English language acquisition
(a case study of a young learner)

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Abstract: This study aims at finding the English vocabulary acquired by a young learner from cartoon movies and describing how she understands the meanings. This is a case study of a five-year-old young learner, who likes story-telling, in which she initially gets the English vocabulary, which is not her first language, from watching cartoon movies. The process of acquiring the vocabulary happens since she was two years old until now. Observation method was used in collecting the data in her age of 4-5 years, as well as interviewing her parents in order to get the information regarding how the child understands the meanings of the vocabulary. Language acquisition (Jalongo: 1992), and vocabulary understanding method (Dardjowidjojo: 2012) were used as the theoretical framework in analysing the data. The results show that the young learner acquires more than seven vocabulary from one cartoon movie in the forms of noun, verb, adjective, and adverb, besides that, she is also able to acquire phrases and sentences. The child mostly used referential strategy to understand the meanings of the vocabulary she got from the cartoon movies. Her parents also play the important role in assisting and helping the child to understand the vocabulary meanings by translating the words into her mother tongue and by describing the difficult vocabulary she could not understand.

Keywords: language acquisition; English vocabulary; young learner; vocabulary meanings

Introduction

There are many foreign TV channels for children recently in Indonesia, like Nick Junior and Disney Junior that have cartoon programs in several languages, i.e. original language and subtitles in other languages. English is the most used language/subtitle in cartoon movies. It seems that children who often watch cartoon movies in English make them familiar with that language and they unconsciously imitate, acquire the vocabulary and are able to pronounce words, phrases or sentences with native-like pronunciation.

Sujiono (2009) states that children has golden age period until six or seven years old in which in that period, they experience rapid socio-emotional development that enables them to adapt with the environment, imitate and use the language they hear. Children acquire their mother tongue mainly from their parents, family, environment, school, and also from television program they watch. It is assumed that children could also acquire a foreign language at the same time with their mother tongue, because children in Indonesia, especially in Bali are multilingual that they also learn local language(s) and foreign language(s) besides their first language.

Imitating is one of the strategies used by children in their early age to acquire both mother tongue and foreign language(s). One interesting case from a five-year-old child is that she acquires English as the foreign language from watching English cartoon movies, imitating the words, phrases, and even several sentences, and then finally remembering and pronouncing them after watching the movies. That condition is in line with Hurlock's statement (2003) that children

with high intelligent and good discipline tend to have good development in acquiring vocabulary. The five-year-old child seems to have good development in acquiring English vocabulary even though it is considered as the foreign language. This research was conducted in order to find out English vocabulary acquired by the five-year-old child from cartoon animation movies and describe the ways she understands the meaning of the vocabulary.

Methodology

Data source

A five-year-old namely Teresa Violeta Umbas who has good development in acquiring English as the foreign language was observed for this research. She was born and lives in Denpasar. She speaks Indonesian with her parents and it is her mother tongue. When she was under the observation (in 2017), she went to a kindergarten in Denpasar where her teachers used Indonesian as a means of communication at school. Vio – her nick name – likes watching cartoon animation movies in English and often imitates (until now) the vocabulary spoken by the characters in the movie and able to pronounce them like English native speaker, which become interesting points to be observed.

Data collection

In this field research, language acquisition method (Dardjowidjojo, 2012:228-229) was applied. The first step done in collecting data is by giving a questionnaire to her parents in order to figure out the identity of the child, most frequently movies watched and the movies' short descriptions, the vocabulary acquired from watching the movies, the way in understanding the acquired vocabulary, and the parents role in the child development in relation to English vocabulary acquisition. The questionnaire was returned after the observation is conducted, which is the second step in collecting the data. The observation was done from her parents helps by video-recording the process. The last step was interviewing her parents in order to support the information gathered from the questionnaire.

The data were collected in six weeks from July to August 2017. It is realized that the process in requiring English vocabulary was not instant and could not be completed during six-week observation time. It must involve a complex process started when she watched cartoon movies for the first time. Based on the information from her parents, she began watching cartoon in her age of >2 years old, therefore, it has been about 3 years when the observation was conducted.

Data analysis

The collected data taken from the results of the questionnaire, observation and interview were analysed qualitatively and descriptively in order to fulfill the purposes of this research. Children language acquisition theory consists of behavior, maturalism, preformation, cognitive development, and psycholinguistics (Jalongo, 1992:9-11). This theory describes the process of how children acquire a language, and include the children efforts in organizing their thought and developing language. This theory has a correlation with how Vio was acquiring English vocabulary from the cartoon movies she watched. In terms of how Vio understood the meanings of the acquired vocabulary, an approach regarding lexicon acquisition of young learners (Dardjowidjojo, 2012) which includes the type of words acquired, the way children know vocabulary meanings, and the way children remember the meanings was used in this research.

Result and discussion

This part contains the description of the English vocabulary acquired by Vio and the discussions on how she was able to know and understand the acquired English vocabulary. There are five cartoon animation movies often watched by Vio during the observation; one movie entitled Sofia the First is on Disney Junior Channel, three movies with the titles Max and Ruby, Blaze and the Monster Machine, and also Shimmer and Shine on Nick Junior Channel, and a movie entitled Zoo Moo that has the same TV Channel as the title. The reasons why she likes to watch those movies are because they are for Vio's age, the utterances spoken by the movie characters are slow and some terms are repetitively spoken, therefore, those movies become the favorite ones.

Vocabulary acquisition from max and ruby movie

There are five words, a phrase and a sentence imitated by the young learner from Max and Ruby movie. The sentence imitated is incomplete and it

is a part of a complex sentence. Table 1 below shows the list of vocabulary acquired by Vio.

Table 1 Vocabulary acquired from Max and Ruby Movie

Word	Phrase	Sentence
Bunny (N)	baby toys (NP)	* this robot is very quite.
autograph (N)		
pizza (N)		
robot (N)		
hungry (Adj)		

From the observation done while she was watching that movie, it was informed by her parents that Vio imitated those words, phrase, and sentence while she was drawing a picture. She did not pay attention to the movie thoroughly because she was doing another activity at the same time. One word that she could memorize after watching the movie is the word 'autograph' as she asked an autograph after she finished drawing a picture on her drawing book.

Vocabulary acquisition from Sofia the first movie

Sophia the First is also her favorite movie because the story is about a princess named Sophia in which a princess character is often loved by girls including Vio. The vocabulary acquired from this movie is as the following.

Table 2 Vocabulary acquired from Sofia the First

Phrase	Sentence
Princess Ballet (NP)	What is my mom gonna say, if she sees my ballet.
	And it's not what she thought it would be.
	She'll be so disappointed in me.
	From that to baking pies I've always won first prize, Gotta reach a higher height.
	I've got no choice.
	I've gotta get it right.
	You don't need to be number one as long as you have lots of fun.
	I've got no choice I got it right.

During Vio was watching Sofia the First movie (Princess Ballet edition) she could imitate the song while it was sung by the character in the movie, but not so accurately. The song contains simple sentences and a few complex sentences. However, without watching the movie, she could not sing that song.

Vocabulary acquisition from blaze and the monster machine movie

Blaze and the Monster Machine is a type of movie that often asks the audience to repeat some words spoken by the characters as well as to count numbers. There are also several questions asked and stimulate the audience to answer them. Table 3 below show the vocabulary acquired by Vio from this movie.

Table 3 Vocabulary acquired from Blaze and The Monster Machine

Word	Phrase	Sentence
Blaze (N)	monster truck (NP)	A sneaky blue truck who cheats in races.
AJ (N)	young smart driver (NP)	When an animal is in trouble, Blaze and his friends have to use and transform awesome new animal powers
Starla (N)	a truck friend (NP)	
Stripes (N)	right behind you (Adv P)	
Zeg (N)	so brave (Adj P)	
Darington (N)	monster machine (NP)	
Crusher (N)	world windows (NP)	
fire (N)	wheels robots (NP	
sneaky (Adj)		
cheat (V)		
races (N)		

animals (N)	

It is not surprising that Vio could imitate a lot of words, some phrases, and two sentences. The most common thing in this movie is that the names of the cars (that can speak) are often repeated, so that Vio was not only able imitate them while watching the movie but also remember them after she watched the movie. The sentence "When an animal is in trouble, Blaze and his friends have to use and transform awesome new animal powers" is always spoken repetitively, and Vio could imitate the sentences but not always correct.

Vocabulary acquisition from shimmer and shine movie

The other movie that Vio often watch is Shimmer and Shine. The following table contains the list of vocabulary acquired from this movie.

Table 4   Vocabulary acquired from Shimmer and Shine

Word	Phrase
voice (N)	Genie trainings (NP)
save (Adj)	Genie teacher (NP)
princess (N)	evil sorcerer (NP)
	team work(NP)

Shimmer and Shine movie is not an interactive movie like Dora and the Explorer and Blaze and the Monster Machine, therefore, Vio could only imitate few words and phrases. By watching this movie, Vio used her fantasy to tell a story based on the Genie story in the movie.

Vocabulary acquisition from zoo moo movie

Zoo Moo is a movie about animals' life. She could only imitate words and a phrase. There is not a sentence that she could imitate, because it is not an interactive movie.

Table 5   Vocabulary acquired from Zoo Moo

Word	Phrase
Leo (N)	Junior ranger (NP)
animals (N)	
computer (N)	
sister (N)	
face (N)	

island (N)
police (N)
cute (Adj)
fish (N)
collects (V)

Knowing the meanings of vocabulary

Vio's interests on the stories of her favourite cartoon amination movies and her curiosity are the factors that led her to imitate and acquire vocabulary and also find the meanings of the vocabulary. The words/phrases/sentences she imitated from the movies are often repeated by the characters in the movie. She could imitate words, simple phrases, simple sentence (usually in a song), and a few complex sentence. Not all the vocabulary that she imitated during watching the movies could be remembered. In this case, she only acquired some of the vocabulary she imitated. Related to the vocabulary that she acquired, sometimes she understood the meanings by herself or she asked the meanings of vocabulary she wanted to know from her parents who always accompanied her while watching television.

The movies with the same series are often shown every day in one term, and because she watched the same serial of movies repeatedly, it became easier for Vio to acquire English vocabulary from the movies. She knew the meanings of the vocabulary by using reference strategy. It means that she interpreted the contexts of situation in the movies, then she relates the vocabulary (usually the nouns) with the things she looks at the movies, with the facial expressions of the characters (for the adjectives), and with the situation in the movies. Since the movies were watched several times, she can remember some vocabulary after she finished watching them.

Vio's parents have an important role in helping her to figure the meanings of vocabulary when she could not refer to the things and situation in the movies. Vio was often accompanied by her parents when watching movies and she often asked directly about the vocabulary meanings. Her parents also choose the good cartoon movies, possibly the educating ones, therefore, she would acquire good vocabulary.

Vio has got another positive effect from watching the English cartoon movies besides acquiring

English vocabulary, that is, by using her imagination, she is able to retell stories that she remembers. Vio learns English unconsciously by the watching the movies, then can understand the meanings of the vocabulary without having an English lesson.

Conclusion

The results show that the young learner acquires more than seven vocabulary from one cartoon movie in the forms of noun, verb, adjective, and adverb, besides that, she is also able to acquire several phrases and sentences. Vio mostly used referential strategy to understand the meanings of the vocabulary she got from the cartoon movies. Her parents also play the important role in assisting and helping the child to understand the vocabulary meanings by translating the words into her mother tongue and by describing the difficult vocabulary she could not understand.

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