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A case study research on Justin Herald's language development

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Abstract: The first language development of a 4-year-old was the subject of this case study. Additionally, it examines the problems and processes that influence L1 development. Over the span of two months, the researcher observed and documented the subject's generated sounds, phrases, and sentences as well as how the learner responded to various linguistic stimuli to understand how the youngster internally interpreted them. According to the findings of the study, the child's phonological development should be taken into account and more emphasis placed on assisting the child in coping with phonological awareness in the target language, particularly in critical vowels and diphthongs. The child also struggled with language and communication, which were greatly influenced by his environment. Undoubtedly, a child's early language development is greatly influenced by the environment and its surroundings. To promote practical and meaningful language learning and growth, both parents and teachers should constructively profit from them at different phases of the process of learning.

Keywords: First language, Language acquisition, Language development, Mother tongue

Biographical notes: Genesis Gregorious Genelza is currently a faculty member at the University of Mindanao Tagum College teaching General Education, Professional Education, and Major Subjects in English. He graduated with a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English last 2016 and is a graduate of a Master of Arts in Education major in English (MAEd-English). He has been a Model United Nations ambassador and a delegate, receiving major awards for best position paper for UNHRC, UNICEF, and UNESCO; a special mention for WHO and UNESCO; and an honorable mention for UNICEF. Furthermore, his passion for learning and commitment to growing professionally, spiritually, and personally has been his constant priority and consideration.

1. Introduction

It is possible to learn a language. Humans are given the ability to produce 40 sounds, and because to genetics, our brain can build connections between sounds and objects, events, or concepts. These characteristics work together to allow for the development of language. A sound can have a life of its own. The infant's "ma-ma-ma" babbling sound develops into "ma" and ultimately "mother." Early in life, children learn through listening, practicing, and practicing. In reality, a young toddler's pleasant sounds of language practice—apparently random chatter—are a modeling of the rhythm, tone, volume, and nonverbal cues they notice in us (Lowe, Cho, Goldsmith & Morton 2021).

Language acquisition is the method by which people develop the ability to understand, produce, and use language for communication. It entails learning a wide range of skills, including syntax, phonetics, and a large lexicon. However, every typical youngster learns a first language effectively without requiring many professional sessions. Children seem to pick up language at a remarkably fast rate, with most children's speech being somewhat grammatical by the age of three, despite the fact that language development is a complicated and distinct human feature (Crain & Lillo- Martin, 1999).

The process of a child learning to speak takes time. A child already has spent months playing with language sounds and intonations and connecting words to meanings by the time he or she says their first significant word. Linguistic development happens in stages, with various kids progressing to each stage at a varied rate. However, usually always, these phases are completed in the same order (Linguistic Society of America, 2021).

Additionally, teachers in early childhood settings typically deal with kids who have communication issues. Numerous factors can hinder language learning. Examples include difficulty hearing, difficulty making connections between sight and sound, focus challenges, and a limited range of experiences. A child's language abilities are closely

related to the number of words and the level of complexity of the conversations the child has with others. To understand the connection between sounds and objects, a kid must hear. Make a connection between the sound and what it stands for after that. If a child hears few words and isn't read to, sung to, or talked to much, his language development will be hindered. Children who grow up in linguistically and cognitively deficient environments may have language and communication delays. The speech and language development of children who are neglected by their caregivers and are rarely conversed with may be completely undeveloped (Saffran, Senghas & Trueswell, 2001).

If offered the opportunity to hear, talk, and engage in complex conversations, these kids can catch up. Making sure that young children engage in a variety of developmentally appropriate language activities is the responsibility of the early childhood instructor. It is important to discuss any worries about impaired language development with the family and other school personnel in order to properly identify any potential causes. Many parents lack knowledge about what constitutes "normal" language development at various ages and are ignorant of it. Early childhood schools are among the most crucial settings for the early diagnosis of language problems (Short, Eadie & Kemp, 2019).

Furthermore, according to Genelza (2021), unskilled learners do not fully connect the phonological, morphological, and orthographic aspects of words. As a result, their mental representations of words are underdeveloped, which compromises their ability to read and spell effectively. In turn, subpar word reading and spelling make it difficult to use higher-level abilities like reading comprehension and reading vocabulary. In contrast, readers' word knowledge rises when explicit teaching of the relationships between difficult words' sound, meaning, and spelling structures is implemented, promoting literacy. Teaching academic vocabulary and difficult terms culled from subject-matter curriculum is thus one way to improve word knowledge and literacy.

Moreover, based on the researcher's observation on the participant, the child in his age, struggled to articulate well the words and how to express them accordingly. His acquisition and development on language had to have more exposure as to how the language should be used. There is a logical problem at the center of language acquisition of the child. The learner's input is too inconsistent and incomplete to determine grammar acquisition. Furthermore, when the child was given corrective feedback (by his parents), he often ignored it. With this, the researcher can ascertain a child's language development, learn how language is organized, ascertain the child's capacity to infer the linguistic structure from the insight that he or she receives, and ascertain the child's capacity to construct lexical characterizations in their minds in such a way that they are effective for both the perception and the production of spoken language. As a result, the researcher is able to suggest solutions to a child's language learning problem.

The study was conducted with the following objectives: to determine the language development of the child and if the participant has experiencing difficulties in using the target language, to identify the types of difficulties the participant's undergone and to provide recommendation to those problems.

2. Literature review

The challenging process of reading instruction can be significantly impacted by issues with phonetic decoding and sight word recognition, especially given that pupils are forced to read more challenging texts as they move through the school levels. Years of academic failure resulted in alienation from school and decreased motivation for many elderly struggle readers and speakers who never learned to "break the code," so it is imperative to assess and identify children who are still failing with basic phonological decoding abilities. These skills are efficiently isolated through the use of non-word and sight word examinations, ensuring that older, struggling readers and speakers who struggle with deciphering obtain the specific, intense coaching they need to get back on track to successful comprehension. As a result, understanding phonemics is highly recommended in order to correctly comprehend words through regular practice and instructor guidance (Genelza, 2022).

3. Method

This study employed a case study methodological approach. The case study is a suitable research method when "why" and "how" questions are presented, when the researcher has very limited influence over the occurrences being researched, and when the emphasis is on a contemporary phenomenon in a real-world situation (Yin, 2003). A qualitative case study is a research methodology that helps analyze a phenomenon in a given circumstance utilizing a wide range of information sources. It accomplishes this via a variety of lenses to reveal various elements of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

A qualitative case study research is holistic in nature, and a case study's goal is to reveal relationships within a social environment, system, or counterculture. According to Creswell (2007), a case study explores the interpersonal connections that exist within a circumstance. This kind of research uses the researcher as a research tool, clearly defines the researcher's function in the study, and addresses ethical concerns (Janesick, 2004).

Thus, in doing this study, the researcher tapped the language development of a child and how he utilized words to express his thought. The study focused on the following: Phonological differences, lexicon, morphosyntax, semantics and pragmatics of the child. To do this, the researcher was immersed deeply on this study by observing him for a day without controlling him and telling him what to do and speak. The researcher recorded a video with a consent of his parents but not letting him know that he was being recorded so that there was a natural flow of using the language on that day. The study enables the researcher to fully understand the research problem, which may facilitate defining, interpreting, and explaining a research topic or circumstance.

The researchers should be knowledgeable enough with the subject matter of their study to understand the key ideas and relevant conceptual and analytical issues, according to Yin (2009). They need to know why the study is being done, what evidence is being sought, what empirical deviations might be anticipated (and what to do if they do), and also what supportive and contradicting evidence are. Examples of specific preparations include reviewing the original case study concept, case study methodology, sample reports, and other data gathering chores. In addition to being sufficiently knowledgeable about the research issue, case study investigators should be able to evaluate information in real time and modify their data collection procedures to suit the case study.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. The case of Justin Herald

Language acquisition in children happens quickly, effortlessly, and without any formal training. It occurs on its own, regardless of whether their family makes an effort to teach them. Although they do not teach their children to speak, parents and other caregivers do have a big impact on their lives by talking to them. Never-spoken-to children will never learn how to communicate. Additionally, the language must be used with the child; for instance, a toddler will not learn to converse if they just hear the language on TV or the radio. Every typical youngster who is raised in a setting where there is conversation will pick up the language that is used there. A child can easily pick up two or more languages at once if they regularly interact with people who speak those languages. On the participant's side, the researcher's observations are, nevertheless, manifested in this way.

Justin Herald (not his true name), a 4-year-old boy, coming from a place of Bisaya, is more fluent in speaking the Bisaya language, hence his first language (mother tongue). He has certain awareness to the mother tongue that he knew often however, he sometimes struggled putting it into practice and even stuttered a bit when he talked. Normally, this occurs to this kind of age as the participant is still learning and imitating others regarding with the construction of words. With this, the following points are in thorough discussion in understanding the language context and situation of the participant:

4.2. Phonological differences

The table presented below simply shows the words that I find interesting for a thorough discussion and something different from what the child said. In the video, clearly, the child's first language is Bisaya and that he is more fluent in using it in a daily discourse than speaking English language. But at the same time, the child is using words that he had heard from external events just like his environment, his peers, or even in technology (like games, cellphone, television, and others). Thus, the child acquired language (either first language or foreign language) in predictable manner, conscious or subconscious process of acquiring it.

Table 1: Phonological differences: Words uttered by the child versus the standard words/phrase in Bisaya and English

Words being Uttered by the Child	STANDARD
nagkuan/kuan	word that substitutes for any unmentionable thing/what/the thing: to express uncertainty ummm/um/uh (English) – Interjection
To Si	Tito Sis (Genesis)
Kyaka	hala Ka (Bisaya) Oh, No! (English)
biya (pronoun) *biya (adverb)*	naa diha (Bisaya) there/therein/thereupon (English) a substitution for "baya" (Bisaya) good/really/truly (English)
Kali	kini (Bisaya) this (English)
Boyolet	Violet

The following are the words to be discussed thoroughly and to put too much attention because of the language variation the child uttered/used:

"Nagkuan or Kuan"

This is often used by a person nowadays. And since the child nowadays is good at imitating what an adult person do/used, he acquired a language subconsciously. In this notion, the word *"kuan*" is usually used as a substitute for any unmentionable thing/the-what/the thing: to express uncertainty. To be exact, the child based on the video, that he is using it for *"thinking time"* just like the standard form in English *"ummm/um/uh"* the so-called *Interjection*.

According to Caboncе (2011), "Kuan" is employed as a stand-in name when an item, person, time, quantity, quality, place, or activity is briefly forgotten, unrelated, being avoided on purpose, or intelligible to the persons involved in the dialogue based on context. Similar to how someone, anything, somewhere, sometime, so-and-so, etc. are used in English, roughly. The preposition or article used can help to clarify the original intent. For instance, while sa kuan can be used to refer to a time, location, or thing, si kuan will always relate to a person (depending on context and its position in the sentence).

"To Si"

This caught my attention all the time every time the child is calling me in a day-to-day conversation. This is just a shortened way of saying *"Tito Genesis"*. On my observation, this is simply part of a great deal of linguistic variability in producing a language, most specifically the term tagged as "morphophonemic process". The child is utilizing a dissimilation in this aspect of the morphophonemic process, which is a process where a sound becomes increasingly similar to another surrounding sound in terms of one or more of its phonetic features; a process where a segment takes the characteristics of neighboring sound (e.g., instead of saying Tito Genesis, the child uttered To Si).

Nelson (1964) asserts that although the sounds may differ from one speaker to the next and from one location to another, there is enough tolerance for the variation that any sound variant employed does not result in meaning discrepancies. According to this idea, even if a youngster removes a few letters from a word, the message will remain the same as long as the listener can understand it.

"Kyaka"

This word is so foreign to me since there is no absolute definition of it in Bisaya and in English. But when analyzing the context of the word the child said in the video, he is trying to say *"Hala Ka"* (Oh, no!) which I speculate that this is just his way of substituting the word into his own way.

There are seven stops: /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/ and /ʔ/. /t/ and /d/ are dentals, not alveolars. Alveolars are articulated with the tongue touching or brought near the alveolar ridge which is a small ridge protruding just behind the upper front teeth within the oral cavity. However, in Cebuano and Bisaya, these segments are pronounced as dentals and are articulated with the tongue pushing against the back of the upper teeth (Zorc, 1975).

With the notion presented, this shows that the child prefers to use "K" than the letter "H" since the letter "H" is a voiceless glottal fricative, and that the child may find it difficult to pronounce such words.

"Kali"

The same thing goes with this word in the above statement wherein the child used substitution. The word *"kali*" means *"kini"*, a pronoun word in English *"this"*.

According to Villamarzo, Relis and Cruz (2003), the child used substitution for they can easily pronounce a word in their own way. But it does not mean that the people around him/her will not give guidance and remediation to correct him for accuracy. There should sometimes have a monitor to correct him/her.

The child chose to utilize the letter "L" rather than the letter "N" when articulating the words "kali" and "kini" (place of articulation: alveolar; style of articulation: liquid) (place of articulation: alveolar; manner of articulation: nasal). As a result, it will be presumed that the infant has more liquid alveolar than nasal alveolar.

"Biya (pronoun) and Biya (adverb)"

These words caught my attention while filming the video, since the child used this word in a different manner and context but the same way of pronouncing it (same stress, pitch, and volume). Observe the following scenario:

- **a.** When he was watching TV ads: *"Naa biya si Sophia (a character from a Promise of Forever)"* Simply saying: in Bisaya – Naa Diha; in standard: there/therein/thereupon which he used it as a pronoun.
- **b.** *Justin: Gutom na To Si? Lami biya na. (Talking about the Buko Salad)*. In this context, he used it as an adverb that the buko salad is so really/truly good.

According to Cummins' Threshold theory from 1981, bilingualism's potential benefits on cognitive development are unlikely to manifest themselves until kids have reached a particular minimum or threshold level of competency in the second or foreign language. As a result, phonology—the study of language sounds—is crucial.

"Boyolet"

This is not new to a child learning English language in that kind of age since they are processing it. In this kind of morphophonemic process, the child integrate metathesis, a progression that rearranges or converses a categorization of segments. Instead of saying *violet*, he simply uttered *"boyolet"*.

On the other hand, observing the phoneme of the words being uttered by the child (boyolet) and the standard one (violet), there is a major difference on the initial sound of it. The child in this scenario, used letter "B" (a voiced bilabial stop) than the letter "V" (labio-dental fricative). It is not new to us since Bisaya does not have a letter "V" and that the child used instead the bilabial "B" in pronouncing the word "violet".

With this, it is important that there will be someone who will sometimes monitor the child's progress in speaking the language and at the same time there should be a comprehensible input with the use of scaffolding and the more knowledgeable others to achieve meaning learning not just in L1 but also in L2 (Krashen, 1988). Thus, the better the pronunciation, the more effective the communication becomes.

4.3. The Lexicon

Table 2 shows the lexicon being used by the child and the standard meaning strike through in English. Based on the table, the child is using his mother tongue to communicate. And that, the following words are in the point of consideration in this study why the child (Justin Herald) used it in his discourse.

The ability to speak is one of the most exciting features of human development since it allows us to communicate thoughts from one mind towards another. Numerous studies in developmental psychology, linguistics, and education have examined the rate of development and the stages of language acquisition, from the first monosyllabic utterances through the usage of complex, sophisticated, and context-specific components (Castello, 2015).

Language is an incredibly intricate system that is always evolving. Children learn their mother tongues rapidly and well, despite their complexities and immense variety. In this instance, the behaviorist claims that Justin adapts and imitates what he hears in his surroundings.

Table 2. Lexicon: Words being uttered by the child versus the standard words/phrase in English

Words being Uttered by the Child	STANDARD
Gidakpan	Being captured (English)
Kuan/Gikuan/Nagkuan	word that substitutes for any unmentionable thing/what/the thing: to express uncertainty ummm/um/uh (English) – Interjection
Nadira	There (English)
Daraay	Here (English)
Turaay	Over there (English)
Kyaka	hala Ka (Bisaya) Oh, No! (English)
Biya	naa diha (Bisaya) there/therein/thereupon (English)
Kali	kini (Bisaya) this (English)
Boyolet	Violet

Additionally, according to Lightbown and Spada (2001), acquisition takes place during a person's formative years, typically beginning in early childhood before the age of three, and that it is learned as a result of spending time with native speakers. In this way, Justin learned the language of the individuals with whom he is acquainted. Consequently, it is evident that the development of a language (which is also founded on behaviorist theory) involves conditioning through the use of imitation, practice, reinforcement, and habituation (habit formation), which together make up the stages of language acquisition.

Looking at the words the child uttered (for example, gidakpan, kuan, nadira, turaay, daraay, and others), he is more fluent in speaking his first language since he acquired it to the people around him. And since he acquired and used it in a daily discourse, he is more confident to communicate with others. At the same time, Justin is also making his words (for example, kyaka, kali, and others) may be because of his pronunciation or it might be what he hears from his peers. But the semantics of what he said is clearly understandable to the person he is talking since it somewhat connected to the context of what the conversation is all about.

Additionally, Chenu and Jisa (2009) noted that children acquire language in phases, with individual students reaching different stages at different ages. Despite this, all children are taught the same language in roughly the same order as typically developing children. As a result, Chenu and Jisa (2009) outline the stages as follows:

Table 3: Stages

1-4 MO	Babies respond to phonetic contrasts with no phonemic value in their language. But they ignore voice differences, unlike computers, which can't identify say, [u] spoken by a male and a female as the same sound. Cooing and crying the sounds of the human language.
4-7 MO	Babbling and gurgling sounds of the human language. Responding to sounds specific to household language. Prosodic features of L1 appear. If exposed to more than one language, children acquire those with prevailing social functions. Deaf babies hand 'babble'.
~ 8-24 MO	Human speech begins with sound strings with meaning. Holophrases—one-word multi-meaning sentences to express ideas, feelings, and social contact. Meaning is defined and differentiated in the context of here and now. Higher comprehension than production. Practice drills while playing in self-controlled situations. Vocabulary growth and parent imitation if parents expand on toddler utterances.
~ 15 MO	10 words in the active vocabulary
18 MO	Vocabulary spurt, 1-2 new words per day
18-24 MO	50 words in active vocabulary Two-word sentences. No markers. Pivot grammar Irregular form use. Self-talk in imaginary settings, pleasure practice.
24-36 MO	Telegraphese—three and more word sentences consisting of content words. Grammaticality through word order and intonation. Overgeneralizations and undergeneralizations of meanings and grammatical forms. Regularization of irregular verbs, nouns.
3-5 years	Competence begins to match performance. Grammaticality, complete syntactic structures. Complex sentences.
4 years	10-15 new words per day
7 years	20 new words per day, academic vocabulary. Registers and styles appear.
12 years	Overgeneralizations may continue.
Adolescence	Strive for "correct" or "cool" forms for social identity and ego enhancement.
Adult	40-60,000 words in active vocabulary.

The researcher can now see from this chart that Justin, at the age of four, can pick up and say 10 to 15 new words every day, at which point his proficiency starts to equal his achievement, and he can also construct grammatical structures in the language he used.

The usage-based theory of language proposes that children primarily develop their vocabulary through extremely concrete formulations based around individual words or frames on the basis of the speech they hear and use. This theory is related to the idea presented above. In essence, this means that children acquire language via their language experiences and that a language structure arises from language use, according to Tomasello (2003), the theory's creator. The usage-based approach holds that direct form/meaning pairs, or constructions, are the fundamental building blocks of grammar and contends that children acquire constructions by first mastering particular examples before generalizing and using them effectively with other lexical items. During the third and fourth years of life, constructs increasingly grow more generic and abstract, and grammar develops as a result of speakers of a language building linguistic constructions out of recurrent symbol patterns.

Furthermore, according to Kuhl's Native Language Magnet Model idea from 2005, young children pick up their mother tongue quickly and naturally, developing along identical developmental routes regardless of culture. Infants must learn to distinguish between nearly all of the phonetic units of the world's languages in order to learn which phonological distinctions will be used in the language of their ethnicity.

Language acquisition is the process by which people develop the ability to understand, produce, and use language in order to communicate. It entails learning a wide range of skills, including syntax, phonetics, and a large vocabulary. Nevertheless, every typical youngster learns a first language effectively without requiring many formal sessions. It is quite amazing given the difficulties and complexity of the system that the majority of youngsters in a language variety seem to succeed in converge on a grammatical system that is equivalent to everyone else in the community with few errors. Thus, in this notion, the child (Gabriel) is indeed imitating, doing habit formation, reinforcing, and practicing words so that he can use and apply it in his daily conversation regardless of the structure of the words he uttered as long as the meaningful connection is there.

4.4. The Morphosyntax

The child's utterances seem to develop communicative strategies in language skills as he coped with his environment and with the people around him. As he matured and learned, the child can produce morphemes from that target language, or his first language and it turns out he can now produce words then phrases and up until sentences. But, in order to understand his utterances, we must start with the morphemes he produced. Thus, using the Mean Length of Utterance proposed by Williamson (2009), we can govern the measurement of the child's words in relative to his morphemes he used. With the sentences, Justin produced during the filming of the video, we can now calculate the MLUs as follows by tallying the quantity of morphemes in the utterances.

So, there are 367 morphemes altogether. I now divide the total number of morphemes (367) by the overall number of utterances to determine the mean length of an utterance (83). Thus, 367/83 = 4.42 is the mean utterance length. What I need to do right now is figure out what age a child would exhibit mean utterance length that is comparable to what this youngster scored in table 4 when it was presented.

Table 4. Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) by Age. Source (Miller, 1981)

MLU	Age equivalent (within 1 month)
1.31	18
1.62	21
1.92	24
2.54	30
2.85	33
3.16	36
3.47	39
3.78	42
4.09	45
4.40	48
4.71	51
5.02	54
5.32	57
5.63	60

From the table 4 presented, the result lies between 4.40 – 4.71. Therefore, the child's MLU result would be expected in a child between 48 – 51 months of age. This means that the child appears to have an average length of utterances and since the child's age is also 4 (48 months). Thus, this suggests that the child's expressive language skills are developing along standard normal lines of a 4-year-old child.

4.5. The Sense of Meaning

Table 5. Semantics: Sample sentences uttered by the child together with the standard meaning in English

SENTENCE	STANDARD
Gipatay niya.	He/She killed it.
Ang mata… kay gipatay man siya ato.	The eye… the spider killed the girl.
Awa tuara. Dagko kayo.	There it is! So big!
Naay kuan dira, damang dako!	There is ummm... big spider!
Patay ang babae	The girl is dead.
Gutom na Tito Si?	Are you hungry Tito Si?
Lami biya na.	It is so delicious.
Damang na?	Is that a spider?
Ning sunod.	It followed. (Talking about the spider)
Dako mana siya	It is big.
Dagko kaayo.	It is so big.
Sa color ani?	What color is this?

Based on table 5 presented above, the child (Justin Herald), is using his first language to communicate easily with other people. The child's adaptation to language can be underpinned to the theory of Interactionism. According to interactionists, language can be used to create interpersonal bonds and carry out social interactions between people. In this view, exchange and interaction patterns can be used to specify and arrange the content of language classes. With the sentences being uttered by the child, I can conclude that in terms of semantics, the child knew what he's saying. He can understand the context he uttered since this language is more familiar to him.

According to sociolinguistics, sociolect, idiolect, and registers play an important role in a person's way of speaking. This means that society is one of the important determinants in language use. In sociolect, the ability of the speakers (in this case, the child) to alter their speech in order to conform to or diverge from the style of the person they are engaging with is known as speech adjustment. With this, we cannot understand sometimes the terminology being used by the speaker most especially to a child, since they are learning the language in their own paces. Some terminologies might be difficult to decode because of the following reasons: adaptation from the environment, creating his/her own word coinage, or the difficulty of pronouncing the words (just like the word violet as pronounced by the child as "boyolet). But in the child's case, the three reasons mentioned has highly been observed yet the meaning is there and comprehensible to the listener, most especially to those people he is connected and more familiar with.

Another variation in language use is the idiolect. Each person has a way of using his or her language. Speakers of the language do not speak the same way. This is influenced by one's family background and/or place of origin or residence. To the subject of this study, this is highly being observed because of the environment he is in and connected with.

Moreover, in terms of his register, another variation of his language use, I can say that it has to do something with the following assumptions I observed during the video taking: a) how formal or informal the language used, b) the theme or the subject of the discourse, and c) the social role of the participant. In addition, in terms to the sense of meaning, the child can understand to use deixis. Deictic expressions like the pointing function in his first language – for example., turaay, daraay, dira, dara and others. With this, the child can refer something within the same context of utterance with the use of the deictic expressions he knew.

Furthermore, looking at the table presented, the child is more familiar using the following lexical category: nouns and adjectives (more often). In his age, I can say that semantics is already there in him. Conscious or subconscious he is, with his age, he has now the understanding of the sense of meaning he uttered in a discourse within his own pace and capability of decoding the word. Thus, the child can understand the context of utterance in a daily conversation within his knowledge and assistance of the people around him. But a child must also accomplish three things in order to learn the semantics of a language: 1) recognize the pertinent linguistic terms, 2) recognize and comprehend the meanings these terms refer to, and 3) learn how the forms relate to the meanings. In order to increase their conceptual understanding of the universe, he must discover the relationship between forms and meanings at a moment in his life when both of these components are shifting targets.

4.6. The Pragmatics

It makes sense to assume that pragmatic knowledge can be taught. There is no argument that parents should not teach their children pragmatics or give them constructive criticism when they are learning a language. It follows that teaching children pragmatically is something that parents and even peers actively do.

Looking at the pragmatics of the child, the relationship of the sentences to the environment in which they occur is highly noticeable. Since the child preferred to speak in his first language, he is more fluent and comfortable to use the language in daily conversation. In the video, the child is not anxious to speak with the target language and he can easily deliver some sort of act appropriate to what he just said. For instance, when he said, *"Hala, nay kuan dira… damang dako!"*, we can simply decode it as something as a warning to someone, in this case, the child is watching a television giving a warning to the girl that there is a big spider in that area. Thus, the child knew what he's saying giving us the necessary act for that utterance.

According to the Speech Act Theory, which states that in every word of speech establishes some sort of performance. And with that, in the child's speech/utterances I found it as he more often used illocutionary act in his daily discourse based on the film being documented. The child here intends to do something by uttering a sentence. He is more on expressing something to his listener/audience (for example., giving warnings, being happy of what he saw, heard, felt, and others). At the same time, he was asking question to the hearer to provide information that he might feel

confused or need clarification. For instance, when the child said, *"Unsay color ani? Black? Yellow?"* he just meant to ask for clarification or an inquiry of what is really the color of that thing. With this observation gathered, I can say that a child knew how to act in the context of his utterance.

Another observation that I saw from him, is his conversational maxims. The child assumed when people communicate, they will be accommodating and they themselves wish to collaborate with him. For example, when the child asked me if I am hungry, he expect that I will be going to give him an answer to his question. Or even the conversation between his parents wherein he kept on asking them about something, the maxim of quantity is there and that you have to give him an exact answer or information to his queries.

On the other hand, implicature is also present in the child's utterance. Some statements simply imply that it is not part of the utterance and does not follow a necessary consequence to the utterance. The best example scenario of it is during the mother asked the child something he saw in the television. In that scenario, the mother asked the child about what happened to the spider and the boy answered differently and out of the context of the mother's question and that he answered *"Nagkuan ang babae… gidakpan."*. Clearly, the child did not understand the question raised by his mother and that perhaps of the setting he was in (for example., busy playing games, busy watching television, and others).

With the observation presented, I can say that the child's pragmatic learning is there and can be traceable to the utterance he projects. But, with some difficulty in understanding some complex statements from others, parents or even peers can be an active instructor for giving correct feedback to the child to avoid confusion. Needless to say, parents and other people around him can play an important role in his pragmatic learning.

With this, it is important that there will be someone who will sometimes monitor the child's progress in speaking the language and at the same time there should be a comprehensible input with the use of scaffolding and the more knowledgeable others to achieve meaning learning not just in L1 but also in L2 (Krashen, 1988).

Furthermore, the child's lexicon, morphological development, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic learning should also not be forgotten to give feedback because they are also part of making the child competent in using the language in a meaningful context of his daily lives.

Language is a type of cognition that actually sets humans apart from other animals. We transfer ideas from one mind to another through language, making language learning one of the most fascinating aspects of human development. Numerous studies in developmental psychology, linguistics, and education have examined the growth rates and phases of language acquisition, covering everything from the earliest monosyllabic utterances to the usage of sophisticated, nuanced, and context-specific patterns.

There are clearly numerous distinctions, and acquiring a language is far too complex an endeavor to be explained solely by a list of elements. These factors interact and impact one another to create learning experiences that differ between and within groups of children. Even though these earlier experiences should serve as a foundation for future developments, it is an understanding of how the underlying knowledge systems differ, as well as a greater sensitivity to language learners' innate capabilities and limitations, that can be used to improve the language learning experience.

5. Summary of findings

Language is an extremely complex system, which is continuously subject to change. Despite the complexity and the vast amount of variation, the child learned his mother tongue quickly and efficiently. With the observation being gathered in this paper, here are the following findings:

1. The phonological development of the child must put into consideration and give more emphasis in helping the child cope with the phonological awareness in the target language.
2. The child can acquire/say 10-15 new words per day wherein his competence begins to match performance and can complete syntactic structures in the language he used based on the stages presented by Chenu and Jisa (Chenu & Jisa, 2009).
3. The child is more familiar using the following lexical category: nouns and adjectives (more often).
4. Sociolect, idiolect, and registers play an important role in the child's way of speaking.
5. The child's pragmatic learning is present and can be traceable to the utterances he projects.
6. The MLU result which is 4.42, lies between 4.40 – 4.71. Therefore, the child's MLU result would be expected in a child between 48 – 51 months of age. This means that the child appears to have an average length of utterances and since the child's age is also 4 (48 months). And this suggests that the child's expressive language skills are developing along standard normal lines of a 4-year-old child.

6. Recommendations

The result of this study shows that there is a need to correct, instruct, and assist the child in providing correct feedback when it comes to speaking a certain language that he used. Hence, the following recommendations are offered to address the participant's problem when it comes to this notion presented in this study.

Family and peers: As part of the language learning process of the child, they must monitor the child's progress in speaking the language in their home or during their play time. They must also be an active instructor for giving correct feedback to the child to avoid confusion.

Teachers: The teachers and future teachers must help the child to produce the language correctly and must also assess the child for further improvements. They must give effective communicative activities that will measure the speaking performance of the child. Exercise the child's listening skills together. We frequently forget that language is a receptive as well as an expressive medium. Make sure children don't just mimic words to learn how to speak. Children

must pay attention, receive knowledge accurately, and efficiently assimilate it. Introduce games where kids have to repeat back what they've heard you say (you will often be amazed at how varied and inaccurate their interpretations can be). Children should be prompted to discuss key details from a story or activity. Additionally, instill in kids the importance of listening to their debate partners.

To the participant: In order to improve his speaking abilities in the target language, the participant must actively participate in the communicative activities that have been created for him. Additionally, the participant is urged to use the target language correctly. A child must also accomplish three things or activities in order to learn the semantics of a language: 1) recognize the pertinent linguistic terms, 2) recognize and comprehend the meanings these terms refer to, and 3) understand how the forms relate to the meanings. In order to increase their conceptual understanding of the universe, he must discover the relationship between forms and meanings at a moment in his life when both of these components are shifting targets.

7. Conclusion

Below are the conclusions gathered from this study:

The child is not a fan of lengthening the word being uttered (for example, To Si – Tito Genesis). The child preferred to use dental stops "K" than voiceless glottal fricative "H". The child preferred to use liquid alveolar "L" than nasal alveolar "N". In addition, he preferred to use a voice bilabial stop "B" than labio-dental fricative "V" in pronouncing the word "violet".

At some point, based on the video, the child uses words with same spelling, same stress, pitch, and volume but have different meanings. Also, the child acquired language subconsciously. He has difficulty in pronouncing the letter L and has some difficulty in pronouncing diphthongs (for example, violet).

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