1978).

A3 : *kalau aku suka makan sayur.* (I like eating vegetable )

A7 : *aku suka makan nakoko [nata de ko ko].* (I like eating *nata de koko*)

The utterances above shows that, the children are able to produce full sentences in conversation about their day, and their utterances produced fully comprehensible and understood. Because in this utterances could show that the utterances consist of one clause.

##### DATA 3

Three and four-year old typically use a full Noun Phrase like the *little boy* or *the dog* in the frog story (Shatz & Gelman, 1983).

A 4 : *tadi aku makan kentang peddes.....* (I just eaten **spicy potatoes**)

A 3: *bapak ku punya hp besar bagus.....* (My father has **large good cellular**)

From the utterances analyzed, there are three characteristics were found in their utterances while they are talking each other based on the daily conversation when they were doing activity in the classroom as a student's kindergarten. It means that the theory can prove in the four-year old children's utterances.

#### b) Children who Don't Study in The Kindergarten

##### DATA 4

Shatz & Gelman, (1983) stated that they use short utterances, a lot of repetition and extensive imperative in giving instructions to younger than them.

B1 : *Aku burung hantu nanti kereta balapku. Burung hantu gini gini* (my racing motorcycle is **the owl. The owl** like this one)

B2 : *Ada bunga, gambar bunga, ada bunga yang kayak gitu itu.* (there are **flowers**, picture of flowers, there are **flowers**)

The children utterances above show that the children are able to produce of repetition word, when they were giving statement.

**DATA 5**

They are using full sentences, and have both vocabulary and grammar to engage in conversation about their day. Their words are usually fully comprehensible and understood by others (Hart, 1978).

B1 : *Aku tadi beli hp buka tutup.* (I just bought open-closed cellular)

*Dia beli kereta.* (He bought motorcycle)

*Ada foto bapakku di sini.* (There is my father's photo here)

*Ada kamera yang di hp besar.* (There is camera in large cell)

*Aku gak mau sabar-sabar nunggu.* (I don't want waiting patiently)

*Aku mau jajan.* (I want to buy something)

B2 : *Aku juga beli ya bang.* (I also want to buy something)

*Tante, tadi aku ngomong sama ayah.* (aunty.... I just spoken to my father)

*Aku suka coklat.* (I like chocolate)

The utterances above shows that the children are able to produce full sentences in conversation about their day, and their utterances produced fully comprehensible and understood.

**DATA 6**

Three and four-year old typically use a full Noun Phrase like the *little boy* or *the dog* in the frog story (Shatz & Gelman, 1983).

B1 : *Iya, hp besar, hape cantik.* (Yes, **large cell, beautiful cell**)

*Iya beli aja yang mobil balap.* (Yes, just buy **racing car**)

*Makan ikan besar.* (Eating **big fish**)

B2 : **Mobil balap. (Racing car)**

The utterances that produced by children above categorized as full noun phrase.

Table 1. The Utterances of Children who Study in The Kindergarten and who Don't Study in the Kindergarten

No.	The Characterisics	Children who study in the Kindergarten	Children who don't study in the Kindergarten
1.	<b>Repetition</b>	A 8: <i>makan sayur, makan ayam, makan sayur</i>  ( <b>eating vegetable</b> , eating chicken, <b>eating vegetable</b> )	B1: <i>Aku burung hantu nanti kereta balapku. Burung hantu gini gini</i> (my racing motorcycle is <b>the owl. The owl</b> like this one)  B2 : <i>Ada bunga, gambar bunga, ada</i>



		<p>A6 :<i>aku tadi makan nasik... sama ayam... sama nasik</i></p> <p>(I just eaten <b>rice</b>... with chicken.....and <b>rice</b>)</p>	<p><i>bunga yang kayak gitu itu.</i></p> <p>(there are <b>flowers</b>, picture of flowers, there are <b>flowers</b>)</p>
2.	<b>Full Sentences</b>	<p>A3:<i>kalau aku suka makan Sayur</i></p> <p>(I like eating vegetable)</p> <p>A7 :<i>aku suka makan nakoko (nata de koko).</i></p> <p>(I like eating nakoko [nata de coco])</p>	<p>B1 :<i>Aku tadi beli hp buka tutup.</i></p> <p>(I just bought open-closed cell)</p> <p><i>Dia beli kereta.</i></p> <p>(he buys motorcycle)</p> <p><i>Ada foto bapakku di sini.</i></p> <p>(there is my father's picture here)</p> <p><i>Ada kamera yang di hp besar.</i></p> <p>(there is camera in large cell)</p> <p><i>Aku gak mau sabar-sabar nunggu.</i></p> <p>(I don't want waiting patiently)</p> <p><i>Aku mau jajan.</i></p> <p>(I want to buy something)</p> <p>B2 :</p>

			<p><i>Aku juga beli ya bang.</i> ( I also want to buy something, brother)</p> <p><i>Tante, tadi aku ngomong sama ayah.</i> (my aunty just spoken to my father)</p> <p><i>Aku suka coklat.</i> (I like chocolate)</p>
3.	<b>Noun Phrase</b>	<p><i>A4:tadi aku makan kentang peddes.</i> (I just eaten <b>spicy potatoes</b>)</p> <p><i>A3:Bapakku punya hp besar bagus.....</i> (My father has <b>large good cellular</b>)</p>	<p><b>B1 :</b></p> <p><i>Iya, hape besar, hape cantik.</i> (yes, big cell, beautifull cell)</p> <p><i>Iya beli aja yang mobil balap.</i> <b>Makan ikan besar.</b> (My father has <b>large good cellular</b>)</p> <p><b>B2 : Mobil balap. (racing car)</b></p>

*\*A: The code for children who study in the Kindergarten*

*\*B: The code for children who don't study in the Kindergarten*

Based on the data of utterances between children who study in the Kindergarten and who don't, it is showed that the children's utterances who study in kindergarten is better than children who don't study in their language development. It can be shown from in producing of full sentences, and also be able to produce noun phrase more appropriate than the children who don't study in kindergarten. This can be seen as effect of the acquisition planning in the

kindergarten. For example, to describe the cell phone owned by their father. The children who don't study in the kindergarten used "cantik" means beautiful, meanwhile the children who study in the kindergarten used "bagus" means good. It is because in kindergarten, they are taught about the vocabulary related to the adjective in describing object.

### *5.2 The Implementation Acquisition Planning in Brigjen Katamso I Kindergarten Medan*

Kaplan (2000: 127) stated there are a number of issues needed to be examined as part of any language-in-education implementation programmed. Each of these areas of policy development for language policy implementation may develop differently in a particular nation depending on how that nation's education system operates.

#### **a) Curriculum Policy**

Curriculum policy not only discusses about the objective of language teaching or learning, but also who will learn language, what and when it will be learnt. In Brigjen Katamso Kindergarten Medan, they follow a standard curriculum, licensed by the Department of Education and Culture, which prepares children for entry into the Indonesian school system. These aspects are divided into two fields (Depdiknas, 2005: 3-4), namely the development of habituation is an activity performed continuously and present in everyday life in order to familiarize the good things in children that are useful in the environment. This field contains aspects of Moral and Values of Religion and Social aspects, Emotional and Independence.

The second is the development of basic capabilities is an activity that is prepared to enhance the ability and creativity of children in accordance with their development stage. This field contains the language skills, Cognitive, Physical / Motor, and Art.

Language development program includes embodiment of the ambiance for the development of the maturity of the language in the context of playing. In this kindergarten, the instruction is conducted in the Indonesian language. The time allocation of teaching and learning is also follows the regulation of the curriculum; for the age group of 4 (four) years up to 6 (six) years old at least 900 minutes per week.

#### **b) Personnel Policy**

There is a need for a group of teachers trained in language pedagogy and reasonably fluent in the target language. In recruiting the teacher, this school applied strict requirement to find the qualified teachers. The educational background is considered as important things in teacher recruitment. The teacher candidate will be selected from the background of study before continuing to interview test and teaching test. The teacher candidate also has to speak a good and proper Indonesia language.

After passing the test, the teacher will be trained as the teaching assistant first before being assigned as the home room teacher.

#### **c) Methodology and Materials Policy**

Language teaching must have some sort of content. The language itself may be the

objective of instruction, but instruction must be taught over some content. Two related issues in this area are what content will be used for language teaching and by what methodology will language instruction be delivered.

In Brigjen Katamso Kindergarten, the material and method are arranged following a standard curriculum, licensed by the Department of Education and Culture which is stated in Permendikbud 146 tahun 2014.

The content of Curriculum for Early Childhood Education provides development programs. The language development program includes embodiments atmosphere for the development of the maturity of the language in the context of play. Learning through play is a child's learning activities are carried out through ambience and various playing activities. This method is used for the achievement of core competencies and basic competencies that must be owned learners.

#### **d) Community Policy**

Language education does not occur in a vacuum. Students and teachers live in the community beyond the classroom, and students have parents who are concerned about the education their students are exposed to.

In this kindergarden, the role of parent is considered important. There are meeting which is held regularly with parents to discuss about the development of their children during the study. It involves the development in their language. In this meeting, it would also advised for parents to use good Indonesian at home. For example: many children if you want to say to drink it because in his expression as his parents' language used. So it is advisable to use the word "drink"

#### **e) Evaluation Policy**

In this kindergarten there are some evaluation which is done to evaluate if the proposed plan and its implementation is effective. The evaluation is applied for students and teacher. For the students, the evaluation is called resembly. The students will be gathered and given question related to the material they had learned. There are also the evaluation which is held every month. The kindergartem students will be asked to tell a story for their friend. From their performance their development of language will be evaluate.

For the teacher, the evaluation is done evry month. The teachers will be gathered and they will be asked to perform the mikro teaching. By the performance of the teachers in the micro teaching, their teaching will be evaluate by the headmaster in the kindergarten.

## **6. Conclusion**

The analysis of the data above showed that four year old children who studied in the kindergartenen have more vocabulary and can use them more appropriately compared to the chidren who only stayed at home as the effect of the acquisition planning applied in the

kindergarten. Language acquisition of children are affected by their surroundings. The social interaction with the family member and the community around them affect by the children. Input is a determinant factor of how well the children acquire the language.

The four-year old children who stayed at home had some differences in the characteristics of their utterances compared to the children who studied in the kindergarten. The acquisition planning applied in the kindergarten which covered the plans which are implemented by the teacher in teaching learning process affect the language exposed by the children. From the research finding it is showed that four-year old children who studied in the kindergarten have more vocabulary and can use them more appropriately compared to the children who only stayed at home as the effect of the acquisition planning applied in the kindergarten.

### **Suggestion**

In relation to the conclusion, some suggestion can be given as follow:

1. Language acquisition of children are affected by their surroundings. It is better for the parents to give attention to the environment where the children socialize.
2. Sending the children to the kindergarten at four-year old is a good way to develop a better language development of their children.

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