# MORPHOSYNTACTIC ABILITIES IN CHILD WITH INTELECTUAL DISABILITIES: A CASE STUDY

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | This research is a case study on the ability of children with intellectual disabilities in morphosyntax abilities. It is well-known that the language skills of children with intellectual disabilities do not compare with those of other normal children, where they will have language delays and even language disorders. The subject of this study was KH, a 12-year-old child with mild intellectual disability, before doing speech therapy was only able to say one or two words. After 30 speech therapy sessions, the researcher wanted to know the morphological ability in the use of affixes when speaking and the syntax abilities in the use of phrases and the use of sentence types. The methods used in collecting data were observation and interview. Researchers also used fishing techniques with flashcards and were asked to tell the daily activities of KH. The results of this study show that after 30 times of speech therapy, KH is able to use affixation and is able to use simple sentences and complex sentences when communicating. |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

God gives different cognitive ability and mental ability for every child. There are some children who has a high level of cognitive abilities and mental abilities, there are also children who has a low level of cognitive abilities and mental abilities. The situation is called intellectual disability or also called "tunagrahita" (in Indonesian) or mental retardation.

In Ar-Rasily ang Dewi (2016) intellectual disability is a condition where is someone has a lack of intelligence since born and followed by a general lack of mental development such a social adaptive skill, practice, and conceptual. According to Matos et al (2015) intellectually disability child has a cognitive limitation, so it can cause the child have a trouble in communicating, reading, writing, and concentration during study process.

When every people communicating, they use a language, even children with intelletctual disabilities also use it. But the language is not good like other children. So, every child with intellectual disabilities has language disorders because that children unable to receive language

stimulus properly. Children with intellectual disabilities can't process language reception, both in the mechanism of speaking, thinking, and processing language in to words or sentences.

Estimated prevalence of intellectual disabilities in Indonesia is 0,3-0,4%. The highest of cases on age 10-14 years old. Cases of intellectual disabilities in boys 1,5 higher than girls. While in elderly people with intellectual disabilities of the *severe* type have a lowet prevalence (Faradz, 2009).

This research uses a child with intellectual disabilities who are aged 10 years old with name KH (initial). When the data research is collected, KH have done 30 speech therapy sessions in one of hospital in Yogyakarta since refereed from children psychology. KH has a mild intellectual disability, known before doing speech therapy, KH able to use one word and sometimes already able to use two words when speaking. In this research wanted to know the ability of morphology in the use of affixes when speaking and the ability of syntax in use phrase and use sentence after doing 30 speech therapy sessions and accompanied by home exercises carried out by parents according to the direction of a speech therapist on these abilities.

On research was doing by Mulyono et al (2018) with 'Information Structure of the Utterances Spoken by Children with Mental Retardation: Case Study on Ansyah' generate that the function of the subject's utterance is a topic of pragmatic realtions and when it using it the topic of the sentence is often lost. In 'Syntatic Simplicity in Dyslexic Children's Utterances' by Mulyono et al (2017) found that children with dyslexia can produce short sentences and realizing the use of short sentences and can determine the use of task word and word order which is not maximal.

In Rafiqa et al (2019) 'Mean Length Evaluation of Utterance (MLU) and Syntatic Complexity of Children with and Without Language Disorders' talk about comparison of children's language abilities with language disorders and children's without language disorders. In Nurharyani & Bivit (2020) 'The Language Acquisition of a Child with Mental Retardation (A Pscholinguitic Study)' discussed that there was a delay in language acquisition in children's with mental reterdation.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Morphology

In linguistics, morphology is a sub-science that explains about word forms and word formation (Chaer, 2015). Ramlan (2009) said that morphology is the part of linguistic that learn about word forms and the influence of word changes on word meanings.

The object of morphological study is a word. Words are formed from smaller units, that named is morpheme. A morpheme is the smallest grammatical that has a meaning, it can be a basic from or it can be a affixes form (Shinta, 2012). Shinta also explained that the different of basic forms is can form words and have a lexical meaning, but affixes can't form words and just cause the grammatical meaning of a sentence to occur.

Shinta (2012) also explained that morpheme is the smallest unit from language and can't share to be a smaller again, consists of a seires of phonemes, and form a certain structure and grammatical. Morpheme are divided into 2 types is free morphemes and bound morphemes. Keraf (1987) explained that free morphemes can be directly form sentences or can stand alone, but, the bound morphemes must always be together with another morpheme, so it can't to make a sentence. In a line with Chaer (2008) said that free morpheme can also called root morpheme is morpheme that can be a basic for formation word, the example is 'rumah', 'mobil', 'duduk', 'jalan'. Chaer also explained that bound morpheme is a morpheme that must be joined with another morpheme, so that can be used for communicating, the example is form affix *di-, me-, ter-, -el, -kan,* etc.

Dhanawaty et al (2017) explained that one of the most process morphology is affixation which is the process of adding affixes to a basic morpheme by adding basic elements, affixes, and the resulting of grammatical meaning. Affixes divided in to 3 types based on where it is attached to the basic shape, 1) prefix, is affixes that place at the beginning of the basic form, the example is *me-* on word 'hibur' become 'menghibur', *di-* on word 'buat' become 'dibuat', *ke-* on word 'tua' become 'ketua', *ter-* on word 'lambat' become 'terlambat'. 2) Prefixes can also appear in the words that have another affixs, the example is words with endings *-kan* on word 'berdasarkan' from word 'dasar'. Infix, is affixes was added in the middle of the basic shape, the example is *-el* on word 'telunjuk' from 'tunjuk', *-er* on word 'seruling' from 'suling', and *-em* on word 'jemari' from 'jari'. 3) Suffix is affixes added in the end of words, the example is *-an* from 'bagi' become

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'bagian', *-kan* from 'bagai' become 'bagaikan', *-i* from 'aku' become 'akui'. 4) Confix is two affixes that are on beginning and ending of the words. The example is *per-/-an* on qord 'tanding' become 'pertandingan', *ke-/-an* on word 'terang' become 'keterangan', *ber-/-an* on word 'cium' become 'berciuman'. 5) Circumfix is combination of non-confidential affixes, the example is *ber-/-an* on word 'beraturan' from 'atur' which mean order.

## 2.2 Syntax

Syntax is the arrangement or order of words, determined by both the writer's style and grammar rules. Ramlan (2009) also said that syntax is the part of linguistics that explaines about discourse, sentences, clause, and phrase. According to Carnie (2007) said that syntax is the study of words and the meaning of utterances. Manaf (2009) said that syntax is about internal structure from sentences.

The object from syntax is the internal structure sentences, that is phrase, clause, and sentence. Phrase is combined from two words or more that has non-predicative or called a combination of words that fill of the syntactic function in a sentence (Chaer 2003). Phrase doesn't have a predicate, example is 'rumah kecil, 'anjing cokelat saya', 'kakak sakit'. Dhanawaty et al (2007) said that clause is a grammatical unit consisting of a predicate (Pred), subject (Subj), object (Obj), Complement (Pel), Information (K). In line with Aeni (2018) that also explained clause as a construction, there are several words that have a functional relationship, in grammar is known with suject, predicate, object, and information. At least one clause is consist of one predicate and may be followed by subject, object, complementary, and information.

Sentence is a grammatical unit that is limited by a long pause accompanied by ups and down in the final tone (Ramlam 2009). Kuncaraningsih said that sentence is the part of speech that have a minimal structure is subject and predicate that mean to show the part of speech that is already equipped with meaning. In a line with the meaning of sentence on Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) which mean that a unit of speech that expresses a concept of thought or feeling and consists of several elements, such as subject, object, predicate, complementary, and information.
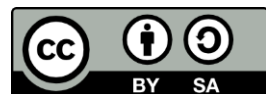
## 2.3 Intellectual Disability

According to American Psyiatric Association (2013) states that there is a decrease in adaptive that occurs in the domain function conceptual, social, practical before 18 years old, so intellectual disabilities can be detected at the age of children. Kemenpppa (2013) said that children with intellectual disabilities is the children who have levels intelligence under the average with other children, significantly accompanied an inability to adapt to developmental behavior.

Insani et al (2021) explained that children with intellectual disabilities have an own obstacle when doing an activity because the limits of intelligence and incompetent on interaction skills. Munzayanah (2000) explained that the reason of intellectual disabilities divided into two groups, 1) Biomedical, covers occur because prenatal, natal, dan postnatal. 2) psychology or environment, and in Moeschler & Shevell (2006) the reason of intellectual disabilities on children is not always because of genetic disorder, but also affected by infection, trauma, complications, prematurity, and environmental exposure to chemical.

Geonifam (2010) divided children with intellectual disorders become 3 group: 1) mild intellectual disabilities children (able to educate) with IQ 50/55-70/75, 2) moderate intellectual disabilities children (able to train) with IQ 20/25-50/55, and 3) children with severe intellectual disabilities (capable of nursing) with IQ 0-20/25. According to Manual of Mental Disorder 5th edition was described by Barnard et al (2014) about predictors of acces to sex education for children with intellectual disabilities in public schools divided children with intellectual disabilities into 4 according to the severity, 1) mild with IQ rane 50-70, 2) moderate with IQ range 40-55, 3) severe with IQ range 25-40, and 4) profound with IQ range under 25.

Children with intellectual disabilies will run into some problems on the environment both in the school, with friends, or in the community groups. In Anidi & Anlianna (2022) explained that the problems cover in 2 main things, first, when children with intellectual disabilities being in a groups or friends will be considered the child has a problem where a child with intellectual disabilities can't distinguish between right or wrong behavior. Second, with theory multiple intelligence a group will be considered children with intellectual disabilities has a intrapersonal and personal intelligence which can function optimally, whereas linguistic intelligence and kinesthetic intelligence late or undeveloped according to normal children. According in the

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research of Insani et al (2021) produce abot problems that arise in children with intellectual disabilitiy is anxiety, fear, nervous, and worry.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This research has the form of a case study because the researcher wants to know the language skills of the research subject, KH (with initials) with intellectual disability at the level of morphology and syntax abilities after 30 speech therapy sessions.

This research was made in a qualitative descriptive form using the case study method by utterances data from KH. Data collection methods used observation and interviews to see KH's language skills at the morphology and syntax levels. This research also used the speaking method with fishing techniques by asking KH to tell about activities on flashcards or asking him to tell about his daily activities. Researchers interviewed KH's family about KH's medical history too.

The results of this research explain the language skills by KH after 30 speech therapy sessions on morphological and syntactic abilities. This includes morphology skills in using affixes when KH is speaking and syntax skills in using phrases and using types of sentences when KH is speaking. Besides that, we can see a structure of information in the sentences uttered by KH.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subject of this study named KH (with initials) was born in June 2010 with the main diagnosis of hydrocephalus at birth and underwent surgery to install Vp. Shunt at 11 days old. In his daily life, KH uses glasses with thick lenses because he has glaucoma and has developmental delays. So that KH is less balanced when he walks, runs, or other activities that require muscle coordination and difficulties in communicating. KH attended one of the Yogyakarta Special Schools. When playing with his friends, KH is a shy child.

At the first meeting for speech therapy, KH was only able to say one word and sometimes used two words but not often. After speech therapy sessions for 30 meetings and practicing at home with his parents, KH was able to use three words in one sentence. Below are the results that the researcher found at the 30th speech therapy session as seen from the morphology abilities in the use of affixes and syntax abilities in the use of phrases and types of sentences.

## 4.1 Morphology Abilities

In this research, the morphology abilities of KH is seen from the ability to use affixes on the basic words. It can be said that KH's morphology abilities are not maximized because during data collection KH only uses basic words in verbs. Examples:

(1) Bapak gendong adik disini.

(2) Mas baju biru pegang balon.

(3) Aku beli donat.

(4) Mbah belikan aku mainan.

In (1), (2), and (3) for each of the verbs 'gendong', 'pegang', and 'beli' are basic words and (4) the verb has an affixation -kan, namely 'belikan'. At first glance, there is no problem in sentences (1), (2), and (3) having meanings that can be understood by others. But when looked at more deeply, the verbs in the four sentences above are in the predicate position (Pred) should have affixations so as not to create confusion in the meaning of each sentence.

For example, the meaning of KH's in (1) is that a father is carrying out an activity given by his brother. When 'gendong' is given the affixation of *di-* and *me-* it will have a different meaning.

(5) Bapak <u>menggendong</u> adik disini.
         *me + V*

(6) Bapak <u>digendong</u> adik disini.
       *di + V*

Two sentences above have different meanings, in (5) 'bapak' as subject (Subj) carries out the 'gendong' activity as predicate (Pred) to 'adik' who is given the activity as object (Obj) and 'disini' as a description (K). The sentence is known as active sentence. But in (6) can be interpreted as 'bapak' in the position of the subject (Subj) being given the activity 'gendong' by 'adik' on the object (Obj). It is known as passive sentence.

As explained by Muslich (2008) that the prefix me- added to the base form of a word class, especially verb classes, can be interpreted as performing the action mentioned in the base form of the word, for example the word 'mengambil' which means to take action. While the prefix di- in the base form of the verb class functions to express a passive action which means not intentionally or not doing anything at all, for example in 'diambil', 'diangkat', 'diminum', and so on.

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In (4) 'belikan' from 'beli' with suffix *-kan*. This can be interpreted by 'Mbah' as the subject (Subj) gives the activity 'beli' with the description of the activity 'mainan' to 'aku' as the object (Obj).

## 4.2 Syntax Abilities

### 4.2.1 Verb as Predicate

The researcher chose this sentence for this subchapter to be a sentence that KH said which has a verb as a predicate and the gist of the sentence. The verb has an argument structure that acts as a participant in itself so that the verb must be expressed in syntax to become a grammatical sentence. In a sentence each verb must have a different number of arguments.

(7) <u>Aku</u>  <u>tidur</u>.
    *Subj  Pred*

In (7) has the simplest sentence elements only with noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP). In the noun phrase is 'aku' as the subject and in the verb phrase is 'tidur' as the predicate in the sentence. So that in (7) has the meaning that 'aku' is doing 'tidur'.

(8) <u>Bapak</u> <u>gendong</u> <u>adik</u>.
    *Subj    Pred   Obj*

Data (8) shows that more complex sentences that can be uttered by KH. In it has a Subj-Pred-Obj pattern. Subj and Obj positions are filled with noun phrases 'bapak' and 'adik'. The Pred position is filled with a verb phrase, the activity of 'gendong' by the subject to the object.

$$\begin{pmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Gendong'(Subj, Obj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & [\text{Pred 'Bapak'}] \\ \text{OBJ} & [\text{Pred 'Adik'}] \end{pmatrix}$$
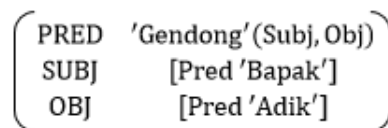
Diagram 1. Data information structure (8)

In the diagram above there is a grammatical relationship in each phrase. In (8) it can be seen that the verb 'gendong' has two arguments, that is subject and object. The subject is located before the position of the predicate, the data can be changed into a passive form from subject to object and vice versa and add affixes to the verb (Pred) without changing the meaning of the sentence.

(9) Mbah belikan aku mainan.
    *Subj   Pred   Obj    K*

Data (9) describes the Subj-Pred-Obj-K pattern. The noun phrase occupies the subject with the word 'mbah' and the object with 'aku'. The word 'mainan' has an adverb position in the sentence is a noun phrase to clarify the meaning of the sentence. The predicate with the verb phrase 'belikan' is an activity by the subject to the object.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Belikan'}(\text{Subj, Obj}) \\ \text{SUBJ} & [\text{Pred 'Mbah'}] \\ \text{OBJ} & [\text{Pred 'Aku'}] \end{bmatrix}$$
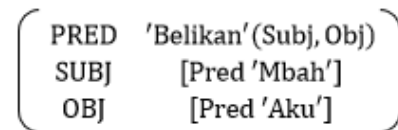
Diagram 2. Data information structure (9)

In diagram 2 illustrated of grammatical relations in each phrase in (9). The predicate has 'belikan' which has two arguments, there are subject and object. The verb 'belikan' from 'beli' plus the suffix *-kan* to *V+kan* pattern. The data can be made passive sentence by adding the prefix di- in the predicate, changing the subject into an object and vice versa. Whereas 'mainan' in the position of a noun phrase as an adverb marker of the previous phrase has the same position, namely at the end of the sentence if (9) is changed to passive.

**4.2.2 Simple Sentence**

The sentences uttered by KH are mostly sentences that have main phrases. Its characteristics are having only one verb; don't use conjunctions; minimal sentence structure Subj-Pred-Obj. Simple sentences can also have two elements Subj-Pred. When KH makes this simple sentence it is easy for others to understand.

(10) Adik  nangis.
     *Subj    Pred*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Pred} & \text{'Nangis'}(\text{Subj}) \\ \text{Subj} & [\text{Pred 'Adik'}] \end{bmatrix}$$
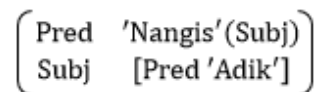
Diagram 3. Data information structure (10)

In (10) only has two sentence elements are the subject and predicate. The subject is a noun phrase with 'adik' while the predicate is with 'nangis' is noun phrase too. With the basic word

'tangis' has a noun class which can be changed to a verb class with the affixation *me+V* to 'menangis'. Diagram 3 shows the predicate has only one argument is the subject.

(11) Aku  jatuh.
     *Subj  Pred*

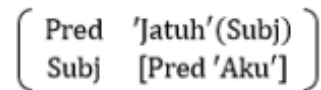$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Pred} & \text{'Jatuh'(Subj)} \\ \text{Subj} & \text{[Pred 'Aku']} \end{bmatrix}$$

Diagram 4. Data information structure (11)

Data (11) only has two elements are subject and predicate sentences. The subject with the noun phrase 'aku' and the predicate with the verb phrase 'jatuh'. In diagram 4 it can be seen that the predicate 'jatuh' is only followed by one argument, the subject.

### 4.2.2.1 Extransitive Sentence

Based on the frequency of its use, KH quite often makes extransitive sentences when conversations.

(12) Kakak  naik  sepeda.
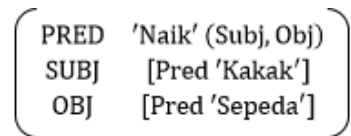     *Subj  Pred  Obj*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Naik' (Subj, Obj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Kakak']} \\ \text{OBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Sepeda']} \end{bmatrix}$$

Diagram 5. Data information structure (12)

(13) Mbak  lihat  tv.
     *Subj  Pred  Obj*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Lihat' (Subj, Obj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Mbak]} \\ \text{OBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Tv']} \end{bmatrix}$$
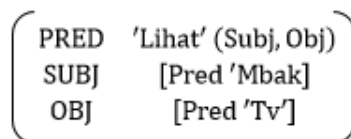
Diagram 6. Data information structure (13)

(14) Kakak  main  bola.
     *Subj  Pred  Obj*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Main' (Subj, Obj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Kakak]} \\ \text{OBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Bola']} \end{bmatrix}$$
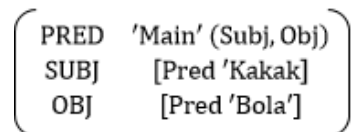
Diagram 7. Data information structure (14)

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The equations of (12), (13), and (14) are that they have a sentence pattern with Subj-Pred-Obj. In this pattern there are noun phrases as subjects and objects and verb phrases as predicates. In diagrams 5, 6, and 7 it is illustrated that the predicate has two arguments in each sentence, this can make the sentence passive even though the predicate uses a base word without affixes. As in (12) with the activity 'naik' has a 'kakak' who performs the activity with 'sepeda' as something given the activity. In (13) 'lihat' is the activity of the sentences carried out by 'mbak' and 'tv' is something that is given activity by the subject.

### 4.2.2.2 Intransitive Sentence

It can be said that the use of intransitive sentences uttered by KH is quite frequent.

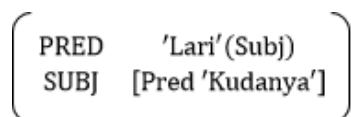(15) Kudanya lari di lapangan.
    *Subj   Pred     K*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Lari'(Subj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Kudanya']} \end{bmatrix}$$

Diagram 8. Data information structure (15)

(16) Kakak duduk di karpet.
    *Subj   Pred     K*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Duduk'(Subj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Kakak']} \end{bmatrix}$$
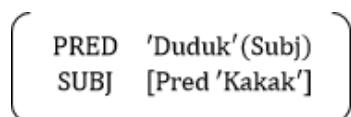
Diagram 9. Data information structure (16)

(17) Bapak pergi ke kantor.
    *Subj   Pred     K*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Pergi'(Subj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Bapak']} \end{bmatrix}$$
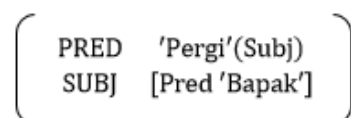
Diagram 10. Data information structure (17)

In (15), (16), and (17) have similarities in the Subj-Pred-K pattern. The subject has a noun phrase, the predicate has a verb phrase, and in the description has a prepositional phrase which has the same core preposition in the each sentence. In the sentence information structure diagram (8), (9), (10) illustrates that the verb phrases in each data contain verbs with basic words are 'lari', 'duduk', dan 'pergi'. Each predicate also has only one argument is the subject. Sentence (15) 'lari' has one

argument, is 'kudanya' as the perpetrator of the activity and the word 'di lapangan' as the place where the activity. (16) has one argument attached to 'duduk' is 'kakak' as the perpetrator of the activity and 'di karpet' as a description of the place to carry out the activity. Whereas (17) the predicate 'pergi' has only one argument, namely 'bapak' as the perpetrator of the activity and followed by a description 'ke kantor' as the destination of the activity of the perpetrator. The three sentences above are said to be intransitive sentences because the predicate isn't followed by an object argument which should be given activity by the actor. So that (15), (16), and (17) cann't be changed into passive sentences.

### 4.2.3 Complex Sentence

Not only simple sentences, KH can also make complex sentences even though the frequency of its use is not as much as the use of simple sentences.

(18) <u>Tadi</u> <u>aku</u> <u>bangun</u>, <u>terus mandi</u>.
   *K*  *Subj* *Pred*    *Conj*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Bangun'(Subj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Aku']} \end{bmatrix}$$
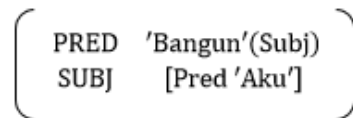
Diagram 11. Data information structure (18)

In (18) has a K-Subj-Pred-Conj sentence pattern. In K there is 'tadi' as adjunct. Adjunct is a word which if there is no such word in the sentence does not affect the meaning of the sentence. so that it can be said that 'tadi' in (18) can be used or cann't be used in the sentence, because it has an adjunct position. Next, in the subject there is a noun phrase with 'aku', in the predicate there is a verb phrase with 'bangun'. In (18) has a conjunction (Conj) position as a statement to connect from one time to another from the previous sentence is 'terus mandi'. So the word 'tadi aku bangun' is the main clause of (18) followed by the conjunction 'terus mandi' which means that the bathing activity is a continuation of the waking activity.

(19) <u>Aku</u>  <u>lihat</u>  <u>sapi</u>  <u>sama kambing kemarin</u>
    *Subj* *Pred*  *Obj*      *Conj*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Lihat' (Subj, Obj)} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Aku]} \\ \text{OBJ} & \text{[Pred 'Sapi']} \end{bmatrix}$$
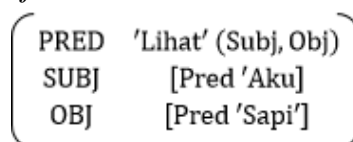
Diagram 12. Data information structure (19)

Data (19) is patterned Subj-Pred-Obj-Conj. In the subject and object there are elements of noun phrases namely 'aku' and 'sapi' and in the predicate there are elements of verb phrases with the base word 'lihat' has two subject and object arguments. The conjunction pattern in the sentence above is 'sama kambing kemarin'. The word 'sama' contained in has meaning at the same time, so that the relationship between the main clause, namely 'aku lihat sapi' with the conjunction 'sama kambing kemarin', occurs at the same time is yesterday with the subject as the actor carrying out the 'lihat' activity. Based on the data that has been collected from KH's utterances, very few complex sentences are produced. So, there are not many complex sentences that have complete elements.

### 4.2.4 Incomplete Sentence

In addition to simple sentences and complex sentences that can be found, there are also incomplete sentences. The frequency of using incomplete sentences is almost the same as the frequency of using simple sentences.

   (20) Halo Mbak.

   (21) Kapan selesainya?

   (22) Besar sekali.

Incomplete sentences have the simplest sentence elements when compared to other sentence elements. The core elements of the sentence are often used by KH in daily conversations with his family and school friends. Incomplete sentences must also have sentences that are related to other sentences, usually located in sentences before or after the incomplete sentence itself.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Based on KH's mild intellectual disability condition, he is only able to use one to two words when communicating. However, after doing 30 speech therapy sessions, KH is able to make simple sentences and complex sentences. It can be seen from the explanation above that KH is able to make simple sentences and complex sentences with the sentence structure Subj-Pred-Obj or with two arguments attached to the predicate. KH's morphology abilities more often use the suffix *-nya* in the words that are spoken.

In the results of his syntax ability, KH seems to be able to use a variety of phrases, such as Noun Phrase (NP), Verb Phrase (VP), and Prepositional Phrase (PP). When making sentences, verbs that act as predicates more often use the base word rather than the addition of affixes to the word. This can create confusion of meaning by others when hearing KH speak.

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