

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In the process of language acquisition, when children have already master in producing clause, they start the new step in adding complexity within clause. Adding complexity is not simply a matter of length – more words and more morphemes (Clark, 2009). In this stage children can elaborate the use of verb by adding inflections or auxiliaries so they can make more various constructions with each verb. The knowledge of the use of inflection and also auxiliary includes in the knowledge of syntax.

Knowing the knowledge of syntax makes children able to form different sentences with different constructions but with the same information. Fernandes, Marcus, Nubila, & Vouloumanos (2005) stated that we can describe one single scene in more than one way by using a single verb in different syntactic frames. For example when an Indonesian child sees a cracker which is eaten by his grandmother he may say *eyang maem krupuk* or other possible sentence like *krupuknya dimaem eyang*.

The two sentences above have the same information but it is formed in different constructions. The first sentence is formed in active sentence and the second sentence is formed in passive sentence. It shows that sentence constructions can be used as alternative choice in doing communication. It is argued that children use active sentence when the actor is the information needed

in the utterance and use passive when the actor is not known or it is known but the speaker is not interested in it (Clark, 2009).

In understanding active and passive constructions, children do not only have to understand how words are placed in order but children also have to understand semantic roles of words in the constructions they are produced. In many languages, syntactic and semantic relations are expressed through word or morpheme order (Nicoladis & Rhemtulla, 2011). From those two constructions, it can be seen children's understanding not only in syntax but also in semantic roles. It is caused by the change of semantic roles in subject of active sentence to subject in passive sentence. Subject in an active sentence is an agent but in passive sentence, subject has a role of patient or receiver. Van Valin (2004) stated that in passive sentences the linking between syntactic function and semantic roles changes.

As stated above that active and passive are two different constructions which can be used in order to give the same information but this fact does not show that children can acquire these two constructions in the same time. Gaer (1969) investigated how three to six years old children produce and comprehend sentences. It is found that the order of production of sentence types was active, negative, question, passive. Passive is acquired later after acquiring negative and question. Passive is not acquired simultaneously with active sentence even though it is explained before that these two sentences have the same information or deep structure. This is assumed that children do not "know" the grammar well enough to recognize that these sentences both have the same deep structure (Gaer, 1969).

An interesting thing about active and passive construction is about the time in acquiring these constructions among children from different countries who use different language. It is found that English children have shared abstract syntactic representation of short passive and full passive and produced passive mostly in the form of short passive in the age of 4 (Messenger, Branigan, & McLean, 2011). Earlier than English-speaking children, three-year-old Sesotho-speaking children have already had abstract knowledge of passive syntax. Sesotho-speaking children produced more passive in their utterances that is assumed that it is influenced by their caregiver speech (Demuth, Molo, & Machobane, 2009). The latest time in acquiring passive is experienced by Hebrew-speaking children who are acquiring passive sentence when they are 8 years old (Berman, 1985 cited in Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

There are some previous studies done in this field. One of the study was held by Nasution (2009). Nasution (2009) by the title *Kemampuan Berbahasa Anak Usia 3-4 Tahun (Prasekolah) di Play Group Tunas Mekar Medan: Tinjauan Psikolinguistik* found that children in this age have already acquired how to form grammatically correct sentences. It is proven by the production of S+P construction that is mostly produced by all participants in simple sentences eventhough there is still another construction which is grammatically incorrect.

Another study by Maliq and Jumadi (2012) which investigated sentence structure and sentence types of 2-4 years old Indonesian children. They found that two years old children tend to use P+S construction of their utterances. Three years old children mostly produce sentence with P+S and S+P and four years old

children can produce more complex construction, which is S+P+O construction, compared to three years old children.

The similar study which is done by Yuniarsih, Ermanto & Emidar (2013) found 23 constructions. It is found that Indonesian children in the age of three to four years old tend to produce predicate construction. There are 93 constructions of P from the data transcribed. The example of this construction is *udah dipakai*. The second construction which is usually produced is S+P (37 constructions) for example *Bosnya lagi sibuk* and P+S (36 constructions) for example *keluar ibu*.

The previous studies gave attention to the sentence types and sentence construction depending on syntactic function which are acquired by 2-4 years old Indonesian children but they did not separate which constructions belong to which sentence types. The researchers in the previous studies analysed all sentence constructions produced by children without classifying them into specific sentence types. This present study gives attention to the construction of active and passive sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child.

The present study has a three years old Indonesian child as its subject because three years old child is the earliest time in acquiring passive sentence. It was found in Sesotho speaking children (Demuth, Moloi, & Machobane, 2009).

In this study, the writer wants to see how the construction of active and passive sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child because of the fact that these two constructions have the same deep structure but there is different assumption of the time in acquiring these constructions. It is also because of the short time which children have in acquiring these constructions.

The writer wants to know how a three-year-old Indonesian child uses the active and passive sentence constructions which are assumed to be different with adult but the construction which is produced can help them in communication not only with other children in the same age but also in the communication with adult. This study is still reasonable to be held even there are so many researches have been already done the reaserch in this field. It is caused by the inquiry in the children speaking Indonesian is still rare.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 How are the constructions of active sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child?

1.2.2 How are the constructions of passive sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child?

1.3 Objective of The Study

The writer disposes the objectives of the study are as follow:

1.3.1 To find out the constructions of active sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child.

1.3.2 To find out the constructions of passive sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child.

1.4 Significance of The Study

The present study may enrich our knowledge of language acquisition especially the construction of active and passive sentences produced by a three-year-old Indonesian child. Knowing the construction of active and passive sentences which are produced by the child can help us in understanding the way

children communicate. This knowledge may help parents to know what important steps happen in the first language acquisition of three-year-old Indonesian child. When parents know how the characteristic of sentence construction produced by children in this age is, parents can give appropriate stimuli to their children in the process of acquiring language especially the acquisition of syntax and later children are expected to understand well in receiving and using language. This study also may take along to and become references to the next study.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Active Sentence** : a sentence which its subject does something. The subject of the sentence is the actor of an action for example *Mereka berlomba menjadi yang terbaik*. There are two types of active sentence which is grouped by its verb. Those are active transitive and active intransitive (Putrayasa, 2009a).
- Passive Sentence** : a sentence in which logical subject is placed in the object position and the logical object is positioned in the subject position for example *Saya dipinjami mantel oleh Dani* (Putrayasa, 2009a)
- Sentence** : is a smallest unit of language in the form of clause which stands alone and has a complete idea (Putrayasa, 2009a).

Syntactic Function : the relationship between words in the sentence which has dependence relationship in forming sentence into a structure. This function relates to word order or phrase to the clause (Putrayasa, 2010).