**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. **Background of the Study**

The existence of a child in a family is always full of excitement, especially in his/her growth since age of 1 until 5 years old. Every single achievement of both verbal and physical becomes something special. Parents will proudly tell everybody about it and even compare their child’s achievement towards others.

Children start to communicate to others right after they recognize their ‘new’ world. Language, then, has important role in children’s development. Every child, in this world, acquires his/her first language starting from babbling into complete utterance through same steps. The first language produced by a child is always in the form of sound then step by step develops into a complete sentence with complex pattern and for specific purposes.

Mother as the closest adult with a child has big contribution to children language acquisition. Then, mother starts to stimulate her child to ‘talk’ by communicating her message. Today, mother has to deal with managing her time to work and to educateher children. Pre-school, then, becomes an answer for parents to support their children’s need on education, including language competence.

In Indonesia, preschool or *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD) has been mushrooming not only in big cities but also in villages. Parents’ reason on putting their child to PAUD may vary. Some parents already have awareness to give *early childhood* education, but the main reason is actually because the fact that they have to work outside their house.

In term of children language competence, people are usually busy comparing a child who cannot produce certain sound(s) with other children (in the same age) who clearly can pronounce the sound or a child can say *this and that* but others cannot. They do not understand that language competence is not only phonetic system but also other aspects of language such as pragmatic.

As far as the writer knows, pragmatics study on children’s competence is rather rare to be done compared to other language studies. A few researches on children’s pragmatic usually focusing on school period, aged 7-12, or else describing children’s pragmatic competence in general (see “Echa” by Darjowijojo, 2000). Study on preschool children’s pragmatic particularly concerning their competence on directive speech acts has not been observed. Yuniarti (2010) run a research on pragmatic which identifies the realization of preschool children’s comprehension and production on Directive Speech Act (DSA) and politeness. However, she does not deeply discuss on children ability in responding and producing indirect speech acts.

Another background of this study is about the fact that children shortly will face their world by interacting with others from various backgrounds. It is important to get understanding on which linguistic form should be used to communicate with which person. A three-year-old student said: *“Lho tasku mana?”* (Where is my bag?), while her bag was actually just next to her. She expected someone will help her to take her bag. However, another 3-year-old child said: *“Saya ambilkan sapu, ya Tan?*” (I’ll take you a broom, aunty?), when his aunt said that the room was dirty. Those speeches are two examples on how children communicate their meaning using different form of utterances and for different purposes and context. Based on those two utterances, at least, the researcher believes that there will be more complicated utterances which are produced by preschool children.

Based on those backgrounds, this research analyzes the preschool children’s utterances correlated with a subject in pragmatics which is Directive Speech Acts (DSA). DSA is chosen as observed subject because it correlates speaker (S) and hearer (H) in a sequence or direct interaction. How master children in using various types of DSA will become indicator of their ability in using language for communication with various settings and scenes. Through this research, the preschool children’s performance on DSA can be seen in order to get perspective on children’s pragmatic competence. Therefore, this study is intended to describe and explain the manifestation of preschool children’s competence on DSA which can be formed as direct - indirect speech acts and preferred - dispreferred speech acts.

1. **Problem Statement**

In order to direct this study into the aim of the research and based on the above backgrounds this study is actually the answer of : “How is the realization of preschool children’s competence on Directive Speech Acts?”.

1. **Research Objective**

The objective of this research is of course in line with the question as in problem statement. This research is intended to explain the realization of the preschool children’s competence on understanding and producing Directive Speech Acts.

1. **Significance of the Study**

This study is positive for many parties especially for the researcher herself. As a qualitative study, this study gives explanation on how preschool children producing DSAs and how varied are their responses to DSAs. Thus, the result of this study can be such data for linguists, psychologists, parents, educators and even policy makers in education to take appropriate actions based on their own position.

Theoretically, this study potentially can be data for future advanced study on pragmatics, and even psycholinguistics or sociolinguistics. The specific data on Indonesian preschool children’s language can enrich the existed data on children’s DSA. It also can be used as basic data for other researchers in order to study Indonesian children which are correlated with some other issues such as children’s social economic condition or children’s physical development.

Practically, this study is useful for the researcher herself and indirectly also useful for educators, policy makers and community in general especially parents. Educator can get a resource on teaching language to their students especially in pragmatics, so that they can set a suitable syllabus or create some actions to support students’ language competence. Government as the policy maker in a country for instance, can set a rule to facilitate children in getting positive stimuli from the media or can provide some public facilities which support children’s pragmatics competence. For children’s community such as parents or adults in general, this study can give a perspective about the importance of social support in improving a child’s language competence in a communication. Most importantly, this study is basically useful for researcher to improve her knowledge and understanding on pragmatics and running a research.

1. **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is clearly on preschool children’s performance Directive Speech Acts (DSA). The data are obtained from students aged 4-6 years old without looking at their gender specification or socio-economic background. The performance which is described on this study focuses on preschool period means without looking at every level of age.

To get perspective on preschool children’s competence, there are two areas as focus on describing their performance, *understanding* and *producing*. Thus, this research focuses on how capable the children in responding and producing both direct and indirect speech acts. In *responding* DSA the focus are as the following table:

Table. 1.1 Preschool Children’s Performance in Responding DSA

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Form of the DSA | Responses |
| Verbal | Non-verbal |
| Direct Speech Acts | Preferred | dispreferred | Acceptance  | Refusal |
| Indirect Speech Acts | Preferred | dispreferred | Acceptance  | Refusal  |

While in *producing* DSA the focus are on the way children produce eight types of DSA : *asking,* *commanding, requesting, inviting, offering, forbidding, suggesting, and warning*.

1. **Research Method and Steps**

This research is an ex post facto research where data are taken from the real condition as happened in TK Islam Masjid Al Falaq Semarang. The researcher observes during students’ activities around the school, in and off-class. She monitors the interaction of the students and their teachers (in the classroom) and directly interacts with students while off-class.

Based on the objective of this study, this research is also categorized as qualitative descriptive because the result of this study is drawn clearly, accurately, and systematically as the real situation and classified based on the related theories.

The data of this study consist of primary and secondary data or spoken and written data. The spoken data in this case are utterances produced by the students’ when they communicate to the others and the result of opened interview with them. The written data is from the researcher note which mainly about the context when the students’ communicate to others. The secondary data of this study are taken from opened interview with teacher and students’ parents about additional information such as where they live and who they live with.

This research uses pragmatic approach because the data, as utterances produced by the students, is the manifestation of using language for communication. In a communication, both speaker (S) and hearer (H) must have the same meaning, so *context* is a very important part when people producing an utterance. Besides, the way students responding other people’s utterances are also as the sign that preschool children have already understood about the use of language.

This research is held in TK Islam Masjid Al Falaq Semarang which is located at JL. Payung Prasetya Raya no.1 Semarang. It has two levels of classes, they are *group A* (4-5 years old), and *group B* (5-6 years old). This school is chosen because the students come from various family backgrounds.

In order to answer the research problem, the researcher has set methodology which is generally grouped into three main steps. The steps in doing this research are:

1. Collecting data through attentive observation toward the interaction among the students and adult at the school and completed with audio recorder and researcher’s notation.
2. Analyzing the data explaining them according to the relevant theories as presented in the previous chapter including the concept of conversation analysis.
3. Presenting the data analysis into a detail description and categorizing them based on the theories, so that the result of the study can be obtained.

The detail of these three steps on research methodology then will be explained in the third chapter of this report.

1. **Theoretical Framework**

In order to get its objectives of this research, some theories are used to analyze the empirical data using a set of methodology. In this research, one topic in pragmatics is used as focus of the study. Levinson (1983:1-53) states that pragmatics is a study about relation between language and context which becomes the basic of language comprehension. Therefore, pragmatics focuses on study about utterance meaning where the meaning is defined by context.

From several subjects in Pragmatics, this study is close to the speech acts theory which proposed by J.L. Austin (1962). He isolates three kinds of acts, they are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Then, Searle (1976) proposes five basic of action of illocutionary acts, namely *representatives,* *directive, commisive, expressive, and declaration* (Levinson 1983: 236- 240).

This study focuses on directive speech acts (DSA) which can be formed as commanding, requesting, inviting, forbidding, suggesting and so forth. When we want to request something, the utterance can be realized in different ways and sometime expressed indirectly. When a speaker produces an utterance, unintentionally he also chooses certain strategy in order to deliver his message.

DSA is one of the Speech Acts macro-classes offered by Searle (1975) which aims to make hearer to do something as speaker’s intention. Talking about one’s competence on DSA means one’s ability in performing DSA as producer of DSA or responder of DSA. When one acts as a speaker means s/he produces a DSA, but when one acts as hearer means responds to a DSA.

In order to get the intention of the S, H most of the time needs to understand what is behind the *surface meaning* by knowing the context of an exchange/conversation between speaker and hearer*.* The same knowledge about the topic of the conversation is also needed. Therefore, it is also important to review briefly on pragmatics and pragmatic development because the data is taken from children.

In expressing her/his intention, a speaker can use various utterances depending on the context when s/he speaks. The hearer, then, can get the meaning from the explicit intention but also from implicit one. That is the reason why this study is also done in the framework of direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. Before identifying preschool children’s ability in responding and producing DSA, the second chapter provides the concept of indirect speech acts as mentioned in Searle’s book in 1979, entitled *Expression and Meaning Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts.*

This research investigates whether preschool children are able to respond and produce DSA and how is the performance of the responses and production of the speech. Therefore, brief discussions on Child Language Development and competence as well as Children’s Pragmatic competence are also needed as basic information to analyze the data.

1. **Operational Definition**

The operational definition in this research covers :

1. Children in this research are students aged 4-6 years who study in TK Islam Masjid Al Falaq Semarang.
2. Directive Speech Acts in this paper is part of Illocutionary Speech Acts proposes by Austin (1962) where a speaker produces an utterance in order to get hearer to do something as s/he wants.
3. Children’s Performance on DSA is the realization of children’s competence on understanding and producing DSA which occur both in direct speech acts and indirect speech acts.
4. **The Organization of Writing**

As a final report of a research, this thesis is systematically reported starting from introduction to conclusion. The writing of this report is divided into five chapters and each of the chapters consists of some sub chapters as the following description :

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of this research followed by the scope of the study, the aims of the study, the research methods, underlying theories, and the writing organization.

Chapter II: LITERARY REVIEW

This chapter gives details about theories which will be used as guidance for analyzing the empirical data. At the beginning of this chapter previous related study will be presented briefly and then it will be followed by several theories in psycholinguistics and pragmatics, such as Children Language Competence and Speech Acts Theory.

Chapter III: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter contains the types of this research, the data source, the method of collecting the data, population and sample, the method of analyzing the data, and the method of presenting the results.

Chapter IV: DATA ANALYSIS

It contains the analysis about the children’s directive speech acts, which is based on the empirical data. The analysis consists of finding and discussion as description of preschool ability on responding and producing DSA.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION

It contains the conclusion of the analysis and is followed by suggestion for the next researches.