CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

C H A P T E R   I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

It has been observed that the way children acquire
their first language is unique. Children pass processes
that make people want to investigate what is behind those
processes.

The writer quoted Chomsky's approach (1965) in Brown
(1987: 19-20) which claimed that :

> The existence of innate properties of
> language to explain the child's mas-
> tery of his native language in such a
> short time despite the highly abstract
> nature of the rules of language. This
> innate knowledge is embodied in a
> "little black box" that is called
> language acquisition device (LAD).

This approach is supported by Brown (1987:19) which said
that children are born with a built-in-device of some kind
that predisposes us to language acquisition. It asserts
that language acquisition is innately determined.

The child's production of language begins during the
last quarter of his first year. At about 8 to 10 months
the infant's production of speech-like sounds begins to
shift from babbling to true speech production. Within the
next few months the frequency of babbling disappears and

the number and variety of recognizable utterances increas-
es. As it is stated in Foss and Hakes (1978: 235):

> These utterances are generally
> short and most often correspond in
> their surface form to the words of the
> adult language, though often in
> abbreviated form.

Thus, girrafe is likely to come out as "raffe" and
elephant may be "e'phan". The next two and a half until
three and a half years witness a remarkable increase in
the length, variety and complexity of the child's utter-
ances. According to Mc.Neil (1970) and Slobin (1971) the
increase is so striking that many investigators have
claimed that by the age of 4 or 5 years the child has
mastered all of the essentials of his language.

It is close enough to the truth to indicate that the
period from roughly 1;5 to 5 years is an extremely import-
ant one for language development.

By the time a child reaches stage one-word utterances
he has already been producing utterances longer than
single words for some time. One-word utterances still make
up a large proportion of his total speech, and they have
many of the same characteristics they had earlier. But it
is the increasing proportion of the child's speech con-
sisting of utterances longer than single words that

is most important, because it allows us to gain some insight to the abilities which they reflect.

After the period of one-word utterances, children come to the period of two-word utterances which is signed by the emergence of telegraphese utterances. In this period, children selectively omit some elements that would be present in an adult's utterances. Brown and Belugi (1964) called it as the telegraphic speech - the things omitted are those that an adult would omit if composing a telegram.

Why do children produce telegraphic speech ? According to Taylor and Taylor (1990: 295):

> Limitation of vocabulary cannot be the cause of telegraphic speech, because the children at age 2 know over two hundred words, but young children possess only limited process-ing capacity which they exhaust in producing key content words.

The omissions from children utterances are not only selective, but they are quite consistent. The types of words omitted are just those that were missing entirely from the vocabulary of one-word utterances, such as arti-cle, auxiliary, and possessive inflection. The function words omitted are ones that would contribute to the grammar of the telegram, but convey much less of the meaning than the words that remain.

Until now there is no observation about the nature of telegraphic speech of two years old Chinese children. That's why the writer is interested in making an observation and the description about the nature of telegraphic speech of two-year old Chinese children in order to contribute a new observation about the development of child's language.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As implied in the background of the study, this thesis is intended to answer the following major problem, that is: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF TELEGRAPHIC SPEECH OF TWO TWO-YEAR OLD CHINESE CHILDREN IN TWO-WORD UTTERANCES PERIOD ?

Based on the major problem above, two minor problems are then derived. The minor problems are:

1.2.1. What semantic relationship occurs in two-word utterances of two two-year old Chinese children ?

1.2.2. What syntactic nature are shown in two-word utterances of two two-year old Chinese children ?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the statement of the problem above, the main objective is to observe and to describe the nature of

telegraphic speech of two two-year old Chinese children in the two-word utterances period.

In addition to the main objective, the writer also tries to deal with two minor objectives as follow:

1.3.1. To describe the semantic relationship which occurs in two-word utterances of two two-year old Chinese children.

1.3.2. To describe the syntactic nature in two-word utterances of two two-year old Chinese children.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The finding of this study is more likely to support children's language development, especially for Chinese children in acquiring their first language in the two-word utterances period with the main concern in the telegraphic speech period - the period which is characterized by short, simple sentences, and full of content words.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is the two-word utterances. The writer will analyze utterances contain of two words. If the children produce one-word utterances or more than two-word utterances, the writer will not analyzed those.

Realizing how broad the study of two-word utterances is, the writer limits the study in some ways:

1.5.1 The subjects under the study are two Chinese children at the age of two.

1.5.2 The data are collected by recording until the information about subjects' telegraphic speech is proven.

1.6   Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two major theories which are related to the development of child's language. Those theories are, first is the theory of language acquisition which includes input hypothesis as a part of language acquisition theory. The second theory is the theory of stages of child's language development which include babbling period theory, one-word utterances and the last is two-word utterances include the telegraphic speech theory.

In the following paragraphs, the writer tries to discuss the contribution of each theory toward her thesis and also gives general explanation of those theories.

1.6.1 Theory of Language Acquisition

The contribution of language acquisition theory is to give some views related to the acquisition process that might happen in such early age, especially in the way of

acquiring their first language. What actually happens in the process of acquiring a language ?

Some linguists claim that children are born with innate and universal language faculty. One variety of innatism claims that universal linguistic structures are parts of an innate language faculty. Taylor and Taylor (1990: 325) argue that:

> Language is acquired under two main conditions: the rapid and the sequential brain maturation and the cognitive development and the pragmatic need to exchange information and to control other functions.

However, language acquisition theory cannot stand alone. There is another theory behind it and it is needed in order to complete the explanation of language acquisition. One of them is called input hypothesis theory. This theory becomes a part of the language acquisition theory.

Input Hypothesis

Input hypothesis claims that human acquires language in one way only, that is by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input.

1.6.2 Stages of Child's Language Development

The writer also discusses four stages of child's language development because this theory will give a lot

of contribution to this thesis. The main contribution is to give explanation about the processes that the children should pass before they finally come to the telegraphic speech period.

There are three periods. Those periods are :

Babbling period

It is the earliest period which comes out in the child's language. It occurs between 3 and 6 months of age. Infants start to babble and continue to do so even after they produce their first words, between 1 and 1.5 years of age.

One-word utterances

The second period is one-word utterances. It can have several idiosyncratic meanings (Bloom 1970). These words are called holophrastic utterances. Moreover, a child's utterances are limited to the "here and now" (Bloom 1973). When faced with a communicative obstacle, they are not very adept at recording a more appropriate message.

Two-word utterances

This period occupies the third stage. Two-word utterances are divided into two parts. The first part is signed with the emergence of pivot grammar that is a grammar

which is possessed by children in their early utterances. While the second part is the production of telegraphic speech. Below is a brief explanation about telegraphic speech.

Telegraphic speech

This theory describes the concept of telegraphic speech which is used by the writer to conduct her study about the nature of Chinese children's telegraphic speech.

Sometimes between 1,5 and 2,5 years of age, children combine two words together such as *mommy shoe, go car,* and *more cookie.* Children's two-word utterances have been called *telegraphic speech,* like a telegram, they omit smaller and less important words such as articles (the, a), auxiliary verbs (can, am, will), and prepositions (on, at, in). Also, as yet there are no grammatical mor-phemes added to the words, such as -s and -ed endings (Brown 1973).

As the theories have already been stated generally, the writer will give a thorough explanation concerning those theories in chapter two of her thesis writing.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding that might happen to the readers, it is necessary to define the key terms used in

this thesis. The key terms to be defined are as follow :

1. Acquisition.

    According to Krashen (1985) :

    > Acquisition is a subconscious process
    > identical in all important ways to
    > process children utilize in acquiring
    > their first language.

2. Utterance is spoken word or words.

3. Two-word stage signals the beginning of semantic development beyond the single word, since word combinations allow word meaning combinations.

4. Telegraphic speech is a speech phase that occurs in the two-word utterances of two years old children in which the children do not include the functional words in their utterances merely because they have not yet acquired the use of the functional words. Therefore, their utterances contain only content words. However, their utterances are understandable. For example, daddy go, give mommy, etc.

5. Syntax deals with the rules for the arrangement of words into phrases and phrases into sentences.

6. Semantics deals with the meanings of words and sentences.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It gives the readers some explanations about (1) background of the study, (2) statement of the problem, (3) objective of the study, (4) significance of the study, (5) limitation of the study, (6) theoretical framework, (7) definition of key terms, and the last part is (8) organization of the study.

The second chapter reviews some literature related to the study under report. It discusses the theories used in the study, namely theories of language acquisition which includes input hypothesis and stages of child's language development which is divided into babbling period, one-.pm word utterances period, two-word utterances period, and telegraphic speech period in more details. This chapter also discusses about review of related study. It concerns with the previous observations that had been done by some experts in the same topic but with different subjects, settings, time, etc, as a comparison study with the writer's observation.

The third chapter refers to the research methodology. This chapter consists of (1) the nature of the study, (2) the research design, (3) the subjects of the study, (4) the research instruments, (5) the procedure of collecting

the data, and the last (6) is the procedure of analyzing the data.

The fourth chapter includes (1) the findings and (2) the interpretation/discussion of the topic.

The fifth chapter of this thesis presents the writer's conclusion of the topic and also some suggestions concerning to the topic under study.