

## Indonesian Language Acquisition of 0-2-Year-Old Children: A Study of Psycholinguistic Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study discusses the problem of phonology and morphology acquisition in children aged 0-2 years whose parents use Indonesian in their daily interaction (communication) in the family while the surrounding community interacts (communicates) using the local language (Javanese). This research concludes that the embryonic development of children's language can vary in each individual, can develop quickly and can also be slow, depending on the level or level of age, the ability of the parents, and the active environment to develop it. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. The data generated from this research is in the form of spoken words, which will then be transcribed into writing. Data related to this research, which is devoted to language acquisition in the form of phonology and morphology acquisition in children aged 0-2 years, was obtained using several methods.

**Keywords:** *psycholinguistics; early childhood; language acquisition; communication; language.*

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a saying in this world, "No day without language and no life without language." Language is the main means of communication in human life in this world, whether in the form of writing, speaking, or only in the form of certain symbols (Apriyanto & Nurhayaty, 2019). Humans cannot communicate without language because they are social creatures who inevitably have to interact with other humans. In interaction, there must be communication; in communication, there must be language (Mailani, 2022., Hasbullah, M., & Noermanzah, 2019).

According to Chaer (2018: 222), humans can only master language. From before birth or still in the womb, humans have been equipped with innate capacity by the Almighty Creator with language acquisition tools or devices. Not only using language in the form of words (verbal) but using nonverbal language. He kicks and moves around in the womb, indicating that the foetus wants to interact with his mother. Of course, many factors can support and influence the development of children's abilities in language acquisition (Andini, 2018, & Anggraini, 2018).

Suardi (2019) argues that language is a means of communication humans acquire from birth. At the beginning of a baby's birth, it cannot yet speak with other people. A

child's acquisition of a language begins with the acquisition of the first language, often called the mother tongue. Language acquisition is a very long process since children do not know a language until they are fluent in a language (Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Nur Septiadi et al., 2021). After acquiring the mother tongue, the child acquires another language or a second language that he recognizes as a new treasure of knowledge at a certain age. Mother tongue is the first language that humans master from the beginning of their lives through interactions with the family and community environment around the child (Suardi, 2019., Syaprizal, 2019., & Apriliana).

Children's language is acquired through a natural process and is influenced by two factors: biological and social (environmental) factors (Agnew et al., 2006). Biological factors are children born normally and equipped with sufficient body organs. In contrast, social (environmental) factors are children's interactions with people in their environment in language acquisition. Language development in a child aged 0-2 years is still very limited. He is still limited to imitating the words he hears from his mother/father, who informally (family) continues to say every time, regardless of whether the child understands or not what they listen to the child.

Sundari (2018) states that language acquisition is a person's acquisition of language unconsciously, implicitly, and informally. Implicit means that language acquisition takes place unconsciously. Everything happens unintentionally, while informal language acquisition occurs naturally without a special time or place to master. It all happens when the child communicates with the people around him.

At the beginning of language acquisition, a child will be more silent, listening and listening without giving any speech reactions. This means that the first maturity a child master is listening to other people talk (Gottschalk, 2019). However, as his age increases, the growth of his speech organs also improves. After that, the child will try to accept and imitate the words he has heard from his parents, family, and environment.

Language acquisition is different from language learning. Chaer (2018: 167) explains that language acquisition occurs in a child's brain when he acquires his first language or mother tongue. In contrast, language learning concerns the processes that occur when a child is learning a new language (second language) after acquiring his mother tongue (first language) (van Niejenhuis et al., 2018).

Psycholinguistics explains in detail the stages of a child's development in acquiring language to communicate according to age. Psycholinguistics is a hybrid science, that is, a science that is a combination of two sciences: psychology and linguistics (Fomin & Yakimova, 2016). The seeds of this science were already visible at the beginning of the 20th century when German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt stated that language could be explained based on psychological principles.

Dardjowidjojo (2014: 25) details that psycholinguistics studies four main topics: (a) comprehension, which is the mental processes that humans go through so that they can catch what people say and understand what is meant; (b) production, which is the mental processes in us that make us able to speak as we speak, (c) biological and

neurological foundations that make humans able to speak, and (d) language acquisition, which is how children acquire their language.

The term acquisition is the equivalent of the English term acquisition, i.e., the process of language acquisition that a child naturally goes through while learning his or her native language (Kotorova, 2014). This means that acquisition is how humans absorb information, which can then be understood so that communication between speakers can occur properly.

One of the reasons here is that the author feels very interested in examining the short sounds or phonetics of the language of children aged 0-2 years in interacting (communicating) with their parents. These short sounds are trained continuously and repeatedly, which, later in the stages of children's language development, will grow into words and, at certain stages, become complete sentences that everyone can understand.

## METHOD

This type of research is descriptive qualitative research (see Herman et al., 2021). The data generated from this research is in the form of spoken words, which will then be transcribed into writing. Data related to this research, which is devoted to language acquisition in the form of phonology and morphology acquisition in children aged 0-2 years, was obtained using several methods. The methods used are the listening method and the chap method. The use of these methods is expected to maximize the data obtained.

The listening method is a very helpful method in providing data because this method is more natural (natural), parallel to the observation method (Elek, 2016). Mahsun (2017: 90) states that this method has basic techniques, namely the technique of *simak bebas libat cakap* (SBLC) and *simak libat cakap* (SLC). Both of these techniques are used by researchers, where the technique of *simak bebas libat cakap*, the researcher will only act as a full observer, meaning that the researcher will see all the behaviour of both language and movements of the research subject without participating in verbal and social communication then the observer records the data obtained.

Using tools in observation, such as audio recordings (sound) and video recording devices (sound and image), is also very necessary. In addition, it will also be supported by the *simak libat cakap* technique, which allows researchers not only as observers but also to communicate and participate with research subjects to obtain more and more accurate data.

Qualitative data analysis, according to Moleong (2017: 46) is an effort made by working with data, organising data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesising it, looking for and finding patterns, finding what is important and what is learned and deciding what can be told to others (see Apriyanto & Anum, 2018; Ayu et al., 2020; Herman et al., 2021). In analysing the data, the researcher first grouped the data included in the phonological acquisition and morphological acquisition of children aged 0-2 years.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study discusses the problem of phonology and morphology acquisition in children aged 0-2 years whose parents use Indonesian in their daily interaction (communication) in the family while the surrounding community interacts (communicates) using the local language (Javanese).

1. Phonological acquisition in 0-2 year old children.

a. Phonological acquisition in 0-0,5 year old children

Phonological acquisition in children of this age cannot be described. It is not speech that comes out but only an expression in the form of a smile, laughter or crying. During the first six months of life, infants undergo significant phonological acquisition, laying the groundwork for language development (Wesche, 2012). Initially, babies produce reflexive sounds such as crying, burping, and cooing, which serve as precursors to linguistic communication. By around two months, infants start to exhibit vowel-like sounds, often repeating single syllables such as "ah" or "oo." These sounds, known as babbling, are essential for phonological development as they allow infants to explore vocalization and begin to manipulate their articulators to produce sounds resembling those of their native language (Gani, 2017). As infants approach the six-month mark, they demonstrate increased vocal variety and may experiment with consonant-like sounds, marking the beginning stages of canonical babbling. This stage is crucial for phonological acquisition as it represents the emergence of speech-like patterns and lays the foundation for later language development (Leuprecht & Skillicorn, 2016).

By six months, infants exhibit more intentional vocalizations and begin to imitate the speech sounds of their caregivers. They engage in vocal turn-taking, where they respond to adult speech with their own vocalizations, indicating an early understanding of conversational dynamics (Yaylacı & Beauvais, 2017). Additionally, infants demonstrate sensitivity to the phonetic contrasts of their native language, showing preferences for sounds they are familiar with. Through interaction with caregivers and exposure to their native language, infants refine their phonological repertoire and develop a rudimentary understanding of language structure. This period of phonological acquisition sets the stage for further language development, as infants transition from babbling to producing their first words, marking a significant milestone in their linguistic journey. It can be concluded that at this age, children go through the stage of babbling that is difficult to understand. However, the babble is what children use to communicate.

b. Phonological acquisition in 0,6-1 year old children

With the acquisition of phonology at this age, children can make several sounds in the form of vocal and consonant sounds. Between six months and one year of age, children experience a rapid expansion in their phonological acquisition as they transition from babbling to producing their first words. During this period, infants refine their ability to produce speech sounds, incorporating a wider range of

consonants and vowels into their babbling repertoire (CJ, 2018; Endarweni, 2014). They engage in reduplicated babbling, where they repeat strings of consonant-vowel syllables like "bababa" or "dadada," which serve as early attempts to mimic the speech patterns they hear in their environment. Additionally, infants begin to exhibit variegated babbling, where they produce sequences of different consonant and vowel sounds within a single vocalization, showcasing their growing phonological flexibility and control over their vocal apparatus. These babbling patterns reflect the infant's burgeoning ability to manipulate phonemes and lay the groundwork for subsequent language development.

By the end of the first year, children typically produce their first recognizable words, marking a significant milestone in phonological acquisition. These early words often reflect objects or people in the child's immediate environment and are typically characterized by simplified phonetic structures (Alderson, 2000). Children may use phonological simplifications such as reduplication (e.g., "dada" for "dog") or consonant cluster reduction (e.g., "poon" for "spoon") as they learn to produce words within the constraints of their developing phonological system. Despite these simplifications, caregivers can usually discern the intended meaning, fostering communication and further language learning opportunities. As children continue to refine their phonological skills, they gradually expand their vocabulary and phonetic repertoire, setting the stage for more complex language acquisition in the years to come.

Based on the data transcript, the acquisition of phonology for this age cannot yet be described, such as in the sounds [pa], [ta], [ba]. [ma]. However, language acquisition can be understood based on the sound elements produced. The vowel sound [a] is the one that is clearly heard, and BL consonant sounds [b] and [p], AA consonant [t], and BL nasal consonant [m].

#### c. Phonological acquisition in 1-1,5 year old children

Between the ages of one and one and a half years old, children continue to make significant strides in their phonological acquisition, building upon the foundational skills developed during earlier stages. At this stage, children typically demonstrate an increased ability to produce a wider range of consonant and vowel sounds, allowing for more diverse and accurate vocalizations (Cleary, 2010). They move beyond simple reduplicated and variegated babbling to produce more purposeful and intentional speech-like utterances. Children begin to exhibit jargon, which consists of strings of sounds that mimic the rhythm and intonation of adult speech, indicating their growing awareness of language structure and communication patterns. Additionally, they may start to produce their first meaningful words with greater consistency and accuracy, relying less on phonological simplifications and more on adult-like speech patterns.

By one and a half years old, children typically have a vocabulary of several words and are beginning to combine words to form simple phrases or two-word utterances. Their phonological repertoire continues to expand, allowing for clearer

articulation of speech sounds and more sophisticated babbling patterns. Children exhibit increased sensitivity to the phonetic contrasts of their native language, refining their pronunciation and demonstrating a greater understanding of speech sounds. Caregivers play a crucial role during this stage by providing rich linguistic input and reinforcing accurate phonological production through imitation and positive reinforcement. As children progress through this phase, they lay the groundwork for further language development, paving the way for more complex linguistic skills in the years ahead.

The transcript data shows that the child has started to pronounce clear words at this age. Sound productions appear in the form of the following words.

/unda/	[bunda]	“ibu”	Mom
/anyah/	[ayah]	”ayah”	Dad
/nyinyik/	[ninik]	“nenek”	Grandma
/minyum/	[minUm]	“minum”	Drink
/puyang/	[puyAŋ]	“pulang”	Go home
/uyet/	[ulat]	“ulat”	Caterpillar
/tidun/	[tidUr]	“tidur”	Sleep
/cepedah/	[sepEda]	“sepeda”	Bicycle
/dapun/	[dapur]	“dapur”	Kitchen
/Kaman/	[kamar]	“kamar”	Room

Based on the sounds spoken above, children acquire language in the phonological order in terms of articulatory appearances in the form of VKVK or KVK, indicating that these language sounds contain phonemic values that the listener can understand. The vowel sounds [a], [i], [e], and [u] are dominated by the child. Meanwhile, consonant sounds that appear according to the data, such as : [n], [d], [h], [k], [m], [p], [y], [t], [l], [c], and [ŋ]. The AA nasal sound [n] is a nasal that appears in the middle and the BL nasal [m] appears at the beginning. The consonant sounds DV [k], BL [p], AA [t], and [d] appear at the beginning.

d. Phonological acquisition in 1,6-2 year old children

Between the ages of one and a half to two years old, children continue to make significant strides in their phonological acquisition, exhibiting more advanced speech abilities compared to earlier stages. At this stage, children typically demonstrate a rapid expansion of their vocabulary, acquiring new words at a remarkable rate as they actively engage in language learning through interaction with caregivers and exploration of their environment. Their phonological repertoire becomes increasingly sophisticated, allowing for clearer articulation of speech sounds and more accurate imitation of adult speech patterns. Children begin to master the pronunciation of a wider range of consonants and vowels, enabling them to produce more complex and varied utterances.

By two years old, children usually have a vocabulary of several hundred words and are able to combine words to form simple sentences or phrases. Their speech becomes more intelligible to others outside of their immediate family, as they refine their articulation and pronunciation skills. Children at this age also demonstrate a growing awareness of grammar and syntax, incorporating basic grammatical structures into their speech, such as plurals and verb tenses. They exhibit an eagerness to communicate and engage in conversation, demonstrating an understanding of turn-taking and conversational conventions. Caregivers continue to play a crucial role in supporting phonological acquisition during this stage by providing ample opportunities for language-rich interactions and modeling correct speech patterns, laying the foundation for further language development in the years to come.

The phonological acquisition of children aged 1.6 years, according to the data transcript of the research results, has begun to be able to pronounce clear words. The vowel sounds [a], [i], [u] that appear when 2-year-old children speak can be categorised as being following universality in language acquisition, besides that the vowels [ɛ], [ə] and [o] also appear the following data.

Bunyi vokal [a] muncul pada kata <i>The vowel sound [a] appears in the word</i>			Meaning
/agu/	[aŋgur]	“anggur”	Grape
/ambut/	[rambut]	“rambut”	Hair
/ayam/	[ayam]	“ayam”	Chicken
Bunyi vokal, [ə], [ɛ] muncul pada kata <i>The vowel sounds, [ə], [ɛ] appear in the word</i>			
/eyut/	[pərut]	“perut”	Stomach
/ebek/	[bɛbɛʔ]	“bebek”	Duck
Bunyi vokal [i] muncul pada kata <i>The vowel sound [i] appears in the word</i>			
/igi/	[gigi]	“gigi”	Teeth
Bunyi vokal [o] muncul pada kata <i>The vowel sound [o] appears in the word</i>			

/cetobeyi/	[stroberi]	“strawberi”	Strawberry
Bunyi vokal [u] muncul pada kata <i>The vowel sound [u] appears in the word</i>			
/uning/	[kuniŋ]	“kuning”	Yellow

Consonant sounds that appear in 2-year-old children based on facts are in the form of sounds: [b], [d], [g], [h], [j], [k], [m], [n], [p], [t], [y] and [ŋ]. The voiced consonant BL [d] and voiceless consonant BL [p] appear in forms such as:

/dung/	[hiduŋ]	“hidung”	Nose
/apel/	[apəl]	“apel”	Apple

In the 2-year-old's utterance above, there is an omission of GL fricative consonant sound [h] and vowel [i] as well as an omission of vowel sound [a]. Other consonants, such as the affricative sound FP [c], DV sound [g], nasal sound [ŋ], and fricative sound GL [h] are found in the following words:

/picang/	[pisaŋ]	“pisang”	Banana
/anggun/	[aŋgur]	“anggur”	Grape
/angga/	[maŋga]	“mangga”	Mango
/igi/	[gigi]	“gigi”	Teeth
/cikush/	[tikUs]	“tikus”	Mouse
/jajah/	[gajah]	“gajah”	Elephant

## 2. Morphological acquisition in 2-year-old children

Language acquisition of children aged 0-2 years at the morphological level was analysed on the following word forms:

### a. Morphological acquisition of 0-1 year old children

Morphological acquisition for children aged 0-2 years after transcription of the research data, it is found that for children aged 0-1 years cannot be described here because the sounds of the language they pronounce cannot yet be identified.

### b. Morphological acquisition of 1.5-year-old children

Referring to the language sounds uttered by children aged 1.5 years in the data transcription. It can be said that children at this age are starting to be able to produce words that are classified as monomorphemic, such as the following :

/ibu/	[ibu]	“ibu”	Mom
/bapak/	[bapaʔ]	“bapak”	Dad
/loti/	[loti]	“roti”	Bread



/pegi/	[pəgi]	“pergi”	Go
/idun/	[idun]	“tidur”	Sleep
/num/	[num]	“minum”	Drink
/puyang/	[puyaŋ]	“pulang”	Back
/uduk/	[uduʔ]	“duduk”	Sit down
/peda/	[pɛda]	“sepeda”	Bicycle
/bambah/	[bambah]	“tambah”	Again
/ndah/	[əndah]	“sudah”	Done

In addition to monomorphemic forms, some pronunciations are more than one word even though phonologically they undergo sound changes, as follows:

/acit tati/	[acit tati]	“sakit kaki”	foot pain
/macan aciʔ/	[macan aciʔ]	“makan nasi”	eating rice
/es coyim/	[es coyim]	“es krim”	Ice cream
/pegi cetoyah/	[pəgi cetoyah]	“pergi sekolah”	Go school
/mau idun/	[ mau idun]	“mau tidur”	Want to slip
/daq num/	[dak num]	“ndak minum”	No drink
/puyang unda/	[puyaŋ unda]	“pulang bunda”	Go home, Mom
/peda kakak/	[pɛda kakaʔ]	“sepeda kakak”	brother's bike
/bambah yagi/	[bambah yagi]	“tambah lagi”	More
/ndah nandi/	[əndah nandi]	“sudah mandi”	had a shower

Based on the above facts, it can be said that children aged 1.5 years can produce more than one word classified as a compound word.

c. Morphological acquisition of 2-year-old children

Language acquisition at the morphological level for 2-year-old children does not significantly differ from 1.5-year-old children. The fact shows that the utterances issued are still around one or two words and nouns are the words that dominate the development of language acquisition. After that, verbs and adjectives are also experienced vocabulary development. The following words are to clarify the above:

Kata (word)	Seharusnya (Should be)	Arti kata (meaning)	Jenis kata (word classes)	
/ebek/	[bɛbɛk]	Bebek (duck)	Kata benda	N
/ayam/	[ayam]	Ayam (chicken)	Kata benda	N
/uyung/	[buyung]	Burung (bird)	Kata benda	N
/maem/	[makan]	Makan (eat)	Kata kerja	V
/nandi/	[mandi]	Mandi (take a bath)	Kata kerja	V
/dendong/	[gendong]	Gendong (carry)	Kata kerja	V
/toton/	[kotor]	Kotor (dirty)	Kata sifat	Adj
/uning/	[kuning]	Kuning (yellow)	Kata sifat	Adj
Dan lain-lain (many others)				

The types of compound words spoken by 2-year-olds are not many, only around words classified as easy to pronounce and short to the extent of their age-appropriate abilities.

Understanding Indonesian language acquisition in children from birth to two years old provides valuable insights from a psycholinguistic perspective. In the first year of life, infants in Indonesia begin to lay the foundation for language acquisition by developing receptive skills. They start to recognize and differentiate sounds specific to the Indonesian language, such as phonemes and intonation patterns. Additionally, infants demonstrate early sensitivity to morphological cues in Indonesian speech, even though they may not yet produce these morphemes themselves. Caregivers play a crucial role during this period by providing language-rich environments, allowing infants to absorb linguistic input and begin to comprehend the grammatical structures of Indonesian. By the end of the first year, some children may exhibit initial attempts at expressive language, where they start to produce simple sounds and babble in ways that resemble Indonesian phonetic patterns.

As children progress into the second year, their language acquisition in Indonesian becomes more active and complex. They begin to imitate the speech sounds and intonation patterns of their caregivers, refining their phonological skills and expanding their vocabulary. Caregiver interaction continues to be vital during this stage, as children engage in turn-taking conversations and learn to express their needs and desires through gestures, babbling, and eventually, words. Additionally, children start to develop rudimentary morphological skills, attempting to use basic grammatical markers such as verb tenses and pronouns in their speech. This period of language development highlights the dynamic interplay between cognitive and linguistic processes in Indonesian-speaking children, emphasizing the importance of early exposure to language-rich environments for optimal language acquisition outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the embryonic development of children's language can vary in each individual, can develop quickly, and can also be slow, depending on the level or level of his age, the ability of his parents, and the active environment to develop it. The higher the child's age, the higher the development of language skills.

Language acquisition for the morphological level in children aged 19 months, based on the type of word, it can be said that children at that age have also been able to produce nouns and verbs and even adjectives but still in the form of single words and are often mispronounced. Until the age of 24 months (2 years) a child is able to produce more words (utterances) and not only limited to one or two words but more than that where for a while, nouns are words that dominate the development of language acquisition, after that are verbs and adjectives which also experience vocabulary development.

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