

# ENGLISH DEVELOPMENT AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN RELATION WITH TV EXPOSURE (A CASE STUDY OF YOUNG LEARNER)

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## Abstract

The aims of this study are to know the role of young learner's parents in choosing good and educating television program for their child, and to describe the effects of TV exposure in their child's English language development. A five-year-old young learner who lives in Denpasar was observed in 2017. The data were collected by giving a questionnaire to the young learner's parents in order to get the description of the effects of the television programs to her language development. As it is a following research of the previous research on English vocabulary acquisition, the results of the observation of the young learner and the interview with her parents that have already been done are used to support the analysis of this small research. The collected data were analysed descriptively based on approaches from Barr, et.al. (2010), Christakis (2009), and March (2004) about English language acquisition and language development of young children. The results show that the young learner's parents have the important role in choosing good and educating television program for her. It can be seen from the choices of cartoon movies as one of the television programs that is educating as well as entertaining for a child in her age, the intensive accompaniment when she was watching the movies, the limitation of television watching time, and also the parents' assistance in order to help her understand the stories and vocabulary meanings. It is true that good content, context, and the amount of daily TV viewing time as well as parental assistance will be beneficial for the young learner's second language development in informal learning situation. The effectiveness of watching cartoon movies has led her to gain the positive second language development in her bilingual condition, although English code-switching in Indonesian sentences sometimes occur.

*Keywords: SLA, English, language development, TV exposure, cartoon movies*

## I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Educating television programs may have positive effects on children's language development between the ages of two and five years. Close (2004:5) states that under the right conditions, children between two and five years old may experience benefits from good-quality educational television programs. Right conditions meant are related to good and educating television programs for children that can encourage talk, parents accompanying, and also time limitation in television watching.

This study is in relation with the previous research about English Vocabulary Acquisition by A Young Learner (Widiastuti, Dewi, and Maharani, 2017) that aims at finding out the English vocabulary (as a second/foreign language) acquired by a young learner from cartoon movies and describing how she understands the meanings. A five-year-old young learner, namely Vio, was observed and her parents were interviewed in order to get the data. During the data collection there was an interesting fact of the young learner, that she has had imagination and developed the stories in the movies she has watched into a story telling. The story telling activity is supported by one of her hobbies, that is watching cartoon movies. From the previous research, Vio often watched five cartoon movies from television and acquired more than seven vocabularies from a movie in the forms of noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and also several phrases and sentences – though sometimes the sentences she acquired do not show the correct structures. In order to understand the vocabulary meanings, she used referential strategy. Her parents also play the important role in helping her to describe the vocabulary meanings by translating them into Indonesian and explaining the difficult vocabulary she could not understand. Vio's language development from watching television programs is gained under the right conditions, as stated by Close (2004) and that is in line with Hurlock's (2000) statement that her intelligent and good discipline results in having good development in acquiring vocabulary.

### 1.2 AIMS OF STUDY

Having the description that linguistic maturity of the young learner between ages two and five, the educating television programs viewed in the appropriate amount of time, and the involvement of parents affect Vio's language development, and based on the background, this study has the aims at 1) knowing Vio's parents' role in choosing good and educating television program for her; 2) describing the effects of TV exposure in her English language development.

## II MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Imitation is one of the activities that often affects children's language development in their early age. Chomsky (2006) said that "human culture is geographically or environmentally determined, and language development is nothing but imitation of the child's surroundings". Children acquire their language through imitating vocabulary and utterances from parents, family, or surroundings.

Children's language develops fast in certain age, and it is supported by the statement of Linebarger and Walker (2005) that young children development starts continuously from birth until 5 years, namely the sensitive period which is critical for language acquisition. In that period of time, children can pronounce new vocabulary they hear and arrange simple sentences from the vocabulary they hear, even though sometimes the sentence structure is not well organized.

Age, family, and environment are important factors in children language development, moreover, recent research show that edutainment programs on television is another factor that can help children acquire a language. Al-Harbi (2015) confirms two things in regards to language development; those are 1) that educational television programs for children become a resource and an alternative means of instruction for children from low income families and children of immigrant families in order to know the host culture and its language. This linguistic exposure offers at the least the building blocks of not only the intonation of the language but also the passive vocabularies. 2) Language is a social phenomenon and it is naturally used in social communicative settings. Children may develop their linguistic skill from passive into active. Participation of parents in the interactive context is important to help children develop their linguistic skill. Al-Harbi's findings are related to the second language acquisition where children can acquire other language (s) which is not their mother tongue from media, and it means that it is possible for children to learn a foreign language through television programs.

### 2.2 METHODOLOGY

Teresa Violeta Umbas, a five-year-old girl and a young learner who lives in Denpasar, was observed in 2017. She uses Indonesian as her first language with her parents and family at home and her teachers and friends at school. She went to a kindergarten in Denpasar at the time when she was under the observation. She usually watched cartoon movies accompanied by her parents in about 30 minutes up to 2 hours per day.

The data were collected by giving a questionnaire to Vio's parents in order to know whether her parents are involved in choosing television programs for her, and to get the description of the effects of the television programs to her language development. As it is a following research of the previous research on English vocabulary acquisition, the results of the observation of Vio and the interview with her parents that have already been done are used to support the analysis of this small research.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively based on the following approaches. First, Barr, et.al. (2010) describe three important elements in children's TV viewing, namely content, context, and the amount of daily TV viewing time. Parents should have better understanding of media exposure; therefore, they understand the benefit of the programs, and of parental assistance and interaction with their children. Second, Christakis (2009) said that parents should know that media is a tool to convey messages for people, and that they have to be selective in choosing appropriate television programs for their children that have positive edutainment content and they have to limit the time for their children's TV watching. Third, March (2004) describes the effectiveness of television series for pre-school in a study of Barney & Friends television program, taking the children aged 2 to 7 in a US day care center who watched its same episodes over two weeks, and reports that "1) Nearly two thirds of the children could report accurately what they had seen; 2) about 55% of the children also managed to mention some characters; 3) sometimes children demonstrated evidence of new words in their vocabularies relating to a specific episode".

## III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 PARENTS' ROLE IN CHOOSING THE TELEVISION PROGRAM

Vio's favorite television program is cartoon movie. There are five cartoon movies she often watched during the observation, namely 1) Sofia the First on Disney Junior Channel, 2) Max and Ruby, 3) Blaze and the Monster Machine, 4) Shimmer and Shine on Nick Junior Channel, and 5) Zoo Moo on Zoo Moo Channel. Those are the kinds of edutainment movies for pre-school age. Even though the

movies have the subtitles in Indonesian, she preferred to watch the English version, because she was interested and had the curiosity in knowing English. The same episodes of those cartoon movies are played repeatedly in a season, so that, generally children already recognize the stories. She likes watching those movies because they are specifically produced for children around Vio's age, the utterances spoken by the characters are not too fast and the vocabularies are often pronounced repetitively (Widiastuti, Dewi, and Maharani, 2017).

The questionnaire result shows that in choosing the appropriate English cartoon movies for her age, she was informed by her parents which ones were good or not for her. For example, if the programs were not suitable like a monster cartoon which is more suitable for teenagers and it is only likely for entertainment, without having education, her parents would explain in their way not to watch that kind of program anymore. Vio's parents often accompanied her while she was watching the movies, and it was for helping her in understanding the stories and telling her the meanings of the English vocabularies that she did not know. She is a typical of critical child who usually asks the reasons why she is not allowed to do something, but often obeys her parents' advice, so that it is not too difficult for her parents to tell her the reasons, and that finally she receives her parents' explanation. Besides, watching the cartoons from television, the same titles of the cartoon can be watched from Youtube, and sometimes when Vio went out with her parents, she watched the cartoons from Youtube, but her parents often reminded her for watching only edutainment cartoons, mostly the same with the cartoons she often watched on television.

### **3.2 EFFECTS OF VIO'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

Vio shows the positive effects in her second language development through watching the English cartoon movies mostly from television and sometimes from Youtube. She can acquire English as her second language contextually, without memorizing the vocabulary and grammar, but self-understanding in informal learning situation. As a result, her English pronunciation and intonation sound natural and English native-like based on the influence of the native speakers in the cartoon movies. Moreover, she can understand the positive messages from the stories, for example, friendship, motivation, and self-confidence.

Surprisingly, from the second language acquisition through watching the cartoon movies, she also shows further English language development, that is, she has been able to do story-telling from the positive effects shown. She has creative ideas from seeing the interesting innovation from the cartoon movie she watched, for example, she made a game adopted from the instructions shown in a movie about a flight mission to an outer space, and told a story about it. She used the playing tools she has to support her in the creative game-making and story-telling. Another example is that she drew pictures and colored them by using her imagination from the princess story she watches – Sofia the First – then told a story about it with the help of her parents in making the sentences. She keeps doing story telling recently, and the following year, she has started telling a story in an event in front of people, and it is for making her keep motivated, develop her English language skill and improve her self-confidence. Of course, that happens with the full assistance and support from her parents.

Besides giving the effects of Vio's English language development, it also brings about the effect of code switching. Indonesian is her first language that is acquired in the natural processes from her parents, family, teachers, and environment where she lives, and English is her second language that is acquired from the subconscious situation and in informal language learning from watching English cartoon movies with parents' assistance and accompaniment. This makes her to be a bilingual of Indonesian and English. Vio's parents said that she sometimes mixed the Indonesian sentences with English lexicon. This is considered as the usual effect of a bilingual person that the code switching cannot be avoided.

## **IV CONCLUSION**

Vio's parents have the important role in choosing good and educating television program for her. It can be seen from the choices of cartoon movies as one of the television programs that is educating as well as entertaining for a child in her age, the intensive accompaniment when she was watching the movies, the limitation of television watching time, and also the parents' assistance in order to help her understand the stories and vocabulary meanings. It is true that good content, context, and the amount of daily TV viewing time as well as parental assistance will be beneficial for Vio's second language development in informal learning situation. The effectiveness of watching cartoon movies has led Vio to

gain the positive second language development in her bilingual condition, although, there sometimes exists English code-switching in Indonesian sentences.

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