



# The Language Production of Monolingual Children and Multilingual Children: A Comparative Study of Psycholinguistics

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to determine the comparison of language production in monolingual and multilingual children. In comparing these two studies, two previous studies will be compared, namely research from Murni Mahmud, et al. 2022. Language Production Of Children Aged 6 Years Old: A Psycholinguistics Study and Maria Klara, et al. Language Production among Multilingual Children: Insights on Code Mixing. In the comparison carried out, it was found that monolingual children had obstacles in thinking in composing to say what was on their minds, while multilingual children tended to accidentally speak in mixed languages, but the obstacle was that sometimes the person they were talking to did not understand the language of the speaker.

**Keywords:** Comparative Study, Language Production, Multilingual, Monolingual, Children

## 1. Introduction

Humans use language as a communication tool to interact with other people. But when we want to communicate in conveying ideas or the contents of our thoughts to other people, we must go through the process of language production. Language production is a person's ability to express their own thoughts through vocal means and through writing (Nababan, 1992). Language production is influenced by the speaker's own background, such as his or her cultural background and environment. Language production includes all stages of a concept of language itself.

Language production can be experienced by all ages, In producing language, children need a socialization process to transmit the language they acquire through the surrounding environment. In the environment, children practice using language rules according to the communication context. For example, imitating the language of parents, caregivers, friends or people around them is one way for children to acquire language. However, children's language skills are acquired with age. Children's language abilities develop from one child to the next and are very complex (Ochs et al., 2019).

Language production is influenced by the cultural background and environment of the speaker. In producing a language, children need a socialization process to understand and practice themselves as members of society so that they can be accepted in their environment (Werdiningsih, 2016). When a child produces language, they must

go through language production first, where they conceptualize their ideas first and then formulate them so that he can execute the language he wants to convey.

Children tend to still have limitations in conveying the contents of their thoughts due to limited language knowledge so they cannot easily speak the language they want. As previously explained, Language Production can be experienced by all ages, but there are differences in the difficulty of producing language at each age.

The aim of this research is to know the ability of children to produce language. Apart from that, this research will also explain the stages that occur in language production. This research uses several domestic and foreign journals to explain several theories in language production. This research is useful for increasing knowledge and broadening our understanding and insight into language production in children and can be useful for students in the field of linguistics who study language production as part of psycholinguistics. It is also hoped that this research can be part of a contribution to the world of language education.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Stage of Language production

#### 1. Conceptual Preparation

In preparing a message to be expressed, we train our social and rhetorical competence. Effective speech will pay attention to the state of the listener's knowledge, the intention to be realized, the state achieved in the discourse, the focus of the interlocutor's attention, and so on (Clark, 1996).

#### 2. Language Formulation

In language production, there is a "formulation" in one of the stages. The formulation is divided into several parts, namely:

##### a. Grammatical Encoding

Lexical concepts enabled in building messages for expression triggers retrieval of the lemma from the mental lexicon. These are syntactic words, characterized by a syntactic framework. The syntactic framework determines, how the semantic arguments in the message (such as theme or addressee) should be mapped to syntactic functions (such as direct or indirect objects).

##### b. Morphological Body

The first major step in the formation of the articulatory form of an utterance involves the creation of phonological words and phrases and the formation of intonational phrases. The core process here is retrieval of the phonological code. Once selected, the lemma activates the phonological code of each morpheme.

##### c. Phonetic Coding

The creation of metrically grouped, tone-marked phonological syllables is followed by the creation of signal patterns for those syllables in a broader context. It is largely unknown what kind of processing mechanisms create these gesture

scores. The system must be generative so that speakers can produce syllables that they have never produced before (for example in reading nonsense words)

### 3. Articulation

Whatever the origin of the articulatory score, it is ultimately carried out by the laryngeal and supralaryngeal *systems*. It is under the control of the laryngeal and facial areas of the somatosensory cortex, caudal midbrain structures, and the cerebellum.

### 4. Self-Monitoring

The speaker is his own listener. Whether listening to one's own speech or listening to someone else's speech, the same superior temporal lobe structures are activated (McGuire, Silbersweig, and Frith, 1996, Price, Wise, et al., 1996).

## 2.2. Children's Language production Phenomenon

### 1. Children's language production Phenomenon

Griffin and Ferreira (2006) argue that producing language requires at least three main steps, namely: deciding what to express (conceptualization), determining how to express it (formulation), and expressing it (articulation). This statement is supported by Atkinson (2010) who states that producing language, cognition, perception and motor actions are integrated activities that cannot be separated from each other. Children will use their brain to draw a perception before it is produced using speech (motor action).

The study of language production in psycholinguistics currently focuses on how various kinds of motives influence the way individuals communicate or, more broadly, the way they express information through language. Language production is thought to involve a series of different processes (e.g. Dell, 1986; Levelt, 1999). Single word production, for example, is said to consist of the retrieval of semantic information that combines the conceptual representation and meaning of a word, followed by the selection of a lemma, that is, an abstract representation of a word's lexical entry, followed by morphological, coding of the input, then phonological coding, motor programming and finally articulation. Building a motor plan is a cognitively demanding activity; developing a speech plan can be more challenging than speaking itself (Kemper et al., 2011).

Lashley (1951) once argued that complex sequential actions such as speaking must be guided by plans developed prior to their execution, a view that continues to pervade research in motor behavior, including language production. The language producer has a choice of word order in some cases, but not in others, and when there is a choice, the producer must immediately choose one form and prevent others from interfering, so as not to create speech errors that are a mixture of alternative forms.

As previously discussed, language production can occur in any age group, but the process will be different. Language production in children is a crucial aspect of their language development, which begins from birth and continues to evolve throughout their childhood. Imitating the language of parents, caregivers, or people around them is a way for children to acquire language. However, there are children who have their own



advantages, namely those who are able to acquire and produce language without having to enter formal school, there are also children who have entered formal school and are still unable to produce language well. Children who acquire language very quickly, most of their speech is grammatical. The unique thing about children is their mastery of language. This is because without learning, children can produce language and use that language well only by imitating the language of their parents, caregivers, or people around them.

The researchers found that children aged 6 years were said to be able to use simple language even though the grammar analysis was still not precise. This study was conducted at the Institute of Play International School Makassar. This research investigated four children intensively by analyzing the utterances produced by the children based on syntactic and phonological analysis. Researchers used the interview method to collect data. Through these interviews, researchers asked simple things about what children often say in daily activities, such as "What would you say if your friend needed help?", "What do you usually say to your parents when you are going to school?" In this study, 6 year old children tended to use simple sentences in communication. A simple sentence is a sentence that only consists of a subject and a predicate. These sentences are characterized by suitability of form, meaning, function, simplicity of elements, and position or sequence of elements. The language abilities of 6 year old children develop normally. They are able to use their language to communicate with the people around them. They have no difficulty in using conversational skills in communicating.

These findings demonstrate the significant progress children make in language production across childhood with a focus on the importance of interactions and environmental input in shaping their language skills.

Language production in children depends on the environment in which they live. That's why language reflects ourselves and our environment. Children can quickly record the languages they hear in their environment and then they themselves will be able to say a few words from the language they hear. For this reason, if we want to support 6 year old children to be able to produce good language, then the environment must also be good.

This is different from the language production of multilingual children, in the research of Maria Klara, et. Children tend to use code mixing. Code mixing is language that expressively aims to improve social status or maintain the prestige of its speakers in society (Holmes, 2013). In this study, the use of the three languages (English, Mandarin and Indonesian) varied among children. Some children speak Mandarin as their mother tongue and are more fluent in Mandarin than English or Indonesian, while others are more fluent in English and Mandarin than Indonesian. However, because English is the main language in the school curriculum, some students have difficulty constructing entire sentences in English, which makes them combine English with other languages in daily conversations.

As long as the speaker and listener can understand the gist, then mixed language can be used. There are several factors that cause students to mix up language conversations:

1. This is because children acquire many languages at home.
2. Due to children's inability to master two languages effectively, they often mix languages when speaking.
3. Influence from the surrounding environment, including neighbors and acquaintances. Children who use Indonesian in daily conversations will be more likely to use two languages if they often interact with an environment that has a diverse linguistic heritage.
4. Due to formal and informal circumstances or familiarity. Students choose to use codes when interacting with teachers; they may feel this is due to the formal nature of the situation; Consequently, they must be fluent in Indonesian or Mandarin. In contrast, when students interact with their peers, they tend to use code mixing, perhaps because they know that it is an informal setting or because of their closeness.
5. When explaining or interacting with students, some teachers often use mixed language.

In the context of code-mixing, multilingual children's thought processes in producing language will be different, starting from composing their ideas to the structure of the words that will be spoken. In fact, children will accidentally say the language without a long thought process because they are used to their environment which may also use code-mixing in communicating.

### 3. Method

This research uses qualitative methods to analyze the language production abilities of children aged 6 years. The research design in this study uses narrative research, in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide insight into their lives. This information is then remembered or returned by the researcher into a narrative chronology. The subjects of this research were children aged 4-6 years. The population of this research subject is children who live in residential and church environments.

In this research, the researcher is the main instrument (human instrument) who collects and analyzes data. Meanwhile, in collecting data, researchers use non-human instruments such as journal sources, and the internet in collecting data.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

On Pure Mahmud. et al, 2022, In language production, a 6-year-old child can be said to be able to communicate well in simple language. However, in terms of grammar, language production in 6 year old children is still not perfect. Like:

Using conjunctions, they still don't understand the correct placement of conjunctions in the language structure, but they already know conjunctions.

Using verbs/Auxiliary, children are not yet able to differentiate verbs in different time activities such as past, present, future. It's the same with auxiliaries, they don't understand the difference between auxiliaries for singular and plural subjects, in other words they just use auxiliaries as they please.

The word structure changes, children tend to repeat what they have said before, and this results in their grammatical structure sometimes becoming irregular, but they still interpret the language well even though the structure is messy.

The sentence is characterized by conformity of form meaning, function, simplicity of elements, and position or order of elements. According to the suitability of the form of meaning, simple sentences have a complete or complete form. The first requirement for a simple sentence structure is that it is complete, in other words a simple sentence is a complete sentence. The completeness of a simple sentence form is minimal completeness. This means that if elements of the sentence are removed, then the sentence is no longer a simple sentence. Simple sentences are easy to make for children and all ages. To interact with children aged 6 years also requires several ways so that they can produce language well.

According to Clark and Clark (1977), there are three things that are necessary to consider when talking to children.

1. To ensure that children realize that a statement is directed at them and not at them others. This can be done by using a name, a special tone of voice and or even get their attention by touching them.
2. When adults attract children's attention, they choose appropriate words and sentences so that what is said can be understood by the child. For example, children will pay more attention when adults talk about toys, food, family, people, dreams or everything kids do or play instead of talking about history, math, or money.
3. To modify speech by using fast or slow speech, short or long sentences and so on.

Apart from that, children also tend to stall in speaking. This is because children are still processing in their minds to convey the contents of their thoughts, for example, they remember a sequence of events to tell other people, children also tend to take a long time to choose the appropriate words to convey to people so that other people understand them. Regardless of whether we understand what the children say or not, they always think about how to produce language so that those of us who hear it will understand. Example:

**Researcher** : what do you usually say when you want to leave to school to your parents?

**Kid** : Uhm. When I say bye to my parents? Bye bye! Just like that

**Researcher** : Is that all?

**Kid** : Ya, when they also preferred to say bye.

The word "uhm..." shows that children need time to think in conveying information to the person they are talking to.



The weakness of 6 year old children in language production also lies in the phonology angle. Children are still immature in pronouncing words with the right intonation and sound. However, as time goes by, the children's environment also influences language production, children will understand how a word sounds correctly. There are many weaknesses in 6-year-old children in producing language, but at their age, if they are able to carry out communication interactions with other people and are able to answer when someone asks them a question, it can be said that they have the ability to produce language well.

Here are some things we can do to support children so that they are able to produce language well:

- Listen to them patiently
- Avoid situations that put negative pressure on children
- Respond in language that is familiar to him and easy to understand
- Teach slowly about the pronunciation of sounds from letters to words

Meanwhile in the study of MacDonald (2013), in code-mixing which occurs in communication, there are children who are very fluent in one language and less so in another language, for example, there is a child who is fluent in Mandarin but is weak in English but not means not being able to speak English at all. There are also those who are fluent in English but weak in Indonesian and Mandarin but that doesn't mean they are completely unable to speak those languages.

In this context, language production in multilingual children has both ease and difficulty... ease, where these children are used to speaking with each other by mixing different languages so that they are rich in word choice and that way they can easily convey the contents of their thoughts. However, it will be difficult if there are some of them who do not understand the language, remembering that every child has a weakness in one language, thus allowing miscommunication to occur.

## 5. Conclusion

Children aged 6 years are able to produce language well, but only use simple language and the sentence structure of the language is still irregular. However, children aged 6 years are able to communicate well, both with people older than them and with friends of the same age, because they are able to choose the right vocabulary in their delivery. However, they only spoke briefly, without rambling and straight to the point. There are also multilingual children, children are more free to use mixed languages, but according to the context, difficulties and difficulties can occur in multilingual children because their languages are mixed.

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