LANGUAGE ACQUISITION : THE EFFORTS OF AFGHAN REFUGEES IN COMMUNICATING WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

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**ABSTRACT**

Language acquisition is a process which is experienced by a child in acquiring a first and second language. It needs a natural setting of target language in order to convey and understand the message correctly (Krashen: 2002). The research was designed in qualitative research that aimed at describing second language acquisition experienced by Afghan refugees who were living in Makassar city for 5 to 10 years. Besides describing the language acquisition process of Bahasa Indonesia as the second language, it also describing the factors that influence the process. There were 10 refugees taken as participants who had spoken Bahasa Indonesia well. The data were taken by interviewing the informants. Thus, the data were analyzed based on Krashen's theory (1995) that related to acquisition learning hypothesis. The results revealed that there were various ways they used in acquiring bahasa Indonesia, namely: self-learning and course institutions. Moreover, they experienced 5 stages in the language acquisition process, they were: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. Their second language acquisition process is influenced by two factors as like 1) internal factors : integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, personality, language aptitude, 2) External factors : formal situation and informal situation. Even though they faced some obstacles in learning the language, they kept practicing and communicating with local people in the neighborhood.

**Keywords : L**anguage acquisition, Afghan refugees, efforts, interaction, local people.

**INTRODUCTION**

Language acquisition has always attracted attention in a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology and neuroscience. The relationship between mind and thought is very different from the theories on language acquisition. In the last half of the 20th century, significant progress was made in the interpretation of language. On the alternative hand, Chomksy (1957) proposes that infants have innate limitations to languages wherein they establish "accepted grammar" and "accepted phonetics". These tactics display exclusive crucial factors concerning the idea of language acquisition.

The process through which humans learn to capture, produce, and utilize words instinctively for communication is known as the acquisition of a second language, which is often employed after the first language. Krashen (1994) states that the existence of environmental language was one of the factors that helped people learn a second language. This means that if people in another area or have two languages ​​that these individuals often use, they are often infected or easily accept people's language. As a result, they do not use it intentionally collectively. It's the same as learning a second language.

Language acquisition is important because language is an important cognitive tool that allows us to communicate accurately and effectively with each other. Therefore, the lack of acquisition of any language will severely hamper a person's ability to function properly and participate in society. Language development can be understood as the process of acquiring different language skills. Therefore, the researcher are interested in study language acquisition since it languages ​​bring people together, and a general knowledge of languages ​​allows us to develop cross-cultural understanding through communication and to know how the process of language acquisition among refugees.

Some of the phenomena found by the researcher about refugees are that, as a long oppressed minority in Afghanistan, the Hazaras, who are mostly Shia Muslims, have come to Indonesia temporarily. Indonesia became a transit country where the refugees would spend months or at most a few years, hoping to get asylum in other countries like the US and Australia. Australia and the United States resettle most refugees from Indonesia, but in recent years both countries have dramatically reduced the number of refugees coming from Indonesia.

Indonesia is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Refugee Protocol, which means refugees cannot permanently resettle in Indonesia. Instead, they are allowed to stay in Indonesia on a limited basis - similar to if they were in transit at the airport and just passing through. Therefore, they are not allowed to work or attend school in Indonesia, or drive a car or motorcycle. They are not allowed to travel outside the city limits. They are also without any source of income and have to live on a monthly allowance of IDR 1,250,000 (77 euros) provided by IOM which is barely enough to cover basic needs such as food.

Thus, the researcher investigate the process of second language acquisition that occurs in Afghan refugees who are in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. It is known, the refugees are placed in several cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Denpasar, Kupang, Manado, Medan, Pekanbaru, Pontianak, Semarang, Tanjung Pinang, and one of which is Makassar City. Afghanistan declared its independent on August 19, 1919 with a monarchical system of government. Despite its independence, it was engulfed in a civil war that never ended. Therefore, some civilians are fled to safe countries to seek asylum and hope for a better future.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Field (2003) suggests that the link between the human brain and language is discussed in psycholinguistics. The soul or brain functions when language is used forcibly. According to Carroll (1953), linguistics is an area of study focused on human language, while psychology is a branch of science concerned with the human soul, mind, and emotions. According to Kridalaksana (1982), psycholinguistics is the study of the connections between language and behavior, human reason, and linguistic competence. For instance, you may observe how a young child who is still a newborn can make sounds and what the process of recognizing sounds is in the process of language, that is, the process of understanding and producing language.

Krashen (2002: 1) stated that language acquisition is very similar in the process by which a child is acquired and used in first and second language acquisition. It requires meaningful interaction in the natural target language, and the way speakers communicate is not about the form they emit, but about the message they convey and understand. He also defined 5 hypotheses that related to language acquisition. The hypotheses was first published in the 1980s to the present, including those: a) Acquisition – Learning hypothesis, b) Monitor hypothesis, c) Natural hypothesis order, d) Input hypothesis, and e) Effective filter hypothesis.

**While several hypotheses have been proposed regarding second language acquisition, researchers have placed particular emphasis on the acquisition-learning hypothesis. This hypothesis focuses on how learners acquire or learn a second language as a system. It proposes that language mastery happens subconsciously. Krashen (1982) emphasizes acquisition as an unconscious process in second language acquisition. He explains that learners may not be aware they're actively learning the language; they're simply focused on communication. In short, language acquisition flourishes through natural, communicative interactions, not through a rigid focus on linguistic rules.**

According to Mitchell and Myles (2004), a **foreign language** is one that has no immediate local use or speakers in a particular community. It's not widely spoken or used by the people where the learner resides. In simpler terms, it's any language other than the dominant language(s) of the learner's environment. Following this definition, Spanish would be a foreign language for someone living in India. **In contrast, a second language** is one learned in addition to a native language and is used regularly within the learner's environment. For example, English could be a second language for someone living in India, depending on the context.

Thus, Krashen (1986) divides the second language acquisition process into five stages: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (ASCD. 2018) (Haynes 2007: 31; Betti, 1996: 23).

*The first step is preproduction, is also known as the quiet period*. Learners at this stage have an open vocabulary of 500 words but do not yet speak a second language (Haynes 2007: 29-35). Not every learner goes through a quiet phase. Some students began to shout out loud. Although the outcome can be language use, that is more akin to imitation than the original. As part of the language course, other people could be invited to talk at the beginning. It can take three to six months for learners to recover from a period of silence (Ellis 2008, pp. 73-75; Al-Seady, 2002a: 88).

*The second stage is early production,* where the learner can speak in short phrases of a word or two. They can also memorize language pieces, although they may make mistakes when using them. Learners usually have an active and receptive vocabulary of about 1000 words. This stage usually lasts for about six months (Haynes 2007: 29; and Betti, 1998: 13).

*The third stage is speech emergence* . During this stage, learners' vocabulary grows to about 3000 words, and they are able to communicate using basic questions and sentences. They might frequently make grammatical errors.

*The fourth stage is intermediate smoothness.*  At this stage, learners can employ more complex sentence structures and has a vocabulary of around 6,000 words. They can also express their ideas and viewpoints. The more complex the sentence structure, the more likely it is for learners to make mistakes.

*The last stage is advanced fluency* which typically takes five to ten years of language study to reach. At this stage, learners are able to communicate on par with native speakers (Haynes 2007: 29-35; Al-Seady, 2002b: 14).

When learning second language, there are some factors that may influence learners in acquiring their second language. The factors are divided into internal factors and external factors.

1.) Internal factors

The motivation, learning style, and other common elements all have an impact on learning a second language (Ellis, 1985). These elements are a component of psychology.

a) Motivation

The SLA process may be affected by motivation. A second language learner's motivation is made up of an effort, a desire, and a positive attitude toward the language (Yazigy, 1991). It closely relates to societal issues. Parents play the primary role the majority of the time. Parents can inspire their kids by encouraging them to use their second language in everyday situations. siblings, friends, and workplace may also be involved.

b) Personality

A person's personality is their unique attribute (Dornyei, 2005). People with strong self-confidence are also better at learning a second language than those who are shy. The two basic personality types are introverts and extroverts. Introverts are those who lack social skills and believe they can meet their needs on their own without assistance from others. The process of learning a language might be impacted by this personality trait because introverts prefer to spend their free time alone rather than conversing with people.

c) Language aptitude

Student aptitude is related to language ability. Speaking and self-intelligence are included in this. A component of self-intelligence is personal memory. Learning depends in large part on memory. Even the simplest words take memory to memorize. In the process of learning, episodic memory is involved (Tulving, 1983). Memory connects a word's sound with the sensation of seeing, touching, or smelling an object.

2.) External factors

Language learning might be conducted in informal and formal learning. Both situations were introduced and studied by some researchers (Lightbown & Spada, 2001; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Rogers, 2004).

a) Formal situation

Typically, this circumstance is referred to as the intended circumstance. There are language courses because the teaching and learning process has been planned. In this instance, the second language is consciously learned. Grammar rules are understood by language learners in this process, but they pay no attention to how people communicate. As a result, during this process, language learners do not receive any instruction in how to converse with native speakers in a second language.

b) Informal situation

The natural circumstances are referred to as the informal situation in the mastery of a second language. In this case, the second language is being picked up unintentionally. Meaning is a characteristic of the second language learned in informal settings under similar circumstances to those in which the first language was learned. Through constant exposure and back-and-forth conversation, learners begin to grasp the nuances of the language, including slang, cultural references, and appropriate use in different contexts. This allows them to develop a more **natural and intuitive** understanding of the second language.

**METHODS**

The research was designed in descriptive qualitative methods which aimed at analyzing data around the residences of Afghan male refugees in Makassar City. Ary (2010) assumes that qualitative investigators handle data in the form of words or images rather than numbers and statistics. hypothesis - learning.

The data were taken from 10 Afghan male refugees who have been living for 5-10 years in Makassar City. Observations was used to find out the data related to the language use that were experienced by the informants when interacting with their neighbors. While interview was used to find out the data related to factors that influence the ability of using local language and the process of second language acquisition of Afghan male refugees in Makassar city.

Having collected the data, the researcher analyzed how they acquired the language and the factors that influenced them in language acquisition based on Krashen’ theory (1995) .

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section is the result and analysis of Indonesian language acquisition of Afghan refugees living in Makassar City.

**Process of Second Language Acquisition**

First, it can be observed they acquired or mastered Indonesian, especially those who lived in an environment of Indonesian-speaking people. Some participants acquired Indonesian only by autodidact and often hearing to people's interactions using Indonesian intentionally and unintentionally. Some respondents went to school, college and because they have been living in Indonesia for several years. This condition force them to speak fluently and improve it.

The researcher has identified the data based on the interview results in which they acquired the language with several stages. The first stage is pre-production where they are in a quiet period as experienced by all the participants with one participant by Jalil and Milad who experienced a quiet period for 1 year where they were still thinking about whether to learn Indonesian or not. Both participants did not recognize that they were in the process of language acquisition because they had unconsciously heard and produced the language where they lived in Indonesia where people used Indonesian. So unconsciously, they have been connected with Indonesians. Some of them go through this stage in a conscious way, they were immediately learned Indonesian where they felt they needed the language as a daily necessity to easily communicate with the surrounding environment.

Then in the second stage, namely early production, at this stage the learner can speak in short phases of one to two specific words. Based on interviews, Jawad initially learned the numbering from 1-10 first. Other informant, Jalil said that he learned Indonesian by memorizing short questions such as how are you, what is your name, where are you going, and so on. It was similar to informants those are Habib, Shah, Mehran, Jawid, Hadi, Milad, Rohullah, and Ali who initially learned and memorized some basic words in Indonesian. All participants entered this second stage where they were able to speak basic words in Indonesian and could memorize and remember the words and apply them. It is conformed by Krashen’s theory (1986) that mentioned the second stage namely early production is where the learner can speak in short phases of one to two specific words.

In the third stage, the emergence of speech means that vocabulary has been developed and is able to communicate even though it may make mistakes in language. At this stage, participants can answer "how" and "why" questions that require them to provide more complex responses because they have a deeper understanding even though they experience grammatical errors. Some participants experienced errors or difficulties in the language acquisition process such as Habib, Hadi, and Rohullah where they had difficulty in pronouncing a word in Indonesian, Milad had difficulty in composing sentences so that when speaking there were usually words reversed, and Jalil had difficulty in interpreting a word. It is conformed by Krashen's theory (1986) that mentioned the third stage namely speech emergence is they are able to communicate using basic questions and sentences, they might frequently make grammatical errors.

Intermediate fluency is the fourth stage that has been identified by the researcher that all can express ideas and points of view from their own minds, they have not needed to think too long or take a lot of time when they want to say words or sentences to answer questions from researchers. The researcher took an example from one of the participants named Ali who said that he felt happy to be able to speak Indonesian because when we can speak many languages, we are counted as many people, for example 2 languages mean we are 2 people. All participants experienced this fourth stage where they were able to convey ideas and opinions with a good language structure to the researcher so that it was easy to understand. It is conformed by Krashen's theory (1986) that mentioned the fourth stage namely intermediate fluency is they have used more complex sentence structures and can express ideas and points of view from their own minds.

The last stage is advanced fluency, the researcher identified that none of the participants were able at this stage where they still had some words that were not well understood. Some of them were able to communicate well even 1-2 people spoke like native speakers although not all but they were able to answer ideas well and how to speak well to the researcher.

**Factors that Influencing Indonesian Language**

Based on the interview results, most participants were influenced by motivation as internal factor that can make them to involve community easily. They were motivated where they had personal reason as Jawad who had an ex Indonesian girlfriend who pushed him to learn Indonesian. Other participants said that they had to learn Indonesian to facilitate them in the daily activities in their environment. It is conformed by Ellis’s theory (1997) that mentioned the internal factors namely integrative motivation where the learner want to know about the speakers’ people and cultures or because they want to communicate with the people from other cultures.

The personality factor possessed by Milad that he has high confidence in learning a second language by relying on his own ability in mastering a second language. Those condition are conformed by Ellis’s theory (1997) that mentioned motivation, personality, and language aptitude have an impact on learning a second language.

The external factors obtained from the previous data are formal and informal factors. It is formal when there is a plan to do something or consciously implemented, such as attending a course for the reason of further developing the language he mastered. Based on the interview, Shah said that he attended language classes in Latimojong. This shows that language is learned consciously by attending language ccourses in order to acquire Indonesian language fluently.

There are informal situational factors, it is experienced by Jawid and Habib who are living in the area where people use Indonesian to communicate. The surrounding natural environment affect their language acquisition, acquired naturally due to social life. As Jawid said that he had many friends from Indonesia so he could learn directly with his friends at the cafe. It proves that there is the environment where hanging out with friends as a support for success in acquiring Indonesian.

Based on the previous explanation, it has been identified that most of them acquire Indonesian through the environment that forces them to be able to speak Indonesian. Their language acquisition process experienced through 4 stages namely preproduction, early production, speech emergence, and intermediate smoothness of the process. Not all informants experienced these stages because they have different capabilities in acquiring the language. As Krashen (1986) mentioned that second language acquisition process is divided into five stages.

Those factors that influence their language acquisition were internal factors namely the existence of motivational factors, personality, and language aptitude, while external factors could be in formal situations and informal situations. As Ellis (1997) mentioned the factors that influence the ability for second language acquisition.

Although there are obstacles, they still try to practice and always try to communicate with local people in the neighborhood. One of the obstacles experienced by participants is when they pronounced the sound {n} and {ŋ}. They cannot connect or say words properly through these letters, for example the word /buŋa/, /meŋaji, /taŋgung/. Nevertheless, they easily understand the words’ meaning but can not pronounce them correctly.

**The researchers believe** that refugees can leverage their environment to facilitate learning Indonesian. Hanging out with friends and communicating with them is one way this happens. Additionally, some refugees take courses or study in schools to further develop their language skills. This supports the idea that people living in a country for a long time can **unconsciously acquire** the local language.

1. **CONCLUSION**

This research examines how the Indonesian language acquisition of Afghan refugees living in Makassar city. From the results and discussion of the previous chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, this research found that they began to recognize Indonesian through the surrounding environment that requires them to master Indonesian. Some participants acquire Indonesian through courses to deepen their knowledge. The ability of language is influenced by high self-confidence and having an open mindset to the environment and like to spend time talking from native speakers or Indonesian friends.

Secondly, the factors that influence second language acquisition can be supporting factors or even inhibiting factors, namely factors related to internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, personality, and language aptitude. While external factors include formal factors and informal factors. **Formal settings** involve conscious learning through planned activities like language courses. Here, learners typically focus on grammar and vocabulary acquisition. **Informal settings** provide opportunities for unconscious language acquisition through everyday interactions with native speakers. In these situations, learners pick up the language naturally by listening, speaking, and absorbing the language in use.

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