

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Early childhood is a very unique topic to discuss. The children characteristics are always interesting to observe because each child is incomparable to the others, although some born twins, but were innate with different potentials, talents, and interests. There are children who like to sing, dance, and have intelligence to certain level, while there are of ordinary, even not a few who are less intelligent. Early childhood plays significant moment for a child to develop unique individuality and characteristics of their age stages.

Some experts in educational field and psychology view early childhood development as a very important period and need to be addressed as early as possible. Montessori in Hurlock (1978, in Mulyasa, 2012: 20) suggest that early age is a sensitive period in children, namely a period when a particular function needs to be stimulated, and directed so that development is not hampered. For example, the sensitive period to speak in a period not passed, the child will experience obstacles in the development of language skills in the next period. Vigotsky (1986, in Mulyasa 2012: 21) argues that language is an important source in early childhood education. The acquisition of children's language can be said to have the characteristics of continuity, having a series of oneness, which moves from one simple word to a more complicated combination of

words. Children use the language they have acquired through interaction with others, both with their peers, younger children or with the adults around them. In its use, children also indirectly learn the norms and culture that apply around them in using the language.

At an early age (3-5 years old), toddlers can use a form of directive action competence to request, govern, invite, and so in the appropriate context as elements of physical acts complement the meaning of speech. Therefore, the competency to use preschool children's directive actions reflects a very broad, perspective, and communicative network (Setiawati, 2007: 35).

There are several speech act of communication strategies carried out by educators to make their instructions easily understood by pupils and get responses from the pupils. Similar to the pupils' ability to respond or understand speech act in communication, the ability to produce directive speech act by the pupils is also needed to be considered in relation to the fluency of communication between the teacher and the pupils. In line with this, the present research intended at examining of how the speech act and communication strategies of toddlers (age ranges from 3-5 years old) and focuses the on the directive utterance of that particular stage of speech development.

Isjony (2010 : 19) mentioned that children aged 3-5 years old is part of early childhood which is terminologically referred as to as preschool children, and during this sensitive age of children speech development, careful intervention of parents as well as the teachers are of necessarily important

for their ideal growth. At the time the maturation of physical psychological functions that are ready to respond to the stimulation provided by the environment. This period is the time to lay the first foundation in developing physical abilities, cognitive, language, art, social, emotional, self-discipline, religious values, self-concept, and independence. According to Wijana (2009:20), ages of 3-5 years old have the following characteristics:

1. Relating to physical development, children are very active in various activities. It is beneficial for their development of small and large muscles, through climbing, jumping.
2. Language development is also getting better. Children are able to understand the conversation of others and they are able to express their thoughts within certain limits, such as immitating and repeating the conversation.
3. Cognitive development (thinking power) is very rapid, shown by the child's extraordinary curiosity about the environment. This can be seen from the frequency the children ask everything they see and observe.
4. The child model of playing is still by her/himself or very individualistic, but not through social games, although the child activities are carried out together with other children.

Santrok (2004, in Dadjowidjojo 2012: 244) revealed that the stages of language acquisition in a child including the acquisition of phonology, the acquisition of morph syntax, the lexicon, and the acquisition pragmatics.

At the preschool age of phonological development at around 6 week-old children produce sounds that are similar to the sound of a coincident or vocal. These sounds cannot be ascertained because their shape is not yet clearly heard. The process of making sounds like this is called cooing. At around 6 months the child starts mixing consonants with vowels to form what is called babbling, which has been translated into babble. Chatter starts with a consonant and is followed by a consonant. For example: 'papapa, mamama, bababa'. Old people then associate "words" with fathers and mothers even though what is in the minds of children is unknown to us, it is not impossible that chatter is merely mere articulatory training (Jakobson 1971; Ingram 1990; Gass and Selinker 2001). The consonants and vocals change gradually so that words like 'dadi, dida, tita, dita, mama, mama' come up. At the age of preschool phonological development not only acquisition of segmental (vowels, consonants, and diphthongs) but also began to emerge suprasegmental acquisition. Suprasegmental development occurs with word stress and intonation.

When entering kindergarten children have mastered almost all basic grammatical rules of the language. He can already make news sentences, question sentences and a number of other constructions. Only he still has difficulty in making passive sentences. As stated by Harword (2005, in Purwo, 1989) children up to the age of five and a half years have not been able to fully make passive sentences. Of the approximately 12,000 spontaneous sentences made by Harwood's five-year-old children, they do not find a

passive sentence. Only about 80% of children aged seven and a half to eight years can make a passive sentence. Pre-schoolers also still have difficulty with imperative sentence construction. However, children in preschool have learned things beyond vocabulary and grammar. They can already use language in various social contexts. They can say rude to their friends, but also can say polite to their parents.

Language acquisition is a process that takes place in the brain of a child when he gets his first language. There are two processes that occur when a child is acquiring his first language, the competency process and the performance process. The competency process becomes a requirement for the performance process. The performance process itself has two stages, namely the understanding process and the publishing process or the process of producing sentences. The understanding process involves the ability to perceive sentences that are heard, while the publishing process involves the ability or publishing sentences themselves. These two processes then become children's linguistic competencies.

When a person talks, he does not merely say the utterance but he also acts with it. When someone says or issues a speech, he has a specific purpose that has an impact on his speech partner. Directive speech acts that have an influence to do as instructed by speakers, of course many are done in an Early Childhood Education Institution (PAUD), in this age group, of course there are several directive speech acts strategies carried out by educators so that the instructions are easily understood by their students

and of course it is more easily responded by students to do something according to his commands. Based on this understanding, this research focuses on the form of directive speech acts of early childhood and their communication strategies. Based on the explanation above, writer conducted a research on **“The Speech Acts and Communication Strategy: A Case Study on Toddlers (3-5 years) in So’e”**.

1.2 Research Problems

Following are two questions to lead this research:

1. What are types of speech act of the toddlers?
2. What are the communication strategy these toddlers make?

1.3 Aims of the Study :

There are at least two aims of the present study:

1. To describe the types of speech act of the toddlers.
2. To seek the communicationstrategy in their speech.

1.4 Significance of theStudy

1.4.1 Implication.

The present study implicitly is in support towards the theory of Yule (2006:83) stating that the speech acts are a functional unit in communication. This speech act is an action the speaker takes when uttering/communicating.

1.4.2. Application

The study practically would benefit certain people in terms of the outcome of the study, as follows:

1. ELT teachers for EYL may find the present study as one of references regarding the children speech acts and communication strategies.
2. Other researchers would have another sources to refer to for their current or future studies regarding EYL language development.