CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1. Background of the Research

Children all around the world undergo some stages in acquiring their first language as stated by Kess (1993) who says that language is acquired in stages. Those stages are prelinguistic development and the stages of child language development (Kess, 1993:303). Although the time for moving from one stage to another can be different from a child to another, they acquire their first language by passing through a similar set of stages in the process of language acquisition.

According to Krashen in Schutz (2006), language acquisition is the product of a subconscious process (Schutz, 2006:12). Weaver (1994) also states that language acquisition is a subconscious process which leads to functional command of the rules of language, but not necessarily to conscious knowledge about that language or its rules (Weaver, 1994:1). Besides, young children seem to acquire their first language almost without any effort, and painless.

Thus, language acquisition involves a similar set of stages, regardless of the languages. This notion is argued by Stork and Widdowson (1974) who stated that although there are many kinds of languages in the world, human being is able to learn those languages as a native language with
equal ease (Stork and Widdowson, 1974:121). Kess (1993) argued, “No child fails to learn a native language and it is learned largely before the age of five years. It is also amazing when all children do it in much the same way and ends with the same general abilities” (Kess, 1993:303).

According to Matthews (1996), before going through the stages of child language development, children undergo prelinguistic development. In this period, they make cooing sounds for responding pleasurable social interactions and babbling for rehearsing their linguistic skills by reproducing vowels and consonants then repeating syllabic sounds such as [mamama] or [papapa] (Matthews, 1996:17). A different opinion comes from Rusyani (2008) who believes that prelinguistic stage is started by some sounds such as crying for responding hunger, sickness, anger, and others (Rusyani, 2008:19). Matthews, however, does not view the cry as a part of the language development.

Darjowidjojo (2005) emphasizes that prelinguistic stages are crying, cooing, and babbling (Darjowidjojo, 2005:244). As new born babies, they can only cry and move their bodies. Then in the age of six weeks, the babies start to produce sounds which are similar to consonant or vowel sounds. The process is called as cooing or “dekutan” in Bahasa (Darjowidjojo, 2000:63). In the age of six months, the babies start to combine consonants and vowels and the process is called babbling or known as celotehan in Bahasa (Dardjowidjojo, 2000:63).
Having undergone those prelinguistic period, the babies start passing the stages of child language development. According to Zahradníková (2011), the stages include are one-word (12-18 months), two-word (18 months), and three-word (28-42 months) stages (Zahradníková, 2011:28). From the onset of one word stage, children’s progress moves along with their brain maturation. Crystal (2007) stated that “a set of well-practiced sounds is available for use at the time when children become intellectually capable of using sound for the communication of meaning” (Crystal, 2007:83).

During the first three years of life, children’s capability to produce sounds and make their speech clear quickly develops. The way children speak is not only about the words, gestures, and expressions they use, but the sounds they make and how they make the sounds also influence their ability to be understood by others. By the age of two years old, 50% - 65% of children’s words can be understood by unfamiliar adults (Linder, 1993). According to Vihman & Greenlee (1987), by the age of three, most children’s speech is understandable to familiar adults and about 75% of utterances produced by three years old child are intelligible to unfamiliar listeners.

The language of child is not the same with that of adult. The way they say something sometimes can be understood only by those interacting with him/her intensively. The parents and the sibling(s) are the expert
interpreters for their language. One of the factors is the simplification in the way they talk. Rini (2000) said that children often use simplification in their language and it sounds like a new language (Rini, 2000:87). Therefore, it will make adult confused to understand children language.

Children simplification actually covers the simplification of syntax, of morphology, and also of phonological processes. In this case, simplification in phonological processes is the simplification pattern which is used by children to simplify adult speech. All children use the processes while they are still developing their speech and language. For example, children in the age of one to three years old sometimes say [tat] for saying “cat”, [ha] for saying “hat”, or [pi] for saying “pig”. Until the age of five years old, they tend to stop using simplification in phonological processes. Then their speech more sounds like adults speech and become more understandable.

Research on simplification of children language is worth doing because of several reasons. First, only few researchers discuss children language simplification. Most research discuss about language acquisition of children in the field of syntax and grammar. Second, studies done so far are only about language simplification phenomenon in a language only, for example “Simplification Strategies in the Acquisition of Consonant Clusters in Hebrew” (Bloch, 2011) and “Simplification in Child Language in Bahasa Indonesia: a Case Study on Filip” (Rini, 2000). Third, language simplification becomes one of the sources of problems in understanding children talk.
Research on children language simplification had been done by Tamar Bloch in 2011. The research entitled “Simplification Strategies in the Acquisition of Consonant Clusters in Hebrew”. In his research, Bloch (2011) investigated the strategies of cluster simplification in the acquisition of word-initial consonant cluster in Hebrew with the different strategies of cluster simplification such as cluster reduction [CCV → CV], vowel epenthesis [CCV → CVCV], coalescence [CCV → CV], and metathesis [CCV → CVC] (Bloch, 2011:1).

Besides, research on children language simplification in Bahasa Indonesia had been done by Julia Eka Rini in 2000. The research entitled “Simplification in Child Language in Bahasa Indonesia: a Case Study on Filip”. In her research, Rini (2000) investigated the language simplification to prove the language pattern of child by using the simplification theory of Clark and Clark.

According to Clark and Clark (1977), there are four characteristics of children language simplification. Those are omission of final segment, omission of unstressed syllables, reduction of consonant clusters, and reduplication of syllables (Clark and Clark, 1977:397). Furthermore, in her research, Rini (2000) found that all of the four characteristics of child language simplification are found in Indonesian children’s talk. She also identified two other types of simplification, i.e. omission of initial sound and reversion of vowel or consonant (Rini, 2000:93). She found that the
examples of omission of initial sound are [ini] for saying “sini”, [uap] for saying “suap”, and [ana] for saying “sana”. Then the examples of reversion of vowels/consonants are [dago-dago] for “gado-gado”, [nemot] for saying “monyet” and [citana] for saying “istana”.

This research is worth doing because of three reasons. First, there are only few researchs about children language simplification. Second, studies done so far are only language simplification phenomenon in a language only. Third, language simplification is one of the main problems in understanding children talk.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting language simplification research and analyzing the language simplification of children as a study case in Indonesian and English children. The data of Indonesian are taken from a female child, two and a half years old, named Nadhira Fazilla Devi, as subject 1. For Indonesian, the data were taken on March and April 2014. Meanwhile, those of English are taken from a recorded talk from YouTube videos, showing Jose Luis, at the same age. Hence, the researcher is interested in conducting a research entitled “Language Simplification: a Case Study on Indonesian and English Children”.

A.2. Problems of the Research

1. How does language simplification occur on Indonesian child?
2. How does language simplification occur on English child?

3. Why does language simplification happen in Indonesian and English children?

A.3. Objectives of the Research

1. To investigate how the language simplification occur on Indonesian child.

2. To investigate how the language simplification occur on English child.

3. To investigate why the language simplification happen in Indonesian and English children.

A.4. Significance of the Research

This research will contribute to broaden the perspective of language acquisition which concern on children language simplification in the scope of psycholinguistic. Furthermore, the result of the study is expected to be a stimulant for other researchers who are interested in conducting a more comprehensive research in the same topic.

A.5. Limitation of the Research

In this research, the researcher used the theory of children language simplification characteristics from Clark and Clark (1977) and the research findings of Julia Eka Rini (2000) as analysis tools for analyzing the language
simplification as a study case on Indonesian and English children. Furthermore, the researcher also uses behaviorism and nativism theory on language acquisition, phonological processes theory and the places of articulation theory for gaining deeper analysis.

The data taken are only the language simplifications which are produced by Indonesian and English children. The data of Indonesian are taken from a female child, two and a half years old, named Nadhira Fazilla Devi, as subject 1. For Indonesian, the data were taken on March and April 2014. Meanwhile, those of English are taken from a recorded talk from YouTube videos, showing Jose Luis, at the same age.

A.6. Organization of the Research Report

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with background of the research, problems of the research, objectives of the research, significance of the research, limitation of the research, and organization of the research report. The second chapter deals with review of literature. The third chapter deals with research method. The fourth chapter deals with data analysis. Then the fifth chapter deals with conclusion and suggestion.