

• The Morphological Repertoire Acquired by Meranao-Speaking Toddlers

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Abstract

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This study sought out the morphological features acquired by five two-year old Meranao children. Specifically, it aimed at finding out: (1) the morphological features acquired by five two-year old Meranao children; (2) the word-forms commonly found in toddlers-talk; and (3) the particles commonly used by these toddlers.

This study employed the qualitative type of research utilizing a case study approach in identifying, describing, and documenting the morphological repertoire acquired by the five two-year old Meranao children. Videotaping and tape recording were cautiously done in order to obtain the necessary data. The morphological repertoire exhibited by the involved Meranao children was then identified and categorized to readily determine their morphological acquisition.

Results of the study revealed that : (1) a typical two-year old Meranao child exhibited a telegraphic quality of a two-word speech; (2) the subjects leave out the grammatical words such as is and the. For example, 'kowa ontoda' for 'Kinowa niyan so ontoda' (He got the chair); 'amo pangit' for "So amo na pangit' (The monkey is ugly); 'plane mala' for 'So plane na mala' (The plane is big); and (3) the subjects leave out the grammatical morphemes such as the prefix pag- for 'paginom' and 'pagodoa'; the suffix such as -ya for 'titiya.' Thus, the subjects put in only the words that carry the most important content. (Note, however, that "pangit" and "plane" are not Meranao terms. This shows that children nowadays are influenced by "borrowings.")

Other results revealed that toddlers exhibited a reduplication of word, as e in the words 'nana', 'mimi', and 'titi' (see Appendix A for correct Meranao and English translation). Moreover, the speech of the toddlers is made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Furthermore, toddlers employed particles such as e, personal article si, and locative particle sa in their utterances. Finally, the study revealed that Meranao toddlers could hardly produce the retroflex [r]. While they could not produce [r], they instead replaced [r] in the medial position with [y], i.e., instead of 'perak', they produced 'peyak.'

In conclusion, a typical Meranao toddler produces a telegraphic speech. It is like a telegram, brief but interpretable. Also, the speech of toddlers is made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

With the above findings and conclusions made, the following implications were:

Language is an innate capability triggered by the presence of language in the environment. It appears that in order to learn a language a child must be able to interact with adult people who speak the language. Early opportunities provided by parents and other adults at home and in the community as well may establish much of what is learned. Thus, the interaction that takes place between toddlers and adult is of prime importance in the environment in which language is acquired.

Since the environment of these toddlers is of prime consideration in acquiring the language, it behooves every mother/caretaker, who takes a crucial role in the linguistic encounters of the child, to avoid, as much as possible, baby-talk when talking to the small children, especially during the first few years of their existence. Kagan's (1979) study revealed that children reared in an environment in which people talk to them straight and reward them for making speech-like sounds will talk earlier than children who do not receive such attention.

Among the recommendations brought to the fore are the following:

1. That baby-talk be not used frequently when talking to children, in order to prevent the development of incorrect auditory. Hence, appropriate and correct words must be used to enable them to follow and imitate adult-speech;

2. That a syntactical analysis of toddler-talk should be conducted not only to determine the lexical items present in their utterances but to enhance better understanding of these expressions; and

3. That a comparative study of the morphological features acquired by Meranao and other linguistic group toddlers be pursued to ascertain whether toddlers undergo the same stages of language development.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The first breath of life is usually noisy. This noise continues except during rest until the last breath but the quality and purpose of human sounds undergo great changes especially in the first two years of childhood. By the time children are two years old, most of the pre-speech forms of communication they have found useful during infancy are abandoned. Toddlers no longer babble, and their crying is greatly curtailed. They may use gestures, but mainly as supplements to speech – to emphasize the meaning of the words they use – rather than as substitutes for speech. However, they continue to communicate with others by emotional expressions which, on the whole, are less subject to social disapproval and less likely to be judged as “babyish” than other pre-speech forms (Hurlock, 1982).

Toddlers' utterances may be quite meaningless to adults if they are not aware exactly in what way these utterances are expressed. People cannot just rely on

understanding what they hear to work out the meaning of words that they do not hear well. In general, people have little awareness of how words are produced by human beings; they have no vocabulary with which to discuss it. A crucial problem for them is to determine how these words which can be understood are organized into a system of words that allow meaningful communication. In search of a workable solution to this problem, the study of morphological repertoire acquired by children is conducted so as to determine the messages that children are trying to convey.

The thrust of morphology, among others, is to find out the morphological features acquired by toddlers. Indeed, the researcher is inspired to conduct a study on morphological repertoire acquired by two-year old Meranao-speaking children mainly to help people like preschool teachers, caretakers, and those who are engaged in childcare to better understand the messages that these toddlers are trying to convey.

For the aforementioned reason, this research work is justified.

Theoretical-Conceptual Framework of the Study

The paradigm exemplified in Figure 1 shows that the study is anchored on the Sociocultural Theory (Norton, 1993) and Motor Development (Atkinson, 1990).

Development does not end once a person reaches physical maturity but continues throughout life, and developmental psychologists seek to describe and analyze the regularities of human development across the entire life span. Developmental psychologists often study the average, or typical, rate of development. For instance, at what age does the average child begin to speak? How rapidly does a typical child's vocabulary increase with age? Developmental psychologists also seek to discover how features of the environment influence development. For example, how do different child-rearing practices affect the language development of children?

The sociocultural theory stresses the interactive reality of language acquisition. While many researchers in the sixties and seventies have concluded that language is an innate capability triggered by the presence of language in the environment, other researchers both in America and England (Wells, 1979, 1981) have considered the importance of the social environment in which language is acquired and the interaction that takes place between children and adults.

Bruner (1978:44) describes a sociocultural viewpoint of languages acquisition as follows:

[Language is] encountered in a highly orderly interaction with the mother, who takes a crucial role in the linguistic encounters of the child. What has emerged is a theory of mother-infant interaction in language acquisition – called the tuning theory – that sees language mastery as involving the mother as much as it does the child.

Support for a social context for language acquisition frequently relies on cases in which children do not interact with adults. For example, Moskowitz (1978) describes a boy with normal hearing who was raised by deaf parents. Although the child listened to television daily, by the age of two to three he could neither speak nor understand English.

He was, however, fluent in his parents' sign language. Moskowitz concludes, "It appears that in order to learn a language a child must also be able to interact with adult people in the language." Similarly, a longitudinal study of children from kindergarten through third grade conducted by Walker et. al. (1994) has found that the environment and early language experiences are so important that many children from lower socioeconomic environments who may have fewer early language experiences demonstrate differences in language skills. In like manner, studies conducted by Kagan (1979) revealed that children reared in an environment in which people talk to them straight and reward them for making speech-like sounds talked earlier than children who did not receive such attention. For example, children reared in middle-class American homes begin to speak at about 1 year of age. Children reared in San Marcos, a remote village in Guatemala, have little verbal interaction with adults and do not utter their first words until they are over 2 years old. In like manner, a mother's and/or caretaker's frequent use of babytalk when talking to small children usually result in incorrect auditory skill in letters, thus affecting the language development of the child.

Today, most psychologists agree that not only environment that guide the language development of the child but motor development as well correlate with the language development of the child. For example, if a mother experienced German measles during the first three months of pregnancy, the infant may be born deaf, blind, or brain-damaged. Thus, the normal maturation of the fetus is adversely affected. In like manner, the development of language is also affected.

Early studies on motor development have arrived at similar conclusions. Studies conducted by Kagan (1979) revealed that in the normal course of development, human beings are not able to talk before they have attained a certain level of neurological development; no infant less than a year old speaks in sentences. Lenneberg's (1978) study posits that language development is principally due to the process of maturation. A sequence of milestones in the development of speech is correlated with age and with the development of other skills. For example, Brown (1973) conducted one of the most extensive longitudinal studies of early language acquisition. In this study, the speech of children were recorded over a five-year period. Brown found that all these children appear to go through the same stages of language development, although a great variance was among three children. For example, one of these three successfully used six grammatical morphemes by the age of two years and three months, while the second child did not master them until the age of three years and six months. The third child was four years before reaching an equivalent stage in language development. Thus a child is able to speak the language if he attains the appropriate level of neurological maturation.

Figure 1 shows the Theoretical-Conceptual Framework of the present study. It depicts how the environment guide the language development of the child, how brain maturation correlates with the development of speech, and finally how these two (environment and brain maturation) interplay.

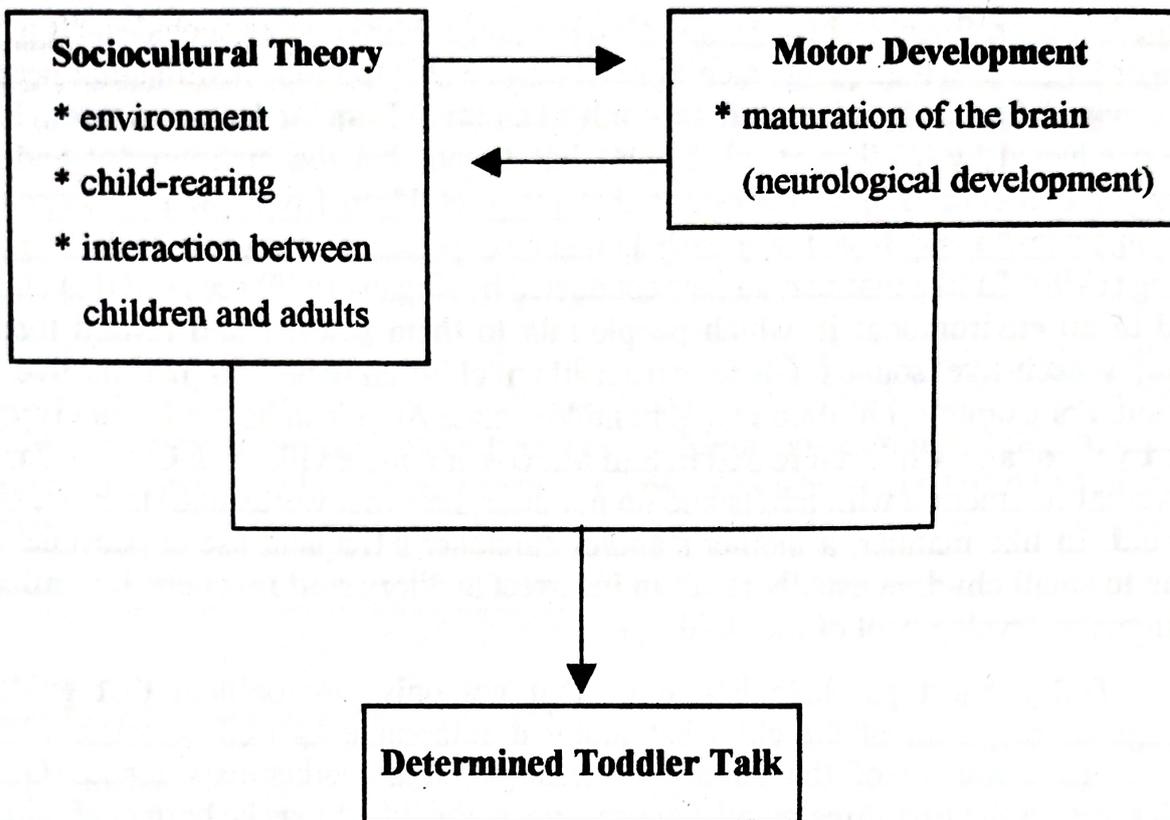


Figure 1

The Theoretical-Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to find out the morphological repertoire acquired by five two-year old Meranao children.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What morphological features do the five two-year old Meranao children acquire?
2. What word-forms are most commonly found in toddler-talk?
3. What particles do these toddlers commonly use?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the analysis of the morphological features acquired by five two-year old Meranao-speaking children, the word forms commonly found in the toddler-talk, and the particles commonly used by these toddlers.

Significance of the Study

This study hopes to provide insights on the importance of studying toddler-talk exhibited by two-year old Meranao children to the following:

Preschool Teachers. The findings of this study would give insights on how toddlers construct their utterances and the importance of understanding the messages that toddlers are trying to convey.

Caretakers. The results of this study may be useful not only to parents but also to those who are engaged in caring for and understanding these toddlers during their first few years of existence.

Students. The findings of this study would provide the language students viable insights on how toddlers form or construct words and/or utterances.

Future Researchers. The findings of this endeavor would serve researchers as viable avenue for conducting studies on first language acquisition and comparative study on toddler-talk.

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study are defined conceptually and/or operationally as follows:

Language. It is an arbitrary system of articulated sounds made use of by a group of human beings as a means of transmitting information (Wardhaugh, 1977). In this study, it refers to the Meranao language.

Morphology. The branch of linguistics that deals with the internal structure and forms of words (Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition). In this study, it refers to word formation acquired by two-year old Meranao children.

Grammar. The study of word forms and the rules of a language (The New Webster's Dictionary).

First/Native Language. It pertains to the language that is first acquired by a speaker. In this study, it is the Meranao language.

First Language Acquisition. It refers to a speaker's acquisition of his first language. In this study, it is a process by which children acquire their first/native language.

Meranao Toddlers. The term refers to two-year old Meranao children.

Utterance. This refers to a spoken sentence or part of a sentence.

Word. It is a morpheme or combination of morphemes which native speakers regard as a minimal pronounceable unit (Hyman, 1975).

Particle. It is used to bind or unite (Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary). In this study, the term is used to connect or unite words.

Holophrastic speech. The first single-word utterances of a child.

Telegraphic speech. The two-word utterances of a child.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Linguists, psychologists and educators have shown interest in the study of children's language. Although the development of child language study can be traced to the 18th and 19th centuries, most of the research studies on the subject have accumulated over the past fifteen years. However, one thing is certain: children learn the intricacies of language on their own. They are not taught language as they are taught reading, writing, arithmetic and other skills. (Skinner, 1957).

Related Literature

There is no one who has not at some time witnessed the remarkable ability of children to communicate. As small babies, children babble and coo and cry and vocally or nonvocally send an extraordinary number of messages and receive even more messages. As they reach the end of their first year, they imitate words and speech sounds they hear around them, and about this time they utter their first "words" (Brown, 1987).

How can one explain this fantastic journey from that first anguished cry at birth to adult competence in language? From the first words to tens of thousands? From telegraphese at 18 months to the compound complex sentences just a few years later? It is these sorts of questions that theories of language acquisition attempt to answer.

In principle, one can adopt one of two extremist and polarized positions in the study of first language acquisition. The behavioristic position (Brown, 1987) holds that children come into the world with a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate bearing no pre-conceived notions about the world or about the language. These children are shaped by their environment, slowly conditioned through various schedules of reinforcement. At the other extreme, one finds a position that claims children come into this world with very specific innate knowledge, which includes language.

One of the most fascinating accomplishments of children is the acquisition of language. The process of language learning is a gradual climb that is charted into stages in the literature of language development (Froese, 1987).

In the first month or first two months, babies cry, and their vocal performance is limited to these crying noises. Fortunately for those around them, children soon replace some of their crying with a cooing period, usually during the third month of life. During this cooing period, the sounds a child produces are primarily consonants formed at the back of the mouth, such as [k] and [g], and non-low vowel sounds, such as [i] and [u]. The growing period varies in length from one child to another, but by age of five months, most children have entered into the babbling stage, characterized by an increasing variety of sounds (Falk, 1973).

The babbling periods extend from the age of four or five months until the child is approximately one year old. During this time, the child produces a great variety of sounds. It is at this point that children seem to recognize and understand a few words they

hear such as their name and commands like "NO". In terms of production, children at about the age of ten months have usually acquired the basic intonation patterns of the language they are about to learn (Falk, 1973).

The next stage is the lallation that begins around 6 to 8 months. Unlike babbling, lallation involves the imperfect or accidental imitation by babies of their own sound and those of others, setting the stage to communicate.

Parents begin to sense the intention behind these utterances, with their more well-defined shapes, which often attribute meaning to them, such as questioning, calling, greeting or wanting. Following lallation is the imitation stage that begins around 9 or 10 to 18 months. This stage of early vocalization, or the prelinguistic period, occurs when the baby consciously imitates the sounds that he/she hears. The baby now begins to respond differently to adult speech (Lenneberg, 1978).

It is usually said that children have begun to talk when they first begin to consistently use a particular sequence of sounds that corresponds roughly to the sequence of sounds used by adults with approximately the same meaning. This is recognized as the child's first word. However, the first stage of actual language acquisition is the holophrastic stage – 'expressing an entire sentence in one word.' During the holophrastic stage, which begins with the production of the first word, children use only a single word: they do not yet combine two words to produce simple phrases. The length of the holophrastic stage, like at stages of language acquisition, varies from child to child. For some, it may last as long as a year; for others, especially those who enter this stage later than usual, it may occur for only a few days. The normal length appears to be between three and nine months (Falk, 1973).

Two-word utterances enter the child's communication world at approximately eighteen months of age. Those utterances consist of a noun and a pivot-class word (a word added to the holophrase, which aids in clarifying meaning in either a noun, a verb, or an adjective). For example, the child might say "nice dog" or "heard story". The child is speaking in less than totally grammatical sentences, but these utterances do represent sentences. During this two-word stage, children quickly grasp the importance of expressing concepts and the role that language plays in communicating with others (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

Sometime towards the end of the first year of life children begin to produce expressions which have meaning. Babies utterances, both in their sounds and in their pitch patterns, gradually become certain sound sequences that are tied to certain situations. As an illustration, here is a set of expressions in English of a child aged 1. These are called expressions rather than words because many do not have any relationship to words in the adult language (Cruttenden, 1979).

Expressions

{ ma'am }
{ da'da }
{ na'na }

Gloss

yum yum
bath
piano, music
singing

Example

I'm enjoying my food.
That's a bath.
I want to bang the piano
{pointing to the radio}
{singing to himself}

By the time children are 18 to 24 months of age, they usually utter two-word statements. During this two-word stage, they quickly grasp the importance of expressing concepts and the role that language plays in communicating with others. Thus the child often leaves out small words and word endings for his/her speech. For example, instead of saying "Look at the big dog", the child says "Big dog" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

Language development, which begins in infancy, is a never-ending task. Therefore, theorists cannot fully explain how the acquisition process occurs. There does not appear to be sequence in the acquisition of phonology, grammar and semantics.

Related Studies

Different researches about language development have been conducted. The present study is substantiated by the following studies:

Brown (1973) conducted one of the most extensive longitudinal studies of early language acquisition. In this study, the speech of three children was recorded over a five-year period. Brown found that during approximately the first two years of life speech could be described as telegraphic. During this stage, the speech was made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs and adjectives. The speech in this telegraphic period did not utilize function words such as prepositions, articles, auxiliary verbs, or pronouns. Brown's study also showed great variance among three children he studied. For example, one child successfully used six grammatical morphemes by the age of two years and three months, while a second child did not master them until the age of three years and six months. The child was four years old before reaching an equivalent stage in language development.

Similarly, a longitudinal study of children from kindergarten through third grade conducted by Walker et. al. (1994) found that the environment and early language experiences are so important that many children from lower socioeconomic environments who may have fewer early language experiences demonstrate differences in language ability. Walker et. al. concluded: "The constraints placed on their language development in the context of early parenting may compromise growth in both early language and intelligence as well as later success in terms of reading and spelling achievement in particular."

The study of Hyman (1975) on one hand revealed that the study of language acquisition is of importance to phonologists, since it is possible to observe the stages children go through as they attempt to discover the phonology of their language. In her findings, children speaking English have frequently been observed to substitute the sound [w] for [r]. Thus they say *wabbit* instead of *rabbit* and *wight* instead of *right*. This shows that, in language acquisition, it is possible to have different phonological representations for the same sound. Thus [w] is sometimes represented as [r] and sometimes as [w].

Lenneberg's study (1941), on the other hand, posits that language development is principally due to the process of maturation. A sequence of milestones in the development of speech is correlated with age and with the development of other skills. The findings of his study revealed that the majority of children begin to use single

utterances or words around the age of one year and two-word utterances around the last quarter of the second year (cited in Cruttenden, 1979).

On the other hand, Jenkins and Palermo's study (Brown, 1987) attempted to synthesize notions of generative linguistics and mediational approaches to child language. They claimed that the child might acquire frames of phrase-structure grammar and learn the stimulus-response equivalences that can be substituted within each frame.

Moreover, Piaget and Inhelder's study explained that language is not the means whereby a child constructs reality (Cruttenden, 1979), but once that reality is constructed it does enable him to think about the reality more easily. Thus language is seen as relevant, though not absolutely necessary, to a child's conceptual development. The findings of their study revealed that emphasis is still on the inner development of the child and that early speech is considered by Piaget to be predominantly egocentric.

The study of Halliday describes language as developing to serve needs which exists as features of human life at all times and in all creatures. These needs or functions are grouped under six headings: Instructional, Regulatory, Interactional, Personal, Heuristic and Imaginative (Cruttenden, 1979).

Bloom's research, along with that of Piaget, Slobin, and others (Brown, 1987), likewise paved the way for a new wave of child language study. Piaget described overall development as the result of children's interaction with their environment, with a complementary interaction between their developing perceptual cognitive capacities and their linguistic experience. The findings of their study revealed that what children learn about language is determined by what they already know about the world.

McNeil's study showed that a child comes to the task of learning language with a language acquisition device (LAD) which has in it a notion of a hierarchy of grammatical categories, which first shows itself in the pivot-open distinction.

He further described LAD as consisting of four innate linguistic properties: (1) the ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds in the environment, (2) the ability to organize linguistic events into various classes which can later be refined, (3) knowledge that only a certain kind of linguistic system is possible and that the other kinds are not, and (4) the ability to engage in constant evaluation of the developing linguistic system so as to construct the simplest possible system out of the linguistic data that are encountered (cited in Brown, 1987).

The basic notion of Chomsky, on one hand, is that it is ridiculous to think of children as coming to language with a blank mind and then being "conditioned" to it; there must be a very considerable innate disposition to language (Cruttenden, 1979).

Gumperz and Gumperz's study likewise revealed that child language is not just a poor copy of adult speech but is systematic, goal-oriented and governed by an identifiable underlying communicative intent, which is for communicative purposes. Thus it must be treated with care and must be studied in the light of linguistics and other factors that influence the child's acquisition of language.

Bloom's study (Brown, 1987), further explained that language development depends upon an explanation of the cognitive underpinnings of language: what children

know will determine what they learn about the code for both speaking and understanding messages.

In relations to the studies mentioned above, Mastura (1998) studied the "Language Acquisition of Children Two-Three Years of Age." Based on his findings, the researcher has concluded that children have common difficulties in the articulation of /r/ or /l/ sounds. Intervocally /r/ usually becomes /l/ or /l/ becomes /r/. The children also find difficulty in uttering consonantal sounds in the initial position. They usually omitted prefixes and the first syllables of words.

On one hand, Bacasno (1995) studied "Patterns of First Language Acquisition as Reflected in the baby Talk of Six (6) Children." The findings of the study revealed that there is reduplication of word, as in the word "namnam," "papa," "mama," "dede," "taktak," and "hathat." Other results are modifications of certain sounds such as [k] to [t], the loss of laterals or retroflex, partial reduplication and the loss of certain sounds in the first syllable. Children also omitted the consonant sounds in the initial positions like "omay" for "gamay" (small). Finally, greater use of nouns in general in the language of babies was revealed in their baby-talk.

On the other hand, the study, "The Morphological Development in Cebuano of Twelve Toddlers in barangay Sto. Niño, Cebu City" conducted by Arcilla (1988), revealed that the speech of toddlers is characterized as one involving affixation, reduplication process and the use of ligatures, personal articles, particles, conjunctions, and demonstratives. The most predominant affixes present in almost all of the toddlers are the prefixes na-, nang-, naka-, nag-, ka-, gi-, ma-, pa-, I-, pag-, mag-, pagka-, magpa-, sang-, di-, nagpa-, ga-, and mi-. The prefix nag- is the most productive. The toddlers rarely exhibit infixes. Only three of them used suffixes such as -a-, -an-, -on-, and -han-. As for the ligatures, the toddlers exhibited two typical ligatures present in the Cebuano language, -ng-, and -nga-. However, the ligature -y- was used by only one toddler.

Moreover, the toddlers also employed personal articles such as si and in, locative particles such as sa, conjunction such as og and the demonstrative such as didto. Other results also revealed that most of the speeches of the child belong to the large open classes such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. In addition, the study of Al Fahd (1987), the "Patterns of the First Language Acquisition as Reflected in the baby-Talk of Ten Maranao Children," revealed that out of 50 lexical items, the most common terms acquired by babies are the following: '(a)ma', '(ngi)rong', for nose, 'di' for bad, 'da' for nothing, '(ma-i) to' for little and '(talum) pa' for shoes. The loss of laterals and retroflex is also observed.

Finally, Buca and Delmonte (1997) studied that "Phonological System of the First Language Acquired by Five Maranao Children Aged Two to Three Years." The findings of the study revealed that the following sounds are found in the phonological system of the subjects. The vowels are; /a/ /u/ and /i/. The diphthongs are; /oy/, /ay/, and /aw/. The consonants are; /p/, /y/, /k/, /s/, /b/, /d/, /m/, /n/, and /t/. The subjects have difficulty uttering the following sounds: the vowels /E/ and /e/; the consonants /f/, /g/, /t/, /v/, /n/, /c/, and the consonants cluster /ks/.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methods used, the locale of the study, the subjects of the study, the data gathering instruments, and the statistical treatment of data.

Research method Used

This study employed the qualitative type of research utilizing a case study approach in identifying, describing, and documenting the morphological repertoire acquired by the five (5) two-year old Meranao children. Videotaping and tape recording were cautiously done in order to obtain the necessary data. The morphological repertoire exhibited by the involved children was then identified and categorized to readily determine their morphological acquisition.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Marawi City, from the first semester 1999 until summer 2000.

Marawi is the seat of the provincial capital of Lanao del Sur, a province located in the northwest, on the island of Mindanao. An important geographic feature of the city is Lake Lanao, the largest lake on Mindanao and the second largest freshwater lake in the Philippines. Marawi is situated on the northern tip of the lake that is approximately 2,800 feet above sea level. It has a total land area of 2,258 hectares. The city population consists of mostly Meranao. In terms of population, the Meranao is the largest Filipino Muslim group in the Philippines. Living along the lakeshore of Lanao has given them the name Meranao, which means residing near or in the vicinity of the Lake.

The word Marawi in Basa Iranun (Meranao Language) literally means a "place where things are inclined or centered" (see map).

The Subjects

The subjects of this study were five two-year-old Meranao children residing in Marawi City. They were carefully chosen according to their age and environment through purposive sampling.

Data Gathering Instruments

In obtaining the desired data, an actual observation was conducted as the primary source of data collection. Thus videotaping and tape-recording were done to obtain the data. As such, the study involved the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, watching what was happening, listening to what was said, collecting whatever

data were made available. These instruments were designed to record and observe the actual utterances of the subjects.

The secondary source of data collection was the visual materials such as toys and/or objects. Children were provided with these instruments to encourage them to play. These were designed to elicit the subjects' responses.

Statistical Treatment

Since this study is a qualitative type of research utilizing a case study approach, the researcher used simple statistics such as frequency, percentage distribution, and ranking.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered during the observation period. The presentation and analysis were divided into three (3) parts: (1) the morphological features acquired by the toddlers; (2) the word forms commonly found in the toddler-talk; and (3) the particles commonly used by these toddlers.

I. *The Morphological Features Acquired by the Meranao Toddlers*

The findings revealed that the subjects exhibited the telegraphic quality of the two-word speech. As observed in their utterances (see Appendix A), the subjects leave out the grammatical words (such as is and the). For example, 'kowa ontoda' for 'kinowa niyan so ontoda' (He got the chair); 'amo pangit' for 'So amo na pangit' (The monkey is ugly); 'plane mala' for 'So plane na mala' (The plane is big). Moreover, the toddlers also leave out grammatical morphemes such as the prefix pag- for 'paginom', and 'pagodoa'; suffixes such as -ya for titiya and -a for odoa. Hence, the subjects put in only the words that carry the most important content. [Note, however, that 'pangit' and 'plane' are not Meranao terms. This only shows that children nowadays are influenced by "borrowings"].

The above finding is substantiated by Gardner and Lambert (1972) who revealed that by the age of two, children quickly grasp the importance of expressing concepts and the role that language plays in communicating with others. Thus the child often leaves out small words and word endings for his/her speech. For example, instead of saying "Look at the big dog," the child says "Big dog." The results look like a telegram, interpretable but brief. Furthermore, the subjects exhibited a reduplication of word as in the word 'nana,' 'mimi,' and 'titi'. This idea is supported by Bacasno's finding that the speech of toddlers is characterized as one involving partial reduplication or the reduplication process, as in the word 'namnam,' 'papa,' 'mama,' 'dede,' 'taktak,' etc. Other results revealed that Meranao toddlers could hardly produce retroflex [r]. While they could not produce [r], they instead replaced [r] in the medial position with [y], i.e., instead of 'perak', they produced 'peyak'. On the contrary, Hyman (1975) in his study of

American children, observed that while they could not produce [r] they instead replaced [r] in the initial position with [w], i.e., instead of rabbit, they produced 'wabbit.'

On the other hand, Table 1 shows the frequency of the nouns, verbs and adjectives manifested in the toddlers' utterances. Based on multiple responses, the table exemplifies that there were 49 or 58.33% nouns and the recurring words were 'ome' with 10 or 20.41%, ranking first; followed by 'abe' with 5 or 10.20%, ranking second; and 'mommy' with 4 or 8.16%, ranking third.

On the other hand, there were 26 or 30.95% verbs and the recurring words were 'kena' with 5 or 19.23%, ranking first; followed by 'inom' with 4 or 15.38% and 'titi' with 4 or 15.38%, ranking second; and 'kowa' with 3 or 11.53% and 'odo' with 3 or 11.53%, ranking third.

Moreover, there were 8 or 9.52% adjectives and the most prevailing words were 'pangit' with 3 or 37.5%, ranking first; followed by 'mala' with 2 or 25%, ranking second; and the rest were all 1 or 12.5%, ranking third. There is, therefore, a total of 84 or 100% utterances.

Table 1. *Sample Frequency Distribution of Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives manifested in the Toddlers' Utterances.*

Category	Frequency	Percent	Rank
NOUNS			
'ome'	10	20.41	1 st
'ontoda'	1	2.04	
'amo'	2	4.08	
Alinor	2	4.08	
'abe'	5	10.20	2 nd
'bike'	3	6.12	
'begas'	1	2.04	
'plane'	2	4.08	
'aso'	1	2.04	
Ali	1	2.04	
'gita'	2	4.08	
'seda'	1	2.04	
'mommy'	4	8.16	3 rd
'Naie'	1	2.04	
'ig'	1	2.04	
'peyak' (perak)	3	6.12	
'buk'	1	2.04	
Sarip	1	2.04	
'mata'	1	2.04	
MSU	1	2.04	
'daddy'	2	4.08	
'taumpa' (talumpa)	1	2.04	
'ate'	1	2.04	
'baala' (bangkala)	1	2.04	
Total -----	49*	100	
VERBS			
'kowa'			
'tago'	3	11.53	3 rd

'odo'	1	3.84	
'yaoma'	3	11.53	
'titi'	2	7.69	
'inom'	4	15.38	2 nd
'kena'	4	15.38	
'tungkami' (sungkami)	5	19.23	1 st
'mimi'	1	3.84	
'miyaopit' (miyalopit)	1	3.84	
'yabono' (miyabono)	1	3.84	
Total - - - - -	1	3.84	
ADJECTIVES	26*	<u>100</u>	
'pangit'			
'mala'			
'da'	3	37.5	1 st
'matas'	2	25	2 nd
'nana'	1	12.5	3 rd
Total - - - - -	1	12.5	
	1	12.5	
	8*	100	

Legend:

*Based on multiple responses

II. *Word-forms commonly found in the toddler-talk*

Table 2 indicates that there were 49 or 58.33% nouns ranking first; followed by the verbs with 26 or 30.95%, ranking second; and adjectives with 8 or 9.52%, ranking third. The pattern shows that the speech of the toddlers is mostly made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives. The speech in this telegraphic period did not utilize functions words, such as prepositions, articles, auxiliary verbs, or pronouns.

The above idea is supported by Arcilla's (1998) study, "The Morphological Development in Cebuano of Twelve-Toddlers In Barangay Sto. Niño, Cebu City," which revealed that during the two-word stage, the speech of the child is mostly made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Table 2. *Summary of Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives exhibited in the toddler-talk.*

Category	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Nouns	49	58.33	1 st
Verbs	26	28.57	2 nd
Adjectives	8	13.09	3 rd

III. *The Particles used by these Meranao toddlers.*

As for the use of particles, Table 3 indicates that the common particles observed in the toddler's utterances are e, si, and sa. The table exemplifies that there are 5 or 45.45% "si," ranking first; followed by "sa" with 4 or 36.36%, ranking second; and "e" with 2 or 18.18%, ranking third. As shown in their utterances (see Appendix B), e is used

when the modified word comes first before the modifier. For example, in 'taumpa I daddy', 'taumpa' is the word being modified while 'daddy' serves as modifier. Although they are both nouns, they function in the sentence differently.

On the other hand, the personal particle si is used when referring to a person. For example, "Si Nora." On the contrary, locative particle sa is used when referring to a place. For example, "Sa opisina." Moreover, it was found that out of five (5) subjects, only Baby 3 exhibited all the particles while babies 1, 2, 4 and 5 employed si and sa (see Appendix B).

The above findings is supported by Arcilla's (1998) study, "The Morphological Development in Cebuano of Twelve-Toddlers in Barangay Sto. Niño, Cebu City," which revealed that the speech of toddlers is characterized as one involving the use of ligatures or particles. For example, in Cebuano language, the toddlers exhibited two typical ligatures such as -ng- and -nga-. Also, the toddlers employed personal particles such as si and in.

Table 3. *Particles Exhibited in the Toddlers' Utterances*

	Particles	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Baby 1 "si"				
Baby 2 "si" "sa"	"si"	5	45.45	1 st
Baby 3 "e"	"sa"	4	36.36	2 nd
"si" "sa"	"e"	2	18.18	3 rd
Baby 4 "si" "sa"				
Baby 5 "ti" (si) "ta" (sa)				

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study endeavored to determine the Morphological Repertoire Acquired by Meranao-Speaking Toddlers Residing in Marawi City.

Specifically, this study aimed at finding out: (1) the morphological features acquired by 5 two-year old Meranao children; (2) the word-forms most commonly found in the toddler talk; and (3) the particles commonly used by these toddlers.

Summary

From the obtained data, the following findings are generated:

1. That a typical two-year old Meranao baby exhibited a telegraphic quality of a two-word speech;
2. That subjects left out the grammatical words such as is and the. For example, 'kowa ontoda' for 'Kinowa niyan so ontoda' (He got the chair); 'amo pangit' for 'So amo na pangit' (The monkey is ugly); 'plane mala' for 'So plane na mala' (The plane is big);
3. That subjects left out grammatical morphemes such as the prefix pag- for 'paginom' and 'pagodoa'; and suffixes such as -ya for 'titiya' and '-a' for 'odoa';
4. That subjects put in only the words that carry the most important content;
5. That toddlers exhibited a reduplication of word, as in the 'nana', 'mimi', and 'titi';
6. That the speech of toddlers was made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives; and
7. Finally, that toddlers employed particles such as i, personal particle si, and locative particle sa in their utterances.

Conclusion

A typical Meranao toddler produces a telegraphic speech. It is like a telegram, brief but interpretable. For example, "amo pangit" for "so amo na pangit" (The monkey is ugly). Also, the speech of toddlers is made up of content words belonging to the large open classes called nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Implications

Language is an innate capability triggered by the presence of language in the environment. It appears that in order to learn a language a child must also be able to interact with adult people who speak the language. Early opportunities provided by parents and other adults at home and in the community as well may establish much of what is learned. Thus, the interaction that takes place between toddlers and adults is of prime importance in the environment in which language is acquired.

Since the environment of these toddlers is of prime consideration in acquiring language, it behooves every mother/care-taker, who takes a crucial role in the linguistic encounters of the child, to avoid, as much as possible, baby-talk when talking to the small children, especially during the first few years of their existence. Kagan (1979) revealed that children reared in an environment in which people talk to them straight and reward them for making speech-like sounds will talk earlier than children who do not receive such attention.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions, these recommendations are given:

1. That baby-talk be not used frequently when talking to children, in order to prevent the development of incorrect auditory skill. Appropriate and correct words must be used to enable them to follow and imitate adult-speech;
2. That a syntactical analysis of toddler-talk should be conducted not only to determine the lexical items present in their utterances but to enhance better understanding of these expressions; and
3. That a comparative study of the morphological features acquired by Meranao and other linguistic group toddlers may be pursued to ascertain whether toddlers undergo the same stages of language development.

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APPENDIX A

Toddler's Utterances	Correct Meranao Translation	English Translation
'abe'	'ama'	Father
'ome'	'ina'	Mother
'kowa ontoda'	'Kinowa niyan so ontoda'	He got the chair.
'amo pangit'	'So amo na pangit'	The monkey is ugly.
'tago Alinor'	'Tiyago e Alinor'	Alinor kept it.
'odo ome'	'Pagodoa ko ome'	Nature's calling.
'inom'	'Paginoma'	I want to drink.
'Yaoma abe'	'Miyakaoma si ama'	My father arrived.
'Alinor bike'	'Bike e Alinor'	Alinor's bike.
'peyak abe'	'Perak ama'	I want money.
'begas ome'	'Bigeya sa begas ina'	Give me some rice.
'miaopit ako'	'Miyalopit ako'	
'kowa plane'	'Kinowa niyan so plane'	He got the plane.
'titi abe'	'titiya ko ama'	I want to urinate.
'pangit'	'Pangit'	Ugly
'aso ome'	'Pagilain aken so aso ina'	I want to see the dog.
'kowa Ali'	'Kinowa e Ali'	Ali got it.
'gita ome'	'Begiya sa gita ina'	Give me some food.
'seda ome'	'Begiya sa seda ina'	Give me some fish.
'kena ome'	'Kenako ina'	I want to eat.
'mala amo'	'So amo na mala'	The monkey is big.
'maitem amo'	'So amo na maitem'	The monkey is black.
'da bike'	'Miyada so bike'	The bike was lost.
'kena mommy'	'kena ko ina'	I want to eat.
'pangit Naie'	'Pangit si Naie'	Narie is ugly.
'ig mommy'	'Negiya sa ig ina'	Give some water.
'matas buk'	'Matas I buk'	She has a long hair.
'Sarip mata'	'Mala e mata si Sarip'	Sarip has big eyes.
'begas pen'	'Begiya pen sa begas'	Give me more rice.

'Sarp mata'	'Si Sarip na mala I mata'	Sarif has big eyes.
'tungkami MSU'	'Sung kami sa MSU'	We will go to MSU.
'bike abe'	'Tomoon aken so bike'	I want bicycle.
'yaoma daddy'	'Minioma e ama''	It's my father who brought it.
'taumpa e daddy'	'Talumpa e ama'	That's my father's shoes.
'mala plane'	'So lane na mala'	The plane is big.
'baala ome'	'Bangcala e ina'	That's my mother's dress.
'inom'	'Paginom ako'	I want to drink.
'mimi'	'Soso ako'	I want milk.
'nana'	'Mapiya'	Good or (appreciation)
'titi'	'Titiya ako'	I want to urinate.
'odo ome'	'Pagodo ako ina'	Nature's calling.

APPENDIX B

Toddler's Utterances	English Translation
<p>Baby 1</p> <p>Q: 'Antawa aringka?'</p> <p>A: "Si Junjun".</p> <p>Q: 'Anda si ome ka?'</p> <p>A: (initoro iyan so kwarto)</p>	<p>Q: Who is your brother?</p> <p>A: Jun-jun.</p> <p>Q: Where is your mother?</p> <p>A: 9pointing at the room)</p>
<p>Baby 2</p> <p>Q: 'Anda ka mababaling?'</p> <p>A: 'Sa walay.</p> <p>Q: 'Antawa oto?'</p> <p>A: 'Si Alinor.'</p>	<p>Q: Where do you live?</p> <p>A: In the house.</p> <p>Q: Who's that?</p> <p>A: Alinor</p>
<p>Baby 3</p> <p>1. 'Taumpa e daddy.'</p> <p>(Talumpa e daddy)</p> <p>2. 'Yaoma e daddy.'</p> <p>(Miniyoma e daddy)</p> <p>Q: 'Antawa I ped ka?'</p> <p>A: 'Si mommy.'</p>	<p>It's my father's shoes.</p> <p>It's my father who brought it.</p> <p>Q: Who's your companion?</p> <p>A: Mommy</p>

<p>Q: 'Anda si Daddy ngka?'</p> <p>A: 'Sa opisina.'</p>	<p>Q: Where is your father?</p> <p>A: In the office.</p>
<p>Baby 4</p> <p>Q: 'Anda ka mababaling?'</p> <p>A: 'Ta (sa) Bangon.'</p> <p>Q: 'Antona-a I ngaran e ome ngka?'</p> <p>A: 'Ti (si) Saida.'</p>	<p>Q: Where do you live?</p> <p>A: Bangon.</p> <p>Q: What's your mother's name?</p> <p>A: Saida</p>
<p>Baby 5</p> <p>Q: 'Anda si abe ngka?'</p> <p>A: 'Sa Iligan.'</p> <p>Q: 'Antawa-a I ome ngka?'</p> <p>A: 'Si Nora.'</p>	<p>Q: Where is your father?</p> <p>A: In Iligan.</p> <p>Q: Who is your mother?</p> <p>A: Nora</p>

APPENDIX C*

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECTS

1. Baby 1 is Alinor Orogan, a 2 year and 2 month old boy from Lilod Madaya., Marawi City.
2. Baby 2 is Ali Abdulcarim, a 2 year and 3 month old boy from Lilod madaya, Marawi City.
3. Baby 3 is Janima Macabantog, a 2 year and a month old from Bangon, Marawi City.
4. Baby 4 is Johari Datumanong, a 2 year old from, Bangon, Marawi City.
5. Baby 5 is Mohammad Basher, a 2 year and 2 month old from Bangon, Marawi City.

***Note:** Appendix D (Various pictures taken during the observation period and interactions with the subjects of Bangon and Lilod Madaya, Marawi City) and

Appendix E (International Phonetic Alphabet) in the original have been omitted in this publication.