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FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

A Research

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By:

Zahra Hameed Khamis

&

Hadeel Nuri Khazal

Supervised by :

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ayad Hameed

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Dedication

To…

Our guide and spark of hope and light in our life- The prophet and messenger "the peace and prayers of God be upon him"

To…

The pearls our life , our parents.

To…

The sweetest figures , our brother and sisters .

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to shed light on the phenomenon of first language acquisition. The paper focuses on the main features of each age of language acquisition and the main language areas acquired at each stage. The paper ends up with a number of conclusions and based on the findings of the study.

1- Introduction

1.1 The problem

It has been observed that children suffering from difficulties in communicating with others. Their speech is somewhat fragmented and impaired which makes it difficult for the adults to understand them. However, it is assumed that they do try to communicate with their surroundings even with the limited speech they possess. Therefore, the interest of this paper is to investigate the major developments in these children's speech and to what extent.

1.2 The aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the linguistic development of those children mentioned above. To be more precise, this paper is an attempt to exploring whether Children have any language at all. In doing so, their semantic development along with their morphological development has been taken into account. "sometime between five years of age and puberty, the ease with which children learn language disappears and children exposed to a new language will have more difficulty learning it." Therefore, whether these children could be conditioned to learning language is another interest of this paper.

2. On Defining first language

Many definitions of language have been proposed. Henry Sweet, an English phonetician and language scholar, stated: “Language is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas into thoughts.” The American linguists Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager formulated the following definition: “A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates.” Any succinct definition of language makes a number of presuppositions and begs a number of questions. The first, for example, puts excessive weight on “thought,” and the second uses “arbitrary” in a specialized, though legitimate, way (Lyons,1981:51).

Language, a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release(Coates, 1993:21).

While Tomasello(2000:216)says that language is obviously as different from other animal’s communication system as the elephant’s trunk is different from other animal’s nostrils. When animals vocally imitate utterances, it does not mean they possess

language. Non-human communication systems are based on one of the following three designs: 1. A finite repertory of calls (one for warnings of predators, one for claims of territory and so on). 2. A continuous analog signal that registers of some state (the livelier the dance of the bee, the richer the food source that it is telling its hivemate). Or 3. A Series of random variations on a theme (a birdsong repeated with a new twist each time). Animals can convey various messages to each other, such as feelings, warnings, desire/willingness to mateand location of food sources…etc. Nonetheless, animals lack anything like human language.

Language is made up of socially shared rules that include the following:

– What words mean (e.g., "star" can refer to a bright object in the night sky or a celebrity)

– How to make new words (e.g., friend, friendly, unfriendly)

– How to put words together (e.g., "Peg walked to the new store" rather than "Peg walk store new")

– What word combinations are best in what situations ("Would you mind moving your foot?" could quickly change to "Get off my foot, please!" if the first request did not produce results)(Ibid:219).

2.1 Characteristics and Features of Language

Language is, today, an inseparable part of human society. Human civilization has been possible only through language. It is through language only that humanity has come out of the stone age and has developed science, art and technology in a big way. Language is a means of communication, it is arbitrary, it is a system of systems. We know that Speech is primary while writing is secondary(Pinker,1994:33)

Language is human so it differs from animal communication in several ways. Language can have scores of characteristics but the following are the most important ones: language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These characteristics of language set human language apart from animal communication. Some of these features may be part of animal communication; yet they do not form part of it in total (Ibid.).

Language is Arbitrary: Language is arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them. There is no reason why a female adult human being be called a woman in English, aurat in Urdu, Zen in Persian and Femine in French. The choice of a word selected to mean a particular thing or idea is purely arbitrary but once a word is selected for a particular referent, it comes to stay as such. It may be noted that

had language not been arbitrary, there would have been only one language in the world (Crain,1987:36).

Language is Social: Language is a set of conventional communicative signals used by humans for communication in a community. Language in this sense is a possession of a social group, comprising an indispensable set of rules which permits its members to relate to each other, to interact with each other, to co-operate with each other; it is a social institution. Language exists in society; it is a means of nourishing and developing culture and establishing human relations (Curtiss,2004:69).

Language is Symbolic: Language consists of various sound symbols and their graph logical counterparts that are employed to denote some objects, occurrences or meaning. These symbols are arbitrarily chosen and conventionally accepted and employed. Words in a language are not mere signs or figures, but symbols of meaning. The intelligibility of a language depends on a correct interpretation of these symbols (O'Grady, 2008:31.).

Language is Systematic: Although language is symbolic, yet its symbols are arranged in a particular system. All languages have their system of arrangements. Every language is a system of systems. All languages have phonological and grammatical systems, and within a system there are several sub-systems. For example, within the grammatical system we have morphological

and syntactic systems, and within these two sub-systems we have systems such as those of plural, of mood, of aspect, of tense, etc. (O'Grady,2008:33).

Language is Vocal: Language is primarily made up of vocal sounds only produced by a physiological articulatory mechanism in the human body. In the beginning, it appeared as vocal sounds only. Writing came much later, as an intelligent attempt to represent vocal sounds. Writing is only the graphic representation of the sounds of the language. So the linguists say that speech is primary(Chomsky,2004:397).

Language is Non-instinctive, Conventional: No language was created in a day out of a mutually agreed upon formula by a group of humans. Language is the outcome of evolution and convention. Each generation transmits this convention on to the next. Like all human institutions languages also change and die, grow and expand. Every language then is a convention in a community. It is non-instinctive because it is acquired by human beings. Nobody gets a language in heritage; he acquires it because he an innate ability (Ibid.).

Bybee(2010:35) Language is Productive and Creative: Language has creativity and productivity. The structural elements of human language can be combined to produce new utterances, which neither the speaker nor his hearers may ever have made or heard before any, listener, yet which both sides

understand without difficulty. Language changes according to the needs of society.

Finally, language has other characteristics such as Duality referring to the two systems of sound and meaning, Displacement which means the ability to talk across time and space, Humanness which means that animals cannot acquire it, Universality which refers to the equilibrium across humanity on linguistic grounds, Competence and Performance which means that language is innate and produced is society and furthermore, language is culturally transmitted. It is learnt by an individual from his elders, and is transmitted from one generation to another. Thus using J. Firth's term, language is a 'polysystametic'. It is also open to be studied from multifaceted angles (Crain, 1987:21).

3. On Defining Acquisition

Language acquisition is the process whereby children achieve a fluent control of their native language (Varshney, 2003:307). Children learn a language, not because they are subjected to a similar conditioning process, but because they possess an inborn capacity which permits them to acquire a language as a normal maturational process. This capacity is universal.

The child has an innate language acquiring device. He learns a language by exposure to it in society and by

unconsciously forming certain hypothesis about language, which he goes on modifying till he comes to the adult model to which he is for the most part exposed. So the child goes on constructing an innate grammar, operating over generalized rules. The capacity for acquiring language is remarkable a number of reasons (Langacker, 1973:12-13). It is first because of its uniformity throughout the human race. There simply are no cases of normal human children who, given the chance, fail to acquire a native language. The ability of children at such young age to form complex rules, to construct the grammars of spoken and sign languages, and to do in such a relatively short time is indeed phenomenal. The fact that the stages through which a child learns a language of different nations reveals interesting aspects of the acquisition process (Fromkin, 1983:341).

From this, we know that it is impossible that the child passing suddenly from one stage to another. In addition to that, as universal there are some stages in acquiring the native language. They are the cooing stage, the babbling stage, the holophrastic stage, the two word stage, and the telegraph stage. As Fromkin states (1983:326) that children do not wake up one morning with a fully formed grammar in their heads or with all the “rules” of social and communicative intercourse. The language is acquired by the stages, and, it is suggested, every

successive stage more closely near to the grammar of the adult language.

Language Acquisition is meant process whereby children achieve a fluent control of their native language (Varshney, 2003:307). The ability to get and understand the language is inherited genetically but the particular language that children speak is culturally and environmentally transmitted to them. Children all over the world acquire their first language without tutoring. Whereas a child exposed to speak to an English speaking community begins to speak English fluently, the other one exposed to a community of Indonesian speakers, begins to use Indonesia fluently.

Language acquisition thus appears to be different in kind from the acquisition of other skill such us swimming, dancing, or gymnastics. Native language acquisition is much less likely to be affected by mental retardation than the acquisition of other intellectual skill activities. Every normal human child learns one or more language unless he is brought up in linguistic isolation, and learns the essentials of his language by a fairly little age, say by six (ibid).

According to Chomsky (2009:101-102) language acquisition is a matter of growth and maturation of relatively fixed capacities, under appropriate external conditions. The form of Acquisition and use of language the language that is acquired

is largely determined by internal factors; it is because of the fundamental correspondence of all human languages, because of the fact that “human beings are the same, wherever they may be”, that a child can learn any language. The functioning of the language capacity is, furthermore, optimal at a certain “critical period” of intellectual development.In addition to that, the term „language acquisition“ is normally used without qualification for the process which results in the knowledge of one“s native language (or native languages). It is conceivable that the acquisition of a foreign language whether it is learned systematically at school or not, proceeds in a quite different way. Indeed, as we have seen, the acquisition of one“s native language after the alleged „critical age“ for language acquisition may differ, for neurophysiological reasons, from the normal child“s acquisition of his native language. (Lyons, 1981:252).

As Bolinger (2002:3) said that, acquiring a language calls for three things:

1. Predispositions, as well as physical capacities, developed through countless centuries of natural selection ;People have capacities for communicating in a human way uniquely and capacities for acting such as breathing, grasping and crying.
2. A preexisting language system, any one of the many produced by the cultures of the world; Language persists through time and from speaker to speaker. We are not born with an instinct to learn language such as English, Indonesian or Chinese but we

learn a language as members of the society, or we want to understand that society, or to be understood by that speech community. It means that if a language is not used in any society, it dies out.

3. A competence that comes from applying the predispositions and capacities to the system through the relatively long period during which the child learns both to manipulate the physical elements of the system, such as sounds and words and grammatical rules, and to permeate them with meaning: A child must learn the rules before use the language creatively.

4- Acquisition of language skill

4.1. The Acquisition schedule

Pinker(1994:534) notes that language is what makes societies function well. Language defines what the senses intuit. Language creates bridges and barriers. When using language, rarely does a person think about the implications it has on our lives. Language controls us, in a sense. We are bound by it. When we acquire it as toddlers, we do not have the mental capacity to understand the weight language holds in our lives. When we acquire a second language, we begin to understand how important languages are and how difficult they can be to attain.

When a person begins to learn a language, they go through stages of language acquisition. These stages function differently

depending on whether the person is acquiring their first or second language. Typically, first language acquisition happens during infancy, which is a time when a person cannot consciously process the stages of language acquisition. Second language acquisition often occurs between adolescence and adulthood when a person can more cognitively process through the stages and better identify their progress (Ibid.).

4.2 Pre-speech (cooing and babbling)

Much of importance goes on even before the child utters his first word: infants learn to pay attention to speech, pays attention to intonation and the rhythm of speech long before they begin to speak. Infants respond to speech more keenly than to other sounds. Speech elicits greater electrical activity in the left side of the 2 month old infant's brain than do other sounds. Experiment with microphone and nipple showed that infants suck more vigorously if the action triggers a human voice as opposed to music or other sounds (Bertoncini,et al.,1988:117).

Child learn to recognize the distinctive sounds, the phonemes of the language they hear from birth long before they are able to pronounce them. Infants can distinguish between /p/ and /b/ at three or four months (in an experiment with /ba/ played vs. /pa/, a two month infant showed awareness of the change). But children do not learn how to use these sounds until much later-- around the second year or later--as shown by the

experiment with /pok/ and /bok/. The same is true for rising vs. falling intonation, which only becomes systematically funtional much later. Infants know the difference between one language and another by recognition of phonological patterns (Story of the Russian fairy tale book.)(Ibid.).

4.2.1 Babbling and cooing stage

Begins at several months of age. Characterized by indiscriminate utterance of speech sounds-- many of which may not be used in the given language but are found in other languages clicks. Many native speech sounds may be absent-- some are naturally harder to pronounce /r/ /th/. Very few consonant clusters and repeated syllables are common (Mehler, and Christophe,2000:68).

This stage is self-explanatory in which a child begins to make random sounds with their vocal cords. Some of these sounds are made for the purpose of communicating; others are for no purpose at all. This stage is an exploring stage for the speaker to develop sounds and maybe a few specific phonemes. Also during this stage, the child may be able to nod ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in response to questions or point to things they want (Morse,1972:477).

During the first year of life the child is in a pre-speech stage. Developmental aspects related to speech would include the development of gestures, making adequate eye contact, sound

repartee between infant and caregiver, cooing, babbling and crying. Examples of such pre-speech sounds would be dadadada, mamamama and waaaah(Ibid.).

4.3. The One Word (Holophrastic) Stage

Gerken(1994:19) sures that infants may utter their first word as early as nine months: usually mama, dada (these words resemble babbling). Deaf babies whose parents use sign language begin making their first word/gestures around eight months. This stage is characterized by the production of actual speech signs. Often the words are simplified: "du" for duck, "ba" for bottle. When the child has acquired about 50 words he develops regular pronunciation patterns. This may even distort certain words-- turtle becomes "kurka". Incorrect pronunciations are systematic at this time: all words with /r/ are pronounced as /w/. sick--thick, thick--fick. Children tend to perceive more phonemic contrasts than they are able to produce themselves.

The child usually reaches this phase between the age of 10 and 13 months. Although the child tends to utter a single word at a time, its meaning is also supplemented by the context in which it takes place, as well as by non-verbal cues. An example of such a one-word sentence would be a child leaning over the edge of his cot and pointing to his bottle while laughing and saying “botty” in a commanding way. An adult in the situation could well interpret the child’s holophrase as meaning, “Give

me my bottle immediately (so that I can throw it over the edge of the cot again and you can pick it up)". Another example would be "Dada", which could mean "Daddy, please come to me."(Pinker,1994:96)

At this stage, a child can begin to utter recognizable words or at least phonemes that resemble words or simple phrases. Children develop these singular words through association and experience. For example, if a child's father is bald, the child may point to a bald man walking down the street and say "dada!", assuming that all bald men are their father. This association shows that the child is beginning to understand the meanings of words, though not yet in their entirety (ibid:97).

During this period, the child begins to grasp simple concepts in the foreign language and has the ability to produce simple, one or two word phrases. In a language class, the instructor can begin to ask more complex questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Most of the verbs the child uses during this stage are likely in the present tense.The first 50 words tend to be names of important persons, greetings, foods, highlights of the daily routine such as baths, ability to change their environment-give, take, go, up, down, open (Pallier et al.,1997:31)

The meaning of words may not correspond to that of adult language: overextension-- dog may mean any four legged creature. apple may mean any round object. bird may mean any

flying object. Child can still distinguish between the differences, simply hasn't learned that they are linguistically meaningful. Dissimilarities linguistically redundant (Ibid).

The extra-linguistic context provides much of the speech info. Rising and falling intonation may or may not be used to distinguish questions from statements at the one-word stage. Words left out if the contexts makes them obvious. At this stage, utterances show no internal grammatical structure (much like the sentence yes in adult speech, which can't be broken down into subject, predicate, etc.) (Pallier et al.,1997:32.).

4.4. The two word (Telegraphic) stage

As Clahsen (1996:129) notes during this stage, the child's analytical skills enhance and their ability to form complete sentences emerges. Their words have more of a purpose rather than simply identifying objects and people like in the previous stages. At this point in a child's life, roughly age two, they begin to acquire new words more rapidly and their vocabulary increases at a rate of as many as 10 words per week.

This stage is named as it is because it is similar to what is seen in a telegram; containing just enough information for the sentence to make sense. This stage contains many three and four word sentences. Sometime during this stage the child begins to see the links between words and objects and therefore overgeneralization comes in. Some examples of sentences in the

telegraphic stage are “Mummy eat carrot”, “What her name?” and “He is playing ball.” During this stage a child’s vocabulary expands from 50 words to up to 13,000 words. At the end of this stage the child starts to incorporate plurals, joining words and attempts to get a grip on tenses (Brown,1973:16).

As a child’s grasp on language grows it may seem to us as though they just learn each part in a random order, but this is not the case. There is a definite order of speech sounds. Children first start speaking vowels, starting with the rounded mouthed sounds like “oo” and “aa”. After the vowels come the consonants, p, b, m, t, d, n, k and g. The consonants are first because they are easier to pronounce then some of the others, for example ‘s’ and ‘z’ require specific tongue place which children cannot do at that age(Ibid:17).

As all human beings do, children will improvise something they cannot yet do. For example when children come across a sound they cannot produce they replace it with a sound they can e.g. ‘Thoap” for “Soap” and “Wun” for “Run.” These are just a few example of resourceful children are, even if in our eyes it is just cute (Ibid:23).

4.5 Developing Morphology

No satisfactory morphological development is noticed in the subjects throughout the study. However, one male child, comparatively older than the others, does show some

morphological element present in his linguistic repertoire. He has a variety of words and can refer to the proper objects by their names.

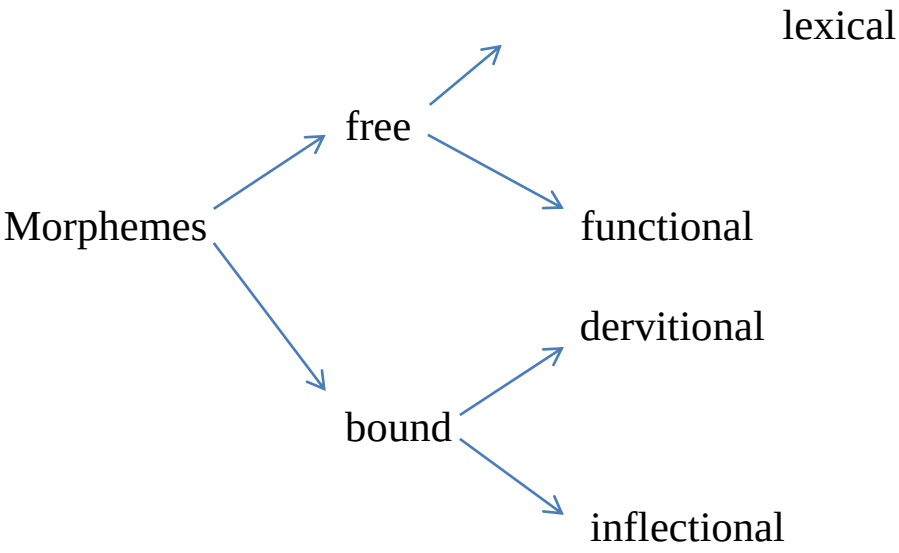
It has been found that all the other subjects, except the one mentioned above, predominantly use nouns such as /aam/, /kaak/, /paani/, etc. Verbs, modifiers and determiners are not found in their speech. However, the male child can use verbs, adjectives, modifiers and determiners to a limited extent though. For example, he struggles to indicate objects by their numbers i.e. if a single pencil is presented before him he knows it is pencil. However, he cannot say how many pencils if a bundle of pencil are presented. The phrase he uses to describe them is "Onek Pencil". He can also say if he feels bad or good about anything to which the others have no answer.

At this point it is also worth a mention that any normal child of this age as the children studied, are in between the pre-operational and concrete-operational period (Piaget,). Unfortunately, these children are lagging way behind and can be described as fumbling in the sensory motor stage.

Morphology observes the internal structure of words on the basis of their constituent units of meaning, morphemes. The concept, morpheme, can be described as the "minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function" (Yule 1996:75). If one extracts examples found in Ella's (the child used in this

research) transcripts one can find words such as paying and means1. Each of these two words contains a lasting element or a stem, pay and mean. Additionally, each word has a different ending, suffix, –ing and –s. When counting morphemes one acknowledges the stem as one morpheme and the suffix as another. Hence, these two morphemes can be divided into two types; free and bound morphemes. The free ones are elements which can stand alone while the bound on the other hand cannot (Yule 1996).

Table (1) The different types of morphemes



(Adapted from Yule 1996)

Lexical morphemes consist of word classes that are the most crucial in carrying out a message, noun, verb and adjective. These belong to the ‘open’ word classes where it is common that new words can be added. The example paying and means from above are a part of this group. Functional morphemes are part of

the ‘closed’ word classes which rarely adds new words and the classes that are participants here are; conjunction, article, pronoun and preposition (Yule 1996). Examples expressed by Ella of these morphemes are; above, and, the derivational can be used to create new words or word classes such as the transformation of gent to gently by adding –ly. The word has changed into a new grammatical category from noun, gent, to adverb, gently. Inflectional differs in the way that it can change the grammatical function of the word instead. This morpheme tells us whether the word is singular or plural, the tense and the comparative or possessive form. Hence, they only consist of 8 suffix alternatives (http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/browser/index.php?url=Eng-UK/Forrester/).

Table (2) The inflectional morphemes

Noun+ -‘s, -s

Verb+ -s, -ing, -ed, -en

Adjective+ -est, -er (Adapted from Yule 1996)

From these new terms that have been introduced one can divide a majority of utterances on these conditions, observe below.

Table (3) Examples from Ella’s transcripts of different morphemes

1) *There’s cereal*

Lexical inflectional Lexical

2) *I* *like*

functional lexical

3) *Fuzz* *-y*

lexical derivational

The acquirement of the different morphemes can partly be observed in one of the most eminent early studies of children by Berko2. In this experiment the knowledge of plural –s is put to test in order to acknowledge whether it is an acquired feature of the children. Hence, various forms of grammatical features such as past tenses and plural was elicited by the experimenter through pictures (http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/topics/wugs/wugs.pdf).

Table (4) The elicitation of plural –s

The picture above is one example of a picture which was observed by the children in order to see if they acknowledge the

connection of wug in plural is equivalent with wugs. The reason for using the unrecognizable word wug is crucial for the experiment's validity. If the experimenter would have chosen a word like cow the children might have heard the plural form cows in some context. Hence, the correct answer cows had not been enough to justify the children's knowledge of how to use plural formula for cow established from cow+ -s since it might also be a random guess. Nevertheless, this obstacle is prevented with the fake word wug (http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/L1%20and%20L2.htm).

Other studies of children's morphological acquirement show that endings such as –ing and plural are most frequent to appear around the age of 18 months. Nevertheless, the process of how to use these correctly has only started by then and will continue to be acquired for several months additionally. The speed of the development of the endings –ing and plural can be observed in Berko's study2. The usage of plural seems to be acquired rapidly from 0 % to 100 % of level of correct use in 3 months (between the ages of 28 to 31months). Nevertheless, the –ing usage is a slower process which requires 16 months to get from 50 to 100 %. The occurrence of backsliding may show during this development and this concept can be defined as the child returning to an earlier stage in the development.

Consequentially, the two years to come will emerge other endings (Crystal 1997).

4.6 Developing syntax

Syntax is the organization and structure of a sentence's components. The concept was found in the Greek language where the word syntax stands for "a setting out together" or an "arrangement" (Yule 1996:100).

The first recognition of grammatical development may not seem typical for the area nevertheless it appears through the first single words. Generally the most common word classes at this stage are the nouns (ca. 60%) and the verbs accounting for perhaps 20% of all utterances. However, it is not unusual to find other word classes such as adjectives and adverbs although there may also exist words that are hard to categorize in a word class (for example bye-bye) (Crystal 1997:105).

The outset of the production of words is, as mentioned before, defined as the one-word stage. However, some researchers may find this concept misleading since a baby's one word utterance could be understood as a sentence. To present an example one could look at a child that used 'dada' in three different ways: as a question, statement and a demand. For example as the child heard someone outside the door it said Dada? Which could be interpreted, Is that Daddy coming? (Crystal 1997:111).

As the child reaches the age of 18 months it tends to put these single words together into a two-word sentence. People may consider this phase as when the ‘real’ grammar development begins. Certain sentences are possible to analyse grammatically or semantically while others are not (Crystal 1997). On the discourse of syntax one can analyse these utterances by splitting them into smaller units. Nevertheless, it is important to define these concepts, used in practising this analysing, in order to avoid confusions. A word could be described as the letter between the empty spaces in a text and these words can be divided into classes such as noun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, interjection, numeral, pronoun and preposition. One could also put them, as Crystal suggests below, into clauses; subject, verb, adverbial, object and predicate (Estling Vannestål 2005 & 1997).

Table 5) Clause elements defined in phrases from the two-word stage

1) Daddy kick – Subject verb

2) Shut door – Verb subject

3) There teddy – Adverbial subject

4) She cold – Subject adverbial

Then generally at the age around two the ‘real’ sentence building advances with more words and various combinations, such as Man kick ball, Where daddy going? and Put that on there. The clause structures keep in complexity with time and at

the end of year three the child's utterances resemble more with an adult's (Crystal 1997).

As mentioned above there are several kinds of techniques one can use when dividing a language into smaller units, two additional categories are phrase and sentence. A phrase could be described as a unit of grammatical correction that can consist of one or several words that form a phrase. It could be a noun-, verb-, prepositional phrase etc. The determination of a noun phrase means that the main word is a noun and the same concept goes for remaining phrases (Hewings & Hewings 2005). A sentence has at least one or two clauses where the first word has a capital letter and the last word finishes off with a dot, question mark or exclamation mark (Estling Vannestål 2005).

As the child develops and grows older, the language improves and the child will have to connect the right forms of words with each other in order to produce the intended utterance. This can be done through a system that Yule refers to as the traditional categories which divides sentences into different boxes for example voice, number, gender, tense and person (1996). This technique is most profitable when discussing the agreement within a sentence, for instance with: The boy likes his dog. In the noun phrase 'the boy' one may consider in terms of number and person that these categories affect the choice of tense and structure of the sentence. Hence, there must be an agreement of

concord between The boy and likes in order for a grammatically ‘correct’ sentence. Next, in the category of tense there is a multiple choice to be made, choosing a verb that ‘fits’ the chosen noun. One could ask whether the verb should be in the present (like) etc. Then one also have the voice, whether to create a passive (the liking has been done) or active (the liking is happening right now) voice. The last category is gender which can be used as describing the possession of something. In the example sentence one has the dog which belongs to the boy and this relationship is symbolized in the agreement word, his. This choice is done through something called natural gender which could be described as determining the choice biologically. The possession state is then divided into three categories; male entities (he, his), female entities (she, her) and, also when the gender does not matter as with animals there is, genderless entities (it, its).

In other languages, for example Spanish and German, they use the grammatical gender which is more common. Spanish has two gender forms while German has three and both languages use different articles for each gender which differs from English where the same article is used for all genders (the).This system is nevertheless not biologically based since girl is labelled to be a neuter (das Mädchen) and a book is labelled to be masculine in French (le livre) (Yule 1996).

4.7 Developing Semantics

Children do not hear sentences in isolation, but in a context. No child has learned language from the radio. Ervin-Tripp (1973) studied hearing children of deaf parents whose only access to English was from radio or television broadcasts. The children did not learn any speech from that input. One reason is that without already knowing the language, it would be difficult for a child to figure out what the characters in the unresponsive televised worlds are talking about. In interacting with live human speakers, who tend to talk about the here and now in the presence of children, the child can be more of a mind-reader, guessing what the speaker might have meant (Yule,1966:122).

It is believed that before the child has learned any syntax, he knows the meaning of many words, and he might be able to make good guesses. In fact, parental speech to young children is so redundant with its context that a person with no knowledge of the order in which parents' words are spoken, only the words themselves, can infer from transcripts, with high accuracy, what was being said (Sachs, 1981:76). Many models of language acquisition assume that the input to the child consists of a sentence and a representation of the meaning of that sentence, inferred from context and from the child's knowledge of the meanings of the words (e.g. Anderson, 1977; Berwich, 1986; Pinker, 1982, 1984; Wexler & Gleitman, 1985). Children do not

hear every word of every sentence, but perceive the entire meaning of a sentence from context. Blind children, whose access to the nonlinguistic world is obviously severely limited, learn language without many problems (Landau & Gleitman, 1985). And when children do succeed in guessing a parents meaning, it cannot be by simple temporal contiguity. For example, Gleitman (1985) points out that when a mother arriving home from work opens the door, she is likely to say "Eat your peas" when her child is, perhaps, looking at the dog, and certainly not when the child is already eating peas. It is suggested that children learn by making semantic errors, taxonomic categorization bias, mutual exclusivity, shape bias and substance bias, syntactic bootstrapping and caregiver's speech.

Conclusions

The findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

1- In the first language acquisition .The child must be able to hear and hear language. It must have a need to communicate as well. Normally children's caregivers speak to the child in a different simplified language. Choo-choo, pee-pee etc.

2- The child does not have to respond for the caregiver to continue communicate.

3- The first speech-like sound is cooing. It appears during the first few months of life. Particularly high vowels such as [i] and [u].By four months velar consonants [k] and [g] appears. Between six and eight months the child is sitting up and producing a number of different vowels and consonants and combinations.

4- Between twelve and eighteen months children use one word sentences to communicate what they want. Between eighteen and twenty months the child can put two words together. Examples are baby chair - it is the baby's chair, baby wants to sit in chair, the baby is in the chair By 24-30 months old the baby begins producing a large number of utterances that could be classified as multiple word speech.

5- A child does not learn their first language, they are actively constructing from what is said to them and how

people react to what they say, possible ways of using the language. By two-and-a-half when they go beyond telegraphic speech, the first inflectional morphemes appears. usually the -ing form and then the -s forms. The child tends to overuse them by overgeneralization. Eg foots, means Children don't learn syntax, they repeat sentences incorrectly but understands what is said.

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Website resources:

http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/browser/index.php?url=Eng-UK/Forrester

http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/topics/wugs/wugs.pdf

http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/L1%20and%20L2.htm