

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHING  
STRATEGY MODEL FOR ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE LISTENING AND  
SPEAKING SKILLS FOR  
PRESCHOOLERS  
IN MALAYSIA**

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**SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY**

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LANGUAGE LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS FOR  
PRESCHOOLERS IN MALAYSIA

NORSHIMAR AKMAR BINTI HASHIM

THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION)

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop a teaching strategy model for English Language listening and speaking skills for preschoolers in Malaysia using the Design and Development Research Approach (Richey & Klein, 2007). Based on the literature, this kind of model has not yet been developed by other early childhood education researchers in Malaysia. Therefore, the development of this model should be developed. The study was conducted in three phases, namely the needs analysis, design and development, and evaluation. The need analysis used the questionnaire to be distributed to 100 Malaysian government preschool teachers. These findings concluded that there was a need to develop a model of English listening and speaking skills teaching strategies in preschools. The second phase was to design and develop a preschool teaching strategy model using focus group interviews, Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM), and Interpretive Structural Modelling (ISM). The 21 expert panels reached the agreement on the suitability of the elements in the teaching strategy model with respect to the elements taken from the literature review. FDM decision data were used during the ISM process to develop teaching strategy models of 9 experts. The impact of these phases has resulted a prototyped model. The third phase was the usability evaluation which involved 30 experienced preschool teachers evaluating the model using the structured interview based on the open-ended questionnaire. The findings have shown that the preschool teachers reached the consensus on the suitability and usability of the teaching strategy model for English Language listening and speaking skills for preschool children. In conclusion, this model helps children's enhancement in English listening and speaking skills. The implication of the study suggests that the model can be used as a guide for preschool teachers to improve their teaching strategies in developing children's English listening and speaking skills.



## **PEMBANGUNAN MODEL STRATEGI PENGAJARAN KEMAHIRAN MENDENGAR DAN BERTUTUR BAHASA INGGERIS UNTUK KANAK-KANAK PRASEKOLAH DI MALAYSIA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk membina model strategi pengajaran untuk kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur Bahasa Inggeris kepada kanak-kanak prasekolah di Malaysia dengan menggunakan Pendekatan Penyelidikan Reka Bentuk dan Pembangunan (Richey & Klein, 2007). Berdasarkan literatur, model seperti ini belum pernah dibina oleh penyelidik Pendidikan Awal Kanak-kanak di Malaysia. Oleh itu, pembinaan model ini harus dibina. Kajian ini dilakukan dalam tiga tahap, iaitu analisis keperluan, reka bentuk dan pembinaan, dan penilaian. Analisis keperluan menggunakan soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada 100 guru prasekolah kerajaan Malaysia. Keputusan fasa ini, menyimpulkan bahawa terdapat keperluan untuk membina model strategi pengajaran kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris untuk prasekolah. Fasa kedua adalah reka bentuk dan membina model strategi pengajaran prasekolah menggunakan temu ramah kumpulan berfokus, Kaedah Fuzzy Delphi (FDM), dan *Interpretive Structural Modeling* (ISM). Untuk temu ramah berfokus, 21 panel pakar mencapai kesepakatan mengenai kesesuaian 30 elemen dalam model strategi pengajaran berkenaan dengan elemen yang diambil dari tinjauan literatur. Data keputusan FDM digunakan dalam proses ISM untuk pembinaan model strategi pengajaran oleh 9 pakar. Hasil daripada fasa-fasa ini telah menghasilkan model prototaip. Fasa ketiga adalah penilaian kebolehgunaan yang melibatkan 30 orang guru prasekolah yang berpengalaman menilai model dengan temu bual berstruktur berdasarkan soal selidik terbuka. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru prasekolah mencapai kata sepakat mengenai kesesuaian dan kebolehgunaan model strategi pengajaran kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris untuk kanak-kanak prasekolah. Kesimpulannya, model ini membantu peningkatan dalam kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur Bahasa Inggeris kanak-kanak. Implikasinya ialah, model tersebut dapat dijadikan panduan bagi guru prasekolah untuk meningkatkan strategi pengajaran mereka dalam kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DDR	Design Development and Research
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELL	English Language Learner
FDM	Fuzzy Delphi Method
ISM	Interpretive Structural Modeling
LAD	Language Acquisition Devise
MBMMBI	<i>Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu dan Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris</i>
MOE	Ministry of Education
NPSC	National Preschool Standard Curriculum
NPSCA	National Standard-Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Document
NKRA	National Key Results Area
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ZPD	The Zone of Proximal Development

## APPENDIX LIST

- A Letter of permission to carry out the study from the ministry of education Malaysia
- B Questionnaire of Need Analysis
- C Validity of language need analysis questionnaire
- D Validity of Content need analysis questionnaire
- E Interview elements asked
- F FDM Questionnaire in English & Bahasa Melayu
- G Language Validity of FDM questionnaire
- H Item Validity of FDM questionnaire
- I Attendance for FDM session
- J Tentative FDM session
- K Attendance for ISM session
- L Tentative ISM session
- M ISM result
- N Questionnaire Instrument for Usability Evaluation Phase of the Teaching Strategy Model (Structured Interview)
- O Item validity of Usability Evaluation Questionnaire
- P Language validity of Usability Evaluation Questionnaire



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research background, problem statement followed by an explanation of the research objectives, and research questions. The significance of the research and the framework that guides the study is highlighted briefly in the subsequent sections. Finally, the structure of the thesis outlined at the end of the chapter.



## 1.2 Background of the Study

Language development starts since a child is born and it develops with direct experiences, upbringing, education, and encouragement given by the adults around them. Prominent researchers and experts have discussed this fact in early childhood education by Beaty and Pratt (2011); Chomsky and Smith (2000); Mahzan Arshad (2012) and Piaget (1959). Chomsky and Smith (2000) stated that children's existing language processing tools in the brain is called the *Language Acquisition Devise (LAD)*. The LAD can process words they hear and children abled to repeat the pronunciation of the word. It is to be used at an appropriate time based on their experiences (Muchau, 2015).

Typically, language is a form of communication to express thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, and information. Non-verbal movements and behaviour that include facial expressions, bodily posture, and tone of voice are also forms of communication included in language. Therefore, language contains a set of social standards showing an understanding of the words, putting words together in a phrase to enable users to communicate and understand the commands, directions, and information given by others (Gu, 2015; Menter, 2012). In other words, language is essential for people to express themselves and communicate with peers and friends.

The development of children's language involves the ability to listen, speak, read and write. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are part of the communication which begins with hearing and responding to sounds. Children begin communicating and developing language on the day they were born (Anderson, Baker, Leavitt,



Mclaughlin & Robinson, 2010). As children grow and develop, they start listening for various purposes and responding with words rather than sounds and gestures. As discussed by Baker, Mogna, Rodriguez, Farmer & Yovanoff (2016), communication is a receptive language (listening), preceding expressive language (speak). Expressive language skills lay the groundwork for the future success of reading and writing (Baker et al., 2016). These skills develop children's opportunities to listen to and talk to, or with, their parents, relatives, friends, and caregivers (Mullen, 2017).

Apart from that, children's ability to use English as a second language and as an interaction tool in daily life becomes one of the Preschool Curriculum's objectives (Ministry of Education, 2017). The curriculum component aims to ensure that children can listen actively through meaningful interactions with suitable language activities in the respective language. As speaking skills are used in verbal interactions in teaching and learning activities, they are the first components to ensure that the children interact with teachers and friends (Gu, 2015).

Thus, education in Malaysia through the Philosophy of National Education emphasizes comprehensive education that covers physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual aspects. Preschool education has become the national agenda for education today. It has become one of the sub-units in the National Key Result Area (NKRA) after recognizing the effectiveness of early childhood education in all aspects, especially cognitive development. The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) has outlined the concept of appropriate practices used for the education of preschool children through the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010), and the National Preschool Standard Curriculum and Assessment (Curriculum Development





Division, 2017).

At this stage, children are taught to be perfect humans. Implementing preschool for all children before they enter the real school environment is considered to enable the development of education, and thus facilitate the teaching process in the classroom. According to Rohaty (2013), children can effectively absorb the skills taught to them as this stage has become a starting point for entering the educational world for which it can positively impact the growth process.

The growth process impacts children's ability, especially at the preschool level. The children are susceptible to the environment and can learn many languages at once. Therefore, teachers should not miss the opportunity to find appropriate approaches, methods, and strategies to guide the children. Moreover, the teachers provided practical and enjoyable learning activities for children. The teacher tried a variety of strategies in order to make sure that the children learn English in an enjoyable way.

The use of English in everyday life is essential in line with the development of education in Malaysia to go global. The implementation of the policy of '*Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu dan Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris (MBMMBI)*' was done in phases starting in 2010. The main objective is to empower the young learners with English language so as to strengthen their command of English as a compulsory language as the language of communication and language sciences at national and international levels. This is to equip every student with English mastery, to enable the exploration of various knowledge in competition at the national and global levels (Julaihi Bujang, 2010). The importance of English acquisition is to expose the

international language at the preschool level.

Preschool teachers need to make multiple leaps to translate the policies as well as strengthen their English proficiency through effective teaching. English should be aligned with the requirements in the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010) and National Preschool Standard Curriculum and Assessment (Curriculum Development Division, 2017) whereby the teaching of both languages (English and “*Bahasa Melayu*”) should take 600 minutes per week. The role of teachers is increasingly crucial in the implementation of English language teaching and learning strategies in preschool. Effective teaching strategies are one that can help improve preschool children’s English listening and speaking skills. Teachers need to understand effective implementation procedures to make a positive impact on preschool children.

In 2010, the National Preschool Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001) was revised and upgraded to National Standard Preschool Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010) to ensure that the curriculum is up to date with the current needs (Ministry of Education, 2010; Siti Hamira, 2018). In April 2016, the National Curriculum was updated in which high order thinking skills were emphasized in the learning standard known as National Standard-Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Document. The curriculum document provides the English language learning standard comprising of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Ministry of Education, 2017). Listening and speaking skills are combined, as they are regarded as the essential skills in the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017).



One of the aims of the National Standard -Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment (Ministry of Education, 2017) is to use English as a second language in listening and speaking for preschool children's verbal interaction (Ministry of Education, 2017). To achieve this aim, MOE allocates 600 minutes of interaction session in English and another 600 minutes in Bahasa Malaysia. However, 400 minutes are applied to the preschoolers who use another language such as Tamil or Chinese as the primary language of instruction (Ministry of Education, 2017). The changes of the minimum hour communication strand are to increase English language use in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and to provide excellent opportunities for children to enable them to have more time to acquire and learn English (Siti Hamira Md Ngajib, 2018).



Also, communication in a foreign language largely depends on listening and speaking skills (Cabell, Justice, McGinty, DeCoster & Forston, 2015). For this reason, the mastery of listening and speaking skills in English as a second language is a priority these days (Idrissova, Smagulova & Tussupbekova, 2015). At the same time, listening and speaking skills become increasingly important when the child enrolls in preschool as the skills allow them to communicate appropriately. Both skills are equally crucial to preschool children's social development as they attend and participate in conversations (Cabell et al., 2015). Preschool children establish a connection by listening to spoken language, which is an integral part of developing speech, language, and communication (Baker et al., 2016; Khanam & Jahan, 2015).





The following statement by Linse (2005) highlights that listening is a foundation for language skills.

*"You need to hear a word before you can say it; you need to say a word before you can read it: you need to read a word before you can write it"*

*(Linse, 2005, pg. 27)*

Listening skills do not come along when children are born, and the skills are developed and improve as they grow with much practice. The listening practice equip the preschool children to be active listeners (Qodir, Baehaqi & Miftah, 2018). The best way to practice listening skills is through activities that provide exercises with listening skills. The suitable listening activities that suit preschool children are songs, dramas, rhymes, chants, stories, and games (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015). The listening activities can be done with repetitive actions that exercise specific weaknesses over a long period (Crosskey, 2011; Dromi & Zaidman-Zait, 2011; Everett, 2016; Feinstein, 2006). Children have to develop auditory perceptual skills such as auditory detection, discrimination, recognition, sequencing, and memory to master the listening skills (Wang, Shafto & Houton., 2018). The combination of these abilities allows for the growth of vocabulary, proper grammar skills, potential reading skills, and the ability to listen in background noise. These skills, when weak, can be enhanced by replicating how the ear responds to the surrounding sounds. The best time to replicate these skills is during preschool years, as the brain is still growing. Similar to listening, speaking is also an essential skill in the language. Speaking skills deserve as much attention as another language skill is concerned. Likewise, speaking is described as an interactive meaning building process involving information generation, receipt, and processing





(Abu-Snoubar, 2017). Speaking skills become the medium of interaction between people who use meaningful verses (Dromi & Zaidman-Zait, 2011).

Listening and speaking skills are interrelated skills that produce communication. Past studies have shown that listening and speaking skills were part of communication (Almutairi & Shukri, 2016; Celik & Yavuz, 2015; Irshad & Anwar, 2018; Linxiao Wang, 2015; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner, Russo, Kupper, & Kupper, 2006; Richards, 2008; Tavit, 2010). Preschool children speak based on how and what they have listened to as far as the sound of the words is concerned.

In the Malaysian education context, the awareness of using English in daily life is vital as it aligns with the development of education in Malaysia to a global level.

Recently, from 2015 to 2025, the Ministry of Education (MOE) launched the Roadmap for English Language Education in Malaysia to align the standard English taught in higher education schools and institutions with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). CEFR is an international standard aimed at creating learners who can communicate and connect in any language, or English in this context. This move illustrates the fact that there is a thematic continuum of English language education from preschool to tertiary studies (MOE, 2017).

In 2017, CEFR came in due to the emphasis on the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the curriculum. Listening and speaking skills are essential skills in the English Cambridge module (MOE, 2017). Hence, the module became teachers' support document provided with necessary information and guidance to deliver lessons using the Scheme of Work and Syllabus (Curriculum Development Division, 2018). In





conjunction, preschool children have to achieve pre-A1 or A1 at CEFR level. As A1 is the lowest level of generative language, the learner can interact in a simple way by asking and answering simple questions about themselves, then answering simple statements in areas of urgent need or on prevalent subjects, rather than relying solely on a very rehearsed and structured vocabulary of situation-specific sentences. However, communication is dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair (Curriculum Development Division, 2018).

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) and Cambridge English researched Malaysian schools through 'Measuring the English Language Standard and Establishing an evidence-based line for Malaysian schools' to investigate the proficiency level of English (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). The Ministry of Education Malaysia has set to align English language education with the CEFR. CEFR is a framework of reference to describe learners' ability to six levels of language proficiency, such as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. A1 and A2 are low levels, B1 and B2 moderate levels, and C1 and C2 are high levels. Each level of the CEFR describes what the learner does in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A baseline study 2013 by MOE has shown that 62.0% of preschool teachers were below A, 25.0% of teachers at B2, and 13.0% at C1. The result of the study shows that listening and speaking skills were the weakest skills. The *“Dialog Penyediaan Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2015 -2025”* in January 2014 has drawn much attention on an issue about students in Malaysia whereby students from preschool to university level are still





unable to speak English adequately. Preschool teachers became a part of the problem because all preschool teachers have to teach preschool children English communication (MOE, 2014). It is a worrying issue as English is mandatory from preschool to higher education in Malaysia. The Ministry of Education also agreed that English should be taught from preschool to increase English Language proficiency. According to the research above, 85 per cent of students are interested in learning English. At the same time, 97 per cent of teachers are interested in teaching English, but the English language proficiency for both preschool teachers and children were still low. Considering the high percentage of interest and acceptance towards English, the lack of English proficiency among students and teachers in Malaysia needs to be investigated (MOE, 2014).



where the English teaching and learning process in preschool is constantly disrupted due to the children's inability to understand what is being conveyed by the teacher. In his research, it is found that children mostly stayed silent and waited for the correct answer from the teacher instead. Teachers' teaching strategies were unable to effectively convey the contents of the subject as the students did not understand the language it was conveyed in (Idrissova et al., 2015). In terms of vocabulary comprehension and essential listening and speaking skills, students were also unsteady in this aspect (Bowyer-Crane, Snowling, Duff, Fielsend, Carroll, Miles, Gotz, & Hulme, 2008). Given that the students were unable to understand the second language that they were learning in class, interactions between teacher and students proved strenuous. Continuous exercise must be done to elevate the level of vocabulary proficiency in English (Idrissova et al., 2015). Teachers must prepare preschool children for English







learning by giving them early exposure, as outlined in the roots of language. Low levels of proficiency in students stem from limited exposure to the main factors of learning a language, which is listening and speaking by themselves. Through their listening skills, students were quickly understand the contents of the education conveyed by the teacher (Junio, 2012). Following that, speaking in English became natural for children when they are regularly exposed to it. Therefore, it is clear that deficient levels of proficiency in English disrupt the teaching and learning process in the classroom. It shows the importance of listening and speaking skills in English for preschool children (Sayer & Ban, 2014). When it comes to teaching and learning in the classroom, there is a polemic showing that the teaching and learning process cannot attract children's interest to learn English Language (Justice et al., 2018).



preschool teachers teach English lessons through conventional methods that are not attractive to the children. As suggested by Funk (2012) and Yildirim (2016), suitable teaching strategies play an important role in children's learning; thus, methods need to be varied to suit the class size, subject matter, and children's level of proficiency. Teaching and learning that should be conducted using English as the instructional language, has not been implemented to its full extent. However, the English language teaching instruction is still based mainly on rigorous drill exercises, which inculcate a dull and discouraging classroom atmosphere. It shows that English teachers have to be more creative in delivering the subject. A variety of teaching strategies and techniques are important, depending on children's capabilities. Based on past research by Hazita Azman (2016); Mahir and Jarjis (2007) and Paakki (2013), the core problem concerning Malaysian children is the inflexible manner. This is when the children are not provided





with ample opportunities to practice speaking skills in English during class hours verbally and they are commonly confined, and subjected to, a listen-and-repeat pattern.

On the other hand, listening skills are commonly neglected by preschool teachers in English subject. The essential element in developing listening skills to preschool children is to ensure that they become active listeners (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015). In order for the preschool children to become active listeners, preschool teachers have to become a model in speaking English. Preschool children use what they hear from the teachers as part of the communication process. By listening, preschool children learn to speak based on the sound they have listened to. These skills are functional skills considered as non-written communication (OCR Oxford Cambridge and RSA, 2016). Preschool children lack the listening skills when learning English with incompetent language teachers, and this can affect their speaking proficiency (Hazita Azman, 2016). One of the key findings regarding critical issues in early childhood education is the lack of teachers' competence in using English when speaking with preschool children (Sri Handayani, 2016). It became a significant problem for the children to learn English with teachers who do not actively converse in that language. In the preschool curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017), the learning standard of listening and speaking skills in English communication has been emphasised.

Moreover, the curriculum has set the standard that children can at least interact with adults and peers using simple English that they have listened to in the conversation. Therefore, it is essential to review the performance and skillset of preschool teachers to enhance the teaching and learning process of this second language. Due to the issues mentioned above, most preschool teachers are not English





majors. It is an obstacle for them to interact with preschool children productively as well as to conduct activities in English (Canpolat, Kuzu, Yildirim, & Canpolat, 2015). The main issue that causes difficulty for them is the inability to communicate effectively with preschool children as they are not professionally trained to teach English as a second language. Preschool teachers are unable to successfully carry out teaching and learning activities in English effectively due to their lack of language skills, low levels of proficiency, and limited knowledge of English (Siti Hamira Md Ngajib, 2018).

Based on the preschool teachers' feedback (Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Kuantan, 2017), they do not possess enough vocabulary to speak English during the 600 minutes of English instructional language per week. Most of the time, they tend to fall back to Bahasa Malaysia as the instructional language. They are not skilled enough to fully communicate in the English language with the children. The result from past research has shown that the lesser the preschool children listen to the English language, the lesser the breadth of vocabulary that they acquired. Furthermore, the result revealed that preschool children's interaction in English does not take place to boost language learning (Asemota, 2015; Booth, 2013; Coyle & Gómez Gracia, 2014; O'Malley et al., 2006; Richards, 2008a). Hence, the required 600 minutes by the MOE as in the NSPCA is not effectively realized.

In 2016, Malaysian preschool teachers had to sit for the 'Ujian Kompetensi Bahasa Inggeris' by MOE to test their English proficiency level. The test evaluated listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill components (Ujian Kompetensi Bahasa Inggeris - UKBI) (Ministry of Education, 2017). The scores were graded in six bands,





with Band C2 being the highest, and Band A1 being the lowest. Results between 2016 - 2017 for the Kuantan district included 81 out of 128 preschool teachers achieving B2 and B1 which categorized them as independent users. Forty-five preschool teachers achieved C1 and C2 and they were categorized as proficient users. Only three preschool teachers achieved A1 and A2. MOE targeted that all preschool teachers should achieve at least B1. The UKBI results showed that most of Kuantan's preschool teachers had achieved the target set by MOE which they are capable to teach preschool children English language. However, preschool children still performed poorly in terms of listening and speaking skills when compared with other preschool children within Malaysia according to the result of '*Instrumen Penilaian Prasekolah Kebangsaan*' (IPPK) in 2017. Based on the PPD (2017) report, preschool teachers claimed that MOE has given the CEFR module but the teachers did not know how to apply the module in the teaching process. Some of the preschool teachers claimed that they required a systematic teaching strategy to teach listening and speaking skills to benefit preschool children (Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Kuantan, 2017).

According to Rohaty (2013), a problem that needs to be taken seriously in English language teaching is the mechanical manner in which teachers emphasize on reading and writing. Rarely do the preschool teacher use English as a speaking tool in daily lessons, and they do not emphasize on student's listening skills in the teaching and learning process. Rohaty (2013) also saw that the English language should not be used as a subject in preschool education, instead of being the tool for teacher-student interaction during external activities as well as other activities. Preschool teachers should apply effective teaching strategies specifically on English language listening and speaking skills. It shows that teaching strategy is essential to make sure that all





preschool teachers are capable of developing the listening and speaking skills of preschool children. The Standard Preschool National Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010) and Standard Preschool National Curriculum revised 2017 (Curriculum Development Division, 2017) also focus on listening and speaking skills to elevate the learning standard for the English language. Nevertheless, preschool teachers tend to exercise more on reading and writing skills (Rohaty, 2013). Therefore, in order to act as a reference for preschool teachers, there is a need to establish a model of teaching techniques to develop listening and speaking skills.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the research



The study is aimed at the development of the teaching strategy model named as a listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model as a guide for preschool teachers to enhance preschool children's listening and speaking skills in English. The listening and speaking strategies used in the preschool classroom should apply to the English Language strand and curriculum. Besides, the listening and speaking skills' teaching strategy model is to help preschool teachers to guide teachers to employ appropriate styles in teaching listening and speaking skills to align with CEFR to the preschool children. Preschool teachers need to prepare preschool children to learn the English Language by providing early learning experiences as outlined in the English language listening and speaking skills curriculum (Curriculum Development Division, 2017). The preschool teachers need to understand the elements of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model that can help them in the teaching and learning process. The development of the model should consider the inclusion of appropriate elements





of teaching strategy to enhance listening and speaking skills. Apart from that, another group of experts was also consulted to evaluate the model. The model consists of three stages based on the design and development research (DDR) approach (Richey & Klien, 2007): the needs analysis phase, the development phase, and the evaluate usability phase.

### 1.5 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to design and develop the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model for preschool by using Design and Developmental Research Approach (Richey & Klein, 2014).



The research consists of three phases. The objectives of each phase were as described.

- a) To ascertain whether there is a need for developing a teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.
- b) To design and develop the teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.
- c) To evaluate the teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.





## 1.6 Research Questions

Based on the research objective, the problem statement, and the rationale of the research, the research questions for the research have been formulated according to the three phases based on the design and development research approach. It was described in the methodology chapter for Phase 1; in identifying the needs of the teaching strategy model on preschool teachers' views, the needs analysis phase seeks to answer the following research questions:

### Phase 1

- 1.1 Is it important to develop a teaching strategy model for teaching listening and speaking skills?

- 1.2 Is there a need for a teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language?

For Phase 2, which is the design and development phase for the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model for Preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language, these are the research questions:

- 2.1 What are the elements of the teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement?
- 2.2 What are the key components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement?
- 2.3 What are the elements in the main components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on the experts' agreement?



- 2.4 What are the priority elements of each of the key components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement?

In the final Phase 3, the listening and speaking skills English language teaching strategy model for preschool is evaluated based on experts' consensus. The evaluation phase aimed at answering the following research questions:

- 3.1 What is the experts' consensus on the suitability of the component in the listening and speaking teaching strategy model?
- 3.2 What is the experts' consensus on the suitability of the elements for each component in the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model?
- 3.3 What is the experts' consensus on the usability of the elements in listening and speaking skills teaching strategy models?
- 3.4 What is the experts' consensus on the usability of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model?





Table 1.1

*Research Objectives and Research Questions by Phase*

Phase	Research Objective	Research Question
PHASE 1: NEED ANALYSIS	To ascertain whether there is a need for developing a teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.	1.1 Is it important to develop a teaching strategy model for teaching listening and speaking skills? 1.2 Is there a need for a teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language?
PHASE 2: DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH	To design and develop the teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.	2.1 What are the elements of the teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement? 2.2 What are the key components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement? 2.3 What are the elements in the main components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on the experts' agreement? 2.4 What are the priority elements of each of the key components of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model based on experts' agreement?
PHASE 3: USABILITY EVALUATION	To evaluate the teaching strategy model for preschool listening and speaking skills in the English Language.	3.1 What is the experts' consensus on the suitability of the component in the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model? 3.2 What is the experts' consensus on the suitability of the elements for each component in the listening and

*(Continued)*

Table 1.1 (*Continuation*)

Phase	Research Objective	Research Question
		speaking skills teaching strategy model?
		3.3 What is the experts' consensus on the usability of the elements in the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy models?
		3.4 What is the experts' consensus on the usability of the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model?



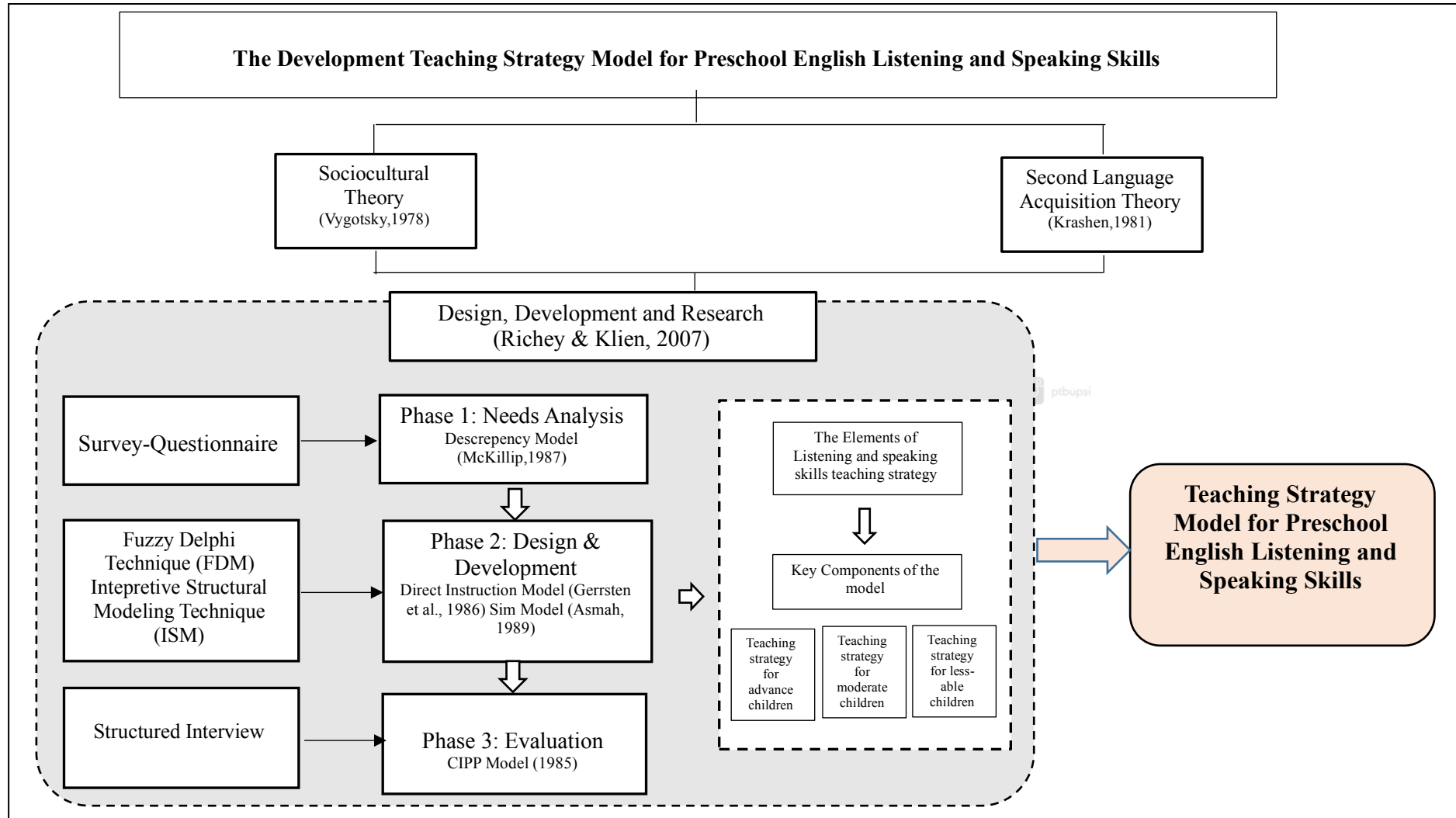


Figure 1.1. Research Conceptual Framework



## 1.7 Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model design and development in preschool education, the concepts and theories shall be reviewed. The previous section describes the conceptual research context to highlight the important main ideas, the concept of listening and speaking teaching strategy model, and important variables underpinning the development of the model for the preschool English language teaching strategy. The conceptual framework is indicated in Figure 1.1.

This conceptual framework is built on components that impact effective teaching strategies for listening and speaking English teaching skills, which is the process of effective teaching strategies used in teaching and learning English. The selection of elements of this teaching strategy is based on a wealth of relevant literature, theories and models. These three components are integrated to look for effective teaching and listening strategies in English teaching.

The strategies used by teachers are essential for promoting listening and speaking skills in English. Teachers' abilities and skills in English also greatly influence effective interactions with children. Teachers not only interact in English teaching slots but they can also interact throughout the child's learning habitually. In teaching and learning, teachers are always stimulated and encouraged to instil in them the desire to try to initiate interactions with teachers. Teachers provide opportunities for children to interact with themselves (teachers) and the children's peers.



The Conceptual Framework deals with the following (Yahya & Wood, 2017):

- a) The objective of the research.
- b) The main variables needed to be considered in the development of the listening and speaking skill teaching strategy model.
- c) The theories underpinning the variables and how the variables are connected to serve the purpose of the research.
- d) How the variables are positioned in the development process of the model.
- e) The theories and models involved in guiding the development process of the model.
- f) How the theories, models, and development process are connected, resulting in the end purpose of the research.

In detail, based on the purpose as listed above, the conceptual framework elaborates the following:

- a) The listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model is the general purpose of the research, which is incorporated in preschool English communication teaching. Based on the problem statement of the research, the main objective of the research is to develop listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model to support preschool children's listening and speaking skills in English Language teaching. It serves to contribute to the body of knowledge as a proposal on how listening and speaking skills teaching strategy models could be incorporated in a preschool classroom language teaching and learning in assisting preschool teachers in fulfilling

both learning needs and target learning outcomes. In this context, this model must be generated to guide the implementation of listening and speaking skills as support to preschool teachers in preschool classroom teaching. It also suggested how listening and speaking skills' teaching strategy model does not replace formal teaching.

- b) Based on the aim and scope of the research, the problem statement, and the research questions, listening, and speaking skills teaching strategy model are proposed to be developed. They are based on preschool teacher's natural methods to cope with teaching strategy, which is "listening and speaking skill enhancement". In this regard, the conceptual framework shows the theories linked to this variable. The theories describe how teachers could assist through the listening and speaking skills teaching process.
- c) Variables are linked to the model's development process through connected theories and models, as shown in the framework by the methodology stages (Design and Development Research Approach).
- d) The conceptual framework includes models and approaches adopted in each phase of the methodology to guide the development of the model.

Overall, the conceptual framework aims to illustrate how the aim of the research is fulfilled through the connection of the variables, theories, framework, and models to develop the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model. The model, as mentioned, is to serve as a guide in the effective incorporation of listening and speaking skills, which can enhance the English language in preschool education. The conceptual framework shows that the teaching strategy is an independent variable to use the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model as a teaching aid. The dependent

variable is the preschool children's listening ad speaking skills when using the model.

## 1.8 Operational definitions

Some several words or phrases have been used in this research, and definitions are as follows:

### 1.8.1 Model

Tracey and Morrow ( 2006) point out that a model is a form of concept illustrated in the way of graphics that facilitates the reader to understand the process of work or activity. Meanwhile, Pastore and Andrade (2019) explain that the model may be intended as a form where it is an adaptive competence, and teachers require the ability to apply knowledge and skills in a flexible, creative, and responsive way.

The model is defined as a guideline and framework for preschool teachers to enhance listening and speaking skills teaching strategy. The developed model in this research becomes a benchmark for anyone who is developing the needs of listening and speaking skills.



### 1.8.2 Listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model

Listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model is specifically for English language teaching strategy concentrating on listening and speaking skills for preschool children. By using this model, the preschool teachers can understand a variety of strategies of active teaching listening and speaking skills in preschool. Preschool teachers can write their lesson plans or develop modules using this model.

In this study, preschool teaching refers to the process of teaching and learning in a preschool classroom that is flexible in a comfortable, safe, and cheerful learning environment. The study was conducted over four hours under the components provided in the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010), and now the Standard Preschool National Curriculum revised 2017 (Curriculum Development Division, 2017). Teachers begin their learning with self-management, fluency, and communication skills. The purpose of the previous activities, gives children the confidence to present ideas in the morning conversation, think creatively and imaginatively to explore the skills taught and perform self-reflection at the end of the learning session in the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010). To date, the Standard Preschool National Curriculum and Assessment was revised in 2017 (Curriculum Development Division, 2017).







### 1.8.3 Listening skill

The learning experience enables children to listen and respond using appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses. The preschool teacher used the teaching strategy model to create active teaching activities, and children listened to words, phrases, and sentences. The more a child listens to what others have to say, the better the vocabulary and other communication elements that included in that interaction. As a result of the development of attentive listening skills, preschool teachers can ease the early struggle of preschool children in communicating with others once they go to primary school.

In the context of the study, the listening skills by National Standard Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment are highlighted and the listening and speaking skills model developed. Listening skills are dependent on each other and share the same importance in developing preschool children's communication skills. The data for the importance of preschool children's listening skills measured by using questionnaire instruments in the needs analysis phase. The researcher gathers all the elements of teaching listening skills to develop the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model.



#### 1.8.4 Speaking skill

*Speaking skill* refers to the ability to use language to communicate effectively. Being able to speak using simple words, phrases, and sentences is an example of a speaking skill. Speaking skill is a skill that children use to converse or to express their thoughts and feelings (Rojanabenjakun, 2016).

In this research, speaking skills guide the preschool children to prepare them to develop the ability to communicate simple sentences and to interact with peers and friends (Ministry of Education, 2017).

*Preschool children* are children aged between four and six years old. They receive formal education in a government school.

In the context of this study, preschool children refer to children between the age of four plus and six-plus who attend preschool education programs under the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Preschool children are the children that used the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model to enhance their listening and speaking skills. Preschool children go through the teaching and learning process according to the curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education Malaysia's NSPC (Ministry of Education, 2010), and most recently, the NSPCA Review 2017 (2017) is organized to assist their development and confidence to help them move on to Year One.



### 1.8.6 Preschool teacher

*Preschool teachers* refers to the occupation that conveys information and knowledge explicitly. It is performed by people who have the qualifications and training by qualified and trained professionals in Early Childhood Education. All preschool teachers in Malaysia must possess a minimum requirement of diploma in Early Childhood Education by the year 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2016).

In this research, preschool teachers represent qualified trained preschool teachers that teach preschool children aged 4-6 years. They have different backgrounds in terms of age, experience, and education, which might affect the way teaching and learning take place in preschool classrooms. *The preschool teachers* refers to teachers who teach English as a second language to children between 4-6 years old who have enrolled in the preschool. A preschool teacher applied the listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model in the preschool classroom to enhance children's listening and speaking skills.

### 1.8.7 Teaching strategy

Teaching strategy is the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction (Dewi, Kultsum & Armadi, 2016). These are strategies the teacher employs to assist student learning. The strategies used in the teaching approach are to help students to understand the material of the desired course and to be able to achieve attainable goals in the future.





In this research, teaching strategy specifically concerns with the practical techniques employed by preschool teachers to enhance English language listening and speaking skills for preschool children. The teaching strategy also helps preschool teachers become more confident in teaching listening and speaking skills in a systematic way.

### **1.8.8 National Preschool Education Curriculum (NSPC)**

In this study, the National Preschool Education Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010) and the NSPCA Review 2017 (Curriculum Development Division, 2017) are standard reference documents for all preschool teachers and kindergarteners after the Education (Preschool Education) Act is amended. The National Preschool Standard Curriculum is designed to promote and improve the quality of preschool education.

NSPC (Ministry of Education, 2010) and NSPCA Review 2017 (Curriculum Development Division, 2017) are also aimed at nurturing children's potential in all areas of development, mastering necessary skills, and fostering positive attitudes in preparation for Year One. The use of English in everyday interactions is also emphasized in light of its position as a second language. Emphasis is placed on the mastery of language across all components to help children think, understand a concept, imagine, communicate ideas, interact, and communicate effectively.



## 1.9 Significance of the research

In the researcher's view, the findings of the research could be of value to stakeholders such as preschool children, preschool teachers, parents, early childhood policymakers, and researchers who are concerned with the education of preschool children, especially in Malaysia. The findings are of significance for:

### 1.9.1 Preschool children

This research is significant for children aged 4+ to 5+ who are studying in preschools, who are in the process of transition from pre-listening and pre speaking skills to listening and speaking skills. Listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model is a set of a systematic model specifically in listening and speaking skills that lead to preschool children's communication activities. Children took advantage of this research because they can learn and practise English through successful experiences with teachers in Early Childhood Education. Since the early years are a critical period for children (Vanhove, 2013), children must acquire a second language through active listening and speaking skills.

The model is developed based on the principle of stimulating multiple intelligences that exist in children, in addition to other considerations likethe Development Appropriate Practice (DAP), interest and children who love visual stimulation, playing, socializing, singing and moving in the process of learning the communication skills.

### 1.9.2 Preschool teacher

It is useful for preschool teachers to improve their teaching strategies in teaching and to learn listening and speaking skills so that the preschool children can comprehend the materials and can be engaged in the teaching and learning process, especially in listening and speaking skills activities. The preschool teachers are also expected to create exciting listening and speaking activities innovatively.

Preschool teachers could facilitate the second language acquisition of children through active listening and speaking skills in and out of the classroom. This study gave preschool teachers the information they need to teach English with a systematic teaching strategy effectively. The preschool teachers are expected to know the English language teaching strategy needs, skills, and knowledge in order to optimize their daily conversations with preschool children.

### 1.9.3 Parents

Although this research does not focus on parents, they are essential in promoting the development of children. Opportunities can be provided from the model by preschool teachers to parents who wish to guide their children in developing the learning communication skills at home in an enjoyable way. Therefore, the English listening and speaking skills' teaching strategy model is hoped to guide parents.

#### 1.9.4 Early Childhood Policy Maker

The content of the curriculum of early childhood education can improve towards achieving the quality of early childhood education in Malaysia. Therefore, this research is significant in the curriculum of early childhood education and the Ministry of Education as a reference to improve the content of the existing curriculum, which involves learning early communication skills. This study is in line with the first wave objectives of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025) that emphasize the importance of bilingual skills. The first wave is to focus on strengthening the current education system, including preschool education, before introducing structural changes that started the second wave (2016-2020).

This study also directly supports the MBMMBI (2010) national policy by providing quality English language learning and emphasizing the use of the language so that the younger generation can master English well, master the university level, and compete globally.

The Ministry of Education could also consider the intake of preservice teachers with a good background in English. Technical preparation also make it easier for preschool teachers to communicate successfully in English in a classroom of preschool children.

### 1.9.5 Researcher

This research is also very significant to researchers in the field of early childhood education, particularly those who are interested in developing research in the field of communication skills. This research can be used as a reference to diversify alternative strategies or methods for children. Therefore, the connection to the study is also useful for researchers who wish to broaden the reach of early childhood communication research.

### 1.10 Limitation of the study

The research is conducted by design and scientific procedures, with the best possible control elements that can interfere with the results of the research. There are several limitations in this study because the focus is only on teachers' teaching strategy for teaching English speaking and listening skills to children. The context of this study is preschool education and second language learning.

This research aims to design, develop, and evaluate the usability of the teaching strategy of listening and speaking skills teaching strategy model for preschools. This research is a research design and development research, so the research only focuses on the design and development process of the model.



This research relies entirely on the collaboration and contribution of expert group ideas. Thus, the findings of the research depended heavily on the degree of collaboration, commitment, and solicitude given during the time when the survey data collection techniques, partial structural interviews, the Fuzzy Delphi technique, and Interpretive Structural Modeling were applied in the model development process.

The design and development of models were conducted amongst specialists involved with early childhood education and in this process, Excel software was used. Based on this limitation, research findings cannot be generalized to all preschool teachers in Malaysia as the research conducted is specific to the context rather than a general population of the teachers.

### **1.11 Rationale of the study**

Based on the problem statement that has been debated, there is an urgent need to develop a model of teaching English listening and speaking skills for preschool. The existence of this model is implemented with a few rationales.

First, the researcher chose English listening and speaking skills as the scope of the study based on the rationale of the importance of English listening and speaking skills which is increasingly emphasized in the aspect of communication. It is therefore important for teachers to have resources and guidance on how to execute the appropriate teaching process. This study is conducted with the intention to help teachers strengthen the knowledge of the necessary elements in teaching and they can produce a good

teaching design and be able to improve the listening and speaking skills of preschool children.

Secondly, the researcher chose to develop a teaching model based on the rationale of most teaching models in Malaysia are dependent on teaching models from the West because there is a lack of research in developing new models in Malaysia. Therefore, the researcher feels it is appropriate to conduct a study to develop a new model that reflects the context and culture of Malaysia.

Third, the researcher chose to conduct a study involving preschool students based on the rationale stated by Siti Hamira (2018) which emphasizes the importance of listening and speaking skills starting from preschool age. It is to provide a solid foundation of listening and speaking skills to children so that they can interact in English with friends, teachers, and peers.

Fourth, the researcher chooses the use of experts as a study sample based on the rationale of the study which looks at the experts' perspective on design thinking is still not much highlighted while according to Muhammad Ridhuan Tony Lim Abdullah (2014) if the experts chosen match the context of the study, it may increase the potentiality of communication thus, produce views and ideas that have a very useful impact. In order to fill the existing research gap, this study uses experts as a sample of research in developing teaching models of preschool English listening and speaking skills.

## 1.12 Conclusion

Preschool education seeks to improve the capacity of children between the ages of 4 and 6 concerning their physical, mental, moral, intellectual, and social growth in a healthy and enriching learning atmosphere through enjoyable, imaginative and meaningful means. In this research, the researcher chooses to use the listening and speaking skills components to get the elements of each skill. The model is a teaching strategy for listening and speaking skills for the preschool teachers to enhance English language communication. It is to improve skills, cultivate confidence, and develop a positive self-concept in preschool teachers to plan their teaching.