Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Current Research and Practice in Teaching Speaking

Most English teachers would generally agree that in speaking classes there should be some attention on the formal aspects of speaking such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and the appropriate use of the spoken language. There should also be opportunity and encouragement for learners to produce meaningful spoken messages with real communicative goals. In addition to all these, the learners should also be given the opportunity to gain fluent use of what is already known.

Robert Sanborn Brown and Paul Nation (1997) proposed that in speaking classes students must be exposed to three key items:

1. Form-focused speaking

   When learners first begin to speak in another language, their speaking will need to be based on some form-
focused learning. They further suggested an effective way to begin, which is to base speaking on some useful, simple memorized phrases and sentences, such as repetition drills.

2. Meaning-focused instruction

Language learners should also be exposed to and given opportunities to practice and use meaning-focused communication, in which they must both produce and listen to meaningful communication.

3. Opportunities to improve fluency

Signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses and "ums" and "ers." These signs indicate that the speaker does not have to spend a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message.

There are merits in Brown and Nation's (1997) proposal, provided there is an appropriate balance of these three elements in a speaking program. Form-focused activities should be emphasized at
elementary levels, and a correspondingly greater emphasis on fluency activities at higher levels.
2.2 Current Research and Practice in Vocabulary Teaching

When teachers start teaching a new group of students, Allen (1983) stressed that it is always helpful to know which members of the class have already learned more vocabulary than their classmates. Allen (1983) suggested that these students can be helpers and leaders, and the students who need to learn vocabulary the most can be given special kinds of work. Tests which can help to show how much has been achieved by individuals in the class is useful to any teacher.

Language teachers are not responsible for entertaining the students in class, but they are responsible for creating conditions, which encourage vocabulary expansion, and a well-chosen game or activity can help the students acquire English words. Vocabulary activities are helpful because they can make students feel that certain words are important and necessary, because without those words, the object of the game cannot be achieved (Allen, 1983).

The selection of vocabulary items to teach depends largely on the specific teaching situation. Teachers need to keep in mind a number of criteria stemming from the teaching context when they try to
determine which words to teach (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Teh, 1995). When teaching young learners, a good source of vocabulary items is the KBSR syllabus.

Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Teh (1995), suggested several factors which must be considered in the selection of vocabulary to be taught:

- **Frequency**

  This takes into consideration the minimum adequate vocabulary, which are enough words for a learner to express the ideas he wants to express. Teachers must remember the interdependence between frequency and usefulness in making their selections.

- **Cultural factors**

  It is important for the students to be able to recognize and identify with the words being introduced. Words referring to climate, landscape, food, clothing and
customs vary with different cultures, so it is best to start with items related to local cultural context.

- *Student-related factors*

The teacher must not forget to take into account the student's need to understand the words and register selected. Gauging the student's level of proficiency and degree of motivation is also a factor to be taken into consideration. In addition, if the student sees that the vocabulary is relevant and useful, the teacher will be able to engage his interest and ensure effective learning takes place.

Hunt & Beglar (1998) proposed seven teaching principles modified from Coady (1997) and Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus' (1996) approaches to vocabulary instruction and learning. The first approach is the incidental learning of vocabulary, which requires the teacher to provide opportunities for extensive reading and listening.
The second is the explicit instruction, which involves diagnosing the words learners need to know, presenting them for the first time, elaborating word knowledge, and developing fluency with known words. Finally, independent strategy development involves practicing guessing meaning from context and training learners to use dictionaries.

Hunt & Beglar (1998) stressed that the learner's proficiency level and learning situation is a main consideration in deciding the emphasis to be placed on each approach.

The seven teaching principles derived from the three approaches are:

- **Principle 1**  Provide opportunities for incidental learning of vocabulary.
- **Principle 2**  Diagnose which of the 3,000 most common words learners need to study.
- **Principle 3**  Provide opportunities for the intentional learning of vocabulary.
- **Principle 4**  Provide opportunities for elaborating word
knowledge.

- Principle 5 Provide opportunities for developing fluency with known vocabulary.
- Principle 6 Experiment with guessing from context.
- Principle 7 Examine different types of dictionaries and teach students to use them.

The first principle is probably best for beginning and intermediate students who have limited vocabulary. Principles two through five may be more suitable for more proficient intermediate and advanced students due to the emphasis on reading and listening. Due to its immediate benefits, principles six and seven should begin early in the curriculum.

There is an important distinction between communicating the meaning of unknown vocabulary and learning new vocabulary. Nation (1994) suggested that although some words may be learned after one meeting, this is exceptional. Although a teacher may clearly communicate the meaning of a word, that does not
guarantee the word will be learned. Nation (1994) also suggested that to assist learning, further meetings would be necessary.

Nation (1994) proposed repetition of vocabulary, which can be added to a course in several complementary ways:

- By setting aside class time for revision, for example reviewing learners' vocabulary notebooks.

- By periodically and systematically testing previously met vocabulary and following up on the results and

- By planning the recycling of previously met vocabulary through pair and group activities.

Nation (1994) believed that vocabulary learning is not an end in itself. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform. Learners' growth in vocabulary should be accompanied by opportunities to become fluent with that vocabulary. Similarly, in this study, the researcher
hoped this fluency could be partly achieved through activities that lead to the enrichment of vocabulary knowledge.

It is important to keep in mind that the activities selected should not be too much of a burden to the students and should give opportunity for meaningful use of the vocabulary.

Visual aids can also be a useful tool in vocabulary teaching and are available in many forms. Teachers have a choice of several that require little or no time to expense or prepare. Allen (1983) points out that when students see actions performed by a classmate or two in response to the teacher's instructions, that is a kind of visual aid. As used in this study, pictures for vocabulary teaching can come from many sources. In addition to those drawn by the students, as in Vocabulary Activity 4 (Appendix 1), or the teacher, there are many materials and resources from which the teacher can copy or cut from.

Often a picture will also show a situation or a scene which there are several different things and persons. It is good for students to see the total scene or picture so that they can see how these things relate to each other.
Nation (1994) concurred with Craik & Lockhart (1972) and Craik & Tulving (1975) who suggested that a very important factor in learning is the quality of mental activity in the brain of the learner at the moment the learning occurs. They further indicated that if this activity is at a deep and thoughtful level, the learning will remain for a long time. If the activity is shallow and mechanical, little learning will occur.

From this Nation (1994) proposed that the teacher consider the possible depth of processing that a particular vocabulary activity provides. Nation (1994) presented different ways where deep and thoughtful processing can result from:

- Relating the new word to previous knowledge.
- Having to create a context for the word.
- Drawing on a range of clues to recall the word.
- Having to appropriately relate the word to a variety of aspects.
- Using the word in a goal directed activity like problem solving.