CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter reviews the basic theories of the research related to Teaching Speaking English to young learners. Principally, the reviews are on the Characteristic of Young Children, Definition of speaking, the teaching of speaking for children, and Teaching Difficulties.

Teaching speaking English to young learner is not an easy task. Before we start to teach speaking English, firstly what we have to know is the characteristic of young children. Because the subject of the research is in the fourth grade, the explanation below is the characteristic of young children in nine or ten years old.

3.1 The Characteristic of Young Children

According to Harmer (2006) Young children, especially those up to the ages of nine or   ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents and adults in the following ways:

-       They respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words.

-       They often learn indirectly rather than directly-that is they take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are being taught.

-     Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear and, crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with.

-     They find abstract concepts such as grammar rules difficult to grasp.

-     They generally display an enthusiasm for learning and a curiosity about the world around them.

-     They have a need for individual attention and approval from the teacher.

-     They are keen to talk about themselves and respond well to learning that uses themselves and their own lives as main topics in the classroom.

-     They have a limited attention span; unless activities are extremely engaging, they can get easily bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so.

3.2 Speaking

After considering the characteristic of young children, we have to consider the definition of speaking.

3.2.1 Definition of Speaking

According to Oxford Dictionary Speaking as noun is the action of expressing oneself in speech or giving speeches. Another definition speaking as adjective is conveying meaning as though in words.

3.2.2   The Teaching of Speaking for Children

We have considered the characteristic of young children and the definition of speaking. Now, we have to read some previous research in teaching of speaking for

children. It explains about the background to the teaching of speaking, classroom techniques, activities, media and assessment.

3.2.2.1 Background to the teaching of speaking

According to Linse and Nunan (2005), they explain about background to the teaching of speaking. Speaking is important in children's overall language development. Children learning English as their native language spend time developing speaking skills. If you were to visit a class for native English speaking five-year-olds in North America, you would undoubtedly see children **finger-plays**, simple chants and rhymes with hand or finger motions. They would also be singing songs with their teacher. Usually the entire class sits together while everyone sings or chants in unison. This is a regular and important part of the school day because teachers working with young learners recognize how important it is for children to develop strong speaking skills. Many of the songs and finger-plays that children learn to say contain language that is repetitive. Look at Example 1- two favorite children's song – and see how much repetition there is in each song. Both of these songs also lend themselves to pantomime and TPR-style activities. Children can easily mime the actions until they feel comfortable saying the words. Children gradually learn the repetitive lyrics of songs and eventually the entire songs.

Example 1:

This is the way we wash our clothes

This is the way we wash our clothes, wash our clothes, wash our clothes

This is the way we wash our clothes so early Monday morning.

This is the way we iron our clothes, iron our clothes, iron our clothes

This is the way we iron our clothes so early Tuesday morning.

The Hokey-Pokey

You put your right foot in

You put your right foot out

You put your right foot in

You shake it all about

You do the hokey-pokey and you turn yourself around

That's what it's all about

You put your left foot in

(Etc.)

Children can make up their own verses or versions of songs and finger-plays known as **innovations.** This gives children an opportunity takes a known pattern and put their own twist to it. Teachers prompt children in order to come up with their own verses.

3.2.2.2 Methods in Teaching Speaking English to Young learners

Audio-lingual Method (ALM)

The **Audio-lingual Method (ALM)** to language teaching is based on the notion that one can learn language by developing habits based on the patterns of language (Celce-Murcia, 2001). According to Linse and Nunan, (2005), there are two important

features of ALM which can easily be adapted for the young learner classroom: drills with choral response and dialogues.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Teachers have realized the value of connecting real-life situations with classroom instruction and thus have embraced **Communicative Language Teaching. CLT** is an approach and a philosophical orientation that connects classroom-based language learning with the language that learners need in order to communicate outside of the classroom (Nunan, 2003). From the standpoint of teaching English to young learners, it is necessary to connect classroom learning to the real-life child-focused situations where children use language to communicate and convey meaning such as asking a parent for help finding something that is lost, playing a game, saying a finger-play, inviting a friend over to play, and creating an art project.

3.2.2.3 Classroom techniques and activities

Linse and Nunan (2005) stated that speaking activities are an important part of any young learners' ESL and EFL classroom and are often considered the focal point of instruction. When teaching speaking, it is especially important to select activities which match the objectives of your program. For instance, if you teach in a school that emphasizes music and the arts, you would include a lot of songs authored by others as well as by your students. The specific techniques and tasks that you choose should be based on the aims of the program coupled with the learners' stages of development.

Choral response

Linse, (2005) stated that the first feature typical of ALM is drills aimed at getting learners to practice using the patterns that occur in language. Substitution drills are a

hallmark of the ALM classroom. Although drills can be dull and boring for the learners, they do not have to be. Whenever possible, try to personalize the content to the learners in your classroom. You can use drills for several minutes as a way to introduce a new language pattern to children. For instance, bring in pictures of food items as you pretend to eat different things or hold up pictures of an apple and say, *I like apples.* Then have the students repeated your sentence. You can also say each sentence and have students respond in unison, using the technique known as **Choral response.**

Choral response is also used when children repeat the lines of a poem or song. Sentences with substitutions can be slipped right into the young-learner curriculum in the form of songs or finger plays that have repetitive language and language substitutions; they are learning the patterns of the English language. Looking back at the Hokey Pokey, you can easily see how the language resembles a substitution drill. When children sing the song, they are repeating the lines over and over again, and they are substituting words throughout the various verses. They are also repeating lines with one or two words changed or substituted for other lines.

Dialogues

Linse, (2005) stated that the second feature of ALM which can easily find its way into the young learners' classroom in dialogue. Dialogues provide learners with grammatically controlled scripts that they can use in real life. Dialogues can very easily be scripted and turned into child-friendly role plays. Whenever possible, the role play should be based on the types of real and make-believe conversations that children have when they work and play.

Fishbowl technique

Linse, (2005) stated that one specific technique which helps children learn how to work with a partner or in a small group is known as the **fishbowl.** The teacher can either invite a volunteer to do the activity with him or can model the activity using two or more puppets. The teacher models the activity that the children are expected to do while everyone in the class watches as if the teacher and the volunteer were in a fishbowl. Children then go back to their seats knowing clearly what they are expected to do.

Games

According to Linse, 2001, play is purposeful activity and games are a part of playing. As such, games are a very appropriate teaching technique in the young-learner classroom. When carefully planned, games offer the advantages of both ALM and CLT. You can very easily set up games so that children repeat the same patterns over and over again. Games can also be structured to maximize English language use. When she gives the rules for a game, she always makes using English a game rule. When English –use is a game rule, children tend to monitor their use of the English language they play the game. For instance, if a child uses her native language while playing the game, she loses a point or a turn. There are a number of vocabulary games which may also help children speaking skills.

Caroline, (2001) stated that an area of speaking and listening activities at word, phrase, and sentence level can be generated from the set of pictures will seem like games. They are fast moving and sometimes have a competitive edge. They are likely to keep pupils interest.

Harmer, (2001) also stated that there are many communication games which aim to get students talking as quickly and fluently as possible. Two particular categories are worth mentioning. They are information-gap games and television-radio games. Information-gap games is one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, put things in the right order or find similarities and differences between pictures. Television and radio games are games from radio and television which imported into the classroom.

Talking and Writing Box

Linse, and Nunan, 2005, introduced the concept of talking and writing box as a way to learn about childrens' development and interests. The talking and writing box is made of pictures that children have self-selected and are interesting to them. When children are asked to talk about the pictures on their box, they talk about things that are of interest to them because they have selected the pictures for the box.

Rhymes, Finger-plays, and Chants

Linse and Nunan in 2005 stated that rhymes, finger-plays, and chants help native English-speaking children learn how to pronounce words correctly. You can select rhymes and finger-plays that focus on a specific phoneme or sound or set of sounds. Most English-language course books contain rhymes, poems, and chants as part of the program.

3.2.2.3 Media in Teaching Speaking English to young learners

The Course book

Harmer (2000) stated that the most important factor of course book use is for teachers to try to engage student with the content they are going to be dealing with. It means that increase the students' interest in a topic and making sure that they know exactly what we want them to do before we get the students to open their books and disappear, heads-down in the pages, while we are still trying to talk to them.

Computer-based presentation technology

Harmer (2000) stated that computers have changed the world of classroom presentation forever that is for those fortunate enough to have the money and resources for both hardware and software. The two crucial pieces or hardware are a computer and a data projector. Anything that is on our computer screen can be shown to the whole class using a data projector to put up an enlarged version of it on screen or a white wall. It means that all the students can see a word processed task at the same time, or we can project a picture, diagram or map. For example, presentation software, such as PowerPoint, increases our capacity to present visual material (words, graphics and pictures) in a dynamic and interesting way. However, the most commonly used PowerPoint template (a heading with bullet points has suffered from excessive use and may be the less effective use of the medium. In fact, the software offers a more interesting option where we can mix text and visuals with audio/video tracks so that pictures can dissolve or fly onto and off the screen, and music, speech and film can be

integrated into the presentation. Some people may find this kind of animated presentation irritating in its own way, but there is no doubt that it allows teachers to mix different kinds of display much more effectively than before such software hand operated.

Using puppets to introduce dialogues

Linse, (2005) stated that Puppets can easily model different dialogues for children to practice with their classmates. You can also use puppets to show children how to work with a partner or in small groups. Teachers working with young learners are often aware that children feel more comfortable talking with a puppet than with an adult (Slattery and Willis, 2003). The use of puppets is very appropriate in the young-learner classroom. A child who developmentally is too shy to speak to an adult in front of his peers, he may feel very comfortable when the same adult is holding a puppet and speaking to the child as the puppet. Puppets also make the language-learning activity more fun.

3.2.2.4 Assessments in Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

Harmer (2000, 381) stated that direct test is a test items which if it asks candidates to perform the communicative skills which is being tested.

Harmer (2000,381) stated that indirect test is a test item which try to measure a students' knowledge and ability by getting at what lies beneath their receptive and productive skills.

Linse (2005, 148) stated that asking young learners questions and engaging them in conversations can assess students speaking skills. The teacher can assess students by asking specific questions during class, as well as by talking with them on a one-to-one basis.

1.2 Teaching Difficulties

Since teaching speaking English to young learners is not an easy task to do, some difficulties may appear during the process. Some difficulties can derive from several sources, which are the teachers themselves, the students, and school policies.

Teaching problems derived from teachers may be due to the use of English during the process of teaching. Moon (2005) notes some obstacles for teachers who use English to teach English. They are asserted as follow:

a. It can take a long time for the teachers to explain things, even using gestures

b. Teachers may have limited English or insufficient fluency in the language, so this way may enable them to give students incorrect models. It is because children have special sensitivity to pronunciation though they will not be able to make use to this particular instinct if their teachers lack fluency of foreign language. That is why, young learner teachers need very good English language skills because they provide the main language input for children who may have limited exposure outside the classroom.

c. Teachers need the flexibility to be able to adjust their language to the children's level, knowledge of English so they can provide feedback, and a rich knowledge of the culture so as to get children interested.