

## PENGARUH PERAN ORANG TUA TERHADAP PEMEROLEHAN MORFOLOGI PADA BALITA

### *PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON MORPHOLOGICAL ACQUISITION IN A TODDLER*

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#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji perkembangan morfologi pada seorang anak berusia 2 tahun 6 bulan, K.A., menggunakan kerangka teori interaksionis. Observasi dilakukan selama satu bulan, mengungkapkan bahwa keterbatasan paparan terhadap input linguistik yang bervariasi menghasilkan kosakata yang terbatas dan pembentukan kalimat yang tidak lengkap. Meskipun K.A. responsif terhadap komunikasi, kurangnya keterlibatan orang tua, terutama ketidakhadiran ayah, menghambat perkembangan morfologinya. Studi ini menemukan bahwa peningkatan interaksi ibu sedikit meningkatkan penggunaan morfem dan struktur kalimat K.A., menekankan peran penting keterlibatan orang tua dalam pemerolehan bahasa. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya lingkungan linguistik yang kaya dan menyarankan intervensi terarah untuk mendukung perkembangan morfologi pada anak.

**Kata Kunci:** Morfologi, Observasi, Perkembangan Bahasa Anak

#### Abstract

*This study examines the morphological development in a 2-year-6-month-old child, K.A., using an interactionist framework. Observations were conducted over one month, revealing that limited exposure to varied linguistic inputs resulted in restricted vocabulary and incomplete sentence formation. Despite K.A.'s responsiveness to communication, the lack of parental engagement, particularly the father's absence, hindered his morphological development. The study found that increased maternal interaction slightly improved K.A.'s use of morphemes and sentence structures, underscoring the crucial role of parental involvement in language acquisition. These findings highlight the importance of enriched linguistic environments and suggest targeted interventions to support early morphological development.*

**Keywords:** Language Development, Morphological, Observation

## INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is a critical aspect of early childhood development, encompassing various linguistic domains, including phonology, syntax, semantics, and morphology. Notably, among these domains, morphology, which is the study of word formation and structure, is particularly pivotal. This is because it bridges the gap between basic word recognition and the construction of more complex syntactic structures (Berko, 1958; Clark, 2015). As children learn to manipulate morphemes, the smallest units of meaning, they lay the groundwork for understanding and producing grammatically correct sentences. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of morphological development is essential for comprehending the broader spectrum of language acquisition in children.

Morphological development in children follows a predictable sequence,

beginning with the acquisition of simple morphemes, such as plural and past tense markers, and progressing to more complex structures. For instance, research by Brown (1973) and Crain & Lillo-Martin (1999) has documented that children initially learn morphemes like "s" for plurals and "ed" for past tense, before moving on to more intricate morphological rules. These stages of development are influenced by a variety of factors, including cognitive maturation and linguistic exposure. Theories of language acquisition, including nativist, learning, and interactionist perspectives, offer varying explanations for how children acquire morphological knowledge (Chomsky, 2014; Skinner, 1957; Vygotsky, 1978). While the nativist theory emphasizes innate biological mechanisms, and the learning theory focuses on reinforcement and imitation, the interactionist theory provides a more holistic view by considering the role of social interaction and environmental input.

Among these theories, the interactionist perspective is particularly insightful as it emphasizes the crucial role of social interaction and environmental input in language learning. According to this theory, children learn morphology through active engagement with caregivers and the surrounding linguistic environment (Bruner, 1985; Tomasello, 2005). This engagement involves not only listening and mimicking but also participating in meaningful conversations that provide rich linguistic input. Through these interactions, children are exposed to a variety of morphemes and syntactic structures, which they gradually internalize and reproduce. Therefore, the quality and quantity of linguistic input from caregivers are essential for fostering robust morphological development.

Previous research has consistently shown that parental involvement and the richness of linguistic input significantly influence children's morphological acquisition. Hoff (2006) and Hart & Risley (1996) have demonstrated that children who are exposed to diverse and frequent verbal interactions tend to develop a more extensive morphological repertoire compared to those with limited linguistic stimulation. Furthermore, studies by Snow (1983) and Huttenlocher et al. (2002) highlight the importance of both the quantity and quality of verbal interactions. For example, children who engage in conversations with caregivers that include a wide range of vocabulary and complex sentence structures are more likely to develop advanced morphological skills. Thus, the role of the family environment cannot be overstated in the context of language acquisition.

In light of this background, the present study aims to explore the morphological development of K.A., a 2-year and 6-month-old child, within the context of his familial interactions. Specifically, by focusing on K.A.'s use of morphemes and sentence structure, we seek to understand the impact of his linguistic environment on his morphological growth. This involves a detailed analysis of K.A.'s verbal interactions with his caregivers, noting the frequency and complexity of the morphemes used. Moreover, we will examine how K.A.'s exposure to different types of linguistic input, such as stories, conversations, and educational activities, affects his ability to use and understand morphological structures.

The study is guided by the hypothesis that K.A.'s morphological development is constrained by limited parental interaction and exposure to varied linguistic inputs. This hypothesis is rooted in the interactionist theory, which posits that rich and frequent social interactions are essential for robust language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978; Tomasello, 2005). Consequently, if K.A. experiences limited verbal engagement and a restricted range of linguistic input, his morphological development may lag behind that of peers who receive more enriched linguistic environments. To test this hypothesis, we will conduct a series of observational and interactive sessions with K.A. and his

caregivers, analyzing the data to identify patterns and correlations between his linguistic environment and morphological skills.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of environmental and social factors in the morphological development of young children. By examining the case of K.A., we aim to contribute to the understanding of how familial interactions and linguistic input shape the acquisition of morphological knowledge. Our findings could have significant implications for early childhood education and intervention programs, highlighting the need for strategies that promote rich and varied verbal interactions between children and their caregivers. Through such efforts, we can support the optimal linguistic development of children, ensuring they acquire the necessary skills for effective communication and academic success.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach using note-taking, recording and question-and-answer techniques. The qualitative descriptive method is research that describes the research object based on facts that appear or are as they are. The data used in this research are the results of field observations included in the video and the video is explained in tabular form according to the morphological stages. This is then continued with a comparative analysis of language acquisition from the mechanisms of language acquisition and factors that influence language acquisition, which can be obtained through questions and answers with parents. This research involved one subject, namely K.A., a boy aged 2 years and 6 months. The research was conducted for 4 weeks. Data analysis was carried out by means of transcription, identification, classification and inference.



Figure 1. Research method

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the weekly observations are summarized in the table below:

Tabel 1. Results of the weekly observations

Week	Observation Summary	Morphological Features	Parental Interaction
1	Limited vocabulary, primarily single words ("Mama," "Makan," "Main")	No use of inflectional morphemes	Minimal interaction with mother; father absent
2	Some basic morphological structures; "kucing," attempted "bermain"	Early use of noun ("kucing"); simple verb ("bermain")	Slight increase in mother's engagement
3	Increased responsiveness; use of adjective-noun combinations ("mobil besar," "mobil merah")	Adjective-noun combinations	Mother asks simple questions; father absent
4	Slight improvement in sentence formation ("Mama makan," "Papa kerja")	Two-word combinations; minimal inflectional use	Limited verbal interaction; father absent

During the first week, K.A. exhibited a limited vocabulary, primarily using

single words such as "Mama," "Makan," and "Main." The absence of inflectional morphemes in his speech indicated that his morphological development was still in the early stages. This observation aligns with Brown's (1973) stages of language development, where children initially use isolated words before progressing to more complex morphological structures. According to Hart and Risley (1995), the richness of a child's vocabulary is closely tied to the amount and variety of linguistic input they receive. Hoff (2006) also emphasizes that children exposed to a more extensive range of vocabulary in their environment tend to develop a broader lexicon. K.A.'s restricted vocabulary suggests insufficient exposure to new words and varied linguistic inputs, highlighting the need for more interactive and engaging verbal communication from his caregivers.

Throughout the observations, K.A. predominantly communicated using single words and rarely formed sentences with more than one word. For instance, in the first week, his utterances were primarily limited to single words. By the second week, there was a slight improvement in K.A.'s morphological development, as evidenced by his early use of basic morphological structures such as "kucing-kucing" and his attempt at the verb "bermain." This finding is consistent with the interactionist theory, which posits that children learn language through social interactions and the use of repetitive and varied sentence structures in daily communication (Tomasello, 2003; Bruner, 1983). This progression suggests that even a small increase in linguistic input can positively influence morphological development. The mother's slight increase in engagement, although minimal, provided K.A. with more opportunities to hear and practice using morphemes. During the second week, the following dialogue was observed:

Mother : "*Lihat ada Kucing.*"

K.A. : "*Kucing!*"

Mother : "*Iya, kucing lagi ngapain ya kucingnya?*"

K.A. : "*Bermain.*"

Mother : "*Kucing bermain?*"

K.A. : "*Iya.*"

This interaction shows K.A.'s early attempts at using basic morphological structures such as the noun "anjing" and the verb "bermain." The mother's encouragement and engagement provided K.A. with opportunities to practice his morphological skills, albeit in a limited capacity.

The observations revealed minimal verbal interactions between K.A. and his parents. While his mother, A.S., engaged in limited conversations, his father, Y.H., was often unavailable due to work commitments. This lack of engagement is significant because parental interaction plays a crucial role in language development. Snow (1983) and Huttenlocher et al. (2002) found that children whose parents engage in frequent and varied verbal interactions tend to develop more robust linguistic skills. The minimal interaction observed in K.A.'s case suggests that he is not receiving the necessary linguistic stimulation from his primary caregivers, which is essential for his morphological development. The lack of complete sentences indicates that K.A. may not be receiving sufficient exposure to complex and varied sentence constructions, which are crucial for the development of syntactic and morphological skills. This finding supports the interactionist theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and environmental input in language learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Despite his limited vocabulary and incomplete sentence formation, K.A. demonstrated good responsiveness to communication. He followed simple instructions and showed an understanding of basic commands. For example, during the third week,

K.A. was observed responding to simple requests and showing increased responsiveness, such as identifying objects when asked ("mobil besar," "mobil merah"). This suggests that K.A. has a foundational understanding of language and the potential for further development if provided with more verbal stimulation and interaction. Vygotsky (1978) and Tomasello (2005) emphasize that social interaction is key to cognitive and language development. K.A.'s responsiveness indicates that with more interactive and enriched linguistic environments, his language skills, particularly morphology, could improve significantly. During the third week, the following dialogue was observed:

- Mother : "*Mana mobil besar, K.A.?*"  
K.A. : "*Ini mobil besar.*"  
Mother : "*Bagus! Warna mobil apa?*"  
K.A. : "*Merah.*"  
Mother : "*Mobil merah?*"  
K.A. : "*Iya, mobil merah.*"

This interaction shows K.A.'s use of adjective-noun combinations, indicating an increase in morphological complexity. The mother's questions and K.A.'s responses demonstrate his growing ability to form more complex linguistic structures.

During the fourth week, K.A. showed slight improvement in sentence formation, using two-word combinations like "Mama makan" and "Papa kerja." Although his use of inflectional morphemes remained minimal, this progress signifies a gradual shift towards more complex syntactic constructions. The continued limited verbal interaction and the father's absence suggest that while the presence of a single caregiver can facilitate some morphological development, optimal growth requires more consistent and varied linguistic input. This observation is consistent with Snow's (1983) research, which highlights the importance of diverse and frequent verbal interactions in early language development. During the fourth week, the following dialogue was observed:

- Mother : "*K.A., liat mama lagi apa sekarang?*"  
K.A. : "*Mama makan.*"  
Mother : "*Iya, Mama makan. Kalau Papa?*"  
K.A. : "*Papa kerja.*"

This interaction highlights K.A.'s ability to form simple two-word sentences, demonstrating progress in his morphological development. The continued engagement from his mother, albeit limited, has provided K.A. with the necessary linguistic input to improve his language skills.

Several factors influence language acquisition, including the quantity and quality of linguistic input, the child's social environment, and the level of parental involvement (Hoff, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995). In K.A.'s case, the limited parental interaction, particularly the father's absence due to work commitments, has likely contributed to his slower morphological development. Comparative analysis of language acquisition mechanisms suggests that children who receive more consistent and diverse linguistic input from engaged caregivers tend to develop stronger language skills (Snow, 1983; Huttenlocher et al., 2002). This highlights the need for both parents to be more actively involved in K.A.'s language learning process, despite the challenges posed by their schedules.

These findings align with the interactionist theory, which posits that language acquisition is a dynamic process influenced by social interaction and environmental input (Bruner, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). Overall, K.A.'s morphological development is constrained by limited exposure to varied linguistic inputs and minimal parental interaction. Despite these challenges, his good responsiveness to communication and the

slight improvements observed over the four weeks suggest that with more consistent and enriched verbal engagement, there is significant potential for further language development. The study's findings align with the interactionist theory, emphasizing the critical role of social interaction and environmental input in early language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978; Tomasello, 2005). These insights underscore the need for targeted interventions to create a more linguistically stimulating environment for K.A., enabling him to develop his morphological skills more effectively.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study on K.A.'s morphological development reveals significant limitations in his vocabulary and sentence formation, primarily due to insufficient parental interaction and exposure to varied linguistic inputs. Despite these challenges, K.A.'s good responsiveness to communication suggests potential for improvement with increased verbal engagement. The findings underscore the critical role of social interaction in early language acquisition and the need for targeted interventions to enhance linguistic environments for young children. Parents should be encouraged to engage more actively in verbal interactions with their children to support their language growth and development.

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