

## CHILD LANGUAGE: AN STUDY ON PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

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### ABSTRACT:

Psycholinguistics is a branch of linguistics and psychology that studies the mental aspects of language and speech. It inquires about why human speech is called a language, how human produces speech sounds etc. The process of acquiring human language by children is one of the fundamental study in psycholinguistics. A child acquires a language without institutional or formal education. From the stage of cooing upto 6 or 7 years of his or her age, children use a different form of speech while they talk to their peer friends. This is called Child language/ baby talk. This paper is an attempt to analyse the syntactic, morphological and phonological differences in Assamese language found while children use long vowels or different types of tone.

Keywords: Psycholinguistics, Child Language, Syntax, morphology, phonology.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Psycholinguistics is the study of cognitive process that support the acquisition and use of language. According to David Crystal "A branch of linguistics which studies the co-relation between linguistics behaviour and psychological processes thought to underline that behavior". There are some linguistic aspects that can be analysed under the purview of psycholinguistics.

Here are they--

- 1) Why human speech is called a language ?
- 2) How child acquires a language ?
- 3) How human being produces speech ?
- 4) How human being understands a language ? What is the inherent mental faculty that help us understand a language ?

The process of acquiring a language by children in psycholinguistics is an fundamental area of study. A child learns his or her first language quickly and easily without formal teaching or practices. There are two types of language acquisition processes i.e. Genetic and Environmental. Children are generally influenced by their environment of a his or her society. They possess a special mental faculty to learn a language easily. In this process of learning their first languages, parents, closed relatives play an crucial role in child language acquisition. They first starts imitating the sound they are exposed to by the environment, then gradually acquire the language when they are interacted by the parents or relatives one. From the stage of cooing upto the age of 6/ 7 yrs children employ different forms of language while they interact with their peer group. Which is called child language/ baby talk. Children generally use different types of tone in child language/ baby talk . That is quite evident in Assamese language in terms of phonology, morphology, and syntax. We can also notice it while interacting with pets or talking to elderly person. Researchers posit that child language is an important area of study under child language acquisition.

### 1.1 OBJECTIVE:

This paper studies on child language acquisition, especially how a child acquires his or her first language and gets familiar with a society without formal education in Assamese society.

### 1.2 METHODOLOGY:

This research paper is carried out with primary and secondary data. For primary data, a survey was conducted. A few children was directly interviewed . Secondary data are taken from published books and journals related to child language.

### 2.0 ANALYSIS:

A child starts acquiring a language through the exposer he gets from the environment. i.e. interaction with parents or caregivers. As they gradually grow up, they follow all the ques and nuances of language.

However, children learn the basic structure of language through these interaction which help in the development of cognitive ability of children.

Generally baby talk is a language which is mutual coalescence of word and syntax. It is a kind of language simplified language where compound word, affixes are usually avoided. Repeated occurrence of phoneme and word is common in this language. Moreover, question forms are used in speech more often.

We conducted a survey to show the different characteristics child language/ baby talk. We carried out the survey in two stages.

### 2.1 FIRST STAGE :

In the first stage, I took 10 children of different age group for the interview. I asked questions and interacted with them. Here are some data given below.

SRISTI RABHA

Q. What is your name ?

A- Sisti

Q- ki koi aasa ? ( what are you doing) ( child language is used by interviewer)

A- Mam mam ( have eaten is omitted)

Q- Mur logot phu phu jaba ( will you go out with me ?)

A- Dam (will go) /d/ is replaced with /z/.

HIMAKSHI RABHA

Q- Tumar naam ki ?

A- himakhi (kkh is omitted)

Q- Kun srenit porha ?

A- Omuk seni ( /r/ is omitted in sreni and becomes seni)

ANKUR DAS

Q- Tumar naam ki ?

A- Anku Das (/r/ is omitted in Ankur)

Q- Ki khaba etia ?

A- Cha kham ( /h/ is omitted in chah)

ZURIKA DAS

Q- ki kori asa Juri ?

A- kheli asu ( o is replaced with u)

Q- Aaji school bondho neki ?

A- Bondo ( aspirated sound is omitted)

Q- Ki kheli aasa ?

A- Chua chui ( /u/ replaces /o/)

## 2.2 SECOND STAGE:

In the second stage of the survey, we studied the linguistic forms they acquire in child language in the linguistic environment of Assamese language. In this survey, we noticed some phonological, morphological and syntactic syntactic aspects

### 2.2.1 PHONOLOGICAL ASPECT:

Aspirated sounds are always turned into non aspirated sounds in child language.

For instance:

Dhemali- demali ( fun)

Bondho- bondo (closed)

The spirants c and z changes into plosives.

For instance

Ase - athe

korisa- koritha

zam- dam

Again spirants /h/ in child language is often omitted.

For instance

porh- po

chah- cha

Moreover, child language exhibits a remarkable characteristics that, regional dialectical form influences the child language a lot. Which is vividly seen in child language of that particular region.

For instance

Morom- moom

ghorial- goial

Sometimes, the sound

/r/ Undergoes changes to laterals /l/ sound.

For example

kotari- kotal

Again, the vocalic anaptyxis and swaragama s at the word final position of zuktaaXar are generally simplified. e.g

Plaam-palam

skul-iskul

Skel-iskel

### 2.2.2 LEXICOLOGY:

Use of word plays a crucial role in child language or baby talk. Here words are simplified so that a child can easily pronounce it. Some examples are given below:

biku- biscuit

meu- mekuti(cat)

ba ba- dhunia( beautiful)

chi chi - letera( dirty)

mam mam- bhat ( rice or other food)

phu phu- phuriboloi jua ( to go out.)

### 2.2.3 MORPHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES:

There is a limitation of using pronouns in baby talk. Only nouns are seen being used extensively. Children also use their names while describing a fact instead of pronoun I, me, my, he she etc. For instance: a child name Hari says

Hari will eat rice instead I will eat rice.

Hari's toy instead of My toy.

Again, difference of case marking system is vividly seen. In Assamese grammar, Prothoma bibhokti( nominal case) and Choturthi Bibhokti(ablative case) are seen omitted in baby talk. Eg.

mun khabo( mun e khabo)

ghor zaam ( ghor oloi zaam)

iskul zaam ( skuloloi jaam)

While acquiring a language, children often listen to some common grammatical pattern which is generally used more often while interacting with him. For example simple past or present tense, less complex structure etc. Consequently, they try to use these simplified or common form to describe something. For example

moi goisilu- moi jaisilu

moi kham- moi khabo

### 2.2.4 SYNTACTIC DIFFERENCE:

In baby talk, usually short sentences are used to describe a fact. For instance:  
Biku lage instead of muk eta biscuit lage ( I want a biscuit)  
Maa zaam instead Maar usoroloi jaam.

Sometimes a child uses only one word to convey his feelings (holophrastic word) and that denotes a complete sentence. Parents are also used to that kind of words and easily grasp the message what his child wanted to convey.

For example:

diya- ( pointing a book)

e.i. muk kitap khan diya( give me that book)

### 3.0 CONCLUSION:

Child language study is one of the fundamental research areas in psycholinguistics. Many a times researchers and psycholinguists give different opinions that create rucus among themselves. Most of the psycholinguists posit that child language/ baby talk helps children's mental cognitive development and also in child language acquisition. But some researchers also argue that it is a barrier in child language acquisition.

Child language is yet not extensively researched in psycholinguistical theoretical framework. Though some researchers are engaged in this field and deliberately doing their research. Still more researchers are needed so that an extensive research can be done in this field and basing on these research, researchers can further explore more in that area.

### DATA COLLECT :

1. Das, Ankur : Age 3 yrs.
2. Das, Jurika : Age 4 yrs 6 month.
3. Rabha, Sristi : Age 1 yrs 6 month.
4. Rabha, Himaskhi : Age 2 yrs 6 month.

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