CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teaching and Learning Process of Speaking Skill

A. Previous Research

About this research, there has been a plethora of writing research. Like Zakiyatus Syarifatul Afif, a student of Tarbiyah faculty of Walisongo State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN Walisongo) Semarang, in her thesis "English Language Teaching-Learning at Citischool Bilingual Kindergarten Semarang in Academic Year 2008/2009" which describes the teaching learning process kindergarten students. After collecting data from library and field data resources, she gets the result that learning approach in kindergarten should concern to some aspect; it should recognize students' development; using creative and innovative method. Teacher should create comfortable and conducive learning environment.

The other research was done by Nafi'atun Ulfah under the title "Language Assessment for Young Learners (A Descriptive Study of Language Assessment at Third Grade of An-Nissa Bilingual Elementary School Semarang in the Academic Year 2009-2010)." This study uses qualitative approach because the data are descriptive in the forms of written and spoken. It was conducted at third grade of An-Nissa bilingual elementary Semarang in academic year 2009/2010. The researcher investigated the teaching learning process including the method, the media which is used, the medium of instruction, those are as complementary data for the research but the focus is on the language assessment.²

¹ Zakiyatus Syarifatul A, English Language Teaching-Learning at Citischool Bilingual Kindergarten Semarang in Academic Year 2008/2009, Unpublished Thesis (Semarang: IAIN Walisongo, 2009), p. v

² Nafiatun Ulfa, Language Assessment for Young Learners: A Descriptive Study of Language Assessment At Third Grade of An-Nissa Bilingual Elementary School Semarang in The Academic Year 2009-2010, Unpublished Thesis (Semarang: IAIN Walisongo, 2010), p. v

B. Theoretical Framework

1. Teaching and Learning Process

According to Hornby, teaching means giving the instruction to (a person): give a person (knowledge skill, etc).³ According to Stern, cited by Johnson, English language teaching is defined broadly as creating situations that promote second language use and learning. It involves organizing learning environment, language use, and language learning activities that are intended to facilitate students' language development.⁴ Based on the definition above it can be concluded that teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling learner to learn, setting the condition for learning.

Learning is an activity to gain knowledge or skill. ⁵ Breaking down the components of the definition of learning, we can extract domains of research inquiry. ⁶

- a Learning is acquisition or "getting".
- b Learning is retention of information or skill.
- c Retention implies storage systems, memory, and cognitive organization.
- d Learning involves active, conscious focus on, and acting upon events outside or inside organism.
- e Learning is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting.
- f Learning involves some form of practice, perhaps reinforced practice.
- g Learning is a change in behavior.

These concepts can also give way to a number of subfields within the discipline of psychology: acquisition processes, perception, memory (storage)

³ Hornby, A.S., *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current Language*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 37

⁴Donna M. Johnson, *Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning*, (New York: Longman Publishing Group, 1991), p. 10

⁵ Martin H. Manser, Oxford Learnoer's Pocket Dictionary, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.237

⁶ H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of 1* 5 *tage Learning and Teaching*, 4th Ed., (New York: Pearson Education Company: 2000), p. 7

systems, recall, conscious and subconscious learning styles and strategies, theories of forgetting, reinforcement, and the role of practice. While process means series of action carried out in order to do or achieve something. In this thesis, teaching-learning process means series of activities that tries to help the students to acquire, develop knowledge and skill and the students' activities to gain them. The process of teaching and learning includes teaching materials, teaching methods, and learning assessments used by the teacher.

a. Teaching Materials

To make teaching learning process more successful, the material must be selected appropriately. Tomlinson has defined material as anything which is used to help teaching language. The form of teaching material is anything which presents or informs about the language to be learned.⁸ Teaching material has important roles of teaching.

The English teaching materials for young learner must be interesting and fun, the form of material support for language teaching comes from textbook. According to Brewster, Ellis, and Girard, there are some reasons why the textbook is used in teaching learning; it is useful learning aid for the students, it can identify what should be taught or learned, it can indicate what methodology should be used, it can provide attractively and economically, all or most materials needed. With interesting and fun learning atmosphere, the students will be more motivated to study.

There are so many textbooks available so teachers should be able to choose the most appropriate one. Teacher should look at any course book to use with a critical eye and check over each unit to see whether it suits your students' goals. If so, teacher can go ahead with it. If not, teacher might want

 8 Brian Tomlinson, $\it Material \ Development \ in \ Language \ Teaching,$ (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 1

⁷ Ibid.

Jean Brewster, Gail Ellis, Dennis Girard, *The Primary English Teacher's Guide*. (China, penguin English, 2003), p. 152

to choose a different book or still with the same book and find other material that can fulfill the lack of material. This can be applied to whole themes or parts of the book. There might be parts of the book that are too difficult or too easy for the students; teacher may consider omitting those parts out or supplementing them. ¹⁰ It's important to look at these aspects before using the book. Omitting some parts of the book which is too difficult and giving addition to the lacking material or too easy parts are necessary.

Although textbook provide the majority of materials, teacher can also use other materials in order to provide variety. The numbers of supplementary materials can be chosen are storybook, songs, rhyme, chants, game, posters, flashcards, worksheet, video, CDs, the internet, and other CALL program, etc. For selecting supplementary materials, the teacher can also use games that children play in L1 can be played in L2, or make collection of children's comics, toys, poster, etc.¹¹ The teacher can produce his or her own material if the textbook does not provide enough practice; exercises, activities, or visual aids. ¹² The visual are such as, making worksheet, flashcards, pictures, etc.

b. Teaching Methods

Method is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objective. Method tends to be concerned primarily with teacher and students roles and behavior and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject matter objectives, sequencing, and material. They are almost always thought of as being broadly applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts.¹³ Method is the practical realization of an

13 H. Douglas Brown, *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, 2nd Ed, (San Fransisco: Longman, 2001), p. 88

¹⁰ Lucy Pollard, *Teaching English*, (London, Lucy Pollard Copyright, 2008), p. 17

¹¹ Jean Brewster, Gail Ellis, Dennis Girard, *Op. Cit.*, p. 156

¹²*Ibid*, p. 156

approach. There are some popular methods in English language teaching learning which are going to be discussed below.

1) The Grammar Translation Method

The fundamental purpose of Grammar-Translation method is to make the students able to read literature written in target language. ¹⁴ The method consists of studying written texts, translating them into the students' own language and carrying out a study of grammar. ¹⁵ There is little attention given to the use of the spoken language.

2) Direct Method

It is stated by Diane Larsen Freeman in Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching as follows¹⁶

As with the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method is not new. Its principles have been applied by language teachers for many years. The Direct Method has one basic rule: no translation is allowed.... In fact, Direct Method receives its name from the fact that meaning is to be conveyed directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids with no recourse to the students' native language.

It means that the teaching and learning process is conveyed in English.

3) Audiolingual

This method uses the stimulus-response reinforcement model. In this method, the grammatical rules are introduced in the dialog which is reinforced. Audio-Lingual Method drills the students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns.¹⁷ This method can be done by playing a recording of a conversation in the target language, the students listen and rehearse what they've heard.

¹⁴ Bambang Setyadi, Teaching English as Foreign Language, (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2006), p. 33

15 Lucy Pollard, *Op. Cit.*, p. 19

 $^{^{\}rm 16}$ Diane Larsen Freeman, Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching , (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 35

4) Presentation, Practice, and Production

This method has similarities with the audio lingual. They are same in the use of drilling. But, PPP is contextualized by the situation that has been presented by the teacher. ¹⁸ Later the students, using the new language, make sentences of their own, and this referred as production.

5) The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The Communicative approach - or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) - is the name which was given to a set of beliefs which included not only a re-examination of what aspects of language to teach, but also a shift in emphasis in how to teach. The 'what to teach' aspect of the Communicative approach stressed the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary. A guiding principle was to train students to use these language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes.¹⁹

Activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing. Thus role-play and simulation have become very popular in CLT, where students simulate a television program or a scene at an airport - or they might put together the simulated front page of a newspaper. Sometimes they have to solve a puzzle and can only do so by sharing information.

6) Task Based Learning

In this method, the students are given a task to perform and only when the task is completed, the teacher discuss the language that was

 $^{^{18} \}mbox{Jeremy Harmer},$ The Practice of English Language Teaching, (Malaysia: Pearson Education Longman, 2007), p. 80

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 85.

used, making correction and adjustment which the students' performance of the task has shown to be desirable. ²⁰ In other words, students are presented with a task they have to perform or a problem they have to solve.

7) The Silent Way

In this method, the teacher helps the students to acquire the foreign language by gesture or expression. Later students guess them. And the teacher shows the correction of students' guessing verbally.²¹

8) Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a method developed by the Bulgari an psychiatrist-educator Georgi Lozanov. Suggestopedia is a specific set learning recommendations derived from Suggestology, which Lozanov describes as a "science concerned with the systematic study of the nomational and/or nonconscious influences" that human beings are constantly responding to. Suggestopedia tries to influence and redirect them so as to optimize learning. The most conspicuous characteristics of Suggestopedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behavior of the teacher. ²² The method is focus on the atmosphere of teaching and learning to be closer with the target language like using song and classroom arrangement.

9) Total Physical Respond

Total Physical Response is linked to the "trace theory" of memory in psychology (e.g., Katona 1940), which holds that the more often or the more intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled.

²¹Ibid, p. 89
²² Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rogers, Approach and Method in Language Teaching, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.142

²⁰*Ibid*, p. 86

Retracing can be done verbally (e.g., by rote repetition) and/or in association with motor activity. ²³ Combined tracing activities, such as verbal rehearsal accompanied by motor activity, for example teacher mentions a word then the students should mime or practice the word.

c. Learning Assessment

Assessment is described as an attempt to analyze the learning which the students have achieved over a period of time as a result of teaching learning.²⁴ There are some purposes of assessment. First, assessment is to increase in continuous learning process (formative). Second, it is to give feedback for the students on their progress or achievement (summative) and inform it to teacher and parents (informative). Third, it is to identify students' need to be supported (diagnostic). And forth, it is also to check the effectiveness of teaching method and learning material (evaluative).²⁵ Many states have developed their own formal assessment tool for English learners. This type of standardized test is typically given on a yearly basis by someone who has received special training on administering it. These English language assessments are important because they do the following:²⁶

- 1) screen and identify students who need English language instruction
- 2) establish appropriate placement for level of instruction
- 3) reclassify students to move to a different level or exit the English learner program
- 4) monitor English language development
- 5) provide information on evaluation
- 6) establish instructional and student accountability

²³ *Ibid*, p. 87

 ²⁴Jean Brewster, Gail Ellis, Dennis Girard, *Op.Cit.*, p. 244
 ²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 245
 ²⁶ Carmen Zuniga D. and Evelyn Marino W., *Helping English Language Learner Succeed*, (USA: Shell Educational Publishing, 2007), p. 52

According to Brown, there are two kinds of assessment, formal and informal assessment.²⁷:

1) Informal Assessment

Informal assessment is assessment which is incidental and unplanned. It is involved evaluative coaching and feedback on task designed which shows students' language performance. It is not for recording result and making judgment about students' language competence.²⁸ It is done to see the students comprehension of the material taught, then teacher can determine whether the learning objective is reached or not and give the response.

Informal assessment is also called formative evaluation; assessing students in the process of forming students' competencies and skills in order to help them continue that growth process. The teacher can give assessment trough his or her subjective opinion of students' attitude, participation, or cognitive development. For example, when the students' respond to the teacher's question, offers comment, tries out new words or structure, the teacher can make assessment by giving feedback or correction.²⁹ It can be done when students make mistakes whether the mistake are slips, errors, or attempts. Slips are mistakes which the students can correct themselves when the mistakes are pointed out to them. Errors are mistakes which the students cannot correct themselves; they need the teacher's explanation.³⁰ Attempts are the mistakes occurred when the students try to say something but they do not yet know the correct way of saying it.

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²⁷H.Douglas Brown, *Op.Cit.*, p. 402

²⁸Ibid

³⁰Jeremy Harmer, Op. Cit., p. 99

There are two techniques of giving corrective feedback of accuracy activities; showing incorrectness and getting it right. For showing incorrectness, there are some alternative techniques. First, repeating, the teacher asks the students to repeat what the students said which indicate it is not clear or wrong. Second, echoing, the teacher repeats the students' wrong utterances. Third, statement and question, the teacher says "that is not quite right or "is it right". Forth, expression, the teacher uses facial expression or gestures to show students' mistakes. Fifth, the teacher gives quiet hint to show the students' mistakes. Sixth, reformulating, the teacher repeat what the students said correctly but not detail as same as the students' said, just reformulate.³¹ The way of getting it right is repeating what the students' mistake correctly in detail, not only reformulate that mistake.

2) Formal Assessment

Formal assessment is assessment which is for recording result and making judgment about students' language competence by exercises or experiences specifically designed. Formal assessment usually is called summative evaluation. It can occur at the end a lesson, unit, or course. It can be done through test. And test is an instrument or procedure designed to elicit students' language performance with the purpose to measure the students' ability or knowledge.³² It is important to have good formal assessment to check the development of the students' competence.

There are some ways for assessing students' work. First, the teacher can do it by comments, marks, grades, or writing reports to inform the students' achievement for students themselves, the school, and the

³¹Jeremy Harmer, Op. Cit., p. 106

³²*Ibid.*, p. 401

parents.³³ Commonly the formal assessment is don in written form in the end of chapter, semester or the end of academic year.

2. Speaking Skill

In psycholinguistic, speaking is a productive language skill. It is a mental process. Mental process also called as "a process of thinking". We use word, phrases, and sentences to convey a message to a listener. A word is the smallest free form (an item that may be uttered in isolation with semantic or pragmatic content) in a language, while a phrase is a syntactic structure that consists of more than one word but lacks the subject-predicate organization of a clause. When we combine these words into one group, then it becomes a sentence.³⁴

Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols. Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Speaking is one of the most difficult aspects for students to master. This is hardly surprising when one considers everything that is involved when speaking: ideas, what to say, language, how to use grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation as well as listening to and reacting to the person you are communicating with. ³⁵ It is important to give students as many opportunities as possible to speak in a supportive environment. Gaining confidence will help students speak more easily.

Furthermore speaking is one of the central elements of communication. In EFL (English as Foreigner language) teaching, it is an aspect that needs special attention and instruction. In order to provide effective attention, it is necessary for a teacher of EFL to carefully examine the factors, condition and components that underlie speaking effectiveness. Effective instruction derived from the careful analysis of this area, together with sufficient language input and

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³³Jeremy Harmer, *Op. Cit.*, p. 101

³⁴ O' Grady, William and Dobrovosky, *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction*, (London: Copp Clark LTD, 2000), p. 310

³⁵ Lucy Pollard, Op. Cit., p. 33

speech-promotion activities will gradually help learners improve their English speaking ability.

Students should learn to speak the second language by interacting to others. For this case, students should master several speaking components', such as: comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. In brief, English teacher should be creative in developing their teaching learning process to create good atmosphere, improve the students speaking skill, give attention to the speaking components', and make the English lesson more exiting.

According to Syakur there are at least five components of speaking skill concerned with comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.³⁶

a. Comprehension, for oral communication, comprehension certainly requires a subject to respond to the speech as well as to initiate it.

b. Grammar

The grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. If grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer, although, as we shall see in A2, creating a 'good' grammar rule is extremely difficult. Linguists investigating native-speaker speech (and writing) have, over the years, devised various different systems to describe how the language works.³⁷ Grammar is one important aspect of speaking because if an utterance can has different meaning if the speaker uses incorrect grammar.

³⁶ Syakur, Language Testing and Evaluation. (Surakarta: Sebelas Maret University Press, 1987), p. 3 ³⁷ Jeremy Harmer, *Op. Cit.*, p. 12

c. Vocabulary

Vocabulary means list of words with their meaning.³⁸ One cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas both oral and written form if they do not have sufficient vocabulary. Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.

d. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way for students' to produce clearer language when they speak. Pronunciation is an essential aspect of learning to speak a foreign language. If a student does not pronounce a word correctly, it can be very difficult to understand him/her. On the other hand, if students make grammatical mistakes e.g. in a verb tense, the listener still has an idea of what is being said. ³⁹ So, it can be seen that good pronunciation is vital if a student is to be understood.

e. Fluency

Fluency can be defined as the ability to speak fluently and accurately. Fluency in speaking is the aim of many language learners. Signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses and "ums" or "ers". 40 These signs indicate that the speaker does not have spend a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message.

3. Teaching Speaking Skill

Teaching speaking is a very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to

Martin H. Manser, *Op. Cit.*, p. 461
 Lucy Pollard, *Op. Cit.*, p. 65

⁴⁰ H. Douglas Brown, *Op. Cit.*, p. 4

teaching speaking. Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. Nunan in this case formulates what is meant by teaching speaking:⁴¹

- a Produce the English speech sounds and sound patterns
- b Use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.
- c Select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
- d Organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
- e Use language as a means of expressing values and judgments.
- f Use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency.

In addition, Hayriye provides some suggestions for English teachers in teaching speaking. As we can see in the following:⁴²

- a Provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and tasks, and shared knowledge.
- b Try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this aim, practice different ways of student participation.
- c Reduce teacher speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time. Step back and observe students.
- d Indicate positive signs when commenting on a student's response.
- Ask eliciting questions such as "What do you mean? How did you reach that conclusion?" in order to prompt students to speak more.

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⁴¹ David Nunan, *Research Method in Language Learning*, (USA, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 23

⁴² http://unr.edu/homepage/hayriyek, January 20th, 2011

- f Provide written feedback like "Your presentation was really great. It was a good job. I really appreciated your efforts in preparing the materials and efficient use of your voice..."
- g Do not correct students' pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech.
- h Involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class; contact parents and other people who can help.
- i Circulate around classroom to ensure that students are on the right track and see whether they need your help while they work in groups or pairs.
- j Provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities.
- k Diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

The activities which are given by teachers are aimed to attract students' motivation to involve in speaking class. Thus, the teacher should use a good method in the teaching and learning process of speaking.

4. Activities in Teaching Speaking

There are many activities which offer students much time to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and help them become more socialized, and make students more active in teaching and learning process and at the same time makes their learning more meaningful and fun for them that stated by Hayriye such as role play, simulations, information gap, brainstorming, storytelling, interview, story completion, reporting, playing cards, picture narrating, picture describing, find the difference. Each of activities is explained as follows:⁴³

a. Brainstorming

⁴³ *Ibid*.

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depends on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The good characteristics of brainstorming are that the students are not criticized for their ideas so students will be open to sharing new ideas.

b. Role Play

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Role play has appeal for students because it allows the students to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while. 44 Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. While simulation is very similar to role-play but here students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, he or she can bring a microphone to sing and so on.

c. Discussion

The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Here the teacher can form groups of students and each group works on their topic for a given time period, and present their opinions to the class. The main aim of group discussion is to improve fluency, grammar in probably best allowed to function as a naturally communicative context.

d. Information Gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Also, each

 $^{^{44}}$ Richard-Amato, Patricia A., *Making It Happen, Third Edition, (* United States :Pearson Education, 2003), p. 222

partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

e. Storytelling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

f. Interviews

Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present the result to the class.

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class.

g. Story Completion

This is a very enjoyable, whole-class, free-speaking activity where students sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on.

h. Reporting

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

i. Picture Narrating

This activity is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria provided by the teacher as a rubric. Rubrics can include the vocabulary or structures they need to use while narrating.

j. Picture Describing

Another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, so a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

5. Teaching Speaking to Elementary School Students

Elementary school students are categorized as young learners that have different characteristic from adult learners. They usually consist of students at the age of 6 to 12 years old, where the element of fun becomes a part of their world. To give further comprehension about them, Harmer states some general characteristic of children, as follows: ⁴⁵

- a They respond to meaning even if they do not understand the words.
- b They often learn indirectly than directly.
- c Their understanding comes not just from the explanation, but also from what they see and hear and crucially have a chance to touch and interact with.
- d They generally display an enthusiasm for learning and curiosity about the world around them.
- e They have a need for individual attention and approval from their teacher.
- f They are keen on talking about themselves and responding well to learning that use themselves and their own lives as main topic in the classroom.
- g They have limited attention span, unless activities are extremely engaging can make them easily getting bored, losing interaction after 10 minutes or so.

Based on the points above, researcher assumes that elementary school students are included as young learners who are very enthusiastic in finding out, understanding and learning everything. It seems that they like learning something that involves a new thing and the elements of fun such as a game, where they can laugh, talk, and feel happy during the class and the most important thing that they can enjoy and absorb the lesson.

Today language students are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language. In their own language children are able to express emotions, communicate intentions and reactions, explore the language, play with the language and make language puns,

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⁴⁵ Jeremy Harmer, *Op. Cit.*, p. 38

so they expect to be able to do the same in English. Speaking is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher to develop.⁴⁶ The children often naturally insert their native language when they cannot find the right words to express what they want to say in English.

It is important for the language teacher to remember that young children may spend a long time absorbing language before they actually produce anything. It is not a good idea to try to force them to speak in the target language as this can create a lot of emotional stress. By doing repetitive songs, rhymes, games, and plenty of choral work, children will be able to produce language without the stress of having to speak individually. Even if small children are not actually saying anything, they will still be taking in it. Some children say nothing at all in class but go home and tell their parents what they have learnt. ⁴⁷ In such condition, it is important for the teacher to give motivation and encourage the students to have more bravery to speak in the classroom.

Since children at primary level are usually extremely limited in the amount of language they know, free conversation is simply not possible. Hence all oral tasks such as drills or simple role-plays have to take place in a very well defined framework. Most of our pupils have little opportunity to practise speaking English outside the classroom and so they need lots of practice when they are in class. What is important with beginners is finding the balance between providing languages through controlled and guided activities and at the same time letting them enjoy natural talk.⁴⁸

a Controlled Practice

Controlled practice goes hand in hand with presentation since it is important that pupils try out new language as soon as they have heard it. In controlled practice there is very little chance that the pupils can make a

⁴⁸ Scott & Ytreberg, *Teaching English to Children*, (Great Britain: Longman, 1990), p. 33

⁴⁶ Esra Öztürk, *Teaching English to Young Learners Through Integrated Skills Approach*, (Gazi: Gazi University, 2007), p. 83

⁴¹ Ibid.

mistake. For example, the teacher asks the pupils "Do you like?" . They can then go on to ask each other in pairs. "Do you like ...?", with the other pupil simply answering 'yes' or 'no'. Once the pattern is established with the class, they can happily do it in pairs.

As Scott mentions, activities like these provide the basis for oral work, but do not always produce 'real' language at once. Their purpose is to train pupils to use correct, simple, useful language within a situation or context. ⁴⁹ Pupils may have to repeat sentences, be corrected and go through the same thing several times. Familiarity and safety are necessary to help build up the language competence.

b Guided Practice

Guided practice follows on directly from controlled practice and will often be done either in pairs or in small groups. Guided oral practice aims to give the student a limited freedom to use and practise what he has learnt, yet still be subject to some restraints. In general, it is best to provide the general situation and content of what is to be said, but allow some freedom in the mode of expression. By controlling the situation but allowing variety of expression of this kind, the dialogue has been changed from controlled to guided oral work. Guided practice usually gives the pupils some sort of choice, but the choice of language is limited. Below are some examples: ⁵⁰

Dialogues and role play work: Working with dialogues is a useful way to bridge the gap between guided practice and freer activities. Controlled dialogues can easily develop into freer work when the pupils are ready for it. Putting pupils into pairs for doing the dialogues is a simple way of organizing even large classes. First the teacher will have to present the dialogue in whatever way seems most suitable. Dialogues that involve some sort of action or movement are the ones that work best with young children. Intonation is

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 38

⁵⁰ Esra Öztürk, *Op. Cit*, p. 86

terribly important too. Another way to practice oral proficiency in a guided way is to set up a role-playing situation. As in the case of the dialogue, role-playing of this kind is a flexible technique which can be used in a much more structured and predictable way at the controlled stage, or alternatively with less guidance at a later stage in the lesson where continued practice is turning into active production. In their formative years learners are much more receptive to participating in communication activities which include speaking and role-play. The younger learner is usually less self-conscious and thus enjoys practicing a second language orally and finds it highly motivating.⁵¹ Incorporating role-play into the classroom variety, a lot of opportunities for language production can bring a lot of fun to the pupils.

In role-play the pupils are pretending to be someone else. Beginners of all ages can start on role-play dialogues by learning a simple one off by heart and then acting it out in pairs. With the five to seven year olds teacher can give them a model first by acting out the dialogue with a puppet, and getting the pupils to repeat the sentences after him/her. With the older children teacher can act it out with one of the cleverer pupils. In role-play activities pupils have to be familiar with the language needed.

Scott claims that dialogues and role-play are useful oral activities because:⁵²

- 1) Pupils speak in the first and second person. Texts are often in the third person, so they feel free to take risks without worrying about mistakes while talking.
- 2) Pupils learn to ask as well as answer.
- 3) They learn to use short complete bits of language and to respond appropriately.
- 4) They don't just use words, but also all the other parts of speaking a language tone of voice, stress, intonation, facial expressions, etc.

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Scott & Ytreberg, p. 41

5) They can be used to encourage natural 'chat' in the classroom, making up dialogues about the little things which have happened and which occupy the children at that moment. If the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed and nobody worries too much about formal mistakes or using the mother tongue now and then, then even beginners can have great fun trying out the little language they know.

c Free Activities

For younger learners communicating in the target language means creating a more controlled framework for speaking and listening through task-based activities such as information-gap, role play and extended tasks, working either in pairs, small groups or as a whole class. Using controlled and guided activities, which have choices wherever possible provides a good background for activities where children say what they want to say. The followings are some characteristics of free activities:⁵³

- 1) They focus attention on the message and not on the language as such, although the language will usually be limited by the activity itself.
- There is genuine communication even though the situations are sometimes artificial. However, free activities prepare pupils for their lives outside the classroom.
- 3) Free activities concentrate on meaning more than on correctness. Formal mistakes don't really matter too much unless the pupils can understand the meaning. In free activities it is more important that the pupils use the language with a natural flow with what is called fluency and so fluency is more important than accuracy at this stage.
- 4) Teacher control is minimal during the activity, but the teacher must be sure that the pupils have enough language to do the task.

⁵³ Esra Öztürk, *Op. Cit*, p. 86

5) The atmosphere should be informal and there should be a game element in the activity.

Teacher should set up activities so that children can do them in pairs and groups. Then they will get opportunities to use English not just to respond to questions, but also to ask questions. They will also have the satisfaction of completing a task on their own. Hudelson puts forward a generalization about children's learning by saying that children learn best in social contexts, 'in groups where some group members know more than others' those who know more are believed to facilitate the learning of others by motivating them to go beyond their present level. Young learners should be given the opportunity to use the language with each other as well as with the teacher. When pupils work in pairs or groups, they get more opportunities to speak, ask and answer questions, so that they can learn from each other, and they gain confidence because they are speaking in private rather than the whole class.⁵⁴

Speaking activities are probably the most demanding for students and teachers in terms of affective factors involved. Trying to produce language in front of other students can generate high levels of anxiety. Some students may have cultural inhibitions or shy personalities who do not speak very much in their first language. Dunn claims that young children are willing to use language and it sounds without worrying about mistakes. They rarely have inhibitions typical to teenagers and adults. This is one of the reasons young children learn faster than adults, and another is that they have a marvelous ability of imitation. ⁵⁵ Thus, they can speak a foreign language without an accent when they have a good model to imitate whereas adults normally retain an accent.

⁵⁴ Hudelson, S., *EFL Teaching and Children: A Topic Based Approach* (UK: English Teaching Forum. Vol. XXIX, 1991), p.2

⁵⁵ Dunn, O., Beginning English with Young Children, (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 3

As Brumfit mentions that it seems that making mistakes and learning from their correction is a natural part of the learning process, so too great rigidity in control may well be counter productive. When using communicative activities, it is important to strive for a classroom in which students feel comfortable and confident, feel free to take risks, and have sufficient opportunities to speak. It can be difficult to determine how often and how much to correct oral work. Too much correction inhibits the students and too little means that they will learn incorrect language, which is difficult to change later on.

When pupils work with controlled and guided activities, they should be corrected at once if they make mistakes at this stage. During this type of activity the pupils are using teacher or textbook language, and the pupils are only imitating or giving an alternative, so correction is straightforward. However, when the pupils are working on free oral activities, the emphasis should be on content rather than the language. If pupils are trying to express themselves on problem solving or role-play activities, then correction of language mistakes should not be done while the activity is going on. Also the teacher should vary correction criteria according to his/her expectations for individual students. Some need lots of encouragement to speak freely and should not be over-corrected but quicker students may benefit from a little more correction. Consequently, it's important for elementary students to go beyond simple repetition and manipulation of form. They sometimes need to get away from mere 'language practice' and to strive to communicate meaningfully about topics, which really concern them. Lynee proposes the

House, S., An Introduction to Teaching English to Children, (London: Richmond, 1997), p. 67

⁵⁶ Brumfit, C., Moon, J., Tongue, R. (ed.), *Teaching English to Children: From Practice to Principle*. (Malaysia: Longman, 1997), p. 81

following points, which must be taken into consideration while teaching speaking.⁵⁸

Children as language learners need:

- 1) To hear clear pronunciation
- 2) To feel successful when using English
- 3) Plenty of opportunities to communicate
- 4) To enjoy their efforts at speaking in English
- 5) To know they have achieved something worthwhile.

The teacher should:

- Speak a lot of English and repeat children's words or phrases when you are answering them
- 2) React to the meaning of what they are trying to say.
- 3) Encourage them by showing that what they are saying is more impotent than your correction
- 4) Wait until they finish speaking before you repeat and rephrase
- 5) Show your approval for all your pupils' speaking however short it may be
- 6) Provide activities that are fun and have a purpose or a goal, and that have an end-product that they can feel proud of.

⁵⁸ Esra Öztürk, *Op. Cit,* p. 90