THE COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE SKILLS BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS OF AL ABIDIN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THROUGH STORYTELLING

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Abstract

This research discusses about students' language acquisition in the fifth grade of elementary school. The objective of this research is to reveal their language competence. This research shows between male and female students' language skill through retelling stories in Indonesian. The aspects used in this research are grammatical cohesion analysis. The grammatical aspects include reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Data were taken through controlled cross sectional observation research. The data were analyzed using a comparative descriptive method that compares male and female students' language in compiling sentences and clauses and to compare their grammatical errors. The finding showed that female students in the Fifth grade of Al Abidin International Islamic Elementary School of Surakarta were more skilled than male students in using Indonesian. Male students made more mistakes in the grammatical cohesion aspects. The errors are dominated by the using of reference aspects. Female students made the sentences using more varied that male did.

Key Words: Language Acquisition, Language Comparison, Male and Female Students

INTRODUCTION

Language consists of some aspects that must be understood by the users. The aspects incluude phonological aspects (aspects that correlate to sound), semantic aspects (namely aspects related to meaning), and syntactic aspects (aspects that relate to sentence structure). Those are obtained during the language acquisition process. There are some factors involved in the language acquisition process. Dardjowidjojo (2003: 223) stated that human can only produce language if they know linguistic rules which they obtained from childhood.

Among the theories underlying the process of language acquisition are behavioral theory and cognitive theory. The concept of behaviorism is the belief that the language acquisition process is *nurture* which is determined by the natural environment. Children come into the world with a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate bearing no preconceived notion about the world or about language) and that these children are then shaped by the environment and slowly conditioned through various schedules of reinforcement, Dardjowidjojo (2003: 234). In contrast, the

innateness theory by Chomsky showed that the limitations of behaviorism view of language acquisition task (Pinker, 1994). The main point of the theory is that the children are born with an innate knowledge which guides them in the language acquisition task. According to Chomsky, language acquisition process is based on *nature* that children were born with a language acquisition device. The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a postulated organ of brain that is supposed to function as a congenital device for learning symbolic language (Chomsky, 2009).

In fact, *nurture* and *nature* interrelated in the language acquisition process. Without a series of Language Acquisition Device (LAD), humans cannot speak. Therefore, the *nature* is needed in the language acquisition process. Language is not only a habit, but it is a system governed by a set of rules. Furthermore, language is also creative and depends on structure. Just the same, environment supports to the language acquisition process. Clark (2009) stated that children beside their innate abilities; their acquisition of language could also be affected by social interaction and cognitive development.

Language acquisition is different with language learning in some aspects. According to Krashen (1981) the way to get language competent is divided into two processes, they are acquisition and learning. Language acquisition is a process of mastering the language performed by children when they learn their mother tongue. Meanwhile, language learning is a process of mastering language in a formal order in class and with a teacher. Gass & Selingker (2008) said that children had acquired a language if they could use their language skills for speaking or conversing.

Children need to understand the language skills as the basic of linguistic competence. Chomsky (1965) divided linguistics in two categories, namely *competence* and *performance*. Linguistic competence is speaker/ hearer's knowledge of his/her language (Chomsky, 1965:4). This is a basic knowledge of language system, linguistics rules, grammar competence, vocabularies, and all the language traits. Linguistic performance is the actual use of the linguistic competence (Chomsky 1965:10). Performance is actual production (speaking and writing) or comprehension (listening and reading) to linguistics events (Brown, 2007: 38-39).

In accordance to language acquisition, gender is considered to have an impact on the level of language competence. Moccaby and Jacob (in Elliott 2000: 138) stated that men are superior in Mathematical and visual-spatial skills, while women are better at verbal skills.

Christiana (2012: 211) stated that about three percent of preschoolers are late talker, although their intelligence is normal or better. Compared to girls, boys tend to experience late talker.

In accordance to gender, there is a difference between male and female's brain in terms of its shape which female's left hemisphere is thicker than her right hemisphere (Steinberg et al 2001: 319). However, Philip et al (1987 in Steinberg 2001: 319) states that although there are differences in language processing between men and women, these differences only lead to culture influences rather than genetics.

Studies on gender differences between males and females in the use of language or language acquisition have been done previously. Rahmawati, D. et al (2018) concluded that girl is more likely to make sound changes than boy. They explain that girl says more various sounds at the end of words compared to a boy who sounds a little clearer in saying one word in full. Silvia (2016) compares male and female students in the skills of writing description and narrative text in English. The study is to know students' competence on three aspects, they are: text structure, grammatical acquisition, and vocabulary acquisition based on word format. The results showed that male students are better by the comparison of 2:1. Male students are better in the use of text structure and grammatical acquisition, while female students are better in the vocabulary acquisition based on the word formats.

Ratminingsih (2013) concluded that there is a significant difference in speaking competence between female and male students, female students have higher speaking competencies than male students. Aziz (2006) did a research to 82 children and found that girls had higher level of creativity than boys by the number of 35 (53%) compared to 31 (47%). Aziz & Mangestuti (2005) did a research to 304 students and found that female students were higher than male students in the level of intellectual intelligence measured by the Standard Progresive Matrice (SPM) test by the mean of 127, 28 : 166, 80; for emotional intelligence 88, 69: 90, 93 and for spiritual intelligence 78, 20 : 81, 30.

Language assessment can be done internally or externally. Internally, language studies are carried out on the internal structure which starts from the phonology, morphology, sytax and discourse structure. While external studies are related to the relation between language and language external factors such as: social factors, psychology, ethnicity, and so on. The underlying thing in understanding and acquiring a language lies on the knowledge of language aspects that must be mastered. The grammatical aspect is a rule in language formation to

facilitate the language use. A grammar of a language purports to be a description of the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic competence (Chomsky 1965:4).

As language consists of form and meaning, discourse is also divided into two types, namely cohesion which correlates to the language form and coherence which relates to the meaning (Sumarlam 2013:39). Furthermore, Sumarlam (2013) explained that meaningful discourse is cohesive on form or structure and coherence in meaning or inner structure. Flowerdew (2009:103) introduce the notion of connectedness to refer to cohesion. Connectedness is the flow of information and is reflected by the choice of vocabulary words and grammatical linking words that contribute to textual relations (Flowerdew and Mahlberg 2009: 106).

Cohesion is divided into two types; they are lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion. Halliday & Hasan (1976: 6) divides cohesion as grammatical and lexical cohesion. Grammatical aspect is the form of discourse, while lexical cohesion is the aspects relate to the meaning. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 6; Sumarlam 2013: 40).

Based on the background and research gaps, the researcher analyzes about language acquisition of Indonesian language to the students of Fifth grade of Al Abidin International Islamic Elementary School of Surakarta. It is aimed at measuring Indonesian language acquisition as a second language and comparing between male and female students' language skills based on grammatical aspects.

The objects of this research are six male students and six female students. The researcher uses a book of Frog where are you by Mercer Mayer. The book is a blank narrative book without any script. Students are ordered to tell a story based on the picture in the book. The researcher analyzes grammatical aspect of each clause used by students. This study is expected to measure students' language skills and to compare between male and female students level in producing Indonesian.

METHOD

This research uses observation method. Data was obtained by recording students' activity of retelling story. The data was transcribed and analyzed to find conclusion. This method is as used by Brown (1973) on language development research. This study uses cross-sectional

research design in which the time is a certain point in time (Dardjowidjojo, 2012: 229). The subject is more than one person and uses a predetermined topic. The chosen topic is not a development topic but a moment topic. The method is an observational type with a controlled cross-sectional research design. The place of research has been arranged in advance and equipment which has been adapted to the research objective (Dardjowidjojo, 2012: 229). The research was conducted in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Female Students								Male Students							
F	Sen	Cl	Grammatical Errors					M	Sen	Cl	Grammatical Errors				
			R	S	E	C					R	S	E	C	
F 1	31	42			1		2%	M 7	29	40	1		1		5%
F2	24	32	1				3%	M 8	39	60	3		1	2	10%
F3	25	38				1	3%	M 9	16	22	2				9%
F 4	24	30		1		1	7%	M 10	21	26	2				8%
F 5	15	32	1		2		9%	M 11	16	35	5			2	20%
F 6	16	28	1	1		1	11%	M 12	17	37	3			1	11%

Based on the recording, the data can be identified as the table below:

Table: comparison of male and female students' grammatical errors.

Glossaries:
FM   : Female   R   : Reference
M   : Male   S   : Substitution
Sent   : Sentence   E   : Ellipsis
Cl   : Clause   K   : Conjunction

Table above shows a comparison number of grammatical cohesion errors made by male and female students in telling a story. The grammatical errors made by female students are as follows: F1 produced 42 clauses and made 2% error with only an error on ellipsis, F2 made 32 clauses by an error on reference; F3 produced 38 clauses by making a mistake in conjunction by the percentage of 3% error; F4 produced 30 clauses by two grammatical errors of substitution and conjunction; F5 by 9% error, produced 32 clauses and made a mistake on reference and two mistakes in ellipsis; P6 by 11% error produced 28 clauses and made three mistakes which included of a mistake in use of substitution, a mistake in reference, and a mistake in conjunction.

Hereafter, grammatical errors made by male students are: L7 by 5% error produced 40 clauses and made a mistake in reference and a mistake in ellipsis; L8 with 10% error produced 60 clauses and made three mistakes in the use of reference, a mistake in ellipsis, and two mistakes in conjunction; L9 with 9% error produced 22 clauses and made two mistakes in references; L10 with 8% error produced 26 clauses and made two mistakes in the use of reference; L11 with 20% error produced 35 clauses and made seven mistakes which included of five mistakes in reference and two mistakes in using conjunction; L12 with 11% error produced 37 clauses and made three mistakes in the use of references and a mistake in conjunction.

The table shows that male students' grammatical errors are more than female students'. On the average, female students make a mistake on each grammatical aspect. Meanwhile, male students make more than a mistake. The most dominant grammatical error occurs in using reference linguistic features, such thing or human, plural or singular, third or first person pronounce and demonstrative reference. In accordance to reference, (Nunan 1993: 21) who states that referential cohesion plays a special role in creating cohesive ties between the elements that can be difficult or even impossible to interpret if a single sentence is taken out of context.

 A. Reference

The principle of reference is based on the exploration of the lexico-grammatical environment of the text to look elsewhere to get a fuller picture and to make complete sense of a word or structure (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 31). The three of six students make some mistakes in using grammatical cohesion that each of them does a mistake. Meanwhile, all the six male students make mistakes in using reference.

1. Ternyata, setelah itu ia melihat lagi semakin banyak katak, dan ia ternyata ada katak dia.
   a) Ternyata, setelah itu ia melihat lagi semakin banyak katak
   b) dan *ia* ternyata ada katak *dia*.

Sentence 1 is a sentence that is made by male students of M8. There are two grammatical errors in using reference. First, the subject of the clause is the lingual unit of '*ia*' which refers to the third personal pronoun of a single free form. However, the lingual unit of '*ada*' in (1b) indicates that there is a frog there. Therefore, a demonstrative reference is the right type of reference as the subject of the clause. Clause (1b) will be '*dan **disitu** ternyata ada katak dia*'. Thus, the correct reference as the subject of (1b) demonstrative reference of place with lingual unit of '*disitu*'.

The second reference error in (1b) is the use of personal reference by the lingual unit of '*dia*'. It is a single third person. The use of the lingual unit is wrong because the reference in (1b) should refer to possessive adjective. Thus, the possessive pronoun and adjective that shows the right ownership is the third single personal pronounce of '*nya*', the right clause is '*dan disitu ternyata ada katak**nya**'*.

B. Substitution

Substitution is simply reveled by replacement of one expression by another in the text (Brown and Yule 1983: 201). Based on the table, there are two female students that make mistakes in using substitution by a mistake for each student. On the other hand, no male student makes mistake in the use of substitution item.

2. *Anak laki-laki terdampar di atas kepala rusa dan menjatuhkan anak laki-laki itu ke sebuah sungai.*
   a) *Anak laki-laki **terdampar** di atas kepala rusa*
   b) *dan menjatuhkan anak laki-laki itu ke sebuah sungai.*

There is an error in substitution use of the word '*terdampar*'. It intends to express a movement to a higher place. In clause (2a) '*Anak laki-laki **terdampar** di atas kepala rusa'*, student of (F6) intends to describe the movement position of the subject '*anak lelaki'* from a low place to the higher place above a deer's head through the lingual unit of '*terdampar**.*** However, the word '*terdampar**'** is not right to reveal the condition.

C. Ellipsis

The basic notion of ellipsis is nothing to be inserted into the structural slot of the missing information (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 143). Hoey (1983: 110) defines ellipsis as deletion that occurs when the structure of one sentence is incomplete and the missing element(s) can be recovered from a previous sentence unambiguously. Both male and female students make mistakes in the use of ellipsis.

3. Tiba-tiba terdengar suara di kayu, dan mencari suara itu.
   a) Tiba-tiba terdengar suara di kayu
   b) dan mencari suara itu

There is a mistake in (3b) in the use of ellipsis. There is an ellipsis in '*dan mencari suara itu*'. There is no lingual unit which functions as the subject and it does not be mentioned in the

previous sentence. Thus, ellipsis should not be done because it makes an ambiguous without context involved.

D. Conjunction

Conjunction is different from reference, substitution, and ellipsis in that it is not an anaphoric relation. Nevertheless, Halliday and Hasan (1976), Martin and Rose (2007), Nunan (1993) treat conjunction as type of cohesive devices. These meaning presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 226). Both male and female students make mistake in the use of conjunction. However, the mistakes made by male students are complex than female students' mistakes.

4. *Aku terkejut melihat botol kaca itu kosong.*
   a) *Aku terkejut*
   b) *Melihat botol kaca itu kosong.*

Sentence (4) consists of two sentences. There is a grammatical error in clause (4b) in the use of conjunction. Clause (4a) and (4b) are not correlated with any lingual unit as a conjunction marker. Meanwhile, both the two sentences contain a causal meaning. The shock experienced by the subject '*aku*' in clause (5a) is caused by seeing an empty glass. Optionally, there are two types of conjunctions that can be used to connect between clause (6a) and (6b). First, speaker can use the type conjunction that has a causal meaning, such: '*aku terkejut **karena** melihat botol kaca itu kosong*'. Here, speaker emphasizes the aspect of causality process. Second, speaker may use the type of conjunction that has a period/ temporal meaning, such: '*aku terkejut **ketika** melihat botol kaca itu kosong*'. Here, the speaker underlines on the temporal aspect.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, female students in the fifth grade of Al Abidin Islamic International Elementary School of Surakarta are more skilled than male students in the term of grammatical cohesion. It is based on students' storytelling using a blank narration book of 'Frog where are you' by Mercer Mayer. The result shows that male students made more mistakes in the grammatical cohesion aspects. The errors are dominated by reference aspect. Furthermore, students' lingual units of conjunction are more varied than male students. In accordance, Nunan (1993: 26) states that the relationships signaled by conjunction can be fully understood through

reference to other parts of the text. It can be concluded that female students' in the fifth grade of Al Abidin Islamic International Elementary School are more skilled than male students.

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