



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Children's language development has some magnificent moments and milestones- from first babbles and words to the development of a sophisticated vocabulary utterance of complex sentences. Language is a wonderful tool that helps children in their adaptation to the world when they are trying to understand everything around them. As stated by Miller in 1981 (Cited in Hurlock, 1978), "language consists of a sequence of words". This description ascribes to language in two parts: the presence of words and sequencing. Although words are important in language, the presence of words is not enough to make a language. Sequencing of the words is also required.

Hurlock in "Children Development" (1978: 333) stated "As children develop during middle and late childhood, changes in their vocabulary and grammar take place". In this stage, a change occurs in the way they think about words. They become less tied to actions and perceptual dimensions associated with words, and they become more analytical in their approach to words. For example, when asked to say the first thing that comes to mind when they hear a word, such as "anjing" (Ind; meaning dog), preschool children often respond with a word related to the immediate context of "anjing". A child might associate "anjing" with a word that indicates its appearance (hitam; Ind; meaning black) or to an action associated with it (menggonggong; Ind; meaning bark). On the other





hand, older children more frequently respond to "anjing" by associating it with an appropriate category (hewan; Ind; meaning animal). The increasing ability of elementary school children to comprehend words helps them understand words that have direct relation with their personal experiences.

Children's utterances are not simply words that are randomly strung together but from very early stages reveal their grasp of the principles of sentence formation (Fromkin & Rodman, 1988:374). At first, children know the meaning of word then they may create simple sentences with clear and simple syntactic relation, too. By the development of their age and also their linguistic knowledge, they are able to improve the length of their sentences and their grammar acquisition until they are able to create sentences as complete and perfect as the adults'.

Sometimes we look at children's language development as a simple problem. We don't realize that actually the language process in their brain is complicated. Before they can create the sentence, they have to understand the correct meaning of the word. In this context, understanding means that the children have the ability to achieve a grasp of the nature, significance, or explanation of something and to have a clear or complete idea of words. It is just amazing to realize how the children's brain is "growing and developing." This case is related to cognitive development, the development of the thinking and organizing systems of the brain. It involves language, mental imaginary, thinking, reasoning, problem solving, and memory development.



According to Bee (1975), word is defined as any sounds or combination of sounds that the child uses consistently with a clear reference. Furthermore, word comprehension can be defined as the mental processes by which listeners take in the words uttered by a speaker and use them to make an interpretation of what they think about what the speaker have in mind (Psychology and Language: 1997-43). In other words, it is the building of meanings from words.

Further, Brown in Levin and Gibson (1985) said that children have more concrete terms in their vocabulary because it is learned in very concrete situation and children usually are only able to comprehend the familiar words around them because they can imagine these words in their brain well. In line with this, Jean Piaget also stated that the elementary students have ability to comprehend concrete words:

The third stage in cognitive development-the stage of concrete operations-extends from time children are 7 years of age until they are 11 years old. At this time, the vague and nebulous concepts of the preschool years become concrete and specific. (Santrock, 1998:355)

However, children need to comprehend words in order to be able to communicate with the society. If they are able to speak in words and grammatical structures understood by their listeners, they are ready to communicate with the society. Moreover, the children are also expected to have the ability to make written expression. As stated by Elizabeth B. Hurlock in "Child Development", when communication is by speech whether oral or written expression, it must be in words and grammatical structures that can make the listeners or the readers can understand (1978:163). Besides, children also make similar advances in grammar. The elementary school child's improvement in logical reasoning and analytical



skills helps in the understanding of such construction and by the end of the elementary school years, children usually can apply most of the appropriate rules of grammar.

The above reasons become the writer's consideration to use children's language as the object of the study, that is, how they create their sentences in written expression that can be understood by people in order to prove that the children can comprehend a word in accordance with their linguistic knowledge in their present age and also the way they develop their ability to produce sentences with a fully formed grammar. In addition, the writer focuses the research to "concrete" and "abstract" words, with ultimate purpose to find out the ability of 7-11 years old elementary students in comprehending "concrete" and "abstract" words. The writer chooses Indonesian as the object of the study because it is a compulsory subject in Indonesia as an instructional language. This means that children have to master Indonesian well.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the background of the study, the writer defines the problems as follow:

- 1.2.1. What kinds of Indonesian sentence patterns are made by 7-11 year-old elementary students using "concrete" and "abstract" words?
- 1.2.2. Do the 7-11 year-old elementary students comprehend "concrete" words more easily than "abstract" words?



1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statement of the problem above this study is intended:

- 1.3.1. To find out what kinds of Indonesian sentence patterns are made by 7-11 year-old elementary students using "concrete" and "abstract" words.
- 1.3.2. To find out whether the 7-11 year-old elementary students comprehend "concrete" words more easily than "abstract" words.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to provide a real description about the elementary students' language-skill, namely their ability to make sentences as indicator of word comprehension along with their cognitive development. It is expected that the result of this study will be of some use for the students of Linguistics and Psycholinguistics since this study has been purposed on the boundaries of these fields. It is also expected to increase students' knowledge about Indonesian structure analysis and may become a reference for psycholinguistics students who do studies on the relationship among the word comprehension and cognitive development. This study might also be useful for some professionals such as linguistic scholars, psycholinguists, and Indonesian elementary teachers.

1.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are three major theories of children's language development that support this study. First, Vygotsky's theory describes the relationship between thought and language in the children's language development; Second, Piaget's



theory which gives a clear picture about the word comprehension and third, Elizabeth's theory which explains the ability of elementary students in sentence production.

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian Psychologist in 1962 (Cited in Solso, 1995:388) said, "the development of thought in the child is evident in their language development". At one point Vygotsky wrote, "Language is a merger between outer speech the child hears and inner speech he thinks with". It means that language and thought are dual entities of a common phenomenon.

According to Jean Piaget (1980) Comprehension is one of the processes in Cognitive processes. He proposes a term called Cognitive Development. The third stage in cognitive development ~ *the stage of concrete operations* ~ extends from the time children are 7 years of age until they are 11 years old. At this time, the vague and nebulous concepts of the preschool years become concrete and specific (John W. Santrock, 1998:355). This enables children to begin to think deductively and categorize objects.

The third theory was proposed by Elizabeth (1978: 317) who stated that a child must build a vocabulary, comprehend the standard meanings of words and learn to use words as adults do to border the horizon of communication. The elementary students' ability in producing sentences is influenced by *infinite generativity*, an individual ability to generate an infinite number of meaningful sentences using a finite set of words and rules, which makes language a highly creative enterprise (Elizabeth, 1978:317).



1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

Clayton (1990) divided words into four categories: abstract, concrete, general and specific. Because of time limitation, competence and fund, the writer limited this study to reach the goal of doing this study. We know that there are many kinds of words, which exist in our language, *Bahasa Indonesia*. So, she focuses the ability of elementary student to comprehend "concrete" and "abstract" words.

The writer also considered that the data are still too much, so the "abstract" and "concrete" words that will be used should be focused on such situation. For example: words around the house, school and playing ground. The reason why the writer focuses on these words is because the writer has assumption that the children are familiar with these words.

The writer shows these words in the model test paper. In addition, she focuses on the ability of elementary students to make sentences based on Indonesian structure and to check the hypothesis whether the "concrete" words are comprehended more easily than "abstract" words.

1.7. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The method used in this study is *Qualitative*. According to Dabbs in 1982 (Cited in Berg, 1989), *Qualitative* refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphor, symbols and description of things. Here, the writer uses the *qualitative* method to describe the characteristic of the elementary students' sentence patterns in terms of "concrete" and "abstract" words.



The writer uses the **naturalistic sampling** to get the data of children's spontaneous use of language. Therefore, she tried to obtain the data in a familiar and comfortable surrounding that is in the children's own homes.

1.7.1. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer defines the following key terms:

1. **Abstract word:** a word that refers to an item that can not be apprehended by one of the five senses. For example, an idea or concepts like *justice, fear*, and so on.
2. **Concrete word:** a word that refers to an item that can be apprehended by one of the five senses. For example, the word *dog, table* and so on.
3. **Cross-sectional Approach:** a research strategy in which individuals of different ages are compared all one time.
4. **Naturalistic Sampling:** a method to get samples of a child's spontaneous use of language obtained in familiar and comfortable surroundings.



5. List of abbreviations:

Table 1.1

List of Abbreviations

Ind		Eng	
S	<i>Subyek</i>	S	Subject
P	<i>Predikat</i>	P	Predicate
O	<i>Obyek</i>	O	Object
K	<i>Keterangan</i>	Comp.	Complement
KB	<i>Kata Benda</i>	N	Noun
KK	<i>Kata Kerja</i>	V	Verb
KS	<i>Kata Sifat</i>	Adj.	Adjective
K.Bil	<i>Kata Bilangan</i>	Card.number	Cardinal Number
KT	<i>Kata Tugas</i>	Det.	Determiner
Ket. Alat	<i>Keterangan alat</i>	Adv.of instrument	Adverb of instrument
Ket.Waktu	<i>Keterangan waktu</i>	Adv. of time	Adverb of time
Ket.Cara	<i>Keterangan cara</i>	Adv.of manner	Adverb of manner
Ket.Penyebab	<i>Keterangan penyebab</i>	Adv.of causative	Adverb of causative
Ket.Tempat	<i>Keterangan tempat</i>	Adv.of place	Adverb of place
-	-	G	Grammatical
-	-	UG	Ungrammatical



1.7.2. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The location of the study is Surabaya. The writer chooses Surabaya for the location of the observation because it is easy to get the data. According to McCarthy (Cited in Menyuk, 1969: 18), the location of the study doesn't have direct influences on the result of observation because the word comprehension in children's language development is universal.

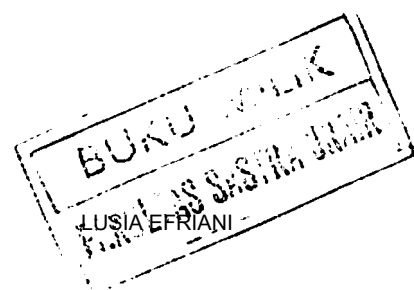
1.7.3. RESPONDENT OF THE STUDY

The respondents of this study are children of seven until eleven years old. Piaget's Theory (Solso, 1995:380) states that obviously a great deal language development and the ability to comprehend words have occurred by this age period.

Five children were chosen as the respondents of this study. The use of a small number of respondents is meant to observe the details of sentence patterns.

The respondents of the study are to meet the following criteria:

1. Normal children, having no physical or mental retardation.
2. Children of 7-11 years old.
3. Using Indonesian as their first language.
4. Attending elementary school.
5. Able to speak and write Indonesian well.





1.7.3.1. BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

This study concerns about the ability of elementary students in comprehending the "concrete" and "abstract" words. Besides, the writer would like to prove the "Piaget's Theory" those children of 7-11 year-old comprehend "concrete" words more easily than "abstract" words. This study has five different children with different ages: Child A represents the 7 year-old children, Child B represents the 8 year-old children, Child C represents the 9 year-old children, Child D represents the 10 year-old and Child E represents the 11 year-old children..

1.7.3.1.1. BACKGROUND OF CHILD A

The name of Child A is Davin Devira. At home, she is usually called Vira. The sex is female. She is seven years old. She is studying at SDN. Dukuh Menanggal II no. 245 Surabaya. Now, she is in the second grade.

Vira is the second daughter of Wida Kirana, S.Sos and Inna Watiningsih. Her father works as a government employee at Dinas Tenaga Kerja and her mother is a housewife. Vira has one sister and one brother.

Vira's family uses Indonesian Language at home but sometimes Vira's family still uses Javanese in daily conversation. However, her mother tends to teach her by using Indonesian language.



1.7.3.1.2. BACKGROUND OF CHILD B

The name of Child B is Agra Rahardiyanto. He is usually called Agra. The sex is male. He is eight years old. He is studying at SDN. Ketabang III No.290 Surabaya. Now, he is in the third grade. Agra is the first son of Yudi Sukardiyanto, Drs. and Desti Ratih, Dra. Her father is running his own business and her mother is a housewife. Agra only has one sister.

Agra's family uses Indonesian Language at home. Agra's family came from Solo. The boy is not allowed to use Javanese at home even in daily conversation.

1.7.3.1.3. BACKGROUND OF CHILD C

The name of Child C is Hendrawan Setyawan He is usually called Inggar. The sex is male. He is nine years old. He is studying at SDN. Ketabang III no. 290 Surabaya. Now, he is in the fourth grade.

Inggar is the second son of Eva Herwawan, S.E. and Titik Setyaningsih, S.E. Her father is running his own business and her mother is a housewife. Inggar only has one brother.

Inggar's family uses Indonesian Language at home but sometimes Inggar's family still uses Javanese in daily conversation. However, her mother tends to teach him by using Indonesian language.



1.7.3.1.4. BACKGROUND OF CHILD D

The name of Child D is Vivi Angelina. At home, she is usually called Vivi. The sex is female. She is ten years old. She is studying at SDK. Santa Theresia Surabaya. Now, she is in the fourth grade.

Vivi is the third daughter of Kalim Lie and Veronica N.G. Her father works as a private employee and so does her mother. Vivi has two sisters.

Vivi's family uses Indonesian Language at home but sometimes her mother tries to make conversation in Chinese with her children. When the writer asked Vivi which one is more difficult, Javanese or Chinese, she answered that Javanese is more difficult than Chinese.

1.7.3.1.5. BACKGROUND OF CHILD E

The name of Child E is Amelia Purwandini. At home, she is usually called Amelia. The sex is female. She is eleven years old. She is studying at SDN Ketabang I no. 288 Surabaya. Now, she is in the sixth grade.

Amelia is the first daughter of Amar Sukmara and Moerwanti. Her father works as a private employee and her mother works as a nurse. Amelia has two sisters.

Amelia's family uses Indonesian Language at home. Amelia's family came from Jakarta, so Amelia is difficult to understand Javanese and she can not speak Javanese at all.



1.7.4. TECHNIQUE OF DATA COLLECTION

In collecting the data, the first step is choosing the respondent of the study. The writer uses a *cross-sectional* approach in which she observes simultaneously some children in different categories such as age (Taylor, 1990:228). It means that this study has five different children with different ages. Based on the approach, Child A represents 7 year-old children, Child B represents 8 year-old children, Child C represents 9 year-old children, Child D represents 10 year-old children and Child E represents 11 year-old children.

The second step is visiting the children in their house. First, the writer did a pre-observation to find the children who agree to participate in this study. Then, the writer asked the children's mothers to fill up the data form. This data form is addressed to the parents in order to know the children's background.

After the writer got the permissions from their parents, she conducted the research in three weeks. The schedule of the research was as follows:

Table 1.2

The Schedule of Research

Week	Topic	Child A	Child B	Child C	Child D	Child E
I	House	14-07- 2003	15-07- 2003	16-07- 2003	17-07- 2003	18-07- 2003
II	School	21-07- 2003	22-07- 2003	23-07- 2003	24-07- 2003	25-07- 2003
III	Playing Ground	28-07- 2003	29-07- 2003	30-07- 2003	31-07- 2003	01-08- 2003



The writer gave a list of 5 "concrete" and 5 "abstract" words based on the topic in every meeting. She asked the children to mark the words that the children know well.

After the children marked the words, the third step was to ask the children to make sentences based on the words that had been marked. Briefly, the procedures in collecting the data are:

1. Choosing the respondents.
2. Doing Pre-observation and asking the children's mothers to fill up the data form.
3. Giving a list of 5 "concrete" words and 5 "abstract" words of each topic.
4. Asking the children to mark the words.
5. Asking the children to make sentences based on the words that have been marked.

1.7.5. TECHNIQUE OF DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting and selecting data, the writer began to analyze the data. In this analysis, she analyzed the sentences that have been made by 7-11 years old children, based on Indonesian structure proposed by Udiati Widiastuti (1995).

First, the writer classified the data according to their ages and based on "concrete" and "abstract" words. Second, the writer tried to interpret the structure of the sentences that have been made by the children.



Finally, the last step is drawing conclusion of the result of the analysis. To sum up, the procedures of the data analysis are:

1. Selecting the data (focus on grammatical sentences)
2. Classifying the data in accordance with their age and based on "concrete" and "abstract" words.
3. Interpreting the data.
4. Drawing conclusion of the result of the analysis.
5. Making tables of the Indonesian sentence Patterns that have been made.

1.8. ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

The writer presents this study in four chapters. Each chapter is described as follows: The first chapter is an introduction. It is divided into eight subchapters: background of the study, statements of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation, method of the study and the organization of the paper itself.

The second chapter is literature review. The writer reviews the theories used in this study in more detail. The third chapter is presentation and analysis of the data. Here, the writer presents the findings of the data collection and the analysis of the data. The last chapter is conclusion. The writer concludes the result of this study in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mulli Jusu