

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Language is the core of human's communication. We use either written or spoken language every day. It allows us to express a thousand kinds of ideas, describe events, feeling, needs and many others that is related to our live and experiences. Using language seems as natural as breathing or walking. However, babies are not born talking. They learn language since birth. About the way they use language as they learn will be discussed later concerning the term of children's acquisition of a first language.

When children learn the first language, they could build on preexisting notions of what to represent with language as well as prior notions of communication (Clark, 2003, p.2). In other words children learn from blank and from knowing nothing till they can find out what the language is essentially used to and meant to. Clark also stated that since languages differ, children's acquisition might also be affected by properties of each language. Their acquisition of language could also be influenced by their social interaction and cognitive development.

Language acquisition occurs during conversation (Clark, 2003). Commonly when children talk, they may use the language of the community where they grow up. Nowadays, numerous communities speak in more than one language or dialect. They are called bilingual community. In these community

children have to choose which language to speak when they talk. Their choice of language may be influenced by the gender, status, power, age of the interlocutor, as well as the topic. Growing up in bilingual community means that children have to learn not only one language but two at the same time. While many researchers deal with the perception that bilingual speakers are effectively two speakers in one, with exactly equivalent skills in both languages. Clark argued that, bilingual speakers tend to use one language for some things and the other for other things, so while such speakers may have fairly balanced skills in both languages, they may have rather specialized vocabularies for many domains (Clark, 2003, p.565).

Furthermore, Clark also suggested that children who grow up with two languages have to work hard in memorizing and in learning two sound systems, morphology, lexicon, syntactic and also two sets of system for use. Parents worry that very early bilingual language exposure may cause their children to be language delayed or competent in only few parts of both languages. Thus, as a result and as stated in King & Fogle (2006), many parents decide not to take a risk and prefer to wait until the children are old enough to receive a new pattern of language and know how to use the language appropriately, even though it is still not clear concerning at what age is the most appropriate for children to study the second language. Crawford (1999, cited in Laura Ann Petitto, 2001, p. 454) added that in order to avoid confusing their children, parents in many countries around the world allow their children to attend the first formal schooling in other majority language after they passed the toddler years. It is only a way to avoid confusion

on their children in speaking, so there will be no language contamination or mistake in uttering both languages.

To learn two languages simultaneously in few first years of life is not a simple job because it requires children to recall and learn both in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, as well as the system of both languages at once. Hence 'language mixing' may occur in bilingual children's utterances. Code-mixing is ubiquitous among bilinguals – adults and children are alike. Genesee & Nicoladis (2005) stated that code-mixing is the use of elements (phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic) from two languages in the same utterance or stretch of conversation. Adult bilinguals also code-mix (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Poplack, 1980 retrieved in Genesee & Nicoladis, 2005). Research has also shown that adult bilinguals code-switch for a variety of meta-communicative purposes; for example, to mark ethnic identities or affiliations, to negotiate social roles and status, and to establish interpersonal intimacy or distance (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Poplack, 1987 in Genesee & Nicoladis, 2005), and their mixing is grammatically constrained. In brief, code-mixing is a useful, sophisticated, and rule-governed feature of language use among adult bilinguals. In contrast, child bilingual code-mixing has often been interpreted as a sign of incompetence and even confusion.

Regarding this phenomenon, the writer is interested in searching out many links or information connected to the issue in order to find out the fact about the perception. The writer is still in question whether code-mixing done by bilingual child has been pursued with two primary goals in mind—to identify its grammatical and its functional properties in order to determine if it is rule-

governed or a sign of confusion (Muysken, 2000). But the most important thing that made the writer tend to examine this topic is because the key question concerning when such language differentiation occurs has not yet been answered because most studies have focused on bilingual children's multi-word combinations. There are only few researches that talked about this kind of phenomenon, especially in Indonesia. There are still only one to two researchers include Endang Rusyani (2008) and Budi Santoso (2009) examining and discussing about the development of children language acquisition or moreover, even too limited researchers examine about the code-mixing in bilingual child. Researchers of code-mixing in Indonesia still prefer to talk about song, trading and other adult rates instead of about children level of competence.

The writer wants to examine the code-mixing in a bilingual child by taking a male participant of the research. The participant is a 3 year old Indonesian-Javanese bilingual child. The writer tended to observe him because the age is appropriate enough and eligible according to empirical studies. In her journal Petitto quoted the empirical studies which says that children first begun to be observed is around eighteen months of age and up, which is after important early language milestones have already passed or are in progress, e.g. first-word, first 50 words, and first two-word combinations, (Petitto, 2001, p. 469). At this age, many bilingual children have been known to use their two languages with remarkable facility and sensitivity, added Nicoladis (1994, p. 5). She also suggested that for children younger than three years, explanations of codemixing is various, ranging from representational to performance explanations due to the

language proficiency of the children. Children in the age about two years old tend to speak and mix the language because they imitate the utterances of interlocutor.

Besides, the writer also pays attention to the environment surround him in determining the participant, especially the parents. The writer only records parents who were native speakers of one of the languages (Indonesian or Javanese) and habitually used that language with their children. Regarding the criteria above, the writer decided to use a boy named Zidan as the participant recorded for the data in the thesis, because he has fulfilled characteristic which is required by this research. The writer chose the Indonesian-Javanese dialects because there still no research in the field of this code especially in Indonesia although the codes are mostly used by people in Java region. More over the study of code-mixing in bilingual 3 years old children are still in the rates of nil.

Through this research, the writer would like to see if bilingual children mix elements of their two languages in conversation consciously or due to their own confusions in setting the system of utterance. The writer wants to examine the problem by using the theory of Elena Nicoladis and Fred Genesee, professors in the Department of Psychology who are interested in the study of Language Development in Bilingual Children and who also stated in their journal article about “*Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA)*” :

The language mixing seen in bilingual children exhibits regular grammatical patterns and is directly influenced by sociolinguistic factors. For example, children's language mixing is sensitive to the specific language used by the adults around them, as well as to their parents' pattern and degree of language mixing (p: 94)

Therefore, these researchers argue that language mixing does not reflect confusion but instead demonstrates the bilingual child's distinct representations of their two input languages from an early age. The writer uses the theory of BFLA because it answers clearly that young children can fully acquire two or more languages.

The theory of BFLA is a combination of both theory of First Language Acquisition (FLA) and also the theory of childhood bilingualism. Eve Clark (2003) is one of researchers who examined either about FLA or concerned the term of bilingual occur in children. According to her, FLA is the study of the processes of learning about the acquisition of native languages during the infant's period.

She also suggested that the language development stage of the bilingual child seems to be like the language development of the monolingual child. Dardjowojo (2000) added that infants learn from lexicon-one word utterance-two words utterance-multiword and then syntax. The writer agrees with such kind of statements, but the researchers did not elaborate many examples of code-mixing uttered by children clearly yet. Hence, the writer wants to prove it in the context of Indonesian child. The writer also wants to seek many factors which may influence the child to code-mix when interacting with other people.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In order to analyze bilingual code-mixing seen in the toddler's daily conversation, the writer would like to state one question as follows:

What type of code-mixing occurs in 3 year old bilingual child's utterances?

## **1.3. Objective of the Study**

Regarding the statements of the problem, the aims of the analysis of the thesis are:

1. To find out many types of code-mixing occur in a bilingual child's utterances.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

After the end of analyzing the study, the writer hopes to contribute knowledge to the study of bilingualism about codes and the type of code-mixing seen in bilingual children. Next, the writer hopes that it can contribute as a comparison for further study about code-mixing in Bilingual First Language Acquisition.

## **1.5. Scope and limitation**

In this study, the writer conducts a research in code-mixing based on the theory of BFLA proposed Genesee and Nicoladis (2005). The writer tries to

analyze the data in language mixing to find out the code-mixing that produced by 3 year old Javanese-Indonesian bilingual boy. The writer limits the data by taking the data for one month from May 11<sup>th</sup> 2010 to June 13<sup>th</sup> 2010. In doing this research, the writer tries to do deep analysis in phonological and lexical mixing instead of in syntactic mixing too. The reason is because Genesee & Nicoladis (2005) in their theory of code-mixing did not explain clearly about this type of mixing. They only stated that it is hard to identify the occurrence of syntactic mixing in young children because it is needed to concern about adult's and monolingual's language also. While there is still no clear agreement in defining the term syntactic mixing among other researchers.

Chengappa (2004) stated that syntactic mixing is the use of the grammar of one language with the lexical items of the other language. Otherwise, Nikitia (2008) defined that the distinction between the categories of noun and verb is central to the study of syntax, and accounting for mixed category constructions, which combine properties of noun phrases and verb phrases, is a challenge that any syntactic theory needs to address. Moreover, there is also no pattern which talked about the level of syntactic mixing in Indonesian language. Hence, it is difficult and need longer time to conduct research about this type of mixing because the sentence structure in English and in Indonesian language is different, so it cannot simply apply the pattern of English to Indonesian language.



## 1.6. Definition of key terms

✦ *Code-Mixing :*

The use of elements (phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic) from two languages in the same utterance or stretch of conversation. It can occur within an utterance (intra-utterance mixing) or between utterances (inter-utterance mixing). (Genesee & Nicoladis, 2005).

✦ *Bilingual :*

Bilingual speakers tend to use one language for some things and other language for other things, so while such speakers may have fairly balanced skills in both languages, they may rather specialized vocabularies for many domains. (Clark, 2003:565)

✦ *First language acquisition:*

The study of the processes of learning about the acquisition of native languages during the infant's period. (Clark, 2003)

✦ *Bilingual First Language Acquisition:*

A study which focuses on the acquisition of two languages all at once from birth. (Genesee & Nicoladis, 2005).

✦ *Javanese-Indonesian Bilingual Child:*

A child whose parents are native speakers of at least one of the languages either Indonesian or Javanese and habitually used that language with their children.

✦ *3 year old child:*

Child whose range of age are between 3;0-3;11 month.