A PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF CHILD LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE TELEGRAPHIC SPEECH

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MA/ARTS/09645/2008-2009
P13AREN8053

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

April, 2015

CERTIFICATION

This thesis has been read and approved as satisfying the conditions for the award of the Master of Arts Degree in English language in the Department of English and Literary studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a product of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations and sources of information are duly acknowledged by means of references.

DEDICATION

This work is wholly dedicated to the Almighty God; the Merciful, All Knowing, the Lord our Help in ages past and while life shall last. To Him alone be all the glory, honor, adoration, thanks and praises in Jesus name. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to first of all acknowledge the Almighty God, The One from whom all things proceed. He is the giver of knowledge and understanding. My thanks and appreciation go to Him in no quantifiable measure for granting me this privilege to be educated to this level. Without His giving me life and this opportunity, there is no way this piece of work could have come into existence. I give this for Your glory, Oh Lord my God.

I also want to acknowledge my first supervisor – late Dr Mrs. A. V. Enesi. Though in absentia, I still remember your Godly and motherly encouragements. I extend my sincere appreciation to my present first supervisor – Prof T. Y. Surakat, I want to say thank you Prof. for all your effort to make this work come out in a very good way. In the same vein, I recognize my second supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) R. S. Abdulrasheed, thank you ma for your labour and inputs into this work, may God bless you.

To uncles Dauda Yahaya, Dr. Ekanem Peter, and Dr. Mohammed Jibril and families, the space is small to sing your praises; I am short of what words to express my profound gratitude but that glory may go to no other except our Lord alone, I say may He that raised you to play the roles that you have played reward you all abundantly.

My appreciation extends to Uncle Raphael Oke, Bro. Friday, Obidabet and Fina, Padam and Ibrahim, Ene, Jonah Jackson and Isty. Bright, Kunle, Tende. The Lord raised you all to assist me in various ways; may He be the one to reward you all accordingly. My special thanks go to Dr. Abdulmumin, God made you available for me and I really appreciate you for always being there for my consultations. May God bless you sir. Thanks to Dr, Saminu, Dr. Abaya, Dr. Jegede, Prof.(Mrs.) Gani-Ikilama, Mr. Ekpeme, lecturers in English department, Mr. “Godeolgy”, and everyone I cannot remember at this time; all those who have contributed in no small measure, you are not despised; the Lord knows you and will reward you accordingly.

Once more, I say thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Luka and family who allowed me to use their child as the case study. Thank you for the approval, understanding and accommodation to enable me carry out the recordings. God saw everything, may He bless you all. Thank you, Punpun of that time too for your cooperation.

Lastly, I recognize my aged mother and siblings for their prayers and encouragements.

In all these, all glory goes to Him alone Who is able to do all things; He kept telling me I will help you and He has helped me quite through. TO YOU BE ALL THE GLORY AND HONOUR AND PRAISE in Jesus name. Amen!

ABSTRACT

This thesis titled "A Pragmatic Interpretation of Child Language: A Case Study of Telegraphic Speech has been carried out to determine the role of context in understanding language use by children or children's speech. Pragmatics is the study of speaker context meaning…. It is a component of linguistic study that goes beyond grammatical competence or well formed sentence to find meaning for a particular utterance or discourse exchange. It demonstrates the relationship between what speakers say and what they actually mean and the kind of effects they expect on the minds of the hearers. The motivation for the study emanates from the fact that children's utterances are not easily understood, especially when one is not familiar with the child's background and speech mannerisms. To a large extent, one needs to rely on context to effectively comprehend what a child says. The study sought to establish whether or not situations and circumstance of speech could be brought to bear in order to discern meaning in children's utterances: whether contextual meaning would be needed to complement semantics. The three media recording technique was employed to elicit utterances from Punpun, the case study child. The utterances were later interpreted pragmatically through the Systemic Functional Grammar's primary level of linguistic analysis: grammar and situation. Interpretations were also made using the various approaches through which pragmatic study is undertaken. The result of the interpretation shows that to a very great extent, context is indispensable, one cannot rely on grammar or literal meaning alone, one has also to make use of inferences, ask questions from those that understand the child better, take a thought, follow the context – both linguistic and non linguistics. All these point to the fact that an understanding of the child's general language situation aids in understanding his speech. The implication of this is that attention should be paid to what a child says, no one uses language without reason. Close attention should be paid to children and what they say, they don't speak in vacuum. Even if their speech is not matured as that of adult, yet, it is meaningful and they intend to do one thing or the other through whatever they say: Language is a tool for communication and a child utilizes this tool for various reasons. A child, at any time utilizes his linguistic knowledge to effectively pass across to his hearer, his intentions or desire while expecting the cooperation of the hearer who may need to rely on some background information to attend to him. This study also confirms the fact that children's utterances can be subjected to various pragmatic theories such as deixis, conversational analysis, cooperative principles, and so on.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
Certification	ii
Declaration	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	4
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study	4
1.4 Significance of the Study	4
1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study	5
1.6 Participant of the Research	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.0 Introduction	10
2.2 An Overview of Child language Study	10
2.3 Child language Study in Nigeria	12
2.4 English: A Second Language as First Language	16
2.5 Theories of Language Acquisition	19
2.5.1 Behaviorism	19
2.5.2 Innatism	22
2.5.3 Cognitivism	24
2.5.4a What is Language Acquisition?	26

2.5.4b Language Acquisition Process 27

2.5.4c Factors Influencing Language Acquisition 28

2.6(i) Stages of Language Acquisition 29

2.6(ii) Linguistic Stage 31

2.6(iii) One Word Stage 33

2.6(iv) Two Words Stage 34

2.7 Telegraphic Speech 35

2.8 Features of Telegraphic Speech 38

2.9 Semantics and pragmatics: Interconnection 41

2.10 Context of Language Use 45

2.11 Functions of Language 47

2.12 Speech Act 49

2.13 Childhood Bilingualism 50

2.14 Theoretical Framework 55

2.15 Summary of Literature Review 62

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction 65

3.1 A Case Study 65

3.2 Data Collection Technique 65

3.3 Duration of Recording 66

3.4 Recording Procedure 68

3.5 Data Transcription Procedure 69

3.6 Framework of Analysis 70

3.7 Descriptive Model 71

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1Introduction 72

4.2 Some Assumptions 73

4.3 Interpretations 74

4.4 Aspect of Language Use 94

4.4.1 Deictic Expression 94

4.4.2 Spatial Deixis 95

4.4.3 Definiteness 96

4.4.4 Cooperative Principle 97

4.4.5 Conversational Principle 99

4.4.6 Presupposition 102

4.4.7 Speech Act Theory 103

4.4.8 Code-mixing: A Case of Bilingualism 104

4.5 Evidence of Telegraphic Speech 106

4.6 Speech Mannerism 108

4.7 The Hows 109

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction 111

5.1 Summary 111

5.2 Conclusion 115

5.3 Suggestions for further research 121

5.4 Contributions 123

Bibliography 125

Appendix

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Language is a peculiar gift of nature to man. It is a central and complex phenomenon to all human beings. It stands at the centre of all human endeavours from the onset of human civilization. Language is the means of acquisition of all manner of knowledge and the tool by which morals, ethics and beliefs that govern human lives are passed on to the succeeding generations. It is the medium of thought and expression of human wants, desires, emotions, ideas, both positive and negative. Clark and Clark (1977) see language as a basic ingredient in virtually every social situation.

However, no one is born an adult with full possession of this vehicle of thought and expression. Rather, a man is born an infant who passes through various stages of growth, which significantly impact on his use of language. A child does not also begin to speak automatically when the time comes for him to; he undergoes some stages before and after the onset of meaningful utterances with which he communicates with his environment. As a result of the inevitability of language in human life, parents look forward with great expectation to seeing their children utter the first words.

As a special area of human life, psycholinguistics is the field of language studies that handles the issue of language acquisition. As Berry (1975) puts it, psycholinguistics is the discipline that discusses both psychological and linguistic issues in relation to each other. A central question in psycholinguistics is the issue of child language acquisition which could be perceived as the process by which a human

being acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate with others.

One thing that has been baffling and of great concern to linguists is how children acquire language. According to Slobin (1971a) in Onyenobi (1997), the mental abilities of a little child seem rather limited in many ways; yet he masters the exceedingly complex structures of the native language of his immediate environment in a short course of three to four years. Many theories have been propounded (behaviourist, innatist, cognitive theories and so on) on child language acquisition and their proponents agree that child language development follows a pattern of acquisition of grammar. That is, there is a set of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic categories which underlie the child's ability to speak and understand the language to which he is exposed.

Crieder *et al* (1983) also in Onyenobi (1997) observe that during language acquisition, children progress from sounds to their first real words sometimes before age one, depending on the rate of language growth of the individual child. Most children by the time they get to age two, begin to combine words into simple sentences. After this age, vocabulary size increases dramatically, sentences become noticeably longer and children begin to produce complex sentences.

This study, therefore, seeks to find out the pragmatic interpretations that are derivable of a Nigerian bilingual child who is acquiring English as her first language with a particular reference to the telegraphic speech. This is the period at which a child communicates with more of content words (the stage following the production of two-word utterances: Pivot Grammar). The research hopes to provide an insight into the ways by which people make meaning out of children's utterances at this stage and what factors aid the understanding of all interlocutors involved in the

communication process. The study is also meant to complement the existing works on child language development and contribute to knowledge.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Semantics is a component of linguistics that focuses on meaning of words and utterances. It studies the meaning of words, phrases or systems used in utterances or communication of one's ideas, intentions, and etcetera. However, it is a known fact that children's language is difficult to understand, especially when one is not closely related to such children. To a large extent, one has to depend on context of situation to understand what the children are saying. That is to say, surface meaning is not enough to ascertain what a child means at any point in time.

It is, therefore, the intension of this study to establish whether or not situations and circumstances of utterances could be brought to bear in order to discern meaning in children's utterances. In other words, we seek to ascertain whether or not contextual meaning would be needed to complement semantics. This investigation is being made using the telegraphic stage of a child's linguistic development as its case study.

The dearth and paucity of child language studies in Africa is another major reason that motivates the pursuit of this study. There is a plethora of research work available and ongoing in Asia, America and other continents of the world on this area of developmental psycholinguistics but only a few of such studies can be said to be obtainable in Africa and specifically Nigeria. In the Nigerian context, there are only but a very few studies in phonology (e.g. Yusuf 1984, Oyebade 1990 and Ojukwu 2006). There are also but a very few studies on grammar (e.g. Ndahi 1982 and Katsina 1992); and the story is not different with regard to semantics as we can speak of just Ambrose (2011) and Ajayi (2013). There is also Surakat (2001) on the area of code

mixing but this present study is a pragmatic venture. No work yet has been carried out on this topic in our setting, especially on how children use language pragmatically, at least to best knowledge of the researcher. This is the vacuum that this research work seeks to fill and this investigation is being made using the telegraphic speech of a child's linguistic development as its case study.

The study seeks to provide answers to such questions as:

1. How do the interlocutors arrive at the semantic and pragmatic interpretations embedded in the child's language?
2. What difference(s) exist(s) between semantic and pragmatic interpretations of the language of the participant?
3. How is the relationship between semantic and pragmatic interpretations reflected in the language of the participant?
4. To what extent is context relevant in children's language?

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This work is aimed at contributing to the study of child language development in Nigeria. As a longitudinal case study of a Nigerian preschool child acquiring the English language as her first language, the objectives are:

i) To collect data on the child between 30 and 36 months through the application of a three media recording technique

ii) To ascertain the role of context in a child's use of language

iii) To analyse the elicited utterances to identify the pragmatic interpretations derivable of a child's language at the telegraphic stage and,

iv) To examine the differences that exist between semantic and pragmatic interpretations of a child's language (if any).

1.4 Significance of the Study

One of the points issuing from Surakat (2001) necessitating this study is the fact that there is a dearth of research work being carried out in the area of Child Language Development (CLD) in Nigeria. There are quite a number of works done and are still being carried out on child language in other parts of the world but such cannot be said of the African continent and Nigeria in particular. There is, therefore, a great need for more studies to be conducted by students, academics and researchers for the purpose of greater awareness about child language acquisition patterns and for a check on pupils for language abnormalities. This study comes as a response to these challenges.

More so, Nigeria is a multilingual state and there is the need to use the English language as a major means of communication. Because of urbanisation, multilingualism and cross cultural marriages, most children are bound to acquire the English language as their first language (LI), irrespective of whatever languages are used around them. Consequently, it is imperative that there should be an in-depth study of the child's language acquisition processes for the purpose of having a better understanding of the child's communicative behaviours.

The findings of this study will be relevant to teachers, policy makers, on the appreciation of the English language as a second language in Nigeria thereby taking appropriate actions toward a better teaching of the language as a major subject in our various institutions. This work is also significant as it is a study on preschool aged child instead of a school aged one; a trilingual child when compared to the usual monolingual studies, as well as a first language acquisition as against the neglect of it for second or adult language acquisition. It is also relevant as it is a study on semantics, especially with regards to the pragmatic level of language study.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is a longitudinal case study of a single child as against an experimental, cross sectional study that investigates an aggregate of children. The focus would therefore be on the telegraphic speech, which is at the syntactic level. This means that the emphasis would be on linguistic units such as phrases, clauses and sentences.

The study would cover data drawn from the elicited utterances of the child who is about 36 months (3 years) old and the semantic and pragmatic interpretations of such utterances would be provided and discussed.

1.6 The Participant of the Research

It is very important to provide background information about the participant of this study. Family background, socio-economic and environmental factors, exert significant influence on the language development of any individual. The girl whose language development is the focus of this research was born on the 6th of November, 2007 at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria. The girl is addressed in this study by one out of her pet names Punpun; she is the fifth child of the family. She has three sisters and a brother and is popularly called "baby of the house", being the last child. The sisters are identified in this study as 'K', 'E' and 'F' while the brother is identified as Brother 'I'.

At the commencement of data collection in 2010, 'K' and 'E' were attending the Demonstration Secondary School, Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U.), Zaria, 'I' was a pupil of A.B.U. Staff School, the immediate elder sister, 'F' was in Vital Years Nursery and Primary School in A.B.U. Main Campus. Punpun as the last child of her parents, was born while the family was living in Catering Flat A.B.U Staff Quarters. This is a block of flats for senior staff of the University. The apartment is a two

bedroom flat; it's a very small apartment with a sitting room, two bedrooms, a toilet/bathroom and a kitchen. The children play on the veranda or down stairs with other children from the neighbourhood because there is no space within the flat to play.

When Punpun was two years and eight months, the family moved to another house, located in Area BZ, Main Campus Staff Quarters. During the study period, Punpun travelled once to Maigamu in Saminaka Local Government Area, Kaduna State along with the whole family and spent two days in the village. Punpun speaks English, Hausa and kuramaa. When the family travelled to Maigamu, 'F' maintained her pattern of linguistic exposure. English is the primary language she speaks, followed by a bit of Hausa and Kurama which are the languages of interaction with members of her family and others. Occasionally, when visitors come to the house, mostly undergraduate students from the campus, they speak English with Punpun. Those who come visiting from Saminaka that cannot speak English, find it difficult to interact with her because despite the fact that she understands Hausa and Kurama, she cannot communicate effectively as she does in English.

Punpun was raised at home under the care of her mother when at home and during working hours by her nanny whom she popularly calls "Antin baby". Antin baby baby-sitted for baby 'F' and so, she and Punpun were very close. The aunty speaks English, Hausa and Kurama. But since Punpun speaks more of English, the nanny finds it more convenient to communicate with her in English. This scenario made Punpun's contact with other languages such as Hausa and Kurama to be minimal because her siblings and parents also speak more of English to her as the nanny does. The electronic media such as television also provided Punpun with passive exposure to English. Punpun is a healthy and cheerful baby girl who was

emotionally attached to the researcher not only because she knows her in church, but also as a result of the closeness during the data collection.

Among her sisters, Punpun is fond of 'F' who is her immediate elder sister. She addresses her brother as "my only brother". Punpun started walking at 10 months; her sisters and brother motivated her to walk in order to join them in roaming about. Punpun prefers going out with her father more than any other person in the house. The researcher always gains a lot of information on her whenever her father or the nanny is around. This is because her father motivates her to talk and plays freely with her, and she sees the nanny as one that supplies food to her whenever she is hungry, so, she feels free with her also.

At three months, the mother started taking her along with her siblings to Sunday school (Church programme) and at one year, she started attending the Saturday Bible Club in the block of flats with other children. These outings exposed 'S' to other children that speak English. At age two, she started joining her siblings to play with neighbours' children called 'N' and 'U' who are indigenes of Jigawa State and communicate mostly in Hausa. This interaction enhanced 'S's Hausa vocabulary and communications.

After two and a half years, she was enrolled in Vital Years Nursery and Primary School, that was after the data collection had ended in November, 2010. She was due to start schooling in October but was forced to delay until a month later for the data collection to be concluded. 'S' is mentally alert and always interested in going to school. She was already seeing herself in Vital Years and would always tell that to anybody who desired to know. As a result it was an uphill task to keep her back to finish the data collection, hence she would always cry at the sight of others

going to school. At this time she had never been to any formal school, apart from the Church's Children Sunday School classes which holds every Sunday.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The review of related literature is essential in every academic study of this kind. It focuses at reviewing available works on a given area of research. In the light of this, the researcher selects from amongst the numerous studies there are (and some are still on-going, especially in the western world) on the area of child language development. The researcher however, selects from the many, important ones with useful information on related areas for the study on pragmatic interpretation of child's language at the telegraphic stage.

2.2 An Overview of Child Language Study

Child linguistic study dates back to the 18th Century, even though it is still on infant stage in Nigeria since much attention is not given to it. Ingram (1989) gives a historical review of child language research and notes that "the field of child language acquisition is one that has gone through several changes over the years in both methods and theoretical orientation used". He further discusses three major periods of child language studies which are:

1. Period of diary studies (1876 – 1926)
2. Period of large sample studies (1926 – 1957)
3. Period of longitudinal (1957 – present)

Andrew Mathews, in 1996, while giving an account of child linguistic development also has a similar record which spans from 1877 to 1930 (for the diary study), 1930 – 1957 (for large sample studies), and 1957 onwards (for linguistic studies) respectively. The records seem to agree and discuss the same participant

though there is a little variation in the dates. Both accounts give examples of major studies during these periods and of which are very significant. Surakat (2001, 2008) also makes reference to these major studies, among which are Tieldman (1787); Darwin (1877); Taine (1877) and Preyer, (1888). In the 20th Century, there are Chamberlain and Chamberlin (1904); Stern and Stern (1907); Ronjant (1973); Pavlovitch (1920); Leopold (1939 – 49) etcetera. See also Ndahi (1982); and Surakat (2001) for details. Other works abound from the 1950's till date that include those studies conducted in Nigeria. A detailed information can be obtained from Surakat (2001).

Conversely, while the West would be said to be experiencing what can be termed a proliferation of studies on the area of developmental linguistics, the same cannot be said of Africa and Nigeria. Unoh (1981) and Ndahi (1982) are the first to decry the neglect and disinterest in child language study in Africa. This was severally highlighted again (after almost 20 years) by Surakat (2001) with an in-depth study in (2008) as he tried to reveal the enormous benefits derivable of such studies. This shows that there has not been any significant improvement on the state of the art. Surakat (2008) attributes this to the serious lack of understanding on the essence of this area and neglect on the side of academics, researchers, language professionals and psychologist alike on this aspect of language study.

The research work, therefore, joins hands with the elders to re-echo this clarion call for more studies in child language development, especially on the pre-school age children – both monolingual and bilinguals. This is because of the usefulness of such studies to abnormal language development, language and educational policies, and national development to mention but a few.

2.3 Child Language Study in Nigeria

While Surakat (2008) has summarised the state of child language research in Nigeria against the backdrop of the scanty nature of such studies in the nation for example, Unoh (1981); Ndahi (1982) and Surakat (2001), in terms of their quality and quantity and particularly on studies of Nigeria pre-schoolers conducted for higher degrees at A.B.U. between 1981 and 2001. This section of the study hopes to do a general 'review' on those as the available and related literatures on the area under study. This is because of their relevance, especially the doctoral dissertation which are of most significant and upon which this work relies heavily as guides.

According to Surakat (2001), the works of Yusuf (1984), Oyebade (1990) and Ojukwu (2006) are all M.A. theses which dwell on the phonological development/acquisition of the 'three major' Nigerian languages, which is Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo respectively. These are on first language acquisition and monolingual studies. He cites Oladejo (1989) and Onyewotu (1989) as studies on bilingual pre-schooler. These two works could not have been done in Ahmadu Bello University; hence we would have been able to lay hands on them.

However, in Ahmadu Bello Universiy the pacesetter in developmental psycholinguistic studies is Ndahi (1982). Her work is titled Second Language Acquisition in Childhood: A Case Study, the dissertation has two volumes which comprise of the written work and data collected. As a longitudinal observational research, it made use of the three media technique for its data collection. Three media technique is a technique which makes use of diary, audio and video recorders to collect data from the child under study. Ndahi made use of a relative's girl-child who was acquiring English after her acquisition of the mother tongue at the age of 3 – 5

years as her participant. The focus was on the acquisition of negatives and interrogatives.

Ndahi (1982) is very significant in many ways: for one, it has opened the way for child language study in A.B.U. and shows that though it is a tasking area, yet, it is not unattemptable. The work shows that Nigerian children can be used to agree or disagree, prove or disprove the notion of universal grammar with studies in the Western World. That is, whether language acquisition processes, patterns and strategies are the same, world over.

After a period of over ten years, Katsina (1992) produced another two volume doctoral dissertation, which is based on the utterances of his monolingual child who was acquiring Hausa as a first language. His work is titled: Language Acquisition Process: A Case Study of Syntactic Development of a Hausa Child. The child's age was between 25 – 56 months. His work looks like an expanded version of Ndahi's work, while Ndahi's deals with negation and interrogation, Katsina's went further by adding statements and commands. The two works are different because the former is on second language – English, while the latter is on first language – a Nigerian language which is Hausa. The study is relevant as it further draws comparison between the African and Indo European languages such as Hausa and English languages. As an educational research work, it has contributions and recommendations for the teaching of indigenous languages in Nigerian educational system.

Surakat (2001) is an elaborate and different work which deals on the topic of code-mixing by his bilingual son (Baba), who simultaneously acquired English, Hausa and Yoruba between the ages of 12 – 36 months. The work titled: Code-mixing in the Language Development of a Bilingual Nigerian Child also comes in two

volumes and focuses on the grammatical structures, motivations and strategies of language hybridization in the speech of pre-scholars. Data collection was for 24 months by the use of three media technique.

The findings of this study are enormous and quite revealing. The contributions are numerous and make the present researcher to want to take sides with the notion that bilingualism is not 'dullness or inability' but an ability by young children who are growing by what is obtained in their environments. Code mixing and code switching is not a deficiency in language use by children.

Other works available here in ABU are M.A. Theses; two of which are drawn from Ndahi's data. They are Akpughunum (1986) and Kumbi (1986). While the issue addressed in Akpughunum is the Interlanguage Hypothesis in Second Language Acquisition: A Case Study of a Nigerian Child, Kumbi (1986) could not be reached. Akpughunum (1986) highlights the concept of mother tongue interference. There is also a work by Surakat in 2006 that is also drawn from Ndahi (1982) data (Vol. 2). This suggests that the doctoral theses have enormous data that can be analyzed from different angles.

Besides the 1986 M.Ed works, 1997 brought another Master's thesis by Onyenobi on the Mother-child Linguistic Interaction, which is on the effects of motherese on the speech development of a Nigerian girl-child at the age between 10 – 18 months and who was acquiring English as the dominant language spoken in the family. This work also has its own peculiar revelations as pertains to the area of linguistic development studies. Yet another work is that of Ambrose (2011) which deals with semantic extension. Using the three media technique, Ambrose (2011) investigated the topic of Overextension in Language Development: A case Study of a

Gwong Child. The study was carried out on a child aged 12 – 31 months and acquiring Gong language, one of the languages, spoken in Kaduna State.

The recent work on child language development in ABU is the one just concluded on A Semantic Analysis of Telegraphic Speech: A Case Study of a Bilingual Child. Ajayi (2013) focused purely on semantics – over-extension and under-extension and how children learn to understand and interpret word, and sentences they never heard before. Ajayi's work is very different from the present study since she dealt only on semantics. Also, she used the data in Surakat (2001), which means she never carried out an observation of any child. Hers is an analysis while this is an interpretation. What is meant by this that Ajayi's work is basically a sentence structure and meaning analysis, employing such terms as agent, agentives, case, locatives and instruments for categorization. The work is mainly syntactically and semantically based; and according to her, the major part of the work was the analysis of data concerning the development of semantics in the language acquisition of the case study child. The present study attempts to go further than hers to incorporate the notion of pragmatic interpretation. This is a study on the levels of semantics and pragmatics as it intends to carry out an interpretation at both levels to identify the meanings derivable of a child's utterances at the telegraphic stage of language acquisition. This aspect has not been delved into by any other study known to the researcher before now.

These research works are very significant as they have in one way or the other met the requirements of carrying out studies of their magnitudes. That does not go to portend that they are all flawless. One pertinent thing about them is that, each of them deals on different aspects of language, which is what is expected of every academic research work. What we have is a case of, one building on or adding a block to that

which is already laid. As Matthews (1996) and Katsina (1992) opine: Language acquisition by children is carried out at various levels which include: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, as well as pragmatics. In order for one to do or have done a thorough work on the language acquisition process of a child, these four functional aspects must be studied. It would be a very enormous task for one to study or attend to these aspects in one work. It therefore becomes pertinent for one to make a choice among these variables. This present study specifically focuses on how people are able to understand what a child's speech means especially at the telegraphic stage. This study is a study at the level of pragmatics which has not been captured by previous researchers. As far as this researcher is concerned, other areas such as phonology, morphology, syntax will not be specially covered in this study unless used where necessary.

2.4 English: A Second Language as First Language

It is a well known fact that the status of English language in Nigeria is that of a second language. Section 51 of the 1979 Consttution revised 1981 fully supports this. A second language as portrayed by Akindele and Adegbite (1999:40-51):

> is a language which is usually the aspectially second language of a bilingual person. It may or may not be the aspectially second language of bilingual language person but a fourth language of a bilingual individual which functions as a second language in societal bilingual.

They further state that:

> a second language is that variety in which a bi-monolingual person conducts his every day activities but share this role with another language in which the speaker has greater linguistic facility or intuitive knowledge.

This definition depicts the roles English plays for Nigerians. It also highlights the status of English in Nigeria in a way. English is a supportive language as majority of Nigerians can be said to speak more than two languages apart from English.

In the same vein, Ajiboye (2005:16-17) says:

> that the expression "second language" refers to "any code acquired after the native language". He explains that "this is not so called because the acquisition follows after the first language in terms of the level of mastery used and degree of its importance as compared with native code.

Jowitt (2002:21) in his evaluation of the status of English as a second language in Nigeria declares that, "English is an official language". This means that English is the language of official function. It has also been the language of education and as a result of these, a language without which Nigerians cannot reach the outside world. The implication of all these is that English is not originally a Nigerian language. Nigeria's multilingual nature necessitated its adoption as a second language by the Western colonial masters. Besides this, a second language is learnt and not naturally acquired

On the other hand, mother tongue and first language in ordinary parlance are used interchangeably to mean one and the same thing. However, in principle it could be true but in practice it is not always so, because mother tongue of a child may not necessarily be the language of the mother but his first language which is the language of his immediate environment or a second or foreign language depending on context and exposure. "Mother language is usually the sequentially first language of a bi-multilingual person" (Akindele and Adegbite (1999:49). Mother tongue is the language of his nativity, the child is not taught, it is naturally acquired unlike the second language; but this can happen where a child does not grow up in his native land. A child's first language is the first language of contact which is not necessarily a

child's native language. It may be the mother tongue, the language of any parent, especially if both are from different linguistic background. It can also be the language of immediate environment which is spoken in the home, or language of wider communication which in most cases is a foreign official or majority language normally spoken in the environment. Such language could also be the language of politics, administration, interaction, commerce or banking, journalism or media. It can also be the medium of instruction from primary to tertiary levels of education; a National (or inter-ethnic) language or lingua franca.

Hitherto, every normal human child when exposed to the language spoken in his environment will speak and understand the language by age of 4 – 5 years (Schmitt, 2000:134). The first language which a child is exposed to is what is referred to as the first language (L_1). L_1 is that language a child encounters in his environment right from the infancy.

However, Muhlhausler (1986) in Gani-Ikilama (2005:13) advises caution over the use of the term. He suggests that the term "primary language" be used to designate the language that is best mastered by a speaker since that speaker's dominant language may not be his mother tongue (MT) as far the order of acquisition is concerned.

The issue here is that English language, though a second language in Nigeria is fast becoming and has become the first language of many Nigerian children. Most children in the urban area, nowadays, grow up acquiring English as their first language, mother tongue, or native language if we go by the traditional designation or linguistic theory convention. This is as a result of urbanization and multilingualism. These make the notion of mother tongue, first language and native language, to not hold any longer as Muhlhausler had warned. Mazrui (1975:9), cited in Ndahi (1982) had envisaged the year 2000 as the year when there could be possibility of more black

people in the world who speak English as their native language than there would be British people…." One can imagine how far this has become the truth in the 21st Century. This situation demands a serious criticism because what it means is that the black man or the Africans especially would be losing their language for the 'Westerners'. Black people would no longer have a language they could call their own, no culture nor identity if English becomes the most sought after language for blacks. If these are what it entails, then, parents, Africans beware for there is danger!

The participant under study comes from a trilingual family where Kurama and Hausa are the major languages but English has become her dominant language, Hausa second and Kurama third. This points to what Mazrui (1975) says earlier, "English language in the pre-school stage is accomplished in a number of different situations. Moreover, for many children in urban setting, English is becoming a first language". This is also the kind of setting where the participant of this study was acquiring English as her first language. Mazuri (1975), assertion has become the case for "a number of African children, especially in the West Africa but also increasingly in East and Central Africa, are growing up bilinguals in English and their own languages because their parents are highly educated and speak English...."

2.5 Theories of Language Acquisition

There is perhaps nothing more remarkable than the emergence of language in children. Have you ever marvelled at how a child can go from saying just a few words to suddenly producing full sentences in just a short matter of time? Researchers (e.g. Blake and Moorhead, 1993; Carroll, 2004) are of the opinion that language development begins even before a child is born http://psychology.about.com. There are several theoretical approaches to explain how children learn to speak and understand language. It is most likely that no one theory

can explain the entire language development process. However, important insights can be gained by examining several major theoretical approaches. Among the various theories that have emerged over the years to study and analyse the process of language acquisition are:

2.5.1 The Behaviourism Theory

This theory whose major proponent is Skinner (1957) is based on the empiricist or behavioural approach. The theory has often been thought of as a process of imitation and reinforcement. The argument here is that children start out as clean slates (Tabular Rasa, according to Locke) and language learning is a process of getting linguistic habits printed on those slates. Language is a condition and behaviour: the stimulus response process. This process gives rise to stimulus – response – feedback and reinforcement. Thus, children learn language by step by step imitation, repetition and memorization, control drilling and reinforcement. Reinforcement can either be positive or negative.

The popular view here is that children learn to speak by imitating the utterances heard around them. Bandura (1989) is of the opinion that they do this by listening to the models, care givers and family members around them. Children strengthen their responses by the repetitions, corrections, and other reactions that adults provide. Thus, language is practice based. A general perception is that, there is no difference between the way one learns a language and the way one learns to do any other thing. The brain focus is on inducing the child to behave with the help of mechanical drills and exercises, while learning is controlled by the condition under which it takes place and that, as long as individuals are participanted to the same condition, they will learn under the same condition. Skinner, by this, is however applying the same principles he had used in his research on animals. But is it a

guarantee that the same result can be the outcome of different researches, especially one involving a different class of living thing as obtains here?

Many reasons have been adduced for the rejection of this theory of language. From the researcher's point of view, Skinner makes an over-generalization. Human beings are not animals. He has assumed much by applying the same treatment to man and animal and coming up with an assumingly same result. Language behaviour in man cannot be the same with whatever behaviour he was testing in rats or birds, as the case may be. Animals do not speak, even if they do, it is not on the same level as humans. Children may have the tendency to imitate but they do not do so 'hook line and sinker', it is not a matter of Gabbage-in – Gabbage-out. Children are not machines or robots. They do not need to be prodded here and there to get responses. In essence, they have a level of reasoning even though not fully mature.

As other linguists have pointed out, behaviourists deny anything to the beyond disposition to behave in certain ways in response to certain external stimulus. Devitt (2006) calls it the empiricists' crude dislike of the unseen: unwillingness to posit theoretical entities that explain the observed phenomena. Behaviourism is powerless to explain our linguistic abilities, as Chomsky (1959:55) puts it: most strikingly, its founders on the stimulus independent of language: Most things we say are not tied closely to particular stimuli: indeed the link between stimulus and utterance may be extremely indirect. Furthermore, Devitt (2008:87-88) quotes Chomsky's criticism: behaviourism cannot account for novelty of language use. This is because, right from the beginning of acquiring a language, the child shows a capacity to produce novelty utterances, hence, ones that could not have been heard or learned from association with particular stimuli. He states that, in order to explain man's linguistic competence, there is the need to ascribe complicated inner state interacting with each

other, as well as with various stimuli, to produce our responses: “there are; behind the overtly expressed sequences, a multiplicity of integrative processes”. See also other contributions: Ndahi (1982); Katsina (1992); Surakat (2001); Carroll (2006) and Loebeck and Denharm, (2010).

Nevertheless, despite all these barrage of criticism and the fact that there need be an interaction between the complicated inner state with each other as well as with various stimuli to produce our responses, there is need to point out what is observable today. Behaviourism seems to be the order of the day. This is as a result of the technological innovation and availability of social media to various homes. Children acquiring language are facilitated by these gadgets to the point that they create for themselves role models in their speeches. For example, musicians, and actors: entertainers and celebrities abound; children just like some adults,, especially take on favourites and tend to talk, walk, and dress in such manner asthose while watching them on television via films, dramas or music videos.

2.5.2 The Innatism Theory

As a result of the behaviourist theorists' inability to fully account for the language acquisition by children, the innateness theory emerged. Noam Chomsky published a criticism of the behavourist theory in 1957 in which he refuted the arguments raised by Skinner. In addition to some of the arguments against Skinner listed above, he focused particularly on the impoverished language input children receive. In his opinion, adults do not typically speak in grammatically complete sentences. In addition, what the child hears is only a small sample of language. Chomsky believes that children must have an in-born faculty for language acquisition. That is to say that a child is predestined/has a predestined ability to acquire language. This means that any child coming into this world has an innate capacity for language

development; children are born with innate propensity for language acquisition, and that this ability makes the task of acquiring of a first language easier than it would otherwise be. According to this theory propounded by Chomsky (1957), the process is biologically determined – the human species has evolved a brain whose neural circuits contain linguistic information at birth. The child's natural predisposition to acquire language is triggered by speech and the child's brain is able to interpret what he/she hears according to the underlying principles or structures it already contains.

Chomsky originally theorized that children were pre-programmed or born with a hard-wired Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in their brains. He later expanded this idea into what he calls universal grammar, a set of innate principles and adjustable parameters that are common to all human languages. The child exploits his Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to make sense of the utterances heard around it. Deriving from this primary linguistic data – the grammar of the LAD is exploited to explain the remarkable speed with which children learn to speak and the considerable similarity in the way grammatical patterns are acquired across different children and languages. According to him, the presence of the universal grammar in the brains of children allows them to deduce the structure of their language. As Ndahi (1982:45) surmised, the innatists regard exposure to language in the environment as a necessary and sufficient condition for language acquisition in children. For one, it is the exposure to language in the child's environment that 'triggers' the innate language acquisition device, and sets the language acquisition course in motion. Two, language exposure provides linguistic data for the child's innate mechanisms to work on so as to discover the particular details of his language, which sets it apart from other human languages (Lindfors, 1980:107 in Ndahi, 1982:46).

In spite of the laudable contributions the biological theorists have made to the study of acquisition of language, it does not go without criticism. Brown (1973) has pointed out an inadequacy by saying:

> the generative rules that were proposed under nativists framework were abstract, formal, explicit and quite logical, yet they dealt specifically with the forms of language and not with the very deepest level of language, that level where memory, perception, thought, meaning and emotion are all interdependently organized in the super-structure of the human mind.

However, Katsina (1992:32) considers the theory as an important approach to the theory of language acquisition. This he says is because:

> the knowledge that a child has a predestined ability to learn language not only helps a researcher to observe the natural strategies that a child adopts to acquire his language, but also leads him to the understanding and interpretation of natural strategies which a child innately passes through before he masters his language.

In the researcher's point of view and coupled with advancement in virtually every areas of knowledge, children no longer receive an impoverished language input, so to say. It only depends on what is available to a child within his specific environment. There are quite avalanches of language input that children receive here and there. This makes a child acquire as well as speak the language of his environment faster than before. As a result children are coming up with language use that is quite marvelling. Romaine (1984:161) had earlier countered Chomsky's claim, calling it "a myth with little basis...."

2.5.3 The Cognitivism Theory

Since the innatist theory has not been found to be flawless, there was the need for yet another theory that could fully account for the acquisition of language in children. In essence, linguists sought to find an explanation to language acquisition in

child in a balanced approach, not ones at both extremes as the behaviour and innatist. The cognitive theory tends to strike a balance as it brings the two earlier theories together in one. According to Surakat (2001:30), the cognitive believes that an adequate theory of language acquisition must concretely link the 'internal' and the 'external' without relegating either to the background. This is essential because, "… experiences from the outside and a capacity within the child… must both 'mech' for language to occur (Deviller and Deviller, 1979:3). He sees cognitive theory as a refinement of the innate view.

The congnitivists believe that the child is not just a passive entity only at the mercy of LAD and being noticed upon by the environment, the child is an active participant in the acquiring process. He acquires through interactions and objects in his world. Lindfor (1980:109) in Surakat (2001:31) argues that he is not simply shaped or moulded by the environment, but he also shapes and moulds it, changing it and, to some extent, controlling it for his use in further learning. The child indulges his innate capabilities and the resources in his environment to his own merit. It does imply then that a child will determine the way the other talks to it. They do ask questions to know and to clarify and so on. This theory is supported by many linguists such as Piaget (1970); McLaughlin (1978); Bloom (1970); Surakat (2001:32) and Ndahi (1982:46). Mclean (1978) criticizes the theory arguing from Bloom, (1970) points of view for the reason that it considers only lexical relation and context thereby forcing the study to be restricted to only early stages of language processes. Hence, it cannot adequately explain the linguistic process of children between 3 and 5 years where syntactic structures rapidly develop.

However, the researcher believes in the cognitive theory and as Ndahi (1982) would say "the approach has an important contribution to make to the study of

language of a child". The child needs the environment, it is therein he lives and gathers some input. On the other hand, a child cannot adequately acquire his language unless he possesses that innate ability to which he has been predestined. This is what facilitates the acquisition of language provided by the environment. There is a two way interaction between freewill of the child and the rich environment. This is also the view of the researcher and sees the approach as that which the study to a large extent draws from. As a result, the framework upon which the present study is based, while still raising an argument that behaviourism – what the child receives from the environment is fastly becoming prominent in children's language acquisition process.

2.5.4a Language Acquisition

Olateju (2009:76) says that acquiring language has to do with the ability of the child/person to develop the knowledge of the basic sounds, vocabulary, phrases, questions, syllables, etc of a language. According to Olateju (2009), Corder (1973) notes that a child acquires a language with other skills and other things about the world around him.

For Oduolowu (2006:10), language acquisition is the act of learning a language for the purpose of being able to understand others and for speech (i.e. comprehension and production). Language comprehension is all about how much a child understands of what is said when spoken to, it begins right from birth and child can only hear and understand a language before he could respond by speaking.

Language production on the other hand talks about language use – a child's ability to use language. A child is born with sounds which he begins to produce at some certain stage but at the same time, he listens to that produced in his environment and combines those as his means of language. The more of adult and other children

speech that a child hears in his environment, the more opportunity he has to develop his language. Both psycholinguists and linguists all agree to the fact that a child can understand more than he can produce/use. Constant play and talking with a child, reading of book to him, telling of stories, listening to music on radio, and exposure to television enhance a child's chances of language development.

Linguists also believe that language acquisition is possible only because children are programmed to analyse language data in a certain way (Lagun cited by Oduolowu, 2006:11). It can be summarised from the foregoing that both innate and external variables come together to aid a child's language acquisition.

2.5.4b Language Acquisition Processes

One of the remarkable aspects of a child's development is in the growth in his ability to use and understand language. What a child who is to acquire language needs to do is to start with the skills that enable him to understand and talk. The skills are embedded in language comprehension and production which will give rise to language acquisition.

Language acquisition process, therefore, speaks of the different developmental milestones which children go through in the process of acquiring their languages. These are preceded first of all by certain stages that have been identified as those that a child goes through in the process of acquiring the skills for hearing, understanding and speaking.

Chart I

	Hearing Understanding	Talking
Birth – 3 months	• Startles to loud sounds • Quiets or smiles when spoken to • Seems to recognize some voices and quiets if crying • Increases or decreases	• Makes pleasure sounds (cooing) • Cries differently for different needs • Smiles when he sees you • Babies using two

	sucking behaviour in response to sound.	syllable sounds.
4 – 6 months	• Moves eyes in direction of sounds • Responds to changes in tone of your voice • Notices toys that make sounds • Pays attention to music.	• Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds including p, b and m • Vocalizes excitement and displeasure • Makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you.
7-12 months	• Enjoys games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake • Turns and looks in direction of sounds • Listens when spoken to • Recognizes words for common items like cup, shoe • Begins to respond to requests ("come here", "want more").	• Babbling has both long and short groups of sounds such as "tata upup hibibibi" • Uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention • Imitates different speech sounds • Has 1 or 2 words (bye-bye, dada, mama) although these may not be clear.

Source: http//www.readingrockets.org/articles/5129.

2.5.4c Factors Influencing Language Acquisition

Some people argue that children had acquired language in slow pace in the time past, but now, it seems that the rate is so rapid. Children tend to be wiser than their parents as they display some characters and attitude that make people wonder and call them names such as "old mama", "old papa". In language acquisition also, linguists believe that there are certain conditions that enhance a child's ability to acquire his language in very good time. Oduolowu (2006) highlights a four point factor such as the level of intelligence, rich or stimulating language background, maturity and a good pattern of adult speech and adult's encouragement as what help a child to acquire his language usage fast, but quickly adds that they are not conclusive

because children who have been found to have these available to them have been said to have retardation despite the availability of those features.

The early childhood news – article reading centre also examines several points that encourage language development and points out the environment as the most critical component to language development. An environ free of abuse and stress frees the brain to create necessary language creations parents need to provide a language rich nurturing world in which attentive carefulness encourage a child's language efforts. Among others, songs, rhymes, and word games, books with colourful pictures of familiar objects stimulate infants. Family snapshots also have been found to be useful in language development.

2.6 (i) Stages of Language Acquisition

It is obvious from the evidence of linguistic studies that language acquisition starts even while the child is unborn. Linguists study how children of different ages (beginning from while yet usnborn) respond to sounds, words and their meanings and how they combine words into sentences (Lobeck and Denham, 2009:35 and Carroll, 2004). There are two basic stages of linguistic acquisition thus: pre-linguistic stage and the linguistic stage. Carroll (2004:242) examines the prelinguistic environment of the preverbal child and cites Sachs (1997) as saying that, well before children begin to speak in comprehensible ways, they are exposed to several uses of language.

Before the real communication, the infants communicate with gestures. They engage in some behaviour that appear to have some communicative meanings. For instance, children's sounds and cries elicit parental behaviour. Moreover, different cries are discriminated by parents and those yield responses that differ in urgency as well as type (Carroll, 2004:243). These are the various prelinguistic cries that linguists and psychologists alike have tagged as cooing, babbling, echolalia and so

forth. Before these three, a child enters the world with what is known as a birth cry. This is the very first sound or cry that every new born baby releases immediately it enters the world, and without which the child will be considered abnormal, dead or a still birth. A birth cry is considered very essential for language acquisition because it clears the vocal organs from the lungs to the mouth of the newly born. From there onward, he matures to make further cries which range from comfort cries to the discomfort ones. A child makes comfort cry when he is relaxed and happy, nothing is disturbing him and he has been properly fed.

On the other hand, the discomfort cries suggests that something must be wrong with the child one way or the other. Such cries include pain cry which is made when a child is in pain or discomfort. The hunger cry is a cry that shows the child needs to be fed. A rage or mad cry occurs when a child is exasperated or disapproving of an action. The last type of the cries is called a fake cry – a cry that a child makes to draw the attention of the mother or care-giver, (see Wolff, 1969 in Surakat, 2001 cited by Ajayi, 2013).

Aside from these cries, a child in preparation to speak makes noises and babbles (Surakat 2001:34). The babbling is considered as the preparatory exercise a child engages in for future utterances (Katsina, 1992 in Ajayi, 2013:14), or the first sign of structuring in the production of words, for it is here at about 6 – 8 months that a canonical pattern is often evident (Kess, 1992:309 in Ajayi, 2013). Babbling is divided into three sub-stages; viz cooing, lalling and echolalia.

Cooing: At this stage, the child utters some sounds that are characterized by back and lip-rounded vowels such as /e/, /u/ and /o/; eeee; uuuu or oooo.

Lalling: In lalling, a child keeps repeating heard sounds and he makes this for pleasure or continuous natural oral exercises, (Ambrose, 2012:14).

Echololia: Here, the child mimics the sound in its environment. It is also the time that the child is fully getting ready for the actual speech, such sounds as 'da', 'ma' can be heard (Katsina, 1992:56 in Ambrose 2012:15 and Surakat, 2001:38 in Ajayi, 2013:12)

Crystal (1987) also notes that before babies are one year, they are already distinguishing cries as they can tell which is their mother's from someone else's voice. Babies show sign of comprehension between two mothers. This they do by responding to different tones of noises such as anger and smiling.… This suggests that the child does not only make but also responds to certain noises, sounds or emotions at this period.

It is very significant to have knowledge of the pre-linguistic stage because it is from there we understand what goes on before the actual utterances. Ndahi (1982); Katsina (1992); Surakat (2001) and McGregor (2009) among others, subscribe to the fact that a child has language capacity before its emergence of speech. He perceives what goes on in his environment and responds appropriately.

2.6 (i) Linguistic Stage

While linguists agree that every child follows a predictable sequence in language acquisition, a consensus is yet to be arrived at what should be the age range at which a child begins to develop this feat. What one has is differing age ranges which show that all children do not progress through each stage exactly the same time or way, Lobeck and Denham (2009). This is why one linguist would record 8 months while another would say it is between 9 – 18 months that is the age at which a child enters a particular language development stage.

What this means is that the age differences are given rise to according to the observations each had carried out. Notwithstanding, the differences could be said to have no far reaching implications since the gaps are very close when examined. The http://www.habblesandsignlanguage.com (world wide web on child language acquisition) and some writers on language matters like Blake and Morehead (1993:29) sound a note of warning that ages associated with each of the developments are simply an approximation, for, there are many typically developing children who reach the stages slightly later (or earlier) than the average.

Under the linguistic stages, there are three well known levels of acquisition: one-word stage, two-word stage and telegraphic stage. Although, there are, Matthews (1996), who adds the multi word or the complex period stage; Crystal (1987) who opines that children language are in five stages which he calls development of grammar(stages of grammatical growth) and Aitchison (1987) who focuses on the stage that occurs during a child's acquisition of vocabulary. These additions are levels of language development which are beyond the usual one-word, two-word and telegraphic stages of language acquisition

Crystal (1987) believes that language acquisition is not just about producing sounds, but about being able to perceive sounds and understand the meaning of utterances that people make. Crystal is of the opinion that children learn in amorphous styles by trial and errors to successfully acquire their language. They learn in stages of grammar, different types of questioning like intonations and recognizing the rhythm of voices. Also Aitchison (1987) subscribes to the fact that children everywhere follow a similar pattern in language acquisition, she sees in the three stages what the process of language acquisition is. She also agrees that normally, children would vary individually when they reach each stage but there is little

variation in the sentences of the language learning. An adaptation from http://www.babblesandsingslanguage.com and http://psychology.about.com give an overview of what the first and second stage of the linguistic period of language acquisition look like:

2.6 (iii) One Word Stage

The first stage of language development occurs (approximately) between nine and eighteen months of age, and is labelled as the "one-word utterance" stage. At this point in time, the muscles and structures necessary to produce language are continuing to develop.

After much practice producing vowel sounds, an infant finds a need to communicate his needs and wants. Single words (or word approximations) begin to be produced at this stage. Most first words are used to label objects or people, and are typically used to describe the things that the child comes in contact with most often (i.e. "mama" or "drink"). These words produced in isolation can also be approximations of complete thoughts. On many occasions the child might say "book" as a way of communicating "I would like you to read me a story". This is possible because at one word stage, most of the time, one word represents a sentence.

This period is also known as the period of holophrase. According to Fromki and Rodman (1978 and 1983), the Greek word HOLO meaning 'whole' or 'complete' or 'undivvided', and PHRASE meaning either 'sentence' or 'style of speech' (see also Surakat 2001:39 and Ajayi, 2013). Surakat (2001) however observes that holophrase describes a single word which can represent or substitute for the adult sentence. He also (Surakat 2001:40) gives the attributes of one-word utterance under the phonology, morphology, semantics and pragmatic levels of language analysis.

Phonologically (he says), universal sounds such as /b/, /m/, /d/ etc. are acquired first before language specific sounds such as /□/, /q/ and /s/. Words tend to be monosyllabic at the initial stages and with consonant – vowel (CV) syllabic structure. Some words, however, are reduplicated syllables as we have in 'ma-ma', 'da-da' etc.

Vocabulary wise, the child at this stage acquires the general specific nominals first and verb-like words such as action words, modifiers, personal/social words and function words. The common types of general nominals (he says) are items of food, clothing, animal, vehicle, toys while common specific nominals are usually names of familiar people such as parents, relations etc.

Morphologically, children utterances are devoid of inflections for tenses; plurality; possessives; adjectives and so on, which are developed later. The child uses his holophrase speech for multiple purposes: greetings, informing, requesting, reporting, labelling and other pragmatic functions such as the expressive, emotive and referential (Surakat, 2001:39-44).

2.6 (iv) Two-Word Stage

As children master the production of words in isolation, they then progress onto the "two-word utterance" stage during which they begin combining words to express more complex thoughts. For the typical child, this stage occurs between eighteen and twenty-four months of age. Primitive syntactic structures formed during this stage logically place words in the appropriate order. However, only the words necessary to communicate one's points are used.

In the words of Surakat (2001:47), two words, most of which occurs at the earlier stages are combined to form different grammatical patterns or semantic relations. Such words include: 'more milk', 'mummy sock', 'all gone car', 'see baby'

etc. Following the theory of Pivot Grammar, (a term associated with Braine, 1963) which he used to describe the nature of a child's language at two word stage: he claimed that a comparatively small number of words tended to recur in the same position in two-word utterances. In a sense, a child tends to notice that there exists such a small number of words which occur frequently and in fixed position (Carttell, 2009:9 in Ajayi 2013). On the account of this, the child goes to construct a first theory of word classes, classifying the first as pivot class and the second as open (Anderson, 1989 in Ajayi 2013). Such words as see bird, see hen, see cow, see dog, and see goat tend to occur at this stage. The pivot grammar has received a number of criticisms, for one, it is restricted to structure which is the arrangement of the word; it did not give adequate attention to semantics. Bloom (1970) observes that the context and the meaning of a word should be taken into consideration. He sees the approach as a lean one. See also (Leopold, 1949; Brown, 1973; Aitchison, 1987; Ndahi, 1982; Katsina, 1992; Surakat, 2001 and Ambrose, 2011).

2.7 Telegraphic Stage of Language Acquisition

Kess (1992:320-21) observes that, once the child starts stringing words together, the hierarchical relationships among items in a sentence emerge and it no longer matters whether sentences are three or six or eighteen words long. Sentence as this appeared to early analysts to be reduced in much the same way that adults reduce their sentences for telegraphic speech (Fromkin and Rodman, 1978/1983; Katsina, 1992 and Surakat, 2001). Adults normally leave out words that do not contribute to the intelligibility of a message in a way that justifies their cost.

Kess (1992) makes a comparison between the telegraphic speech and the telegraphic message from which the name is drawn. He notes that unlike the telegram, we cannot guarantee that the reason certain words are eliminated was

because they could not be justified in terms of the cognitive cost. He points out that though children sentences drop out function words and grammatical morphemes, leaving the content words, there is a telegraphic quality in such utterances for they do demonstrate that the child already grasps the basic structures of sentence formation. The telegraphic characterization however, is not useful except as a loose concept, because it is too negative in focusing on what is missing from child's language, rather than what is present.

Matthews (1996:20-21) has a lot of contributions to this subjects. He posits that:

> telegraphic period is so called because of its terseness and lack of function words such as tense endings, verb endings, prepositions, conjunctions and articles. It occurs between the ages of 1.6 to 3.0… and it is consequently most thoroughly studied of all the periods of linguistic development.

The essence of telegraphic speech is economy. The words that are used are the absolute minimum required to convey the meaning…. He also states that:

> young children tend to follow the same strategy, even in their imitation of adult speech. It was thus thought initially, that the reason for such economy were limitations in memory capacity, but this view has been rejected by researchers once they noticed that children were capable of producing 3,4 or even 5 word telegraphic sentences.

Matthews (1996) goes further to convey the message that presumably a child that can only generate short sentences will choose to omit those that do not contribute so much towards the content of the utterance. They, therefore, allow more effective communication through the omission of redundant(ish) verbiage. He also identifies with the fact that it is surprising how children from very different cultures produce similarly structured sentences even though they have been exposed to strikingly different language structures during their first few years. Telegraphic speech thus

represents a universal child language. Furthermore, Surakat (2001:46) while discussing "Telegraphic to Infinity" notes that a child is observed to be using more than two words in a sentence to express or communicate his ideas and puts the age at about 2 years. He quotes Fromkin and Rodman (1978:248; 1983:330) as saying that:

> it does not follow that the sequence of language acquisition follows one word, two word, three word or four word stages. Having two word stages does not mean that there is three word stage too. What happens is that when a child starts stringing more than two words together, their utterances may be two, three, four or five words or longer. Sometimes you can still see holophrase utterance appearing in the child's speech in some context.

Katsina (1992:574), however, believes that this stage of acquisition should have taken place by the third year. "On the average, by the time a child celebrates his 3rd year". Other scholars believe telegraphic stage starts during the third year of life. McGregor (2006:306) is of the opinion that multiple word utterance begins at least in English as strings of lexical words without grammatical words or morphemes and this is called telegraphic after speeches used in telegram. Denharm and Lobecks's (2009:37) description of this stage seems rather vague since two word and telegraphic stage are merged together or not clearly separated. Although, they state that children at this stage leave out function words and use the content ones, putting the two together could confuse a lay person. The time frame given by them is 18 – 24 months.

Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003:365) sum this discourse by the revelation that:

> though the children's utterances are described as telegraphic, the child does not deliberately leave out function words as would an adult sending a telegram. The sentences reflect the child's grammar at that particular stage of language development. Although these sentences may lack certain morphemes, they nevertheless appear to have hierarchical structures and synthetic rules similar to

> those in adult grammar. For instance, children almost never violate the word order rules of their language.

The researcher toes the path of Kess (1992) and Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003): for one, we need not stick to looking for only content words. Children language these days may have some functional word sentences as most of their expressions look so much like that of adults.

2.8 Features of Telegraphic Stage

Children who are acquiring their language have some attributes which characterize their speech. Surakat (2001:42) observes that telegraphic utterance have consistent structure similar to those found in adult sentences. However, telegraphic speech has its own special characteristics.

One feature of telegraphic speech which can be considered the commonest and which most scholars allude to is the fact that telegraphic speech is devoid of function words (Dale, 1976; Reich, 1986; Sternberg, 1996; Fromkin and Rodman, 1978, 1983; Katsina, 1993; Surakat, 2001; Denharm and Lobeck 2009; Carroll, 2009 and McGregor, 2010). These function words are prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries and articles. The child at this stage uses mostly, words that carry the message, otherwise known as, the content words. This means that children at this period speak only by the means of content words such as Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs. Dale (1973:37) refers to these content words as high-information words and uses low-information to mean the function words. Stenberg (1996) asserts that, it is simply therefore that those class of word carry the most information.

A second feature by which the telegraphic speech is known is sentence like utterance. Though children utterance can be said to be made up of only content words, it can be surprising however, to find out that such utterances are not just in

orderly strung together but appear to be sentence like. This, for Fromkin and Rodman (1983:331) would mean that if a child's sentence is analyzed at this stage, it would be found that it reveals a group of sentence formation. That is, the utterance having subject, subject; verb, and object; and subject and predicate.

Another attribute is that it lacks inflection. This refers to the changes in the forms of words to indicate either plurality, tense and possessives. Stenberg (1996) comments that, rarely do plurals, verb endings, tense markers and other inflections appear, hence, we see 'cat' instead of 'cats', 'sit' for 'sitting', 'laugh' for 'laughing', 'John cap' instead of 'John's cap'. According to him, it is because two and three word utterances are mainly formed of content words, lacking function words and inflections that this stage of development in a child's speech is often referred to as telegraphic stage.

However, Reich (1986) is of the opinion that it is not all function words that are omitted. He gives three types of function words which are likely to be used quite early in children's speech. The first is the personal pronouns, especially the 1st and the 2nd persons (I, me, you) and their possessives adjectives (my, mine, your, yours). The 2nd type of function words are demonstrative forms – 'this' and 'that'. These pronouns (Reich says), serve a function in adult speech which corresponds to children's first referential utterances and these are among the 1st words used. The 2nd class is verb particles such as 'up' in 'get up', 'down' in 'sit down'/put up', 'off' in 'take off' or 'on' in 'put on'. He posits that, quite often, children use the particles in place of the entire particle unit instead of verb alone, as might be expected.

Development of morphemes is yet another feature which marks the telegraphic speech. Morphemes are divided into two categories: inflectional and derivational. As a child acquires more and more of his language, he begins to develop the use of

morphemes. The form of the child's sentence improves from simple to complex, and subsequently compound types. Brown (1973) cited by Sternberg (1996:9) notes that, after studying the utterances of three children over a period of time, there was the appearance of grammatical morphemes both bound and free in the children's utterances. He identifies ten morphemes in the order in which they were acquired by these children.

The progressive form of the verb was noted as the earliest inflectional morphemes acquired. For instance, 'me going park', 'girl paying bill'; after this is the preposition 'in' and 'on'. The plural form is the next; coming after this is the past irregular form of verbs as we have in 'came', 'fell' and 'went'. Also the articles 'a' and 'the' are noticed. Some questions have been asked as what would be the reason for the order of acquisition of these morphemes. Linguists on their own have been trying to provide acceptable answers to this effect. It is important here to re-echo the words of Fromkin and Rodman (1978, 1983) that the term 'telegraphic' is used mainly as a descriptive word to refer to the speech of the child at this stage. This, they said is attributed to the fact that the child does not deliberately leave out the non-content words as does the adult who sends telegram. Unless it is viewed in this way, it could be looked as being too negative which is what Kess (1992:321) had earlier pointed out.

The researcher's observation as well as stand is that given the availability of various 'facilitators' of language acquisition, children have the tendency to progress through the language stages at a very rapid speed. Also, as it concerns telegraphic stage, the notion of use of only content words is not to be tightly held unto as children in this present dispensation can make and use long sentences (including function words) at this stage even before the completion of the age range. Children tend to

come into the word with an innate propensity (LAD) that is highly charged to meet with an environment that is highly knowledgeable and knowledge-driven, with avenues for high and fast development, and language is not an exception. Curiosity which is a language ability children have in language acquisition is further heightened and enables a child to develop and acquire his language much faster than what obtained in the past.

2.9 Semantics and Pragmatics: Interconnections

In the past, there was argument over whether the study of meaning was a venture worth going into. For instance, the traditional grammarians had nothing to do with meaning embedded in language but only prescribed rules that govern the use of grammar. Bolinger (1986:513 in Ojo, 2011:10) sees the traditional grammarians as accounting for the prescriptive and puristic slant… hence, it was forcing the rules of Latin grammar on English to determine the grammaticality of structures.

In the same vein, the structuralism or descriptive linguists led by Bloomfield also relegated the importance of semantics to the background. In essence the focus was on the analysis of living speech; a sentence-grammar approach… the issue of meaning was never attended to (Fries, 1952:x in Ojo, 2011:8). Descriptive linguistics proved a powerful means of recovering some of the surface structure of language (yet) it was not interested in meaning or semantics…. Chomsky or the transformational grammarians also toed the same path since his attendance was mostly on syntax and its structures – its capacity to generate completely novel utterances (Finch, 2000 in Ojo, 2011).

It is Halliday who is the first to give attention to semantics and emphasis that language is a meaning making resources (Ojo, 2011). Without understanding the meaning that is in a language, speech or utterances, there is no way a language can be

properly used as a means of communication. On the account of this, not only has it become an essential part of language study and analysis, but also has been extended to the level of pragmatics, which is in turn being seen as an independent subfield of language. Syal and Jindal (2001) claim that some linguists see pragmatics as an independent level of analysis as it is based on utterance in the same way as phonology is based on sound, syntax on sentences and semantics on both words and sentences. The link between semantics and pragmatics, they say, remains that at both levels, we are concerned with meaning. Semantics attempts to relate meaning to logics and truth and deal with meaning as a matter primarily of sense relation within language.

Pragmatics in a related way attempts to relate meaning to context, hence, it views language as action which is performed by a speaker. By implication, semantics studies meaning by just pointing out the meanings of things, persons, animals, etc, as it is in the world, but pragmatics goes beyond just ordinary naming by using these words and sentences to carry out certain objectives in social situations.

Meyer (2009) views semantics as a part of linguistic competence while pragmatics is meaning derived from our intensions, interactions in specific contexts. Sentences and utterances are the primary unit upon which the study of meaning is based. Fish (2005) cited by Meyer (2009) believes that interpretation involves studying meanings that are encoded in the texts and not go beyond that. He, however, in an attempt to challenge the limitation of such kind of interpretation notes that, if a wife asks the husband "why don't we go to the movie tonight?", the words alone could not produce the actual meaning but many other factors have to be put into consideration. His argument being that communication does not exist in a vacuum – people engaging in conversation do not simply decode only word meaning but draw upon the larger context by which the conversation takes place. In this context, an

attempt is made at distinguishing language at two levels: the levels of grammatical meaning known as semantics – how words have individual meaning (lexical meaning); this can be used to refer to entities in the external worlds. Interpretation according to Fish (2005) goes beyond understanding meaning at the level of grammar. There is the need to understand the social context in which a sentence was uttered. Here, a different level of interpretation that is studied within pragmatics, which explores the role that context plays in interpretation of what people say, takes place.

In the same vein, Sperber and Wilson (1985, 1998 in Ariel, 2008) use the code/inference dichotomy to distinguish between pragmatics and grammar. This is because whatever grammar is; there can be no controversy of it consisting of codes (a sentence). The essence of grammar is a set of conventional associations codifying specific forms with their obligatory or optional, rule-governed positioning, meaning and distributional patterns. He also agrees that grammar basically falls short of meeting our communicative needs. There is, according to Sperber and Wilson (1985/198), a consensus today that the under-determining of grammar – the fact that our coded messages never exhaust the meaning we intend to convey (see Carston, 2002a and Levinson, 2002:8) also cited by Ariel, (2008). As a result of this fact, pragmatics comes in, enriching our encoded messages with pragmatic – plausible inferred interpretations. The seeming conclusion is that pragmatics and grammar always go together for effective communications. Grammar here stands for semantics.

The most basic goal of pragmatic theory is to provide an account for how we go about interpreting such everyday exchanges. All pragmatic theories assume that every act of communication is naturally inferential because the addressee is required to infer the speaker's interaction from whatever evidence is available to him (the linguistic code consisting only one important source of information).

Chiluwa (2010:28) sees semantics and pragmatic as two sides of the same parents (linguistics and meaning). The difference between the two, is that, semantics is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases and sentences without reference to who uses them, why they are used and the influence of the context on the expression. Pragmatics on the other hand, handles those areas which linguistic semantics could not handle. That is, attention to the user of the language, his particular intension (depending on the situation he finds himself) and how he expects his hearer (or reader) to respond.

He goes further to explain that pragmatics was given birth to out of the need or desire to explain the nature of language and how it works in the context of people's situation. Pragmatics like other socio-linguistic sub-fields attempts to demonstrate the social dimensions of language and explains the difference between linguistic forms and what speakers actually say and mean in different social contexts. Pragmatics has also been defined as:

> the study of speaker context meaning, showing how language users manipulate language forms, distract or reorganize sentences in order to express their intensions. And at other times they say one thing but mean another or use questions to express requests/demands. By so doing, pragmatics demonstrates the relationships between what speakers say and what they actually mean and the kind of effects they expect on the minds of the hearers. Pragmatics aims at widening the scope of enquiry into the true value of lexical meaning and their effects in various situations. Chiluwa (2010:IV).

From the foregoing, hence meaning starts at the level of semantics, while pragmatics can be used to gain a wider knowledge or understanding of a particular speech intension. To a large extent, this study subscribes wholly to every argument for pragmatics. To further buttress this argument for pragmatics, several scholars lend credence to speech act as an aspect of pragmatics: Levinson (1983), Kess (1991:156-157), Saeed (2000:220-224), Schmitt (2000:184), Akmajian, (2003), Bauer (2008)

and Mayer (2009), among others, concur the fact that language is a social function. Wardhaugh (2007) also subscribes to this when he says, human beings speak using utterances and sentences. He observes that the thing that language use does is to make propositions. This can take the form of a question or statements, ethical proposition and phatic types of it. He goes further to point out that another way that utterances/sentences make propositions is in the use of the performative utterances. These are the kind of utterances which are used to do a thing. The utterances are not just used but in the process of uttering them a particular action is being carried out if certain conditions in the real world situation are met.

Such utterances perform actions such as naming, marrying, sentencing. When one speaks, he or she engages in carrying out one action or the other by his or her use of language. That is to say that, one gets a particular thing done in certain speech processes. It is not at all times that one tries to ascertain the falsity or truth nature of a statement as had been held by the old grammarians. The above mentioned linguists and scholars argue that, not all declarative statements are used to make utterances that demand true or false responses. There are declarative sentences and there are performative ones. It is this performative aspect of language that gives rise to speech act theory, which was propounded by J. L. Austin (1969) in his *How to Do Things with Words*.

Speech act is fundamentally about purposefully doing things with words – a social act of doing. It is the actions speakers perform in uttering sentences such as informing, promising, warning, questioning, betting etc (McGregor 2010: 142). Speech act theory also tries to explain more precisely how meaning and actions are related to language. In speech act, sentence does not always correspond to speaker's intention nor that of hearers interpretation (Deham and Lobeck, 2010: 332). Austin

(1962: 92-102) differentiates three types of meaning embedded in a speakers' utterance: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts.

Locutionary act is the uttering of sounds and words with meaning; it is the literal meaning of the utterance produced by the speaker. The illocutionary act is the issuing of an utterance with conventional communicative force achieved by saying something. That is, the speaker's intention conveyed in the utterance. The third is perlocutionary act – the effect that the utterance is expected to have on the hearer. The actual effect achieved by saying something.

The question could arise to whether children have the full capacity to do certain things with words, especially as it regards the acts of naming, promising, pledging etc. since they are still infants. The answer is 'yes'. They can still do such with their age mates. Aside this, there are other things they do with words; we are to test some of the utterances of the child under study to determine whether or not a child can do things with words. We would like to see as Halliday (1973) states, that, there a lot of purposes, functions language perform for a child/children even at the early stage of acquisition. Language is acquired to carry out certain things.

2.10 Context of Language Use

Context means the use of linguistic codes (words) in the context of social life since pragmatics is the study of language use by individuals in specific social situations and whose actions are actually influenced by the situations (Chiluwa, 2010:300). It may be physical, environmental, social or institutional situation, including events, time, culture or social conditions that can influence language use. Scholars were concerned with a more balanced way of studying language other than focus on language structures alone. To them, it was significant to examine the

relationship between language and society and how language is influenced by the social context. (Hymes, 1974).

The term context of situation is attributable to Malinowski (1935). Malinowski, a social anthropologist, who in his study of language behaviour among some Indians considered that language, is a "mode of actions" and as a social behaviour is closely tied to the relevant social situation in which it is used (Malinowski, 1935).

Language as a means of communication, undeniably, permeates all facets of human endeavours. It accords an invaluable and unquantifiable assistance to homosapiens in their quest to understand and be understood by fellow human beings. Language use involves both verbal and non-verbal repertories, even though non-verbal means play a great role in our daily communication, it may be effectively used to communicate meaningfully without the verbal aspect.

To communicate effectively however, both aspects of language have to be used within an appropriate context. This is because language does not have one fixed meaning in the various uses into which it is put. Uses of language can have different meanings depending on the context in which it has been used.

Firth (1935) cited by Coulthard (1985) sees language as fundamentally a way of behaviour and making others to behave. For this reason, linguists should be concerned with the verbal process in the context of situation. According to him, language is only meaningful in its context; language only has meaning when it functions appropriately in context.

Huford and Heasely (1983) see context of an utterance as a small subpart of the universe of discourse shared by the hearer, and includes facts about the topic of

the conversation in which the utterance occurs and also the fact about the situation in which the conversation itself takes place.

In this light, there is the need to understand the context in which an utterance is used to fully understand its meaning. Better put, the meaning of any speech event should be best understood when the context is known; every conversation takes place within a given context. Lyons (1977) gives six points which are relevant to the understanding of relationship between language and context. He is of the opinion that participant must know his role and status. He equally says that, participants must be able to categorise the situation in terms of its degree of formality. Knowledge of the time and space of conversation by the participants as well as the appropriate medium and utterances for a given participant matter are essential. Finally, he insists that the participants must know how to make their utterance appropriate to the 'Province' or 'domain' to which the situation belongs. Language viewed in this way is observed to be, to a given extent, meaningful only if context is put into consideration.

Nevertheless, even though language is used in context, that of a child, is not as strict or matured as the adult. There are contexts or situations that warrant their speech; of course, yet, they do not understand such thing as context. A child always wants to be heard and attended to. He does not understand formality or non formalness of any situation but would just go ahead to make his demands or just express himself.

2.11 Functions of Language

Having pointed out the inevitability of context, a very close part to this is the issue of functions. That is, the role language plays for an individual at any given time. This subject is as important to language acquisition as it is to other areas of human lives. Function of language has to do with use which is the concern of

pragmatics. Ndahi (1982) points to this necessity when she alluded to the fact that, researchers have found pragmatics useful to the point that it has to be used in child language analysis, Bloom (1970) and Warden (1976) in Ndahi, (1982) among others have stressed the need to interprets child's utterances in the context in which they are used. It is then that one can see the functions the utterance is performing.

In the words of Richard *et al*. (1999), language is often defined as having three major functions, viz descriptive, expressive and social functions. There are other functions of language. Halliday (1973) also points out three main functions of language: the ideational, interpersonal and the textual functions. These functions are not too different from the others per say. When closely looked at, it can be seen that the descriptive, expressive and the ideational functions go together/do the same thing while social and interpersonal functions are the same. It is only the textual function that may be different, may be, due to the reference to written materials.

However, Halliday (1973) sees a growing child in his early age of language development as being able to master a number of elementary functions of language. These are the functions language performs for a child or the uses that the child puts his language to. Ndahi (1982) observes that there is a context of situation in which the utterance (of a child) is not only produced but also understood. Children learn language within the context of real communication by making particular language structures to serve particular purpose.

Clark and Clark (1977:373) are quoted as saying that, children have to build up structures and function at the same time. "As they learn more about structures, they acquire more devices with which to convey different functions, they extend the uses to which different structures can be put". Halliday (1973, 1978) develops a seven language functions on the part of a child. Each of these functions has a choice

of meaning attached to it. This, according to him, at about 18 months, the child is beginning to master the adult's system of communication including grammar, vocabulary and meaning component.

Oduolowu, (2010:17-21) also subscribes to the fact that, children use language for many things; among which are; communication, to regulate and control behaviour or actions. They also use language in thinking and solving problems.

Invariably, everyone has a particular function that language serves one at any time. No speech made in conversations or discourse is a waste, they are normally directed towards achieving a particular function. Language use is a purposeful activity and it is called tool use (Finegan, 2004:540).

2.12 Childhood Bilingualism

The linguistic situation under which a child acquires his language is important (Surakat, 2001:50-56). In the present time, a child can be acquiring his means of communication under the following settings: Multilingual, trilingual, bilingual or monolingual. This shows that there are different contexts under which language acquisition takes place. Also, a child born in the barracks, under war situations, during migration is under different contexts. There will be differences in the kind of language being acquired but one thing that has been agreed by scholars is that, languages follow the same pattern all over the world.

Here, we speak of a child acquiring her language under a normal family set-up, under a peaceful, quiet and caring environment. Genesee (2008) believes that language acquisition is an everyday and yet magical feat of childhood. Within 3 – 5 years, virtually all children become fully competent in at least one language. Children grow up speaking the language they have acquired from their immediate environment. The language could be his mother tongue or the language he has been exposed to

because his immediate family speaks such a language (Oduoluwu, 2006:124). To say that bilingualism is the ability to master the use of two languages, is taking a perfectionist's point of view. The definition is put at a balance when the writer says that it involves different degrees of competence on the language involved. In this case, a person may control one language better than another or have mastered the different languages for different purposes, while using one language for speaking, and the other for writing.

Linguists argue that, even if one is proficient in two languages, his so called communicative competence ability may not be balanced. Harding-Esch and Riley (2008), Baker (2001), etcetera distinguish different types of bilinguals which can be categorised under two headings: adult bilingualism and childhood bilingualism. Baker (2007:3) makes reference to Valdés and Figueroa (1994)'s classifications into age: simultaneous and sequential or late, ability: incipient/ receptive/ productive, balance of two languages development/ascendant circumstantial and elective. From the classification it can be seen that all others except the simultaneous and sequential bilingualism, refer to the kind of bilingualism pursued in adulthood.

The recipient bilinguals are those people with minimal competence in a second language, they can squeeze in as bilinguals. Some are circumstantial bilinguals because of the need to survive in their new environment; they may be migrants. Elective bilinguals are those who choose to learn one language or the other in the classroom. Ascendant bilingual means one language is gaining upper hand while another is decreasing (additive/subtractive). The attempt to define bilingualism from diverse perspectives has not worked nor does it really characterise the phenomenon very well. To define bilingualism as speaking two or more languages with "native like ability" (as mentioned before) would rule out most bilingual speakers. There are few

people that really speak more than one language "like native" (Myers-Scotton 2006: 36). She is of the view that there are people who were raised as bilinguals from infancy yet cannot speak as natives. A bilingual is not just one who can carry on at least casual conversations on everyday topic in a second language; his speaking and comprehension of others should be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, bilingual child acquisition generally refers to acquiring two or more languages when exposed to them as a very young child. For such children, "acquisition" means spontaneous learning with little or no obvious effort or instruction (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Spolsky and Hult (2008:43) call it simultaneous acquisition resulting in early bilingualism. That is to say the languages are learnt consecutively. On the other hand, sequential childhood bilingualism means that one language learnt at home while the child goes to nursery/elementary school to learn the second (Thompson, 2000 in Baker, 2001). According to Baker (2001), the child acquires one first and later becomes proficient in second. It could be learnt informally: through the street, nursery school and community or formally through the school, adult class, and language courses. See Reich (1986:211); Steinberg (1996); Romaine (1999); Surakat (2001:50-56); Harding-Esch (2003:43); Kroll and De Groot (2005).

The participant of this study is both simultaneous and coordinate bilingual. Simultaneous because she was acquiring English, Hausa and Kurama languages from birth. Amongst the three, English is dominating or has become her preferred language. The reason for this must not be unconnected with what Myers-Scotton, (2006) says while giving a categorical yes answer to the effect that it is possible for a child bilingual to acquire two or even more languages simultaneously with native like competence. This is done (she says) as long as they are continuously exposed to them even though they will eventually develop dominance in one because it is used more.

Myers-Scotton also points out that as very young children; speakers develop dominance in one language partly because it is the main language of the social milieu where they are being raised. They further divide up their language use, with one language used more with certain persons (therefore certain situations).

Contrary to the notion that this kind of bilingualism occurs when a child is raised by bilingual parents in a predominantly monolingual environment and when the parents are monolingual but have raised the child in two different countries. Ramatu's parents sojourn in an environment where a lot of languages abound – ABU, Zaria and they are trilinguals (not monolinguals) who raised their child within the same community. The parents both come from the same place and speak the same language – Kurama. The whole family is trilingual: they all speak Kurama, Hausa and English languages. The participant picks English and that is what she uses most times.

The participant is also a coordinate bilingual since she, like others in this category normally, the first/L1 language is more dominant (English) than the others. That is to that the participant's use of English – her preferred language is more dominant than her use of Hausa and Kurama languages. Gone are the days when bilingualism was taken as only practised by those with a minority language, such belief is a fallacy compared to what is happening in the world today; it might have taken place in the past but not today. All over the world, one thing or the other makes people to acquire more than one language. Even the negative attitude to bilingualism is fast fading away. Children who also become bilingual or trilingual from childhood are endowed with great capabilities and opportunities ahead of them. Acquiring or learning the English language – "the world language" as a first or second language – whether bilingual or monolingual, portends a great task for educators in general.

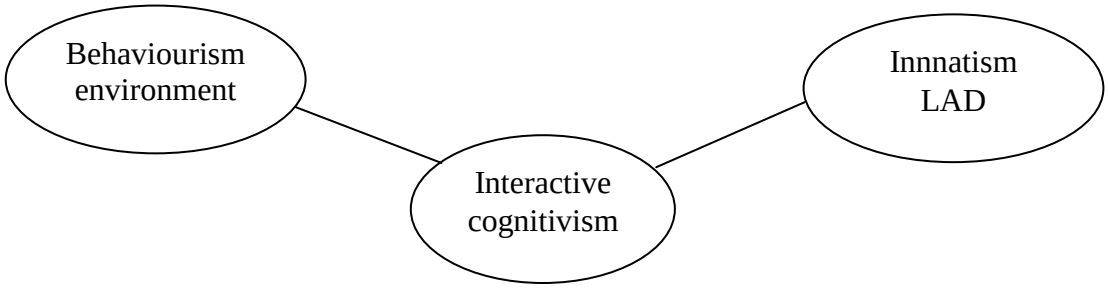
Previously, psycholinguists' attention had been on language in monolingual context. However, today, attention is being directed to bi/multilingual language processing. This has been given rise to due to the recognition that bilingualism is not an exceptional phenomenon but is, in fact, a growing global trend which is posing new challenges for language researchers in general and psycholinguistics in particular. The need to approach psycholinguistics from the perspective of bi/multilingualism is particularly imperative.... (Debort and Kroll, 2002:13 in Spolsky and Hult, 2008).

2.13 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is the interactive cognitivism theory of language acquisition. The three major theories of language acquisition have been reviewed and interactive cognitivism has been selected against the backdrop that none of the behaviourism or innatist theories can appropriately account for the language acquisition process alone. Behaviourism emphasizes performance while innatism emphasizes competence and language cannot be complete without the two having to come together.

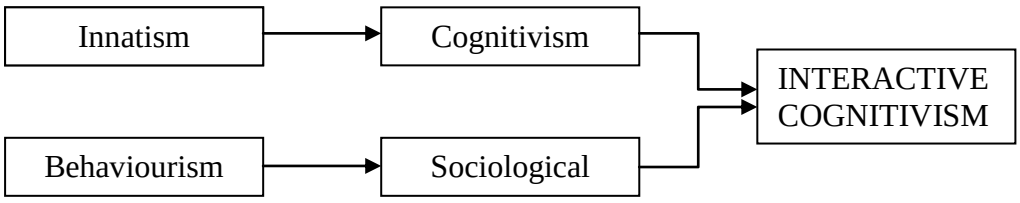
This study adopts the position taken by Surakat (2001:125), with a little modification to suit the purpose of this work. It views the theories as two different sides of the same coin. Without the combination of the strengths of the two theories, language acquisition by anyone cannot be complete and easily done.

Interactive cognitivism is an attempt to bring together both external and internal factors so as to be able to give an adequate explanation of how neonates acquire their languages.



Source: (Surakat 2001)

In this case, (the above diagram), the child is not seen as being left to the mercy of either of the two theories but is seen as an active participant in the process of language acquisition. By this, the child has the capacity to influence what happens in language acquisition environment and can contribute and correct wrong language use because he/she can think and come out with novel language use. The theory emphasizes that there has to be an interaction between innate capacities of the child (LAD) and the human cultural (social) context or environment for linguistic competence to develop. This in one way or the other may have certain implication for language teachers who are involved in handling children from their early stages.



Source: Ngwu (2014), a coinage/an adaptation from Surakat (2001).

This research work sees the various theories of language development as depending on one another to give adequate explanation for the acquisition of language. When taken on the horizontal level, language seems to remain at the innate level or wholly environmental but when it comes down to the other vertically, a

combination that gives rise to interactional cognitivism arises; it also believes the four theories have links in one way or the other. More so, as this combinations are made to suit the present study, the inclusion of sociological theory emphasizes environment but not in the parlance of the behaviorism theory. The sociological or sociocultural view of language acquisition/development foregrounds the notion of language acquisition and use as employed by theorists like Halliday (1978), Vytgotsky (1978) and Hymes (1972). Many children services professionals advocates for the adoption of eclectic approach to theory if that would enhance one's understanding and if the child and situation seem appropriate for your argument (Centre for Learning Innovation (2005).

The Chomskyan innateness and universal grammar have come under serious attacks in the recent time (see Bishop 2014) and other works such as Eldleman and Waterfall (2007), Lidz *et al*, 2003, Lidz & Waxman (2004) Freudental *et al*, 2010 and Pefors *et al* (2010), all cited by Bishop (2014) for the various arguments. All the attacks are not unconnected with the fact that Chomsky concentrated on human mental language endowment or innate capabilities without the actual use to which language is put. This, therefore, would make language acquisition in children one-sided. A proper account of language development must take into consideration of both what goes on inside and that of the outside and Chomsky has failed to do this in his claims as well as his stand on competence and performance/linguistic competence.

Although Bishop (2014) suggests that Chomsky and McGilvary (2012) began to give some explanation in recent time about his theory and changes in the views (Chomsky 2005), the contention against his age long postulations rages on. Bishop notes that instead of enhancing the understanding of language acquisition, his idea has led to stagnation as linguists engage in uncomfortable contortions in a bid to relate

facts about children's' language to his theories. It has been alleged that his theories derived from a consideration of adult language, and take no account of the process of development. Chomsky's concern is the unlearnability of language but studies have shown that "… early learning is word based, and pattern in the input at the level of abstract element is something children become aware of as their knowledge increases (Tomasello, 2000). Another aspect of Chomsky's failure is his focuses on syntax as a formal system without recurse to context and meaning which is the focus of this study. Contributors on language issues have began to see the Chomskyan tradition as falling away or becoming irrelevant but as much as this study does not ascribe to total irrelevance it seems his work is becoming flooded with a lot of controversies (which did not start today) and this study is not an exception.

The essence of language primarily and essentially is communication and communication itself must be meaningful. The need for communication also arises because of the need for association, relationship and existence within a given environment or society. Language is therefore a means or tool for communication or making meaning, achieving aims and objectives and acquiring knowledge about the world and not just an open ended syntactically well formed utterance/sentence devoid of any use. Halliday, in the early 70s changed the outlook of language when he changed the shape by ascribing meaning to it. Fawcett (2004), notes that he transformed the view about language by making 'choice' a core concept of his theory where "choice" in the language system is between meaning rather than structure. He sees language as a resource for constructing meaning where he coined the expression 'language as a social semiotic', 'language as a social semiotic' means interpreting language within a socio-cultural context in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms – as an information system….' People talk to each other, language

does not consist of sentences: it consist of conversation or discourse – the exchange of meaning in interpersonal contexts of one kind or another. The contexts in which meanings are exchanged are not devoid of social value … (Halliday 1978: 2 in Wells 1994. 47).

Halliday is interested in the nature and organization of language as a resource for human social living (Wells, 1994:45), He believes that the internal organization of language is not arbitrary but embodies positive reflection of the function that language has evolved to serve in the life of social man (1973). The functions are realised in different ways in different communities of language because they are coded into semantic and syntactical structures that reflects the different 'social semiotic' of different communities (semiotic and syntactic code represent the fundamental system of the particular system), allows the expression of the social behaviour of people using it in various situational context Halliday (1993). People are allowed to choose these structures that best convey their expressive and communicative interests. From the foregoing it can be observed that meaning and in context is central to Halliday's construct.

Beyond this parlance, Halliday also makes useful contributions on the area of language development believing that investigation into the nature of linguistic system and the abstract functions differ from the concrete uses that language is put into in different situation and can be best approached through the study of how it is that Children learn the linguistic system. Halliday 1978: 52 – 53 in Wells 1994: 45). In order to understand the present state of things there is the need to study the stages of development that preceded it; and the genetic structure that Halliday makes is an attempt to create a balance or rectify the imbalance he sees in linguistic works where (in the words of Wells 1994), the interest in an idealized, ahistorical, and acultural

"linguistic competence" has led to a disregard of what people actually say and of the uses to which language is put in actual situations. In contrast to Chomsky, the linguistic theory that Halliday pursues is inherently social and functional in orientation. He sees language both as a system and resource, code and behaviour. He seeks to explain within a given community what people can mean and how they use their language to do so (1994:45). Context plays a part in determining what people say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context (1978, p3).

Another notable figure in pursuit of this sociological/sociocultural view of language is Dell Hymes. Coming from the sociolinguistic stand point he argues for the primacy of language function…. and demanded that language study be grounded in ethnographic observation rather than introspective theorizing. Hymes was critical about Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence and his failure to account for linguistic variation. He argues that leaving language at the mental grammar does not account for or even acknowledge the enormous role of the socially contextualized ways we see language in determining the shape of utterance. He says that human (and I believe including children) do more than construct grammatically possible linguistic utterances; for him what is taken as ungrammatical utterance can be socially appropriate, just as grammatical utterances can be socially inappropriate (Hymes, 1972b, 1989 in Johnstone and Marcelino 2010). He disagrees with Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence saying that "a child from whom any and all the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood must be a social monster' (Hymes1974:75). Within the social matrix in which it is acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use". The system of use which Hymes speaks of is what he calls 'communicative competence' while in the Chomskyan context children are born with the capacity for acquiring linguistic competence,

communicative competence is learned and as such can be more or less complete or flexible. Under 'linguistic competence' Hymes further disagrees with Chomsky because he focuses on the aspect of language that are uniform across speakers without considering linguistic variation. His idealized speakers/hearers notion was designed for completely homogenous communities. One wonders (even if there was) whether such homogenous community exists today; this study lends its support to Hymes by noting that there is hardly a 'completely homogenous' society where children are growing and acquiring their language today. It may be that Chomsky was speaking of his own time (and even at that there are still variations of or dialects of English language) without considering the future or let's say the far future: This is about five decades he propounded his theory.

Hymes concerns himself with actual language use in social context and brought forth what he called ethnography of society' which he later changed to ethnography of communication which is his new way to understanding language in use. Taking Hymes perspective, a child acquires his language within an environment, within a socio-cultural milieu, while he could use his linguistic competence, he also learns as he observes others, the environment and learns how to use his language within the appropriate context and achieve his intensions. Communicative competence is relevant to us here because it is the focus of Pragmatics. Halliday1993. 94-95 reiterates that children are predisposed from birth to address others and be addressed by them (that is, to interact communicatively); and (b) to construct their own experiences (that is to interpret experience by organizing it into meanings…. This suggests that a child has the ability to interact with others or engage in social interactions and be meaningful – address and to be addressed.

Lev Vygotsky also sees language as a cultural tool that has been developed and refined in the service of social action and interaction (Wells, 1994: 49); he notes that language acquisition or learning is done mostly through conversational interactions. Although coming from the field of developmental psychology he relates his socio-cultural theory to both cognitive and social development. He emphasized the importance of relationship and interactions between children and more knowledgeable peers and adults; he believe that the environment play an important role in a child's development, particularly in the social aspects of development. Aside from physical development, maturation which is genetic, the researcher does not believe that there is any development that is achieved without language for it is the tool with which the whole gamut of development is accomplished. Halliday calls it the foundations of learning itself. (Wells 1994:42). Contemporary socio-cultural theorists abound: Rogoff 1990, 2003; Egan 1997, Prout 1997, James 1990 to mention few; they emphasise learning as work in progress, in context and as social activity. Development is continuous, in close cooperation with other children and adults and in many different contexts: homes for early year's settings, neighbourhood and communities. They all advocate a holistic study of children's development within their environment.

To sum up the argument in this section, a very long citation from Halliday on language and social man" will suffice.

> In the development of the child as a social being, language has the central role. Language is the main channel through which the pattern of living are transmitted to him, through which he learns to act as a member of a society in and through the various social groups, the family, the neighborhood, and so on – and to adopt its culture; its modes of thought and action, its beliefs and its values. This does not happen by instruction, at least not in the pre-school years; nobody teaches him the principles on which social groups are organized, or their systems of beliefs, nor would he understand if they tried. It happens indirectly, through the accumulated

> experience of numerous small events, insignificant in themselves, in which his behaviour is guided and controlled, and in themselves, in which, his behaviour is guided and controlled, and in the course of which he contracts and develops personal relationship of all kinds. All this takes place through the medium language (Halliday, 1978: 9 in Wells 1994.58).
>
> Also, the child learns his mother tongue in behavioural settings where the norms of the culture are acted out and enunciated for him, settings of parental control, instruction, personal interaction and the life; and, reciprocally, he is 'socialized' into the value systems and behaviour patterns of the culture through the use of language at the same time as he is learning (1978.23).

For instance, a child's discriminatory and distinctive attitude in talking to or with the family members and others is quietly observed and acted out as he develops in his environment. The issues raised so far show that the present study has a relationship and corroborate or takes into consideration earlier works and as such be put into cognizance in the course of the various points, arguments and conclusions that will be made within the work and at its end.

2.15 Summary of Literature Review

In view of the time in which we are – the 21st century, the period of world globalization and, information and communication technology (ICT), there is a likelihood of language acquisition by children taking the behaviourism perspective. Today, children are exposed to very many gadgets that facilitate language acquisition. Children are left to the mercy of computers, TV sets and are sent to school as toddlers. Would acquisition of language by children of these days still be the same as it was in the 60s, 70s and 80s? Of a truth, language acquisition cannot be completed without both behaviourism and innatism coming together. But today, a close observation even from our homes shows that children and even younger generation tend toward behaviourism. Behaviourism is trying to have an upper hand in various instances of

language acquisition and use. An anonymous has said that because of the serious advancement made in technology and societal influences, a child's language gets more matured compared to what it has been. A child is better equipped to acquire his language as fast as possible.

Children naturally learn faster than adults, children are not careful of who listens to them; they do not stick to observing the rules of grammar. Adults care about these as they do not want to be ridiculed and for the fact that they are already knowledgeable. An uneducated person can learn language faster than his educated counterpart because for the latter, social position and prestige comes into play for him. Children cannot be limited or hindered by such barriers; they would just want to show you what they have known. Moreover, the developmental capacity and capability of children seem to be greatly enhanced by certain nomenclatures in such a manner that the children of these days cannot be said to be on the same level as a child of 1980's for example. It can be argued that certain food that children take affect their development as such foods and supplements quickens and strengthens their well being. Immunization is another factor, it work directly or indirectly on the brain and neurologists are so much concerned about early childhood developments with particular regards to the brain, www.developingchild.havard.edu. If BCG or Vaccines given for polio for instance could reduce polio drastically, it is suggestive of the fact that vaccines work in the brain as some of the components are designed to do so.

Consequent upon this, argument is no longer to be heated between behaviourism and innatism but to whether or not behaviourism is taking an upper hand in language acquisition, language use and how people speak generally. This is what Bandura (1989) speaks about in what he calls the social cognitivism theory. Language is a social phenomenon used in various situations to achieve certain

purposes. Children have the capacity and the capability to acquire more than one language at a time if they are constantly exposed to them. They also use such languages for various reasons.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains how the entire study was carried out. It contains the necessary explanations about the research design. That is, the whole observational technique and method employed for the data collection and transcription. Also, the theoretical and analytical frameworks as well as the framework of analysis are clearly outlined and illustrated.

3.1 A Participant Research

This study is a longitudinal observational research which focuses on only one (1) child and allows for a qualitative research, rigorous investigation and thorough analysis.

In this case, it is the researcher's family friend's bilingual child (Punpun) whose language development at the pre-school age is being investigated in order to examine the patterns of her speech and how she is understood by her interlocutors. In other words, the child's language use at the telegraphic stage and the interpretations derivable of their uses.

3.2 Data Collection Technique

To be able to collect the needed data for this research work, the three media technique based on Ochs and Schieffelin (1979) employed by Surakat (2001:116) is what has been applied in documenting the child's utterances. The same technique has been used by Bloom and Lahey (1978), Dromi (1987), and others.

The three media technique entails the use of the following instrument for data collection:

1. A diary in which the child's utterances and non-verbal acts are entered. Documented also in the diary, is the physical setting of the child's communication
2. An audio-tape recording using a SONY Micro cassette recorder
3. Video-tape recording which has been done by the use of a digital camera.

It is significant to note here that the justification for the use of the technique is for the purpose of complementation and has been so designed to compensate for the limitations inherent in each of the modes. These have been used in varying degrees in documenting the participant's utterances. As a practice however, it is only the audio and video recorded data that are considered as the primary data, hence, they are verifiable, while the hand-written diary record is not and has been preserved to serve more of a complementary.

3.3 Duration of Recording

The data transcribed in volume two of this research work were collected between March, 2010 (when the participant was 2½ years old) and November of the same year. However, it is only a relevant part of the data that have been used for contextual analysis.

There were three recording sessions that took place at three intervals. The audio tape and handwritten data followed the flexible or continuous time-sampling approach. The flexible timing has been advocated for its merit of allowing events that occur infrequently to be captured (Nachimas and Nachimias, 1981:158 and Surakat, 2001:118). The diary record carried with it the dates of recording done sometimes on a daily bases, (morning, afternoon or night and forth nightly). This recording is also

flexible with a total of six sessions of 45 minutes and above each. The audio and video recordings no doubt, contain enormous samples of communication pattern between the participant of the study and members of her family in various settings such as:

a) Play sessions with her two immediate elder ones, who are her closest playmates
b) Discussions with her aunties
c) Discussions with the father whenever he visits which was normally forth nightly from Abuja
d) Periods of soliloquy while playing with her three 'children/babies' 'Angela' or 'Shade Brown', 'fish' and 'sweet'
e) At the dinning table or after dinner
f) Discussions with the researcher and with general members of the family

The video recording is shorter than the audio recording because of some constraints that attended it. The initial part of this was carried out outside the veranda where the family lived in ABU Staff Quarters, behind the Faculty of Education. The recording was almost impossible as it attracted a lot of distractions and interferences from neighbours. The presence of the on-lookers and the sight of the camera made the participant shy and she refused to say anything despite the 'tip-offs'. This made the whole endeavour artificial that we had to resort to doing the recordings indoors. Meanwhile, the audio is longer, hence, it affords one the opportunity to carry out what is known as surreptitious recording. There are a total of over six (6) or more hours of audio recording excluding the hand-written diary records.

3.4 Recording Procedure

During the observation and collection of the participant's spontaneous utterances, the study combined the use of diary to record observable linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours of the child, elicitation method and formal recordings with the help of audio and video recordings to obtain a complete record of the participant's utterances.

Before the 27th month of age when the observation started, the participant had successfully passed through the pre-linguistic stage, the one word and two word stages of language acquisition. At the 30th month when the recording fully commenced, there were still traces of the one and two word utterances occurring as the telegraphic speech emerged. This is the core of the study. Most scholars believe that the telegraphic stage does start between the ages of 18 and 24 months, utterances characteristic of this period were already noticeable in the child's speeches.

Members of the family did serve as the informants but the researcher always insisted on personally observing such linguistic behaviours for confirmation before they could be considered useful. Confirmations were also sought from the mother and/or the nanny. A notebook for the diary record was purchased and given to the child's mother to document the child's utterances, paralinguistic behaviours and contexts under which they were made. This is aside from the one kept by the researcher to also document her own observation on various visits.

When the participant's mother could not continue with the recording because of her tight schedules in the office, and for the fact that the nanny was not knowledgeable enough to be assigned such task, the investigator had to fully move in to stay with the family until the data collection period elapsed.

Recording initially started with a twice a week visit for diary recoding before the Audio and video recordings. The audio was mostly carried out fortnightly since the child was observed to be very active and outspoken during those times as it was the period when the father came on visit from Abuja. The reason being that she is very fond of the father. For video recording use was made of a digital camera and was operated by the researcher. The professional video recording operators could not be employed as that would have amounted to a lot of attention, distractions and a waste of time and money. The camera could only be used once a month for the six months duration. Each of the recordings lasted between less than three minutes and above one hour and at the end, a total of 6 hours video recorded data was collected while audio recording amounts to 12 hours. All the people involved in the study are represented by the initials of their first names: 'K', 'E', 'F', 'Aunty R', 'Aunty S', 'Aunty B', 'I' etc.

3.5 Data Transcription Procedure

The model of transcription which has been adopted for transcribing the data for this work is based on Bloom and Lahey's (1978:600) convention for transcription of child language recording for the diary observations. This spells out the page layout as well as the orthographical representations of verbal and non-verbal behaviours of participants in any conversation settings involving the child. This is a method whereby the transcription of data is done by placing the utterances of the participant on the right hand-side page of the paper while the utterances by other participants or co-interlocutors are recorded on the left hand-side (see also Ndahi, 1982; Katsina, 1992; Surakat, 2001).

3.6 Framework of Analysis

This study adopts an eclectic method in its linguistic analysis. It toes the path of Surakat (2001) by embracing the systemist's view but with some deviations or modifications to accommodate what the work seeks to address. Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is attributed to M. A. K. Halliday who was the lending figure of the followers of J. R. Firth that endeavoured to do what Firth scorned to do which was to set up a tightly integrated theory (Bolinger, 1986:115 in Ojo, 2011).

The systemic model's real base of language description is sociology. It is functional and semantic rather than formal and syntactic in orientation; it takes the text rather than the sentences as its objects and defines its scope by references to usage further than grammaticality. Language is analysed from a sociological point of view, that is, language as seen in its social context.

Thus, sociological aspects of language have as key words – behaviour, function and situation. Behaviour suggests that language is regarded as a form of behaviour. Function refers to the functionality of language, while situation indicates that language is situation bound and not a form of abstraction. The model also has level for language description of which the primary levels of linguistic analysis include: substance, form and situation. Substance comes under phonetics and it is not covered here hence the focus is linguistics: the focus therefore would be from grammar and context or situation (See Ojo, 2011; Ajayi, 2013, Tarry, 1995; Halliday and Hassan, 1985).

The diagram is represented below:

PHONETICS		LINGUISTICS		
SUBSTANCE	⟷	FORMS	⟷	
Phonic Graphic	Phonology Graphology	Grammar & Lexis	Context	(Extra-textual features) thesis situation (immediate situation wider situation)

Source: Berry (1975:47) in Ojo (2011:24)

3.7 Descriptive Model

Bloom's semantic interpretation model has been used in the case where words/sentences manifested in the structures used by the child and meaning relation attached to them. The model focuses on the interpretation of meanings of utterances ascertained by observing the context in which they occurred. This is useful especially as the participant of the study used certain expressions within utterances which are analysed taking into consideration their real meaning and context under which they were used. For pragmatic meaning, context of utterance, contextual analysis has been used to describe the real meaning. Halliday's functions of language help to show what the child does with her use of language as well as the speech act theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This particular chapter delivers the presentation and establishment of meaning of the data which was gotten from the elicited utterances of the child under study. It is pertinent to note that the chapter mainly focuses on the meaning of the participant's utterances within the confines of the two meaning making components of English language. That is to say that the study is not involved in or concerned with the issue of analysis of structures, categorization, or description: whether syntactic, semantic relation or position.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge some of such other works have been attended to by other researchers such as Surakat (2001), Ambrose (2011), Ajayi (2013), etc. The chapter progresses in its interpretation bearing in mind the objectives of the study and questions it sets out to provide answers to. Thus, the thrust is on the use of language: the real or intended meaning, purpose of the utterances and the context of the utterances. The study hinges/utilizes the events, activities, circumstances or the immediate and general environment of the participant to interpret her speeches. This is because context encompasses all the information that the hearer utilizes for interpreting language expressions. Context is not just the linguistic information that surrounds an utterance (Sperber and Wilson 1995, Mercer 2000 cited by Loukusa 2011). As Loukusa noted, the hearer's knowledge and belief of what the communication partner knows helps in interpretation of his or her utterances. When interpreting contextual factors there is a need to make connections between information and to link information together. In this case therefore, inference

plays a significant role in pragmatic comprehension process (Leinonen *et.al*. 2000, Sperber and Wilson 2002 in Loukusa 2011).

4.2 Some Assumptions

The followings are certain assumptions the study bears in mind as processes which the participant would have gone through to arrive at the point of the study:

(1) That Punpun, like every other child is endowed with universal device to acquire the language she is exposed to

(2) That she has successfully passed through the pre-linguistic and linguistic stages (and rapidly at that) to get to the telegraphic stage. And, that her environments (linguistically) would have had some influences on her acquisition

(3) The participant started construction of sentences between the ages of 18 – 20 months and had progressed there on

(4) That though, children do not acquire complex structures easily, but with their little words carry out/achieve their purposes, and Punpun is not left out

(5) Acquisition of content words and omission of function words, such as inflections, connectives etc, but not in all cases also apply to Punpun. There is omission but not in all cases and some come earlier than others

(6) By the foregoing, Punpun would have acquired a number of grammatical structures to express herself and be meaningful in conjunction with context

(7) Punpun had begun to comprehend other's speeches prior to production. Consequent upon this, she has developed some communication skills, conversational skills with which she made verbal exchanges with her co-interlocutors and communicates effectively.

(8) However, a child's language is not easily comprehended without some necessary clues that aid the listener(s). This could be attributed to the manner of speech, especially as it has to do with pronunciation and context

4.3 Interpretation

Bloom, Rocissano and Hood (1976) cited in Carroll, (2004:288) gives categories of child utterances which the child's speech is believed to fall into and can only be understood with the help of its context. The utterances are not however categorized in this way for the interpretation but are used impliedly as some of the participant's utterances can be said to have these features.

Table 4.4.0 Categories of child utterances

Category	Definition
Nonadjacent	Those utterances that occurred without a previous adult utterance or with a definite pause after a previous adult utterances.
Adjacent	Those utterances that occurred right after an adult utterance
Non contingent	Those utterances that did not share the same topic as the preceding adult utterance.
Imitative	Those utterances that shared the same topic with the preceding utterance, but did not add information; that is, all or part of the preceding utterance was repeated with no change.
Contingent	Those utterances that both shared the same topic with the preceding utterance and added some information to it.

Source: based on child discourse; Development Interaction Between Information Processing and Linguistic Knowledge" by L. Bloom, I. Rocissano, and I. Hood, 1976, Cognitive Psychology, 8, PD 524-528.

Imitated or Copied Utterances

Table 4.4.1 (ATR 4.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Type of Sentence	Function	Speech Act
In the course of playing, 'I' asks Participant what she wants to become in future/study	Am going to study their Fiwa jomi. I will study Fiwajomi medicine	I intend to study or offer the course called Fiwajomi and co. It is the type of Fiwajomi's medicine that I will study	Declarative	Expressive: Nursing a desire, ambition, creating her own future. Also informative	

In the light of the above utterances and the literal meaning(s) derivable from it, it is clear that the 34 months old girl is not knowledgeable at all on what to study or become in future. Yet, her response is not to be thrown overboard. The first question would be who is "Fiwajomi" or "their Fiwajomi"? May be we can start from there to getting an inkling of what the child is talking about. "Fiwajomi" is a character in a home video that also bears the same name FIWAJOMI. Also, knowing the linguistic context: the utterances preceding and following this very one will help one understand that the child was not just making some childish statement.

'I' had asked her 'what she wanted to become in future but she did not understand and responded thus, "future was in Sabon Gari'. 'I' reframed the question to "what do you want to become?" Punpun responded 'Doctor,' while 'I' said his, is a pilot. To this she reaffirmed her resolve to become a doctor-"I want to become a doctor". A second question was "are you going to go to university?" The answer was "yes". To this effect 'I' further questioned and said, "And what are you going to study?" she then responded "Am going to study their Fiwajomi". Someone who does not know where the Participant was coming from could question as the researcher did; "but Fiwajomi is not a course but a person now?" The Participant on her own side continued to paint

a picture that she knew what she was saying. 'P' response to that statement was "…Fiwajomi is my friend" and later on, "I will study Fiwajomi Medicine".

As noted earlier on, FIWAJOMI is a film while Fiwajomi is the main character. The film and the character happen to be Punpun's best at the time of recordings. She has developed a likeness for the film and the character that her speeches then always hovered around it. Fiwajomi was sent to the university to study medicine where he met 2 friends who were also reading the same course. This suggests what "their Fiwajomi" means. Punpun, at her age, should be running from a mere mention of the name 'Doctor' but since some people called her doctor because of the way she speaks and for the fact that her mother is a doctor; she has been seeing herself as one. The coming of FIWAJOMI and her love for the main character heightened the quest that it has become what she wants to study.

Unquestionably therefore, this scenario helps us to understand that Punpun was not talking in vain": she was not talking about attempting the impossible (studying Fiwajomi and his friends nor was she talking about medicine that belongs to Fiwajomi). She was saying that since Fiwajomi was her friend, and reading medicine, she would also study medicine in the university. She had developed a liking for becoming a doctor and that has become what she wants to be in future.

In addition and still in the same context, a look at the following utterances further buttresses how context disambiguates meanings.

Table 4.4.2 (ATR 4.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Type of sentence	Function	SPEECH ACT
Still on Fiwajomi	I will not allow, their Ganja KWO, Ganja Bah…	I cannot allow Ganja and co. You remember Ganja?	Declarative Imperative	Expressive asserting emphasis expressing opinion or views.	

	Ganja.. Ganja.. Ganja come so that Fiwajomi will become a bad boy.	The reason why Ganja came or the purpose of Ganja's coming or existence is to make Fiwajomi a bad boy.			

The background of these utterances is still the same as the ones just discussed above. The Participant in an attempt to drive her point through for 'I' made utterances which could only be understood from 'I's own point of view. 'I' had made a statement that shows he does not want Punpun to go to the university and mess up since it was obvious that Fiwajomi whom she said was her friend and reason for wanting to study medicine did mess up. She said "Amen," which 'I' asked her to say but to that effect, in defense, goes ahead to tell him that, if you are saying/thinking that Fiwajomi messed up, she does not see it that way. Her stand is that it was "their Ganja", that is Ganja and Timanyi, who were Fiwajomi's friends that were responsible for his messing up. "Ganja Bah" is an emphasis, to draw her listener's attention to who she is referring to since they shared the same knowledge about this person. In essence, she is saying, "I will not mess up". The next utterance implies that Ganja was designed to come and lure Fiwajomi into messing up or becoming a bad boy. Of a truth, the story line of the film has it that Fiwajomi went to the university to study medicine but instead of doing so, he joined a bad gang to which Ganja and Timanyi also belonged. It was through them he got into the gang but being inexperienced; he became their errand boy and was subsequently dismissed from the university when he was caught. Therefore, from the participant's stand point, Fiwajomi was not at fault, he is not a bad boy, nor did he mess up. It was Ganja that came for the purpose of making him a bad boy and also made him mess up. Evidently, Punpun is saying that she will not go to the university and mess up because she will not allow somebody like Ganja to

become her friend, so that she will not become a bad girl. The focus here is not on the film but the point worthy of note here is that children can think, reason, take stand and assert their positions. The various pauses Punpun was making in her speech was to help her to think and retrieve from her mental lexicon the right words to say what she had in mind. Though her words did not fully give what she was saying but putting one and one together and allowing her to say her mind show that her utterance was packed full with meaning. The whole set up had a serious implication for homes, parents, teachers and those involved in handling children which cannot be pursued here for lack of space; aside from the issue of the context which is the main purpose of this study. It is the understanding of the context that led to inferences and deductions made to arrive at what Punpun's intended meaning actually is. See also VTR 05, 30/11/10.

Table 4.4.3 (ATR 4.1)

In the same vein, let's look at the next table:

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function
On a general discussion with M, AR, R and others, Punpun raises the issue of her birthday.	Today is my birthday.	That day 12th Sept is my birthday.	Declarative	Nostalgic information Promise
	My birthday is November KWO?	My birthday is not today but November you said?	Interrogative	
	It would go round in Jesus name.	My birthday in November will go round to everybody by the power that is in the name of Jesus. Or, everybody's birthday will be November.	Imperative	
AR comes to the house and carries S on her leg	I will not do my birthday	I don't intend to celebrate my birthday	Declarative	Expressive

Punpun declared that her birthday was 12th September 2010- the day of the recording. The aunty (AR) was surprised and interrogated the mother (M) who later confirmed that it was November 6th. Punpun having taken the correction went ahead to state that it would go round in Jesus name. A further questioning also showed that it was not her birthday that she was actually saying would go round in Jesus name. Punpun was however applying this expression which she has borrowed from a film to her own situation. Instead of saying that the new car which an actor bought and the wife was rejoicing and saying it would go round- Others would buy and she would also have one. She changed it and said it to suit her own case and discussion by saying that the birthday would go round in "Jesus name"; the same phrase that the woman used in the film. Without understanding where Punpun was speaking from, the utterance would steer up questions and none would understand (as it happen that day), except that the immediate elder sister, 'N' helped out with an explanation. Also, "I will not do my birthday" does not mean that Punpun does not like celebrating her birthday. She was indirectly reminding the aunty (AR) that she has not celebrated one and is expecting her to do something, since she is the one that always talked about celebrating birthdays. Invariably, seeing 'AR' is seeing someone who talks/ concerns herself about birthdays. The same meaning is also attached to the statement "I will bake the cake" that she made later in the discussion. 'AR' had not baked cake for her nor talked about it for sometime then and by mentioning it to her hearing; she believes she will do something. Children can also use language trickishly to get what they want.

Table 4.4.4 (ATR 3.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech Act
D asked S to drop the stool she was playing with before it wounds her	If I carry this one what would happen to my hand?	You don't need to be afraid, it won't hurt me.	Interrogative	Inform dramatize	

D's response showing that he did not understand S's utterance was "nothing will happen to you, you are strong girl" S was however trying to dramatize. The Mount Zion film they have watched, where an actor was trying to show the need for forgiveness. He illustrated by asking of I carry this stool for one hour what will happen to my hand? This is what Punpun has copied to the dad's nudge to stop playing with what will harm her. This shows that the electronic gadgets available to us are didactic and can influence children's language in a great measure. D only got to understand when R who had gotten a clue of what S meant and then explains to him.

Table 4.4.5 (ATR 4.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
On a play with I and R	One day, my dream will come to pass	There is a dream am nursing which is yet to be fulfilled	Declarative	Optimistic Imitation	

One would wonder the kind of dream a 3year old child is nursing. Punpun only wanted R to know what she already knows. She was speaking from her favorite film 'Fiwajomi'. Fiwajomi was to go to the university and as he was leaving, the father was telling him that one day his dream will come to pass. This is the statement Punpun is applying to herself. It might not be a surprise how a child could make such a statement at this age since it is obvious that she has copied it from somewhere.

Naturally, children don't talk about what they don't know. They always talk of such things as they have heard, seen or experienced. The only thing that could be surprising is how she could apply it in certain situations and to herself, and it is still appropriate. Children could think and use what they have known to do some things even if to show that they have known such things.

Table 4.4.6 (VTR 03)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
The recording goes on. She becomes inquisitive and wants to know what is happening. I tries to make her play instead of looking into the camera.	Isaac, this issue is personal	I don't want to play, at least for now	Declarative	Control	

Following the sentence, it looks as if the participant has a personal issue which she wants to attend to instead of playing. The issue for her could be to look into the camera to ascertain what is going on, may be after that she could now play. On the other hand, this use of language could not have come from the child. This is a statement she has heard from a film and which she has applied in her own situation and it properly fits in. In the film, the speaker was trying to tell her friend that the reason for her choice of marriage partner is personal and that her friend should leave her alone. Likewise, Punpun tries to let I know that her reason for choosing not to play is personal to her and should not disturb her.

Utterances Meant to Control

Table 4.4.7 (ATR 3.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Playing with I But he did not want to continue	Isaac you are a child of God	You must or I want you to continue playing with me			

The sentence is a statement and at the same time declarative. It is meant to control Isaac and make him continue playing with the participant. She is not just telling him that he is a child of God but to remind him that being a child of God, means he belongs to God. Being a child of God implies not being harsh in his speech but mild. Since he is a child of God he is not supposed to speak like that to her but to do what she wanted by playing with her. Normally, when she misbehaves she was always told that she is a child of God or Jesus baby, as such she should not do bad things.

Table 4.4.8 (ATR 3.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Still talking in the same context, about a particular girl	Isaac you are not my friend	There is no friendship between us. We are now enemies. We used to be friends but no more, not now.	Declarative	Control	

They are talking of a particular music girl she has come to or she always liked to associate herself with the girl's name. She wanted Isaac to understand this with her instead of telling her that she is lying. If he therefore says that Rejoice is not her name

Isaac will no longer be her friend. If you want us to be friends, do not tell me that I am lying for saying that my name is Rejoice.

Table 4.4.9 (ATR 3.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
	I will not do something for you again. I will not open this door.	I need to do something for you but I will not do it again (for a reason) Don't ask me to do anything for you again.			

The statement comes as a result of the one that preceded it. The use is to further control Isaac to dance to the participant's tune. He made a statement that suggests that the participant is telling lies by calling herself Rejoice. To further show her disapproval, she says that he will only not be her friend but that the things she used to help him do, she will no longer do. She uses the opening of door as an example. I used to help you open the door but I will not do it again for you. She did not succeed in her control effort since Isaac insists that he knows how to open the door more than her. However, Punpun succeeded in using her language to control 'P' in VTR -01 where she said "I will not give you my picture again". She had given P a blow playfully which by implication meant that she wanted P to play with her. P, not understanding, did not respond; this made her to threaten P with "Iwill not give you my picture again", as if she had made him a promise of giving him her picture before that time. This is one of the typical ways that children speak. They use AGAIN as if there was a prior agreement.

Table 4.4.10 (VTR -04)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
The recording goes on. She becomes inquisitive and wants to know what is happening. I tries to make her play instead of looking into the camera.	Isaac, this issue is personal	I don't want to play, at least for now	Declarative	Control	

Following the sentence, it looks as if the participant has a personal issue which she wants to attend to instead of playing. The issue for her could be to look into the camera to ascertain what is going on, may be after that she could now play. On the other hand, this use of language could not have come from the child. This is a statement she has heard from a film and which she has applied in her own situation and it properly fits in. In the film, the speaker was trying to tell her friend that the reason for her choice of marriage partner is personal and that her friend should leave her alone. Likewise, Punpun tries to let 'I' know that her reason for choosing not to play is personal to her and should not disturb her.

Table 4.4.11 (ATR 3.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
I, N and Participant have been playing all along in the night that 'M' who had gone to sleep came out. She (the Participant) sees that as an opportunity to run into the room	My leg is paining me	I have problem with my leg that is why am going inside.	Declaration	Control	

The child has been playing all the while, so there is no pain in her leg. She had been looking for a way to enter the room and the opportunity has come. 'M' had left her to continue with her play and afterwards sleep together with the others. So, by saying "my leg is paining me" she knows that 'M' will become interested and take her to sleep with her.

Table 4.4.12(ATR 3.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
The participant's play with Isaac had gone on for long that I wanted to stop.	Isaac you are not tired	You cannot be saying you are tired when am still interested in playing.	Declaration Imperative and Command	Control	

The participant still wanted to sustain the play since between her and I, sensing that he would soon say that he is tired, quickly tells him that you are not tired. You are not tired but you are trying to pretend since you don't want to play with me again.

Table 4.4.13 (ATR 3.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
No Punpun, I don't want to do dokie	Isaac is looking for my trouble. Isaac I will warn you	You will get into trouble with me by say For the reason am warning you ahead of time.	Expressive statement	Warning threaten Control	

The statement does not mean that Punpun has a trouble (an object) which Isaac is searching for. Neither was she telling him that she is intending to warn him. Rather, it

means that since Isaac is not ready to do dokie, he is also planning to get into trouble or he will have problem with her. I will warn you is not a threat but the statement has been influenced by ('Zam' an Hausa word which means I will) instead of I am warning you. The participant has the habit of making the action she is already taking look futuristic. The complete thought would have been: you will get into trouble with me and for that reason, am warning you. If you don't want to do 'dokie salama' you will be in trouble. The statement is meant to threaten, warn and then control or bring Isaac to do what he said he didn't want to do.

Table 4.4.14 (ATR 4.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Isaac ties participant's leg with rope. She cries out and squints for pain but I did not listen	Isaac, don't mind this boy. "KAI"	Isaac, stop this thing you are doing to me. This is not easy, I have been suffering.	Command Exclamatory	Warn Console Comfort Expressive	

Since Isaac has been tying the legs, Punpun has been trying to show him that it's painful yet, he did not pay attention. She asked him to stop but he did not. The Participant becomes helpless and could do nothing else but find solace in consoling herself. Invariably, she was referring to Isaac thereby telling herself not to mind him. That is don't pay attention to what he is doing or be concerned about it; when he is tired, he will leave her. She was telling herself not to mind Isaac.

The exclamation "KAI" is heaving a sigh of relief, which shows she has been suffering or enduring the pain but is now happy to be freed or longs to be freed. At the end there was no other boy at the scene of the play apart from Isaac, she was

indirectly referring to Isaac. The word 'KAI' is normally used to warn somebody to stop doing something which is wrong (especially children), but here, the tone or intonation that the participant used to exclaim 'KAI' is not that of stop it but that of exhaustion, someone who is coming out of a situation and which feels delivered or rescued.

Reportive Utterances

Table 4.4.15

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Visitors in the house and conversation on going	They are saying Me	They are talking about or discussing Me	Statement	Reporting or announcing or informing	

They are saying 'me' implies that some people are saying or using the word "Me". But in this case and on further inquiries it is discovered that the child means that the people inside (M and the visitors) are talking about her, the question is who is saying me (you). My mummy, when did they say you? They say am writing. Parents are fond of talking about the progress their child is making. They could have been talking about her attempts to write and that's what she represents as 'they are saying me'

Table 4.4.16 (ATR 3.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
I, D, Participant and the researcher together D ask I to carry S to the toilet	Daddy, daddy, Isaac told me lie	Am not lying	Reporting	Declaration Imperative	

Isaac having been asked to carry S to the toilet says that she (Punpun) was not telling the truth. This means that she does not mean to defecate. Isaac shows this by not taking her to the toilet, she comes back to report to the daddy that Isaac has refused to take me saying that am telling lies. So what she means is that Isaac said that she was telling lies.

Table 4.4.17 (ATR 4.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
R and S in the sitting room while she points to the photographs on the wall	See my mummy is wearing cap They are 'slapping' my grandfather	See my mummy's graduation picture They also snapped my grandfather	Referential	Showoff	

The first statement is accompanied with pointing which took the researcher's attention to the convocation photographs on the wall. The participant shows up her mum's photograph. The second sentence caused a surprise because the grandfather was not there at the moment. A further questioning revealed that she is talking of another photograph but this time, someone who is late. The photograph she pointed to was on a souvenir calendar used for the man's funeral ceremony, so it is not that the grandfather was around and was being slapped. Rather, it is that they also snapped my grandfather even though he is not her grandfather. Her reason for using grandfather could be because the man was looking older and he was close friend of the grandfather who is still alive.

Table 4.4.18(ATR 4.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
On a normal day relaxation, S comes and calls attention	The window is open (+ pointing) Nono open window.	The window net cover was removed Nono's tooth removed causing a big gap on the teeth ridge	Declarative	Inform or draw attention to	

From the table, it could be seen that the window is not associated with the literal window. But since the first still has something to do with window, the actual thing the child meant is known by her pointing. It is not the same window opened. Instead, Nono opened her mouth as she was laughing and the gap in her teeth was exposed. This is what the participant was calling the researcher's attention to. It could also be seen that Nono's tooth is removed.

Table 4.4.19

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Comes to talk about her nostril	My MAJINA is pushing inside	I want to blow my nose	Statement	Reporting	

Punpun had called "C" attention to help clean the nose as sputum was coming out of it. She however drew in some breath and the sputum went back. This is what she quickly exclaimed that the 'magina' is pushing inside. 'magina' is not a being, and hence, cannot push itself inside. She did not take it that is her breathing in that caused it to go back.

Table 4.4.20 (ATR 1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Participant seeks a paper to write with	Esther did not give me white paper	I need paper to write with	Declarative	Reporting	

The participant is always given a plain sheet of paper to write whenever she wants to scribble some things. She asked Esther but she did not answer and now she comes to report to the researcher. It's not for her to just know but that she does something about it and find her paper to write on. For her it must be white paper as if she cannot use any other kind of paper to write.

Table 4.4.21 (ATR 03.1)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
Punpun just finished having her bath and comes out shouting: while D, M and K were discussing.	My mouth! My mouth (4x)	My mouth, help me I am in pain! My mouth, help me I am in pain!	Exclamatory Exclamatory	Draw attention	

In the first utterance, the shout, "my mouth!" does not mean Punpun bit her mouth or something happened to it. When 'R' asked what happened to your mouth? 'AB' (the nanny) who bathed her explained that she meant how do you see my mouth? That also helped the researcher to remember the discussion prior to her going to bathe. The charge was "go and brush your mouth and bathe as mummy has instructed and when you come out you will eat". That rule must not be broken. So, Punpun was trying to tell R that I have already gone to brush my mouth and also had my bath, am ready to eat now.

The second one also, does not suggest someone in pain, rather it shows Punpun's happiness to see her parents around her and at the same time, they were saying something about her that makes her happy. The exclamation, "mummy, mummy" did not make M nor D to run after her. From her tone, everyone knew she was enjoying herself. From observation, this tended to be Punpun's behaviour, especially when the father is available. Another utterance as the ones above is "I will break my leg!". This statement was made thrice by the Participant and by this she was not implying that she wanted to break her leg. She was rather using this to express her happiness for the slippers that the aunty sent for her. Punpun was shouting this to the hearing of everyone after having been asked by the mother to try the slippers to know if it was her size. Taking the statement on a face value, one will not be able to get the true meaning; but being in the context and knowing what transpired and the facial expression or the mood of the child, all assist in arriving at the actual meaning of the utterance.

Table 4.4.22 (ATR 3.2)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
AR was drinking Maltina which Punpun was interested in and wanted to have a drink/sip	I will sit down here. Because I will not allow Nono to sit down her.	I am sitting where I am and not go any other place The reason is that I don't want Nono to take over the place.	Declarative	Assertive	

Right from the beginning when AR entered the house and was presented with a bottle of Maltina, Punpun had indicated her interest to partake of it and AR had been giving her the opportunity. 'M,' however, came out and Punpun was torn in between the

choice of whether to follow the mother or to stay and see the end of the Maltina. She made the move to go with the morher but 'AR' (her favorite aunty) teased her by saying "the baby is going away, which means I should finish the Maltina". On hearing this, Punpun rushed back and sat on the couch close to the aunty. When R charged her, that it was because of Maltina she was not following the mother, then she made the utterances above. From the context, it could be understood that she wanted more of malt and would not want to miss the action. Nono had nothing to do with it and it was not because of Nono that she was insistent on not moving away from where she was seated but because of MALTINA.

Table 4.4.23 (VTR 01)

Context	Utterance	Meaning	Sentence type	Function	Speech act
'M' asks 'N' to verify what the participant has written. As the recording progressed, S suddenly says: Still in the same setting, as she played	NO, NO, am the one I will tie my mouth, I will tie my mouth. I can cut/caught it, yes; I will caught/cut it.	Owning up that she is responsible and not another. I intend to tie up my mouth with a rope or something. I have the ability to cut something	Declarative Declarative Declarative	Assertive Countering Promising Declaring Intension Declare Ability	

In the first utterance, Punpun practices writing and she was asked to write her name. She did write something and 'N' was asked to look at it and say what she wrote. 'N' said she wrote (1,1,1,1) for which Punpun quickly counters and said "No, No, am the one". That is to say, I did not write "1,1,1,1", I wrote my name; since she

was telling ‘N’ that she wrote her full name: Ramatu, Favour Luka, that was also what she read out to ‘M’ that made her ask ‘N’ to check what ‘S’ had written. For ‘S’, the four ‘1,1,1,1’, means Ramatu Favour Luka.

The second utterance does not mean Punpun intends to take a rope and tie the mouth, which is impossible anyway. The participant made this statement to R to remind her that she would not talk or say anything easily. This is because, right from the outset of the recording, Punpun had been evasive; none could persuade her to talk since she sensed that the focus was on her. The researcher had been using the statement “she will just tie her mouth and refuse to talk”. Punpun then rephrased the statement as if she was promising the researcher that she was not going to open up to say anything.

Lastly, “I can cut/caught it” caused a little confusion except for being present in the context. Punpun was playing with her mates in the course of the recording. She carried a carton (which she called KAYA and basket) on her head shouting “am selling tomatoes”. The ‘KAYA’ happened to be swerving back and forth. As she tried to steady it on her head, she said “I can cut/caught it”. The first ‘cut’ does not fit in here since she was not talking of cutting the basket or KAYA into pieces. The second ‘caught’ is feasible but for the fact that it is in the past tense. We then have to look for the present tense having known from what was going on that she intended saying I can catch it. “Yes, I will caught it” therefore, means yes, I can catch it. This was to reassure herself when she had been able to steady it on her head. Earlier on too, she had tried to carry the same basket but being unable to lift it [or that was what she was acting], she had said “I cannot carry this thing, am tired”. “this basket (carton) cannot come to my head”. It is obvious that ‘the basket’ (carton) cannot climb to her head

hence it is not a living thing. Indeed, she was actually trying to say that the carton was heavy and she was not able to lift it to her head.

4.4 Aspects of Language Use

According to Varga, (2010) pragmatics studies the various aspects of language, it deals with the way language users interpret language in particular situations. Some scholars such as Lobeck and Denham (2009) have also noted that it is possible to participant children's various language use to pragmatic interpretations. In this section, the Participant's language use is examined viz a viz the various aspects of pragmatics such as Deixis, Cooperative Principles, Conversational Implicatures, Presuppositions and Speech Act Theory.

4.4.1 Deitic Expressions

Deixis are words or expressions whose meanings or interpretations cannot be understood outside the context of use. They are words whose meanings can be interpreted only with reference to the speakers' position in space and time (context), (Lobeck and Denham, 2009: 344). Meyer, (2008) also says that deixis is concerned with the ability of words not only to have meaning but to point. The following illustrate some of Punpun's language use that have deictic functions:

Exophoric References or Personal Deixis		Time or Temporal Deixis	
Pronouns	Proper Names	Days	Prepositions
She is upstairs	Fiwajomi, Ronke,	In the morning (2x)	She is in the room
She is in class	Ganja, Alice,	Today	He is in the room
She is in the room	Angela, Akunne	My birthday is today	She is in the palour
She has gone with it in her bag	Shade Brown	Tomorrow	I will see this in the dinning
He put baby sweet in this place	Uncle James	Today they gave me	table
He is in Abuja	Timanyi, Gbenga	Vitamin C	I will put this in your mouth
He is em…		Tomorrow	Is in the room

He will lift me up I will go this place I will watch this one I will give this one her frod My other slippers	Doctor Wura Dickson etc. etc.	November KWO?	

In the case of the pronouns, aside from being a first and second person pronouns referring to a male or female, you will not know who they refer to outside context. Also, the proper names are definite and when used in conversation, one cannot know the actual person except one is in the context or the hearer who shares the same knowledge of the person with the speakers. It was however observed that it is not in all cases that Ramatu used the proper names to show shared knowledge. In the same vein, Frawley, 1992: 282 (cited by Meyer, 2009), points out that, "when considering the particular time frame that temporal deictics mark, it is important to realize that "the principal reference point for temporal deixis is the present, the contextual time at which the utterance occurs'. That is to say that the various times under consideration here is the time at which Punpun uttered these various expressions in question and has nothing to do with speaking in the present what happened in the past.

4.4.2 Spartial Deixis

The spartial use of deictics locates items in various positions relative to the speaker. It could be proximal or distal. The referring items could be demonstratives or adverbials.

Proximal Use	Distal Use
Mummy what is this?	That thing (with pointing)
Who gave you this?	Is in that place
I will go this place	That is the cornflaske I drink (with pointing)
She remove this thing	She is upstairs
I don't like this one, I like this one	You press there (3x)
I will throw this one	This are from here
Take this one to your house	Am not there
I will drink this one	See me here
This one (with pointing)	There is two boy there
This one is your mother	Aunty they bought Fiwajomi here

It is important to note that apart from locating items close or farther from the speaker, distal use also has referential attributes. Nevertheless, Huddleston and pullum (2002: 1505 cited in Meyer, 2008), points out that physical distance from speaker is not always the criterion to use in choice of the demonstrative to use. This is because demonstrative can also refer to properties of such objects or actions taking place or other abstract features of the situations of utterances. An example of what Huddleston and Pullum (2002) is talking about is this: "I hear that one inside" and "Not like that, I don want my fish to fall down". In these cases, the Participant was not pointing nor positioning rather, she was referring to a situation, what the addressee was doing that she was objecting to and the statement made previously.

4.4.3 Definiteness

This involves the use of the articles a, the, in conversations. The use of these items is meant to show that both the speaker and the hearer share knowledge of the same thing or person being referred to.

She is in the room	See it, see it now
He is in the room	It's me that put it
The other slippers	Aunty where is it
She is in the parlour	She has gone with it in her bag
I will cut the other children	Go and look for it
They are for my mummy	Ok, mummy has keep it
The vitamin C is sweet	
The pin is here…	

In the various aspects of deictic expressions pointed out, it is observed that Ramatu used more of 'in' and none of 'on', more of 'this', less of 'that' and none of the plural forms – "these and those". These are the ones appearing first while others will follow later. It was also observed that more of 'here' and 'there' was used, the same thing applies to the definites 'it' and 'the' but it is not always that they follow in consistent with the rule of shared knowledge. Children do assume a lot, that the adults will understand… Nadyanova and Wader (2007) have noted that children do not use the definite 'the' appropriately, they speak as if they have shared knowledge but in actual sense it is not so. All the expressions in the above listed utterances cannot be understood nor the meaning known except by the knowledge of the contexts. Lobeck and Denham conclude that Deixis and definiteness illustrate overlap between Semantics and Pragmatics. They have grammatical meanings but cannot be construed outside context.

4.4.4 Cooperative Principles

This is a principle of conversation in which, according to its proponent (Grice 1989: 29), expects that communicants will make a conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the

talk exchange. In other words, that speakers assume that the hearers can interpret additional meanings based on the context or communicative situation and does not rely on the meanings of the words alone. Macwhinney (2003) has declared that part of acquiring language is acquiring the pragmatics of the language. In addition, it involves learning meanings of words. Carroll (2004) observed that children from the age of two – three years already possess pragmatic skills and can begin to manifest those skills. With the knowledge of this adults can understand and cooperate with children in speech interactions, as the child also expects the adult to cooperate with him/her since they do not fully express their intensions or expectations in full words.

To illustrate Punpun's expectation of the co-interlocutor to cooperate with her as she does with him, a reference is being made to an earlier example in table 4.4.2, where "I" asked the participant what she wanted to become. Punpun had expected I to cooperate with her since he knew how the reason for her wanting "to be a doctor or study their Fiwajomi medicine" came about. This is because 'I' shares certain knowledge with her. Since 'I' refused to recognize her intension or cooperate, she continued to give further relevant explanations/information, such as "Fiwajomi is my friend". She also went ahead to declare that going to the university does not mean she would go there and behave the same way Fiwajomi did. She made this declaration in attempt to expunge "I" s so called fear that she would go and misbehave like Fiwajomi. In the same manner, it was the same kind of expectation she had when she said "my name is Rejoice" which I objected to and for which she threatened that 'I' was no longer her friend. Furthermore, another example is where the researcher asked the participant what she ate:

What did you eat today?	/pancake/
Did you keep for me?	//there is pancake now//

Punpun expects the researcher to understand that her response meant yes, I kept for you (as a play, joke or child talk) even though in the real sense of the utterance, and situation at that time, it meant that pancake still remains if you care to go and make for yourself. It does not mean that she actually kept one for the researcher. By this behaviour, Punpun exhibited and confirms what Tomasello, (1999) cited by Ariel, (2008.5) pointed out: that children's ability to view others as intentional agents is an ability that emerges at nine to twelve months of age and this is prerequisite for language, something which animals do not have.

4.4.5 Conversational Principles

There is no doubt from the fore goings that it is evident that children have conversational skills and the ability to drive their points through to their conversational participants; even if it is at their level, to some extent. According to Wells (1979) cited by Romaine (1984:160), conversation is the most important context for child language development. Conversation is characterized by an interchange between at least two persons who alternate between speaking and hearing. Carroll (2004) emphasized that turn taking is the most fundamental rule of conversation and notes that a child learns this through parent-child interaction… Snow (1977) in Carroll (2004) completes the thought or claim by saying that mothers treat children as active conversational partners by interpreting their burps and other sounds as conversational turns. Carroll's speculation is that between two – three years of age, children are developing both the ability to respond to another's topic of conversation (contingent utterance) and the ability to select their own topic (adjacent utterance). Finally, Carroll (2004: 288-9) believes that two years old children have acquired quite a bit of semantic and syntactic knowledge. However, they do not apply

this knowledge right away in conversations. Rather, children do "fill their slots" by making a comment of some sort, one that is not necessarily related to the previous utterances. Carroll concluded by saying that by three years of age, children have come a long way to integrating linguistic knowledge, and they begin to use their conversational turns in semantically more appropriate ways.

All the above claims were observed in Punpun's speech behaviour. The Participant has acquired discourse skills and can engage in conversations, yet, it is not as mature as that of an adult. She can listen to other's topic of discussion and can raise hers but not as much as older person would do. Punpun has developed in language and cognition and is still developing and at the appropriate time would be able to speak and converse appropriately and meaningfully as Carroll pointed out. Meanwhile, it is only by the help of context that one can fully comprehend child's speeches at this stage.

Discourse Value

The interaction or conversation between two or more people is considered successful because one's actual meaning or intension is properly communicated (meaning is adequately construed) and as a result, the desired response, feedback or result received. Eggins (1994) points out that the fundamental purpose that language has evolved to serve is to enable us make meanings with each other. People or language users do not just interact in order to exchange empty sounds with one another, nor do they gather just to produce words or sentences. The bane of interaction is to make meaning: to make sense of the world and of one another. The purpose of meaning has been described as semiotic and which is obtainable within a particular context. To achieve meaning the people involved must be connected in one relationship or the other (whether formal or informal situation is consequential), the

major concern here would be meaning: do they have a shared code, are they able to understand one another and beyond semantic, do they have a shared knowledge of background information that would aid their understanding viz-a-viz whatever message is being passed across or respond to the needed actions expected (Pragmatics).

Employing the three dimensions of situation: mode, tenor and field of language one can explain the centrality of meaning in every discourse or conversational exchange. Field means the social action involved, what is going on, and in some cases it can be the subject matter. Tenor has to do with the participants in the event and their relationship to each other, considered from the point of view of status and their roles in the event. Mode, refers to the choice of channel whether spoken or written and the role of language in the event. For a child like Punpun, such matters are not highly graduated as she is just developing within her confined environment of the family and has not been in school. Her typical field will normally be playtime, eating, defecating, sleeping. For tenor she could have the parents, elder ones and her peers in the setting. The mode is basically speaking: a face to face interaction. For example,

P. Isaac, you are longer my friend

I. Let it be

P. Isaac, one day my dream will come to pass

I: Yes, your dream will come to pass (reluctantly)

This is participant playing with her only brother and in the course made the above utterance. Isaac did not burg concerning the utterances because he understood what Punpun was trying to say, they share the same knowledge about what she was saying and how it came about. The first was meant to be a threat but none of Punpun's threat

will be off any consequence on Isaac. The second was an information, a reminder to Isaac of the film they had both watched and these determined the kind of response he gave her. He also understood that she meant 'no longer' and not something else. It may not be the same with another person entirely.

4.4.6 Presuppositions

A few of the participant's utterances have been interpreted using the notion of presupposition. Presupposition is a situation of language use wherein language users infer or assume certain propositions based on a particular sentence. It is the assumption that is implied by a word or sentence based on world knowledge. Presupposition is a part of pragmatics in which context rather than semantics is needed to understand speaker's meaning (Lobeck and Denham 2009:327-8).

Here are some utterances taken from ATR 4: 2 12/09/10

//Fiwajomi is my friend//

//Ganja came so that Fiwajomi will become a bad boy//

//Isaac, my name is Rejoice//

//Isaac, you are not my friend//

//Fiwajomi is not a bad boy, Fiwajomi is a good boy//

//Today is my birthday//

Subjectting these statements or propositions to a presuppositional interpretation, the truth values or what the utterances really mean can only be gotten through the help of context.

4.4.7 Speech Act

The instance of speech act however, raises a question in the mind of the researcher. This is because of the fact that, going from all the data interpreted, Speech Act columns have been conspicuously left vacant. Is this the error of the researcher or does it mean that children's utterances have not the speech act forms or effect? That is, does a child's utterance not have the capability of being used to achieve certain things on its pronouncement? If the answer is yes, the only reason might be the fact that the child is still in its infancy stage and may not be able to meet the various requirements for the various performative actions to be carried. That is, even if a child is able to use the various performative verbs, he or she still needs to meet certain requirements by Austin and Searle

The researcher however argues that a child can still do things with words even if it is at his or her own level. Some earlier studies confirm this; for instance, Dore (1975) had stated that children's utterances are realizations of nine primitive speech acts: labeling, repeating, answering, requesting (action), requesting (answer), calling, greeting, protesting and practicing. Earlier before this, Halliday (1973) pointed out six functional categories as descriptive factors interpreting the child's early communicative system. According to Halliday, language is understood as meaning potential, and the meaning potential that they are building is a measure of what they do with language. See also, Keenan and Klein (1975) and Garvey (1975). Further than these, Pham (1989) developed a network of twenty-one functional patterns reflected by three year old bilingual children, among which are: greeting, affirmation, declaration, calling, asking responding, negating, exclaiming, and disagreeing; among others. These are the things children do with words or use language for.

4.4.8 Code – Mixing: A case of Bilingualism

Certain utterances portray the fact that the participant of this study is a bilingual or trilingual child. The issue of bilingualism has been fully discussed in chapter two and here we have the illustrations as follows:

My KITSO is growing	ATR 3.2
I eat TUWO and MIYA KUKA	ART 4.1
This is SENDA	ART 4.2
I saw KITSO	
I will BABU this fish	VTR 1
Am BABUing fish	VTR 1
This is the KITSO you made your hair	D 25/10/10
My MAJINA is coming again	11/10
MAJINA is bringing out	8/10
Aunty see my MAJINA	7/10
See SEKATA	
I am not GURUGU	21/8/10
He is in YAWO	
Shehu, KA NA SHIGA bush	

According to Genesee and Nicoladis (2005/6), code-mixing is ubiquitous among bilinguals; and this is true for both children and adult. Code-mixing is the use of elements from two languages in the same utterance or stretch of conversation. It occurs within an utterance or between utterances. The rate of code-mixing in children is dependent on the form of mixing; that is, whether the mixing is intra versus inter-utterance, the nature of the mixed element(function versus content words), the

language of conversation: the child's less versus the child's more proficient language, and the context(with those who are bilingual versus those who are not).

However, infant bilingual code-mixing overtime has been linked with the child's inability – a sign of incompetence and confusion (Taeschner 1978 cited in Genesee and Nicoladis 2005/6). Researches on child bilingual code-mixing have been focusing on two goal areas in order to determine whether it is rule governed or a sign of confusion. Some school of thought has it that children code-mix because of grammatical incompatibilities. These researchers conclude that child bilingual code-mixing is grammatically constrained because children usually mix their two languages at a point in utterance where the grammar of both languages are concordant (Kopper (in press), Mensal 1994, Sauve and Genesee 2000, Paradis and Nicoladis 2000; Allen, Genesee, Fish and Crago 2002) among others.

Another school of thought working the functional properties of child bilingual code-mixing propose that there are a number of explanations that be attributable to why children code-mix. A first explanation is that it serves to fill gaps in the developing child's lexicon and grammars. In this case, code-mixing will reflect the bilingual child's use of all linguistic resources to express himself when mastering of each language is incomplete. In essence bilingual children mix words from language A when using B because they do not know the appropriate word in B. This school of thought is also of the opinion that children mix more when they use their less proficient than their more proficient languages (Gnenesee and Paradis 1995, Lanvers 2001, Genesee, Paradis and Wolf 1995, Nicoladis and Secco 2000; and others). To the researcher, this is a more plausible reason for bilingual child code-mixing. The Participant under study was found to have followed this pattern most of the time: grammatical gap filling, that is, often mixed function words and inflectional

morphemes from her more proficient language with content words from her less proficient… The use of syntactic pattern from her strongest language to bootstrap into the grammar of her less proficient language. Thus agreeing with earlier studies in Bilingual First Language Acquisition that both lexical and morpho-syntactic mixing attest to the growing child's ability to access and use creatively the lexical and morpho-syntactic resources of both languages during language production.

4.5 Evidences of Telegraphic Speech

I fall down	He bring for me…
Push, she push me	My daddy have gone to Abuja
One boy leg	Is me that enter this place
He go to Abuja	My mummy have travel
He go today	Is for me
I will go to marry you	because is looking for my trouble
After they have finish KWO,	You see BAH, Fiwajomi, he burn his hand
Two boy is…there is two boy	It was hot then I blow it KWO, it burn me

From the above listed examples and others which have been used for illustrations elsewhere in the work, it can be seen that the Participant's utterances confirm to most of the features of the telegraphic speech as examined in chapter two.

Yet the utterances do not totally conform to the traditional notions of telegraphic speech; for instance, the utterances are not just formed by 2 and 3 words alone consisting only of content words, lacking function words and inflections. There are also longer strings of utterances laden with lots of function words. This is suggestive of the fact/point that a child, depending on the environment, in this present

dispensation, has the capability to go beyond the statusquo-earlier scholarly findings stated on the various language acquisition stages.

The argument being that language studies in this present time cannot continue to completely maintain the same ground or stand or have the same manifestations as it was in the nineteen hundreds. Globalisation, technological advancements and availability of electronic gadgets to various homes, most especially in the urban areas; they rub off on virtually everything and language acquisition cannot be left out. Aside from these, a lot of other reasons can adduce for the deviations: The environment for instance, by this we mean the setting, the immediate environment which is the home and the external socialization or interaction with the others in the environment of the child; the background and status of the parents of the child; the position of the said child in the family and the child as an individual – that is, his traits and disposition even at that age or period of development. All these can be brought to bear as a response for any argument that could be raised against what could be termed unusual features of a particular language development stage.

Moreover, language can be said to be mutable but only in its capacity as a single means of communication for any particular set of people. BUT, the modes of usages cannot also be said to be fixed because language itself is dynamic. Therefore, it would not be erroneous to say in this generation that the methods, modes, levels, or times of acquisition: rapidity and usages-quality of acquisition; even though as a child would differ significantly from what it used to be.

4.6 Speech Mannerisms

Majority of the participant's utterances tended to be in the future: the actions she was already taking; in many cases were put as if she was intending to do them. Some of them she would have also concluded. Such utterances include:

I will finish your mango	=	I have finished your mango
I will off this one	=	Let me put off the stabilizer
This is what I will do	=	See what am doing
Isaac I will warn you	=	Isaac, I am warning you
He will not give me my net	=	He has refused to give me the net
I will go to marry you	=	I am going to marry you
I /ah/ eating it	=	I want to eat it, etc.

Secondly, when the Participant was asked questions using the present tense, she would start her response using that tense but if she was speaking on her own would use the correct tense. For instance:

She tell me	She told me
He tell me	He told me
He buy for me	He bought me
I give you	I gave you
I eat fish	I ate fish
I keep for you	I kept for you
He buy for me plantain chips	He bought me plantain chips
I hear that one there	I heard that one there
I didn't ate it	I didn't eat it etc.

This cannot be unconnected with the fact that she is acquiring the English language, a second language, as a first language. It could be evidenced from the first instances

above that Hausa language has to some extent influenced Punpun's speeches, particularly in English. She literally translated the Hausa method of speaking into English and used them most of the times. This has a lot of serious implication for the child as well as the language teacher by the time she gets to school. For Punpun, she would think, speak and may be write in that manner, but it would also take the teacher to put her right.

In the second instance, it may be a bit difficult to adduce reason/s for adopting responses in the present tense but we can also hazard one or two reasons on the ground that, her mental lexicon was not mature enough to retrieve the needed past tense form of the words in question. It could also be connected to the child's inability to use the inflected forms of the words (as already pointed out in features of telegraphic speech) that gave rise to the past tense form.

Adults' knowledge of grammatical expressions and context help to understand what a child is saying.

I will go to marry you	=	I am going to marry you
I will married	=	I will be married/I will marry
You are a lie	=	you are a liar
My teacher is longer my friend	=	my teacher is no longer my friend.

4.7. The Hows

From the fore goings, it is clear that context has been the main indices to understanding Punpun's utterances and the meanings thereof. It is also pertinent to point out here other variables (steps taken in the course of discussion, or question and answers with the Participant) which led to the final outcome of the meaning or interpretations of her utterances:

Asking further questions from Punpun for her to give further light into what she said, if possible.

Asking others who knows or understands her better (especially M, AB and siblings) for further or better explanations.

Doing a thinking back to see if you could connect what is being said with whatever had taken place in the past that could be remembered.

Inferring, but not in a vacuum; it has to be from what is already known.

Saying something in the course of conversation and if it was what the child had in mind she would concur but if not would disagree and give the right information.

The last and the main pointer, following the context of the utterance: both the linguistic and the non-linguistic context. All these, as well as a general understanding of her environment – daily routines and other facilities available to her all combine to give rise to the meanings derivable of Punpun's language use.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This current chapter delivers the summary of the major findings or discoveries made in the course of this study. It also presents the conclusions arrived at based on the outcome of the interpretations from the preceding chapter, and finally proffers some recommendations with regard to the area for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

It was discovered that the participant of this study spoke in general terms; even though she had a topic of discussion she did not and could not sustain such topic for long; she rather jumped from one topic to the other at a time. It was only by relying on context and a fore knowledge of the child's speech mannerisms and behavior that help one understand what the child was saying or meant at a given time. This could probably be phenomenal or the general behavior of other children. The implication is that at whatever time a child has a message to pass across and must not be ignored or neglected but must be listened to.

The child of this study was found to have exhibited a characteristic that want you to know what she has known and as a result, would go on talking to let you know. She wants you to hear her and at that time, your opinion seems not to count except she exhausts what she had to say. This is a case of egocentrism as pointed out by Piaget (1978). This could also be characteristic to other children and as a result it is pertinent that parents give attention to the child in order to help prepare the child in acquiring his language properly.

Pumpum was also found to have spoken about the here and now, from the known to the unknown. It was what experiences she had or that surrounded her at the period of language development that characterized her speeches and afterwards may not go back to such cases again. It is like a phase and when such phase is passed and another entered into, the former seems to be forgotten or ceases to be. Clark and Clark (1977:322) had alluded to this when she said that children are known to talk about the here and now such that reference is usually made to what they see and or do.

The role of context is greatly indispensable for the understanding of the Participant's speech, intension or the actual meaning she attaches to a particular utterance; as a result, semantics cannot go alone but must be complemented by pragmatics for effective communication to take place.

Semantics and pragmatics are both meaning making components/levels of linguistic analysis but the interpretation derivable of each differs. One is based on explicit interpretation – by the use of rule-governed conventionally coded structures while the other is implicit - based on context, inferences, viz a viz the social environment of the child. In essence, semantic and pragmatic interpretations of the child utterances differ but also have a relationship sometimes overlap and have a meeting point.

Code mixing and switching is a basic feature of any bilingual individual. The Participant of this study was observed to have code-mixed for social as well as cognitive reasons. This tally with Genesee and Nicoladis, (2006) "children are sensitive to the social and interactional features of context…and if they are bilinguals, they switch language for social purposes".

Also, Punpun's code mixing and switching was found not to be as a result of mental imbalance/incapability (a sign of incompetence and confusion) but a case of

the growing child's ability to access and use creatively the resources from both languages.

A child is capable of acquiring the languages available to him/her in the environment or is exposed to even if they are to be disparately used for various reasons. Punpun was exposed to a wide range of languages: Kurama, Hausa, English and Pidgin languages but English was the dominant language, followed by Hausa and then Pidgin and Kurama. The question is why this kind of acquisition? The researcher had expected to see some extent of competence in Kurama language. Could this be the level use by the parents and the family in general, or is it a mark the child's interest or individual indifference? It was found to be a case of the child's interest. Punpun was always found to communicate with people in English even when responding to questions which have been asked in either Hausa or Kurama languages.

Punpun's case could have been given rise to for the fact that most of the people who come to the family are educated and use English, her peers or playmates are all in schools and from differing tribes and so, English is the central means of interaction. More so, she was greatly exposed to the Tele media and none of the programmes, home videos, international films were in Kurama language but English language. Hers could not be a case of unconscious development for she was fully aware of the choices she had since these languages were always in use in the family. It is a matter of preference since she could have found English easier and felt comfortable with it.

The English language is being acquired as first language by various Nigerian children because of the multilingual nature of our environment and as a result it may not follow that it must be the native language of the parents alone that can be acquired as a first language. Punpun, as an example, has Kurama as the mother and father

tongue and Hausa, which is the second most used language in the family, but English was and is still her most preferred means of communication. As has been pointed out in the preceding paragraphs, the contributing factors for her include: the television media and the films she was exposed to, the environment and her peer group. Romaine (1984:159-160) argues vehemently that language is transmitted and acquired through culture-specific socialization and interaction with others in various contexts which suggests that other avenues of interaction available to a child could affect or determine the language he acquires.

In present time it is a child has the tendency to acquire his language faster and use more matured expressions different from the stage of language development he or she is into compared to what obtained in the past. A lot of reasons abound for such occurrences: the environment of the child, the home, technology, the electronic media, and the educational background. All these and more are believed to have aided and contributed to whatever feat Punpun has achieved in her acquisition of the English as her first language.

It is possible for a child to grow up with a particular speech mannerism but such could be dropped as the child matures mentally and otherwise.

Just like an adult, a child does a lot of things with words: language plays a lot of roles or functions for children. Such things as expressing intensions, exercising control, reporting events, imitating others, promising, countering, asserting, drawing attention, giving information, showing off, announcing, expressing opinion, deceiving, showing optimism, nursing ambition, creating future, laying emphasis, warning, consoling, comforting, threaten, among a host of other functions.

People can actually understand children's speeches by asking further questions, asking those who know the child better or are closer to him or her. Also, by

going back in time-connecting things in the past that had taken place; making inferences, saying things in the course of interaction that could lead to what the child intends to say and, following the context of utterance, both linguistic and non linguistic utterance. For instance, Punpun's pointing and pulling toward the object and demonstrations most times, (including cries) gave her listener or caregiver a clue to what she was trying to communicate at various points.

A child has both communicative and conversational skills and that is why they are able to engage in interactions with others-both adults and peers though theirs may not be as matured as the adults. Conversation-like behaviours according Romaine (1984:160) begins with the pre-linguistic infants

Some other factors in the environment does influence and facilitate a child' acquisition and development of language: Television, books, pictures, rhymes and songs; as well as being in the midst of others. For instance, Punpun is in the midst of three sisters and a brother, who are all in schools at various levels. Punpun could be said to have been exposed to and developed the situation described by Heath (1983) cited in Romaine (1984) as "pre-school literacy skills" even though not in the same way as the Roadville child.

5.2 Conclusion

This study was carried out with four objectives: firstly, to collect data made up of utterances from a bi/trilingual Nigerian pre-school girl-child in an academic setting (ABU, Zaria). The data were collected for six months (between June and November, 2010) when the child was 31 months old and ended on the 36th month. The three media technique was employed for the collection of data (7 video and 12 audio tape recording sessions), which was complemented by a handwritten diary records.

The second objective was to ascertain the role of context in a child's use of language. The study observed that context is unquantifiably needful in understanding a child's utterances as it serves as an aid or supportive instrument to give a proper, complete understanding to the intended meaning of an utterance/s which ordinarily could not be gotten with the spoken words. Although researchers differ in their opinions on the importance of social environment as a part of child's development from nursery to the classroom, yet it is the conclusion of this study that the social environment is very relevant a factor for language development. It also believes in totality that social context plays a very essential role in first language acquisition: essentially, language is a process of differentiable developmental levels, which hinge on both internal and external factors as it regards language and thought. Language acquisition and development, in the same vein, is a process of learning through communication and interaction between children and adults with the assistance of a more matured person or capable peer. Interaction with people is an important part of a child's maturation and all these take place in the child's particular setting which is his environment.

Thirdly, the study was also to interpret the elicited utterances to identify the pragmatics interpretations derivable of a child's language at the telegraphic stage. The instances of language use by the Participant was neither wholly grammatical nor wholly pragmatics. Issuing from the various nomenclatures used in chapter two under semantics and pragmatics, semantics is grammatical meaning, codes, word meaning or lexical meanings, or a sentence meaning. This has a different meaning or interpretation from pragmatic meaning or interpretation. Pragmatics is inferential, meaning derived from intensions and interactions in specific contexts, utterance meaning, which must of course go with the context. The Participant's speech

behaviour or language use was found to be in consonance with these two levels of meaning. Words alone were not enough to decode the child's utterance or intended/actual meanings but many other factors had to be put into consideration. Conversations are not decoded only on words meaning but had to draw upon the larger context by which the conversation took place. For, there is the need to understand the social context in which a sentence was uttered. Deixis for instance, combines grammatical aspects with pragmatics aspects (that is pinning down who the speaker is, what 'this' denotes, the place or the time particularly is). Based on the fore goings, the study concurs with the fact that words/grammar usually falls short of meeting our communicative needs. This brings to limelight or justifies the need for Pragmatics. It comes and enriches encoded messages with plausible inferred interpretations. Pragmatics and semantics must go together for effective communication.

Telegraphic speech is the kind of utterances that a child within the telegraphic stage of language development produces, it is a meta language/concept that has been used as a yard stick in interpreting the Participant's utterances. The word 'Telegraphic Speech' is not to be taken at its face value. As has been discussed in chapter two, though children's utterances are described as telegraphic, it was observed that the Participant did not deliberately leave out function words as an adult sending a telegram would. Rather, the sentences reflect the child's grammar at that particular stage of language development. It was further observed that certain functions words were omitted while some were used as against the backdrop that children's utterances are totally devoid of function words. In the same vein, the issue of using two, three, four words to mark telegraphic speech is not tenable at all hence children being aided by electronic gadgets, and highly educational environment can

put forth their intensions or desires in more than one or two strings of sentences at a time in such a time as we are today. It could be said that Punpun's innate propensity to acquire language, the unconscious knowledge of language – her linguistic competence was highly alert and heightened by the caliber of people she has contact with in her environment which manifests itself in the kind of utterances she uses.

Further than this, many observers or contributors may argue over some of the utterances that came from the participant of this study but it can be reiterated here, some of the peculiarities which could have given rise to such verbalizations: the first point to note is that most of such utterances are copied and replicated as if it's the original words of the child; making it worse is the fact the child brings it in in an 'appropriate context'. Secondly, telegraphic speech sets in from about 18^{th} or 24^{th} month and expects to be completed by the 36^{th} months of a child's life; this study started from the 30^{th} month which shows that she had gone to some extent in her telegraphic period and as a result it's possible for such utterance to come from her. Punpun is the fifth and last child who is in the midst of three girls and a boy who are in different levels in schools. She has a stable home economic well being, conducive home learning atmosphere with good upbringing; lives in the quarters where you have the same kind of caliber of people – educationally.

The parents' educational background and social status are high. She is also greatly exposed to interactions both within and outside the home. It is also good to note the fact that the participant for this study is a girl-child and linguistic scholars agree to the fact that female genders have more speech proficiency than their male counterparts. Punpun could be seen as presenting this trait in her language development. One more point worthy of consideration is that of the unique nature of the child in question, Punpun was not yet in school yet, her tabular rasa was working,

the company she kept was not contaminated; no violence in her use of words, without the parents' consciousness she was picking the right things (an example is where she used "Isaac you are a child of God" and what that meant to her). She could be considered an intelligent, wise, understanding and knowledgeable child not necessarily because she has been to school. By intelligence is meant the natural tendency that emanates from the child not because she was told, exposed to school or orientation but by general observation of things. Understanding speaks of the child's ability to assimilate and retain, to hear something and keep it till the day of use, either orally or by audio visual and keep it till when required. Her knowledge is defined by her ability to recall while wisdom is her ability to act right or use the right words in the right context, the ability to act or give the information she has as required; that is, putting round peg in the round hole. These 'terms'(wisdom, knowledge and understanding-WKU- as used by the researcher) have been found to be true of Punpun from her use of various utterances of which some have been interpreted. These points might look trivia to some but studies in neuroscience advocates that a balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive, and language development will best prepare all children for success…. stress in early childhood caused by poverty, abuse and depression affect the brain and deter healthy development. Cognitive, emotional and social capacities are intertwined and interrelated organs which provide strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities and the bricks and mortar that constitute the foundation of human development (www.developingchild.harvard.edu.)

Lastly, this study examined the differences that exist between semantic and pragmatic interpretation of a child's language. The outcome of the investigation shows that the difference lies in the kind of meanings derivable of the child's utterances. Semantics, for instance is "the said", word meaning- meaning according to

the individual words in the sentence. It is the literal meanings of each of the words put together. The study subscribes to other works which observed that semantics is explicit, truth conditionally relevant and uncancellable. While on the other hand, pragmatics is "the unsaid", (Levinson, 2006) inference meaning, meaning not based on words of the utterances alone but in reliance with the context of the situation on which the utterances were made. It also involves a fore or shared knowledge of the background of the speaker and her environment. Pragmatic meaning is implicit, truth conditionally irrelevant and cancellable. It then means that the hearer's competence comes into play here, that is, his ability to interpret what the child is saying. Inference plays differing roles in interpreting discourse. It serves as background assumptions that interlocutors need to make in order to participate in conversation. The assumption the speaker expects the addresses need to rely on while interpreting the utterances. An understanding of these helps in no immense way in understanding or interpreting a child's utterances. In addition, the code inference distinction is both psychological real as it is discourse real, (Ariel, 2009:1). In essence, grammatical meaning must aid non linguistic variables for proper communication to take place.

In summation, the study shares the views of Meyer, (1986) and Pham, (1989) that the dimensions of (semantics, syntax and pragmatics) of language or speech cannot be isolated because functions and contexts cannot be significantly defined and described apart from both semantic and syntactical constituents. Even though syntax was not particularly delved into in this study, by implication, it does not also preclude syntax for we speak in syntactical order. That is to say, our speeches, words are organized in long grammatical constructions- the syntactical constituent. Pragmatics plays an important role in child language research. This is because it approaches an individual's system of speech as semantic in nature and social in origin. For the

children or a child, the system can be described as a speech act system between the child and those around him, through which he is able to develop semantically (and pragmatically too) in relation to his environment. Fernandez, (2011), a psycholinguist has said, "When people use language to communicate and interact with others, they are completely unaware of the linguistic system they are summoning to do so – to a certain extent. Linguistic competence constitutes knowledge of language, but that knowledge is tacit, implicit. This means that people do not have conscious access to the principles and rules that govern the combination of sounds, words, and sentences, however they do recognise when those rules and principles have been violated… it is also a powerful demonstration of the psychological reality of grammar". It is in the use of language that one shows his knowledge of the language: the grammar and how to speak and or respond at various contexts.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study is a first study on pragmatics within the Nigerian environment (per say) and ABU in particular. It is the most virgin area for research in Pedolinguistics. This study as a first attempt has probed into how or the ways adults go about interpreting and understanding a child's speech. On the other hand, other studies should seek to unravel how children understand adult's speech. That is to say how children acquire pragmatic competence and their level of use of it in interactions with co-interlocutors.

Since child language study is interactional in nature, it is possible to subject the data to Sociolinguistic, discourse analysis; most especially conversational analysis, other scholars can attempt this.

On the aspect of English language being acquired as a first language in Nigeria, English has and will still be acquired as a first language by several Nigerian children. A child acquiring English language as his first means of communication grows up with whatever form available to him in his environment. There is the need to educate school children to know the difference between the standard and the local forms of the English language and their differing usages. Many children enter school with whatever 'variety' they have which is further complicated by mother tongue interference and cross linguistic transfers. It is with such that pupils approach English language examinations and class works and consequently the kind of performance or results obtained.

Both federal and state government, Private Sectors, educational stakeholders, parents and teachers should brazen up(concerted effort should be made) to ensure that the approved standard for education is what every child receives, what is being used from primary to the tertiary level; in addition, also ensure that qualified teachers teach the standard form of the language from the primary (which is the elementary or foundational level for every Nigerian children), and through the secondary to the tertiary institutions.

It is also imperative for educators, policy makers and stakeholders in the ministry of education as well as teacher, to better appreciate the place of the English language in Nigeria and take appropriated actions toward the better teaching of the language as a major subject in our various institutions.

Though Psycholinguistics is a very demanding field to research into in terms of the time, resources and energy needed to go through it, yet this study strongly recommends that both Masters and PhD candidates alike should research into the area for the benefits derivable from it and in order to bridge the wide gap existing therein

as a result of ignorance and students' disinterest in it. Child language studies in Nigeria should rather be attempted and not dreaded.

This study also recommends and encourages other researcher to pursue studies on preschool age children, first language acquisition and bi/tri/multilingual child as these aspects could be more revealing than the monolingual, second language and school age studies.

5.4 Contributions

This work is a contribution to the existing knowledge in psycholinguistic study and particularly pragmatic study of the child's language use especially in terms of interpretation of the telegraphic speech of the child.

This work is also a contribution to the exiting literature in psycholinguistic studies with the hope that it will serve as a material for further critique or research.

It has also contributed in examining trilingual child which is not usual in psycholinguistics study here in Nigeria – How English has over ridden Kurama language.

The study also makes a contribution to the application of linguistic theories to language teaching. It can serve as language method to be used to improve acquisitions; particularly can be use as a study model by teachers.

It also makes contribution to the age range (the stage studied) in the sense that some particular vocabulary as have been discussed from the child will add to existing literatures of psycholinguistics, if the child could observe such and use it, she is already coming up with something new. As a teacher you need to know the peculiar acquisition situations and backgrounds of children; being current or acquainted with

their social activities, the teacher needs to be versatile in order to understand certain language use by children and be able to help them where and when necessary.

The study also contributes to the first language acquisition and preschool aged child studies in Nigeria with the hope that it will increase or heighten the degree of the level of participation in this area of psycholinguistics.

It makes a contribution in the area of language endangerment; it is hoped that the study will be a challenge to stimulate and encourage native speakers of Kurama language to have a second thought of imparting the knowledge of their language to their young ones. For the native speakers of Kurama language to engage virile measures towards imparting the knowledge of the language to their young generation to avoid any risk of endangerment.

This study is also a contribution to the growing literatures of all endangered languages all over the globe. For instance, forces, especially that of Hausa language, despite the spread of Kurama to other states like Kano, Katsina, would be endangered by Hausa which is a first predominant language in those areas and then by extension, the English language.

It also contributes to the lists of endangered languages in Nigeria. Though there are pockets of Kurama speakers across other states, the Hausa language which is predominantly spoken in those areas have greatly influenced it and by extension, English language, which poses a great threat to Kurama language's 'progress'

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APPENDIX

1. Esther did not give me white paper	ATR2
2. I want to write	‘’
3. Auntyn baby has wake up	‘’
4. Am not kipunika girl	‘’
5. I will break my leg 3X	‘’
6. They put fiwajomi so that he will make his kolashi	ATR3.1
7. There is pan cake now	‘’
8. I will bring chicken so that I will cut it	‘’
9. I will cut the other one	‘’
10. My mouth	‘’
11. Aunty see biro (small liger battery)	‘’
12. Ojuju is inside	‘’
13. My hair is ugly	‘’
14. Pastor ben masobie	‘’
15. Joshua is inside that room	ART3.2
16. They are saying me	‘’
17. Mummy, fiwajomi make his kolashi	‘’
18. Mummy, uncle james will wear fiwajomi cloth	‘’
19. They gave me injection I mess	‘’
20. Is doctor that did for me injection	‘’
21. Isaac, you are a bad girl	‘’
22. I want to put this owo	‘’
23. Because my body is tight	‘’
24. Iskaac, you are a child God	ATR4.1
25. It er name is Rejoice	‘’
26. I will not do something for you again	‘’
27. Isaac you are not my friend	‘’
28. My memory verse is eating tuwo	‘’
29. Nono, you will not come inside	‘’
30. It would go round in Jesus name	ART4.2
31. I keep for you	‘’
32. Look at my mummy is wearing cap	‘’
33. They are slapping my grand father	‘’
34. Pastor saje is angry	‘’
35. Look at what you are playing	‘’
36. I tie my towel [blanket]	VTR-01
37. I will babu this fish	VTR-01
38. Its on the table	‘’
39. Am bubuing fish	‘’

40. I will go and show another one	‘’
41. This basket don’t want to come to my head	‘’
42. Kaya fall down	‘’
43. See two parents	‘’
44. This chair, table, leg	‘’
45. She is doing lilo	‘’
46. He made his kolashi	VTR-05
47. God forbid bad thing	‘’
48. Because their ganja alow fiwajomi to do bad, bad thing	‘’
49. Sit down 4X	VTR-06
50. I will not give you 2X	‘’
51. She has scatter it again	‘’
52. Not like that, I don’t want my fish to fall down	‘’
53. Is me that is holding shade brown	VTR-07
54. I will tell my mummy to buy for you	‘’
55. I am going to make for him cake	‘’
56. Because he is my husband	‘’
57. I will swallow my husband	‘’
58. He is not a bad boy	‘’
59. Am putting them in place	‘’
60. Its coming out now	VTR-03
61. Chicken republic	VTR-04
62. This thing	VTR-03
63. I tell him we are ready	VTR-04
64. This issue is personal	VTR-03
65. I will go inside	VTR-04
66. Daddy do you know this one	‘’
67. Mummy we have look for it	‘’
68. Come and see daddy here	‘’