

## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN CHILDREN AGED 2-4 YEARS

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### ABSTRACT

Language is a communication system used by humans to convey ideas, thoughts and information to other people through sound, written and movement symbols. The aim of this research is to describe the process of acquiring the Acehese language in children aged 2-4 years. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type. The subjects of this research were 2 children aged 2-4 years, the first child from Gampong Meunasah Mampree, Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency, and the second child from Gampong Blang, Tanah Pasir District, North Aceh Regency. Data collection techniques use observation and question and answer. The data obtained was then compiled in the form of observation field notes and questions and answers for children aged 2-4 years which were then analyzed to determine the acquisition of Acehese language phonemes used by children aged 2 years in their daily lives. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the language acquisition of Muhammad Aksan Rafassya aged 3 years is very good. The research subjects had mastered vowel and consonant sounds. At the age of 2 years Aksan was able to own and master words in his surrounding environment. This is also strengthened by mastery of nouns, adjectives and verbs. Meanwhile, Hidayatul Azizi's language acquisition at the age of 2 years is not good because he is not yet very fluent in pronouncing consonant sounds. However, at the age of 2 years Hidayatul Azizi was able to pronounce vowel sounds well. The vowel sounds that Hidayatul Azizi already pronounces fluently are the words 'jeut', 'loen', and the word 'itek'.

**Keywords:** Phonemes; Neurolinguistics; Language Acquisition

### ABSTRAK

*Bahasa adalah sistem komunikasi yang digunakan oleh manusia untuk menyampaikan ide, pemikiran, dan informasi kepada orang lain melalui simbol-simbol suara, tulisan, dan gerakan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan proses pemerolehan bahasa Aceh pada anak usia 2-4 Tahun. Penelitian ini dilakukan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis fenomenologi. Subjek penelitian ini yaitu 2 anak usia 2-4 Tahun, anak pertama dari Gampong Meunasah Mampree, Kecamatan Syamtalira Aron, Kabupaten Aceh Utara, dan anak kedua dari Gampong Blang, Kecamatan Tanah Pasir, Kabupaten Aceh Utara. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi dan tanya jawab. Data yang diperoleh kemudian disusun dalam bentuk catatan lapangan observasi dan tanya jawab pada anak usia 2-4 tahun yang kemudian dianalisis untuk mengetahui pemerolehan fonem bahasa Aceh yang digunakan anak usia 2 tahun dalam kehidupan kesehariannya. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa Pemerolehan bahasa Muhammad Aksan Rafassya usia 3 tahun sangat baik. Subjek penelitian sudah menguasai bunyi vokal dan konsonan. Pada usia 2 tahun Aksan mampu memiliki dan menguasai kata yang berada di lingkungan sekitarnya. Hal tersebut juga diperkuat dengan adanya penguasaan kata benda, kata sifat, dan kata kerja. Sedangkan pemerolehan bahasa Hidayatul Azizi usia 2 tahun kurang baik karena faktor belum terlalu fasih dalam mengucapkan bunyi konsonan. Namun, pada usia 2 tahun Hidayatul azizi sudah mampu mengucapkan bunyi vokal dengan baik. Bunyi vokal yang sudah fasih diucapkan oleh Hidayatul Azizi yaitu kata 'jeut', 'loen', dan kata 'itek'.*

**Kata Kunci:** Fonem; Neurolinguistik; Pemerolehan Bahasa

## INTRODUCTION

Language functions as a forum for conveying information and ideas, meaning that apart from communication, language can also be used to express oneself (Hariyanto et al., 2013). Language also has a very important role in everyday human life, namely as a medium for carrying out actions, language also functions as a reflection of culture for its speakers. Language can control attitudes, behavior, actions, and can change situations. Meanwhile, Chaer (Noermanzah, 2019, p. 307) explains that language is a system in the form of symbols and sound forms that have arbitrary, meaningful, conventional, unique, universal, productive, varied, dynamic and human characteristics, used as a tool of social interaction, and has a function as the identity of the speaker. However, Musfiroh believes that language develops according to phases determined by nature which are biologically regulated and are not triggered by external factors (Musfiroh, 2010: 103).

Language in a linguistic context is seen as a sound system that is arbitrary, conventional, and used by humans as a means of communication. (Kholid A. Harras and Andika Dutha Bachari, 2009:1). This definition shows that there is no connection between language and other phenomena, meaning that it stands alone and is intended as a means of communication. However, if language is linked to the process of acquiring it, then language does not exist independently but there are other individuals involved in its formation.

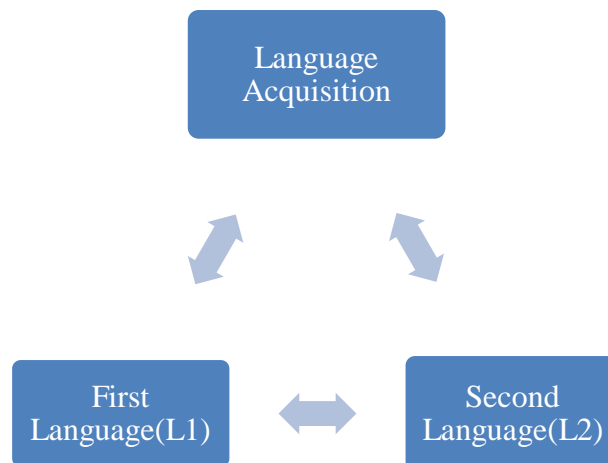
Linguistic Intelligence is a child's intelligence in processing words and using words effectively both orally and in writing. Parents should be aware that developing their child's language skills, especially accuracy in pronouncing phonemes, is a very important thing. pay attention because it is directly related to the meaning of the utterance.

When communicating, of course there are several things you need to pay attention to, one of which is fluency in speaking. Speaking is one type of spoken language skill that is productive (Permana, 2015). Sumadi (2010) states that essentially speaking is oral communication skills that are active, productive and spontaneous. According to Retno et al. (2012), speaking skills are productive language skills that are used to verbally express thoughts and feelings.

In line with psycholinguists who prefer to use the term language acquisition rather than language learning. Children's language acquisition becomes increasingly interesting because "children and only human children, have brains that are designed/planned in such a way that they can learn a language and they can also be exposed/introduced to an appropriate

surrounding environment." (Tarigan, 2009:34-35). This is in accordance with the interpretation that language acquisition is aimed at the process of acquiring language knowledge without qualifications by language speakers. The two terms do have differences. Language acquisition (1) occurs in childhood, (2) is internally motivated, there is behavior and verbal communication, (3) language data is not programmed, (4) there is no formal teacher (instructor); while language learning (1) occurs later if the initial performance is stable, (2) is externally motivated, there are factors of need and benefit, (3) takes place with a planned program, and (4) there is a formal teacher (instructor).

It is clear that language acquisition occurs naturally in childhood. Because there is a connection between the brain and language skills. When a child is born, he only has 20% of his adult brain, in contrast to animals which have 70% (Dardjowidjojo, 2008:244). With only around 20% brain capacity, a child is able to acquire their first language or even more than one language, depending on language input from the surrounding environment as a provider. Take a look at the chart below to better understand how a child acquires language.



**Figure 1.** Language Acquisition

### **First Language (L1)**

Language acquisition is the process of how someone can speak a language or the process of children in general acquiring a first language (L1). The perception of sound in babies begins before birth. This is in line with the results of Almann's research (Dani, 2017) which states that the mother's womb as the place where the baby lives in the womb allows the baby to hear sounds, including language sounds. Sounds from outside the womb can penetrate the uterus and be heard by the baby. However, amniotic fluid prevents high frequency sounds from being heard by the baby. Only sounds with a frequency of around 100 Hz (faint momentarily) can be

heard by the baby in the womb. For comparison, people with normal hearing can hear sounds up to 20,000 Hz. This proves that babies in the womb actually need to be exposed to aspects of language, most importantly sounds, before using that language. This is also proof of human uniqueness. That human uniqueness is not in their ability to think, but in their ability to speak.

## **Second Language (L2)**

Second language (L2) acquisition in children refers to the process in which a child learns and develops language skills in a second language after they have a solid understanding of their first language. The acquisition of a second language (L2) in children can be influenced by environmental factors, emotional involvement, social interactions, language input, individual tendencies, and formal educational experiences. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a language that functions to differentiate meaning (Muslich, 2012:77). Meanwhile, Suhardi (2013:79) states that phonemes are symbols of language that function as differentiators of meaning. In line with Muslich and Suhardi, Venhaar (Pateda, 2015:67) concludes that "a sound that has the function of distinguishing the meaning of the word from other words is called a phoneme, or all sounds that can differentiate meaning are called phonemes".

The acquisition of language phonemes is an important aspect in language development in early childhood. Acehese, as one of the regional languages in Indonesia, has its own phonemic characteristics that need to be understood in the context of children's language acquisition. At the age of 2, children have entered an important period in their language development, where they begin to actively observe and imitate the sounds they hear around them. This process, known as phoneme acquisition, involves the child's ability to differentiate and internalize typical language sounds (Al-Azharie & Usman, 2017).

Acehnese is a language with a large number of speakers. The area where the Acehnese language is used covers almost the entire east coast of Aceh Province from Langsa to Banda Aceh at the northern tip. The number of Acehnese speakers on the west coast of Aceh is also no less large. Starting from Lhoong to Blang Pidie. Therefore, it is natural that the Acehnese language dominates in the language acquisition of the people in Aceh.

The study of the acquisition of Acehnese phonemes in 2 year old children is interesting to explore because it provides valuable insight into how this regional language is acquired by the younger generation (Ismail, 2018). According to previous research, namely research conducted by Niken Widya Selsia and Hendra Setiawan with the research title "Language Acquisition in 2.5 Year Old Children Based on: Phonological and Syntactic Aspects of

Psycholinguistic Studies" they concluded that a 2.5 year old child was able to pronounce words, adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and task words without any obstacles both in terms of sound and in terms of speech tools. The process of acquiring phonemes in children aged 2-4 years is often influenced by the social and linguistic environment in which they are raised. Factors such as the diversity of interactions with native speakers, exposure to various communication situations, and specific processes in language acquisition in this age range that have not previously been well understood, language acquisition in children aged 2-4 years can be influenced by environmental or social factors that previously unnoticed, the use of Acehese in everyday life can influence children's ability to understand and use Acehese phonemes.

Acehnese is one of the regional languages in the Aceh Province. Based on language mapping carried out since 2008 by the Banda Aceh Language Center, it can be seen that there are around 8 regional languages in Aceh Province. The language mapping carried out uses the dialectometry method which can determine the exact area of use of a language or the pockets of users of a particular language. However, until now there are still few people who know for certain the country of origin of the Acehese language. Structurally, the Acehese language has many unique features. One of the uniqueness of the Acehese language is the aspect of phonology or language sounds. Acehese has a greater number of phonemes compared to, for example, Indonesian. Another unique thing is, for example, the vocabulary aspect. The Acehese language has a vocabulary with syllables which generally consists of one to two syllables. In short, the Acehese vocabulary looks very simple, for example ie for 'water'; bu means 'rice'; u means 'coconut', and there are many more things that show such tendencies.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type. The subjects of this research were 2 children aged 2-4 years, the first child was a resident of Gampong Meunasah Mampree, Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency, while the second child was a resident of Gampong Meunasah Blang, Tanah Pasir District, North Aceh Regency. Data collection techniques use observation and question and answer. The data obtained was then compiled in the form of observation field notes and questions and answers for children aged 2-4 years which were then analyzed to determine the acquisition of Acehese language phonemes used by children aged 2-4 years in their daily lives.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

## Result

The results of the analysis are based on the acquisition of Acehese language phonemes in children aged 2-4 years, the first child named Muhammad Aksan Rafassya is a 3 year old child from Gampong Mampree, Syamtalira Aron District, North Aceh Regency. Muhammad Aksan Rafassya is a child who is physically and spiritually healthy. Muhammad Aksan Rafassya is an active child who likes to play. As a 3 year old child, Muhammad Aksan Rafassya communicates more often with his immediate family, namely his mother, father, grandmother, grandfather and mother. In his daily life, Muhammad Aksan Rafassya communicates using his mother tongue, namely Acehese. The Acehese language he uses is not as fluent as Acehese in general. Meanwhile, the second child is named Hidayatul Azizi, who is the 2 year old son of Mr. Faisal and Mrs. Masniati. Hidayatul Azizi is a resident of Gampong Blang, Tanah Pasir District, North Aceh Regency. Hidayatul Azizi in his daily life often communicates using his mother tongue, namely Acehese, which is not spoken as fluently as Acehese in general. However, the pronunciation can still be understood by listeners.

In the table below, the researcher will describe the results of observations and observations of the acquisition of Acehese language phonemes by Muhammad Aksan Rafassya and Hidayatul Azizi.

**Tabel 1. Speech Process**

No	Form Of Speech	Target Speech	Disappearance	Replacement	Meaning In Indonesian
1.	Anok	Manok	/-m-/	-	Ayam
2.	Rusi	Keurusi	/-k-/, /-e-/, /-k-/	-	Kursi
3.	Pajoh	Pajoh	-	-	Makan
4.	Bu	Bu	-	-	Nasi
5.	Deuk	Deuk	-	-	Lapar
6.	Punyo	Punyo	-	-	Apa itu
7.	Atat	Batat	/-b-/	-	Nakal
8.	Anoe	Manoe	/-m-/	-	Mandi
9.	Itek	Itek	-	-	Bebek
10.	Idom	Sidom	/-s-/	-	Semut
11.	Ubah	Reubah	/-r-/, /-e-/	-	Jatuh
12.	Eungeut	Teungeut	/-t-/	-	Ngantuk
13.	Antai	Bantai	/-b-/	-	Bantal
14.	Grah	Grah	-	-	Haus
15.	Aket	Saket	/-s-/	-	Sakit
16.	Angku	Bangku	/-b-/	-	Kursi
17.	Aya	Raya	/-r-/	-	Besar
18.	Aje	Bajee	/-b-/, /-e-/	-	Baju
19.	Lop	Silop	/-s-/, /-i-/	-	Sandal
20.	Um	Suum	/-s-/, /-u-/	-	Panas

No	Form Of Speech	Target Speech	Disappearance	Replacement	Meaning In Indonesian
21.	Jeut	Jeut	-	-	Bisa
22.	Acet	Saket	/-s-/	-	Sakit
23.	Acam	Masam	/-m-/	-	Asam
24.	Bayo	Baro	-	/-y-/	Kemarin
25.	Cucu	Susu	-	/-c-/, /-c-/	Susu
26.	Badah	Bagah	-	/-d-/	Cepat
27.	Beuneh	Beungeh	/-g-/	-	Marah
28.	Nen	Ngen	/-g-/	-	Teman
29.	Pite	Pike	-	/-t-/	Pikir
30.	Loen	Loen	-	-	Aku

## Discussion

From the results of language acquisition research, it can be seen that children aged 2-4 years are active in the language acquisition process. This is in accordance with First Language (L1) theory which prioritizes direct experience in their environment for language learning. Children learn through social interaction, observation, and imitation, as well as through an intuitive understanding of language rules. This process also involves the gradual formation of concepts about the meaning and structure of language. In accordance with First Language (L1) theory, children simplify complex language sounds. There are several consonant sounds such as /r/ which changes sound to /l/ and /s/ which becomes /c/. This often appears in children aged 2-4 years, but as they get older, they will gradually disappear. This is also due to the habits of parents and people around them who often say the same things. There are a number of basic processes that children use when speaking. These are the stages that children go through to be able to speak like adults. As children get older and acquire more complex language skills, children will begin to abandon simple pronunciations.

Based on the data above, it shows that there are phoneme pronunciation errors that appear in the speech of Muhammad Aksan Rafassya and Hidayatul Azizi, these errors are manifested by the omission of phonemes. Phoneme deletion is the aspect that appears most often. Based on the linguistic data obtained in the table above, there are vowel and consonant sounds produced by Rafasya and Azizi. Vowel sounds consist of [i], [a], [U], [o]. Meanwhile, consonant sounds consist of [d], [n], [t], [m], [p], [j], [h], [y], [g], [l], [s], [k].

The vowel phoneme /a/ is the first vowel phoneme mastered by Muhammad Aksan Rafassya and Hidayatul Azizi. The vowel phoneme /a/ is pronounced clearly at the beginning, middle and end of words. The vowel /a/ at the beginning of words such as /aket/ 'saket'. In the middle it is like the word /atat/ 'batat', and at the end it is like the word /antai/ 'slaughter'.



Rafasya and Azizi will change language acquisition which starts from imitating parents with practice and family support so that they can speak the language well and correctly. Thus, family factors will play an important role in a child's language acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that language acquisition is a process that occurs in children when acquiring their first language (mother tongue). This is greatly influenced by the surrounding environment, such as family environment and residence. As a child grows and develops, he not only acquires his mother tongue, but is also able to acquire a second, third and so on. This is of course influenced by environmental, social and cognitive factors obtained during the learning process. The first language can be acquired from the child's interactions with his parents and immediate family, while the second language can be acquired through the learning process.

Muhammad Aksan Rafassya's language acquisition aged 3 years is very good. The research subjects had mastered vowel and consonant sounds. At the age of 2 years Aksan was able to own and master words in his surroundings. This is also strengthened by mastery of nouns, adjectives and verbs. Meanwhile, Hidayatul Azizi's language acquisition at the age of 2 years is not good because he is not yet very fluent in pronouncing consonant sounds. However, at the age of 2 years Hidayatul Azizi was able to pronounce vowel sounds well. The vowel sounds that Hidayatul Azizi already pronounces fluently are the words 'jeut', 'loen', and the word 'itek'. There are similarities in children's ability to pronounce certain words. In general, children's speech shows similarities, for example aket, relaxed, anak, atat, etc.

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