

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Up to age 1, a child is called an **infant**. The term is derived from Latin which means “being without language” (*in* = “without”, *fant* = “speech”). To some people of Africa, a newborn child is a *kuntu*, a “thing”, not yet a *mntu*, a “person”.¹ Based on the thought, a child needs language to become “human”. Of course, the word “human” here is not meant literally but more likely from psychological point of view since the language is used as a marker of someone’s maturity.

Basically, a child needs a language to communicate with other people as language is a system of signs (e.g., speech sounds, hand gestures, letters) used to communicate messages (Taylor, 1990:5). An infant uses prelinguistic means such as crying, gestures, and vocalization, to communicate his² few physical and social needs to people close to him. Since he becomes older and his needs grow, that prelinguistic means is not satisfying anymore. As a toddler, he starts to learn how to pronounce speech sounds and use individual words. He tries to make understandable utterances. Like any other human beings, a child has desire for understanding from others.

¹ The illustration is taken from Fromkin & Rodman (1988:4)

² *He* and *his* are consistently used to name a child in general: referring to both masculine and feminine

At the beginning of his speech development, a child only has one means of verbal communication: crying. By the time he is six to eight weeks old, he begins to coo in response to pleasant sensations. By the time he is three to six months old, the child begins to babble. Babbling infants are interesting to observe because they utter babbling sounds which consist of all sounds of human speech: the complex click sounds found in some African languages, the 'hard' sounds of German, the changing pitch of some Oriental languages, and the soft trills of French (Crystal, 1989:370). Only at the end of the first year, a child produces sounds like the native language of the parents' language.

This study concerns with the early speech development of young children within the second year of life. Within this period, the utterances have become more 'grammatical' (eventhough most of them are still ungrammatical). The grammar development of children are divided into three stages: single-word utterances (around 1;0-1;6), two-word utterances (1;6-2;0), and sentence structure (Crystal, 1989:242). **Single-word utterances** hardly seems like grammar at all, since only single words are involved. Most words used seem to have a naming function and will develop into nouns. **Two-word utterances** are considered the indicators of real grammar. This tends not to happen abruptly, as there is usually a transitional period in which words are brought together, but the sentence is not uttered as a single rhythmical unit, or the lengthy one in quick succession. At the end of the second year, two-word utterances

emerge with great confidence and increasing frequency. By then, they start to build sentences. Above two years old, the utterances are improved rapidly both in vocabulary and grammar.

Many developmental psycholinguists agree that language acquisition of young children is affected by three variables: 1) the language to be acquired, 2) the child who acquires it, and 3) the setting where he acquires it (Taylor, 1991:230). The main focus of this research concerning the last two variables: the child and the setting where the child acquires the language.

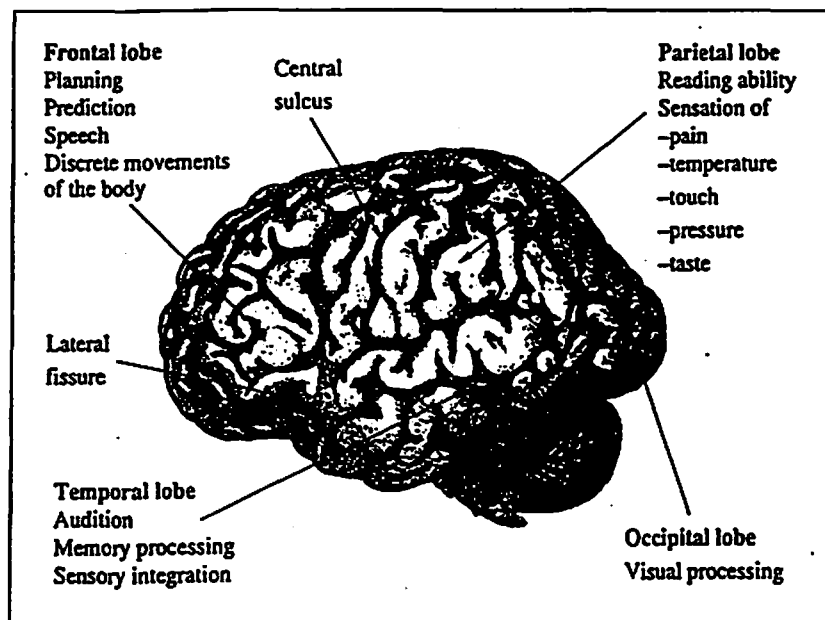
The child who acquires language is able to do so because he has an adequate physical endowment: he has the biological foundations of speech. According to Lenneberg (1967:33), the biological foundations consist of two major parts. First part is named the **central nervous system**, which is in the brain. Human brain is the most advanced among all species because of the **cerebral cortex**. The human brain has the greatest proportion of cortex to brain mass of all animals. It is the human cortex that accounts for our distinctness in the animal world and it is within the human cortex that the secrets of language representation and processing are to be found (O'Grady et al., 1991:341).

The most important orientation points in mapping the cortex are the folds on its surface. The folds of cortex have two parts: **sulci** (singular: **sulcus**) which are areas where the cortex is folded in, and **gyri** (singular: **gyrus**) which are areas where the

cortex is folded out toward the surface. A very prominent sulcus which extends from the front of the brain to the back is called **longitudinal fissure**. Longitudinal fissure separates the **left and right cerebral hemispheres**. Most right-handed individuals have language represented in the left cerebral hemisphere, but the right hemisphere is still responsible for complex language abilities. The main connection between the left and right hemispheres is a bundle of nerve fibers known as the **corpus callosum**. Figure 1.1 shows the left hemisphere seen from the outside and some of its substructures called lobe.

Figure 1.1

Left hemisphere,
the location of each lobe,
and its specialized
functions



Source : O'Grady et al. , 1993:344

The maturation of the cortex of the brain enables a child to speak. However, a child still needs his peripheral system to do so. The peripheral system covers the face, mouth, nasal and oral cavity, pharynx, hypopharynx, larynx, and all the articulatory organs. In table 1.1, some of the more commonly occurring speech sounds together with the morphological correlates involved in their production are summarized.

Table 1.1 Speech Sounds and Articulatory Organs Involved in the Production

Groups of Widely Occuring Speech Sounds	Structures Involved in Their Production
p, b, m	Muscular rim in lips; muscles of cheeks; nasopharyngeal sphincter
f, v, w	Vertical positions of incisors; reduced canines; muscles of lips
t, d, n	Position of teeth and alveolar ridge
k, g	Bulging of tongue with ability to raise back
l, r	Blade of tongue with great facility for changing shape of its cross section
Vowels	Muscles in corner of mouth; small mouth; twisting of vocal folds in adducted position

Source: Lenneberg, 1967:51

Another factor that affects child's language acquisition is the setting in which the child acquires the language. A child is able to speak because he grows up in a *speech-filled environment*.³ The environment is dominated by the mother, especially if

³ The term speech-filled environment is taken from Taylor (1991:226)

the mother babysits the child by herself. To this point, Taylor stated that up to the second year of life, mother is still the pivot of a child's communicative activities (1991:227).

According to Ryan (1974:199), mother 'picks up, interprets, comments on, extends, repeats and sometimes misinterprets what the child has said.' She speaks in such a way to make it easy for the child to acquire language. Mother treats the child as if he is able to speak. She regards the child as her partner in the conversation by treating any kind of sound: burps, wheezes, random vocalizing, babbling - as the contribution to the conversation (Holzman, 1993:26). Some psycholinguists believe that the mother's treatment helps the child to acquire language.

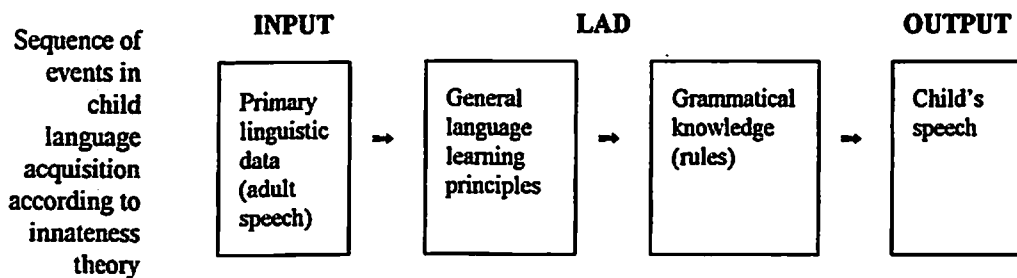
The way a child develops his state from being without language to the moment he masters his first language --with the help of his biological foundations of speech and the setting dominated by his mother-- is amazing to describe. It seems he does it mostly by listening to the spoken language he hears from his surroundings. He learns how to derive meaning from the sequence of sounds and analyzes the speech using his own thought. Many scientists were interested in the child's speech development and they proposed some theories, some of which are stated below.

The first theory on language acquisition was introduced by B.F. Skinner (1957), a psychologist. Language acquisition is thought as a process of **imitation** and **reinforcement**. Children learn to speak by copying utterances heard from their

surroundings, and by having their responses strengthened by repetitions, corrections, and other reactions that adults provide. The weakness of this theory is that it cannot explain the rapid increase of child's vocabulary, some of which are never uttered by any adult.

The second one, the innateness theory, emerging in 1960s, was introduced by Noam Chomsky.⁴ The innateness theory occurred because of the limitations of the imitation and reinforcement view. In the innateness view, it is argued that children must be born with the innate capacity for language development. Chomsky's idea on language acquisition can be drawn in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2



The third theory argues that language acquisition must be viewed within the context of a child's intellectual development. Linguistic structure will emerge only if

⁴ In 1965, Noam Chomsky wrote a book titled *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in which he introduced the idea that children must be born with an innate capacity for language development, called LAD (Language Acquisition Device). It works like antenna, whenever a child is exposed to speech, certain general principles for discovering or structuring language automatically begin to operate.

there is an already-established cognitive foundation. Jean Piaget, a noted Swiss psychologist (in Crystal, 1989:234), has suggested that cognitive capacities shape language acquisition. However, it is difficult to show precise correlation between specific cognitive behaviors and linguistic features at this early stage.

The fourth theory is related with external language input provided by mother as a child's pivot environment. Mothers' or caretakers' speeches addressed to infants and toddlers are called *motherese*.⁵ In the awake of innateness theory proposed by Chomsky, the importance of motherese was minimized. Fortunately in 1970's, there were some studies which showed that motherese is as complex and significant as the proponents of innateness theory. Some of the linguists whose input theories are quoted in this study are Ryan, Holzman, Harris, Fletcher, Ferguson, Taylor, and Crystal.

Steven Pinker⁶, a linguist from MIT, criticizes that parents and caretakers have wasted too much time and energy, conversing with infants, when it cannot accelerate the children's learning of language. In fact, some people disagree with him. Most people believe that mothers and their motherese play useful role in all areas of their children's language development. The question is: how influential their role is.

⁵ Started from this point, maternal input would consistently be called motherese

⁶ Steven Pinker is a follower of Noam Chomsky. He wrote a book, *The Language Instinct*, in which he stated some controversial ideas. One of his statements which attracted my interest was his belief that teaching children to speak was as teaching children how to walk: it was useless; the instinct would guide the children anyway.

In this study, I would like to contribute some ideas on how influential motherese is through my observation on some Indonesian children who are acquiring their first language at the moment. During the observation, I learn that it is hardly possible to analyze one-year old children's utterances in isolation, without paying attention to the context and the motherese. Therefore, I agree with Harris that children's early speech development and the role of motherese should be studied using discourse analysis approach. Without understanding discourse, it would be very difficult to analyze children's speeches for most of the speeches seem meaningless during the first two years of life.

I do my investigations following the lead established by Paul Fletcher (1985) as described in his book *A Child's Learning of English*. Anyhow, different from Fletcher's research, I use cross-sectional approach with three children (aged 1 to 2 years old) and their mothers join in the research.⁷ Those people are taken from middle to upper socio-economic class. The setting of the investigations are the place the children have known: their houses. The data collection was done from November 1996 until May 1997. The data collection covers three activities: asking for the history of the child's speech development, observing the children using natural setting, and eliciting the children when the data are ambiguous.

⁷ Following Fletcher's lead, in the "investigation" the role of observer is minimized. Nonetheless, since the mothers are not linguists, sometimes it is necessary to join their conversation in order to gain the appropriate data.

In analyzing the data, instead of using LARSP as Fletcher did, I use discourse analysis approach as the main aid. In the analysis, I concern about the **pronunciation, vocabulary** including personal pronouns and deictic words, and **sentence-form**, concerning the context of the conversations. I also observe how the children deal with **questions and commands**. Furthermore, the acquisition of discourse skills are also noticed. The role of motherese is analyzed through the transaction between the mother and her child: how the mother provides a model for the child and whether she adjusts her spoken language with the child's spoken language. I would like to show how motherese contributes to the children's early speech development.

I should remind the readers that there might some discrepancies arose since the study is done based on English references, while the objects are Indonesian children. However, since language acquisition is universal, some theories proposed on it should be applicable to all children and languages in the world.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Motherese has a role in guiding children how to acquire their first language. In this study, the role of Indonesian motherese in Indonesian children's early speech development is described. To know the importance of motherese, some problems are discussed in this study and they are defined as follow.

1.2.1 How does Indonesian motherese influence the children's acquisition of Indonesian language in the pronunciation, basic vocabulary, sentence-form, and discourse skills?

1.2.2 How do the children's early utterances influence motherese?

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1.3.1 To discover the way Indonesian motherese influences the child's acquisition of Indonesian language: his pronunciation, his basic vocabulary, his sentence-form, and his realization of grammar

1.3.2 To find out how communication between mother and child might help the child's development of discourse skills: exchanging turn in a conversation, dealing with questions and commands

1.3.3 To find out whether the child's early utterances provide feedback that results in the adjustment of motherese

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

I would like to contribute some ideas about child's language development which are taken from several findings occurring in my investigation. The role of

motherese should not be denied and hopefully through this study its significance in the child's early speech development could be justified.

This study would be useful for people who are interested in developmental psycholinguistics. Many studies in psychology have been done to describe the importance of parents and child contact in developing the social and psychological behaviour, but only few researches have been done to explain its effects in the development of complex linguistic abilities. This study itself only covers limited aspects, but hopefully it has some fruitful information that might encourage further researches in developmental psycholinguistics.

Teachers who teach foreign languages may also take advantages from this study. The advocates of direct method⁸ believe that adult L2 learners can learn a second language in essentially the same way as children learn their mother tongue. This study might help them to get deeper understanding on the topic.

Anyhow, it would be my highest pleasure if this study could be useful for parents and caretakers because they are the people who are closely related with children in daily life. It would be an advantage when they know a little how their children develop their linguistic abilities and skills and they could contribute whatsoever needed to support the children in improving themselves.

⁸ The direct method, which originated in the seventeenth century, was revived in the 1900s as an alternative to grammar translation method. L2 learners are expected to be able to learn second language in essentially the manner as a child. Beside those two methods, there are two other methods known: the audiolingual method (popular in 1950s) and communicative language teaching method (popular during the past decade).

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this subchapter, some theories which are related to this study to some extent are stated. The theories deal with the language development of children, the motherese, and the discourse analysis which is used as a tool in analyzing the data.

1.5.1 THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

In *Developmental Psychology Today*, it is stated that children who acquire language are able to respond to language within the first early months. However, most children are at least a year old before they can produce sounds that can be identified as words because "it is much easier to perceive auditory discriminations than to acquire motor control over the various muscles and organs involved in producing speech" (McCarthy in Schell and Hall, 1983:189). In the same book, it is even clearer stated that:

Babies seem born prepared to respond to speech, and within the first month of life human sounds have a special significance for them. Small babies can make fine distinctions between speech sounds, an ability they lose if the distinctions are not used in the language they hear about them. Babies progress from crying to babbling to speech, and until intonational differences appear near the end of the first year, the vocalizations of children from all language communities sound alike. The pronunciation of first words is not stable, but gradually becomes so as a result of auditory reinforcement (Schell & Hall, 1983:205).

In Table 1.2, the child's language development is summarized together with the prelinguistic features they perform.

Table 1.2: The Child Development of Language

Average Age	Child's Language Development
12 weeks	Smiles when talked to; makes cooing sounds
16 weeks	Turns head in response to human sounds
20 weeks	Makes vowel and consonant sounds while cooing
6 months	Cooing changes to babbling
8 months	Certain syllables repeated over and over again
10 months	Can tell the difference between a few adult words
12 months*	Understands some words. May say "mama"
18 months*	Can speak between 3 and 50 words
24 months*	Has vocabulary or more than 50 words. Uses some two-word phrases
30 months	Vocabulary increases to several hundred words. Phrases of three to five words.
36 months	Vocabulary of about 1.000 words
48 months	Language is well established

Source: Baron et al. (19__ :371)

*) The participants of this research belong to the age categories 12 - 24 months

To these landmarks, please pay attention that the accomplishment of these figures is not a must. Most children would depart from them to some degree. It is also important to notice that these figures are summarized by Western psychologist based on observations on Western children. These figures might not be fully applicable for Indonesian children.

As we see from table 1.2, within the second year of life, the utterances of children become more grammatical. The grammatical development of children are divided into three stages: single-word utterances (1;0-1;6),⁹ two-word utterances (1;6-2;0), and sentence structure (Crystal, 1989:242).

⁹ The number before semi-colon shows the age in year old and the number after semi-colon shows the months passing the years

Single-word utterances hardly seems like grammar at all, since only single words are involved - utterances such as *mama*, *dada*. Sometimes longer-sounding utterances are heard, but these are deceptive: they have been learned as whole phrases, and the children use them as if they were single units. The single-word stage is most noticeable between 12 and 18 months. Most words (60%) used in this **holophrastic** phrase seem to have a naming function and will develop into nouns. Some others (20%) express actions. At this stage, word classes such as adjectives and adverbs, and personal-social words are found.

In many respects, single-word utterances function as if they were sentences. For example: one child uses the word *papa* (pronounced [pʌpʌ], Indonesian word to address male parent) in three ways. As he hears someone approaching outside, he says "Papa?" with rising intonation. As he sees that it is indeed his father, he says "Papa" with a triumphant, falling intonation. And then he says "Papa!" with an insistent intonation, with his arms stretched (Crystal, 1989:242). At a later stage in development, these three functions would be called **question**, **statement**, and **command**. At this stage, these utterances do not have distinctive forms, but the use of prosody and gestures conveys the force of these sentence type nonetheless.

For most people, **two-word utterances** are the indicators of real grammar. There is usually a transitional period in which words are brought together, but the sentence is not uttered as a single rhythmical unit anymore, for example "*Papa*.

Pergi." (Ind., *pergi* = "go", "went", or "gone") or the lengthy one in quick succession such as "*Papa. Pergi. Papa. Papa. Pergi.*" But soon two-word utterances emerge with great confidence and increasing frequency. Based on these two-word utterances, later the children start to expand their utterances so they become more like adults.

1.5.2 MOTHER AND THE ROLE OF MOTHERESE

Mothers do not talk to children in the same way as they talk to other adults. They use motherese in the communication with children. This phenomenon seems universal since its occurrence is recorded at least in fifteen cultures all over the world (Ferguson in Schell and Hall, 1983:194), including Indonesia.

According to Taylor (1991:237), motherese has many characteristics, of which the most important ones seem to be:

- 1) Short MLUs¹⁰ (see table 1.3)
- 2) Many questions and commands
- 3) Baby words
- 4) High redundancy and repetitions
- 5) Exaggerated prosody
- 6) Reference to objects that are here and now

Most of these characteristics of motherese seem to be designed, intuitively or deliberately, to make speech easy for toddlers to understand and acquire.

¹⁰ Measuring the Mean Length Utterance (MLU) has been one of the most widely practised indices of grammatical development in young children. The total number of utterances in a object is divided by the total number of words (in the same procedures) or morphemes (in others).

Table 1.3 : Mean words per minute spoken by mothers to children and adults

	Free play	Storytelling	Conversation
Mothers to youngchildren	69.2	115.1	-
Mothers to older children	86.2	127.5	-
Mothers to adults	-	-	132.4

Source: Broen, 1972

Motherese is created by adapting language in order to give the child maximum opportunity to interact and learn. Several of these adaptations have been noted after Ferguson (in Crystal, 1989:235):

■ The utterances are considerably simplified, especially with respect to their grammar and meaning. Sentences are shorter: one study showed that the average length of maternal sentences to 2-year-old was less than four words - half that found when the mothers talked to other adults. There is more restricted range of sentence patterns, and a frequent use of sentences 'frames' (such as *Where's _____? Or That's a _____?*). The meanings are predominantly 'concrete', relating to the situation in which mother and child are acting.

■ There are several features whose purpose seems to be clarification. Extra information is provided that would be considered unnecessary when talking to other adults. Sentences are expanded and paraphrased and may be repeated several times. The speed of speaking is much slower than that used to other adults.

■ There is also an expressive, or affective, element in motherese, shown by the use of special words or sounds. Diminutive or reduplicative words are common. There may be special use of individual sounds, such as the use of rounded lips in English, or special palatal sounds in Latvian and Marathi.

Another of Ferguson's views on the characteristics of motherese was summarized in Fletcher (1985:36) using three terms: simplifying, expressive identifying and clarifying processes. The term **simplifying** refers to reductions in

complexity, either **paradigmatically** (for example, by reducing the range of inflections used or the number of phonemic contrasts available), or **syntagmatically** (for instance, by simplifying consonant clusters, or using restricted range of sentence structures). **Expressive-identifying** processes 'add affect to utterances' - as in the use of diminutives - or mark out in some way the speech being used, perhaps to get and gain the child's attention. The most commonly noted feature of baby-talk in English under this heading is the high fundamental frequency of a mother's speech to her young child. **Clarifying** processes are those which are said to add redundancy to the message. Repetition and expansions by the mother would come under this heading. In phonology, the use of exaggerated pitch contours (see Garnica, 1977) and the complex of processes that are the consequences of speaking more slowly are referred as 'clarified'. Hence, the speech addressed by the mother to the child is claimed to be important for phonology, lexical and syntactic representation.

According to Fletcher himself, motherese is used by mothers to teach children about aspects of language, one of which is syntax.

"At the notion that motherese is a register by which the mother teaches the child syntax, by constantly adjusting the complexity of her utterances so that they are one step ahead of the child's current level of organization, is to attribute a more central role to syntax, and a more conscious control of language by mother, than seems reasonable. It is now generally agreed that mothers have as a primary aim in establishment and maintenance of communication with the child; the modifications which are undoubtedly present function to facilitate comprehension by the child and so to serve this primary aim. There is, however, no reason why the kinds of modifications made should not, as a by-product, have some relevance for the course of language development." (Fletcher. 1985:39)

1.5.3 DISCOURSE AND THE ROLE OF CONTEXT

Language input to children came to be investigated in any details at the beginning of 1970s. One reason of the upsurge of the interest was the reawakening of theoretical linguistic interest in discourse. This led to approaches to language-learning which emphasizes that the child is a partner in a conversation, and which look at the interchanges between the child and the partner (his parents, siblings, or peers) for recurring conversational patterns and their development.

In conversation, the participants take turns to exchange information, views, and feelings. Children and their mothers also take turn to exchange their intention. A child learns to establish successful conversation by learning about turn taking since the early communication between him and his mother. It is made possible because mother often assumes the toddler's turn. As stated by Holzman:

- Mother does not wait for her infant to make wordlike sounds before she interacts with him verbally. A mother "converses" with her infants by treating any kind of sound - burps, wheezes, random vocalizing, babbling - as contributions to the conversation (Holzman, 1983:26).
- Mother 'picks up, interprets, comments on, extends, repeats and sometimes misinterprets what the child has said' (Ryan, 1974:199).

In **protoconversation**, a conversationlike exchange, an infant has opportunities to learn about **turn-taking** (Snow, 1977:12). A speaking turn consists

of all of the speaker's utterances up to the point at which another person takes over the speaking role (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson in Taylor, 1990:39). The next speaker knows when the current speaker has finished because the current speaker gives out turn-yielding signals in the form of a completed clause, accompanied by a falling or rising intonation with a drawled final stressed syllable and a silent pause.

Another prominent discourse skill that is discussed in this study is the way the child deals with **adjacency pair**. According to Coulthard, adjacency pair consists of two strongly linked utterances, one prototypical example is question-answer pair, which are produced successively by different speakers, the first speaker initiating and the second one responding (Coulthard, 1977). In the conversation between mother and child, mother is always the one who initiates in the conversation, as said by some scholars:

- In mother-child dialogues, the mother assumes leadership in creating and maintaining a semblance of dialogues from the beginning, and even as late as the third year of life (Kaye & Charney in Taylor, 1990:277).

Zukow et al. (1982) and Harris (1993) noted that many studies investigated the relationship between motherese and child's language development resulted in negative findings because the researchers "concentrated only on linguistic input and ignored the relationship between the language that the child hears and the **nonverbal**

context in which that language occurs". According to Hurford and Heasley (1988:68), "context is a small subpart of the universe of discourse shared by the speaker and hearer, and includes facts about the topic of the conversation, and facts about the situation in which the conversation takes place." Motherese might help child's early speech development because it refers to the context in which the child is doing his activities.

Evidence on the view that researchers should not concentrate only on linguistic input but also on the nonverbal context came from a study carried out by Harris, Jones, Brookes, and Grant in 1986. The main finding was that the mothers of the slower developers children had made significantly fewer references to objects on which the child was focusing attention at the time of utterances. A rather different approach, but led to a similar conclusion was conducted by Gordon Wells et al. in 1983. They found that children showing the earliest and most rapid language development received more directives and questions from their parents and more acknowledgement. They also heard more adult speech that referred to their own activities and to current household activities (it might be the reason why children who are not accompanied by caretaker and spend most of their time in front of TV may lack their language development; because television programs do not refer to the children's current activities).

Nonverbal context also influences children's vocabulary. Margaret Harris wrote some notes on children's early vocabulary development (1993:6). When children first start to produce words, the basic words are used in a context-bound way. Highly restricted, context-bound, word use is characteristic of early lexical development but not all basic word use is context bound. Context-bound word use can be contrasted with **contextually flexible** use. The critical distinction between the two is that, whereas context-bound usage is restricted only to specific behavioral context, contextually flexible usage is not. Contextually flexible usage may be divided into two categories: **nominal** (if the object is present) and **non-nominal** (if the object is not present).

Researchers may try as hard as they could to interpret children's early speech. Nonetheless, not all utterances produced by children in his early life could be analyzed grammatically, semantically, or contextually. We may hazard plausible meanings to their utterances, but definite interpretations are often out of the questions.

1.6 METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study is a qualitative study in which the relationship between motherese and child's early speech development is described. The data collection and data analysis are done in the notion that the data (spontaneous speech produced by mother and her child) are unpredictable. Each dyad may have their own characteristics in the

way of communicating. Therefore, the technique of data analysis varies from one dyad to another, from one recording to another, based on the data acquired.

1.6.1 THE DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The title of this study is *A Psycholinguistic Study: The Influence of Motherese in Children's Early Speech Development*. Some important terms are defined below to clarify their meanings and context. The limitation is added on the definitions as to explain the extent of this study.

1. **Motherese**, derived from the word mother, is the simplified and redundant form of speech with exaggerated prosody, used in talking to infants and toddlers, and designed intuitively or deliberately to make speech easy for the listeners to understand and acquire. In this study, the users of this variety are natural mothers who use it to communicate with their children during their childhood. In this study the use of motherese by fathers, caretakers, or siblings is out of notion.
2. **Children** in this study are Indonesian hearing human being 13 - 24 months old, who were born from low-risk pregnancy. Based on the history of their growth, the children participating in this study talk as soon as they walk, or they talk earlier than they walk. To avoid sexual difference factor, only female children are chosen.

3. **Early speech development** is the organized progress of stream of sounds, which occur within 13 - 24 months old.
4. **Basic words** are semantic units stand for familiar things or people, habitual activities, quality of things, which are used either contextually or non-contextually by children. Basic words are the most important for vocabulary because the objects are well differentiated from one another.
5. **Context-bound words** are words which are used referring to specific behavioral context. Highly restricted, context-bound, word use is the characteristic of early lexical development.
6. **Contextually flexible words** are words which are used referring to non-specific behavioral context. Contextually flexible usage may divided into two categories: **nominal** and **non-nominal**.
7. **Nominal** are term used referring to non-specific behavioral context when the object is present to the speaker.
8. **Non-nominal** are term used referring to non-specific behavioral context when the object is absent to the speaker.
9. **Sentences and utterances**. Although those two terms refer to different language forms, in this study both of them are pertained to the stretch of spoken language uttered by a speaker.
10. **Nonverbal context** is a small subpart of the universe of discourse shared

by the speaker and hearer, and includes facts about the topic of the conversation, and facts about the situation in which the conversation takes place. Nonverbal context is just called context in this study.

11. **Single-word utterances or holophrastic phrases** are single words or sentences which are treated as single units. The single-word stage is most noticeable between 1;0 and 1;6.
12. **Two-word utterances** are the utterances which are not uttered as a single rhythmical units, instead there are pauses inserted between the units of the utterances. The two-word stage is most noticeable between 1;6 and 2;0.
13. **Simplifying** refers to reductions in complexity, either paradigmatically (by reducing the range of inflections used or the number of phonemic contrasts available), or syntagmatically (by simplifying consonant clusters, or using restricted range of sentence structures).
14. **Expressive-identifying** is the process of adding affect to utterances as in the use of diminutives or mark out in some way the speech being used, perhaps to get and gain the child's attention.
15. **Clarifying** processes are those which are said to add redundancy to the message. Repetition and expansions by the mother would come under this heading.
16. **Turn-taking** is an activity in a conversation in which the first speaker

utters things up to the point at which another person takes over the speaking role. The next speaker knows when the current speaker has finished because the current speaker gives out turn-yielding signals in the form of a completed clause, accompanied by a falling or rising intonation with a drawled final stressed syllable and a silent pause.

17. **Adjacency pair** consists of two strongly linked utterances, one prototypical example is question-answer pair, which are produced successively by different speakers, the first speaker initiating and the second one responding.
18. **Question and answer** are prototypical type of adjacency pair; one speaker asking to get information and the other one responding by providing the information needed.
19. **Command** is the imperative expressions; one part orders the other part to do something and the other part responds by obeying or disobeying the order.
20. **History** is part of the first step in investigating the objects. The mother is asked what the child has been able to do in the language development. History refers to the record of the child's language accomplishment.

21. **Observation** is part of the second step in investigating the child. The observer watches the interaction between the mother and the child without involving herself.
22. **Experiment** is part of the third step in investigating the child. The researcher tries to elicit certain utterances from the child with the help of the mother.
23. **Party** is a group of people present in the current context of the observation and experiment. The party of each recording is mentioned at the beginning of each analysis.

1.6.2 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The research takes place in Surabaya. The location of the research does not have direct influence to the result of the study because language acquisition is universal and there are facts which show that every normal child will learn the language to which he is exposed.

1.6.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Every child is unique, and no psycholinguist has been able to draw general inference which could be applied to all cases of child's language acquisition. By recalling the objective of this study, this qualitative study is aimed to know whether in

each case, motherese has any influence to the child's early speech development and whether in the same case motherese helps the child to acquire discourse skills.

Population of the present study are children who come from middle to upper socioeconomic families. As Elizabeth B. Hurlock, a psychologist, stated in 1980:

“Children from the higher socioeconomic groups learn to talk earlier, they express themselves better, and they talk more than those from the lower socioeconomic groups. This is mainly because those from the higher groups are given more encouragement to talk and more guidance in learning how to do so.”

According to Frank A. Oski et al. in *Principles and Practice of Pediatrics*, lower socioeconomic status is one of the components of high-risk pregnancies and high-risk infants. The economic condition might influence the children's health and mental condition as well as their intelligence. Moreover, lower class people do not interact much with their children because most of them have to work hard outside the house to earn more money.

Three children and their mothers are chosen to participate in this study. The use of small size objects follows the lead established by Brown (Brown in Fletcher, 1985). The use of small size in this study is meant to record the details of the child's early speech development, the ones that might be lost if the research employs large size objects. The selection of the objects is done subjectively, based on the criteria required (see the criteria below).

Each child joining in this study has the following characteristics:

1. hearing human being

2. aged 1;1-2;0 (13-24 months old)
3. has one sibling or none
4. were born and grow up in Indonesia
5. both parents are Indonesian
6. were born from low-risk pregnancies

Each mother participating in this study has the following characteristics:

1. A married woman with alive spouse (not a widow)
2. Not an alcoholic or drug abuse
3. Non-smoker
4. Babysits her own child, or
5. gets minimum assistance from a caretaker from the extended family (the grandmother or the aunt of the child)
6. Not a professional worker who works outside the house
7. Has two children or less
8. An Indonesian and speaks Indonesian language fluently
9. A graduate of senior high school at minimum
10. Lives permanently in Indonesia

The objects are divided into three groups based on age: group A (aged 1;1-1;4), group B (aged 1;5-1;8), group C (aged 1;9-2;0). Each group is represented by one child.

1.6.4 TECHNIQUE OF DATA COLLECTION

In collecting the data, cross-sectional approach is used. Cross-sectional study is a study of a set of variables in a group of children of different ages, using different subjects for each age category. Based on that approach, child A represents the first four-months of the second year, child B represents the second four-months, and child C represents the last four-months.

Three children and their mothers are studied. Each dyad is studied for a period of seven months with no overlap period between two age-categories. The interval for recordings of the mother and child's language is two weeks, each comprising half an hour's material. Between two visits, the mothers are asked to make notes when the children show development in their speech, so no valuable datum is lost.

In details, the first step of the data collection is to choose the objects. The children are divided into three groups based on age. Each group has interval of four months.

The second step is to visit the objects. Each visit consists of three activities: asking the mother of the progress of the child's speech (the history), making half an hour recording of the mother and child conversation (the observation), and eliciting the child to check the progress observed by the mother and the observer (the

experiment). During the observation and elicitation, necessary notes about the interaction between the mother and the child are also made.

The third step is to ask the mother to fill in the record form when she finds her child utters new words or the child improves his utterances with reduplication, gesture, and any other interesting features.

The last step of data collection is to confirm the data with each mother, to ensure that the data are not misleading.

In short, the procedures in collecting the data are:

1. Choosing the objects
2. Visiting the objects:
 - a. asking the history of the child's language development
 - b. observing the interaction
 - c. doing the experiment (if necessary)
 - d. making necessary notes
3. Asking the mother to fill in the record form
4. Confirming the data with the mother

1.5 TECHNIQUE OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data are classified and the best recordings are picked out. Afterwards, the data are transcribed using orthographic transcription. This kind of transcription is

more practical than merely phonetic transcription. Nevertheless, the use of this sort of transcription make many of the children's utterances idealized. Therefore, some sounds, especially which are uttered by the children, are phonetically transcribed when necessary.

The data are analyzed using the theories proposed in the theoretical framework. The analysis is done per recording since each recording results in different findings. The data analysis is divided into several steps.

The first analysis is done on the pronunciation. The child's pronunciation is analyzed, whether it is similar to adults' words or not. It also questions whether the child simplifies clusters or any sequence of sounds that he might not able to produce. It is also analyzed whether Indonesian motherese exploits exaggerated prosody to get and gain child's attention and whether motherese is changed when the child is unable to imitate motherese. The similarities between the child and the mother's utterances are also noticed.

The second analysis is done on the vocabulary. It questions what words that the child acquires, whether the child's vocabulary consist of the objects that are 'here and now', whether the words are used when the object is present or not present. Related to the context, whether words such as deictic words, personal pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns exist in the child's vocabulary. The role of motherese is also questioned, whether it influences the child to pick up certain words to name things.

The third analysis is done on the sentence-form. Under this heading, it questions whether single-word utterances and two-words utterances occur in Indonesia child's language acquisition within the second year of life. The role of motherese is questioned through the sentence patterns, whether motherese consists of questions and commands that ease the child to realize some basic rules of grammar, whether the child follows the model or whether he draws his own conclusion arbitrarily.

The fourth step deals with the accomplishment of discourse skills. It questions how the child deals with questions and commands, whether mother always initiates the conversation, whether the mother intends, intuitively or deliberately, to teach the child about turn-taking and whether the child seems to realize the importance of it.

The last step of the data analysis is to draw conclusion both on the child's early speech development and on Indonesian motherese. Some comments are also stated here, covering interesting phenomena that occur in the study.

In short, the procedures of data analysis are:

1. Classifying the data
2. Transcribing the data using orthographic transcription
3. Analyzing the pronunciation
4. Analyzing the vocabulary
5. Analyzing the sentence-form

6. **Analyzing the discourse skills**
7. **Concluding the result**

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS OF THE STUDY