

# THE THEME BASED TEAHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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## Background to the study

English as a local content subject in elementary schools has been officially included into school curriculum in 1994. This inclusion is revitalized through Misnistry of National Education Decree No. 22 on the Content Standard. The standard indicates that English is mandated as one of the subjects which must taught starting from elementary schools up to senior high schools. In spite of the existence of the standard, its implementation shows some unsatisfactory results due to several factors, such as teacher qualification, inappropriate syllabus, teaching materials, and methology.

The study which is conducted by Kashihani (2004) indicates that teachers' qualification, their English competence and mastery of teaching methodology for young learners serve as the primary factors for the success of teaching English to this learner target. Other research by Madjid (2006) shows that appropriate selection of teaching methodology for young learners can improve their English communicative competence. In this connection, a series of studies on teaching a foreign language to primary students conducted by Lipton (1992) indicates some drawback factors for developing the program of teaching foreign language in primary schools: (1) lack of qualified foreign language teachers for primary schools; (2) inapproriate selection of course design; (3) inappropriate of teaching methology for primary students; and incongruity of teaching materials and evaluation for teaching foreign language to primary students.

Based upon the studies, the use of appropriate teaching methodology to young learners (primary school students) must be considered in the practice of this teaching. Task-based teaching of foreign languages or second languages to primary students made by some reseachers can help them improve their ability to use the target language and their involvement in learning ( Pinter, 1999; Kashihani, 2004; Madjid, 2006). This study is to find out whether the use of theme-base teaching of English to primary students cah help them increase their abilty to use spoken English (listening and speaking skills).