

## EARLY SYNTACTIC ACQUISITION OF A BALINESE SPEAKING CHILD

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### *Abstract*

*This article addresses the syntactic acquisition of a Balinese monolingual child from the age of 2;5 until 2;7 years old. The data was collected in natural settings when the child was involved in spontaneous interactions with adults. The results of the study show that at this stage, even though the child went through a stage of early sentence or word combinations, she still produced single-word utterances at the onset. The words belong to the forms of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and particles. The word combinations that the child produced can be classified into declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives. In two-word combinations, the patterns of NP and VP occurred. In three or more words utterances, the child started to produce the patterns of S-P, S-P-O and S-P-C. In making questions, the question words **kija** 'where', **apa** 'what', **encen** 'which one' and **nyen** 'whose' are used. In producing questions, the child also applied rising intonation when question words were not used. The child was also able to express tag questions. In imperative sentences, the child was able to use command, request, and invitation. This study implies the role of adults in child language acquisition as shown in subject omission and the flexible word order.*

*Keywords:* Balinese language, child, syntactic, acquisition

### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini membahas pemerolehan sintaksis pada anak monolingual Bali pada usia 2;5 hingga 2;7 tahun. Data dikumpulkan ketika anak terlibat dalam interaksi spontan dengan orang dewasa di lingkungan keluarga. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada periode ini, meskipun anak melalui tahap memproduksi kalimat sederhana atau tahap kombinasi kata, anak masih memproduksi ujaran satu kata. Kata-kata tersebut dapat dikategorikan sebagai kata benda, kata kerja, kata sifat, kata keterangan dan, partikel. Kombinasi kata yang dihasilkan dapat diklasifikasikan ke dalam kalimat deklaratif, interrogatif, dan imperatif. Dalam kombinasi dua kata, NP dan VP diproduksi oleh anak. Dalam ujaran tiga kata atau lebih, pola S-P, S-P-O, dan S-P-C mulai muncul. Ketika anak mengajukan pertanyaan, kata tanya **kija** 'ke mana', **apa** 'apa', **encen** 'yang mana', dan **nyen** 'siapa' sudah mampu digunakan. Dalam mengajukan pertanyaan, anak juga menaikkan intonasi ketika kata tanya tidak digunakan. Anak juga dapat mengekspresikan pertanyaan pendek yang ditambahkan di akhir pernyataan. Dalam kalimat imperatif, anak dapat menggunakan perintah, permintaan, dan undangan. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan peran orang dewasa dalam pemerolehan bahasa anak, seperti yang ditunjukkan dalam penghilangan subjek dan urutan kata yang fleksibel.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Bali, anak, pemerolehan, sintaksis

## INTRODUCTION

Balinese language is a member of the (West) Malayo-Polynesian language group, a local language spoken by the society in Bali Province, Indonesia (Artawa, 2013). For the Balinese language, not much attention has been paid to the acquisition of syntax by children or to the language acquisition in general. As claimed by De Houwer (2002), research on child language acquisition hardly becomes the focus of studies among language scholars. The same was found for the Balinese language where scholars focused more on analyzing solely on the linguistic features of the language (Arka, 2005; Artawa, 2013; Natarina, 2018; Pastika, 2005). De Houwer (2002) emphasized that there are around 5,000 languages in the world; however, most of those languages have not been studied in the field of how children acquire the languages. As a consequence, it is very difficult to universally conclude about how children acquire languages based on limited amount of studies.

Most studies on how children develop their first language have been conducted mainly to children acquiring Indo-European languages (among others, Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés, 2001; De Houwer, 2007; Genske, 2014; Herve, Serratrice, & Corley, 2016; Kauschke & Hofmeister, 2002; Kupisch, 2014; Nicoladis & Gavrila, 2015; Paradis & Genesee, 1996; Unsworth, 2017; Wijnen, Kempen, & Gillis, 2001). What about researches on language acquisition in Indonesia? Indonesia is a country that is very popular with hundreds of local languages. SIL Internasional (2014) listed a number of 719 languages in Indonesia. However, very limited research has been conducted on child language acquisition which is related to the living languages in Indonesia. There are only a number of studies focusing on how children in Indonesia acquire their first language. However, those studies primarily concentrate on how children acquire the national language, the Indonesian language (Candrasari, 2014; Dardjowidjojo, 2000; Yanti, 2013; Yuniarsih, Ermanto, & Emidar, 2013; Ulfa, 2017). On a similar note, Gil & Tadmor (2007) documented a database of how nine children in Jakarta developed the Jakartan Indonesian variety.

Other studies which involve bilingual children were conducted by, among others, Adnyani, Beratha, & Suparwa (2017), Adnyani, Beratha, Pastika, & Suparwa (2018), and Soriente (2007, 2014). Adnyani et al. (2017, 2018) studied the language development of an Indonesian-German bilingual child, while Soriente (2007, 2014) looked at how her Indonesian-Italian children developed WH-questions, tense, and aspects. One documented study which described how a child developed negation in a local language was conducted by Rafiek (2018), who observed how a child used negation in Banjar language, a language spoken by Banjar ethnic group in South Kalimantan. Apparently, other studies on local language acquisition have not been carried out, including the Balinese language. In short, there are not many studies on how children in Indonesia acquire a local language in Indonesia.

The objective of this study was to analyze the syntactic acquisition of a Balinese child. Arka (2005) described that Balinese is an agglutinating language which has relatively rich verbal and nominal morphology. The colloquial Balinese is typically an S-V-O language with S sometimes comes after V-O. In other words, the word order in colloquial Balinese is very flexible. The flexibility of the word order can be found in declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. The following examples show the flexibility of the word order in colloquial Balinese where the grammatical function of S-P can be inverted into P-S.

(1) *Icang meli biu.*  
I buy banana  
'I bought some bananas.'

(2) *Meli biu Icang.*  
buy banana I  
'I bought some bananas.'

(3) *Cai lakar kija?*  
you will where  
'Where are you going?'

(4) *Lakar kija cai?*  
will where you  
'Where are you going?'

(5) *Ne jemak!*  
it take  
'Take it!'

(6) *Jemak ne!*  
take it  
'Take it!'

Child syntactic acquisition is developed through stages, namely one-word utterances, two-word utterances, three-word or more utterances (Clark & Clark, 1977; Clark, 1993; Dardjowidjojo, 2000). The same development is expected in the Balinese syntactic acquisition. In this study, firstly we concentrate on the child's one-word utterance in which its grammatical categories will be described in details. Secondly, the two-word and more utterances will be focused to see the word order, the grammatical categories, and the syntactic functions as well as analyzing the types of the clause whether it is a statement, a question, or an imperative. The study followed the child between the ages of 2;5 (29 months) and 2;7 (31 months). When the study was conducted, the child already developed three-word utterances, yet one-word and two-word utterances still continued to develop. The development of the word utterances was thus observed. As Balinese is a language where its acquisition by children has never been paid attention to, this study brings forth a novel result about the syntactic acquisition of a Balinese child.

## METHOD

### Participant and Linguistic Environment

This research is a case study, which examines the syntactic acquisition of a child exposed to Balinese language. The child, named Putu, was exposed to Balinese language from birth. The child was raised by her Balinese parents who lived in the northern part of Bali, Indonesia. For the Balinese, the Balinese language is commonly considered as their first language. Putu was raised in an environment where Balinese language is spoken by the entire family members, who include Putu's parents, uncles, and grandparents. Thus, Balinese is used as a means of communication in the family. When Putu's parents went for work, she was often looked after by

her grandparents and uncles. As Balinese is a collective society, neighbors occasionally came by to Putu's house and communicated with the child in Balinese.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected through participant observation and elicitation. Observation was conducted in natural settings when the family members were involved in spontaneous interaction and various daily activities. Elicitation such as stimulus or questions was given to the child to confirm that a certain grammatical feature or function had been acquired by the child. In doing the observation, the researcher used two instruments: a video recorder using OPPO mobile phone and a diary record. The video recording and diary record were done weekly. The study followed the child between the ages of 2;5 (29 months) to 2;7 (31 months).

### **Transcription and Analysis Procedures**

The speech produced by the child was transcribed orthographically, along with the phonetic transcription. Every utterance produced by the child was accompanied by contextual description and explanation. The data was coded and glossed according the parts of speech and grammatical functions. In analyzing the data, Lanza's (1992) definition of utterances was used. Lanza (1992) defined an utterance as a word or group of words with a single intonation. Therefore, the speech produced by the child was segmented based on the utterances. After segmenting the speech, the data was coded, transcribed, sorted, and glossed.

In analyzing the data, the first step conducted was describing the sounds produced by the child and connected the sounds with any possible lexicon or reference. When the sounds produced were connected with possible lexicon, then word order, syntactic category and functions were analyzed. Besides, each utterance was described along with the ages of its occurrence. In analyzing the data, extralingual aspects were also noted such as facial expressions, gestures, and other nonverbal expressions, which accompanied the utterances. Based on the diary and video recordings, 405 utterances were collected. The vocabulary produced by the child in those utterances was 190 words, with the categories of 40% nouns, 34.2% verbs, 10.5% particles, and 15.3% adjectives.

## **FINDINGS**

Clark & Clark (1977) and Dardjowidjojo (2000) described that the syntactic development of a child begins early starting with one word utterances followed by two word utterances and then three word utterances and more. Ingram (1989) described a similar stage where a child goes through single word stage in which the child uses single word utterances. At around 1;6—2;0 years old the child started to combine words which was also called the early sentence stage. In this section, how a Balinese child named Putu acquired the Balinese syntax is described. The study followed Putu when she was 2;5—2;7 years old. This means that at that period of time, Putu could already produce word combinations or early sentences.

### **Single-Word Utterances**

As described by Ingram (1989) when a child experienced the early sentence stage or when the child combined words in the utterances, single-word utterances are the most frequently

utterances produced by the child. Most sentences are incomplete and consist mainly of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The same thing is found in this present study. When Putu was already at the word combination stage, to express herself, she frequently produced single-word utterances. The utterances belong to various grammatical categories, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and particles. Single nouns used by the child can be seen in examples (1) until (3).

(1) [bapa?] 2;5

N

*bapak*

'father'

(2) [es] 2;5

N

*es*

'ice'

(3) [jajɔh] 2;6

N

*taluh*

'egg'

In example (1), Putu uttered the word [bapa?] *bapak* 'father' in many occasions, such as when she called her father, when she wanted to tell somebody that the man was her father, or when she wanted to be hugged by her father. In example (2), the utterance occurred when her uncle asked what Putu wanted to buy. Putu said [es] *es* 'ice' indicating that she wanted to have some iced drink or ice cream. In example (3), the word [jajɔh] *taluh* 'egg' appeared when the uncle brought a bag of goods for Putu's mother. Putu and her mother took all the goods out of the bag and then Putu took an egg out of the bag and said [jajɔh] *taluh* 'egg' to her mother. She might try to say 'This is an egg', 'Look, there is an egg', or 'I got an egg.'

Besides using a single noun, the child also produced utterances consisting of a single verb which can be seen in example (4) until (7).

(4) [ae] 2;5

V

*megae*

'to be working'

(5) [ilu] 2;5

V

*milu*

'join'

(6) [lali] 2;5

V

*melali*

'taking a walk'

(7) [papat] 2;7  
 V  
*nyampat*  
 'to be sweeping'

In example (4), the utterance [ae] *megae* 'to be working' appeared when her uncle asked Putu about where her father was. Putu said [ae] *megae* 'working' in which she probably wanted to tell 'My father is working'. In example (5), the word [ilu] *milu* 'join' occurred in many occasions, for instance, when her mother asked Putu about coming to a public pool or when her father asked about going to the cousin's place, or when they invited the child to go somewhere. In such situations, Putu uttered the word [ilu] *milu* 'join' which indicates 'I join', 'I'll join' or 'I will come along'. In example (6), the uncle was visiting Putu's house, yet Putu was not there at that moment. After a while, Putu came back with her parents. The uncle asked Putu where she had been. Putu said [lali] *melali* 'going out' which might mean 'I was going out'. In example (7), Putu was playing with a broom pretending that she was sweeping. The mother asked her what she was doing. Putu said [papat] *nyampat* 'sweeping' which she may mean 'I am sweeping'.

Besides using nouns and verbs, the child could also produce single-word utterances using a single adjective which can be seen in example (8) until (11).

(8) [kəbus] 2;5  
 Adj  
*kebus*  
 'hot'

(9) [təyah] 2;5  
 Adj  
*telah*  
 'it's all eaten'

(10) [odo:] 2;6  
 Adj  
*bodo*  
 'naughty'

(11) [tatot] 2;7  
 Adj  
*takut*  
 'scared/afraid'

In example (8), the word *kebus* 'hot' came out when Putu's mother brought tea for her and her uncles. Putu said [kəbus] *kebus* 'hot' when she touched the glass. The word in data (9) was uttered by the child when the uncle asked for some ice cream that Putu was eating. Putu said [təyah] *telah* 'it's all eaten' to indicate that 'the ice cream is all eaten'. Data (10) occurred when the uncle asked Putu about how he behaved. Putu said the word [odo:] *bodo* 'naughty' where she wanted to express 'You are naughty'.

Putu also produced single-word utterances which belong to the categories of adverbs and pronouns. The examples are the following.

(12) [ento] 2;5

Pron

*ento*

'that one'

(13) [tinj] 2;5

Adv

*tusing*

'no'

(14) [dadi:] 2;5

Adv

*dadi*

'sure'

In data (12), the word occurred when Putu was watching TV. There was a song entitled *Topi saya bundar*. Putu wanted to wear a hat as well. She told her mother to take a hat for her. At first, she did not want the hat given by her mother. She said the word [ento] *ento* 'that one' when she wanted to say 'I want that hat'. She expressed her wish by saying *ento* 'that one'. The word in data (13) occurred when Putu told the father to change the video on his phone. The father chose another video, yet Putu said [tinj] *tusing* which mean 'no' or 'I don't want this video'. In data (14), her grandfather came over and brought foods and drinks for Putu. The father asked for some food she got. Putu allowed her father to take the food by saying [dadi:] *dadi* which means 'sure'.

In producing single-word utterances, the child was also able to use a particle in uttering her sentence. The use of particles can be seen in example (16) until (18).

(15) [o:] 2;5

P

*O*

'yes'

(16) [nah] 2;5

P

*nah*

'alright'

(17) [ñá?] 2;6

P

*nyak*

'alright'

(18) [jɔ?] 2,6  
p  
*ayok*  
'Let's do that'

Data (15) until (18) show the particles used by the child in producing single-word utterances. The particles used in the examples reveal an agreement of someone's invitation or question. In data (15), when her mother played the song *Topi saya bundar* and told Putu to dance and sing along, Putu did not want her mother to play that song at first, but after she heard the song, she seemed happy and enjoyed the song. After a while, Putu wanted her mother to change the TV channel, when her mother asked 'this one?' Putu uttered [ɔ:] *oo* 'yes' in order to tell her mother 'yes, that one'. In data (16), Putu took out some snacks when she and her uncle prepared snacks for the grandfather. The uncle told Putu not to put the snacks inside the can and Putu agreed by saying *nah* 'yes'. In data (17), Putu showed her agreement by saying *nyak* 'alright' when her father invited her to join him to pick some guavas. In data (18), the uncle invited Putu to play basketball outside the house. Putu accepted his invitation by saying *yok* 'let's' which means 'Let's play outside'.

Those are the examples of the child's speech using only single-word utterances. The grammatical categories of the single-word utterances are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and particles.

### Word Combinations

At the age of 2;5, the child also produced early sentences which are also called the word combination stage. When the child combined words, the combination may contain two or more words. Each utterance or word combination can be classified into declarative, interrogative, or imperative sentences.

#### *Declarative Sentences*

Putu was able to express declarative sentences by combining words. The combinations mostly form a phrase or a clause. The phrases produced in this stage of development generally consisted of a phrase that has a short juncture. Most of the phrases can be categorized into two categories which are verb phrases and noun phrases. The adjective phrases and prepositional phrases had not appeared in the child's utterances yet. Noun phrases mostly occurred most probably because a noun is something concrete or real that the child sees every day. The child combined the noun with other words to produce noun phrases. The examples of the noun phrases can be seen in data (19) until data (22).

(19) [tu dah] 2;5  
N N  
*Putu Indah*  
'Putu Indah'

(20) [bo? ca?] 2;5  
 N N  
*ibuk Desak*  
 'Mother Desak'

(21) [di? ti] 2,5  
 N N  
*Adik Putri*  
 'Sister Putri'

(22) [dʒi? ei?] 2,5  
 N N  
*Ajik Orik*  
 'Uncle Orik'

Data (19) until (22) occurred when her mother asked about the people she pointed. Putu uttered [tu dah] *Putu Indah* 'Putu Indah' which may represent 'This is Putu Indah'. Putu said [bo? ca?] *Ibuk Desak* 'mother Desak' when she probably wanted to say 'This is mother Desak'. Putu produced [di? ti] *Adik Putri* 'sister Putri' which might refer to 'This is sister Putri'. Putu uttered [dʒi? ei?] *Ajik Orik* 'uncle Orik' when she pointed to her uncle. As described by Ingram (1989), in the early sentence stage, children very often produce incomplete sentences. Even though their grammar competence is still very limited, they can express themselves in a meaningful way.

Besides noun phrases, the child also produced verb phrases and very often the child also combined verbs with negation, as can be seen in examples (23) until (26). In forming negatives in Balinese, Putu used [ciŋ] or [tiŋ] *tusing* which means 'no'.

(23) [ciŋ idaŋ] 2;5  
 Neg V  
*tusing ngidaang*  
 'not able'

(24) [tiŋ mən] 2;6  
 Neg V  
*tusing demen*  
 'don't like'

(25) [tiŋ te] 2;6  
 Neg V  
*tusing bise*  
 'cannot'

(26) [iŋ dadi:] 2;6  
 Neg V  
*tusing dadi*  
 'not allowed'

In examples (23) until (26), it can also be interpreted that the child deleted the subject. The same was reported by Dardjowidjojo (2000) in which the subject of his study also tended to delete subjects in the child's early stage of the syntactic development. However, the fact that Balinese adults delete subjects in colloquial conversation may also contribute to the subject omission in the children's speech. For instance, when the mother said to the child *demen apa sing?* 'Like or not?' The canonical structure is *Nyai demen apa tusing?* 'Do you like it or not?' However, since subject omission is accepted in Balinese colloquial conversation, many adults do so when talking to children.

At the age of 2;5, the child produced longer declarative sentences by combining more than two words, as can be seen in example (27).

(27) [dʒa? bu? ani] 2;5  
P N N  
*ajak ibuk mandi*  
'taking a bath with mother'

Data (27) showed that the child still omitted the subject where the subject was the child herself. In the example, her mother asked Putu whether she had taken a bath or not. Putu said that she wanted to take a bath with the mother.

The child also produced possessive declarative sentence. Possessive declarative sentence was used by the child when she wanted to express that something belongs to someone. The possessive declarative sentences can be seen in data (28) and (29).

(28) [notol tut ne] 2;5  
N N Pron  
*Motor Ketut ne*  
'This is Ketut's motorcycle'

(29) [sana tutu ne] 2;6  
N N Pron  
*Sandal Putu ne*  
'These are my sandals'

In example (28) and (29), it can be seen that the child expressed that something is possessed by someone. For instance, in data (28), when the child saw a motorcycle that belonged to her aunt, he uttered [notol tut ne] *motor Ketut ne* 'this is Ketut's motorcycle' to indicate that the motorcycle belonged to her aunt Ketut. In data (29), the uncle and Putu were looking for her sandals, when Putu saw her sandal. She uttered that those sandals were hers.

In this study, it is also found that the child could produce a sentence with S-P-O pattern. In other words, subject was presented. Beside using the subject explicitly, the child also could use transitive verb which functions as predicate. A transitive verb needs an object to complete the grammatical meaning. This shows that the child was able to put the lexical item in the right place. The declarative sentences with S-P-O pattern can be seen in data (30) until (32).

(30) [utu lah to] 2;5  
 S P O  
 N V Pron  
*Putu ngelah to*  
 'I have that'

(31) [tutu: lah gi:] 2;6  
 S P O  
 N V N  
*Putu ngelah gigi*  
 'I have teeth'

(32) [de?tan ma:m to:] 2;7  
 S P O  
 N V Pron  
*Kadekan maam ento*  
 'Kadekan is eating it'

In example (30), the word *Putu* functions as the subject, the word *ngelah* 'have' functions as the predicate, and the word *ento* 'that' functions as the object. When the child produced that utterance, the uncle sat on her father's motorcycle. Putu pointed to the motorcycle and uttered the sentence *Putu ngelah to* 'I have that'. The word *to* 'that' refers to the motorcycle that the uncle sat on. The pattern in data (31) and (32) are the same as in (30).

The child could also produce declarative sentences with S-P-C, as displayed in data (33) until (35).

(33) [na? nani dini] 2;5  
 S P C  
 N V Adv  
*anak mandi dini*  
 'Someone is taking a bath here'

(34) [tu opin anan] 2;6  
 S P C  
 N V N  
*Putu nyopin nyanan*  
 'I'll feed you'

(35) [utu ein ma?] 2;7  
 S C P  
 N Adv V  
*Putu buin nyemak*  
 'I take more'

In example (33), the word *anak* 'someone' functions as a subject, the word *mandi* 'take a bath' functions as a predicate, and the word *dini* 'here' functions as a complement. The

complement used by the child was an adverb of place. The word *dini* ‘here’ refers to a specific place which was a public pool. The child uttered this utterance when she saw someone was taking a bath in a pool on a video. Besides using an adverb of place, the child also could use an adverb of time as produced in data (34). The word *nyanan* means ‘later’. This word functions as the adverb of time where the child wanted to express that she would be fed by her mother later. In data (35), the child produced a declarative sentence with adverb of frequency as its complement. The word *buin*, which means ‘again or more’, functions as the complement of the sentence.

### ***Interrogative Sentences***

Putu is able to express interrogative sentences using a single word as can be noticed in example (36) and (37).

(36) [ten] 2;5

WH

*encen*

‘where?’

(37) [pa?] 2;6

N

*bapak*

‘father?’

The word [ten] *encen* which means ‘where?’ refers to different types of questions based on the context. It happened, for example, when the child was looking for a broom, looking for her mother, or when the child was looking for her slippers. The word [ten] *encen* ‘where?’ can be interpreted as ‘Where is the broom?’ or ‘Where are my slippers?’, or ‘Where is mother?’. Besides using WH- question, the child also uses a rising intonation in expressing questions. For instance, she said [pa?] *bapak* which means ‘father’ when the child offered food as she handed some to the father.

Putu was able to express interrogative sentences using two words as well, where the words belong to various categories. Most of the sentences were produced by combining WH question with another word category. The combination that mostly appears is WH + noun. The interrogative sentences expressed by the child by combining WH question + noun can be seen in data (38) until (40).

(38) [ijə bu?] 2;5

WH N

*kije buk?*

‘Where are you going mother?’

(39) [ten papu] 2;5

WH N

*encen papu?*

‘Where is grandmother?’

(40) [ten tuto?] 2;6

WH N

*encen Tutuk?*

'Where is Tutuk?'

The examples presented in (38) until (40) show that the child used the WH-questions 'where'. In the following examples, the child used the question word *apa* 'what'.

(41) [apə ne] 2;5

WH Pron

*Apa ne?*

'What is this?'

(42) [apə to:] 2;7

WH Pron

*Ape to?*

'What is that?'

Besides a single word question, the child could also produce questions using two words with a rising intonation. The child produced interrogative sentences not only by combining the WH question with other word classes, but she also could produce interrogative sentences by combining verbs and nouns with a rising intonation. The examples of this combination can be seen in data (43) until (45).

(43) [pa? dəh] 2;6

N V

*Bapak ngidih?*

'Do you want father?'

(44) [idəh jəh] 2;6

V N

*ngidih yeh*

'Do you want water?'

(45) [bə? dəh] 2;6

N V

*Ibuk ngidih?*

'Do you want some, mother?'

In data (43) and (45), Putu uttered the word [pa? dəh] *bapak ngidih* 'Do you want some, Father?' and [bə? dəh] *Ibuk ngidih* 'Do you want some, Mother?' when she offered the food that she had to her father and mother.

Another finding is Putu combined verbs with the particle *nah* 'okay' indicating interrogative sentences. The interrogative sentences expressed by combining verbs and the particle can be seen in data (46) and (47).

(46) [tup nah] 2;5

V P

*tutup nah*

'Close it, ok?'

(47) [abat nah] 2;7

V P

*sabat nah*

'I will throw at you, ok?'

In data (46), Putu and her uncle opened a can of cookies. Putu took some of the cookies and said [tup nah] *tutup nah* 'close it, ok?' to indicate that she was asking a permission from the uncle that she would close the can after taking the cookie. The combination in data (47) occurred when the uncle and Putu were playing throwing and catching doll. Putu uttered the words [abat nah] *sabat nah* 'I will throw at you, ok?' when she was trying to tell her uncle that she would throw a doll at him.

At the age of 2;5 the child was able to express interrogative sentences using more than two words as well. The interrogative sentences produced can be seen in examples (48) until (50).

(48) [bapa? dʒe notl ne tot] 2;5

N WH N N

*Bapak ije motor ne Ketut*

'Father, where is Ketut's motorcycle?'

(49) [ten papat to:] 2;7

WH N Pron

*encen sampat to*

'Where is that broom?'

(50) [ñen lah to:] 2;7

Wh V Pron

*Nyen ngelah to?*

'Whose is that?'

In data (48), the child uttered the sentence when she asked where her aunt's motor cycle is. In data (49), Putu was looking for a broom that she played with before. She put the broom somewhere, but she forgot where she put it. Putu asked her mother where the broom was. In data (50), Putu asked the uncle about the doll he was holding.

Besides using WH question, Putu also attached a particle at the end of the sentence to indicate confirmation about something. The particle used by the child to confirm something was *ow* which means 'right'. The interrogative sentences produced by the child by attaching particle at the end of her utterance can be seen in data (51) until (53).

(51) [tu lah nε bu? o:] 2;5

N V N P

*Putu ngelah ne buk, ow?*

'Mother, this is mine, right?'

(52) [anən kət to tu o:] 2;5

V N Pron N P

*Nganggon jaket ento Putu, ow?*

'I'm wearing jacket, right?'

(53) [aən yə o:] 2;5

V Pron P

*Kalain ye o?*

'Leave them, right?'

In data (51), Putu was confirming about the phone that her mother was using. She wanted to confirm whether that phone belonged to her or not. In data (52), Putu was watching a video about herself playing in a playground. She wanted to confirm that in the video she was wearing a jacket. In example (53), Putu wanted to leave her neighbor and her cousin who were playing in her bedroom. Putu confirmed that that she wanted to leave them.

### **Imperative Sentences**

At the age of 2;5, Putu was able to express imperative sentences using one word. Most of the imperative sentences produced by Putu were formed by using a verb only. The example of imperative sentences using a single verb can be seen in data (54) until (57).

(54) [buka?] 2;5

V

*Bukak*

'Open it!'

(55) [dʒaŋ] 2;5

V

*Jang*

'Put it away!'

(56) [as] 2;7

V

*Awas*

'Move!'

(57) [ma?] 2;7

V

*Jemak*

'Take it!'

In data (54), the word [buka?] *bukak* 'open' occurred when Putu asked one of the family members to open the food or snack that is wrapped. One of the examples was when the uncle brought cookies that were wrapped in a plastic wrapper. Putu told the uncle to open the cookies by saying [buka?] *bukak* 'open'. The word in data (55) occurred when Putu was playing with her neighbors and one of her neighbours was holding a stick and playing with it. Putu said the word [jan] *jang* 'put it' to tell her neighbour to put the stick away. Putu uttered the word in data (56) when she wanted to pass through a door, but the father was blocking the way. In data (57), Putu was playing with a ball. She threw the ball too far. She said the word [ma?] *jemak* 'take' when she wanted to tell her friend to take the ball for her.

Common imperative sentence uses verbs as its core in the sentence, however, Putu uttered a word that is classified as a noun category to express an imperative sentence. This can be seen in data (58).

(58) [jeh] 2;7  
N  
*yeh*  
'water'

In data (58) the word [jeh] *yeh* 'water' functions as the core of the sentence. The context was when the child was thirsty after eating some crackers. She said the word [jeh] *yeh* 'water' in which she wanted one of her family members to take some water for her. It is indirectly a command for someone to do something for her. Therefore, data (58) is categorized as an imperative sentence.

Putu was also able to express imperative sentences using two words. Putu expressed her imperative sentences by combining verbs with other word classes, such as, noun and pronoun. The imperative sentences expressed by the child using combination of verbs and nouns can be seen in data (59) until (62).

(59) [ma? nɔ?] 2;5  
V N  
*jemak sendok*  
'Take a spoon!'

(60) [ulitne ma:m] 2;5  
N V  
*kulitne maem*  
'Eat the wrapper'

(61) [ma? papɔt] 2;6  
V N  
*jemak saput*  
'Take a blanket!'

(62) [utaʔ alu] 2;6  
 V N  
*bukak malu*  
 'Open it first'

In data (59), Putu uttered [ma? nɔ?] *nyemak sendok* 'Take a spoon!' when she was eating ice cream and the ice cream was put inside a glass. Then Putu told her mother to take her a spoon to help her eating the ice cream. In data (60), the utterance occurred when the uncle asked for some food that Putu had, but Putu did want to share her food and instead said [ulitne ma:m] *kulitne maem* 'Eat the wrapper' telling her uncle to eat the wrapper. The utterance in data (61) occurred when Putu and her friend Wisnu were playing in Putu's bedroom and Putu told him to take a blanket for her by saying the word [ma? papɔt] *nyemak saput* 'Take the blanket'. Data (62) occurred when Putu and her uncle were eating snacks together. Putu could not open the snack by herself, so that she told her uncle to open it for her.

At this age, Putu could produce imperative sentences using more than two words as well. Most of the imperative sentences used verbs as its core as can be seen in examples (63) until (66).

(63) [ma? las bu?] 2;5  
 V N N  
*jemak gelas buk*  
 'Take a glass, mother!'

(64) [tutan ne bu?] 2;5  
 V N N  
*kutang ne buk!*  
 'Throw this away, Mother!'

(65) [ma:m teh to:] 2;6  
 V N Pron  
*maam teh to*  
 'Drink the tea!'

(66) [abə alu ne] 2;7  
 V N Pron  
*abe malu ne*  
 'Hold this for me!'

In data (63) and (64), the imperative sentence started with the verb and the subject was clearly stated but placed at the end of the sentence. In data (63), the child told her mother to take a glass when she was eating an ice cream. She wanted to put the ice cream inside the glass. The imperative sentence in data (64) occurred when the child told her mother to throw some rubbish away. On the other hand, in data (65) and (66) the child produced imperative sentence without explicitly stating the subject. This happened since both the speaker and interlocutor understood whom the interlocutor was.

Putu also produced imperative sentences that can be categorized as a request rather than a command to someone. The sentence can be seen in data (67) and (68).

(67) [pu: dih jeh] 2;6

N V N

*papu ngidih yeh*

'Grandmother, I want water!'

(68) [utu ideh jeh] 2;6

N V N

*Putu ngidih yeh*

'Putu wants water!'

Data (67) and (68) happened in the same situation. After eating a spicy snack, Putu wanted some water. She requested some water from her grandmother.

Besides those imperative sentences, at this stage, the child also could produce imperative sentences by using word *cobak* 'try' as displayed in data (69) and (70).

(69) [ba? ci? ein] 2;5

V V Adv

*cobak pecik buin*

'Try to push it again!'

(70) [ba? ein ton] 2;7

V Adv V

*cobak buin entung*

'Try to throw it again'

Besides using the word *cobak*, Putu also used the word *ayo* 'let's' in producing imperative sentence. The word *ayo* functions as an invitation to someone to do what she said, as seen in data (71).

(71) [jo? detan nini ga?] 2;7

P N Pron V

*ayok Kadekan dini negak*

'Let's sit here, Kadekan!'

The imperative sentences produced by Putu were formed by using verbs only. Besides using verbs, Putu could produce imperative sentences only by using nouns, yet it can be categorized as an imperative sentence because it gave a command to someone to do something. Putu was also able to express imperative sentences by using two words. At this stage of development, Putu expressed her imperative sentences by combining verbs with other word classes, such as a noun and a pronoun. Putu could also produce imperative sentences that can be categorized as an invitation or challenge by using the word *mai*, *coba*, and *ayo*.

## DISCUSSION

Ingram (1989) described that children normally start to produce word combinations as early as 1;8 years old. The syntactic development of a child rapidly grows after the child passes the two-word stage. The developments are in many syntactic aspects (Crain & Lillo-Martin, 1999). The mastery of syntax happens gradually starting from one-word utterance and then two-word utterance until three-word or more utterances (Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

Even though the child in this study was observed when she was already at the stage of word combinations, the child still produced single-word utterances at the onset. The child was able to produce statements with only one word, but the word belongs to various categories, such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun and particle. As has been described by Thuresson (2011), the one-word stage appears between the age of twelve and eighteen months and still continues to the later development. In this study, the subject did not find any difficulties in expressing her thought using a single word. It is found that the most common word class used by the child is noun.

Putu was also able to express declarative sentences by using words combination consisting of two words. Dardjowidjojo (2000) emphasized that the transition from one word into two word stage occurred since the age of twenty months. In this study the two-word combinations can be categorized into verb phrases and noun phrases. Initially, in a clause, the child frequently deletes subjects in her utterances. In Balinese adults' colloquial conversation, the subject omission is accepted. Thus, it is possible that the child frequently omitted subjects in her utterances is an influence of the adult's input. The same case was found by Dardjowidjojo (2000) and Sugono (1991).

The child was also able to produce declarative sentences by combining three words or more. The patterns constructed by the child in the development are S-P-O and S-P-C. She was also able to construct possessive and negative sentences. Trisnowismanto (2016), who conducted a study examining the development of an Indonesian child, also found out that at the age of 2;7, the children in his data could utter declarative sentences. Anggreni (2015) and Candrasari (2014) who did a similar study in examining the development of an Indonesian child also found out that at the age of two years old the child could utter declarative sentences.

In producing interrogative sentences, Putu was able to express interrogative sentences using one word. The first question words mastered by the child were 'where' and 'what'. This finding is similar to Dardjowidjojo's (2000). In this study, it is also found that the question word 'whose' was acquired. Putu was also able to express interrogative sentences using two words. Most of the sentences were produced by combining WH question with other word classes. The combination that mostly appears is WH + noun. Besides using that combination, Putu was also able to produce interrogative sentences by combining nouns and verbs. In producing interrogative sentences in the three words or more stage at the age 2;5, Putu mostly added a particle at the end of the sentence to indicate a confirmation. When question words were not applied, the child uttered questions by using a rising intonation.

At the age of 2;5, the child was able to express imperative sentences using one word. Most of the imperative sentences produced by Putu was in the form of verbs. This finding is supported by the findings of Dardjowidjojo (2000), who found out that at the age of twenty months, the child was able to produce a simple imperative sentence where the sentence consisted of a main verb. Besides using a verb only, Putu could produce imperative sentences

using nouns only, but it could be categorized as imperative sentences because it gave a command to someone to do something or to ask somebody to get something for her by mentioning the object.

Putu was also able to express imperative sentences using two words. In this stage of development, Putu expressed her imperative sentences by combining verbs with other word categories, such as noun and a pronoun. Putu could also produce imperative sentences that can be categorized as an invitation, challenge, or request by using the word *mai* 'come'. Putu also produced imperative sentences by using the word *cobak* 'try'. The sentence was not a command, yet it is more like a request. Besides using the word *cobak*, Putu also used the word *ayo* 'let's' to produce an imperative sentence.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study suggests that in monolingual child language acquisition, early syntax goes through one word, two words, and followed with three word utterances or more. In early word combinations, single word utterances were still produced at the onset. The utterances produced by the child can be classified into declarative, interrogative, an imperative sentences. Finally, language used by adults greatly contribute to the language acquired by the child which in this study is shown by the subject omission and the flexibility of the word order.

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