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The Acquisition of Noun Prefixes and Suffixes During Coloring Activities among Malay Children

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Abstract

This study of Psycholinguistics emphasizes the development of noun prefixes and suffixes among Malay children. The objective of the study was to identify the development of noun prefixes and suffixes among Malay children aged eight, nine, and 10 years. This study applies the Mentalist Theory and was conducted through six respondents consisting of both males and females in each age group. The children consisted of native speakers of Malay, and this study was conducted within the respondent's home. The data of this study was obtained through coloring activities where the respondents would story-tell while being engaged in the activity. The findings of this study discusses the role of language input on the development of noun prefixes and suffixes and further proves that the acquisition involves cognitive, social, and linguistic processes.

Keywords: Prefixes, Suffixes, Children, Parent, Mentalist Theory.

Introduction

The development of language among children holds a relevant scientific perspective to be studied and understood by all. In the everyday life, the activities an individual go through can shape and guide the individual's language development. In addition to daily interaction, the provision of a variety of language and literacy activities that are sufficient and meaningful was found to further encourage good speech by children (Jamian, 2010). This study was also carried out as children were found to master some elements of language beforehand as studied by Juriah Long in 1989, thus making it difficult for them to master the affix due to environmental factors. This indicates that root words are the first to be mastered by children as compared to suffixed words. Therefore, this study was conducted to discern and identify the prominent use of noun affixes among Malay children aged between 8 (eight) to 10 years of age. The design of this qualitative study involves children aged between 8 (eight) to 10 years of age who attended primary schools within the district of Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor.

Determining the study design is important to ensure a relevant and clear study methodology (Noah, 2002). Thus, the researcher only focused on six children as research subjects to participate in this study to identify their mastery of noun affixes through colouring activities.

Finding and Discussion

As a result of the activities carried out, the researcher discussed the aspects of the findings of the study based on the activities that had been carried out, namely coloring activities. The researcher allocated 30 minutes for the coloring activity. Each respondent was given two pictures to color in. The first picture used had a fox chasing a chicken while the second was that of a bride and groom on their wedding day.

At this stage, the respondents were able to use language spontaneously in order to tell stories and discuss the pictures based on their own experiences. From the research that has been conducted, it has been found that the acquisition of the types of Malay affixes varied from one activity to another. The respondents were able to produce various types of words when the activities presented to them piqued their interest thus creating a sense of curiosity in them.

Coloring is one of the activities enjoyed by children. This activity requires the respondent to give their full concentration engaging all their senses. Some respondents who were immersed in the coloring were found to talk less. This situation affects the products of remuneration among the respondents. However, most of the respondents prefer to create something based on what they see through their senses and ask about something rather than just looking at pictures during this activity. All the children who were respondents in this study enjoyed the coloring activity and gave full concentration throughout the activity. During this activity, the respondents will question the researcher if they are unsure of an object before starting the activity. In a study conducted by Jamian (2010), coloring activities are one of the activities that are favored and most liked by children. He stated that the coloring activity enabled him to obtain data for the pronunciation of Malay affixes. Whereas, in the interview session with the respondents, most of the affixes spoken by the respondents are noun affixes and verb affixes.

The results of the study on the acquisition of noun suffixes used by the children between the ages of eight to ten years consisted of primary, derived and compound nouns. The suffixes used for nouns consist of zero suffixes, peN-, ke...-an, peN-...-an, peR-...-an and -an. The children in this study were able to produce noun suffixes. The list of rewards used by respondents during coloring activities is as in Table 1.

Table 1

Types of Noun Affixes During the Coloring Activity

Nouns Prefixes & Suffixes
Pelamin
Buaian
Penyiram
Penyembur
Pekerja
Pengajar
Pakaian
Perkahwinan
Permainan
Pekerjaan

Table 1 shows 10 types of noun affixes mentioned by the respondents during the coloring activity. In relation to that, the noun suffixes that have been used by children during this activity are names that involve concrete items, places, people, clothes, and animals that are in their environment. From the examples of the use of noun suffixes above, it can be stated that children can classify the words used to describe the specific meaning brought by their words of choice.

The evidence attached in the appendix also shows the ability of respondents in this study to use derived nouns. The list of noun affixes used to produce the noun is as in Table 2.

Table 2

Noun Affixes Category During Coloring Activity

Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Awalan peN-	6	100
Awalan pe-	6	100
Akhiran -an	6	100
Apitan pe-...-an	3	40
Apitan peR-...-an	4	66

Table 2 shows the 5 types of noun suffixes that were mentioned by the respondents during this study. There are 13 types of noun suffixes found within the "*Tatabahasa Dewan*". Thus, respondents were able to use 5 of the 13 types of noun affixes in this study for coloring activities. Examples of 5 types of noun suffixes used by respondents are noun suffix peN-, noun prefix pe-, noun suffix -an, noun affix pe-...-an and noun affix peR-...-an.

A total of 6 subjects have spoken the words for the noun prefix peN-, namely "*penyiram*", "*penyembur*" and "*pengajar*". The total percentage for the use of this remuneration is 100%. In addition, 6 subjects have also been able to use prefixes involving words such as "*pelamin*", "*pelukis*" and "*pekerja*". Thus, the percentage is 100%.

In addition, the use of the suffix -an among the subjects is as many as 12 people which makes the percentage 100%. Examples of words involving the suffix -an mentioned by the respondents are "*buaian*", "*ampaian*" and "*pakaian*".

Furthermore, the use of pe...-an's allowance is as much as two people which makes the total percentage as much as 50%. An example of a word for pe...-an is job. Finally, as many as four respondents have used words for the suffix -an such as "*perkahwinan*" and "*permainan*". The percentage of use of this remuneration is as much as 66%.

All the findings of this study are in line with the statement by Chokri et. al (2013), affixation is one of the important aspects of grammar as new words will be built as a result of the affixation process. This nature of affixes causes affixes to be used often in everyday language use, whether in the form of conversation or in writing. However, the compensation process is not a process that is easy to understand because this process has included many other aspects that are very complex. In fact, affixation is a rather complicated word formation process to master and the problem of using affixes is often faced by adult native speakers of the Malay language (Omar, 1981).

Conclusion

The subject of the study titled mastery of noun affixes during coloring activities among Malay children shows that they can identify nouns and affixes as learned in the Malay Grammar. This mastery can be seen from the coloring activity that allows the subjects to be able to speak, pronounce, know and recognize related nouns and affixes. The application of Mentalist Theory (Chomsky, 1975) also proved to be relevant for use in this study as it involves humans, and stimuli as well as connecting mental reality with actual language behavior. This is said to be so as the activities that use these stimulants are successful in encouraging children's engagement in learning thus further showing an increase in their reward development.

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