

CHAPTER II

THEORITICAL REVIEW

A. Teaching and Learning for Young Learners

Teaching and learning are not two sides of the same coin, but are essentially different activities, although they both take place in the public arena of the classroom. The professionalism of teachers of young learners requires an underpinning of theoritical knowledge that can help counteract prevalent misunderstandings of the job. These misunderstandings are not just annoying but they may contribute, to a continuing devaluation of teaching languages at primary level. Theorising the teaching of young learners has an important role to play in complexifying oversimplifications about working with children and thereby increasing the quality of foreign language education (Cameron, 2005: xi).

In many societies, teaching children is seen as an extension of mothering rather than as an intellectual enterprise. Teachers at primary level are often given less training, lower status, and lower pay, than their colleagues in the same educational system who teach teenagers or adults.

Children do have a less complicated view of the world than older children and adults, but this fact does not imply that teaching children is simple or straightforward. On the contrary, the teacher of children needs to be highly skilled to reach into children's world and leads them to develop

their understandings towards more formal, more extensive and differently or organised concepts. Primary teachers need to understand how children make sense of the world and how they learn; they need skills of analysing learning tasks and of using language to teach new ideas to groups and classes of children.

Teaching languages to children needs all the skills of the good primary teacher in managing children and keeping them on task, plus a knowledge of the language, of language teaching, and of language learning.

Cameron said (2005) that children will only learn simple language, such as colors and numbers, nursery rhymes and songs, and talking about themselves. But children can always do more than some people think they can; they have huge learning potential, and the foreign language classroom does them a disservice if people do not exploit that potential.

Children are interested, or can be interested, in topics that are complicated (like dinosaurs and evolution), difficult (like how computers work), and abstract (like why people pollute their own environment or commit crimes).

There is a second way in which children need more than ‘simple’ language, and that is in terms of language structures. It is becoming clearer and clearer that first language development builds from lexical base, and that grammar emerges from lexical and communicative development.

Children use supposedly ‘difficult’ structures in their first languages as part of their lexical repertoires. In foreign language teaching, some syllabuses for primary children look rather like watered-down secondary syllabuses, which present children with just a few of the structures typically found early on at Secondary level, such as the Present Continuous tense for describing current actions, Simple Present for describing habitual action, and prepositions.

In this way, adding on primary level language teaching in a school system merely stretches out what has been done before over a longer period of time. It may be more fruitful to consider the possibility of primary level language teaching providing children with a broad discourse and lexical syllabus, that then changes focus as they move into later stages.

If children learn a foreign language from the age of 5 or 6 until they leave school at about 16 years old, there is time to be imaginative with the syllabus and methodology, changing as the child changes and grows. This prospect should be of interest and concern to secondary sectors too; as language learning begins at younger and younger ages, children will arrive in secondary classrooms with much higher and more diverse levels of the foreign language than teachers will have been accustomed to (Cameron, 2005: xiii).

B. Children Learning A Foreign Language

Some differences about teaching a foreign language to children and teaching adults or adolescents are immediately obvious: children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners. They want to please the teacher rather than their peer group. They will have a go at an activity even when they do not quite understand why or how. However, they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult (Cameron, 2005: 1).

Children do not find it as easy to use language to talk about language; in other words, they do not have the same access as older learners to metalanguage that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent. Although conventional language teaching terms like ‘grammar’ and ‘listening’ are used in connection with the young learner classroom, understanding of what these mean *to the children who are learning them* may need to differ from how they are understood in mainstream language teaching (Cameron, 2005: 1).

Cameron (2005: 2) said that learner-centred teaching places the child at the centre of teacher thinking and curriculum planning. In centring on the child, teachers have a risk of losing sight of what they are trying to do in schools, and of the enormous potential that lies

beyond the child. Teaching young learners, begin with the theory of Piaget and Vygotsky.

a. Piaget

Piaget said (cited in Cameron, 2005: 3) that ‘the child as active learner’. Piaget’s concern was with how young children function in the world that surrounds them, and how this influences their mental development. The child is seen as continually interacting with the world around her/him, solving problems that are presented by the environment. It is through taking action to solve problems that learning occurs.

Piagetian psychology differentiates two ways in which development can take place as a result of activity: *assimilation* and *accommodation*. Assimilation happens when action takes place without any change to the child; accommodation involves the child adjusting to features of the environment in some way. From a Piagetian viewpoint, a child’s thinking develops as gradual growth of knowledge and intellectual skills towards a final stage of formal, logical thinking. The implications of piagetian theory for language learning are the child as sense-maker and the world as offering opportunities for learning (Cameron, 2005: 3).

b. Vygotsky

Vygotsky said (cited in Cameron, 2005) that the child is social. Vygotsky's views of development differ from Piaget's in the importance he gives to language and to other people in the child's world. Although Vygotsky's theory is currently most noted for his central focus on the social, and modern developments are often labelled 'sociocultural theory', he did not neglect the individual cognitive development.

The development of the child's first language in the second year of life is held to generate a fundamental shift in cognitive development. Language provides the child with a new tool, opens up new opportunities for doing things and for organising information through to themselves and organising themselves as they carry out tasks or play, in what is called private speech. As children get older they speak less and less aloud, and differentiate between social speech for others and 'inner speech', which continues to play an important role in regulating and controlling behaviour (Wertsch, 1985, cited in Cameron, 2005: 5).

In considering the early speech of infants and its development into language, Vygotsky (1962, cited in Cameron, 2005: 5) distinguishes the outward talk and what is happening in the child's mind. The infant begins with using single words, but these words convey whole messages: when a child says *juice*, s/he may mean *I want some more juice or my juice has spilt*. As the child's language develops, the whole

undivided thought message can be broken down into smaller units and expresses by putting together words that are now units of talk. Whereas for Piaget the child is an active learner alone in a world of objects, for Vygotsky the child is an active learner in a world full of other people (Cameron, 2005: 6).

Those people play important roles in helping children to learn, bringing objects and ideas to their attention, talking while playing and about playing, reading stories, asking questions. In a whole range of ways, adults *mediate* the world for children and make it accessible to them. The ability to learn through instruction and mediation is characteristic of human intelligence. With the help of adults, children can do and understand much more than they can on their own.

Learning to do things and learning to think are both helped by interacting with an adult. Vygotsky (cited in Cameron, 2005) saw the child as first doing things in a social context, with other people and language helping in various ways, and gradually shifting away from reliance on others to independent action and thinking. This shift from thinking aloud and talking through what is being done, to thinking inside the head, is called *internalisation*.

Wertsch (1985, cited in Cameron, 2005) in Lynn emphasises that internalisation for Vygotsky was not just a transfer but also a transformation; being able to think about something is qualitatively different from being able to do it. In the internalising process, the

interpersonal, joint talk and joint activity, later becomes *intrapersonal*, mental action by one individual. The implication of Vygotskian theory for language learning are words and meanings, the zone of proximal development, and learning as internalisation (Cameron, 2005: 8).

c. Bruner

For Bruner (cited in Cameron, 2005), language is the most important tool for cognitive growth, and he has investigated how adults use language to mediate the world for children and help them to solve problems (Bruner 1983, 1990). Talk that support a child in carrying out an activity, as a kind of verbal version of the fine-tuned help given in the baby feeding example above, has been labelled *scaffolding* (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976).

Moreover, good scaffolding was tuned to the needs of the child and adjusted as the child became more competent. Scaffolding has been transferred to the classroom and teacher-pupil talk. Wood (1998, cited in Cameron, 2005: 8) suggests that teachers can scaffold children's learning in various ways:

Teachers can help children to

By

Attend to what is relevant

Suggesting

Praising the significant

Providing focusing activities

Adopt useful strategies

Encouraging rehearsal

Being explicit about organisation

Remember the whole task and goals

Reminding

Modelling

Providing part-whole activities

(from Wood 1998)

Bruner has provided a further useful idea for language teaching in his notions of *formats and routines*. These are features of events that allow scaffolding to take place, and combine the security of the familiar with the excitement of the new. Bruner's most useful example of a routine is of parents reading stories to their children from babyhood onwards (Cameron, 2005: 10).

Routines in the language classroom, transferring to the language classroom, we can see how classroom routines, which happen every day, may provide opportunities for language development. One immediate example would be in classroom management, such as giving out paper

and scissors for making activities. As a routine, this would always take basically the same form: for example, the teacher talking to the whole class, organising distribution, perhaps using children as monitors; the scissors might be kept in a box, the paper in a cupboard.

Routines then can provide opportunities for meaningful language development; the teachers allow the child to actively make sense of new language from familiar experience and provide a space for language growth. Routines will open up many possibilities for developing language skills.

Piagetian and Vygotskian theories of development (cited in Cameron, 2005) argued that children as actively constructing meaning from their experiences in the world. Vygotsky emphasised the shared construction of meaning with other people, and Bruner's notion of scaffolding develops this idea to show how adults can support in the construction of understanding.

Younger children learn the grammar of the second language more slowly than older learners, so that although they start earlier with language learning they make slower progress, and overall gains are not straightforwardly linked to the time spent learning (Harley *et al.* 1995, cited in Cameron, 2005: 16).

Learning a second language through immersion differs from learning a foreign language a subject lesson several times a week;

immersion pupils study school subjects through the second language and thus have more exposure and more experience with the language (Cameron, 2005: 17) .

However, it is unlikely that the difference in quantity of language learning experience will affect the balance of benefits; in foreign language learning too, receptive skills are likely to remain ahead of productive skills, and grammatical knowledge, which is linked not just to language development but to cognitive development, is likely to develop more slowly for younger children (Cameron, 2005: 18).

The summaries that have emerged as most important in thinking about young children learning a foreign language are the following:

- 1) Children actively try to construct meaning*
- 2) Children need space for language growth*
- 3) Language in use carries cues to meaning that may not be noticed*
- 4) Development can be seen as internalising from social interaction*
- 5) Children's foreign language learning depends on what they experience*

The teacher of foreign language or second language must have more knowledge and skills. It is important that bilingual children have access to pedagogies that allow them to negotiate meaning in their classroom interactions. Teacher responsiveness and teacher negotiation are important skills. English as an additional language (EAL) teachers have such skills and knowledge which they use to complement subject teaching.

The English as an additional language teachers interviewed described their role in the class as having particular educational skills and knowledge which they could apply to the classroom context. These include:

- a) Accessing, facilitating and scaffolding discourses for teaching/learning in one-to-one interactions; the ability to come up with creative ideas across the curriculum.
- b) An understanding of the role language (first and additional) plays in learning and teaching and an application of this knowledge to improve learning/ teaching opportunities.
- c) Knowledge of second-language learning processes and the ability to develop opportunities for this to progress across all skill and curriculum areas.
- d) Knowledge of the linguistic and cultural diversity in the class, school and wider neighbourhood (Creese, 2005: 64).

C. Classroom Interaction

In general, classroom interaction is teacher-student and student-student interaction patterns during a lesson. Classroom interaction in mainstream classes uses seven categories for describing verbal exchanges (Brown, 1975: 67):

1. *Teacher lectures* - describes, explains, narrates, directs.

2. *Teacher questions* about content or procedure, which pupils are intended to answer.

3. *Teacher responds* - accepts feelings of the class; describes past feelings and future feelings in a non-threatening way. Praises, encourages, jokes with pupils. Accepts or uses pupils' ideas. Builds upon pupil responses. Uses mild criticism such as "no, not quite."

4. *Pupils respond* directly and predictably to teacher questions and directions.

5. *Pupils volunteer* information, comments, or questions.

6. *Silence* - pauses, short periods of silence.

7. *Unclassifiable*. Confusion in which communications cannot be understood. Unusual activities such as reprimanding or criticizing pupils. Demonstrating without accompanying teacher or pupil talk. Short spates of blackboard work without accompanying teacher or pupil talk.

A good interaction in classroom will make messages transmission success and create a good interpersonal relationship between the teacher and students, so the students' achievement in language acquisition can be increased. And also classroom interaction will be good if the teacher and the students can talk and communicate.

D. Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC)

FIAC is an acronym which refers to the Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories developed by Dr. Ned Flanders. This system consists of ten categories to classify verbal interaction in the classroom. The early efforts in interaction analysis were influential in the evolution of FIAC as an interaction analysis system. The basic system was developed by Flanders and his colleagues during 1955 and 1960 at the University of Minnesota (Flanders, 1970: 33).

According to Flanders (1965, cited in Smith, 1975), the earliest category system for interaction analysis had only one category for student talk; the earliest categories of teacher talk are accepts and clarifies feeling, praises and encourages, asks questions of procedure, accepts, and/or clarifies student ideas, asks general questions, routine administration or unrelated to learning, gives information, opinion, gives directions, gives criticism, justifies own authority.

The format of FIAC (cited in Smith, 1975) consisted of ten categories; seven categories to code verbal interaction of teacher talk; two categories to code student talk; and one category to record silence or confusion in the classroom (Flanders, 1970: 34).

Flanders (1970: 8) believed teacher education would eventually "focus more sharply on the care and nurture of teaching behavior. When

this happens, systems of interaction analysis could become the foundation of a program to prepare teachers. (Smith, 1975: 22-26).

E. Teacher's Talk and Students' Talk

Classes are sometimes criticised because there is too much Teacher Talking Time (TTT) and not enough Student Talking Time (STT). Overuse of teacher talking time is inappropriate because the more a teacher talks, the less chance there is for the students to practice their own speaking – and it is the students who need the practice, not the teacher. If the teacher talks and talks, the students will have less time for other things, too, such as reading and writing. For these reasons, a good teacher maximises student talking time and minimises teacher talking time.

Good teacher talking time may have beneficial qualities, however. If teachers know how to talk to students, if they know *how* to rough-tune their language to the students' level, then the students get a chance to hear language which is certainly above their own productive level, but which they can more or less understand.

Such comprehensible input – when students receive rough-tuned input in a relaxed and unthreatening way – is an important feature in language acquisition. Teachers who just go on and on, using language which is not especially useful or appropriate, are not offering students the right kind of talking, whereas teachers who engage students with their

stories and interaction, using appropriate comprehensible input will be helping them to understand and acquire the language. Good teachers use their common sense and experience to get the balance right (Harmer, 2007 : 38)

1. Teacher's Talk

Classroom is the main place where they are frequently exposed to the target language. The kind of language used by the teacher for instruction in the classroom is known as teacher talk (TT). For this term, *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* defines it as “that variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. To communicate with students, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of foreigner talk and other simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners” (Richards, 1992: 471).

Teacher talk dominates around 60% of classroom time (Chaudron, 1988: 50). We know that discourse is patterned and consists of complex exchanges. Teacher questions play a central role in classroom activity. Chaudron (1988) has argued that 20–40% of classroom talk consists of teacher questions, while Tsui (1985, cited in Creese, 2005) found that nearly 70% of classroom talk consisted of a teacher question, nomination and feedback sequence. We also know that the pattern of adult/child interaction is different at home from that of school.

Wells (1986, cited in Creese, 2005) found that children in school speak with adults much less than at home, get fewer speaking turns and ask fewer questions. Moreover, the meanings that children express at school are of a smaller range and the sentences they use are syntactically much simpler. Wells says that this is because teachers do most of the talking in the classroom. It is they who determine the topic of talk, and initiate most of the questions and requests (Creese, 2005: 66).

Rod Ellis (1985, cited in Yan, 2006) has argued his own view about teacher talk: “Teacher talk is the special language that teachers use when addressing L2 learners in the classroom. There is systematic simplification of the formal properties of the teacher’s language... studies of teacher talk can be divided into those that investigate the type of language that teachers use in language classrooms and those that investigate in the type of language they use in subject lessons.”

Teacher talk is a special communicative activity. Its goal is to communicate with students and develops students’ foreign language proficiency. Teacher talk is used in class when teachers are conducting instructions, cultivating their intellectual ability and managing classroom activities (Qican, 1999: 23). Teachers adopt the target language to promote their communication with learners.

In this way, learners practice the language by responding to what their teacher says. Besides, teachers use the language to encourage the

communication between learners and themselves. Therefore we can say teacher talk is a kind of communication-based or interaction-based talk.

Teacher talk is particularly important to language teaching (Cook, 2000, cited in Yan, 2006: 11). According to pedagogical theory in Yan (2006), the language that teachers use in classrooms determines to a larger degree whether a class will succeed or not. Teachers pass on knowledge and skills, organize teaching activities and help students practice through teacher talk. In English classrooms, teachers' language is not only the object of the course, but also the medium to achieve the teaching objective. Both the organization of the classroom and the goal of teaching are achieved through teacher talk (Yan, 2006: 11)

Teacher's talk can be a lot of features, such as asking question, invitation, direction, inform, prompt, encouragement, criticizing, and so on. Flanders states that the interaction is classified into several components as follows: Teacher talk, which was sub-categorized into direct and indirect influence.

The direct influence involved:

- a. *Lecturing*, i.e. giving facts or opinions about content or procedure, expressing his own ideas, giving the explanation or citing an authority other than a pupil, and asking rhetorical questions;
- b. *Directing*, i.e. giving directions, commands, or orders to which a student is expected to comply;

c. *Criticizing or justifying authority*, i.e. making statements intended to change student, bawling someone out starting why the teacher is doing what he was doing and extreme self-reference.

The indirect influence was such talk as:

a. *Accepts feeling*, i.e. accepts and clarifies the feeling tone of the students in a non-threatening manner. Feeling may be positive or negative. Predicting and recalling feelings are included;

b. *Praises/encourages*, i.e. praises and encourages students' action or behavior. It also the brief feedback from the teacher in response to correct answer. Jokes that really tension not at the expense of another individual, nodding head or saying, "um hem?" or "go on"; and also such as: "Okay, good!", "That's right!", "Alright".

c. *Accepts or uses students idea*, i.e. clarifies, builds and develops ideas suggested by students;

d. *Asks questions*, i.e. asking a question about content or procedure with the intent that a student answers. (Xiao, 2006)

There are informing and prompting in teacher's talk in classroom interaction. Informing is a direct way to help students realize their mistakes. It involves the provision of explicit information about the linguistic form that is perceived as the problem. It can be realized by means of giving definition, an example, an explanation or by signalling the problem. Besides negotiation of forms, inform here also includes

negotiation of meaning. Examples are: *“The correct word you should use here is cross-culture, not international.”* *“You can give an example here.”*

Sometimes, the teacher also prompts to the students when they provide no response or incorrect responses. Prompting, it is an attempt to get participant produce the correct answer by the use of the clue to indicate the location and/or nature of the error, or requesting the student to make a clarification of what she/he has just said, or by the teacher’s repetition of what the student has said with an emphasis on the incorrect part, so as to arouse the attention of the student to the error, such as: *“Are you sure this is the way they do?”*, *“Can you think of another way to say it?”*, *“A verb isn’t suitable here, what do you think you can use here?”*.

2. Students’ Talk

Flanders said that students’ talk, which was subdivided into student-talk response, student-talk initiation, and silence or confusion.

a. Student-talk response, a student makes a predictable response to teacher. Teacher initiates the context or solicits student’s statements and sets limits on to what the student says;

b. Students-talk initiation, talk by the students which they initiate, unpredictable statements in response to teacher;

c. Silence or confusion, pauses, short periods of silence, and periods of confusion in which communication cannot be understood by the observer. (Allwright and Bailey, 1991:202-203)

Students' talk can be defined as student's speech when they imitates their teacher's examples, expresses teacher's idea or gives comments and criticism about something in the classroom, because learners have effort in the language classroom, but teacher's role cannot be separated from their effort. (Prabhu, 1991: 49)

Based on the theory, it can conclude that teaching and learning English for young learners is different with adults. English for young learners is more simple than for adolescent or adult. It uses the simple words too.

A good interaction in the class is important to make the teacher and the students keep communicating on each other. It can be built by teacher's and students' talk in the classroom. So, the students can be active in talking or speaking English during the class.