# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

by Fahruroji Fahruroji

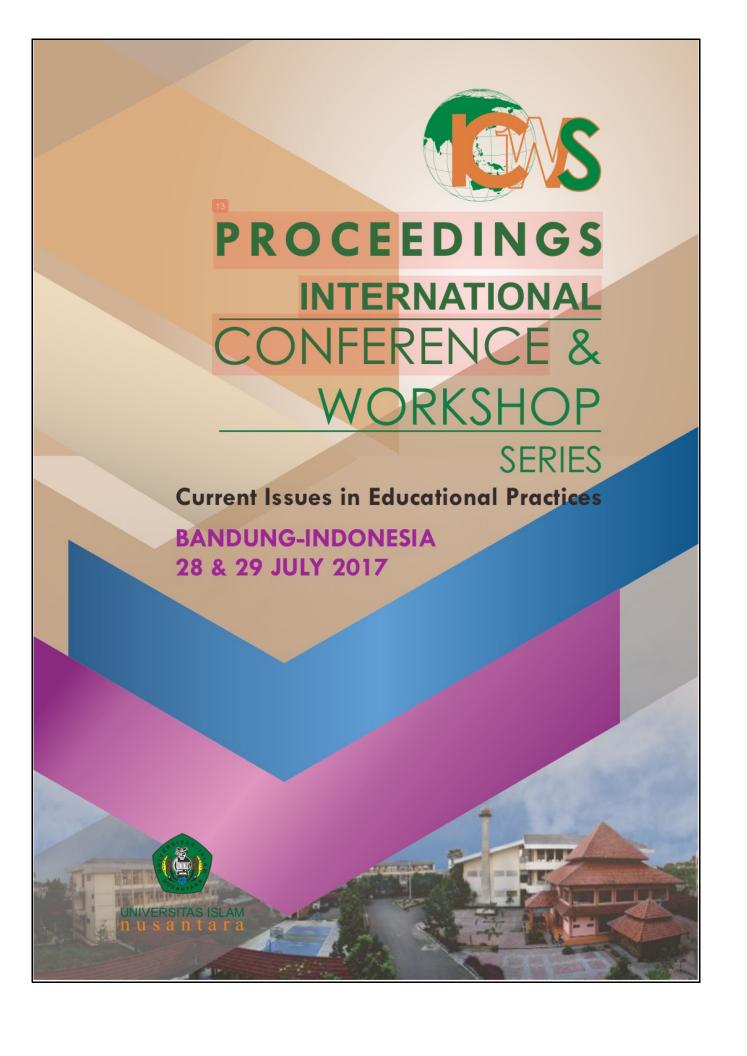
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#### **FOREWORD**

Dear Authors, esteemed Readers,

It is with deep satisfaction that I write this Foreword to the Proceedings of the International Conference and Workshop Series (ICWS) on "Issues in Educational Practices" held by English Department of Universitas Islam Nusantara on July 28 and 29, 2017.

ICWS continues a tradition of bringing together researchers, academics and professionals from all over the world, experts in English Language Teaching and Language Education.

The conference particularly encouraged the interaction of research students and developing academics with the more established academic community in an informal setting to present and to discuss new and current work. Their contributions helped to make the Conference as outstanding as it has been. The papers contributed the most recent scientific knowledge known in the field of English Language Teaching, Teaching and Education, and other related topics.

In addition to the four invited keynote presentations from the English Language Center of Shantou University China were given: by Brandon Castrejon, who spoke about public speaking for English Language Learners, by Ravi Dutt Sharma, who spoke about Pronunciation Assessment Techniques, by Ricardo Ribeiro, who spoke about Culture and Networking in English Language Teaching, and by Shi Zeng Zang, who spoke about Preparation for Writing Task I in IELTS.

These Proceedings will furnish the scientists of the world with an excellent reference book. I trust also that this will be an impetus to stimulate further study and research in all these areas.

On behalf of English Department of Universitas Islam Nusantara, I would like to thank all the participants to take the trouble of coming to ICWS 2017 to participate in this conference and workshop. I am grateful for their valuable inputs in the form of presentations and participations in the discussions. Last but not the least, I convey my sincere thanks to all organizing people, mainly, the faculty and staff of English Department and the hostels for their kind help.

We thank all authors and participants for their contributions.

Hamdan Hidayat Conference Chair

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#### TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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#### Abstract

Teaching foreign language to children of early childhood will help them master the language. It is especially if the teaching employs suitable method and teacher. This writing aims at describing how children start to learn their first language as a basis of their second language or foreign language acquisition. Some components and elements involved in this foreign language teaching play an important role in achieving the success of the teaching. Therefore, any obstacle encountered by children of early childhood in learning foreign language can be overcome, and yet the result of the teaching can be in satisfactory.

Keywords: Language learning methods, language acquisition

#### Introduction

Method of language teaching always gets attention from linguists, especially when it is related to modern language. Teaching modern language encounters many problems, particularly with the method of teaching foreign language.

In 1974, David Webb stated his opinion in a book about some efforts to solve the problems in teaching modern language. According to the author, this book can help language teaching process, it is conducted either inside the classroom or outside.

Similar to general teaching method, language teaching has also theories, such as the theory of behaviorism. In this theory, language is defined as conditioning. The theory assumes that we can train animal to do everything. There are three stages to follow in conducting it. The three stages are stimulus, response, and reinforcement. It is believed that a behavior will emerge by stimulus. The behavior can be then consolidated and regularly repeated by providing reinforcement.

Originally, behaviorism was one of theories in psychology that was adopted by methodologists of language teaching, especially in America. The adoption then created a teaching approach, called audio-lingual method. This method provides ongoing training to students which is followed by reinforcement, either positive or negative, as a focus of classroom main activities. In conducting a classroom, the method, which according to Multon (1963) was influenced by structuralism, has five key characteristics to consider before designing a language teaching. The five characteristics are:

- Language is statement, not writing;
- b. Language is a set of habitual actions:
- c. Language teaching is how to use the language, not about what language is;
- d. Language should be exactly spoken like native speaker, not based on what people think
  it should be;
- e. Language comes in different kinds.

One of language teacher tasks is to give appraisal to students who speak more alike model or tape recorder being played. Specific teaching in this approach might be as follow:

- a. Presenting language focus to learn by providing clear demonstration to the meaning through non-verbal medium;
- b. Providing model of target language patters with several examples;

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- Involving all students in classroom to memorize and mime the model provided by the teacher;
- d. Providing training in progressive substitution forms to all students in classroom at first, then to half groups of students, and finally per individual student;
- e. Conducting the first step using interrogative structure of the target language;
- f. Conducting the first four steps using interrogative structure of the target language;
- g. Checking or monitoring language interpretation using clues that are not given in practice and then reviewing the interpretation in group and individually.

The most important stage in this method is presentation and training. Because presentation is exclusively conducted in the target language, it is important to provide it as clearly as possible.

#### Literature Review Speaking Process

Mental process occurred in speaking, listening, understanding, and memorizing is defined in a cognitive system of human. Human has a system to use language, and language psychology learns how the system works. The system can explain, for example, how human can present an idea through words (language production) and how human can understand an idea or a definition of a sentence being uttered or written (language perception).

G. Kempen has developed a model that can explain about the language perception and production. In that model, it is explained that the system of language usage consists of parts which are closely related one another, and each of them has different tasks (G. Kempen, 1975). Kempen shows how the position of a language user toward his system of language usage in the human cognitive.

#### Speech Recognizer

This system function is to recognize speech uttered by human as certain language. The first step in understanding people talk is to recognize or detect phonology in form of acoustical speech signals during the hearing process. Therefore, the series of sound are the heard utterances. It is important to recognize whether the heard sound is a familiar language or not, and in order to do that, it is important to know phonemes in the language.

In analyzing the speech signals, the role of other systems is very important to identify the signals. For example, if a speech signal that is heard is not immediately identified, the assistance from cognitive system (logic) or lexical system (mental vocabulary) can grasp the meaning of the speech signals correctly.

#### The Conceptual System

Conceptual system is the core of language used by human because it contains thinking process that becomes the basis of human behaviors, such as problem solving, decision making, language usage, etc.

The conceptual system can be illustrated as a network (conceptual network), that is a theory coming from thinking psychology. What occurs in the conceptual system consists of two essential items as follow:

- (1) Definitions or concepts, and
- (2) Operational instruments of those concepts.

The conceptual system consists of dots and lines that form a network. There are several categories of concept in the network, namely:

(1) Nominal concept = N
 (2) Action concept = A
 (3) Action determiner concept = BA
 (4) Nominal determiner concept = PN

Those concepts are related each other in a network. This relationship is called dependency by Schank.

#### The Sentence Generator

After the conceptual structure has been formed, the next step is how to express the structure into spoken language. This is the task for sentence generator that is conducted in four stages of process as follow:

- Theme of what to talk is selected and arranged as good as possible in order to be easily
  accepted by the listeners. Information included in the theme should be familiar to the
  listeners, so the listeners can grasp the content of the talk.
- 2) Formulator gets message from the conceiver in form of conceptual structure to be transformed into utterances. In this stage, lexicalization, sentence structuring, etc. occur. Moreover, it is important to avoid ambiguous sentences.
- 3) Articulator has a function to articulate words. Its task is to convey sentence structures previously formed by the sentence generator and sent to the articulation organ. This activity is a quite complex process.
- 4) Mental lexicon covers all knowledge possessed by a language user. The knowledge is related to words selection of existed vocabularies or words definition, morphological characteristics, syntactical features, pronunciation, and spelling (Kempen, 1981, p. 16). Different with the conventional dictionary, where those words are only passive information (as in the usual dictionary), those are the active elements which are determinants and movable if needed, which may become a meaningful construct.

Lexicon task is to understand meaning of what to say. The meaning will be searched in "mental dictionary" existed in cognitive system. Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to what information that have already existed, for example:

- a. Information about phonology (how to pronounce a word);
- b. Information about syntax (parts of speech and their position in a sentence);
- c. Information about semantic (a clue to conceptual structure);
- d. Information about spelling a word.

#### 1. Phonological Development

At the age of 3-4 month, a baby starts to produce sounds. At first, the baby produces crying or cooing sound (Hassan Sahadily) like a pigeon (Wolf, 1996).

At the age of between 5 and 6 month old, the baby starts to babble. This babbling is sometimes like utterances. According to an expert, in the babbling period, a baby starts to produce simple sounds, the sounds then become rich in variation and have more complex combination. The baby combines vowel and consonant into a sequence just like syllable, such as "ba-ba-ba", "ma-ma-ma", "pa-pa-pa", and other sequences. This babbling cannot be interpreted, and most of the babblings will not be used when the baby is able to speak, as the baby starts to produce meaningful words.

#### 2. Semantic Development

In the process of language acquisition, children have to learn to understand meaning of new words. It means that the children will establish "a dictionary of meaning". At the beginning, the children predict meaning of a new word using the context in which the word is uttered. In this effort of predicting meaning, the children start with two assumptions about functions and contents of a language as follow:

- Language is used for communication. This assumption emerges as the children pay attention
  to gestures or body languages accompanying adults when the adults are speaking. The next
  step is that the children make conclusion that language, as the gestures, is used to
  communicate.
- Language has its own meaning in different contexts. Children assume that there is a logical connection between the talk and what the situation of the talk is.

#### 3. Morphological Development

At the period of forming two words, children have started to make sentence consisting of two words, and the words are generally simple words that are arranged together. Therefore, there are no suffixes on the words to differentiate the meaning of the words.

In European language sentences, word changes occurred in form of morphological inflection start at differentiation phase. In this phase, children start to differentiate word class and morphological differentiation. According to Schaerlaekens (1977), the morphological differentiation consists of:

- 1) Forming plural words,
- 2) Forming diminutiesuffix (Verkleinwoord), and
- 3) Changing verbs.

#### 4. Syntactical Development

At the period of forming one sentence consisting of two words, children omit prepositions, articles, etc., so that the sentence is like a telegram. For certain words in vocabulary, the children often use unique way to express them. However, for words outside the vocabulary, the children rarely use them, and if they use them, they use it more flexible.

The two groups are given label using various terms, but the most common terms are pivot and open class. Pivot class has limited number of words, and each word of this group is used together with words in open class which has larger number of words.

#### Referent Questions

The principal items discussed in this writing are the following questions:

- 1. Are objectives and methods in language teaching important?
- 2. How do children learn language at their early ages?
- 3. Is language laboratory in language teaching important?
- 4. What is the ideal number of students in a single classroom?
- 5. When will examination and assessment be conducted?
- 6. What is the role of teachers and education consultant?

#### The Importance of Objectives and Methods of Language Teaching

First of all, the objective of modern language teaching is to make students possess strong mental and more careful habit. This objective is the main objective in learning modern language, especially for students who are at their first time in school.

Second, foreign language learning should understand cultural background and values developing in the language. Without understanding them, it is difficult to find out several problems emerging from an acceptable terms. For example, Foreign Program Policy of The MLA (Modern Language Association of America) in 1956 stated that by enhancing and getting to know better of language, students can have several cultural perspective of language being learned and social background that can be objectively observed. The process will make students to have more tolerant attitude toward what happen. All of the objectives and methods can interpret practical rules of modern language teaching.

Since long time ago, language teaching has established certain objectives at the beginning and determined what program to provide to students. Therefore, it is important to establish the objectives and methods of the language teaching at the first place.

#### The Establishment of Language Learning

Why teaching language to young children? That is the question should be thought of by language teachers to remind them about how important language learning in early childhood is.

As what had been mentioned about the essence of language learning which occurred in continuity, in developed countries, learning language starts from the home since early childhood. The learning sometimes employs curriculum in which female foreign teachers are assigned to provide it to the children. Is it a new scale occurred in many countries? Two conferences held by

UNESCO in Hamburg, Germany in 1962 and in 1966 emphasized that such development should always be maintained.

Some strong stated arguments related to teaching young children are as follow:

- 1. An effective foreign language learning is a long process that should be started in early childhood, in order to make children possess sufficient language skills.
- Children can learn foreign language easily. This assumption must be clarified to prove its validity.
- 3. Children can learn foreign language in fun way, and they can be more fluent and faster to learn second language if they have mastered their mother tongue.

It can be concluded that learning foreign language in early childhood will make children learn it easily, and they the children will get quite pleasant result.

#### Learning Language Not in Classroom Only

Learning language will be faster and more effective it is conducted not only in classroom but also outside of the classroom, for example in the society in which the language is used. The most effective language laboratory is the native country. Therefore, learning foreign language in the native country will be more effective.

LEA (*Local Education Authority*) can provide help to solve the problem by conducting student exchange. Students can stay in foreign country for several weeks or even months.

In England, there is an institution named *The Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchange*. This institution was founded in 1948 which the main purpose is to facilitate the children and teenagers in the country to have relationship with other countries. The institution has comprehensive information about educational visits and student exchange.

In order to maintain good communication and continuous foreign language learning, a group is formed. This group asks its members to try to use the language all the time.

Outside school time, students often spend their time conducting meeting and learning together using the foreign language. They also hold activities to facilitate the learning, such as watching movies, visiting other schools, conducting language course, and acting role play.

#### **Examination and Assessment**

In teaching and learning process, examination and assessment are required. They are very important for both students and teachers.

For students, the examination and assessment results are conducted to provide the students information of how their learning achievement is. There are two possible categories of assessment result, those are 1) Excellent and 2) need improvement.

For teachers, the results will provide information about which students who have fulfilled the requirements to continue their lesson as they have already comprehended the lesson and who have not. With this results, teachers can focus more on those who have not been succeeded in learning. Moreover, it is better if the teachers know the reasons of why those students have not achieved good results.

The teacher will, therefore, acknowledge whether the applied methods have been effective or not. If most of the students get bad scores, it might be caused by unsuitable teaching methods or approaches. If it is the case, the teachers should be aware and find another method to teach.

One of assessment validity is standardization which encounter large scale of problem in general examination. For example, an assessor sometimes give scores subjectively. It is the problem encountered by students, especially in language. Traditionally, teacher asks students to read and answer questions after they read the text.

#### **Teachers and Education Consultants**

Modern language department is a division in school that is responsible to conduct school communication. This communication can provide clear contribution on the purposes and methods of language teaching as explained in Chapter I. This division is also responsible to provide reliable

human resources in teaching foreign language because teachers and education consultant are part of the division.

#### Roles of Teacher

In a process of teaching and learning, especially in the foreign language one, teacher plays a very important role. Teacher has professional position if there is misconception in language learning.

Many teachers have good and new idea and want to make change in stages. For years, teachers have implemented idea they have to improve their teaching purposes and methods. However, not all of the ideas can be implemented.

According to a book author, an ideal modern language teacher is a teacher who can provide simple description and clear question in the beginning of a new chapter or discussion. The description and question will show practical examples of the main point of a lesson to discuss.

#### 2. Education Consultant

In 1966, LEA (*Local Education Authority*) conference was held to discuss the importance of education consultant in modern language. This conference was incorporated with NALA (*National Association of Language Advisers*). This conference concluded and successfully defined functions of education consultant as follow:

- a. To provide feedback information in general regarding to lessons in teaching language;
- b. To propose suggestion regarding to special personnel;
- c. To become respectable information resource in learning center;
- d. To become respectable information resource in education policy;
- e. To propose suggestion in recruiting new special personnel.

#### Conclusion

It is better to define the conclusion in this writing as main ideas in answering referent questions about the requirement of learning language for all individuals, because language itself is a communication media to share people's idea. Therefore, in order to accomplish the communication results, language to use should be understandable. In contrary, miscommunication will happen.

Some main ideas of how to learn modern language proposed in this writing is about foreign language. As mentioned earlier in the example of how English children learn French and vice versa, several points to consider are as follow:

- 1. The teaching purposes set to accomplish should be clear, and the methods to use should be suitable with students who learn the language.
- 2. Language learning should be started in early childhood to facilitate students;
- Language laboratory is very important in learning language, especially foreign language. The learning should not be conducted only in classroom but also outside the classroom. Student exchange and homestay would make learning foreign language more effective;
- Education consultant should be existed in an organization to connect divisions that have correlation with problems in teaching foreign language.

#### **Correspondence Information**

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