The Role of Play in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Early Childhood Settings in Indonesia

by

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I am the author of the thesis entitled

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It took two months for me to complete this acknowledgement page and I needed a big effort to be mentally strong to continue to write it. Each time I started writing a few sentences, I tended to become emotional. I found myself repeatedly in tears as my father was unable to witness the completion of my PhD thesis as he passed away a year ago.

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Abstract

This research explores and further develops the idea that dramatic play makes a significant contribution to children’s foreign language development (Hanline, 2008; Moon, 2008; Gupta, 2007; Bergen, 2002; Pelligrini, 1991). Previous literature on the implications of dramatic play on children’s language development has focused almost exclusively on first language development. There is a need for new research in this area that investigates the role of dramatic play as a context for supporting the learning of English as a foreign language (Vygotsky, 1978). I argue that social interaction during dramatic play activity, coupled with a variety of interventions, intrinsically motivated by a dramatic play environment, will not only develop children’s English vocabulary and expression, but also provide a natural context for the use of the English language. This study advances understanding of the role of the teacher in working within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through dramatic play and generates new knowledge of the use of a multilingual approach to using dramatic play to enhance language learning.

This action research study involved working collaboratively with a pre-school teacher in a pre-school setting in Indonesia, with a focus upon her reflections and learning process of the use of dramatic play as a context for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Data collection, included the process of reflection on the teacher’s beliefs and practices which involved ten 5-6 year old pre-school children and videotaping cycles of change over a period of ten weeks. The process of implementing the Action Research’s plan was videotaped, where the videotaping data was used by the teacher as a tool for reflection in each cycle. Particular attention of this Action Research was focused on how the teacher transformed her beliefs, values and attitudes on child play along with reflectively and critically developing her practice. Using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), this research enabled the teacher and I to learn, understand, and reflect upon complex challenges associated with using dramatic play as a context for developing English as a foreign language learning. Through repeat reflection and multiple activity cycles of Action Research, the teacher was able to change her beliefs and valued the importance of play as a context for language learning and
development. Consequently she planned and changed her practice to involve extended engagement in dramatic play, the setting up of a variety of dramatic scenarios, and preparing a variety of props and play materials to enhance the use of English in interactive contexts during dramatic play activity.

The research findings highlight the tensions and contradictions on play and pedagogy practice, for example, teachers’ traditional view on play and learning which limit them in adopting play as a context for meaningful learning. In particular, the research contributes to future research on play as a context for children’s meaningful learning of a foreign language.
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

The research reported in this thesis is centrally focused on the pedagogical potential of dramatic play in the context of early childhood education settings to enhance children’s language development; specifically their learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). Dramatic play, where children ‘act out’ or pretend to be certain people or figures, has long been associated with language development (Elías & Berk, 2002). Miller & Almon (2009, p.63) suggest dramatic play ‘contributes greatly to language development.’ Specifically, dramatic play is thought to be a means by which children can develop connections between concrete and abstract thought (Chaiklin, 2003; Karpov, 2005). In addition, dramatic play allows them to use language to negotiate roles, agree on the rules of play, and cooperate with others (Lewis et al, 2000). Researchers find that dramatic play activity contributes to vocabulary size, word meaning and complexity of syntax, maths and reading skills for children (Fisher et al, 2011; Korat et al, 2003; Goldstein & Winner, 2010; DeLoache, 2000; Kavanaugh & Lillard, 2012; Walker & Murachver, 2012).

Existing literature and research on the implication of dramatic play on language development focuses on the relationship between dramatic play and first and second language development. This dissertation argues that dramatic play will also significantly contribute to early-age foreign language development. This thesis suggests that dramatic play will significantly contribute to early age foreign language development. If children get exposed to the target language which is initiated and modelled by their teacher, this enables them to pick up vocabularies and simple expression of the target language. According to Genesee & Nicoladis (2006), children who are exposed to two different languages can simultaneously develop spoken language skills in each. They even develop the ability to switch the two languages respectively according to addressee. Tabor (2008) through his case study provides significant evidence that a child under the age of three effortlessly acquired new language when she
was adopted by a new family who did not speak her first language. His research shows that children might forget their first language if they no longer exposed to it. Further evidence from Copple & Bredekamp (2008) suggests that children can develop two or more languages at the same time as long as they continue to use and get exposed to each language. The idea of language modelling or exposure is significant for my research. Providing language and dramatic play experience effectively scaffolds/helps children to develop languages other than their first language.

Why and how can dramatic play take place to effectively scaffold children’s development of a foreign language? Although much research and literature claims that a free/unstructured play approach to dramatic play promotes children’s development (see e.g. Elkind, 2008; Clements, 2004), the idea of adults’ intervention in dramatic play, which can amplify learning and development, has also been much acknowledged (Goncu and Gaskins, 2006; Wood, 2004; Miller & Almon, 2009; Chaiklin, 2003; Karpov, 2005). In free/unstructured play, children are free to choose, develop, and control their play (Miller & Pound, 2011; Kaiser, 2013). Most importantly, the typical process of free/unstructured play is that children play freely, naturally, and in a spontaneous way without adult intervention. This research demonstrate that the use of dramatic play as a vehicle for second or additional language learning takes place through control of the play as an effective strategy. In this respect, teachers’ initial intervention plays an important role in the control of strategy; that is, by scaffolding, children acquire new words and sentences during dramatic play activity. In other words, teachers provide language experience through positive and active interaction during the play (Kozulin, 2003). Teachers’ intervention is, therefore, a significant requirement for rich modelling and language initiation, which occurs during interaction in the dramatic play experience. Teachers are uniquely enabled to provide the scaffolding which allows children to achieve their target language learning goal.

The idea of structured/guided play activity discussed above is well known and accepted by teachers and educators in the Western educational context, but in another cultural context, the idea can be interpreted differently and the practice of guided play activity is not nearly as common as it ideally
should be. For example, in this action research context, the people in West Sumatra live by the philosophy, *Alam takambang jadi guru* (Let nature be your teacher). Relating to children’s play, this philosophy implies that adults perceive play as free/unstructured play through nature; children are encouraged to play and learn on their own in the environment. In fact, national guidelines of preschool curriculum in Indonesia mandates the guided/structured approach to play. As a result, there is a gap between the society’s common beliefs, values, and attitudes towards play and the national guidelines of the curriculum. Along with this there is an inconsistency between the beliefs, values and attitudes toward dramatic play attributed to teachers, and their play practice. Therefore, I argue that there needs to be a conceptual lens to understand play and learning practice which enables me to develop a critical understanding of a teacher’s perspective on child play and its implication on her practice. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) highlight the importance of cultural-historical understanding in looking at complexities aspects lies behind phenomenon. They write:

> We suggest that a cultural-historical approach can be used to help move beyond this assumption by focusing researchers’ and practitioners’ attention on variations in individuals’ and groups’ histories of engagement in cultural practices because the variations reside not as traits of individuals or collections of individuals, but as proclivities of people with certain histories of engagement with specific cultural activities. Thus, individuals’ and groups’ experience in activities—not their traits—becomes the focus (p.19).

In this research, I work collaboratively with a pre-school teacher to explore how to effectively use dramatic play for foreign language learning. Following the cultural-historical perspective of Rogoff (2003), I believe that my research partner’s practice, experience, beliefs, values, and attitude toward dramatic play and learning are influenced by her ‘cultural practice’. For that reason, within a cultural-historical framework, I am able to develop critical awareness of knowledge of culture where dramatic play takes place (Rogoff, 2003). Interestingly, as a part of the research, the preschool teacher and I collaboratively worked to raise cultural understanding of children’s play through reflection of our individual childhood experiences. The reflection greatly
informs our understanding of cultural-historical development of play in this context of research.

The lens used for analysing, reflection, and understanding play and pedagogy practice is Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) which helped the teacher and I to reflect upon and understand more fully the complexity of people’s thoughts and belief and the relations to her practice. The basic elements of CHAT such as subject, object, tools, community, rules, and division of labour facilitates the teacher to understand about the relationships between her thoughts and beliefs, teaching and learning activity, and socio-historical aspects of the situation. CHAT provided a lens with which the teacher was able to critically analysed situation, make judgement about what had happened, re-shape her perspective, generate problem solving, and think about how the problem-solving effectively work for achieving the goal. In the following part of this chapter I present the discussion and description of the cultural-historical background of this research.

1.1.1 Early Childhood Care and Education in Indonesia

The general picture of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services in Indonesia is described in the Review of National Policies for Education in Indonesia (OECD, 2015), with data reported up to 2015. This review gives a global picture of early childhood services in Indonesia, which is one of the most populous countries in the world, with over 250 million people, and 30% of the population under 15 years of age. With a 20% gross enrolment rate in pre-primary education, educational early childhood services include Kindergartens (TK), Islamic kindergartens (RA), Playgroups (KB) and Childcare Centres (TPA). Care services are available for parents (i.e., Integrated Service Post, or Posyandu, and the Mother’s Program, or BKB). In the Indonesian context, the terms early age’, ‘early childhood learning’, ‘early care,’ and ‘early education’ refer to ‘the area of discipline that concerns the care, development and learning of young children of ages 0-8 years.’ The terms ‘preschool education’ and ‘kindergarten’ refer to education for children between the ages of 3 and 6 (UNESCO, 2003).
Although there has been an increase in gross enrolment ratios for pre-primary education in Indonesia, based on the UNESCO data updated in 2012, Indonesia is still shown as having the lowest enrolment rate in the world (OECD, 2015). In addition, the UNESCO data for the period up to 2012 showed there are about 15 million children aged 0-6 who are not enrolled in formal early childhood educational settings. Therefore, a grand system of beliefs, principles or similar that are advocated in the policies in Indonesia under the coordination of Education Ministry have been designed and promoted to support early childhood education and boost the enrolment number of children attending school:

1. Early childhood education is organized prior to pre-primary education
2. Early childhood education is provided through formal education, non-formal education, and/or informal education.
3. Early childhood education provided through formal education can take the form of taman kanak-kanak (TK) that is, kindergarten, Raudatul athfal (RA), or other forms of formal education of the similar type.
4. Early childhood education provided through non-formal education can take the form of kelompok bermain (KB) that is, play groups, Taman Penitipan Anak (TPA) that is, child-care centres, or other forms of non-formal education of a similar type.
5. Early childhood education provided through informal education can take the form of family education or education in the surroundings. 

(Law of Republic of Indonesia on National Education System, 2003)

There are four kinds of early childhood programs in Indonesia. They are kindergarten, playgroup, child-care, and PAUD (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini) which is similar to child care/play group. In comparison with other countries that provide only kindergarten and child-care, these programs provide a greater flexibility for Indonesian families that look for a diversity of developmental pathways for their children. The Early Childhood Directorate (2010) describes that education for early childhood should enhance not only intellectual,
emotional, aesthetic, social development and parenting, but also provide spiritual development.

The awareness of the importance of children’s education is critical for the development of early childhood education. Despite the government’s awareness of the importance of early childhood care and the effort to address curriculum development, in fact, the report shows mothers’ lack of awareness about the importance of children’s education remains; that is 99.2% of mothers consider their children are not ready for going to school at aged 5-6 years (UNICEF, 2013). Due to the lack of awareness of the importance of early childhood education, ‘only 4% of pupils enrolled in kindergarten are in public kindergartens and the rest of the pupils are in kindergartens run by the private sector or in community-based institutions’ (OECD, 2015, p.89). In rural areas, the rise of women’s participation in the labour force, which has increased about 59%, has led to a demand for early childhood services and education to look after children while mothers are at work. The percentage of women in the workforce continues to increase, attracting increased attention from the government to provide quality child care programs. (UNICEF, 2012).

Regarding the status of early childhood education within the education system, it is part of the formal and informal Indonesian education system (Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2009). Early childhood education is recognized by law as a stage preceding basic education (Ministry of Education Indonesia, 2003; UNESCO, 2005). The UNESCO report shows that TK (Taman Kanak-Kanak), or Kindergarten, is the main centre-based pre-primary education service for children aged 4+ to 6+ years. RA (Raudhatul Athfal) is the same as TK (Taman Kanak-Kanak), but with emphasis on Islamic concepts in school. Law 20, 2003 on the National Education System describes three types of programmes for pre-primary school:

- Kindergarten (*taman kanak-kanak* or TK) and Islamic early childhood education (*raudhatul athafal* or RA) for 4-6 year-olds. The latter is managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- Playgroups (*kelompok bermain* or KB) and childcare centres (*tempat penitipan anak* or TPA) for 2-4 year-olds.
• Integrated care centres (pos pelayanan terpadu, posyandu) where health and care services are provided in an integrated way for children aged up to 6 years old.
• In addition to those listed above there are other non-Islamic, faith-based institutions which provide some aspects of childcare and some elements of education to varying degrees. (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015. p.86)

Although the access of disadvantaged families to early childhood education is still limited, both TK and RA have expanded rapidly during recent years, with the gross enrolment rate having increased from 6% in 1970 to 19% in 2000. It is important to present the current situation around early childhood education sector in Indonesia. The early childhood education sector finds itself in a complex situation. The awareness of the importance of this sector has just increased by enrolment rate, but improvement is needed in many aspects for providing quality early childhood teaching and learning. According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015), there is no sufficient curriculum standard, teacher qualifications, and facilities.

The early childhood care and education sector has not been regulated in a systematic way. Much early childhood provision has developed in an organic way and the oversight and quality assurance of standards and programmes is variable across and within regions. At a local level many new early childhood institutions are authorised without any clear criteria or standards. Some operate without an official licence to do so (p.91).

Variability exists in the qualification of professional teachers involved in early childhood education. In Indonesia, this has long been a dilemma. UNESCO reports that up to 2011, there has been an insufficient set of standards of management for early childhood programs, including the provision of qualified teachers for teaching in pre-primary educational settings:

Just under 16% of teachers were S1/D4 graduates, i.e. with a bachelor’s degree or a four-year diploma, while most were high school graduates or below D2 (two-year diploma) graduates (OECD, 2015, p.91).

The data illustrates that people who do not hold an approved early childhood teaching qualification are allowed to teach at pre-schools and manage early childhood educational programs. Accordingly, starting from 2005, the government totally encourages early childhood teachers to enter tertiary
education for a four-year program. It expects these expanded services to be fully staffed with qualified teachers in the next ten years (The Education Sector Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership (ACDP), 2013). As funding for entering tertiary education for a four-year program coming from individual student, the progress has been uneven and slow. The Indonesian Ministry of Education recommends that:

Educators in formal education, early childhood education, basic education, secondary education, and higher education should be graduates from accredited higher education institutions. (Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2003)

Thus, in order to meet the condition many universities in Indonesia that had a 1-2 year program for early childhood teacher education have begun to provide tertiary education in a four-year program since 2006. Teachers’ qualifications and curricula continue to develop to meet this aspiration, particularly schools of education in Indonesia. As an example, the Early Childhood Department of Padang State University has developed the subject of the method of teaching EFL to early childhood learners in order to facilitate teachers to gain more knowledge in teaching English in early age settings.

In this respect, pre-school teachers are encouraged to pursue their study to get either a college degree or a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. Scholarships are provided by central and local governments for those teachers who have been teaching many years, but have no Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. Numerous teacher training programs in early childhood education and development have been offered by both non-governmental and governmental organizations (MOEC, 2012). These recent policies have aimed to develop teacher professionalism in early childhood education to enhance a better education foundation for the next generation of Indonesians.

1.1.2 Teaching and learning English as foreign language at pre-school level in Indonesia

This research aims to explore pedagogical issues in relation to teaching English as a Foreign Language. The main focus is to investigate how play can be effectively implemented by pre-school teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in early childhood settings in Indonesia, particularly at the pre-school
level in West Sumatra. The current curriculum of pre-school in Indonesia stipulates play as an approach in teaching and learning (Ministry of Education Indonesia, 2003). However, the knowledge about the extent of implementation of play is still elusive; for example, there is no research on the relationship between incorporating play and teaching EFL. In most cases, although the national curriculum guidelines clearly state that EFL is allowed to be introduced at pre-school, there is no obvious framework for teaching EFL at pre-school. In this respect, teachers are responsible for designing, developing, and evaluating teaching and learning strategies of EFL on their own.

I focus on investigating teaching early-age EFL for three main reasons. Firstly, after conducting the literature review, I agree with research findings that argue learning more than one language benefits not only language development, but also children’s critical thinking or cognition. For example, Kovacs (2009, 2007a), who researched the cognitive aspect of learning an additional language found that children who are exposed to more than one language are able to reach higher levels of cognitive function. Bialystok (2012) with his neurological approach to child’s language development emphasizes that learning more than one language contributes to cognitive reserve. Other significant research shows that cognition is affected by early life experiences, in particular language experience (Siegal et al., 2012). Children who are exposed to multi-languages are used to responding to different sounds and meanings. In this respect, therefore, learning additional language such as second and foreign language learning enhances children’s problem solving, mental activity, creativity, and imagination. The advantage for children learning additional language is that it promotes dual native-like language competence (Petitto, 2003). While there are advantages to being exposed to more than two languages, research also demonstrates that being bilingual can cause the delay of language skills, in particular language proficiency between the two languages (De Houwer, 1999; Genesee et al, 2004). I agree with the argument that children using two languages show lack of proficiency, even confusion, however I argue children take time to process for language proficiency. In this respect, my research suggests that through experiencing the language, children pick up more than two languages effortlessly.
Secondly, the national agenda of Indonesia to improve the teaching of English as a foreign language demonstrates an awareness of the importance of the global economic challenge and the development of human resources. It is clearly stated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003: ‘a foreign language can be used as a medium of instruction to support the competency of the learners’. Early childhood education continues to develop, in particular the mastery of delivering English at an early age. Therefore, I aim to investigate the important part of the teacher’s role in teaching and learning EFL in Indonesia.

Thirdly, Indonesian education authorities consider play to be a staple in early childhood classrooms. The key role of play and its place in the early childhood curriculum are recognized in the primary and secondary education policy; the implementation of play in kindergartens is supported by the principle of ‘playing while learning and learning while playing’ (Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2009). Through a play approach, literacy training in the formal Indonesian education system is conducted in the national second language, Bahasa Indonesia; this sits within the general framework of early childhood development, which allows for the introduction of English as a foreign language. Thus, the opportunity exists to examine teaching English as a foreign language in early childhood through play, and this will be the focus of my study.

Although introducing a foreign language is stated clearly in the National teaching guidelines, there is no obvious guidance for teachers to implement teaching a foreign language at pre-school. In fact, on the other hand, the guidance of teaching language for pre-school that is released by Ministry of Education is focused on teaching Bahasa Indonesia as a second language. This has caused pre-school teachers to design their own teaching EFL program. For this reason, the view of play and language learning for children as a mutual endeavour seems a very challenging. The most current research done by English First (EF) using the English Proficiency Index shows that Indonesian’s English proficiency score is at the 34\textsuperscript{th} level, which means a very low proficiency level on a comparative scale involving 40 countries (EF Education First ltd, 2011). Thus, it is believed that EFL learning in Indonesia is totally unsuccessful, since the writing, reading, and speaking competence of senior high school graduates is so poor.
This significantly impacts on the improvement of students’ English language skills, their attitude towards English and motivation to learn, a key factor that will generate further language learning in their higher levels of education. As a result, the younger generation of Indonesians has poor English competence that may impact on their competitiveness in business (Nichols, 2014). Therefore, the government has mandated the provision of the English curriculum for early level of education, such as pre-school and elementary school, emphasizing the importance of language learning at the early age to develop children’s language; the response to this has been very supportive. Primarily, this is the result of the greater attention given by the government to early childhood in general.

In this cultural context of the research, ability to speak English is highly prized in the community where the majority of the individuals speak a local language as their first language and Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, as their second language. English, in this context, is the most prestigious and widely studied foreign language. The demand for English language skills has grown over time and has led to the introduction of English at lower levels of schooling. This is the reason that English is part of the curriculum at the participating pre-school located in the city of Padang in the Indonesian province of West Sumatra. Padang is a city of nearly one million. It is the provincial capital and home to a number of universities, colleges, and major companies. Like other cities of its size in Indonesia, the growing middle class of educated professionals increasingly demands more academically-oriented educational opportunities for their children beginning at younger ages. English is seen as an important component of this early schooling because parents tend to view ability in the language as an extremely important asset for children throughout their school career and in gaining employment when they finish their education.

1.2 Aims

The aim and focus of this thesis is on the teacher and the action research in a particular context, exploring and reflecting dramatic play as a context for language learning. This study also aims at generating teacher’s critically reflective thinking and activities about the potential use of dramatic play as a
context of learning language in pre-school settings. There is a focus on the process of change/transformation of teachers’ thinking and practice, rather than on children’s outcomes. For that reason, this study further aims to identify specific challenges faced in teaching EFL at this level in the Indonesian context and to determine ways in which these problems might be solved in the specific linguistic, social and cultural contexts that exist in Indonesia. Repeated reflection and multiple cycles of dramatic play activities aim not only to re-conceptualise the teacher’s base knowledge of dramatic play, but also, and most importantly, to teach practice improvement. More particularly, this research aims at exploring the way the teacher plays her role in managing dramatic play activity in order to effectively and successfully scaffold children’s developing EFL during the play. At the end of this project, I aim to discover an efficient approach of using dramatic play as a context for learning EFL.

1.3 Justification

Pre-school education is still a recent innovation in Indonesia, and its effects and practices have not been thoroughly studied. As more children begin school at this level, it will be increasingly important to understand the pre-school context and how it could be made more effective (OECD, 2015). This is especially true with respect to EFL, which remains the most widely taught and most in demand foreign language in the Indonesian educational context. It is generally accepted in Indonesia that the more exposure to English students receive at any age and regardless of their language background in a local language or Indonesian, the more beneficial it will be for their ultimate educational achievement. Therefore, social expectations about teaching and learning English are that using the target language is more important than the teaching and learning process. However, this belief is largely unevaluated in Indonesia, and the nature and effects of EFL teaching at the pre-school level has not been evaluated.

1.4 Significance

Early childhood education is currently of concern to the Indonesian government in providing an appropriate education to all children, as attested to by the formation of the Directorate of Early Childhood Education within the
national Ministry of Education in 2010 (Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2014). Similarly, teaching of English as a foreign language and ensuring mastery of this subject remains a priority of the national educational system as a whole (Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2014). The adoption of English as a foreign language in the Indonesian curriculum has led to the language being introduced at lower levels of education, including pre-school. However, little is known about the nature of EFL teaching at this level. For that reason, this study helps to investigate this phenomenon and expands our understanding of foreign language teaching at the earliest levels of formal education.

1.5 Research Questions

This research is undertaken with a view of exploring the notion of guided/structured dramatic play and learning EFL in early age through multiple reflections of dramatic play activity cycles. The aim is to improve the use of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy for learning language. Thus, the question calls for action research (Cook, 2004; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007). The aim of the study is to elucidate the nature of dramatic play at the pre-school level and to describe the extent and quality of EFL used by children as part of this activity. This is important because questions surrounding this research become prevalent in improving the notion of guided/structured dramatic play and learning.

The aim of this research is twofold. First, at an organisational level, I want to learn the cultural-historical value of play and learning; that is, about relationships between the pre-school teachers’ experience of play, her beliefs, values, and attitudes toward play and her classroom practice. I used the term ‘re-conceptualize’ in the research question for one main reason; the teacher and I revisit the use of dramatic play as a strategy of teaching and learning language in a particular context: multilingual language settings. This study suggests that individual and cultural-historical factors might shape the practice of play as a pedagogical strategy (Rogoff, 2003). In order to accomplish my research aims, the main question is as follows:
How can pre-school teachers re-conceptualize dramatic play as pedagogical strategy to enhance children’s foreign language learning and development in multicultural language context?

Since this action research undertakes multiple activity cycles for improving play and learning practice, I then organised relevant and provocative questions into three sub-questions as follows;

1. How could this pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language in a pre-school setting?

2. What happens if the teacher re-conceptualizes her perspective in dramatic play experience?

3. What happens if the teacher uses multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?

The responses of the three sub-questions reflected the importance of cultural-historical understanding of teaching and learning practice. By using a cultural-historical perspective, this action research explores the view of dramatic play within a specific context. The first sub-questions above helped me figure out pre-teacher’s experience, practice, beliefs, values, and self-identity. The response of the first sub-question also informed not only the small scale context of the individual, but also a wider context of teaching and learning practice. The response of the first sub-question informed the pre-school teacher in developing her new design of teaching practice. The second and third questions were generated from the review of knowledge which was taken in the early stages of reflection. They refer to supported experiments which were intended to solve general practical problems. For example, through reflection we considered the damaging effects of stress on children when they are provided with a single target language approach; we then decided to experiment using a multilingual approach during dramatic play and learning language.
1.6 Limitations

I am truly aware of the strength and limitation of this research. By necessity, this action research involves one pre-school in one Indonesian city. The multilingual, multicultural nature of Indonesian society means that the participants in the study (teachers and students) all come from the same ethnic group and have the same experience in the local language of the region. This means that the specific findings of this study may not apply exactly in other parts of Indonesia where the language context is different, especially in locations where more than one local language is used by the community. Additionally, the province of West Sumatra, where this study was conducted, is a strongly Muslim region. This is manifested in the nature and practices of the pre-school studied but would be different in another part of Indonesia where members of different religious communities are present. Finally, while the findings of this study are relevant to other multilingual, multicultural societies especially in developing countries, the cultural background and attitudes towards language may not be exactly the same as in other locations.

However, using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) generates unique outcomes with critical cultural historical perspective of discussion. This method is respectful of culture and histories, and the cyclic approach adds to the multiple Activity Cycles. This informs the activity aspects of the methodology and can be taken up by others who are interested in understanding play in their context.

1.7 Translations

The findings of the study are derived from videotaped records of classroom interaction at the participating pre-school in Padang, West Sumatra. They were transcribed by the researcher who was present during the classes in question and participated in classroom activities. The recorded interactions contain examples of language use in three separate languages: Minangkabau, the local language of West Sumatra; Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia; and English. They were transcribed by the researcher (who speaks Bahasa Indonesia, English, and Baso Minang) who was present during the classes in question and participated in classroom activities. All translations were checked by Dr. Rebecca Fanany of Deakin University who is a native speaker of
English and is fluent in *Baso Minang* and Indonesian in order to ensure accuracy and idiomatic translations.

### 1.8 Overview of Thesis Chapter Structure

This Chapter One had provided the rationale for the structure of the thesis, the context/background of the research, the statement of problems, and the implication of the study. Chapter Two highlights the typology of child play and its relation to current theory of child play. Chapter Two also argue the importance and value of dramatic play in the context of Indonesian early-childhood education settings to enhance children’s language development, specifically their learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). The chapter also discusses the context of early childhood in Indonesia and its relation to foreign language learning. Furthermore, the gap in research on the use of dramatic play for language learning and development is presented in this chapter. Chapter Two and Chapter Three critically review, summarize, evaluate, and clarify theoretical underpinnings of the concept of child play and its importance for child learning and development. Chapter four establishes the significance of theoretical analysis of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). The chapter critically review the use of CHAT incorporated into Action Research project. The systematic overview of research method is presented in Chapter Five. The description of multiple Activity Cycles of Action Research project is presented in Chapter Five. The chapter focuses on reporting the process of teacher’s transformative learning over Action Research cycles. The establishing results are synthesized in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight highlights the outcomes of this research, provides recommendation, and reveals limitation of the research which might generate ideas and recommendation for future research.
Chapter Two

Typologies of play: A historical context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to present a basic discussion of definitions, theories and concepts of play, brief theories and typologies. I will discuss how views of the importance of play in education and children's development and learning is and has been influenced by socio-cultural and cultural-historical contexts. This chapter makes two main points with regard to this: 1) It outlines the history of Western thought on play; 2) it describes cross-cultural perspectives on play and education and learning and development, in particular the views and thoughts on play in Asian contexts. In this respect, I bring together in the form of a historical overview, three strands of thought that tie in with my research focused on the pedagogical potential of dramatic play to enhance early childhood EFL learning. As dramatic play is the focus area of play for the research, this chapter is a synthesis of critical perspectives and relevant discussion of theories and research on dramatic play, particularly Vygotsky (1978) and Smilanski (1971). I discuss the ways in which dramatic play might be a context for learning, particularly language learning and second/additional language learning. The discussion of unstructured and structured dramatic play, and views of dramatic play as a pedagogical context will be essential knowledge for my research.

2.2 Definitions, Theories and Concepts of Play from Classical to Contemporary Time

The definition of child’s play varies according to many aspects. Many studies have been conducted on developing the definition of play both in educational settings and home contexts (Eberle, 2014). Hughes (2010. p.4) identifies five characteristics of play; intrinsically motivated, freely chosen, pleasurable, nonliteral, and activity engaged. Intrinsically motivated means that children engage in play for their own sake. Hughes highlights, ‘if children are forced into play, they may not regard the assigned activity as play at all (p.4)’.
Play is something fun and enjoyable. The second characteristic of play is *freely chosen*, which means children are free to choose their play and to freely develop it. *Nonliteral* means that play ‘involves a certain element of make-believe, a distortion of reality to accommodate the interest of the player’ (p.5). The last characteristic of play is *actively engaged*, this means children are involved *physically and psychologically* (p.5).

At the current point in time, educational researchers and teacher practitioners and others more generally, including children, may universally agree that play refers to a fun activity (Frost, 2010; Bodrova & Leong, 2003a). In this respect, fun active activity refers to free play without adult direction. It is fun to play freely around the house and backyard without adults’ intervention and presence. Further, according to Gray (2011), play is outdoor free play where children are free to manage their play without adults’ intervention. For many children, play is a daily activity that may fulfil mental and/or physical activity needs (Johnson *et al.*, 2005). However, the definition of play is believed to change from time to time and entail many aspects. As Frost (2010, p. 61) suggests:

> The remarkable endurance of play and games across centuries, generations, cultures, and countries is quite a story. Both natural and man-made playgrounds change with geography, time, and necessity. Technology, culture, and interest change children’s toy choices, but their games, laws, and seasons for playing them endure in modified fashion.

Frost emphasises that today, many parents do not allow children to play freely outdoors for security and safety reasons. The dynamic shifts in social life that re-conceptualise the notion of play has resulted in changes to the concept of play (Goncu and Gaskins, 2006). For that reason, play in early childhood calls for definitions of play from multiple perspectives. From the overview of shifts in the notion of play over the three periods; the Classical and Renaissance, pre-modern era, and modern era, play can be defined contextually in relation to social, cultural and economic changes.
2.2.1 Definition, Theories and Concepts of Play in the Western Context

I begin with the discussion of the concept of play in the Ancient Greece, because this historical point in time played an important role in the development of play for educational institutions as we now know them in Western educational contexts (Mulhern, 1956; Gutek, 1991). Although the task to define the concept of play may not be straightforward or clear cut, play can be understood to be a fun, enjoyable activity that empowers our spirits and brightens perceptions of life (Johnson, et al. 1999). Play, indeed, is difficult to define; as teachers, educators and practitioners have all used different definitions when describing play (Pellegrini, 2011). In this research context, I define play as a vehicle for learning and development. In this sense, adults facilitate play activity to become playful and rich with opportunity to learn. The following takes up this contemporary standpoint on definitions of play.

In the Ancient Greek era, play was understood as active play, physical activity, and physical exercise either indoor or outdoor for a competitive ethos that pervaded Greek society (Wolfgang, 1987). For example, children participated in sport competitions, including athletics and Panathenaic Games (Miller, 1979). Boys even participated in dangerous play such as wrestling. Greek society valued strength, considering it very important in human life (Wolfgang, 1987; Harris, 1972). Young boys were not only to be prepared to compete, but also to develop military skills. The concept of play in the Classical and Renaissance was typically divided into two kinds: playful play and serious play. Playful play referred to free play, while serious play referred to play activity for developing children to be athletic in games, such as fighting in armour, archery, running, jumping, and riding horses (Plato, 1960). Play through games and physical abilities in the Classical and Renaissance era was believed as a collective set of preparations for children's future success and wellbeing.

Among the great Greek philosophers during the classical age of 500–300 BCE, Plato and his student Aristotle devoted their reflection to the concept of child play. Plato, who was born in the fifth century B.C.E, presented his reflective thinking on education, in particular the concept of play in early education through his works The Laws and The Republic, written about 385 B.C.E. Plato considered that play should be a pleasurable and enjoyable activity
Plato argues children should develop their strength and endurance, discipline, music, arithmetic, and literacy through fun learning, instead of humiliating children for educational reason (Plato, 1960). In The Republic, his serious topic of education was as a response to the socio-political context in his time; he offered learning through free play rather than by force:

"Well then, the study of calculation and geometry, and all the preparatory education (propaideuthenai) required for dialectic must be put before them as children (paisin), and the instruction must not be given the aspect of a compulsion to learn" (ouk hos epanagkes mathein to schema tes didaches).

"Why not?"

"Because the free man (eleutheron) ought not to learn any study slavishly. Forced labors performed by the body don't make the body any worse, but no forced (biaion) study abides in the soul."

"True," he said.

"Therefore, you best of men," I said, "don't use force (bia) in training the children (paidas) in the subjects, but rather play (paidzontas). In that way you can better discern what each is naturally directed toward." (7.536e-f)

It was understood from the quotation above that Plato opposed a serious-minded learning approach to education. Plato concerned that playful learning was the key defining feature of child learning.

However, in fact, the concept of play as a pleasurable activity had no place in Ancient Greek education or later in Western Europe in the Middle Ages (1559–1560), because the curriculums focused on the upholding of strict moral values; values that excluded ‘pleasurable activities’ and that were firmly entrenched in the social and religious (Christian) life of communities at that time (Ariáes, 1962). Ariáes (1962) furthermore strongly argued that there was no concept of child education in the Middle Ages. For example, young girls were expected to stay at home and help their mother to cook, and to take care of siblings. Young boys were expected to follow in their fathers’ footsteps by
attending their father workplaces and carrying out simple tasks in order to obtain knowledge about how to perform the work. The concept of play as a pleasurable proposed by Plato and Aristotle could not be taken for granted, because the facts remained that a child was a little adult (Jenks, 1996).

The concept of pleasurable play proposed by Plato and Aristotle was extended by an influential English philosopher in England in period of 1632-1704, John Locke. Particularly in England, Locke promoted learning through play for children in the educational context (Saracho, 2013). Like Plato, Locke’s concept of pleasurable play was also aimed at preparing children for the future; that was, to be ‘a skilful man’ (Locke, 1890). However, Locke’s concept of play was more influential in his time as through empirical research, he conceptualised play as a basic need for all children (Chudacoff, 2008). He believed children were naturally drawn to be active, both physically and mentally (Kingdon, 2014). In an era where the community appeared to place high religious value on educational settings, John Locke (1632-1704) in his treatise, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, says, ‘…the chief art is to make everything that children have to do, sport and play too’ (1902, p. 38). Through his reflective thinking of education, moral and political, Locke then was regarded as ‘the father of modern education in England’ (Wood, 1983, p.20).

In speaking of what was understood to constitute play activity in Plato’s era, firstly I am concerned with two fundamental differences in the concepts of play and work in that context. In Plato’s time, in my view, there were no clear cut differences between child play and work. Work refers to an activity for a serious purpose, such as sporting games and athletics (D’Angour, 2013). Moreover, work requires a repeated activity for a competitive reason. As D’Angour (2013) says, ‘the childhood of young aristocrats, the class to which our sources almost exclusively attest, involved training for political and military leadership in such activities as gymnastic competitions and verbal contests’ (p.294). As play activity was regarded as a cultural and religious activity in Plato’s context, adults viewed work constitutive of child play activity.

At the same time, through his book Emile (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) appeared to introduce a more influential concept of play across Europe, in particular in France. According to Rousseau and Foxley (2009), play
should be integrated into the educational system. Rousseau advocated for an education free from humiliation and intimidation. Rousseau valued play as a superior method for children’s learning. Like Locke, Rousseau railed against traditional schooling that saw play as a purposeless activity at that time. Rousseau was also regarded somewhat as a pioneer in his promotion of the use of play materials as a learning mediation and other materials in children’s play in early childhood educational practices (1979).

Still in the Nineteenth century, a more developed concept of child cognitive learning was introduced by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) in Germany (Marenholtz-Bulow, 2007; Provenzo, 2009). According to Provenzo (2009), Froebel was the founder of kindergarten and play materials in German. Froebel valued props/materials/tools and play activity encouraged children to engage in interactive play (Brosterman, 2002). Froebel defined play as not simply a physical activity, but also a playful and meaningful activity with the potential to enrich children’s knowledge and understanding of their world. According to Provenzo (p.88), Froebel furthermore developed the use of tools in children’s play for teaching and learning purposes. ‘Froebel’s gifts were not only clever inventions, but wonderfully appropriate in terms of the cognitive and developmental needs of children’ (p.88). Play materials refers to props/materials, language, and symbols. For Froebel, play should allow children to know the world through mediation of colourful balls (Provenzo, 2009), which means children use props/materials, language, and symbols for learning (Chaiklin, 2003; Karpov, 2003; Kozulin, 2013). Mediation refers to the process of intervention.

The use of play materials/tools or mediation of tools for learning in the concept of play for child development was developed further by Piaget and Vygotsky within the twentieth century. Piaget and Vygotsky valued the importance of children’s play and its role as a leading source in children’s development. Both shared similar views in that they each viewed children’s active engagement in play as enhancing children’s physical and mental development. However, a significant point of difference between the two resided in mediation of adult human in child learning. The fact is that Piaget researched the play activities of individual children playing alone, whereas Vygotsky took
play to be a social activity in which children actively interacted with each other (Cole & Wertsch, 2001; Goncu & Gaskins, 2010; Artiles, 2000). While Piaget’s work seemed to embrace the value of play to children on the assumption that children learn independently, Vygotsky believed that with the help of adults and peers through interactive and social play, children developed their higher mental functions (Karpov, 2003). Piaget in this respect believed that children did not require adult’s intervention for learning and development as they would mature in stages.

The conceptual thinking of the use of play props/materials/tools and adult human as mediator to promote child’s development through meaningful play extensively inform my research development. From Vygotsky’s standpoint, children’s play cannot be understood without reference to adult human, signs, and physical tools; both reflect social, school, economic, and cultural environments. In my view, adults may see a child is gifted with the ability to play on their own and develop knowledge and skills in many areas. However, through the presence of mediators, such as teachers, signs, and physical tools, a child may get wider opportunity to develop farther than they do independently. While Rousseau, Froebel, Piaget, and Vygotsky emphasize the role of tools, such as props/materials and language, in the concept of child play, the teacher as mediator is crucial for children to learn how to use the props/play materials/tools. For example, Kozulin (2003) expanded the idea of using physical tools such picture cards that were used in conjunction with language. According to Kozulin, language consists of psychological tools which referred to language inputs or exposures. The use of language as input/exposure to new language is critical. In this respect, new language as inputs/exposure in conjunction with other physical tools such as picture cards are provided by teachers through the play activity.

In the pre-school context, a teacher and peers are perceived to be verbal mediators who help children learn concepts of meaning through active and social interaction. For that reason, in the socio-cultural perspective of child play (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), another mediator in child learning is language. In this respect, children learn language through language. In other words, language can be used as a tool for learning other language, which is called psychological tools
(Kozulin, 2013). For that reason, play is understood as an active social activity which requires the help of teachers/adults/peers and tools, and language and signs. In other words, adult involvement in children’s play and the encouragement and facilitation of interactive play helps children to achieve higher development (Chaiklin, 2003).

Following on from the concept of adults as mediator in child play, particular reference to the Greek and Roman era provides insight of how adults view children’s play and type of play. In this discussion around adults’ attitudes towards children’s play, my focus on the Greek and Roman era is intended to illustrate the significance of this era generally, from the cultural-historical aspect, to the development of political, military, social, educational and religious thinking about the nature of human behaviour. The discussion of the cultural-historical aspect in child play is relevant to my research development, because I need to enrich my understanding of how adults perceive children’s play over time and space.

Today, current developments in technology have broadened the concept of play. According to Papert, (2005), a technology device is considered as a medium of play for a child’s technologically mediated activity. Further, Sheridan and Pramling-Samuelsson (2003) argue that technology currently now plays a significant role in transforming the concept of play, from traditional approaches, characterized by non-directive play (Lindon, 2001) to digital approaches in which children are involved in screen time play using technology (Sheridan & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2003). However, regardless of the ‘tools’ of play (Vygotsky, 1978), definitions of play from Plato’s era through to the current digital era seem to be grounded in a universally held notion of play as a fun and pleasurable activity. That is, an activity that is inherently constructive and meaningful to children and that has the potential to enhance children’s overall physical, social, and psychological development (Vygotsky, 1978; Goncu & Gaskins, 2010). The shift in the concept of play and the attitudes of adults towards children’s play described above only reflects the development of play in the Western context. In my view, there should be an advance review of the shift of the concept of play and adult attitudes toward children’s play that is based not only on time-frame but also on socio-cultural context. In other words,
I believe that play begins at birth, however, play concept is adapted to the child’s life nature and condition and culture.

The above discussion presented a chronological tracing of the historical changes that have taken place in the conceptualization of children’s play over past decades in Western society, the theoretical definition of play, the attitude of adults towards children’s play which changes over years between and within society. Similansky (1968) suggests that socio-economic has implication on the perspective of play. In this action research, I will see the implication of historical and cultural aspects which shapes pre-school teacher’s perspectives on dramatic play. There was critical shift in adult attitudes toward child’s play from time to time. During the Greek and Roman era, children were regarded as little adults who were entitled to particular responsibilities which might be harmful activities, as an example, older boys participated in running, jumping, and boxing and were taught military skills. (Kontopodis, et al. 2011). While current research shows that sociable and interactive play activity is perceived as important to optimal child development (Vygotsky, 1978; Kozulin, 2013), in the Greek and Roman era, by age six, boys and girls were not allowed to play together and were placed in separate rooms to study subjects such as math, music, religion, and literacy (Aries, 1962). Moreover, in past time, adults believed that children’s play was wasting time, but in the current social context, play is understood as a key leader for children development. In the Ancient Greek context, play was also dedicated for religious purposes. This meant that children’s play took the form of dancing, singing, storytelling, and arts and crafts were dedicated to ancient rites and worship. Such play contexts suggested that the rights of children to have full opportunities for play and recreation as understood in the modern context, were limited in three key aspects of their play, place, chance, and time (Aries, 1962; Bruner et al, 1976). It is towards this end that this perception of adults toward children appear to present a coherent literature review from a historical perspective. While at the current time children are regarded as active social agents who are free to develop imagination and creativity through play (Pellegrini, 2011).

Because the research context of this thesis takes place in Asia, and in particular Indonesia, it is critical to look at cross-cultural views of play, and
particularly re Asia/ Indonesia. The discussion of historical change of play in Asia is informative for my research development because this action research involves a historical-cultural lens in understanding and reflecting the development of the concept and perspective of play. The following section will discuss the definition, theories, and concept of play in relation to shifts in kind of play in the Asian context.

2.2.2 Definition, Theories, and Concept of Child Play in the Asian Context

Today, the concept of child play which is developed by Western researchers, theorists, and scholars might have been recognized as either the major standard or the ideal standard or common feature of child play around the world (Holmes, 2011; 2012). Research shows that Asian countries adopt the Western concept, but in different ways as the response of culture (see Roopnarine et al, 2015.). Despite extensive research on definition, theories, and concepts of children’s play in the Western context, few studies have been conducted on offering definition, theories, and concepts of child play that focus on an Asian framed context, both within formal educational settings and in the social context (Roopnarine, 2010). Cultural-historical analysis on the concept of children’s play is even more unusual. There is increasing interest regarding play as a context of learning in Western education (Gupta, 2011), as well as demand for this research in various socio-cultural cultures (Fleer, 2013). I will present the discussion of the concept of play both at home and in the school context.

Research undertaken by Farver & Wimbarti (1995) demonstrated that in the home context in Indonesia, play was defined as free/unstructured play. Through interviews with mothers, they investigated the notion of play and the role of the mother in children’s play in Indonesia. The research revealed that children engaged in free/unstructured pretend play, without the involvement of mother, but with siblings. The evidence showed that mothers attended their children’s play to use control and discipline as well as to guide the children’s morals and behaviour. In West Sumatra, one out of thirty three provinces in Indonesia, the notion of play is outdoor play in nature and free/unstructured play which requires children to play and learn though nature and environment. Children played with peers and older siblings (Farver and Wimbarti, 1995).
Children running alongside the road, rice fields, and farms, and jumping in rivers were common things in Indonesia.

An influential philosophy of West Sumatra values that nature is a teacher, which reflects that outdoor play in nature benefits children’s learning and development. In a current study of mother and children’s interaction, Zevalkink (2008) also finds outdoor free play is the notion of play in Sunda, an area of West Java. Other recent research undertaken by Singer et al (2009) shows that 58 percent of children in Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Brazil play outdoors in parks, playgrounds, and yards without parent’s supervision. According to Singer et al, ten percent of children play imaginative/fantasy play such as dramatic play. Interestingly, the finding suggests that in the home context, sixty percent of children in those Asian countries spend their leisure time watching television.

In the school context, there are variations of the concept of play in Asian countries, such as Singapore, Indonesia, and Hong Kong. Those three countries are compared and has come to attention, not necessarily from the same geographic region but depending instead on research evidences on the topic of concept of play revealed. For example, according to curriculum in Indonesia, learning through play at pre-school settings is considered as a key approach of teaching and learning (Directorate of Early Childhood Education, 2001). Actually all three countries have in common that play-based learning is promoted in official documents and curricula, but all face challenges of cultural traditions of valuing of formal academic learning for young children and a perceived separation of play and learning. In all three countries this can set up tensions between official curriculum goals, parent concerns and pressures, and gaps between ideals of play and learning, and the reality of practice in schools and preschools. For example, according to curriculum in Indonesia, learning through play at pre-school settings is considered as a key approach of teaching and learning (Directorate of Early Childhood Education, 2001). The notion of play mandated in the curriculum is free play/unstructured play, where children are facilitated to play according to their interest. Examples of play and learning activities at pre-school are colouring, singing, storytelling, crafts, praying, and free play (outdoor play). Pre-schools are allowed to develop theories/ knowledge
based curriculum and play design. There is no set framework of the implementation of the concept of learning through play. Further, the government does not provide guidance on how to manage play in the classroom. OECD/Asian Development Bank (2015) reports, ‘at the local level, many new early childhood institutions are authorised without any clear criteria or standards.’ The report illustrates that pre-school teachers require not only a set of standards of play-based curriculum but also extensive training in the use of plays a context for learning.

Unlike Indonesia, Singapore provides a concept of play with clear criteria and standards (Ministry of Education of Singapore, 2015). ‘Purposeful play’ is considered as key for learning and development (Fleer, 2013. p.155). Play in the formal school context should be well designed, planned, guided and attended by teachers with certain designed learning and development targets. The framework of curriculum for kindergarten suggests the concept of children’s play at pre-school adopt the combination of free play and guided play, where the teacher may be involved and intervene in children’s play when necessary (Ministry of Education of Singapore, 2015). In Hong Kong, pre-school curriculum suggests play activities should be integrated into learning. However, the national framework of curriculum for pre-school does not provide a clear set of standards of the concept/theories of play:

No matter which learning and teaching strategy is adopted, play is an indispensable and important tool for facilitating children’s learning. It helps children know their surroundings and experience the joy of co-operating and sharing with others (Curriculum Development Council, 2006. p 51)

Children’s play in pre-school settings should allow children to explore and experience the world through play. The discussion above shows that theories/concepts/definitions of child play can vary subtly. The theories/concept/definition reflects cultures and societies with different sets of norms, geographic regions, and time periods. Social politics is also reflected in the way adults perceive children’s play.

Although Singapore and Hong Kong have provided clear criteria and standards of curriculum for pre-school, they suggest barriers and challenges
hinder the successful implementation of the play-based curriculum. For example, Ng (2014) reports the barriers and challenges of implementing play-based curriculum in conjunction with extension version of this curriculum framework which was published in 2008 and revised in 2012. Through a qualitative case study, she investigated the process of teaching and learning at pre-schools. From her observation, she found ‘the teacher had not shifted her practice from traditional worksheets teaching method’ (p.7). An interesting finding reported that teachers focused on meeting parents’ expectation on teaching and learning result/outcome; to help children achieve academic skills.

This impacted on the amount of time and opportunities for children to engage with discovery learning and build on their spatial, perception and other conceptual understandings. The lack of exposure to exploratory learning indicated that the two groups of children in the classroom observed had few cognitive strategies to assist the completion of the puzzles. (p.10)

Unavailability of play-based environment resulted in lack of children’s motivation and interest to engage in play. Fung and Cheng (2012) reported Hong Kong and Singapore share similar notions of barriers and challenges of implementing play-based curriculum. The studies showed that teachers did not obviously have knowledge of play-based practice. ‘Even though most Hong Kong teachers had been trained in an entire repertoire of educational styles, they often seem uncertain of how to use them in practice’(p.6). The findings showed that parents expected pre-school would be focused on helping children achieve academic achievement. The parents demand became a challenge in implementing play-based program because play was not considered in the context of learning. Moreover, ‘parents will object when they think teachers spend too much time on playing but not teaching’ (p.9). More interesting findings show that parents expected their children sit still in the classroom. Given two examples of barriers and challenges of the implementation of play-based curriculum in Singapore and Hong Kong, I believe these findings also reflect the situation in Indonesia.

The discussion of the development of the perspective of adults towards children’s play might usefully inform my research development because I will
explore the perspective of the pre-school teacher of the use of play in child language development in a classroom context. I will particularly examine play from the perspective of the pre-school teacher and how it impacts on her teaching and learning performance. Understanding the teacher’s perspective on her/his task as mediator in child learning is a crucial tool in establishing knowledge of historical-cultural aspects behind the teaching and learning. This knowledge will definitely help me to develop reflective thinking about the nature of children’s play in my research context.

2.3 Types of play.

Western theorists identify a number of different types of play; functional play, constructive play, and imaginative play (Piaget, 1962; Smilansky, 1968; Pellergrini, 1982). First, functional play is described as repetitive action which is considered to be the typical or appropriate use of object (Lang et al. 2009; Dawson, et al. 2009) For example, when a child plays with a car, he/she is able to repetitively push the car back and forth, along with making sounds like the car. Functional play is considered as physical activity which is repetitively done by a child, such as sliding on slides, and swinging (Frost, et al, 2001)

Second, constructive play involves assembling, creating, and disassembling objects, such as playing with lego and blocks. Constructive play allows children to manipulate objects and re-construct something through active participation in their learning (Bjorklund et al, 2008; Levine, et al. 2012). In the school context, play can become constructive play with early learning goal oriented activity (Johnson, et al. 2005) by facilitating children with imaginary learning environments (Bodrova, et al. 2004). Constructive play involves adults, and other peers to play in collaboration in order to develop children’s cognitive and problem solving capacity (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1962). During constructive play activity, children share knowledge, perspectives, values, and ideas. Both thinkers of constructive theory, Vygotsky and Piaget share similar perspectives on children’s play that learning occurs in positive interaction in play activity.

The third category, imaginative play, is termed in some studies as pretend play, symbolic play, dramatic play, role-pay, and fantasy play. Stagnitti
(2011) assigns imaginative play as pretend play which involves objects to bring together fantasy and reality. At this point, it is typically imaginative play as a pretend play which refers to symbolic action and behavior (Piaget, 1962). The National Association for the Education of Young Children used the term dramatic play in its documentation (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). According to Lillard et al (2012, p.2), while in symbolic play children extend play materials in a ‘solo activity’, dramatic play can be social play which involves more than one participant in the play activity. Given the different terms associated with imaginative play, the concept of an imaginative play activity can be viewed as involving objects, materials, fantasy, and imagination to bring out reality in play.

The fourth type of play, socio-dramatic play, is an advanced form of pretend or dramatic play which refers to elaborative and imaginative play involving social interaction, language, materials, rules, and roles (Hughes, 1995; Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). Hughes (1995) describes socio-dramatic play is a ‘form of pretend play that involves intense group interaction, with each group member taking a role that complements the role played by all others in the group’ (p. 230). Smilansky (1968) describes dramatic play, considered as socio-dramatic play, according to six categories or processes: imitating social roles, making believe through verbal language, social interaction, making believe through materials/objects, using verbal language for communication, and taking place within a timeframe/play episode. While I attempt to synthesise the variety of terms used interchangeably by different researchers to denote dramatic play; imaginative play, socio-dramatic play, social role-play, make-believe play, fantasy play, at this point I use the term dramatic play as typical of imaginative play. This type of play involves children’s imagination and fantasy where children represent and assign social roles and rules using language and play materials.

Most concepts of play are based on the perspectives of adults through research into why and how children play. Therefore, the typologies of play can be understood based on various approaches of some thinkers; they are psychoanalytic approach, cognitive approach, behavioral approach, and socio-cultural approach (Frost, 2010). The approach describes, compares, or explain
any type of child play. In this following discussion, I present the chronological order of development of theoretical perspectives on the types of play.

**The Psychoanalytic Perspective on Children’s Play**

The psychoanalytic approach to child development believes that play is the work of children, which facilitates children to release emotions, including anxiety and excess of body energy (Klein, 1984). The work refers to a repeated activity which requires the child’s concentration. Focusing on the development of emotion, the psychoanalysts believe that children learn through mental and physical activities, such as manipulative and explorative play activity involving the body’s movement, imagination and self-perception. Manipulative and explorative play activities are also understood as playing a vital role in developing children’s emotions, ego, and identity (Freud, 1905d, 1905c, 1908e, 1911b). The psychoanalytic approach to child development was first developed by Sigmund Freud in the beginning of eighteenth century. Freud stresses the importance of tools and materials which allowed children to manipulate and explore objects through direct experience (Klein, 1955). From psychoanalysis’s perspective, manipulative and explorative play activity involving properties, materials, equipment, and objects such as play dough, blocks, and other manipulative and explorative tools of play, help children mature in personality. Also focusing on manipulative and explorative play, Erik Erikson, a psychoanalyst, further emphasizes that play facilitates children to develop their ego and identity (Mooney, 2000). His psychosocial perspective on child play believes that the ego and identity can be developed through social interaction and problem solving activity (Schlein, 2016).

**Children’s Play from the Behaviorist perspective**

Due to the nature of reinforcement, stimulus and response, punishment, and reward, the type of play in the behaviorists’ perspective are games with rules, playing on the computer, cards, and playing games with devices (Burgoyne, 2003). The games require repetitive performance in order to achieve objectives and provide reinforcement, either reward or punishment. The
interrelationship between children and the tools of play is the critical part in developing child behavior. The tools, toys, props, or other play devices are designed to provide stimulus and response.

An influential behaviorist, Skinner(1974), believed that environment affects children’s behaviour through controlling tools. For example, in his research of the use of a programmed machine in teaching students, Skinner (1958) found that students are able to reinforce their behaviour. Skinner (1958, p.971) writes, ‘in using the device the student refers to a numbered item in a multiple-choice test. He presses the button corresponding to his first choice of answer. If he is right, the device moves on to the next item; if he is wrong, the error is tallied, and he must continue to make choices until he is right’. One of the aspects of reward and punishment important to children’s play is the feeling produced through very strong and powerful motivation. While playing games with rules, children develop their capacity to reflect on actions as the result of stimulus and response (Horgan et al, 2006; Tripodi, 2011).

Cognitivist approach to child play

Cognitive theory is a movement in psychology that emphasizes both mental and social abilities in the child play and development (Wadsworth, 2004). I begin with the discussion about type of play developed by Piaget (1962), a Swiss philosopher and psychologist, who put forth cognitive-developmental theory (Berk, 2013). Emphasising the importance of maturation on child development, Piaget (1962) in his book *Play, Dream, and Imitation in Child Development* emphasized three types of play corresponding to stages of childhood; practice play, symbolic play, and games with rules. First, practice play refers to the beginning of child play at the stage of 0-2 years old, Piaget calls this stage sensorimotor play; where children begin to repeat physical activity, such as swinging, grasping, and throwing using their physical senses:

Play begins, then, with the first disassociation between assimilation and accommodation. After learning to grasp, swing, throw, etc., which involve both an effort of accommodation to new situations, and an effort of repetition, reproduction and generalisation, which are the elements of assimilation, the child sooner or later (often even during the learning period) grasp for the pleasure of grasping, swings or the sake of
Piaget described how children learn things around them through their physical senses by licking, grasping, shaking, and throwing them. Piaget called the next stage the pre-operational stage (age 2-7). In this stage, children begin to use their fantasy and imagination through make-believe play. Piaget also called this make-believe play symbolic play. He described how, at this stage, children use objects/things around them to represent other things. For example, a child might see a stick and use it to represent it as an airplane. He/she might play symbolically by not only symbolizing the stick as airplane but also producing sounds in conjunction with her/his action playing with the stick. Last, Piaget described how games with rules occurred at ages 7-11. This stage was called the concrete operational stage. At this stage, child play was considered as structured play. For Piaget, structured play in this respect referred to play with rules, for example children who play in a team and should obey the rules of play.

For Piaget (1962), adaptation is the process of thought development. For example repetitive actions by children are a way of developing thought (Berk, 2013). The chronological process of thought development during child play is divided by three major developmental schemes, which are assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium which then generate learning. Berk (2013, p.227) explains, ‘during assimilation we use our current schemes to interpret the external word’. For example, when children see a truck for the first time, they call it a car because they are familiar with the concept in their thought. Overtime, they assimilate the concept into schema for a truck, perhaps they eventually develop their understanding that a big car is a truck. ‘In accommodation, we create new schemes or adjust old ones after noticing that our current way of thinking does not capture the environment completely’ (Berk, p.227). The process of assimilation can precede accommodation or the opposite way which is known as equilibration. When children play, they initially assimilate their experience and then accommodate and establish equilibrium (Lefrancois, 2012). In this sense, when children accommodate their old information with new concepts and are able to differentiate between car and truck, it is considered as
accommodation and learning. Establishing from Piaget’s process of thought, play is considered as intrinsically motivated; children do not need adults to help or reward them in play.

Vygotsky’s perspective on play is integrally related to his general theory of intellectual development. Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky with his ZPD concept and scaffolding in play highlights social interaction as key to children’s development of thinking and language. Play activity fosters ZPD in learning and development, because ‘in play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself (Vygotsky, 1967, p. 16). For Vygotsky, scaffolding children’s play enhances development higher than children’s actual performance (Berk, 2001; Daniels, 2001). For example, a child who is provided with variety of activities and props/materials is known as scaffolding play in ZPD. When she enjoys her play and cannot solve the problem and tasks, adults are present to scaffold with hints, clues, or as model in play before she is able to do on her own. In ZPD concept, Vygotsky focuses on discussion about social experience in make believe play and views make believe-play as context for the support of children’s development and language. In make believe play children may act out roles and social rules which are beyond their competence; in this case their imagination precedes development. Vygotsky highlights how make-believe play in ZPD supports children’s language development, the regulation of behaviour, and logical thinking (Berk et al, 2006). At the same time, there is also an extensive study of scaffolding of children’s play development and skills. This is discussed further in the section below.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that the key to learning and development is social interaction in collaborative activity among children, adults, and peers in the social context. In other words, the process of knowledge formation is affected by external inputs which are then internalized as abstract thought. The social interaction further requires tools which help children construct the perceptual, attention, and memory capacities. Tools refers to props/material tools and psychological tools, involving language and symbols (Kozulin, 2013). When children play, children begin to manipulate play materials, along with using language for communication and social interaction.
Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development believes dramatic play involves interaction and imaginative play. According to Bodrova et al (2007) objects/tools and language are the key element of this fantasy, symbolic, or dramatic activity. As stated above that imaginative play involves imagination and fantasy which allow children to experiment with reality. They manipulate objects and use language both for social communication and self-talk. For example, a child cuddling a baby doll says, ‘I will be going to work now, be a nice girl, my dear.’ Both thinkers, Vygotsky and Piaget believe that children are able to reconstruct the world around them through manipulation of physical objects in fantasy, symbolic, or dramatic activity (Bodrova, 2001; Karpov, 2005; Elkind, 2007; Gupta, 2006). Children are able to develop their fantasy and create the situations which reflect social life experience. Dramatic play is understood as a vehicle of four major stages of child development: social emotional, physical, cognitive, and language (Barnett et al, 2006). Language is used as mediation in order to collaboratively work in a dramatic play situation, this situation enhances children to learn to use language; to negotiate roles, social rules, and to explain instructions during play.

In brief, from the classic perspective on child play in the second half of the twentieth century, there are three important perspectives on the types of play: the perspectives from psychoanalytic, behaviourist, and cognitive theorists which contribute to the development of play. However, Vygotsky’s idea that dramatic play is a vehicle of children’s language development can be viewed as significantly contributing to my research. Dramatic play allows children to explore their understanding of the world around them. This exploration is further represented through their actions, either verbal or nonverbal action. In other word, during dramatic play, children re-construct meaning relating to social life experience and develop meaningful language (Saracho and Spodek, 2006). Most research confirms that dramatic play contributes to a child’s first and second language and suggests dramatic play as a context where children both practice and learn language (Similanski,1968; Williams & Rask, 2003; Saracho and Spodek, 2006; Kim, 2005), however, there is some research which explores the use of dramatic play in enhancing child’s foreign language development. If research is showing that play supports second language learning, it may also
support ‘foreign’ language learning. In the following discussion, I outline further arguments and assumptions about the use of play which might be applicable in teaching and learning second and foreign language at pre-school settings will be discussed in chapter three.

2.4 The Role of Play in Education; Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

In the previous section I discussed how definitions of children’s play varied from the Classical era, in the works of Plato to the twentieth century cognitivists Piaget and Vygotsky and from Western to Asian thought. In this section, there are two points of discussion focusing on: 1) adult’s attitudes, beliefs, and values of play, both in home and school context and 2) the role of adults in child play. Relating to the phenomenon of the role of adults in child play activity, there is a need to make a conceptual justification for the inclusion of historical and cultural factors in understanding, interpreting, and make meaning of the experience of play and learning practice at school (Rogoff, 2003). The practical aspects include adults’ attitude towards child play (Lancy, 2002), the way adults intervene in play (Singer et al. 2009; Lancy 2002; 2007), children's daily experiences of play (Berinstein and Magalhaes, 2009), the value of play (Brown, 2012), and other cultural-historical aspects around school. In other words, using the inclusion of historical and cultural factors allows me to put myself into the teacher’s shoes to make sense of her teaching and learning practice properly and fairly in this research.

Parents’ attitudes towards child play and learning is a very important aspect for child learning and development (Holmes, 2011; Vandermaas-Peeler, 2002; Roopnarine, 2010; Singer et al 2009). The current research shows not all parents perceive play as important for child learning and development for reasons such as socio-economic pressures, level of educational background, and social conflict. Further, research shows families from low education as well as low socio-economic background provide less support of education for children (see Smith, 2006; Baroody, et al. 2006; O’Connor, 2001; Lareau, 2000).

A study undertaken by Holmes (2011) focusing on researching Filipino and Hawaiian families demonstrates that Filipino parents do not value the
importance of play for their children. Participants described their childhood and how their parents value play in their pastime. They described the ways in which economic pressure has led them to experience the lack of time for play; as well as their parents being much more focused on their work, which is a key factor in adults ignoring the importance of play for children. Further, in the past, many children were involved in work for supporting their families, for that reason children’s play was not an urgent need. To date, the development of education levels and economic development in Filipino culture has brought positive changes of perspective on the importance of child play for learning and development. The result shows that the majority of participating parents consider play to be very important ‘in developing social skills, using such phrases as “sharing and cooperation,” and “form friendships” (p.15).’

A report of the importance of play is derived from research undertaken by Singer et al (2009). The research which involves parents from a variety of cultural-historical contexts (Argentina, Brazil, China, France, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam) compared parents’ beliefs, value, and attitude toward play. The research findings show that parents in Asia see less advantage to imaginative play, such as dramatic play/pretend play; they see active play such as playing outdoors as beneficial for child’s health and wellbeing. Interestingly, parents from Asian countries do not encourage their children to get dirty during outdoor play. On the other hand, the parents from Western countries show great support for their children to get dirty during outdoor play as part of learning. More specifically, parents from three countries; the United States, Great Britain, and Ireland, perceive that imaginative play is very important for child development. Moreover, Singer et al argue Western parents are more concerned about how long their children spend time playing than parents in Asia. Children in Asia are given greater access to television; they spend more time watching television than playing with peers/siblings.

Another interesting finding shows that gender influences the way adults interpret the importance of dramatic play for child learning and development Gleason (2005). Gleason surveyed forty fathers and seventy mothers, exploring how they interpret the importance of dramatic play and what support parents
provide for children. The findings show fathers perceive dramatic play to provide less benefit to childhood learning and development than mothers do (Gleason, 2005), for that reason fathers engage less in child dramatic play than mothers. Fathers appear to provide support for other play activity, such as outdoor active/physical play than pretend play.

2.5 Free/Unstructured or Structured Dramatic Play within the Context of Learning in a Formal Educational Settings

A literature review concerned with the concept of dramatic play for children involves two contrasting views of the approach to play; whether dramatic play is free/unstructured play or is structured play. In particular, this discussion is important in highlighting the concept of dramatic play in preschool settings. These two controversial concepts are considered in my research of developmental cross-cultural perspectives. The rationale for this discussion is the importance of spontaneity in child play for cognitive development (Hughes, 2003). According to Hughes, spontaneity in children’s dramatic play refers to the freedom of choice of play materials, roles and rules, and language use. Spontaneous dramatic play can be referred to as free/unstructured play, where children are free to develop their imagination and creativity in both outdoor and indoor play Carlisle (2009). For example, children may naturally and spontaneously enjoy playing with a barbie doll, dressing her, and acting out social roles in their play. I discuss about free, unstructured play, and perspectives on that and the value of that. I then move into perspectives that see value in adult involvement and support of children’s play in particular circumstances.

2.5.1 Free/unstructured Dramatic Play

From the historical development of play, the idea of free play is first advocated by Steiner in the beginning of the twentieth century (Masters, 2008; Graham, 2009; Nicol, 2010). He considered free/unstructured play to be vital for children to be free to choose, develop, and control their play. Most importantly, play should be spontaneous and voluntary. The Steiner approach to child play has both the theoretical framework and practical strategies that every child has the competency to develop, resolve, and control their play and learning
on their own. One of the important contributions of the Steiner approach is the idea of early education environments which allow children to develop naturally through play and exploration;

The urge to play, the particular way in which a child plays, disappears and sinks below the surface of life. Then it resurfaces, but as something different, as the skill to adapt to life. There is an inner coherence in life throughout all its stages. We need to know this in order to teach children in the right way (Steiner, 1921/73)

At this point, for example, doing gardening, walking by a river or climbing a tree is considered promoting the awareness of the environment by developing physical and active exploration. Moreover, free play is a type of play that has characteristics; exploring the environment, experiencing nature, developing the body through physical activity (Johnson et al., 2005), experiencing and developing knowledge of everyday life, developing problem solving, and creating new knowledge through active exploration. Free/unstructured play for Piaget (1962) was spontaneous play where children were free to develop their play.

Free/unstructured play offers values and benefits for child learning and development. In much of his writings, Piaget (1962) put forth and recognized the importance of free/unstructured play in childhood development. For Piaget, free/unstructured play gives children great play and learning opportunities, because they learn, explore, and re-construct reality around them through their experience. Piaget gave an example of symbolic play which occurred at pre-operational stage, and allowed children to fulfil their need to be involved in a social life. Let us take an example, Piaget believed a girl who used a doll and pretended to be a mother in conjunction with her free wish/will stimulated her imagination.

Consistent with Piaget’s idea of the value of free/unstructured play, recent researchers such as Pellegrini (2008), Stagnitti (2012), Goldstein (2012), Elkind (2008), and Clements (2004) describe that through free/unstructured play in learning children have power to control play, make decisions, and develop self-discovery. Moreover, Pellegrini (2008) argues learning occurs during recess time when children engage in free play through outdoor play. Cambourne (2004) suggests free play contributes to social interaction and language development.
When children engage in free play, they experiment with language, imagination, and fantasy. Free/unstructured play also has an effect on children’s self-efficacy (Starling, 2011). Lewis & Watson (2000) study language development through free/unstructured dramatic play and find free/unstructured dramatic play promotes communication and expressive language. An interesting study by Fekonja et al (2005) shows significant development of language, in particular words and utterances when children are engaged in free/unstructured symbolic play rather than structured play.

Given the broad notion of free/structured play, what does free/unstructured dramatic play look like and involve? According to Elkind (2007), dramatic play should be natural, spontaneous, and voluntary. Let’s take an example, children independently play with props, rename the props, originate story, and self-talk. In this respect, children take the initiative to choose what to play, develop and act out in their imagination.

Further, how does adult involvement and support of children’s free/unstructured play affect children’s play in particular circumstances? In this sense, teachers provide a variety of stimulating tools/props/materials and activities which motivate children to explore, play, and learn. More importantly, teachers should not interfere in child play, but rather facilitate, accommodate and foster children to explore creatively and imaginatively on their own. In other words, teachers should provide children a wider opportunity to develop their potential through both outdoor and indoor classroom learning (Miller et al. 2011; Kaiser, C. (ed) 2013).

Although much research values the importance of free/unstructured play (Kaiser, 2013; Kim, 2005), free play is in significant decline for some reason. For example, Pelligrini et al (2006) describes that the amount of children who spend time in free play at recess time becomes significantly limited. To some extent, children’s education pays more attention to academic performance, both goal-oriented, and score-oriented. Elkind (2008.p.1) writes:

School administrators and teachers—frequently backed by goal-oriented politicians and parents—broadcast the not-so-subtle message that these days play seems superfluous, that at bottom play is for slackers, that if
kids must play, they should at least learn something while they are doing it. Additionally, a set of formal tasks and homework for fostering academic performance, eliminates amount of free time. As Elkind suggests, ‘Teachers give kindergarten children tests and assign them homework’. Most communities perceive allowing children to play unsupervised by adults as harmful activity, at least in certain situations. In the home context, such as after school, children also find limited access to play outdoors for safety reason. According to Frost (2009), children are taught not to talk with strangers. Children are warned to avoid strangers and adults, stay indoors, and stay away from nearby parks and playgrounds. The more affluent are taken to lessons and sports when parents arrive home. Free, spontaneous play and games are increasingly rare (p.3).

Given child play phenomenon to date, children may experience isolation because they are not given access to explore nature and environment through active spontaneous outdoor play. Unstructured/free play/spontaneous play is considered as the best nature of play for child learning and development (Elkind, 2008; Laumann, 2006). Research shows children are naturally able to create play and play materials on their own; without adult intervention and presence.

2.5.2 Structured Dramatic Play

I am also aware that there is an opposed perspective of dramatic play which perceives that structured dramatic play can be a leading factor in development incorporating adults and interventions (see, e.g., Bodrova, 2008; Barnett et al, 2008, Berk et al, 2006). For that reason, I will outline the ongoing debate about what approach is most effective and appropriate for incorporating learning and development through dramatic play in educational settings.

Unlike free/unstructured play, the idea of structured play values the presence and intervention of adults in child play for directing children to achieve their learning goals (Fisher et al 2011; Hirsch- Pasek et al, 2009; Hurwitz, 2003). In this respect, adults’ intervention amplifies learning and development. From the basic definition of structured play, it is clear that ideas about structured dramatic play are central to amplify children’s learning and development. The importance of structured dramatic play in formal educational settings has been
acknowledged (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). In particular, there is an increasing recognition of the need for play as context for learning, including the awareness of the contribution of dramatic play to child development (Goncu and Gaskins, 2006; Wood, 2004). This idea of play being the leading source of development for preschool and kindergarten children was elaborated by Vygotsky’s colleagues, Alexei Leont’ev and Daniel Elkonin (Elkonin, 1972; Leont’ev, 1981). Leontev and Elkonin argue that children are able to accomplish higher levels of development during play if they are given models (Bodrova, 2015).

Do children need adults in their dramatic play? For Elkonin, children may not know how to develop scenarios, rules, and roles in dramatic play. In this respect, Leontev elaborates the idea of Vygotsky’s on ‘leading activity’ in itself (including unstructured play) by suggesting ‘object-oriented’ dramatic play intervention (p.114). Object-oriented refers to the target or outcome of learning established over the intervention/involvement of teachers during dramatic play activity (Karpov, 2005). Leontev attributes ‘the motive, action, and operation’ to the ideas of Vygotsky (Bodrova, 2015. p378). According to Leontiev (2009), children engage in activities such as dramatic play for a motive. For example, props/play materials provided in the pre-school classroom can lead children’s motivations for ‘actions’ to establish certain learning targets/outcomes. Moreover, according to Daniel (2012), props/materials and classroom physical designs are affective elements which have effects on children’s cognition and the emotional or psychological aspect of their development.

Although Vygotsky (1978) and Similansky (1971) proposed different points of view; they both believed that the role of adults in children’s play was of great importance to amplify child learning and development. Parents or teachers, for example, not only provide dramatic play materials, settings, and environment, but more importantly their presence through interaction helps children establish higher level of learning and development. A research of Similanky has been a good model of case study which focuses on investigating the role of adults in disadvantaged Israeli children’s socio-dramatic play.

Most of the culturally disadvantaged children do not play sociodramatic play. The natural processes of child growth and the nondirective enriched environment in preschool and kindergarten are not enough to give the
disadvantaged children the necessary boost. Without some degree of positive intervention by parents and/or teachers, these children will lack the requirements essential to develop sociodramatic play (Smilansky, 1971, p.30).

Similansky developed teachers’ intervention during socio-dramatic play which included inside and outside intervention. Inside intervention includes enacting in scenario, picking roles, and interaction. When teachers provide guidance and direction without directly engaging in interaction, it is called outside intervention. The research showed both inside and outside intervention help children enact and develop children imagination in dramatic play. According to Lillard (2012; 2011), to date the concerns about the importance of the role of adults in children’s play is increasing in the Western educational context.

How do adults become involved in children’s dramatic play activity? While it is universally accepted theory and practice that adults play an important role in child play, in particular dramatic play, research show there are variations in the way adults interpret their role in children’s dramatic play which may be attributed to cultural background, such as observer (Einarsdottir, 1998), knowledge resource (Christie and Rokos, 2006), direct tutor, co-player/player and director or co-director (Brown & Marchant, 2002). Einarsdottir (1998) reports teachers of pre-school in the Reykjavik region in Iceland perceive that teachers play their role as observer, in this context, observer refers to responsibility for watching and ensuring a safe environment during children’s play. The finding also shows that teachers appear to be reluctant to engage in children’s dramatic play. Interestingly, Farver and Wimbarti (1995) who investigated mother-child interaction during fantasy play in Java, Indonesia, found siblings play more of a role in dramatic play than the mother, including negotiating rules and roles, developing scenarios and engaging in the play. The research showed mothers play their role in observing children’s play. Unlike teachers and parents in the Reykjavik region in Iceland and Java that the observer refers to watching and ensuring a safe environment of play, Johnson et al (2005) argue that playing the role as observer during children’s dramatic play refers to observing and analysing what children need to develop and extend during dramatic play. In this sense, observing refers to preparedness of
intervention. “The observer role is obvious and similar to that played in other areas of the early childhood classroom. In the case of play, teachers must observe carefully to determine whether, when, how, and with whom to intervene” (Zigler et al, 2004. p.163).

Teachers should provide knowledge and experience prior to dramatic play activity, such as reading out stories and books (Bodrova, 2003). According to Christie and Rokos (2006), reading books allows children to develop knowledge of certain objects, themes, and social roles which will be then applied in dramatic play activity. According to Johnson et al (2005), teachers can be director or co-director of dramatic play; they sometimes engage with children, negotiate roles, and pick roles in order to guide them to develop scenarios and how to use play materials. Teachers’ engagement can be necessary any time during dramatic play. Moreover, Brown & Marchant (2002) claim that the teachers’ role as director or co-director during dramatic play activity can be on and off where needed. Most importantly, teachers play a great part in creating a rich environment of dramatic play area. Although there are pros and cons of the involvement of adults in child play, in particular dramatic play, research shows that well-planned and structured dramatic play help children establish higher levels of learning and development. The following discussion focuses on the way adults can be involved in dramatic play.

Dockett and Fleer (2012) articulate the levels of teacher involvement/support/scaffolding of children’s play. For example, at the initial stage in dramatic play activity, the teacher sets up play to encourage children’s learning of particular concepts or another language. In the next stage, the teacher might move along the continuum from direct teacher involvement in co-playing and play tutoring, to at the end having only indirect involvement as a ‘manager’ of time and resources. In this respect, the other form of teacher involvement or scaffolding is where play is intentionally used as a context for achieving particular learning goals, such as where teachers’ plan and within that, they may again use various forms of support varying from direct tutoring to indirect management.

Another example of the level of support/scaffold/intervention draws from the work of Stagnitti (1998). In her research, Stagnitti designed guidelines of
how to engage in children’s role play; by recognising object substitution, recognising decentration, recognising play scripts, and joining the child in role play. The research involved mothers as participants. For Stagnitti, not all children were able to play; mothers in this case helped children develop spontaneous and pretend play. Stagnitti gave an example of what a mother could do to develop children’s thinking and problem solving, ‘maybe we need to tickle teddy to see if he’ll wake up, or maybe we need to find some food so teddy can eat before we do anything else’ (p. 23).

Based on their research findings, the importance of implementing structured dramatic play for learning and development has been confirmed by educators, professionals and practitioners in early childhood education (Bodrova, 2008). From the research findings, dramatic play and a child’s vocabulary size, word meaning, complexity of syntax, and math and reading skills are related (Korat et al., 2003; Hanline, 2008; and Gupta, 2007; Moon and Reifel, 2008). Hanline (2008) documented fifty-one children with physical disabilities, and speech/language disorders in a child care program. Through videotaping, the research observes children’s socio dramatic play activity as well as the way the teacher engages in the play. As an initial activity, the teacher read story books to help children build vocabularies. During socio-dramatic play, children are then encouraged to recall the stories and acting them out. The evidence shows the positive implication of sociodramatic play on both reading and math skills. Further research undertaken by Moon and Reifel, (2008) also demonstrates that children from diverse language backgrounds develop their English as second language vocabularies through dramatic play activity. The research successfully improves children with ESL who spoke a language other than English in the home context. ‘Parents spoke of their amazement at their children’s English improvement by the end of the school year. Some reported that their children were correcting parents’ incorrect pronunciation or grammar in English (p. 6). Research reveals pre-school teachers perceive that structured dramatic play in the classroom allows children to develop children’s language and social development (Rogers, 2008).

Given two different type of dramatic play, a free and unstructured play, current socio-cultural approaches to dramatic play activities focuses on not only
fantasy and imaginative play, but also enhancing language development (Saracho, 2002; 2001, Gupta, 2007). From a socio-cultural perspective, dramatic play allows children to use language through positive social interaction during play activity (Goncu, & Kouba E. 2002).

Currently, there is significant research interest in the development of dramatic play theory in the early twentieth century (Smith, 2010), which has set the tone for a vigorous discourse on child cognitive development and the place of dramatic play in children’s formal early learning (see Moore, 2002; Pelligrini, 2010, Fleer, 2009), however, the research focusing on dramatic play’s contribution to foreign language learning and development in early childhood educational settings has not received much attention. For example, the research focusing on the importance of dramatic play activity and English as a foreign language were much expanded, involving the contribution of dramatic play activity to speaking skill (see Riojas-Cortéz, 2001), pronunciation skills (see Goodwin, 2001), developing vocabulary (Galeano, 2011), and building self confidence in expressing thoughts in EFL (Asta et al., 2005). Whilst research suggest that teachers play significant role in dramatic play, such as designing play environment (Daniels, 2012), establishing goals (Leontev, 2009, Karpov, 2005), and engaging in child play activity (Bodrova, 2015), it is also excellent opportunity in this research to explore the ways in which teachers use dramatic play as a vehicle for foreign language learning in pre-school settings.

The discussion above show that free/unstructured and structured dramatic play seems to be essential for learning and development. However, a careful intervention from adults which promotes a playful learning environment, is essential to help children achieve further development. In particular, because this research aims at exploring the use of dramatic play for scaffolding children to learn foreign language, guided/structured play is considered potentially effective where children require a language role model and initiator during dramatic play experience. In this section, the discussion of the importance of dramatic play for learning and development does not completely fit the concerns of the link of dramatic play with foreign learning and development, but I believe some of ideas are informative.
2.6 Summary of the Chapter

With respect to my research topic of the concept of play, this chapter offers my understanding of typologies of play, the shift of attitude of adults toward child play, and the contribution of cultural-historical lens in looking at child play. In this respect, the historical perspective of the role of adults and tools appears to serve my perspective on dramatic play and its implication to foreign language learning. Ultimately, my goal is to seek the implication of dramatic play to child language development with the lens of socio-cultural perspective, in particular EFL learning. Indeed, some scholars have developed research on the importance of dramatic play to language learning, so that their development would benefit from my research context. For example, in the following chapter, I present Vygotsky’s socio-cultural concept of dramatic play and its implication to language development which potentially contributes to the development of my research conceptual framework. Adopting Vygotsky’s concept about thought and language makes obvious the understanding that language learning occurs through active social interaction which can take place in dramatic play experience. The topic of language development and structured dramatic play will be presented in the next chapter.
Chapter Three  
Language Development and Dramatic Play

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two, the typology of child’s play, I discussed the development of child’s play, the shift of adult perspectives toward child’s play and the implication of this shift of perspective on the role of human and tools in child’s play. As a result of this, I consider that the relationship between dramatic play and language development needs to be further explored, in particular the implication of dramatic play activities on English as a foreign language learning in early childhood educational contexts. For that reason, in this chapter, I think it is important to present a more relevant, comprehensive, critical, and contextualised theory base of dramatic play and child’s thoughts and language development. Speaking about language development cannot be isolated from thought formation; because language and thoughts are interrelated (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). This section represents my understanding of how children learn language and presents the importance of Vygotsky’s concept of the social interaction during dramatic play activity which enhances a child’s language development. I present concepts of language and thought formation from Skinner and two influential theorists of the cognitive approach to child learning: Piaget and Vygotsky. The focus of this section is to describe the development of the perspective of dramatic play from Piaget’s to Vygotsky’s. Also, this chapter particularly outlines my perspective on dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy and its implication for English as foreign language learning in early childhood educational settings.

3.2 How Children Learn Language

This section presents a discussion about critical ideas of how children learn language which are developed by researchers, theorists and philosophers. To begin, however, I think it is important to conceptualise the terms ‘learning’ and ‘acquiring’ language because both terms are often associated with the discussion of language development. Where does children’s language come
from? What does it mean to speak a language at home and then shift to speaking another other language different to the first language at school? Do the children ‘learn’ or ‘acquire’ language in this situation? Which one is considered acquisition and what is learning? Having greater clarity and understanding of the difference between learning and acquiring will help me clearly understand the factors that are associated with the process of learning or acquiring language in multilingual contexts, where my research takes place. I reviewed literature on child language development for children who speak a first language and second language, and I found considerable inconsistency in using and describing both terms (acquiring language and learning language). Kuhl (2004), in her discussion about infant’s language development, appears to inconsistently use the terms acquisition and learning. She writes, ‘The acquisition of language and speech seems deceptively simple. Young children learn their mother tongue rapidly and effortlessly, from babbling at 6 months of age to full sentences by the age of 3 years, and follow the same developmental path regardless of culture’ (p.1).

In this respect, researchers and linguists highlight there is a distinction between language acquisition and language learning. According to Clark, (2001), acquisition is a subconscious process where children are exposed to natural communication and unaware of grammar rules. Acquisition often associates with first language, for example, a child speaks their parent’s language. In her research White (2003) uses the term ‘acquirer’ instead of ‘learner’ specifically for first language development, for example, she writes, ‘L1 acquirer entertain as to the nature of the language that they are acquiring.’ (xi). On the contrary, Hawkins (2001) suggests language learning is not a communicative language process, but it is generated from conscious and deliberate process. Also, learning takes place through conscious awareness of teaching and learning activity. A similar idea is suggested by Lightbown, (2006) that learning language is a conscious activity with awareness of the rules/grammar of language. If children’s development of a first language is considered to be ‘acquisition’, what do we call children’s development of a second language? In this respect, an influential linguist, Krashen (1996) with his theory of second language acquisition (SLA) emphasizes that acquiring language
takes place when there is two way communication where learners can understand the message from exposures.

Employing these terms in this action research, I considered the participating children ‘learning’ English as foreign language, instead of ‘acquiring’, because they do not get much exposure to English in either the home or school context. Additionally, they do not speak English in two way communication. They speak their first language in the home context for communication, for negotiating their neighbourhood, and as part of the social interaction with their surroundings. First language in West Sumatra has no written form, it is used only orally/spoken. Children shift language to their second language, Bahasa Indonesia, and along with it, children shift their language to first language when they communicate with peers. Questionnaire data filled out by parents of participating children illustrates that they ‘acquire’, instead of ‘learn’ second language because they have begun to get exposed to Bahasa Indonesia in the home context, such as through printed media and television. Children’s books are written in Bahasa Indonesia. Seven out of ten children get exposed to second language for communication in the home context because their parents begin to communicate using Bahasa Indonesia. In the school context, children are enabled to participate in two way communication using Bahasa Indonesia and Baso Minang (L2 and L1). For those reasons, I presume that my participating children acquire both first and second language simultaneously both at home and at school, and they learn English in a formal academic context.

Although many language development theorists work on how children acquire first language, such as Skinner (behaviourist); Piaget, Vygotsky, Erickson, Bruner (cognitivist), Sigmund Freud (Psychodynamic), and Arnold Gesell (maturation) (Linden, 2008; Ambridge et al, 2011; Rowland, 2013), I believe their ideas become important reference points and resources as to how language is learned. In particular, the ideas will be greatly informative and contribute to my research which focuses on learning foreign language. Skinner claims that children acquire first language by imitating sounds around them such as speech (Rowland, 2013). From this view, children gradually mature their language naturally by self-error correcting. In this respect, rich language
environments are the key for language development in order to provide children with opportunities to imitate and reinforce language through interaction (Ambridge et al., 2011).

This concept of imitation proposed by Skinner was opposed by Chomsky (2006). He believed that children were born with the capacity to speak language and that language ability is inherited. Because of inherited ability, children mature their grammar of first language by five years (Chomsky, 2006). Critics of Chomsky’s concept oppose that although children inherit language ability, they need external resources to develop further. Piaget (1962), who writes about child’s development earlier than Chomsky, was against the idea of innateness of cognition. Both were involved in an intense and growing debate in 1983 (Cattell, 2000). Piaget agrees with Chomsky’s biological approach of language development, in which language is innate, however he puts great emphasis on a social approach to language development where social aspects impacts on language use (Piattelli-Palmarini, Massimo, 1983). Piaget (1962), emphasised development through interaction with the physical environment. Children go through development involving a series of stages; sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Sensorimotor refers to the process of exploration of body and environment, where children construct perception using body senses, touching, feeling, licking, and sucking. In the latter part of sensorimotor, children begin to create their own assumption/perception which is called egocentrism. At the concrete operational stage, children develop inductive logic, where they began to recognize and classify objects around them. In the latter stage, formal operational, children begin to develop abstract thought and problem solving. Through the series of stages, it is clear that the relationships between the development of language and thought according to Piaget (1962) is that abstract thought is developed first. This abstract thought is then represented through language. Among the different perspectives of how children learn language, Piaget’s idea of external factors which strongly impact on child language development is important.

I assume that children’s first language development is generated from a combination of both nature (external resources) and nurture (internal resources). Children require external resources to develop abstract thought. According to
Goldstein et al (2003) this ability develops as a result of positive social interaction. Goldstein et al believe that positive social interaction with a baby involves a two way interaction between baby and adults, which promotes not only emotional relationships between the two, but also helps baby’s use of vocalization, the process of producing sounds. It means that there is no communicative language practice in the interaction between baby and adults.

Further, Davies (2010) describes how infants begin making meaning of gestures and concepts through external resources. He emphasizes that abstract thought is constructed in stages; this refers to the levels of thinking, reasoning, and understanding that, for example, a waving hand refers to saying good bye. Therefore, the non-communicative language practice occurring in the babbling stage develops. Davies (2010, p157) gives an example:

By 10 months, the infant regularly imitates parents’ gestures in ritualized games like patty-cake and by waving bye-bye. This ability to imitate behaviour coincides with evidence that the baby is beginning to comprehend the parents’ words. Shortly thereafter the baby shows the beginning of true language when he says words intentionally.

The example shows that imitating, copying, and repeating are part of the critical process of making meaning, which is obtained through interaction with external resources.

Moreover, Vygotsky (1978) extends Piaget’s idea about the formation of abstract thought. Both Piaget and Vygotsky share a similar perspective of the importance of social interaction and external resources as supportive of language development and learning, however they have different ideas at several points. One of the most significant ideas is about how children develop and learn; Piaget perceives children as the key to development because they are the active learner and children are able to develop abstract thought on their own (without any intervention), while Vygotsky sees social interaction and intervention from adults as the key to children’s thought and language development. The relationship between abstract thought and language and how they impact on language development will be presented in the following section.
The critical review about how children learn language aims at seeking a rapprochement between the theories discussed at previous paragraphs. I highlight among two constructivist theorists, Piaget and Vygotsky. Using Piaget’s concept, Halpenny and Pettersen (2014) look at the implication of children’s inner thought during problem solving. In this respect, they emphasize that children are able to accumulate knowledge on their own. Moreover, Heo, J et al. (2011.p.738) suggest that the role of adults’ intervention should be reduced in order to provide children opportunity to enhance their inner thoughts, which is known Language Egocentric (LE). Despite Piaget provides constructivist theory in child cognition development, much of the criticism of his work associated with the role of adults in children’s activity as support for learning.

I am delighted by the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) on social interaction and intervention from adults becomes the key argument in this thesis. Swan et al (2011) suggest numerous studies and research share critical overview in common, in particular the implication of interaction and intervention of adults in ZPD concept as support for child learning and development. Among such current emerged concepts are Daniels’s (2016) concept of dialogic conception of pedagogy which is generated from Vygotsky’s idea on social and interaction. Dialogic conception of pedagogy refers to the process of teaching and learning which is influenced by meaningful experience and social interaction. Another influential work is known guided participation developed by Rogoff (2003) views the importance of adults’ role in supporting children’s problem solving. Rogoff highlights Vygotky’s concept on cultural tools, such as language and adult’s involment, is significant support for child learning and development. Given the idea of social resources and adult intervention for learning, I believe that the use of social interaction through the dramatic play activity as context for learning EFL is critical. I therefore decided to use Vygotsky’s theoretical concepts as a framework for analysing and interpreting my data. The discussion will be presented later in sub section 3.2.2

3.2.1 Vygotsky’s Concept of Thought and Language

What is of interest in this research is the incorporation of just Vygotsky’s theory of children’s cognitive development and its link to language
development. The way in which Vygotsky viewed the connection between thought and language, social interaction and experience is critical for this research. In this section, I discuss a selective number of key points about the development of thought and language from a Vygotskian perspective that I believe are applicable to the study of dramatic play and early-age EFL. The importance of dramatic play in foreign language learning cannot be understood in full without a clear understanding of the relationship between thought and language and the ways in which the nature of classroom activities develops imagination, thought and language. Vygotsky (1986), says, ‘schematically, we may imagine thought and speech as two intersecting circles. In their overlapping parts, thought and speech coincide to produce what is call verbal thought (p. 88). He describes the reciprocity of the relationship of thought and language. From Vygotsky’s perspective, although thought and language have separate roots, they develop together and contribute to each other in a gradual process. The language used by the community informs the inner speech of children with their newly emerging thoughts. Inner speech refers to self-talk (Manfra et al, 2006; Winsler et al, 2003), private speech (Corkum et al, 2008; Machado de Almeida Mattos, 2000; Cazden, 1994; Button et al, 2005), and self-instruction (Winsler, 2007). According to Ehrich (2006), inner speech is an initial level of understanding of knowledge where children speak to themselves. Later, as children become involved in active interaction in their own language, their inner speech informs thought, and thoughts then generate through both language and action. Therefore, as children learn from social interaction, they need a guided activity, which mediates the use of tools, such as props/materials, symbols, and language.

It is important to clearly understand the definition of thought because definitions of ‘thought’ or ‘mind’ vary according to different perspectives on language development. Thought or mind is more than a physiological function of the brain that is linked to a physical object. From a socio-cultural and psychological perspective, thought cannot be separated from cultural life because a person is a part of a social network. For Vygotsky, thought is defined as the “mental function” of an individual who develops in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). Wertsch (1991, p. 14) defines thought as something “that extends beyond the skin”. He describes it as a socially “distributed” and
“shared” social experience. From a socio-cultural perspective, thought is the process of reconstruction of experiences obtained through social interaction and transformed through language as “psychological tool” (Kozulin, 2003). Accordingly, thoughts are not invented by a child in isolation. They are viewed as a product of socio-cultural development which children have actively experienced within their community.

Bodrova (2007), who prefers the term ‘mind’ to identify this component of the self, says that thought involves content and ‘shared mental process’ (p. 12). This suggests that the way one child perceives an object will be different from other children who have had different experiences, come from another background and live in a different setting. Content is old information which is combined with new information through a learning process. For example in her research, Bodrova (2007, p. 11) says, ‘Children who attend school and are taught scientific categories for classifying animals will actually group animals in a different way from children who do not attend school’. In this manner, there is strong support for the idea that a child’s conceptualisation and culture are mutually related. Vygotsky believes that socio-cultural background affects people’s perception. In short, the definitions of thought proposed by Vygotsky and Bodrova are similar. Thought, from a socio-cultural perspective, is a unity of pre-conceptions in the child’s thinking, which derives from old information and ‘higher mental function’ (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 34) and which is a kind of process of shared knowledge in a social context.

Vygotsky further defines ‘thought' in terms of four basic mental functions: attention, sensation, perception, and memory (Vygotsky, 1978). Attention is a process of filtering what children hear, see and feel. The result of this auditory, visual, and sensory experience is selected by ‘labelling' through the development of a non-verbal concept.

The child begins to perceive the world not only through his eyes but also through his speech. As a result, the immediacy of “natural” perception is supplanted by a complex mediated process; such as, speech becomes an essential part of the child’s cognitive development. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 32)
Once children start to listen, see and feel, they begin to acquire knowledge, which will be constructed as perception, memory, and attention. Vygotsky acknowledges the existence of an innate conceptual function, which he calls ‘natural memory’. For Vygotsky, ‘this kind of memory is very close to perception, because it arises out of the direct influence of outer stimuli upon human beings.’ (1978, p.39)

However, Vygotsky puts more emphasis on another type of memory which he calls ‘higher mental function’, which is a ‘combination’ of external aspects of thought development and actual mental function. For Vygotsky, memory is not simply a process of recalling or remembering past experiences. In fact, he sees memory as a kind of reaction between stimulus and response. Memory requires external inputs and mediation in order to function. Perception, as well as memory, is not a single or independent entity. Instead, it is ‘part of a dynamic system of behaviour: hence, the relation between transformation of perceptual processes and transformations in other intellectual activities is of primary importance’ (p.31).

Young children tend to talk to themselves, even more often than they talk to others. They enjoy producing sounds, talking to themselves while playing, or imitating others’ speech. I believe that self-talk helps them remember target words into memory/perception through repetitive self-talk. For me personally as an adult, self-talk helps me to recall memories, for example when I lose my car keys, I repetitively say target words through self-talk. I don’t expect a response from others through my self-talk, it is simply the way to recall memory. In the same manner, children often engage in self-talk and although adults often do not respond to the sounds made, this self-talk is viewed as playing an important role in the development of children’s cognition. As children grow, they gain mastery of ‘vocalization’, and it is expected that this self-talk will decrease (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 229). Eventually, children come to use meaningful words and phrases for the purpose of communication. From the example I mentioned above, this self-talk never really disappears even as people reach adulthood. We may find ourselves talking to ourselves as we try to figure something out or if a situation is stressful.
Although Piaget’s argument about an ‘egocentric’ stage is seen as flawed by some (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2006), it has served as important inspiration for other researchers, including Vygotsky. Vygotsky agrees that children talk to themselves, however, he believes that children first use language as ‘social speech’, which they then internalize as thought. Where Piaget suggests that children use ‘self-talk’ to express their innate personal knowledge, Vygotsky believes that children use ‘self-talk’, which he calls ‘inner speech,’ and ‘social language’ together to solve problems. Children use ‘egocentric language’ or ‘inner speech’ to formulate abstract thoughts and construct intellectual functions (Vygotsky, 1978). The transformation of external information from cultural interaction converges with ‘inner speech’ to formulate thought.

Understanding the development of children’s self-talk is important as it may help us analyse the psychological aspects of language development. Children’s self-talk, which Vygotsky refers to as ‘egocentric thought’ or ‘egocentric speech’ (Vygotsky, 1986, p.17), ‘involves a certain unconsciousness, which in its turn explains some features of the child’s logic’ (p.24). The idea of egocentrism suggests that children see only their own point of view. Egocentricity, which develops before verbal speech, contributes to cognitive development. Vygotsky believes that inner speech and verbal speech are both part of cognitive development. By contrast, Piaget suggested that egocentricity is just ‘self-talk’ that will disappear around the age of 6-7 years (Lefrancois, 1995). Vygotsky disagreed with this view and suggested that inner speech is a critical element in higher mental development.

The complex movement from the first vague emergence of the thought to its completion in a verbal formulation. . . . Thought is not expressed but completed in the word. . . . Any thought has movement. It unfolds. . . . This flow of thought is realized as an internal movement through several planes. As a transition from thought to word and from word to thought. (Vygotsky, 1987, pp. 249-250)

Inner speech, then, may be understood as a symbol of verbal language that serves a ‘self-communicative function’ (Lantolf, 2000). Current Vygotskians, Carpendale and Lewis (2004, 2006) argue that the process of thought construction is a process of developing ‘social understanding’. In this process,
children actively internalize external inputs through social interaction then construct thoughts and express them through language.

As discussed above, in addressing the origin of thought and language, the conceptualization of word meaning emerges as an effect of thought formation. In other words, the meaning of a word does not derive from the word itself, from its symbolic form, or from thought. Meaning is a fluid quality that derives from social interaction, inner speech, activity and the use of tools. For example, the meaning of a single word may be different in different contexts of language use. It is difficult to generalize or to assign a constant sense to any given word. However, meaning is a conscious social function of thought, which may be transformed into ‘inner speech and verbal speech’. For this reason, Vygotsky believes that thinking and speech are separate functions but that they join to produce verbal speech.

Although the processes of thought construction and language are not the same, each supports the other. In terms of how thought is formed and its relationship to language, Vygotsky believes that they are ‘interrelated process (es)’ of social interaction that are constructed separately. The ‘internalization’ of information, which is transformed through dialogue and interaction between children and the social community, constructs children’s thought. This ‘internalization’ process, or ‘inner speech,’’ will be reproduced in a kind of response. For Vygotsky, thought is ‘inner speech’ that can be converted into words.

Thus, in Vygotsky’s view, the process required to reach higher psychological functions is a transfer of knowledge from the social environment to the individual internal environment. The tools to do this involve language. Language is known as ‘psychological tools’ (Kozulin, 2003) and ‘mental tools’ (Bodrova, 2007). Technical tools are physical tools, such as a pencil or a book, which are mediated at the individual level by objects and materials. Bodrova (2007) refers to language as ‘mental tools’:

Mental tools help children master their own physical, cognitive and emotional behavior. With mental tools, children make their bodies react in a specific pattern, for example, to music or a verbal command. Planning, problem solving, and memory are impossible without tools.
Tools also help children master emotions. Instead of hitting another person when angry, they learn ways of thinking, or strategies, to control their feelings. (Bodrova, 2007, p.17).

Physical tools, for Bodrova, are objects, which help children to understand the ‘changing environment’ (p.16). In brief, there are four aspects of the development of higher mental function: 1) it is dependent on lower mental functions; 2) it is determined by cultural context; 3) it develops from a shared function to an individual function; and 4) it involves the internalization of a tool’ (Bodrova, 2007, p.21).

The main difference from one child to another lies in their unique, individual social life experience. In his research, Goldstein et al (2003) describes the implication of responses from adults such as touching, smiling, and shaking to 8-month-old infants’ vocal response. Goldstein et al (2003) emphasises that the evidence shows that language is developed by contingency response and exposure to sound provided by adults during social interaction. He writes, ‘Because social stimulation (with no auditory component) is shown here to influence the development of speech, neural structures must be involved in the speech system that are sensitive to non-auditory feedback (p.2). Patterns of interaction, which may be dependent on social and cultural context, contribute to how a child reacts and interacts with others or the environment. Johnson (2003) finds positive social interaction between a 4-year-old girl and her mother over telling a story helps the girl develop ‘prior knowledge’ and fosters her to enable to give verbal feedback over the story (p.1). Johnson (2003) emphasizes that the use of language in mother and daughter interaction is significant to help the girl create knowledge and thought. He writes, ‘The language they use to label, compare, explain, and classify creates a supportive context for structuring the processes of thinking and concept formation (p.2). These studies suggest that the intervention of adults in interaction can amplify the development of language.

3.2.2 Learning within Guided Activity Context

Given the importance of social interaction, adult intervention, tools, and experience as discussed above, children need learning environments to learn and develop. Therefore, the idea of using guided activities to stimulate children’s
thought and language formation is important to this research. Guided activity refers to a learning environment which is well prepared and facilitated by adults (Fisher et al., 2011; Hirsch- Pasek et al., 2009; Hurwitz, 2003). Leontev, Vygotsky’s colleague, uses the term ‘leading activity’ to refer to the creation of an environment or situation where a child can be engaged to develop (in Bodrova 2007). In this respect, the role of adults involves preparing spaces and time involving physical environments which enrich the opportunity to play and engage in positive interaction (Hurwitz, 2003). In addition to preparing space and time, Fisher et al (2011) suggest adults use open-ended questions when engaging in child’s play, modelling language, giving comments, feedback, and helping children explore the experience, in particular language experience. In other words, adults engage in social interaction with children, instead of simply observing or sitting near them.

Many scholars have focused on language as a significant element for the study of children's cognitive development, particularly the use of language as mediator for learning. The next section discusses how language may act as a psychological tool, a ‘tool of mind’, that mediates the development of cognition. Developing the theories of Vygotsky and his colleagues, Bodrova (2007, p.96) uses the term ‘developmental accomplishment' in order to describe the mechanism of cognitive development of a child. Developmental stages is classified into two categories; ‘social situation’ and ‘leading activity’. According to Bodrova, the ‘social situation’ refers to the combination of a set of social interactions involving the child and the context in which the child grows up. To acquire knowledge, develop competencies, and skills, a child needs encouraging assistance from people around him or her: adults, peers, older siblings, etc. The social situation plays a major role in helping a child to reach an ‘optimal condition for development’ during his or her growth (p.97). In the next part of this chapter, I will discuss ways in which pre-school teachers provide support for language learning through play.
3.3 Effective Scaffolding of Children’s Foreign Language Learning and Development in the Classroom Context

Research tells us that carefully considered, effective pedagogy and practice are the most important aspects of support required for quality children’s learning and development (Shipley, 2008; Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). There have been significant shifts of understanding the effective practice and pedagogy, from unguided/free/unstructured/unframed play practice to play-based framed learning and pedagogy (Rogers & Evans, 2008; Fleer, 2010; Bruce, 2011; Bodrova, 2003). In this part of chapter, I discuss strategies implemented by preschool teachers to support children’s foreign language learning and development. However, preceding this, it is important to firstly describe the goal of learning English within the context of this research as clear goals are needed to inform effective teaching and learning practices.

As stated earlier, in the background for this research, there is no adequate guideline provided by the Indonesian government for the teaching of English in the early years of education. The government merely suggests that teaching and learning language, including foreign language should adopt play-based learning, where children learn through play. Although no framework is provided for the teaching and learning EFL, there are guidelines for teaching and learning second language, Bahasa Indonesia, where the goal of learning language at pre-school level is to develop the awareness of language use; to enable children to identify letters, have phonics knowledge, and develop vocabularies. If the information from this guideline is applied to the learning of EFL, it implies that the goal of teaching and learning English is to develop and introduce the awareness of English language, and develop vocabularies and simple expression of English, instead of to obtain proficiency in English.

According to Cabezas and Rouse (2014) effective practice to support foreign language in preschool settings requires a supportive learning environment which allows children to have a rich language experience. The next section reviews literature which implies the importance of children’s play as a potential learning environment.
3.3.1 The Role of Language to Scaffold Children’s Foreign Language Learning and Development

There are a variety of strategies for scaffolding children to develop foreign language vocabulary. Nation (2001), suggests some strategies involve translation, giving synonyms to L2 children’s language, providing pictures, drawing pictures, giving contextual examples of the use of target vocabulary. In this way, the teacher might facilitate children to be involved in a range of creative and imaginative activities. However, the use of code-switching as support of language experience is critical for language learning in a multilingual context. Codeswitching or code-mixing refers to the use of two or more mixed languages or dialects, either as individual words or in sentences (Nilep, 2006). Research shows that using code-switching as a strategy of language for communication effectively helps University students make meaning from new vocabularies (see Blemiller, 2000; Genessee, 2000; Tian, Macaro, 2012; Cook, 2001). According to Cook (2001), for example, using code-switching helped teachers explaining new vocabulary, simple expression, and new concepts. The positive effect of using code-switching is that it avoids frustration and anxiety amongst teachers and children, when children do not have sufficient exposure to target language before coming to school (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009).

It is important to discuss the significance of prior language, L1 and L2 to L3 learning and development and the way teachers help children to learn English as foreign language (hereafter EFL), through guided activity with the use of code-switching first language (L1), second language and English as a foreign language.

Building on from the discussion about two different perspectives of learning language, I argue Vygotsky’s idea of how children make meaning from language might contribute to child play and language learning: The most significant moment during the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity two previously completely independent lines of development, converge. (Vygotsky, 1978. p.24) Vygotsky (1978; 1986) highlights that language plays an important role in obtaining knowledge. With the help of language, children learn about the surrounding
world, social rules, culture and language. Language can be seen as a medium to transfer external information, which will be internalized as inner or abstract knowledge. As they move from producing egocentric language to language for communication, children are helped by interaction with adults and peers to better understand the communicative environment. Language, then, is a tool for solving problems and accomplishing tasks.

The child participants in this study lived in West Sumatra, one of 33 provinces in Indonesia, and came to the pre-school with a home language other than second language (L1), a second Indonesian language (hereafter L2) as well as a foreign language (L3). Typically these children speak L1 during interaction with peers and shift to L2 during communication with the teacher. Starting at pre-school, the local government expects children in West Sumatra to learn literacy of L2 (Bahasa Indonesia) and L3 involving English and Arabic. Indonesia, where the research was conducted, is a linguistically heterogeneous country with approximately 400 local languages. In pre-school settings, learning English as a foreign language is common phenomenon. In West Sumatra in particular, learning Arabic literacy as a foreign language is provided since pre-school settings. In a broader context, most people in Indonesia are native speakers of one of the nation’s local languages and must also master Indonesian, the national Language. Indonesian developed from Malay which was a lingua franca in the region for hundreds of years before the modern era. Some of Indonesia’s local languages are linguistically related to Malay/Indonesian. Minang, the language of West Sumatra where this research took place, is one of these. Nonetheless, speakers of Minang must learn Indonesian, for example my participating children usually begin to do this when they first attend school. The study of English or another foreign language occurs in addition to this. Regarding this background, I have to consider which strategy of scaffolding children’s vocabulary will be effective.

How can a child’s pre-existing language development be linked to foreign language study in the early years of development? To answer this question, it is necessary to better understand the connection between the development of first and second language and that of a foreign language. It can be assumed that the better educators understand children’s language
development, the more effective teaching English as a foreign language in preschool settings is likely to be. First language facilitates the explication of human thought; it is a tool to transmit information and ideas. While it is common for teachers in an EFL classroom to translate from the first or second language into English, attention is rarely paid to understanding the use of language in its mediating role in learning a foreign language (Vygotsky, 1986, p.197).

Success in learning and making meaning of new concepts and words is not only determined by pre-existing language, tools, and meditative processes, but also imagination. Imagination is a key factor in developing the transformation of concepts, objects, and word meaning. In the next section, I discuss how dramatic play enhances self-initiated play, imagination, and language experience. Vygotsky suggests:

Success in learning foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language. The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own. The reverse is also true - a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language (p.196).’

In particular, I argue that the use of the first and second language, together with the foreign language, can link social understandings and individual concept formation. I concur with the research literature that considers the first and second languages to be an important tool for learning new foreign words. New words may be conceptualized in an existing language in a verbal thought. Vygotsky suggests, ‘a foreign word is not related to its object immediately, but through the meanings already established in the native language’ (Vygotsky, 1986, p.197)

3.3.2 Research on Bilingual/Multilingual Children; How Children Simultaneously Develop More Than One Language

It was intriguing to read discoveries about how children can develop two or more languages simultaneously. The literature discussed in this section contributed greatly to the ways in which the participating teacher and I understood bilingual/multilingual experience, particularly when searching for suggestions and recommendations. As mentioned previously, the participating children fluently spoke their first language (this first language is spoken only, no
written form), easily acquired spoken Bahasa Indonesia, and spoke Bahasa Indonesia for communication with others. They were to start learning Bahasa Indonesia writing and reading skills when starting primary school. Although they also begin learning literacy of Arabic as foreign language in both preschool and primary school, the language is not used for communication. How do children acquire two languages and learn two foreign languages? In my research context, it is possible for children to speak both languages L1 and L2 because children get exposed to the languages from communication at home, school and public media (Tabors, 2008).

Using case study methods, Tabors (2008) explored the bilingual development of six-year-old Maya, a Chinese child, who was adopted by an English-speaking family. Tabor considered Maya as a child learning English as a second first language (L2), because she was adopted and moved to America before the age of 5 years but she had already been exposed to Chinese language prior to this. Tabors compared Maya’s bilingual development to another child who was exposed to both first language at home with parents and English (L2) at school context. Maya’s Chinese language was lost after she was only exposed solely to English communication in her new home with her adopted parents and at school. The other child, who received a high input of first language (Chinese language) at home from her Chinese parents and was exposed to English as second language at school, appeared to maintain her first language and rapidly acquire the second language. Maya lost her Chinese language because she had no further exposure to or use of Chinese language after adoption. While other children who live with parents using a first language other than English are able to rapidly develop two languages; both first language at home and second language at school. Similarly, Escamilla (2005) found that children who used English only as second language at school context, lost their first language at home when their parents used English at home, instead of their first language. The research provides evidence showing the key importance of language development is adult’s intervention and use of English, providing opportunities for language experience, intervention, immersion and exposure to children.

Following Tabor’s perspective, I believe that the participating children should be able to maintain both their first language and second language and
then additional languages. According to Clark (2004), ‘Children get their information about language from their caretakers and the adults around them’ (p.2). Research suggests that children are able to learn more than two languages as long as they get sufficient exposure to develop the language, reinforcement, and support of parents, families and society (see August, et al., 2006; Castro, et al. 2011; DeHouwer, 2009; Paradis, et al. 2011).

3.3.2 Designing Dramatic Play

In this part of chapter three, I examine research literature about strategies for using dramatic play for fostering language learning and development and discuss how to use dramatic play effectively. Critically, current research supports the idea that adults play a significant role in designing learning environments which support interaction during dramatic play experiences (Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer, 2009). Careful planning of the learning environment to help children actively engage in dramatic play is important to achieve the goal of learning. According to Hirsch-Pasek et al (2009) there are a variety of interventions that an adult can provide in order to help children achieve learning goals. Fisher et al (2011) describe two forms of intervention in play that can be undertaken by the adult. First, adults can provide play materials that lead to learning experiences, secondly, the adult can engage in the play by asking questions, giving feedback, and providing comments during play experience.

Korat et al (2003) suggest three levels of involvement during socio-dramatic play for supporting the development first language literacy:

**Level 1** is creating a rich environment easily accessible to the children in the different corners of play and work in the kindergarten.

**Level 2** is responding willingly to all children who, through their play, initiate questions concerning the written language. Responses could include giving information as well as posing new questions aimed at the child's zone of proximal development.

**Level 3** is planning a curriculum that deals with literacy subjects in order to encourage awareness of the written language (e.g., how newspapers
affect our society, how written language affects our neighbourhood, how books are created). (p.387)

Although the focus of Korat’s project is upon literacy development in the child’s first language through the use of sociodramatic play, I believe the idea of level of involvement can contribute to my research project development. Korat et al (2003) describes the way adults intervene in play and help children develop literacy;

…the beginning of the project, one of the teacher's decisions was to add an office corner to the other corners in the kindergarten. The office included an old typewriter, telephone, chairs, and two tables. The children willingly cooperated and brought from their homes different office appliances and materials. In a short time, they started using the phone to lead conversations and to make notes while talking, to fill out forms and diaries, and to play as if they were office workers. It was very clear to all children who came to work in the office corner that there you were supposed to write and not just draw. Glancing at what they produced, we found that it involved different levels of representations of written language, from strings of figurative signs, to letter-like marks, to a broad inventory of Hebrew letters and numbers. They tried to fill out the forms and the diaries in the lines, and some put their names on them. (p.388)

This vignette illustrates the way the teacher provides play materials and designs the room. This has informed the development of my research project. When the children began to play, their teacher joined in and guided them in their writing of letters and numbers in the office context. Korat et al (2003) suggested that if necessary, the teacher can also play a unique role; to take initiative in play as illustrated in the vignette below:

The teacher came over to the children’ stable and initiated the following exchange:

Teacher: So how is work?

Roy: Nobody is coming.
Teacher: Who is supposed to come?

Gal: People that need different things.

Teacher: What kinds of things can you arrange in your office?

Gal and Roy: Whatever you like.

The teacher understood that the children were inviting her to play the role of a client, so she decided to be the first one to apply for their office service. (p.389)

Docket and Fleer (2002) describes two kinds of teacher involvement; outside the flow or inside the flow. Outside the flow refers to the way teacher helps children reflect, modify, and extend the play. When the teacher participates in play experience, it is called inside the flow. A similar idea comes from Ashiabi (2007) who describes the way teacher took on a role when participating in dramatic play:

Mr. Lane had noticed his preschoolers’ interest in medicine and what takes place in the doctor’s office. So Mr. Lane set up the dramatic area in the class with props such as stethoscopes, sphygmomanometer (blood pressure units), thermometers, plastic syringes, note pads, reservation books, file folders, and prescription forms. However, Mr. Lane observed that while the children pretending to be nurses in the doctor’s office were calling patients to the doctor’s office, they were not taking the file folders of the patients into the doctor’s office. He was able to take the role of a patient and draw attention to the issue.

Teachers can play a range of roles in dramatic play, from facilitating and designing the learning environment to participating in the play experience.

Vygotsky (1978; 1986) provided a comprehensive theoretical perspective of the way adults guide children in play. His idea that children acquire development through ‘psychological tools’ and ‘mediators’ will now be discussed: additionally, the way in which children’s learning and play can be scaffolded to reach their potential through ‘leading activities,’ in particularly dramatic play, will be described. Before we discuss scaffolding further, it is
important to clarify the terminology used throughout this chapter. Although Vygotsky himself does not use the term ‘scaffolding’, he conceptualises ‘mediated activity’, which is provided by adult humans, to help children use tools and signs to master knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978, p.54).

Through the concept of mediated learning given by Vygotsky, the notion of scaffolding refers to the assistance provided by more experienced persons, such as teachers and peers, to help children to reach higher level of knowledge mastery. In teaching EFL in pre-school classroom settings, I see scaffolding as a process of mediating children to construct their knowledge and concepts through the medium of dramatic play activity and their mother/second language use.

In terms of definition, currently, there exists the general use of the term ‘scaffolding’, which means either helping, assisting, guiding, or supporting (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Within a Vygotskian perspective, Kozulin defines mediation as the process of adult involvement in enhancing the child’s performance in a framework of guided participation. In terms of Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) notion of scaffolding, there exists a process during the transition of knowledge from actual performance to higher development through interaction. Bodrova (2007) defines scaffolding as ‘a mediator’ (p.57). She claims that scaffolding is a process of helping children to acquire skills and the ability to solve problems through an instructional relationship between an adult (expert) and a child (lesser expert). Similarly, Kozulin (2003), terms ‘scaffolding’ as ‘mediation’ (p.18); thus, these definitions overlap and complement each other. Even though Bodrova and Kozulin use different terms to describe scaffolding, the framework of their knowledge base is still in line with the notion of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Zone of proximal development (hereafter ZPD) refers to the gap between children’s actual knowledge/ability/performance and improved knowledge/ability/performance after obtaining guidance/assistance/help/scaffolding (Daniel, 2001; Chaiklin, 2003). ZPD occurs in conjunction with collaboration with more knowledgeable adults/peers. Vygotsky (1934/1987) defines the notion of ZPD as ‘what the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow’ (p.211). From the definition given, ZPD is a description of development from actual
development without intervention to potential development with intervention, scaffolding and collaboration.

Vygotsky conceptualises scaffolding, or what he calls ‘mediated activity’, in ‘a basic analogy’ of the mutual relationships between sign and tool in an interactional activity as the following figure 1:

![Figure 1. Mediated Activity](image)

Sign

Tool

**Figure 1. Mediated Activity**

Cited from ‘Mind and Society’ (Vygotsky, 1978, p.54)

The theory highlights the role of activity, which of course, is mediated by humans, in transferring the knowledge through the use of language and tools. Sign refers to gesture, verbal language, or artefact, which ‘assimilates the name of objects in her environment’ (p.84). A tool, which refers to property-things-material, is used to shape the child’s perception. In Vygotsky’s concept, perception ‘is generally not an independent but rather an integrated feature of motor reaction’ (p.96). This means that the child’s activity is the representation of perception, which is generated from the use of language and tools, she/he gains from his/her environment. Tools and signs help children to solve problems in their activity.

In terms of pre-school activity, I see the concept of mediated activity from Vygotsky refers to a mediated learning process which can be guided by the teacher and peers. Teachers use signs, both verbal and non-verbal language during class activity to help children shape their perception. Materials are prepared by teachers to help children make meaning of their perceptions and to
engage in activities. Teachers should understand their role is critical in helping children use language, tools, and to engage them in learning activity, thus, helping children master knowledge and accomplish tasks through a mediated activity.

In line with Vygostky’s perspective, a critical part of this research is to apply the concept of Vygotskian scaffolding to EFL learning. Mediated activity, which is prepared by a teacher, will not only facilitate children to make meaning in EFL, but also scaffold children to represent their understanding of EFL through language and actions. The activity mediates children to use language and imagination. Through a dramatic play activity, teachers can help children to reach both ‘interpersonal’ and ‘intrapersonal’ processes of knowledge transformation. This means that children develop their interpersonal interaction between children to teacher and children, which is known as ‘the social level’. Later, the interaction among teachers-children and children-children will lead to the development of ‘the individual level’, which is known as intrapersonal development. It is critical for teachers to use some strategies to effectively help children develop their interpersonal interaction between children to teacher and children during dramatic play.

On the basis of Vygotsky’s concept, in order to scaffold children in learning EFL, modelling can be implemented during dramatic play. Vygotsky says that by using their imagination, children imitate the experiences they gain through daily life interaction and act them out in either dramatic play or symbolic play. Children acquire knowledge and information from adults: ‘by imitating adults and through being instructed about how to act’ (Vygotsky, 1978, p.84). Therefore, in terms of my research, presenting a model in particular, EFL is important during dramatic play. As I understand from Vygotsky’s concept, learning occurs through the demonstration provided by teachers and peers. Certainly, teachers play a critical role in modelling the use of EFL during their involvement in dramatic play.

In modelling, teachers can use language, both verbal and non-verbal. Vygotsky (1986) informs us that language is critical for the development of children’s thought. He claims that children acquire knowledge through language and construct it into thought, which will be expressed into language. This means
that language can be the medium of learning language. In classroom practice, for example, teachers can combine the use of two or more languages in giving the meaning of objects, then children see and try to imitate them.

Teachers can also use non-verbal language, such as gestures, mime and symbolic action. Vygotsky writes that ‘representational activity’ which is given by teachers and peers helps children to make meaning of objects and actions. Children may look at the way teachers or peers act as role models through non-verbal languages, which have a communicative function. With the assistance of teachers, children may be able to make meaning through the use of context (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, not all children can reach the same level of achievement. This means that the concept of imitation is not simply ‘mechanical processes’ (88). Thus, according to Vygotsky, teachers should consider the zone of proximal development. Using modelling strategies, teachers should consider children’s development with the idea of a zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development (hereafter ZPD) refers to the gap between children’s actual knowledge/ability/performance and improved knowledge/ability/performance after obtaining guidance/assistance/help/scaffolding (Daniel, 2001; Chaiklin, 2003). ZPD informs teachers to see what children have already mastered, and helps children to develop it to reach higher levels. Vygotsky (1978) assumes that children might be able to imitate what they see and listen to, and develop their imagination higher than their current development.

However, the achievement at the level of development depends on in which way teachers scaffold them: ‘the only ‘good learning’ is that which advances development’ (p.89). Certainly, inappropriate scaffolding may lead to misunderstanding and misconception. Kozulin (2003) argues that teachers should prepare the symbolic materials which are relevant for the activity of problem-solving. ‘Symbols may remain useless unless their meaning as cognitive tools is properly mediated to the child’ (p.24). Moreover, teachers should play their role as a supervisor of the use of tools. ‘That is why the inability to teach psychological tools in a transcendent manner inevitably leads to failure in their appropriation by students’ (p.26). So, what techniques teacher can use in scaffolding children’s language learning should be considered.
The active repetitive modelling of the spoken language can be the technique in scaffolding children’s language learning. Lantolf (2003, p.251) argues that the repetitive spoken language modelled by the teacher during class activity is a part of mediation. ‘Sign-based mediation first is inter-personal and then becomes intra-personal as children learn to regulate the mediational tools of their culture and, with this, their own social and mental activity’. Interaction which happens as a two way street, for example between a child and adult, is called inter-personal. As the result of interaction, children generate logical thinking, concepts, and understanding on their own (individual level), which is called inter-personal. For example, at a certain point, given the repetitive modelling of spoken language, children develop ‘future activity’ (Lantolf, p.355). ‘The future activity’ refers to potential meaningful words and concepts. It means that children reproduce what they see and listen to through language, sounds, and meaningful action that will gradually enable them to develop awareness of language:

The child responds to the teacher’s utterance with what, from a conversational perspective, has to be considered as an inappropriate move; the child’s utterance, however, is not intended as an interpersonal turn, but as an imitation of the teacher’s language. It results in a transformation, or as some might put it, an overgeneralization, as the child produces what appears to be a violation of a co-occurrence constraint on ‘wipe’. Of course, under some circumstances, it would be appropriate to say, “wipe your teeth,” as when one perhaps has a bit of lettuce stuck on a tooth. The resulting pattern is reminiscent of the L1 child’s imitations in (3) and (4) (p359).

Children actively imitate adults’ spoken language, then, internalize it, sometimes through self-talk and actions. As children listen to the language used by teachers, children may initially imitate the gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, voice; including pitch, tone and intonation, and then express it in a verbal language. For this reason, in dramatic play activity, teachers should actively use language with children ‘that is within their ZPD’ (p.366).

According to Vygotsky’s scaffolding, it is important that children engage in talk and social interaction with other children, their parents, teachers or peers.
In the classroom, teachers should use appropriate interventions and materials to facilitate the social interactions between children. ‘When children are engaged in classroom activities, their behaviour and discoveries are influenced by the kinds of activities the teacher has set up, even though the teacher may not be physically present where that activity is taking place’ (Bodrova, 2003, p.2). Teachers are required to monitor interactions: to lead the meaning construction of a new concept.

3.3.4 The Role of the Teacher in ZPD Concept

In the previous chapter, the role of the teacher in dramatic play has been discussed, such as observer, knowledge resource, co-director/director, and so-player/player. Due to the fact that the notion of the ZPD is going to be front and centre of my discussion and my opening statement then this chapter needs to have a much deeper and richer discussion on what ZPD is and how teachers support and move children through the ZPD during dramatic play activity. To clearly show how to practically apply ZPD during dramatic play, I argue that both Chaiklin (2003) and Bodrova’s concept (2003) of ZPD in classroom have much informed the use of ZPD in dramatic play activity. In particular I discuss the idea about the practical way to identify ZPD concepts in order to better design intervention, the way teachers engage with children to optimally help them reach potential development, and how to cope with challenge during activity.

Using the concept of ZPD, what kind of kind of strategy is optimal for helping children develop language during dramatic play activity? According to Chaiklin (2003), there are three aspects of ZPD that should be highlighted during the process of scaffolding, generality assumption, assistance assumption, and potential assumption. The aspects become practical steps that guide what the teacher should do using ZPD concepts. Similarly, using the concept of ZPD, Bodrova (2003) named generality assumption, assistance assumption, and potential assumption in different terms; they are the lower level. This is called ‘the child’s independent performance’ and the higher level is called ‘assisted performance’ (p.3).
**General Assumptions**

Initial analysis or general assumption of child development, is critical for designing what strategy is optimal for helping children develop further, which is called *preceding analysis* by Chaiklin(2003). Chaiklin described that the notion of ZPD emphasises the process of interaction between competent and less competent persons, where the more competent person help foster the less competent person to reach potential development. Teachers might initially figure out actual development, what children can do prior to intervention by giving children a variety of tasks (Berk, 1997). ‘The first aspect focuses on the idea that a person is able to perform a certain number of tasks alone, while in collaboration, it is possible to perform a greater number of tasks’(p.2).

Teachers need to consider the various levels of readiness of each of the children through the learning process. Not all children show their enthusiasm and progress; some are passive. Also, not all children constantly engage in dramatic play. Some withdraw themselves. According to CSL Cheah (2001. p.50), 'children not only choose the types of play activities in which to engage, but also whether or not to participate with others in those activities.' Therefore, teachers should use some strategies to overcome this: designing teaching and learning which fits the current performance; understanding the responses given by children, in terms of whether they understand or not; and understanding the different response given by each child.

**Assistance Assumption**

The description of assistance assumption can be obtained ‘with collaboration, direction, or some kind of help the child is always able to do more and solve more difficult tasks that [sic] he can independently’ (Vygotsky, 1934/1987, p. 209. cited from Chaiklin, 2003). Drawing from Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of child development, the key factor to motivate children to engage in dramatic play, is the environment which fascinates children and encourages them to play. Setting up varied scenario centres will increase the motivation and interest to play. Smilansky (1968) found that less fascinating environments resulted in less engagement in play. In a disadvantaged school, where the classroom was poorly designed; children seemed lost and wandered. Smilansky
put forth that sociodramatic play was driven by the need and motive to copy their environment. For that reason, providing children with environments such as props/materials, classroom decoration, and language will drive them to use their imagination and to pretend.

According to Vygotsky’s perspective, children construct knowledge through a mediated learning process. Children normally engage in talk and social interaction with other children, their parents, teachers, or peers; this plays a key role in their cognitive development and learning. Because, in a classroom, children interact with teachers and other children, teachers should use appropriate interventions and materials to facilitate the social interactions between children. This provides a model of how to learn and to actively participate in activities that promote the acquisition of cognitive skills. ‘When children are engaged in classroom activities, their behaviour and discoveries are influenced by the kinds of activities the teacher has set up, even though the teacher may not be physically present where that activity is taking place’(Bodrova, 2007, p.2). Teachers are required to monitor interactions: to lead the meaning construction of a new concept.

Another example of intervention drawing from Smilansky and Shefatya (1990), illustrated that teachers are required to model how to actively engage in socio-dramatic play, such as how to involve social interaction, communication and cooperation. Modelling how to use props and develop story can be provided at initial stage of play, when children seem to be able independently to use props and develop story. The teacher might also withdraw from direct participation and keep observing them. In assistance assumption stage, teachers should design programs to help young children learn how to learn, not focus upon the outcomes of teaching in their planning (Bodrova, 2003). Bodrova (2003) states that a drilling approach is not recommended, because it does not contribute to ‘long term’ development; rather, it results in problems for children who are not ready to learn yet.

**Potential assumption**

The analysis could be interpretative. According to Chaiklinn, ‘the potential is not a property of the child — as these formulations are sometimes
interpreted — but simply an indication of the presence of certain maturing functions, which enables a situation that gives a potential for meaningful, interventive action (p.3).

To what level of involvement do teachers take part in children’s dramatic play? Following Vygotsky’s concept of Zone Proximal Development (ZPD), teachers can decide to provide intervention, extend participation, or withdraw from participation which is considered based on children’s development. For example, when children seem able to play independently; to develop their imagination and creativity, the teacher probably can withdraw from participation. Bodrova (2003) offers the following example:

Let’s consider the example of José, who, independently and without hesitation, can correctly recognize uppercase letters and some lowercase letters and who, with hesitation and insecurity, can correctly identify other lowercase letters if the teacher gives him a hint. The knowledge that is most likely to emerge is José’s knowledge of lowercase letters. Thus, if the teacher focuses on lowercase letters, she will maximize the influence of instruction. However, if she focuses on teaching José cursive writing, he may become frustrated or his learning may come at the expense of other important developments. (p.4)

Varying levels of children’s performance requires teachers to design flexible and effective support and assistance. ‘To choose the right kind of support, the concept of scaffolding is helpful’ (Bodrova, 2003, p.4). Teachers should consider when the best time is to assist children, and when should they be left to independently accomplish the tasks. Another example given by Bodrova (2003) describes a child who is learning to use a pencil:

At first, the teacher puts the pencil in the child’s hand and places the child’s fingers around the pencil in the correct way. As the child tries to hold the pencil in approximately the right way, the teacher makes slight adjustments to the child’s hand position. Finally, the child learns to hold the pencil correctly. The right assistance, or scaffolding, is not only what helps the child in the short run, but what helps the child use a skill independently in the long run (p.8)
Given the example above, the teacher might help children to develop vocabularies during interaction in dramatic play activity. At first, children might slowly repeat the new words given, but gradually they are able to imitate, repeat, and use them for oral communication. With the appropriate scaffolding plan, and a lot of support, children can quickly learn how to learn. Therefore, teachers should design individually appropriate learning experiences for children.

In the classroom, children’s opportunities for learning reside in the interactions among children, teachers, and materials, which can be the scaffolder. Teachers serve as a facilitator of learning: ensure how tools mediate collaborative learning for children (Bodrova, 2007; Kozulin, 2003). Despite the importance of interaction which allows children to develop problem-solving, there is a need for guided activity which allows learners to accomplish a targeted goal; this is called ‘leading activity’ (Bodrova, 2003, p.12). According to Bodrova (2007;2003), play is a leading activity, which allows children to develop cognitive development.

The focus of leading activity is different in particular age groups. Leading activity is more focussed on building emotional relationships between children and caregivers. Children age 1 to 3 are provided with the activities which allow them to accomplish tasks by using materials and language. Unlike infants and toddlers, pre-school children may engage in a contextual play, such as make-believe play. Bodrova claims that make believe play for pre-school age is as a ‘mature play’, which requires children to do creative play. A mature play allows children to manipulate objects and language: this activity requires higher-level thinking and encourages skill. Krauss (1996) emphasizes that, in general, the focus of leading activity is ‘ no longer on the individual acting in isolation but rather on the interaction with the individuals engaged in the activity as a whole’ (p.116).

Established from the discussion above, the characteristics of leading activity involve four conditions. First, the activity requires children to use their imagination when manipulating situation and objects (Bodrova, 2003). Second, it minimizes the use of the real materials during play activity (Bodrova, 2003; Wertsch, 2007). Third, children are involved in explicit roles and implicit rules (Meira & Lerman, 2001). Fourth, it allows children to use language extensively
(Mercer, 2008; Thompson, 2012b). Last, the activity allows children to use the similar theme at another time (Meira, & Lerman, 2001). In a leading activity, children use objects to represent the real one in an imaginary situation. They manipulate objects by actively engaging in an interactive conversation (Poehner, 2008).

On the other hand, play is not considered as a leading activity for some conditions. These include: an activity which focuses on objects, or which requires children to do a procedure with objects; it does not require an imaginary situation which allows children to manipulate objects as if it is real; it does not allow children to actively use language; it causes conflicts among them; it does not encourage them to continue or develop the same theme at another time. In fact, ‘not all children reach the highest level of play, by the time they turn age 5’ (Bodrova, 2003, p.15). This means children do not develop their imagination by manipulating objects and representing social roles in their play: they continue using repetitive verbal expression or actions. Such conditions may be solved by the existence of adults, peers, and tools, which allow them to be more creative.

Given the example of how teachers are involved in children’s play, therefore, there is a need to do an assessment for some reasons. First, teachers need to know what kind of scaffolding is suitable for a particular child. Second, teachers have to recognize what kind of scaffolding should be more developed or discontinued. Third, teachers are required to know whether the assistance provided works or not. Fourth, teachers need to consider whether learning is amplified or accelerated. Fifth, teachers may identify how to work most effectively in the ZPD for each child for each different child. Although the question arises: ‘why do we assess anyway?’ many educators agree that assessment is required for the reflection of teaching and learning, in particular, to know more about children’s development (Poehner, 2008. p.3). For example, a set of well-planned and meaningful and informative assessments will help a teacher to conduct a better play and learning program (Bodrova, 2003, 2007).

3.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provides a theoretical overview of how children learn language from Skinner, Chomsky, Piaget and Vygotsky. Such research
constitutes a significant knowledge base for my research framework, and this is important in order to be able critically to find out the most effective way of helping children learn foreign language in a pre-school context. Because my participating children have a bilingual/multilingual language background, this chapter highlights the importance of intervention, initiation, guidance, modelling, input, exposure, and experience provided by adults. As this chapter has discussed, without adults’ intervention, children are not able to maintain their language, even to develop another language. For that reason, the key answer to how children learn language, is that they learn from the input modelled by surroundings, exposure, experience, and interaction.
Chapter Four

Cultural Historical Activity Theory as a Lens for Analysing Contextual Teaching and Learning Phenomena.

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, I outline a collection of interrelated concepts which are relevant in response to my research questions. Chapter Two has outlined a detailed exploration of play; definition and development. Chapter Three has provided a detailed description of conceptual thinking of how children learn language and how a dramatic play context may support language learning. The collection of interrelated concepts gained from these two chapters is invaluable to determine what assumptions values and concepts can be either integrated into my research or developed in another way. The discussion in Chapter Two and Chapter Three regarding an epistemic assumption of how dramatic play enhances learning and children's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development has built my personal knowledge about the value of dramatic play as a context for language learning and development. Much research and literature from Western countries suggest that dramatic play becomes a central activity for enhancing language development, because dramatic play activity encourages children to actively use language and negotiate social meaning. The evidence from the research and literature provides invaluable conceptual guidance for practitioners to make decisions about developing their own curriculum design and pedagogical approach, particularly at pre-schools in Indonesian settings.

However, I have to articulate that the evidence of integrating play and curriculum design predominantly reflect a Western context. I believe that cultural historical understanding has an impact on the way practitioners value the concepts of play, and then integrate and design it as a pedagogical approach in the curriculum (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore a constructivist and contextual approach to play in this sense is required, through particular critical observation, discussion, reflection and ongoing professional development. In order to do critical thinking and comprehensive observation of dramatic play within a social
and cultural context, I need a lens, that is a way of seeing, which is used to frame, analyse, and develop teaching and learning. In particular, I attempted to see how social and historical frameworks influence play and pedagogy. The key reason to attend to the social and historical framework of play and pedagogy is to articulate that the conceptual framework of play and pedagogy in Indonesia differs from that of others which has been developed in Western countries, and, in particular, how play and pedagogy goes beyond accounts that have been based on Western society. In brief, developing contextual play and pedagogy is required in order to help practitioners bring about play to optimise learning and development outcomes.

As an example, many literatures dominantly promote the Western view that children need to play. To play is also identified as a right in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31. However, it is important to look at the theoretical and research basis for the Western view and the UN Convention as well as the way Asian values lean toward formal structured learning rather than play-based learning. Because formal education has been the dominant concept of teaching and learning for non-Western countries (Pattnaik, 2005), the perspective that children do not need to play becomes a great challenge for establishing the concept of play and pedagogy in educational settings in Asian contexts. Research conducted by Pattnaik (2005) demonstrates that the perspective of children’s play in East Asian countries reflects the dominant perspective of children’s play in Indonesia; that children need formal learning, instead of play and learning. To develop my understanding of the rationale behind this social phenomenon, I think I need a particular frame to analyse the situations within which pre-school teachers live and teaching and learning occurs. I find Cultural Historical Activity Theory is the most applicable lens through which to see these contextual features of teaching and learning.

CHAT enables me to see things from multi-angles and perspectives. Using CHAT as a lens of analysis through which to view the socio-cultural aspects of teaching and learning can help pre-school teachers to design and re-conceptualise the practice of play and pedagogy, taking into account the value of human social and cultural aspects (Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2003). In this
research, in particular, CHAT is used for reflective practice and analysing the development of teaching and learning. It will be presented in sub-section 4.5.

In brief, this chapter presents a definition of CHAT and a theoretical overview of CHAT. I will trace the origins of CHAT which focuses on contributions of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. The value of CHAT and its implications for educational research will be outlined in this section. I then describe how to pursue this analytically. Most importantly, this chapter outlines how CHAT contributes to Action Research.

4.2 Definition and development of CHAT

In order to frame and develop my personal knowledge and understanding of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (hereafter CHAT), I will begin exploring CHAT by raising some questions.

1. What is CHAT, Cultural Historical Theory, and Activity Theory? As I found the two terms, Activity Theory and CHAT, are used simultaneously, do they have historical relationships? Or, are they embedded in a similar concept? If the answers is yes, why do scholars use two different names; Activity Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory? If the answer is no, what are the difference between them?

2. What is the origin of either Activity Theory or CHAT theory? Which one comes first, Activity Theory or CHAT?

3. What are the relationships between CHAT and socio-cultural perspectives if both socio-cultural and Activity theory/CHAT originate from Vygotsky’s concept? Do they (socio-cultural and Activity theory/CHAT) mutually inform each other?

A further question is, what is the connection between Cultural Historical Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory – what is the difference here?

These questions help me to develop a better understanding of CHAT and I offer a detailed description of CHAT in the following section.
What is CHAT and Activity Theory?

CHAT stands for Cultural Historical Activity Theory. Roth et al. (2011) addresses Activity Theory and CHAT interchangeably. In contrast, Victor Kaptelinin (2005) argues there are different approaches to defining Activity Theory and CHAT. Activity Theory which is developed by Leontiev (1975/1978), focuses on analysing individuals in an activity context, while CHAT which is developed by Engeström (1987) elaborates the analysis of individuals in respect to collective phenomenon (Kaptelinin, 2005). CHAT provides a comprehensive lens for looking at individual’s activity. It does this through the analysis of an individual’s interaction with community, tools, rules, and the division of labour. It means that CHAT perceives that an individual’s action is influenced by cultural and historical factors such experiences, community, policy, and social context experiences. On the other hand, Activity Theory focuses on looking at individuals in terms of ‘subject-object’ interaction; that refers to investigating the motives that bring about an individual’s action.

However, Kaptelinin emphasises that both Activity Theory and CHAT share conceptual thinking about individual activity but use a different lens. Bonnie Nardi (1996) suggests that ‘Activity Theory is a powerful and clarifying descriptive tool rather than a strongly descriptive theory’ (p.7). Nardi (1996) perceives that Activity Theory ‘offers a set of perspectives on human activity and a set of concepts for describing that activity’ (p.8). In this respect, I think Activity Theory focuses on describing an individual’s activity at the individual level, while CHAT focuses on a larger scope of analysing an individual’s action which is embedded in both social and historical context. Regarding social and historical influences on individual development, Veresov (2010) uses the concept of cultural historical approach as a lens for understanding the phenomenon of children’s development. In this case, he uses term Cultural Historical Theory. It is worth noting that Cultural Historical Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory are derived from same origin in the conceptual thinking of Vygotsky. While Vygotsky’s Cultural Historical Theory emphasises the role of culture on the development of human beings (Rogoff, 2003), CHAT extends the implication of human activity in the context of development and
learning, in which tension and contradiction in activity becomes the key factor of development.

Accordingly, every concept and principle of cultural historical theory refers to a certain aspect of the complex process of development of the higher mental functions. The role, place, and interrelationships of all the concepts and principles within the theory become clear in terms of the origins and development of the higher mental functions (p.83).

I decide to use the term and concept of CHAT in responding to my research aims because CHAT fits better as a lens for looking at my study that involves critical observation, discussion, reflection and ongoing professional development.

I consider that CHAT is a broader lens which offers insights regarding the cultural-historical activity paradigm in investigating teaching and learning practice. In my research, I believe that it is the history and culture of the context, which places pre-school teachers as agents of change within that educational context. They articulate culture, beliefs, and social values through their teaching practice in the classroom context using play materials. In particular, in this research, I attempt to help pre-school teachers to re-conceptualise play and pedagogy through critical analysis to transform values, roles, norms, and activity in the teaching and learning context. CHAT can be useful as a technical tool, a theoretical concept, lens, or framework for analysing the holistic aspect of play and pedagogy; in order to develop contextual play and learning.

The Origin of CHAT

I agree with Kaptelinin’s idea (2005) in the previous paragraph, that CHAT and Activity Theory share conceptual thinking about human activity. In this sense, this section is important, in order to see the origins of the idea of human activity itself; because most literature provides a detailed description of the historical roots of CHAT in the link to Vygotsky (see Marken, 2006; Roth et al, 2006; Hardman, Joanne, 2008, Kaptelinin et al, 2012). Yet, little discussion exists about how Vygotsky’s conceptual idea was firmly developed based in Marxist principles. The link between Marxist principles and Vygotsky’s idea is very well known fact.
In this section, I will outline the historical roots of CHAT from German philosophy; Kant to Hegel, and Soviet Russia; Vygotsky, Leontiev and Luria, and the ‘American pragmatists’, Engestrom, Dewey, and Barbara Rogof (Plakitsi, 2013, p.2). In his book, *Thought and Language* (1978), Vygotsky articulates that his constructivist concept was inspired by the ideas of Karl Marx which focus on the interaction between environment and people (Kozulin, 1986). In the Marxist tradition, the nature of the interaction between people and the environment creates tension and conflict. Following Marxism, Vygotsky believed that human development is shaped and formed by society and culture. In his writing, Vygotsky was much informed by Kant and Hegel (Pass, 2004). Vygotsky recognised that he developed the concept of Spinoza which was developed by Hegel. Spinoza refers to the process of thinking which is formed and shaped through interaction between internal and external factors. Also, Vygotsky in his works credits Kant’s idea which became a key idea central to a Piagetian concept. Kant perceived that the development of mental logic occurs in a separate space with the development of intuition. Both Piaget and Vygotsky were constructivist, however they had different points of view in psychology. Piaget used a naturalist approach for human development, while Vygotsky focused on social interaction for knowledge construction. Vygotsky credited Piaget’s concept of human learning, but he related to social interaction as a leading source of constructing knowledge.

Historically, CHAT is developed through a series of stages related to theory development; there will be first, second, and third generation. As mentioned above, the principal idea of activity theory credited to Vygotsky (the first generation of CHAT) was then extended by Alexei Leontev (1981). The basic component of Activity Theory is subject, tool and object, where the subject is individual/group, the object is the intended activity, and the tool is materials, artefacts, language, and symbols. Leontev (1981) argued individual’s actions should be seen in context, such as the community. Engestrom (2001) developed the third generation of CHAT, where he developed more complex elements than Leontev’s concept. Engestrom argued that Leontev’s concept of CHAT did not take into account the influence of the social on the individual. Therefore, he developed four principles of CHAT: a collective interaction between subject,
tools, division of labour, rules, roles, and outcome; collective experiences of humans; the implication of various perspectives in community; contradictions as the key of change/transformation, and the possibility of making change. These principles are important in my research; to deeply understand the teacher’s beliefs and attitudes toward children’s play as well as her practice. For example, the teacher’s practice in the classroom is shaped by a collective interaction between subject, tools, and division of labour, rules, roles, and outcomes as well as her personal experiences. CHAT principles allow us to understand and see tension and contradiction and make change for improved teaching and learning.

**CHAT and Socio-Cultural Perspectives**

When talking about Cultural Historical Activity Theory, I find two terms: ‘cultural-historical’ and ‘socio-cultural’ are used interchangeably. I think it is important to describe the difference between them and how the theoretical stances help me develop a clear conceptual and technical framework for this research.

Both ‘cultural historical’ and ‘socio-cultural’ share origins in the conceptual thinking of Vygotsky. As Ellis et al (2010. p.3) states, ‘sociocultural, cultural-historical and CHAT all arise from the work of Vygotsky and his methodological interest in the mediation of human activity by physical or psychological tools’. Socio-historical perspective in CHAT focuses on the intervention and action within collective or complex situations while socio-cultural perspective rather focuses on the process of an individual’s cognitive development within interaction with others (Edward,2007). In addition to collective or complex situations, Edward (2007) emphasizes that social, cultural and historical aspects affect a teacher’s beliefs and values. These aspects also affect attitudes toward play and learning, as well as teaching and learning intervention.

**4.3 Research using CHAT**

I will outline the rationale of using CHAT for my action research project. The value of CHAT and its implications for educational research will be outlined at this section. Thereafter, relevant research using CHAT will be traced and I then describe how to pursue this analytically.
Historical development plays a big part of CHAT’s origin. As stated in the previous discussion, the concept of CHAT was introduced by Engestrom who developed Vygotsky’s concept of human activity. Growing research on CHAT has already developed CHAT into a multi-disciplinary field of research; computers and technology, business development, medical science, and educational research.

In medical science, CHAT is used in medical professional development in a hospital in Helsinki, Finland. Engestrom (2000) analyses collective aspects of patient service in order to improve better quality of hospital service. The research involves participants and hospital stakeholders in designing a reflective intervention using CHAT. The data involves video recording, individual interviews which are used for identifying and determining contradictions and tensions over doctor and patient interaction. This research is essential for providing a critical guidance of the way to design contextual services for patient.

In educational research, CHAT has been used as a lens to comprehensively investigate educational practice; in particular for professional development. There has been growing interest in research of developing principles and practices of contextual teaching and learning for optimum learning outcomes. In this respect, CHAT has provided a lens to develop contextual teaching and learning through its holistic insights (e.g. Lim & Hang, 2003; Russell & Schneiderheinze, 2005). For example, Joanne Hardman (2005) uses CHAT for investigating the shift in the way teachers help students in learning mathematics in primary school in a rural area of Cape Town. Hardman (2005) investigates the shift of teacher’s perception on designing computer laboratory classroom activity. From the research conducted by Hardman, I believe that CHAT has provided a technical tool to re-conceptualise teaching and learning practice. Reconceptualising theory and practice occurs when researchers are able to identify contradictions and tensions between the elements of teaching and learning activity; in this sense, CHAT is a lens to seek contradiction and tension (e.g., Lim & Hang, 2003; Russell & Schneiderheinze, 2005).

There has also been growing research using CHAT to investigate technology that is computer based. Brine and Franken (2006) use CHAT for
identifying the challenges of using an online teaching and learning program. For example, Barab et al (2002) use CHAT to explore the way thirty three participating undergraduate students learn computer-based 3D virtual tools. The data involves videorecording student interactions in the classroom context and student interviews. By using thematic analysis as technique of data analysis, Barab et al are able to describe the process of learning and developing conceptual thinking about science and technology. Most importantly, the research informs the way students cope with tension and contradiction over the learning process. Some researchers use CHAT for developing integrated technology and learning (e.g. Blin, 2004; Brine & Franken, 2006; Issroff & Scanlon, 2002). Contextual teaching and learning practice can be designed through CHAT analysis, because CHAT allows researchers to gain insights into contradictions and tensions which are influenced by social and cultural aspects (see Thorne, 2003). In this respect, CHAT helps researchers to develop new concepts or approaches to teaching and learning through looking back on the old experiences (see Blin, 2004).

The research above provides an overview of reasons why CHAT is the theoretical approach chosen for this study. CHAT has offered a theoretical lens as a basis for understanding the deeper practice of using dramatic play as a context for learning language, in particular EFL learning in pre-school settings.

4.4 Integrating CHAT and Action research

Given relevant research using CHAT and its implication on education in the previous section, I now focus on outlining relevant research using integrated CHAT and Action Research. This section is expected to help the preschool teacher and I figure out and explain interrelationships among the complex aspects in teaching and learning, in particular play and pedagogy during the Action Research process. I will particularly present how and why CHAT’s conceptual lens can be applied in this Action Research. In my project, CHAT is used as a lens in constructing and meaning making, and in encouraging teaching and learning to be contextual. Particularly important in this section is to outline relevant research and literature about how CHAT is integrated in Action Research project. This discussion is essential to lead us to design integrated CHAT and Action Research.
Before coming to discussion of how CHAT is applied in Action Research, I think it is important to describe the historical relationships of CHAT and Action Research. Bridget Somekh (2011) disagrees with Engeström’s statement that there is no conceptual link between Action Research and CHAT. Somekh argues (2011) that both Lev Vygotsky, Activity Theory’s founder and Kurt Lewin, founder of Action Research, were close friends and they were ‘influenced by each other’s work’ (p.93). In the Sage Handbook of Educational Action Research Somekh and et al (2009), offer a comprehensive argument and discussion focussing on how Action Research and CHAT share conceptual thinking and are mutually developed using one particular paradigm on another. They demonstrate that the key notion of CHAT and Action Research is a process of learning from experience and responding to problems. It means that theoretical idea of both CHAT and Action Research involves the cognitive process rather than the result. In this respect, I believe that relating to the underpinning epistemology of the Action Research model being employed, CHAT is a compatible lens for seeking holistic contextual issues/problems. As Somekh (2011) suggests, ‘The notion of “zooming in” to explore data when using AR and “zooming out” to engage in more systemic analysis of the same data with CHAT is a useful one’ (p.96). Reflection is the key part of Action Research in order to achieve a critical, systematic, and reflective re-construction of knowledge and for creating improvement.

In this section I outline the benefits of combining CHAT and Action Research. CHAT offers a lens for identifying contradictions and tensions for reflective and reconstructive thinking. CHAT enables researchers to develop critical reflection for improving social situations. For example, Marken, (2006) uses system analysis of CHAT for improving professional training development and client performance. Marken uses CHAT to develop reflection of standard operating procedures which is responsive to different cultural norms and expectations. Using CHAT, he finds a contradiction between the Rules (or cultural norms) of Japanese society and the Rules of U.S. society which affects each group in making decisions. Individual perception, which reflects cultural background, is also drawn well through the combined use of reflection and CHAT. Analysing the interview data, Marken finds that different cultural
backgrounds affects the nature of job performance at work. However, Marker finds it is an interesting complex situation to be analysed through the lens of CHAT. He (2006) illustrates;

Using the lens of Activity Theory to examine these comments indicates a lot of activity in the Community element, as well as some conflict between the individual and the community. Certainly in the case of the defensive managers talking to their Western boss, there’s a sense of a conflict between the individual manager and the corporate expectations (p.42)

After analysing contradictions and tension, Marken works collaboratively to design a coaching program which is responsive to the contradictions and tensions. In this respect, he achieves successful outcomes, in which the participants express satisfaction with the way the program improved communication between two different groups (US and Japan group).

From Marken’s work, I see that CHAT is an essential technical tool for identifying complex issues/problems in social situations. I might call CHAT a lens for reflection. The issues/problems will be invaluable data for developing next steps of the Action Research process: planning. There will be continuing reflection during the Action Research process; in this sense, CHAT is used as a lens to overcome the complexity of the situation.

4.5 Techniques of applying CHAT

As I mentioned above, reflection is the key part of action research. Reflection enables a critical, systematic, and reflective re-constructing of knowledge and creates improvement. In this respect, the pre-school teacher and I used CHAT as a lens for the reflection. CHAT elements are included in reflective practice, such as journal writing. The teacher applied CHAT when developing the journal in order to gain rich knowledge and understanding of the challenges of dramatic play practice. Before explaining this technique, this section will outline a detailed plan for the teacher(s) to use CHAT as a tool for reflective practice, as well as describe some examples of using those techniques in research.
Before I present the technique of applying CHAT in research, I think it is important to demonstrate the familiar terms normally used in CHAT system analysis.

**Figure 2. Engestrom’s CHAT Model (Engestrom, 2001)**

Definition of terms in the elements of CHAT system:

1. Subject refers to individual/group
2. Object is intended activity
3. Tools refers to physical materials; textbook, computer, play materials, furniture, and symbolic; language.
4. Community refers to the participants of an activity system, who share the same object.
5. The division of labour refers to roles, power and status existing around individual and community.
6. Rules are explicit and implicit policies, social values, norms (Engestrom, 1993)

There are two other terms which are frequently used in CHAT analysis; contradiction and tension. Kuutii (1996) describes contradictions as ‘a misfit within elements, between them, between different activities, or between different developmental phases of a single activity’ (p. 34). Contradiction might accumulate tension (Engestrom, 2001), which refers to the ways in which conflicts/problems are stimulated through the interaction between elements. Some scholars define contradiction as tension (Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2006; Basharina, 2007; Berge & Fjuk, 2006). Both contradiction and tension are used interchangeably.

In this action research, the pre-school teacher and I adopt the concepts of CHAT; in particular, we elaborated the elements of CHAT so that they became
the points of reflective practice. The following table is a brief outline of the application of CHAT as lens in developing pre-school teacher’s reflective practice.

**Table 1. The Outline of Teacher’s Reflective Journal**

**Using CHAT Lens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAT element</th>
<th>Topic of reflection using CHAT lens</th>
<th>Tension and contradiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Outcome      | 1. Teaching goal (language development)  
               2. The way children demonstrate their learning |                           |
| Object       | 1. Detailed description of the activity  
               2. Rationale of the change of teaching practice  
               3. Description of classroom atmosphere  
               4. Description of motivation of the children / level of involvement with activities  
               5. Description of children’s attitude towards the content and the delivery strategy |                           |
| Subject      | 1. Personal background information  
               2. Teacher’s knowledge of her role in dramatic play as context for language learning.  
               3. Description of the teacher’s belief about the importance of play.  
               4. The knowledge of how children play in daily life and school context  
               5. The teacher’s teaching style  
               6. The knowledge of child language development.  
               7. Description of prior knowledge of the children, in particular language  
               8. The teacher’s past experience of play |                           |
| Tools/artefact | 1. Description of the physical environment of the school, furniture and arrangement  
               2. Description of play materials  
               3. Description of language use for instruction  
               4. Planning and designing a classroom or playroom |                           |
| Division of labour | 1. Local and national government involvement for the successful of targeted outcome  
                        2. School management involvement for the successful of targeted outcome |                           |
| Community     | 1. Social information background  
               2. Parents’ beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations about pre-school  
               2. Parents’ beliefs about child play |                           |
The teacher and I developed reflective questions framed using a CHAT lens. The teacher identified tension and contradiction (in the third column) which were derived from within elements or between the elements. In this research context, the tension and contradiction refers to challenges of using dramatic play as context for learning language. According to Engestrom (2001), contradiction refers to a situation in the internal elements of CHAT, which might result in tension or conflict. Engestrom believes that these contradictions and tensions foster change and transformation. For example, the reflective practice in this research showed the outcome of teaching and learning second language (Bahasa Indonesia) was to develop children’s literacy readiness (it was attributed to national standard curriculum), however, in fact, the community expected pre-school to successfully generate graduates with skills of reading and writing, as well as maths skills. Using CHAT lens, we then understood that the pre-school activity system and community did not share common outcomes; that they have contradictory points of view and resulted in overwhelming challenges. From here, the teacher explored potential solutions and changes which might work best for improving the situation.

There are two different basic concepts of data analysis using CHAT; the contradiction model of Engestrom and Mwanza-Simwami’s Open-ended questions. Mwanza focuses on particular questions which help the researcher to pattern out operational processes. The contradiction model of Engestrom focuses on identifying contradiction and tension, which occurs among elements; such as subjects, tools, object and outcome, rules, community and division of labour. I chose to use the contradiction model of Engestrom in order to focus on identifying contradiction and tension, which occurs in dramatic play practice.
Research using CHAT can rely on observation data technique (written or visual/audio recorded) and interviews. In one instance, Basharina (2007) collected her data via emails and online discussion. Interestingly, Berge et al (2006) examine artefacts/materials in order to collect data which responds to questions which reflect the cultural and historical aspects of materials. The technique of data collection is called artefacts analysis. Using CHAT, the researcher is not only focusing on qualitative data, but can also use a combined method, qualitative and quantitative. For example, in studying the contradiction of CHAT elements, Dippe’s (2006) uses combined quantitative and qualitative data which allows him to explore contradictions comprehensively using statistical data, which is obtained through questionnaires. The next step of the data collection process is to analyse, describe, illustrate, and evaluate data.

Understanding social cultural meaning can involves looking for the meaning of a written document/audio recorded data for people in a given situation. The written document/audio recorded data should consider the context, time and current situation. This is important in order to understand the social situation. Engestrom suggests that data analysis includes a coding technique which looks at micro and macro contradiction between the elements. It means that researchers construct knowledge through broad and narrow insights of describing semantic relationships between elements of CHAT analysis. Engestrom (1987) argues that initial analysis is required in order to provide a detailed description of the elements of CHAT. Initial analysis aims at describing social cultural meanings to participants. The analysis illustrates the social cultural meanings of a given situation to participants.

In order to be able to construct the knowledge through identifying contradictions, data analysis then involves: preparing an analysis worksheet; selecting samples of data which articulate contradiction; listing all implicit and explicit meaning of words, texts, and artefacts and articulating broad and narrow contradiction between elements of CHAT. For example, at the beginning of data analysis, a questionnaire can be coded (see Dippe, 2006), interviews data can be transcribed and then the researcher can articulate contradiction (see Murphy and Rodriguez-Manzanares, in press), and artefacts can be described into narrative (see Berge et al, 2006). In brief, data analysis using the contradiction model of
Engestrom provides a detailed description of social cultural context and other aspects surrounding it.

Daisy Mwanza-Simwami (2002) through her PhD thesis creates a technique applying CHAT through open-ended questions. Mwanza-Simwami’s questions are aimed at designing and patterning a social situation with open-ended questions. The eight open-ended questions help researchers to collect information which addresses the contextual situation. For example, in her research, Mwanza-Simwami (2002) uses the eight questions to map out relationships between elements of CHAT. In this sense, she is able to provide a detailed and analytical description of the teaching and learning situation. The following are Mwanza-Simwami’s eight open-ended questions:

1. **Activity** of interest—What sort of activity am I interested in?
2. **Object or Objective** of activity—Why is this activity taking place?
3. **Subjects** in this activity—Who is involved in carrying out this activity?
4. **Tools** mediating the activity—By what means are the subjects carrying out this activity?
5. **Rules** and regulations mediating the activity—Are there any cultural norms, rules or regulations governing the performance of this activity?
6. **Division of labour** mediating the activity—Who is responsible for what, when carrying out this activity and how are the roles organized?
7. **Community** in which activity is conducted—What is the environment in which this activity is carried out?
8. What is the desired **Outcome** from carrying out this activity?

(Mwanza, 2001; italics and British spelling in original)

I adopted and elaborated Mwanza open-ended questions for data analysis, in particular critically looking at the detail of events of each Activity Cycle of Action Research as the following example;

**Table 2: Evaluative Coding Accordance with CHAT Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>What is developed in Activity Cycle?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Subject** | Who is the subject in Activity Cycle?  
<p>| | How does the subject develop herself in Activity Cycle? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediating artefacts</th>
<th>What tool(s) is/are used?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the object/focus of this phase?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the purpose of the activity for the subject?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the teacher working on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why is s/he working on it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division of labour</strong></td>
<td>Who does what in this phase?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who determines what is meaningful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>What community is involved in this phase?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What group of people work together on the object?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules</strong></td>
<td>What kinds of rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>instructional rules=evaluative rules and Pacing rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social order rules=disciplinary rules and communicative interaction rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open-ended questions allow me to not only focus at the level of individual, but also on the organizational context. They also help me to describe teaching and learning experience more comprehensively. There are numerous studies of the use of Mwanza’s questions for capturing and representing human’s activity and experiences. In one of these examples, Marken (2006) uses Mwanza’s questions for developing and improving client performance. Mwanza’s questions are used for identifying contradictions of the CHAT system. At first, he uses thematic techniques in responding to the eight
questions. The detailed description of the environment helps him to design a modified practice for a multinational organization which is contextual and developed based on the need of staff in the organization.

4.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter is a theoretical exploration of CHAT, history and development of CHAT, and potential adoption of CHAT and action research. I see promising implications of CHAT in the research, and I use it to explore the use of dramatic play activity as a context of learning language, in particular foreign language. Using a CHAT lens allows the pre-school teacher and I to better explore, understand, and anticipate the challenges of play as a strategy for teaching and learning, and to develop play so that it becomes a force of transformation.
Chapter Five

Research Method

5.1 Introduction, Aims, and Questions

In this chapter, I present the selection and description of my method, specific practical aspects and designed activities involved in carrying out the research. This chapter presents the rationale and justification for my selection of methods. It also shows that this particular combination of methods is consistent with the epistemological and theoretical perspectives of my research. This chapter also describes the way I recruited participants, the ethics processes, the setting, how the data was collected and analysed, activities, forms, and tools used, because research methods reflect techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data in order to correspond research question (Crotty, 1998).

As mentioned in Chapter Four, this project involved a preschool teacher engaged in collaborative Action Research with me as researcher, exploring and reflecting on dramatic play as a context for supporting children’s English language learning, using CHAT as a lens. The notion of using CHAT is the process of learning from experience and responding to problems; that is the process of teacher’s critical learning, exploring, and developing potential use of dramatic play as a context for language learning. The focus of this Action Research is the process instead of a numeric result/outcome. The research aims at exploring the process of changes to the teacher’s thinking and practice. It is hoped the findings of the research will inform practice.

Thus, in order to accomplish the aims of this research, my research aim incorporates two aspects; at the organisational level, I wanted to learn the social context of teaching and learning; that was about relationships between the preschool teacher’s beliefs and values regarding play in a context of local and national politics. The analysis of the social context of teaching and learning helped me to develop a deep understanding of social contexts within the teaching and learning process. I used the term ‘re-conceptualise’ in the research question for a main reason; I was really curious about how teachers might use dramatic play context for learning language in a particular multilingual language settings. This was because I believed that the teacher and social factors might
shape her practice of play as a pedagogical strategy. In order to accomplish my research aims, the main question is as follows

How can the pre-school teacher re-conceptualise dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy to enhance children’s foreign language learning and development in a multicultural language context?

I then formulated relevant and provocative questions about dramatic play activity as a pedagogical strategy in teaching children’s language into three sub-questions as follows:

1. How could the pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language in a pre-school setting?

2. What happens if the teacher re-conceptualises her perspective in dramatic play experience?

3. What happens if the teacher uses a multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?

The most fundamental aim of this Action Research is to find out the way pre-school teachers conceptualise and apply dramatic play as a context for learning and teaching foreign language. Therefore, a key notion of Action Research is the teacher’s reflection through analysis of social context of teaching and learning. The first sub-question reflects the process of reflection. In this respect, the teacher used a CHAT lens for understanding phenomenon. The teacher carried out two kinds of interventions, which served to generate improved learning and teaching using dramatic play. First, the reflective processes of Action Research, has led the teacher to a possible reconceptualization of her perspectives of the importance of guided dramatic play to children’s language development. The teacher modified her intervention to maximise the use of dramatic play activity as context for learning language through reflective multiple cycles of dramatic play activities. The process of re-conceptualising is reflected in the second sub-question. The third sub-question referred to the second kind of intervention, which was the use of a multilingual
language approach during dramatic play activities. Carrying out the use of multilingual language intervention was expected to successfully help children develop the awareness of English vocabularies.

Relating to the design of new teaching practice, both the second and third sub-questions informed the potential solution to problems found in the use of dramatic play as context for learning language at pre-school settings. For that reason, it was important to find out relevant techniques of exploring the way the teachers conceptualise dramatic play and practice. The following discussion presents the practical techniques: how data was collected, what kind of data was collected, and how to analyse the data, as well as the rationale and justification of the selection of method.

5.2 Epistemology/Theory

To determine the nature of research stages was challenging. In fact, there has been continuing debate about the mode of research design (see Saunders et al, 2007; Crotty, 1998). For example, Saunders et al. (2007) and Crotty (1998) demonstrate the different nature of research stages. Saunders et al. (2007) classify stages of research design into six. They are philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, techniques and procedures. Yet, Crotty (1998) proposes research design be divided into four stages: epistemology; theoretical perspective; methodology; and methods. Crotty’s model of research stages was applied in my project, because it was considered accessible in order to clearly and systematically develop the structure of the research process. In my project, I identify the nature of research stages as: constructionist (epistemology); interpretivism (theoretical perspective); Action Research and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (methodology); and informal conversation, reflective journals, other written and audio/video recorded observation (methods).

5.2.1 Constructionist (Epistemology)

Some researchers contend that both epistemology and theoretical framework are similar (see Saunders et al, 2007). For example, Saunders et al (2007) suggest that ‘positivism’ and ‘subjectivism’ is considered as philosophy. On the contrary, Crotty (1998) clearly classifies the selection of epistemology, theoretical framework, methodology, and method. In this case, I adopted
Crotty’s model because the applicability of the classification was accessible. According to Crotty (1998, p. 8), ‘epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know’. There are three ways of understanding how humans gain knowledge: constructionist, subjectivist, and objectivist. I chose a constructionist model which perceives that knowledge can be reconstructed through social practice. In other words, I believe that the process of knowledge construction involves the interaction of and between people and their environment. I was inspired by the nature of a constructionist approach. It is my belief that an individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and values are shaped by social practice. In this sense, play and pedagogy in a pre-school classroom context can be understood in relation to not only the pre-school teacher’s beliefs, attitudes, and values, but also her environment. For example, Singer et al. (2009) find 58 percent of children in Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Brazil play outdoor in areas such as such parks, playgrounds, and yards without parents’ supervision. This cultural value does not see play as learning, or that play is always unsupervised, but rather that play is really just a recreational pursuit without constant supervision or goals. Given the research findings on how adults perceive child play, my research seeks to determine whether a pre-school teacher in this research context (Indonesia) would perceive play as something that is unsupervised. Besides unsupervised play, the social value in Asia perceives teaching and learning as formal education. According to Moon (2015), learning for children is typically formal learning such as rote learning. Would the social culture in my research context share this value?

Also, I believe that a constructionist approach is the way to gain an understanding of complex situations behind teaching and learning pre-school practice. For example, Beatty and Feldman (2012) report findings, noting that 1) there is an alignment or misalignment (tensions) between a teacher’s skills, views, and context, and his or her conceptualisation of the pedagogy and attempts to enact it; they note 2) the conflicts, struggles, and rewards he or she experiences as a result of these alignments and misalignments, as well as (3) the changes to his or her conceptualisation of the pedagogy and to his or her ways of attempting it that occur in response to these conflicts, struggles, and rewards; and (4) the changes to his or her skills, perspectives, and general ‘way of being a
teacher’ that also occur in response to these conflicts, struggles, and rewards (p. 284). Using a constructionist approach has enabled them to explore the process of teaching and learning development. Given these findings, I believed a constructionist approach was applicable in this research, to study this teacher’s teaching experience; that is, how she develops her understanding of her beliefs, attitudes, and values as a teacher, and how this might help her to construct knowledge. A constructionist approach has made significant contributions to my study of the nature of this problem.

5.2.2 Interpretivism (Theoretical Perspective)

To achieve the goals of this research, I need a theoretical perspective, which is the philosophical lens of understanding phenomenon (Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2007). There are two ways of understanding phenomenon: positivism and interpretivism. Positivism involves measurable-based results in researching humans’ activity and behaviour work. On the contrary, interpretivism relies on qualitative data such as interviews and observations, which emphasise the relationships between humans and its social (Livesey, 2006). In the past, research on human activity and behaviour has relied on measurable-based conception (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Levy & Henry, 2003). However, researchers now acknowledge that an empirical approach is not the only way to research, that it has its limitations (as do all approaches) and that in some situations, qualitative, interpretivist approaches are more appropriate and useful (Levy & Henry, 2003; Carson et al., 2001). A positivism approach provides limited capacity to develop an understanding of complex phenomenon. A positivism approach with measurable-based research generates generalisable and quantifiable results, while interpretivism allows researchers to deeply develop meaning of particular phenomena and analyse interrelationships between elements of humans’ activity and behaviour. In this respect, I adopted an interpretivism approach to accomplish the aim of my research.

In this project, the main reason I utilised an interpretivism approach was to develop play and pedagogy which was responsive to a particular context: developing my understanding of the implication of social reality to the individual. This could be done through analysis of the teacher’s journal, observation, and dialogue. Justification for adopting interpretivism was to gain
deep understanding of teaching and learning practice and what might influenced them.

5.3 Qualitative Research Design

As stated previously, this research aimed to explore teaching and learning practice at both an individual and social level. In this respect, I believed that teaching and learning practice is attributed to social environments, which ‘are unique, dynamic, and complex’ (Hatch, 2012, p. 9). Therefore, in order to systematically and critically investigate the uniqueness, dynamics, and complexity of pedagogy practice of an early childhood setting in particular, I needed to gain a greater understanding of the pre-school teacher’s teaching and learning experience, including her beliefs and social values relating to children’s play and teaching language. I believe that the pre-school teacher’s beliefs, attitudes, and values were shaped by her social life experience (Vygotsky, 1986). The observations of interaction between the teacher and children in a classroom context was considered to be invaluable evidence for analysing teacher performance. After designing the nature of my research, I began to question what paradigm best to address it.

I believe that descriptive data allowed me to interpret play and pedagogy practice in a classroom context. Data collection involved open-ended dialogue, interviews, and observations through audio-video recording, field notes, and reflections. I used a small group of pre-school children with one teacher in order to focus on an intensive exploration of personal problems with its context and find a solution (Duggleby, 2005). I critically developed my understanding of pedagogy from the perspective of a pre-school teacher both as an individual and as a social actor in her life which was then presented in a narrative report with relevant and contextual description, quotations, and evidence (Johnson, 2008; Lichtman, 2006). In brief, based on my initial assumption of sequences and elements of the research data, I quickly fell to qualitative research for some justifications.

Most importantly, the main reason I utilised a qualitative approach was because its interpretive and descriptive data allowed me to gain a greater understanding of phenomenon through which I understood the pre-school
teacher as an individual which attributed to her social environment, beliefs and values (Leitch and Day, 2006). Moreover, interpretative data is essential to investigate complex relationships between a pre-school teacher with a curriculum, school system, and local/national government policies, and to interpret interactions between the teacher and children and the children and their peers. I believe qualitative research allowed me to gain rich and deep analysis to achieve the overall research aim.

5.3.1 Action Research and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Methodology)

Within the context of a constructionist method, the aim and focus of this research is on the teacher and the Action Research in a particular context, where the Action Research is exploring dramatic play as a context for language learning. I then began to question what methodology was relevant to accomplish the outcome. Berg (2001) suggests that justification of selecting a specific methodology should reflect the research question. The main research question is as follows:

How can a pre-school teacher re-conceptualise dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy to enhance foreign language learning and development in a multicultural language context?’

I used the term ‘re-conceptualise’ in the question which referred to exploring modified ways to improve play and pedagogy through the use of reflection, dialogue, and journals. The participating pre-school teacher was encouraged to analyse her own teaching context, and in collaborative work, we figured out teaching strategies which were responsive to the learning context.

As a part of the nature of a constructionist and interpretivism approach, I believe that the implication and implementation of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy might be significant to other contexts of learning. In other words, the concept of dramatic play for pedagogy, which was developed by Western scholars, might be re-constructed by participating pre-school teachers in different ways. For that reason, a reflection practice in this context is very important. I then found the notion of reflective practice, bringing together action and reflection in Action Research, might be relevant to address the research
aims. The following discussion presents the rationale of using Action Research in the project, the procedure of Action Research, data collection sources, and the process of analysing the data.

5.3.2 Collaborative Action Research Inquiry

Action Research has found a home in a number of research fields over the past three decades or so (Mills et al., 2003; Gonzalez et al., 2004). In what follows, I will trace a historical path that describes the use of Action Research in educational research and that identifies this approach’s key concepts and transformational potential. The concept of Action Research in social contexts was introduced by John Dewey. Born in 1859, Dewey was an American philosopher who believed that humans constructed new knowledge if they were confronted with problems (Dewey, 1938). He believed that human knowledge was constructed through a reflective process of doing something; as he said, ‘the self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action.’(P.361). To Dewey, thinking and action can be a thought of as a response to something; thinking, action and re-action is as the result of social interaction (Dewey, 1938). In other words, to gain knowledge, humans have to do something; that is, perform an action. As Miller (2003, p. 6) says, ‘knowledge comes from doing.’ From Dewey’s perspective, the most important aspect of gaining knowledge is figuring out the problem, doing something, observing reflectively, and re-practicing. A key value of Action Research shared by Dewey and Kurt Lewin lies in the relationship between thinking and action. This philosophical understanding generates Action Research. Lewin (1946), brought Dewey’s foundational ‘reflection-action-reflection’ idea to greater prominence in educational research. Lewin (1946) investigated social problems and problem solving through practicing. He then named this approach as ‘Action Research’. This concept significantly contributed to the idea that action can be seen as a tool of research.

Moreover, parallel to the paradigm of ‘reflection-action-reflection’ of Dewey, Lewin (1946) added that reflection on practice should accommodate personal development through experience. He suggested that learning was experiencing. His Lewinian Learning Cycle consisted of four components: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and
active intervention. In it he emphasised that knowledge construction happens when an individual performs a concrete action and reflects on it through critical thinking. I consider that both Dewey and Lewin’s concept corresponded on a few occasions. Also, their concept of learning and constructing knowledge is placed in the heart of a constructionist paradigm.

In 1984, Kolb developed the concept of learning and experiencing for personal development. This concept was carried out as a part of educational context. He emphasised there being a need for educational environments to foster learning experiences. In other words, learning through experiencing an educational context allowed students to reflect and apply ideas in cyclic processes. In about same era, Schon (1983, 1987) also developed Dewey’s concept of learning through experiencing and classified reflection of experience into two: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action refers to learning by doing and being responsive to unpredictable conditions, challenges, and problems. In other words, reflection-in-action allows a person to observe and reflect on ongoing experiences and find a solution, then implement it over the learning process; three of the processes can be done on the spot. In contrast, reflection-on-action allows a person to look back and reflect on both past experiences and ongoing experiences with a full thoughtful consideration. Schon’s concept of reflection-on-action corresponds with Dewey’s idea of reflective practice. In this sense, reflective practice is a process of reconstructing experience through reflecting on past practice.

Then, through their work with McTaggart at Deakin University during the eighties, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988a) introduced ‘action’ as a tool of research in the university context. They developed a practical guide of Action Research through their Action Research planning text. To Kemmis and McTaggart, action is a way to understand social phenomena. Within the notion of a constructionist approach, they believed that experience is accumulated in the notion of knowledge as socially and culturally constructed as well as in the knowledge of how a researcher reflects on their experiences. For that reason, and in order to gain information about what might be happening in social contexts, they suggested that researchers should engage in the exploration of experience through the process of ‘participatory Action research’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011,
The actions themselves, which involve the collection of information, evaluation and critical reflection, can be used for improving practice.

Action Research as a ‘tool’ was then adopted by McNaughton (2010) and colleagues in the field of early childhood research. Research is a tool, which is a key concept of the constructionist approach. A tool refers to methodology, a strategic plan and action to achieve a goal. Action Research as a tool is a strategy that is used for improving teaching practice (Sagor, 2004). McNaughton argues that in order to help educators collaborate with colleagues to solve the challenges of teaching and learning activities, there is a need for reflective action (MacNaughton, Siraj-Blatchford, & Rolfe, 2010).

The notion of reflective action is the same as Action Research as discussed by Kemmis and McTaggart, in that reflective practice leads to action, planning and implementing new action in order to achieve a specific goal. The key of Action Research is reflective practice. From here, an individual can critically think and systematically design/plan strategy. McNaughton et al. (2010) define Action Research more specifically as a systematically reflective, collaborative process that closely examines learning environment contexts for creating positive change and to improve practice in early-childhood education settings. Through their engagement with reflective practice, early-childhood teachers are more positive about their teaching practice due to being either more analytical or reflective about their own perceptions and educational assumptions (Keyes, 2000; Leitch, Ruth et al., 2006).

The mobilisation of Action Research in educational research has seen rapid development. According to Dick (2004, p. 432), ‘AR (Action research) has been common in education since the last 60 years, especially in the English-speaking world’ (2004, p. 432). Action Research has also been growing in the field of early education due to the recognition by teachers, school systems, parents, and communities of the critical need for school reform through a systematic, reflective, critical and analytical process (Goh, 2012; Jarrett, 2011). My literature review evidenced the proliferation of theoretical and methodological Action Research literature in both print and electronic formats of Action Research. However, research literature that focuses on the use of Action Research approaches to explore interrelationships between children’s play
activity, and language development is still limited. I think it is important to extend research that generates culturally responsive pedagogy. In this sense, Action Research facilitates the abilities of researchers, teachers, and educators to resolve their own unique and complex situations. For example, Linger (2006) describes how academics can work together with communities to produce better research and social problem solving as well as building reflective practice in the community. For that reason, we were challenged to engage in a reflective thinking and practice and use Action Research in using dramatic play experience as a pedagogical strategy in teaching and learning language and aimed at exploring the potential use of dramatic play as context for learning EFL.

As stated in the previous sub-section, given my commitment as a university researcher to contributing to society, I intended to work with pre-school teacher and to improve play and pedagogical practice at a particular learning context in Padang, a capital city of West Sumatera. The main reason I selected Padang is because I live in Padang and work at Padang State University; in this sense, I believe using Action Research has the potential to benefit pre-schools around Padang. From the insights gained through collective information about my literature review, I understood that an Action Research approach has the potential to contribute positively to effective language teaching and learning through play experience in early childhood settings. I was challenged to develop play and pedagogy which was responsive to the context of West Sumatera. As such, in my research project, the adoption of an Action Research approach coheres with my research question’s focus on establishing a better understanding of the social context of the research.

I thought it was crucial to know how to reflectively perceive the complexities of teaching and learning situations in order to gain a deeper understanding of contextual learning. I decided I would need both practical and conceptual thinking to understand social reality. Besides using Action Research as a methodology of developing teaching and learning, I then learnt and understood that Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), which originated from Activity Theory developed by Engestrom, might enable me to be thoughtful of social complexities. I would work with a pre-school teacher who might bring her life experience, values, beliefs, and attitude to classroom. In this
sense, the nature of Action Research is the critical thinking involved in looking back to past and ongoing experience, while CHAT is the lens of looking at the phenomenon. Thus, I believe that the combination of the use of Action Research as a methodology and CHAT in this project might develop a rich understanding of contextual play and pedagogy. In brief, CHAT was utilized as a lens of conceptual framework to work on and develop the complexities of the situation into supportive and rich data.

5.3.4 Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

As stated in the previous discussion, I needed to develop my knowledge and understanding of the pre-school teacher’s teaching and learning experience, including her belief and social value relating to children’s play and teaching language. To be able to gain my knowledge and understanding in this topic, a lens of insight into teaching and learning practice was required.

In the view of conceptual framework of activity, humans’ perceptions and subjectivities are shaped by experience (Engestrom, 1999). It was considered crucial to look at the teacher’s personal experience of teaching and learning that has adopted dramatic play activity, in particular in teaching and learning EFL in early childhood setting. I agree with Vygotsky’s idea that pedagogy is not isolated, but rather results from an activity system:

Pedagogics is never and was never politically indifferent, since, willingly or unwillingly, through its own work on the psyche, it has always adopted a particular social pattern, political line, in accordance with the dominant social class that has guided its interests. (Vygotsky, 1997b, p. 348)

I began with the use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to understand the teacher’s perspective of dramatic play activity, in particular the use of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy of teaching and learning EFL at her pre-school. This CHAT analysis allowed us to engage in reflective thinking; it helped to facilitate the sharing of knowledge of the teacher’s teaching and learning context with its complexities. I believe the combination of those
techniques of data collection facilitated my co-researcher and me to deepen our understanding of relationships between the individual and society.

In brief, CHAT is not a method, but rather involves conceptual thinking of analyzing phenomenon. In particular, CHAT is used as a lens to analyze social phenomenon (Engestrom, 2001;2010). CHAT’s insight perceives that an individual’s social and cultural experience exists in tools/artefact, social rules, object, and community. To obtain the information/ideas/facts, we initially analysed the co-researching teacher’s perspective through informal discussion, her teacher’s lesson plan, school curriculum, teacher’s journal, reflective practice, etc. In this respect, CHAT is an analytical tool, a lens, and a theoretical tool, which effectively helped my co-researcher and me to engage in reflection on the learning context which was heavily influenced by social, political, cultural and educational developments.

5.3.5 The Use of Activity System and How It Links to CHAT and Action Research Methodology

The previous discussion presents a theoretical explanation of how to perceive play and pedagogical contexts. In this section, I attempt to explain what Activity System is, how it benefited my research analysis, and how it worked as an analytical tool of CHAT and Action Research methodology.

Activity System analysis originated from Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1987), which was developed from the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Leont’ev (1978; 1981) by Engestrom (1987; 1990) and others. The key concept of Activity Theory presented by Vygotsky was the attribute of social context in teacher and child’s learning and development. It meant that Activity Theory perceived both teacher and children as social agents in a learning process that demonstrated an interpersonal interaction. Moreover, in the view of Activity Theory, children did not only interact with others, but also with their learning environment. In my project, I used Activity System for an analytical investigation of both the teacher and children’s social attributes. In brief, Activity System analysis perceives children’s interaction with others and their environment individually and collectively illustrated through a set of relations.
between tools, artefacts, materials, the rules of the play, social value, social role and belief.

Activity System consists of tools, subject, object, rules, division of labour, and community. In CHAT perspective, the elements of this CHAT, are called Activity System. As in CHAT (Engestrom, 1999), Activity System is defined as a unit of analysis of complex social attributes of both teacher and children, including the historical background of Activity System. In particular, the method of Activity System analysis is used for analysing human interactions with its complex social context. Most importantly, in this project, Activity System analysis is applied as a unit of analysis to examine the interactions of children with teachers, peers, their environment, social setting, and themselves. The elements of CHAT might correspond and contradict and result in tension occasionally, which is called contradiction and tension. I used analysis of contradiction and tension for exploring the challenges of using dramatic play, and then came to next step of Action Research, ‘Plan’. In other words, by using Activity System, I was able to see contradictions and tensions between the elements of Activity System.

Contradiction and tension itself might lead to knowledge construction for my co-researcher and me because knowledge construction of contextual teaching and learning was the key aim of this research (Crawford & Hasan, 2006). In other words, contradictions and tensions allowed for critical reflection which would be extended to learning construction through Action Research for either my co-researcher or me. It means that Activity System was the key analytical tool for developing Action Research.

As I stated earlier, Activity System analysis was used as an analytical tool of this Action Research to respond to sub-questions of this Action Research: How could this pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language in a pre-school setting? I analysed the interrelationships between elements of CHAT in order to gain collective information about learning environments for reflective practice; the topic which might have helped us to develop our understanding of the social context of teaching practice are ‘who I am’, ‘who are our children’, ‘why they learn EFL’, ‘what they learn’, and ‘how they learn’.
In particular, for example, Activity System analysis was an analytical tool to explore the use of dramatic play activity as a pedagogical strategy in teaching EFL in early childhood education settings; to analyse a complex elements of social activity of 1) the teacher’s teaching performance and 2) child play. Using CHAT and Activity System as analytical tools helped us to reflect and go to Action Research cycle. Our first focus of Activity System analysis was on the pre-school teacher. In particular, we drew upon CHAT, for example, by examining how national and local policies affected the pre-teacher’s performance. This was because we believed that teaching and learning, which was embedded in an Activity System, was shaped by subjects, tools, objects, rules, historical contexts of the local and national curriculum, school system, etc. Our second focus of Activity System analysis was on the pre-school children; in particular, we investigated children not as individuals but as social agents who brought their experiences and knowledge to classroom.

A major reason for the use of Activity System analysis in this research was to collect a well-developed framework for analysing the complexity of both the teacher’s pedagogical strategy and the children’s learning environment, which included their settings, social dynamics, values, and beliefs. The analysis of the teacher as a social agent provided information about her experience of learning language, which was embedded in her everyday experiences. More specifically, this collective information could help me, the teacher, and the school system to develop dramatic play as part of pedagogical strategies of teaching language, through a reflective teaching practice. Another reason for the use of Activity System analysis was to identify challenges of implementing dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy of teaching EFL in early childhood education settings, exploring possible ways to address these challenges, and implementing these solutions through reflective teaching of EFL. Through the lens of Activity Theory, the teacher and I were not merely seeking ideas for teaching and learning EFL, we were looking at the relationships between the participating children’s mediated activity and developing their language concepts and knowledge in the context of dramatic play activity.

The figure 1 below illustrates a CHAT triangle and its implementation in my research. The figure 1 reflects the interrelationships between elements of
human activity. Human participants are considered as *subjects*, who undertake an activity to achieve a set of goals, which are called outcomes. In order to achieve the set of goals, the subject needs tools, such as physical tools and psychological tools (Kozulin, 2003). Physical tools refer to artefacts and psychological tools refer to symbols, signs and language. Subjects and tools can be influenced by their community, rules, and the division of labour. A key notion of CHAT is the interaction between the tools, subject, rules, outcome, community, and division of labour.

The design of the CHAT triangle is critical in my research. Figure 1 reflects the ‘Subject’ in Activity elements and refers to a human, individual, or group community (Engeström, 2010, p. 6). In this project, I proposed that the subject of the Activity System was the participating teacher, who meant to explore dramatic play as a context for learning (the object) and the targeted outcome was to promote the pre-school children’s language development and to achieve the goals of the curriculum in respect to the local and national curriculum. Although children are the recipients of the learning and the learners being investigated, they belong to the subject in the diagram because they are the subject of the learning process.

![Figure 3. The implementation of analytical framework of CHAT analysis in my research (adapted from Engestrom, 1999)](image-url)
Object refers to the process of development (Kaptelinin, 2005) which is driven by the subject (Nardi, 1996). Nardi (2006, p. 37) adds: ‘Objects can be transformed in the course of an activity; they are not immutable structures.’ In this sense, I intended to explore dramatic play as support language learning context was the set of object of activity. The tools included dramatic play experience, language use, play materials, lesson plans, the teacher’s reflective journal, curriculum, and other teaching and learning materials. The outcome of this reflective process is to help children develop their foreign language.

‘Rules’ refer to social norms or social beliefs. For example, the cultural and societal understanding of play and the Education Ministry’s policy of play in preschool. Rules can be created by a community. For example in this project, a ‘Rule’ that affected the teaching and learning activity was that parents believed that their children should come to school to study in a formal way. This kind of social belief might result in a contradiction regarding the nature of a child’s learning and development. Because this research was investigating the use of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy in teaching EFL in pre-school settings and parents were located within the community dimension within Activity System, this ‘Rule’ could pose an interesting key challenge.

The pre-school teacher and I worked together to design the questions of reflective practice and she responded to questions accordingly. Using CHAT analysis allowed us to identifying that underpinned dramatic play as a pedagogic perspective in teaching and learning language, in particular teaching and learning EFL. We were also able to identify the tensions and contradictions between the subject, object, community, rules, and outcome. The tensions and contradictions between and within the Activity System allowed us to address the teacher’s perception and the challenges she faced in using dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy in teaching language. Activity Systems helped the co-researcher and myself to focus on both teaching and learning activities through multiple cycles of activity (see Reflection in figure 1) and children’s language learning by analysing the elements of human Activity System such as aspects of tools, subject, object, community, rules, and division of labour. The result of Activity System analysis might bring multiple values to us, including a greater
understanding of the practice of past and current teaching and learning through play activities.

In the first week of the data collection process, through the teacher’s journal of reflective practice along with the questionnaire and lesson plan, I began to unpack the teacher’s perceptions of the use of dramatic play in teaching language, and the questions regarding the use of dramatic play activity as a pedagogical strategy of teaching EFL. At this stage of data collection, the focus of the analysis was not only the teacher as an individual or her teaching environment, but rather my research focused on the interconnections between the teacher and her teaching and learning environment, such as her curriculum, social perception, etc.

According to Lave (1988), learning settings refer not only to the place where the activity is conducted, but also to the interrelations between human and environmental components, such as tools, artefacts, symbols, and social conventions. Lave’s notion/idea on cognition and situated learning in Activity System analysis was considered to be valuable in underscoring the need to look reflectively at the contextual design of the learning environment in my research project. Moreover, current research confirms that social and physical environments might affect the learning process (Lippman, 2010). Lippman found that there is strong implication of learning environments both social and physical to the way learners shape, adopt, and develop knowledge. Social and physical environments can ‘shape the learner ‘(Lippman, 2010.p.1).

In brief, a central factor of Action Research in this project is to provide the description of the learning environment of the ongoing and past teaching and learning activity at the pre-school. The collection of information could enable us to underpin the challenges in play and pedagogy, develop an enactment through an understanding of tensions and contradictions, and then construct a reflective practice. Most importantly, in this sense, the combined use of Action Research and CHAT allowed us to re-conceptualise the use of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy in teaching and learning EFL at pre-school settings through a reflective practice.
5.3 Researcher’s Stance

I positioned myself as a researcher as well as a facilitator who was undertaking post-graduate study at the School of Education at Deakin University. Also, given my commitment as a lecturer of early childhood teacher education at one of the government universities in Indonesia to improve play and pedagogy at pre-school settings in Indonesia, I would do my best to share my knowledge of play and pedagogy with pre-school teachers. By extending partnerships with pre-school teachers, I believed I would then ‘disavow or seek to diminish the relevance of more theoretical discourses such as critical theory’ together with pre-school teachers (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007, p. 274). I adopted a constructionist concept in my research and I understood that a constructionist concept focussed on the reconstruction of knowledge through working collaboratively with pre-school teachers to solve challenges (Reason, 1992).

What identifies a constructionist concept in educational research is working together for change and development (Cook, 2004). For example, in this respect, university researchers might contribute to educational change and development. In other words, universities play a significant role in working together both informally and formally with school management, teachers, and society for the purpose of educational improvement. In addition to working together with school management, teachers, and society, universities are facilitators for social transformation. Kemmis and McTaggart (2007) recommend, ‘if university researchers are involved, their role is a service role to the teachers’ (p. 274). Within the notion of a constructionist approach to this research, I believed that an Action Research approach was the best method to accomplish my research aims, which were to provide recommendations for the contextual and culturally responsive implementation of dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy in teaching and learning language. These recommendations needed to be responsive to multicultural language contexts in Indonesia. I had to extend partnerships with pre-school teachers because in this respect, pre-school teachers were more familiar with the daily reality of teaching and learning. As stated in the previous paragraph, my position was a researcher and facilitator,
while the participating pre-school teacher was the expert of her own classroom (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Collaborative projects encourage teachers to share their problems, perceptions, values, and assumptions about dramatic play and pedagogy and its relevance to teaching EFL in pre-school. Within the framework of a Collaborative Action Research project, teachers’ individual voices reflect the situation of the broader group. In this Collaborative Action Research project, the participating pre-school teacher and I sought to integrate theory and practice to develop a better framework of play and pedagogy, in particular in relation to EFL teaching strategies in early childhood settings in Indonesia (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Within the notion of CHAT perspective, Yamagata-Lynch (2010) suggests that collaborative partners in CHAT share roles and perspectives as full observers. We both were observers, advocates, and facilitators of changing teaching and learning practice. In this project, I was not positioning myself as an expert of teaching EFL at an early age group level. I was a collaborative partner with the pre-school teacher. To be precise, I literally shared my academic understanding with the preschool teacher.

In brief, within the notion of CHAT and Collaborative Action Research, both the constructionist approach and Action Research were clearly mutually related. I was the facilitator who shared ideas and experiences and initiated the change of teaching and learning practice through collaborative work with the pre-school teacher. Kemmis and McTaggart (2007, p. 273) suggest that the notion of ‘share ownerships of research project’ is to bring about knowledge construction and social transformation. This means that a crucial aim of the constructionist approach to this research was the mutual sharing of knowledge between the researcher and implementer or practitioner. The constructionist approach emphasises knowledge construction through sharing ideas, constructionist and reflective thinking, and taking action collaboratively. In brief, the constructionist perspective in qualitative research was the key notion of this project.

5.4 Research Participants

This project is Action Research working with a pre-school teacher to examine and develop her own teaching and learning practice. Potential
participating pre-school teachers should be professional teachers who gain teaching registration in Indonesia. They were also required to currently teach English as a Foreign Language at pre-school level. Given the nature of the potential participants I needed, I chose purposive sampling, because it allowed me to select participants with particular characteristics (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Baxter and Babbie (2004) suggest that a potential participating researcher could be contacted by email, either by teachers or students who had co-authored a project’.

My aim was to work with a teacher of pre-school to help her critically reflect on her practice through using CHAT. I would have expected to work with more teachers if I had received more responses in order to provide diverse situations and an in-depth study through Action Research within a CHAT perspective. Potential pre-school teachers who could be my collaborative partners of research/co-researchers were selected through random purpose sampling. In addition, in terms of collaborative Action Research, I sought to work with one pre-school teacher who had already obtained a national certification as well as an experienced teacher who also had good English competence. Potential teachers were invited via email and posted mail. One school agreed to participate and recommended one of their teachers who at the participating school was happy to engage in this Action Research project. Improvement through cyclic design of mediation, observation, reflection, re-mediation process was expected.

As stated in the previous section, I decided to work collaboratively with one pre-school with certain criteria. I decided to choose a government pre-school because I expected the result of this research to contribute to a local government educational context. Of course, potential pre-schools which were invited to participate in this project had to have teaching and learning EFL in the school program, because I would not only investigate the practice of play and pedagogy but also the use of play for developing children’s language, in particular EFL.

In the process of recruiting a school, I found only one pre-school out of ten pre-schools which agreed to participate in this project. I also obtained one potential participating pre-school teacher in the school. She obtained teaching certification from the government in 2013. Teaching at pre-school was the only
job she had had since 2002, to date she had 13 years of experience teaching at pre-school. She started teaching at pre-school one year into her training. In 2010 she then obtained a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education, the equivalent of a four-year teaching degree.

**Teacher as Co-researcher**

The class teacher was responsible for 10 children in her class. Pre-school teachers who are ‘co-researchers’ (Reeb, 2006) play an important role in implementing the ‘Plan’ of an Action Research project. We were involved in planning and working together in observation and in designing the reflection. Cook (2004) suggests that a classroom teacher is the expert of teaching practice. In other words, my co-researcher and I shared knowledge and reconstructed it in a reflective way. The teacher in the project, who included the children in planning daily activities, implemented the play environment as usual in the class. Because collaborative Action Research was on the basis of an investigation of ‘actual practices, not abstract practices’ (Kemmis, 2005, p.277), this routine was designed to promote English language learning through play. In this project, Action Research was the process of designing play activity, mediation, observation and reflection, and then, re-mediation of play. So, the role of the teacher in this project was the agent in conducting self-reflection on play and pedagogy, with the help of researcher.

**Children**

This research involved 10 children between the ages of 5 and 6. Their parents were asked to fill in a parental consent form and ten of them got consent to join in this project. Children spoke more than one language both at school and at home. In the school context, children spoke their native language (L1), to communicate with their peers. Children may or may not have spoken their native language to communicate with teachers. In fact, L2 was formal language instruction. In this respect, children sometimes spoke L2 and then switched to L1. Children were able to use two different languages interchangeably. Children learnt two different foreign languages at school: English as a Foreign Language and Arabic for religious purposes. Among children in the pre-school, these ten participating children’s parents spoke the native language, L1 for social
interactions at home and spoke L2 for communication with teachers. For ethical purpose, participating children’s name were pseudonyms.

5.5 Project Settings

The research was conducted in Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra. It was located at the west coast of Sumatra, which has a population of over 5,098,790 people at 2014 consensus (ifmsa, 2015). Most of the habitants are Muslim. According to the department of cultural and tourism affairs, West Sumatran is situated in a multilingual context. The local residents speak Minangkabau language as a first language, for a daily language use, and Indonesian as a second language, which is the official language in Indonesia. Padang was chosen for several reasons: Padang was the largest city in West Sumatera and the habitants spoke a standard first language.

Although the first language is Minangkabau, the dialects spoken in different regions of West Sumatra are significant. Specifically, there are two main dialects: the coastal and the highland dialect. The coastal region consists of the dialect of padang and pesisir selatan. The highland region uses three different dialects: Luhak Agam, which covers the area of Bukittinggi, Maninjau, Lubuk Basung, Luhak Tanah Data, which covers the area of Batusangka, Padang Panjang, Singkarak, Kayutanam, and Luhak 50 Kota, which covers Payakumbuh (Nadra, 2006). Interestingly, the dialect of Padang is used as the standard first language in West Sumatera. This dialect is used for communication by different speakers of the first language.

West Sumatrans are used to foreign language learning. To Padang people, learning a foreign language is not a new thing, but something that takes place from the early years of age to later in life. I learnt from my grandfather who spoke Dutch and Japanese, as the result of foreign colonisation in West Sumatera. In fact, there are lots of borrowed words from foreign languages, such as Dutch and Arabic, whilst at present most borrowed words are from English. Besides the effect of colonisation, West Sumatran use foreign language for a religious purpose. The Department of Cultural and Tourism Affairs of West Sumatra reported that the written language of Minang kabau was originally adopted from Arabic. Besides speaking in their mother tongue and acquiring an
official language, young children in West Sumatra start learning Arabic in their early years. It is interesting to note that at most pre-schools children memorise small parts of the Quran, the central religious text of Islam, which is written in Arabic. I found myself, in my early age, studying Arabic by memorising new words and long sentences as well.

The setting of the study was a government pre-school classroom in Padang, West Sumatera, Indonesia. It was chosen in response to the invitation to potential school participants. The school had over 40 children. The children are nearly all from middle income families. Almost all of the parents are from working families. The research took place in one class, for over two and half months. The class was chosen based on the availability of a teacher. Once one teacher had agree to participate, I provided her with the letter of consent for the student participants. Ten parents’ participating children in one class positively agreed to involve in.

The children were non-English language speakers. They were from families who speak Indonesian as a second language and standard Minang Kabau language as their first language. In the classroom, the teachers speak Indonesian, an official language in Indonesia. The school also provides Arabic, as a foreign language, which is used for religion purposes, such as praying before class, in class, and as a closing class activity. For that reason, I think this pre-school is unique.

To see how the shift in learning process occurred during multiple cycles of Action Research, I think it is essential to discuss the current characteristics of the pre-school classroom prior to my mediation/intervention. I believe that learning takes place in a situation, which determines individual actions and interpersonal interactions. As Vygotsky (1986) suggests, teachers should create a learning situation which optimally supports children to use language, remain in touch with the real-world situations, and foster interaction and collaboration among peers.

In this project, the classroom environment was designed to correspond with the sociocultural context. For example, the classroom walls were decorated to create a beach setting. I learned that the reason for choosing a beach theme was because Padang is located on the sea coast. This was confirmed by the
teacher: ‘the theme of beach on the wall aimed at getting children to know their surroundings, which was Padang beach’, she said. The banner with monkeys and ‘orangutans’, birds and other specific animals from West Sumatera were used to introduce native animals to the children. There were posters of specific fruits and vegetables from Indonesia as well. There were some posters of Alquran words and sentences to reflect the religious background of the students. These contextual features of decoration were considered by the teacher as an effective approach to familiarizing children with the world around them.

Besides looking at the classroom decorations, arranging furniture was a critical component in order to successfully deliver the learning purpose (Vukelich & Christie, 2009). At this point, I observed the classroom furniture with great interest. Children were provided with desks, while there was no rug in the rest of classroom. In this large, four-by-five-metre classroom, there were two rows of chairs, consisting of five-six chairs each. A whiteboard stood in front of the desks. One teacher’s desk was placed between the children’s desks and the whiteboard. The teacher argued that children learned and sat at the desks, as well as played. At play time, children were allowed to put play materials on their desks. Below are the two photographs which describe the classroom arrangement prior to Action Research being conducted:

Figure 4. Classroom Photographs Prior to Activity Cycle 1.
The photographs in Figure 4 show the layout of the classroom before any intervention had taken place. The layout was centered towards the teacher so that the children were aligned to the front of the class. There was a whiteboard at the front. Behind the teacher’s desk was a wardrobe to store play materials. Next to the children’s desks was a drawer used to for bag storage. The play area was on the desks. The teacher described using desks for play areas in order to monitor the children play activities and interact with the play materials.

In this context, we intended to look at the gaps in practice and knowledge by looking at the current features of the learning situation prior to conducting the cyclic Action Research project. Through a dialogic discussion of the classroom arrangement, EFL status in curriculum, play and pedagogy, and its impact on EFL learning, would help my research partner and me to make a choice about what we should do in order to make improvements. Reflective dialogue and watching video recordings of the teaching and learning intervention also helped us to figure out better strategies and concepts, which were considered to contribute more effectively to natural and spontaneous EFL learning. The current features of the learning situation provided contextual information that helped us to effectively implement a new approach to teaching EFL. My discussion with the teacher promoted our critical reflection on the learning environment: thinking about what kind of routine children had at school, what program the pre-school offered, and what learning and play opportunities were provided at school.

5.6 Instruments

This Action Research project required analysis of the pre-school teacher’s teaching experience, beliefs, attitudes and values. To gain the information/data, qualitative data collection techniques, such as observations, unstructured interview/dialogue and the assessment of documents, were needed (Cook, 2004). Different kinds of data were required depending on the focus of study over the Action Research cycle. I used the combination of three types of data collection: written document, interview, and observation. Over two and a half months, data collection was allocated at the beginning of the pre-school’s academic year in 2012 in West Sumatera, Indonesia.
1. Written documentation

The focus of study for the first step of Action Research was reflective practice that was to gain understanding of past and ongoing learning environments. So that, written documentation such as the teacher’s journals, curriculum, lesson plans, and other related materials were required as data. The assessment of curriculum documentation and lesson plans was also required for reflection. Other written documentation, such as field notes, was also required. There were thirty pages of journal notes, fifty pages of lesson plans, and ten questionnaires for ten participating children’s parents. Questionnaires are a widely used for gathering information about the choice of language was established at home context. These were collected from both the teacher and children’s parents. Some pages of the pre-school curriculum and local and national curriculum were also analysed in step one of the data collection process.

2. Interview

There are three ways to conduct interviews: a structured interview, a semi-structured interview, and an unstructured interview (Patton, 2002). I chose an open-ended style of interview, which was an unstructured interview (Hitchcock & David, 1995). The main reason for conducting an unstructured interview was to discuss specific topics which needed detailed explanations (McCann & Clark, 2005). I obtained a total of approximately 5 hours of recorded data from an open-ended interview.

3. Observation

I obtained 720 minutes of video recording data (dramatic play activities) over 8 weeks. These videos were used for the reflection process. I also obtained photos for observation. The vignette of videos was essential visual evidence for data analysis. As Tochon (2009) states, video recording data allows researchers to perform reflective thinking, discussion, and to re-construct new actions. Jewitt et al. (2009) suggest that the ability to re-visit past events is essential for the reflection process. Video recording also allowed my co-researcher and me to focus on a specific point/event and gain a deeper understanding of the contextual meanings of individual actions. The detail of the responses of the children, either
cognitive, verbal/non-verbal, or their emotional responses as a result of the modified learning environment through Action Research, were captured. In particular, the observations included the interactions between children and teachers who offered a clearer sense of the language learning process throughout the dramatic play activity. Field notes were also taken during the observation process.

5.7 Procedure of Data Collection

Action Research is a process by which changes to the intervention style are addressed (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). According to Hunter et al (2013), the idea of the change/improvement/modification of the intervention was derived from previous reflection: ‘This means the second cycle emerges from the first’ (p. 64).

The model of planning, implementing, observing, reflecting and re-implementing in each cycle was enabled via a rather simple set of flexible strategies to correspond to the situation, issues/problem, and the need during the teaching and learning process (Townsend, 2013). Because the change/improvement/modification emerges from a previous cycle, it is not surprising that the timeline of each Activity Cycle has a different time span. In this data collection, the first Activity Cycle required two weeks. Other Activity Cycles could be completed in one week. Moreover, Hunter et al (2013) stress that the number of Activity Cycles cannot be predicted because an Activity Cycle requires critical reflection.

This Action Research required seven Activity Cycles in which each Activity Cycle required planning, implementing, observing, reflecting and re-implementing. As stated in the discussion of selecting methodology, Dewey and Lewin suggest that the most important aspect of gaining knowledge is figuring out the problem, doing something, observing reflectively, and re-practicing (Dewey & Lewin, 1938). Figuring out the problem is reflection. In Action Research, this reflection was essential for developing the next step, and for designing a ‘Plan’ of action.

The following is an example of how data was collected in the first two weeks (Activity Cycle 1). More explicitly, we achieved this through the articulation of the object of the activity, tools, rules, community, and division of
labour. Given the importance of the learning environment in the nature of CHAT, at the first step of data collection the teacher and I examined past and current learning activities in the field of research in order to capture the tensions and contradictions that occurred in the learning environment. The analysis would be essential for developing the next Action Research step, which was to design a ‘Plan’ of action. The question required my co-researcher and me to design a reflective journal. In order to respond to what we needed to explore in the nature of CHAT, we decided to design a journal which uncovered answers to the following questions: 1) who I am; 2) who are our children; 3) why they learn EFL; 4) what they learn; and 5) how they learn. These questions allowed us to develop an understanding of what, how, why, when, where, and how in relation to the past (or previous) and ongoing (or new) learning situation. In the next section I will attempt to present the techniques we uncovered via these questions:

1. **Who am I**

   The question ‘who I am’ was responded to through my co-researcher’s reflective journal. In these journal notes, my co-researcher introduced herself and provided a story in response to her life experiences, including her teaching and learning experiences, educational background, etc.

2. **Who are our children**

   We thought it was important to question the cultural backgrounds of our child participants, in particular their socio-linguistic situations. In Activity System analysis, our child participants were the subjects and objects of this research. We needed to know their socio-linguistic backgrounds, because this information helped us to gain a better understanding of the teaching approach of EFL through a socio-cultural perspective. We focused on collecting information about the backgrounds of the children, including factors such as their religion, economical situations, and the language used in their daily social interactions. This information was obtained through a questionnaire completed by the children’s parents. The critical purpose of this questionnaire was to gain an understanding of the experience of the
child’s language. In addition, information was also gained through the teacher’s journal of the child’s language experience in classroom.

2. Why children learn
The main reason to question why children learn was to gather information regarding the rationale of children learning EFL; this important and relevant information helped us to come to conclusions about the major motivations, perceptions, and attitudes of the parents, the wider community, and the teacher, towards learning a foreign language. This data of the parents’ attitudes towards EFL was obtained through a questionnaire prior to the initial intervention.

3. What do children learn
Through the teacher’s lesson plan, she gathered information about what the children had learnt in the past and in current practices, in particular in EFL. This data informed us about the focus of teaching language in a pre-school setting as mandated in the curriculum. To gain our understanding of what children learned, CHAT tension and contradiction was used to determine contradictions between the focus of the current teaching of EFL and the curriculum standard itself. We believed that contradictions might also take place because of the irrelevance of the theory and practice of the standard curriculum. For example, while children just started to learn their second language, Indonesian National language, the lesson plan informed us that children were simultaneously learning to write and read EFL words and simple expressions. This mismatch between the goal of teaching EFL and the practice was discussed, including the rationale for why this circumstance occurred. We investigated the pressures leading to this contradiction; for example, it was found that the community perceived that learning EFL should cover speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills. The community’s expectations might thus influence the focus of teaching and learning EFL in pre-school education settings.
4. How children learn

This is an exploration of the strategy used for the teaching of EFL by the pre-school teacher, my research partner. The information was obtained from the teacher’s lesson plans, journals, and through open-ended dialogue with the teacher. We examined the sorts of challenges currently going on in the teaching of EFL through dramatic play and looked for clues as to where to focus our attention. We then discussed and devised a desirable objective to reach and decided on the strategies we needed to implement in order to reach it.

Those four questions allowed us to examine teaching and learning activities using dramatic play experiences as a unit of analysis: ‘who, why, what, and how’ were the general parameters of the learning process with its connection to other elements of the teaching and learning activity. The analysis of our reflective practice informed us about the framework of the learning environment, complete with identified challenges. In other words, through what we discovered about the challenges, we were then able to generate another two supporting questions related to our ‘Plan’ and ‘Action’.

In brief, this step 1 was collecting data about past and ongoing learning environments. I worked with the pre-school teacher, who played her role as my co-researcher, to revisit ‘what she had done’ and ‘what should she do’, using the lens of CHAT. In particular, we considered her experience in using dramatic play activities as a pedagogical strategy in language teaching. The teaching journal was important for gaining information about the general classroom process and the teacher’s attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and feelings. Journal notes/field notes were used to record the variety of the teacher’s experiences in order to understand English words, multiple and complex symbols, and simple English expressions. During this first step of the Action Research process, my co-researcher and I engaged in some informal discussion that was an unstructured interview. The main reason for holding an un-structured interview was to create a comfort zone of sharing ideas, opinions, and feelings. Critical points of discussion were documented in my daily field notes.
Step 2. Action

As stated in the previous section, the timeline of each Activity Cycle was different. The dramatic play activities, which were conducted approximately three times a week for thirty minutes per meeting, were recorded through camera and audio recordings. I was in the classroom observing the activity, using some camera which were set in some corners of the classroom, and sometimes making written notes of my observations.

Step 3. Observations and Reflection

Observation was critical in this Action Research; observation led to reflection. The participating pre-school teacher and I watched the video recordings and discussed my written documents in order to pinpoint how she felt about her practice, what challenges she found in terms of implementing changes, what positive things she gained over the implementation of the new design of the learning environment, what needed to improve or be dismissed, and what was missing.

For example, over one week of reflection and observation in Activity Cycle 1, we organised and analysed our journal notes and discussed the video footage in a formal conversation. We interpreted this material and made summaries. This collective information allowed us to discover the gaps between theory and practice. We sorted, sifted, discarded, and made a catalogue of what worked and what did not. The reflection was also developed through the lens of CHAT. In other words, we considered the possible interactions and interrelationships between elements of CHAT, subject, object, rule, division of labour, and community. The results of this observation and reflection were documented in the teacher’s reflective journal and my observation journal.

Step 4. Re-plan of action

After collecting and analysing our thoughtful considerations of the pre-school teacher’s experience, we came to the process of implementing an intervention or modified plan of action at the second week. Through her journal, the teacher engaged in a reflective set of questions about her teaching practice,
such as ‘what has she learned’, ‘how did she feel about the practice’, ‘how did she make conclusions of her practice’, ‘any new questions developed through practice’, and ‘any modified actions should be taken’.

Overall the Activity Cycle used CHAT as a lens for the reflection process, both for initial reflections and for reflection within the cyclic process of Action Research. In order to obtain the current general information/ideas/facts for reflective practice, participating pre-school teachers and I collaboratively worked to design the pinpoints for reflection; I helped her design the framework of what needed to be considered and explained, and to design questions in the journal. The journal would be then filled out by the participating pre-school teacher. Relating to the framework of the journal, I suggested that she use the nature of the CHAT paradigm, a theoretical lens of designing reflection. We engaged in an informal conversation and discussion in order to learn, understand, and develop CHAT for reflection. It was important to crystallise our understanding of why, what and how to implement CHAT in this project. We then understood and believed that CHAT facilitated us in exploring the challenges of using dramatic play activity as a pedagogical strategy in teaching EFL in a pre-school educational setting, because CHAT enabled us as researchers to extend our insight and to analyse complex situations; to search for concrete facts and the reasons behind them. We believed that the challenges were broad enough to allow for a range of insights into teaching and learning. We directed the focus of reflection based on the CHAT in order to respond to a sub-question of research: How could my co-researcher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language in a pre-school setting?

5.8. Ethical Considerations

The administration process is the procedure of asking for permission prior to conducting data collection. Because my research involved children, there were ethical guidelines from the Deakin Human Research Ethics Committee (DHREC) to follow. I was granted research ethics approval from the DHREC prior to the data collection process. A copy of this approval is provided in the appendices. I was mindful that my research process should protect my potential child participants. For that reason, in the process of data collection, I
made sure four elements of research ethics, information, consent, confidentiality, and use, met the guidelines provided by the DHREC. Prior to conducting field research, I firstly wrote a letter of consent which informed my potential participants (the pre-school teacher, the pre-school principal, local government, children, school system, and parents) about my research, including my research aims, research questions, and the method of the research. Through the consent forms, my potential participants were able to make informed decisions about their participation, and able to withdraw from the research project at any time without any pressure. Children were given the opportunity to opt out by informing either their parents or teacher. A form of withdraw were given, but none did. I would also mention that these changes were reviewed and approved through University HDR ethics processes. A pseudonym chosen to represent child’s name.

As a university lecturer who works with a teacher, I understand the power imbalance which may impact the research process. In this respect, I did not position myself as an expert but rather treated the teacher as a research partner. To overcome the potential power imbalance between us, I strove to achieve a situation where the co-researcher did not need to fear that her performance and thoughts would be judged. We managed questions and answers and shared experiences outside the school area such as a café, which was a more casual environment. The casual circumstance seemed to have a significant impact on breaking down barriers between us. The situation enabled her to articulate thoughts. This approach also attempted to build a good relationship between the researcher and the participants, which is important (Howell, 2013). Howell emphasised that shared experiences empower participants to involve and be reflective and critical of their perceptions and practice and overcome power imbalance.

5.9 Data Analysis

In this section, I will discuss my procedures for analysing my data, how to make sense of data, and the way to interpret data. In my point of view, with the notion of a constructionist method, data analysis is the process of constructing my knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning practice
through interpreting collective data. Because the goal of the Action Research was to improve play and pedagogy practice, I needed a technique of data analysis that could allow me insights into the development of the practice. As suggested by Crotty (1998), the procedures of collecting and presenting data should reflect the project’s research questions. For example, in attempting to respond to the main question of this research, ‘How can a pre-school teacher re-conceptualise dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy to enhance children’s foreign language learning and development in a multicultural language context?’, I should decide what data is going be relevant to responses to the questions, because the key purpose of conducting data analysis in qualitative research is to identify relevant sources of research findings and discussion (Fetterman, 2009). For that reason, I used thematic analysis in order to help me sort out raw data, make meaning, and interpret my findings.

Thematic analysis is an analytical process of exploring the understanding of topic issues through organising, identifying, and renaming the data to fit with particular aims (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) suggest that the full process of analysis can be split into six phases: familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. I adopted Braun and Clark’s technique of using thematic analysis because the techniques are accessible and use explicit procedures. Below are six steps of data analysis:

**Phase 1: Familiarising Yourself with Your Data**

This stage was the process of getting to know the entire data set. At this stage, I read, re-read, and explored the data in order to locate meaning and patterns. I did not come to identifying, naming, or classifying the data, but rather developed my understanding of aspects of the entire data set. This was an important step to help me to continue the coding process efficiently. I began naming the teacher’s journal on the basis of a particular Activity Cycle of Action Research in order to gain insights into the development. I also started to examine the interview data, and then this data was transcribed and transformed into text. In video analysis, I did not use a specific tool that supported the data analysis process but coded manually. The procedure in video analysis was to identify the vignette with a
particular themes/ideas/ categories, cut and encode the vignettes, and make senses the vignettes associated with unit of analysis.

**Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**
Specific topics or words which related to the phenomena were coded. I paid attention to repeated patterns which could be informative for units of analysis. For example, I highlighted sections of the teacher’s journal which provided interesting topics and repeated patterns. I also added extra notes to my data, for example, to name the context and situation of the written data if required. I believe that these extra notes were essential later when I came to presenting my findings and discussion. I also mapped out evidence of development and learning which were located in video recording data. I named the date and time of a particular vignette which might inform my units of analysis.

**Phase 3: Searching for Themes**
As mentioned above, thematic analysis is used as an analytical process of exploring and understanding the topic issue. In this respect, I organised, identified, and renamed the initial topic, tension and contradiction. After that, searching for themes involved describing the reflection process in each Activity Cycle. For example I organised, identified, and renamed what happened, what changed, how they changed, why they changed, and the implications of the change or changes.

**Phase 4: Reviewing Themes**
This stage allowed me to review the codes and whether they were relevant, sufficient, and efficient for supporting analysis. I did this because sometimes researchers have to obtain more data if there is insufficient and irrelevant data. For example, I found particular points in the teacher’s journal needed to be re-reviewed for clarity of meaning; in this sense, I needed more detail and an explanation of her writing. In another example, I worked on identifying and naming particular data, but sometimes I found the data was sufficient to support analysis. In this case, reviewing themes was important to ensure that the data was sufficient, efficient, and relevant for analysis.
Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

During this stage, I began to relate codes to my research questions. For example, I identified challenges in play and pedagogy practice: the teacher’s perspective on play, teaching professionalism, adults’ values regarding play, lack of materials, and so on.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The notion of collaborative Action Research and CHAT is constructing knowledge and understanding of play and pedagogy practice through multiple Activity Cycles, intervention and reflection. I will present and report on the process of the development of the teacher’s values, beliefs, and attitudes toward play and pedagogy. I will present evidence of development. There are three sub-questions in this research. I began to focus on linking back data to the questions.

1. Responding to first sub-question, ‘How could this pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language in a pre-school setting?’

The response to this question aimed to provide a description of the ongoing and past learning environment, in particular the pre-school teacher’s experience with play and pedagogy practice. The detailed description of play and pedagogy allowed me to figure out contradictions and tensions within this research context, which was essential for reflection. I analysed the aspect of tools, subject, object, community, rules, and division of labour. Also, I linked back to different sources of data which helped me outline to following: ‘who are our children’, ‘why they learn’, ‘what they learn’, and ‘how they learn’. These relevant sources of data were interpreted and analysed for identifying contradictions and tensions between elements of CHAT. The result of this analysis was an important source for outlining the challenges of play and pedagogy practice.
2. Responding to the second sub-question, ‘What happens if the teacher re-conceptualises her perspective in dramatic play experience?’

   This question aimed to provide evidence of the changes to the intervention. The response to this question focused on the responses of the children as a result of the intervention.

3. Responding to the third sub-question, ‘What happens if the teacher uses a multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?’

   In this Action Research project, we decided to make modifications to the intervention over dramatic play activities in classroom. This stage of analysis provided evidence of the implication of the use of a multilingual language approach during the dramatic play experience. I presented a vignette of video recording data which demonstrated the development of the children’s language, in particular the development of their EFL vocabularies. Other sources of data analysis, such as the teacher’s journal and lesson plans, were also interpreted.

5.10 Ensuring Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

   It is important to scrutinise the rigorousness of the framework and the key characteristics of the process of data collection, to analyse the data, and to report the outcomes for enhancing the quality of qualitative research. A common concept of the trustworthiness of qualitative research suggests that rigorous research involves credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and conformability (Creswell, 2013). The credibility of this research is established by ensuring the research findings adequately reflect the data context which was addressed through triangulation. Triangulation refers to the process of cross-verification of data (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). In particular, to verify that the findings and data analysis accurately reflect the actual phenomenon, the data was obtained from different sources such as interviews, written documents, video and audio files, and
observations. The various data were found consistent (Casey & Murphy, 2009) and met the standard of dependability. For example, I looked for clarification and further explanation of the teacher, whether I accurately interpreted her viewpoints in written journals and informal interviews and made sense to her perspectives.

Although the implication of the outcome of this research cannot make broad claims because of the small sample of participants, the transferability can apply to a certain type of context with criteria. In presenting the results, the criteria of using dramatic play as a context for foreign language learning of children are defined in order to determine what I meant by the implication of dramatic play toward children language development. By presenting various data analyses including rich descriptions of the context, this research potentially invites readers to make a connection between the aspects/elements involved in this research and their own context. More importantly, the outcome is not only valid in the individual level but also potentially applicable to other contexts or settings that can be transferable to other teaching and learning language classrooms in multilingual language settings. This action research does not intend to establish generalisation, but instead, the outcome contributes to future research and direction.

The sample size justification indicates the dependability of this research. The purpose of this research is to explore the way preschool teachers use dramatic play activity to effectively and successfully scaffold the development of English as a foreign language. To do this, I need to obtain data from preschools that provide English language learning in their curriculum. Most importantly, I have to work with qualified preschool teachers who teach English in the schools. A qualified preschool teacher refers to those who meet the national quality standard for educators. I sent out invitations for research participation to some preschools in Padang, and only one school gave a positive response and met the criteria of a potential research participant. A small-size research sample allowed me to comprehensively investigate the process of action research cycles. To address conformability, I presented the process of reflection and activity cycles in detail.
5.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has mapped practical aspects, designed activities involved in research, research tools and techniques for collecting data, and a set of designed processes for managing and analysing data. In the first part of this chapter, constructionist and interpretivist methods are reviewed, followed by the details of the rationale of using these epistemologies/theories. The latter part of the chapter presents the nature of my research and the qualitative methods, which were used as an approach to understanding and developing my research. This happened through interviews, reflective journals, and other written and audio/video recording observations. Because the nature of this research is a reflective process of using dramatic play as a context for learning languages, Action Research was used. In this respect, CHAT was used as the lens for reflection.
Chapter Six

Research Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study which were obtained from video-recordings of the children who took part in the study engaged in dramatic play, from audio recordings of informal interviews with their teacher, and from analysis of the reflective journals kept by the participating teacher. Excerpts from my field notes also contribute to the data. This study made use of multiple cycles of planning, implementation, observation and reflection on the outcomes of these activities. This approach to Action Research is discussed by Crane and Richardson (2000) as a way of facilitating ongoing reflection aimed at developing more effective practice.

![Figure 5. Multiple Cyclic Process of Action Research](Source: Crane and Richardson, 2000)

These cycles of activity, shown in the figure above, allow a teacher to stop, think and change (O’Connor&Diggins, 2002). The results of these Activity Cycles in terms of changes/ modifications that emerged during the course of this Action Research, as well as why and how these changes came about, are presented in this chapter. An Activity Cycle was defined as ending each time the researcher and teacher stopped, thought and changed their practice. This chapter presents seven cycles that took place over a two and half month period of data collection.

6.2 Activity Cycle 1

Activity Cycle 1 took place during the first two weeks of data collection which included planning, action, observation and reflection. The aim of this first phase was to enrich the play-based learning environment, and specifically
encourage dramatic play as a context for language learning. The Action Research began with reflection in order to collect issues and problems. The next step was to design a plan, implement the plan, and then observe. During this cycle, the participating teacher and I reflected together and identified issues arising from using dramatic play as part of the teaching and learning process. The teacher was also required to write in her reflective journal using Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a methodological approach to understanding her own practice. The questions we collaboratively designed and posed and which she reflected upon in her journals, involved the following: teaching goal (outcome), description of the dramatic play experience (activity), and description of the teacher, her perspective on play and learning (subject), description of the physical environment of the school, furniture and arrangement (tools/props), local and national government involvement for the success of targeted outcome (division of labour), and social information background (community). The following tensions and contradictions are identified, such as conflict between policy, values, and practice; lack of time; parents’ evaluation of children’s play and learning in school; play materials, lack of curriculum development standards for EFL teaching and learning at pre-school level; and teaching approach.

6.2.1 Conflict between policy, values and practice

In CHAT perspective, the subject is the teacher and multiple individuals are the community around the teacher. I present findings about the interrelationships between the teacher’s values and the community around her. I found that the teacher’s perspective and attitude towards children’s play was influenced by the values of the community.

The teacher’s journal demonstrated that her main goal of teaching literacy in a pre-school setting was to develop students’ fluency in reading text L2 (Bahasa Indonesia), with accurate and quick expression. Further to this analysis, I posed questions and asked her to mention the goal of teaching literacy suggested by the national standard. She responded that the national standard advised that teaching literacy aimed at developing the awareness of reading, such as spelling, pronunciation, and words and sentences. The teacher and I discussed it together; we realised that pre-school curriculum with the standard
national policy, which emphasises the goal of literacy at pre-school was to develop readiness for literacy.

Because of using CHAT as a lens of looking at the issue stated by the teacher, I am required to understand the issue in the context. Therefore, I analysed both the teacher’s journal and Indonesian national curriculum standards and found that they clashed with one another. The teacher noted that parents and the school administration expected children to gain an ability to read and write Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia, alongside other skills and abilities in other areas. The teacher noted in her journal: ‘Most parents expect their children to be able to read and write as well as be good at math, especially numeracy, addition, and counting.’ (J.1) The national curriculum, however, called for children to master spelling and handwriting as a part of literacy development (see appendix A). In other words, teaching and learning at the preschool level was intended to focus on developing fluency in reading.

Both the national curriculum and the teacher’s journal indicated the expected outcome of preschool education was successful entry into elementary school, which is based on the attainment of certain skills. The teacher noted in her journal that: Children will be required to pass particular tests of skill in reading, writing, and math.’ (J.1)

Parents expected the preschool to prepare children to pass the elementary school entrance exam. The teacher was very much aware of this expectation and noted in her journal:

Most parents expect their children to pass the test. They might ask teachers to contribute extra hours to teach literacy and math. The more desirable elementary schools have their own tests with required scores. (J.1)

National curriculum guidance document No 1839/C.C2/TU/2009 on the management of preschool and elementary school entrance indicates that there are no literacy requirements to enter school at this level and mathematics is also not required. The document states:
Oleh karena itu, setiap sekolah dasar (SD) wajib menerima peserta didik tanpa melalui tes masuk dan tetap memprioritaskan pada anak-anak yang berusia 7 s.d. 12 tahun dari lingkungan sekitarnya tanpa diskriminasi sesuai daya tampung satuan pendidikan yang bersangkutan.

[For this reason, every elementary school (SD) is required to accept pupils without an entrance test and give priority to children aged 7-12 in the local community without discrimination to the capacity of the school in question.]

To better understand this dilemma, the teacher and I studied the outcomes identified by the government for this level of education.

The document quoted above appears to reflect the practice of requiring aspiring elementary school students to take an entrance exam and states the government’s position on this issue. This suggests the issue is one of national importance; a view held by both the teacher and myself. Nonetheless, it was the case that many local schools had their own requirements that children needed to pass a formal entrance test. The teacher’s journal and my field notes both made reference to the fact that the most desirable elementary schools admitted students on the basis of a test and ignored the government’s ruling that this should not be done.

6.2.2 Lack of play time

Audio recording data of an informal interview between the teacher and the researcher in this initial period of reflection indicated a lack of time allocated to play during the preschool sessions. When asked, the teacher stated that the frequency and duration of play in her classroom amounted to dramatic play taking place once a week for around 30 minutes and at recess (Data IC, 12 Sept, min 23). Analysis of daily lesson plans showed three types of activity: an introductory segment, the main lesson, and a closing segment. The lesson plans show there is no certain time frame for dramatic play. From an informal dialogue, it is identified that the teacher sees dramatic play activity as something she does not need to formally plan and engage the children in. This allowed for 60 minutes of play in a two and one half day educational program (see Appendix B). Although the government policy, in relation to preschool and play, mandates...
learning through play, no given standard of guidance of time-frame is stated that must be assigned to the supervision of free/unstructured play.

### 6.2.3 Parents’ evaluation of children’s play and learning in school

Another issue identified by the teacher in her journal was that parents, and the community in general, tend to view pre-school as a context for formal learning. The teacher wrote: ‘Some parents ask that their children be given homework to do outside of school’. Parents, the school administration and the teachers themselves are driven by fear that students will be unable to enter the more desirable schools when they complete preschool. The teacher wrote: ‘Parents ask to encourage the development of children’s academic skills; to immediately be able to read, write, and do counting. They thought it was shameful if children completed two-year pre-school program (one year-kindergarten and one year-preschool) but there was no outcome’. In other words, the pre-school was considered to fail if children did not read text fluently. ‘Some parents might ask me to give private course of literacy and math in which the teachers get paid to give this type of extra tuition.’

In an attempt to more fully understand the parents’ views, I asked the teacher to explain the reasons parents want their children to do homework at age 5-6. She explained: ‘They (parents) want me to give the children homework to keep them learning outside of school. Otherwise the children will spend all their time playing at home’. She also noted: ‘When the children get too wild, the parents get mad and tell them to stop playing.’ This seems to indicate that many parents felt play was a waste of their children’s time, especially in the very competitive educational environment, and time spent playing could be better used to study and get ahead of other children.

### 6.2.4 Play materials

During the first week of data collection, the researcher documented the classroom context in photographs (Figures 6, 7 and 8). The figures 6, 7 and 8 show that toys and other materials for play were kept in drawers behind teacher’s yellow desk. Figure 1 shows the teacher’s desk and seating for the children. The children stored their bags in a drawer next to where they sat. At the back of the room, there are other drawers which contain a large collection of
picture books where children got access to the books only at selected times. An empty aquarium is located in the right hand corner at the back of the classroom.

![Figure 6: Classroom Layout; Front of the Room](image)

Figure 6 depicts the yellow desk that belongs to teacher, which is placed at the front corner of the room. The red desks are in straight rows facing the teacher’s desk. Children see the faces of their teacher and the back of their peers. Behind the teacher’s yellow desk is a set of drawers. The front green wall was decorated with cartoon characters and some artwork.

![Figure 7. Classroom Layout; Back of the Room](image)
Here are the children’s chairs, painted red, yellow, blue, and green. The back of the room was pink and decorated with a nature theme which was painted by a professional.

![Image of classroom layout](image)

**Figure 8. Classroom Layout; Entrance (Taken From the Front of the Room)**

There is no children’s artwork on display in the classroom. The decoration was prepared by the teacher.

The teacher indicated in her journal that maintenance of play materials was a formal part of her duties. The reason for this was that the children sometimes took toys and materials home with them to use outside of school hours without permission. She wrote:

> We teachers are required to maintain the play materials because the children take them home. We keep them in a drawer, rather than display them around the classroom, because it is our responsibility to keep them in good condition. We have to report on them at the beginning of the school year and again at the end, and the set of items has to be complete.

A discussion with the teacher indicated that the school provides a limited budget for resources that did not extend to replacing lost or damaged toys. The teacher therefore kept the play materials out of sight to reduce the possibility of loss or misplacement as she would be responsible for anything that was missing and would be required to pay for their replacement.
6.2.5 Lack of curriculum development standards for EFL teaching and learning at pre-school level

There are no available curriculum standards that relate to EFL teaching at the preschool level in Indonesia. Nonetheless, the teachers are expected by local community and school management, to teach using English as the language of instruction. The teacher who took part in this study noted this in her journal as follows:

I used my old curriculum from when I taught first at a private preschool. We (teachers) were taught how to teach EFL to children at university. There were no national curriculum guidelines for teaching EFL because it was not a compulsory subject. (J1)

My field notes contained reference to the teacher’s attempts to create her own EFL materials and lesson plans. The national curriculum states that EFL teaching at the preschool level may be carried out through play but does not include detailed guidelines for teaching practices or lesson plans. This was a problem for the teacher because definable standards of what the teacher should do, how, and why, is important for establishing the curriculum’s goals and objectives.

6.2.6 Teaching approach

During the first week of data collection, audio-video recordings, formal interviews, and the teacher’s journal showed the strategies that the teacher employed to teach language. In her journal, the teacher discussed using songs, music, pictures, question and answer activities, storytelling and memorization to support language learning. On the first day of the data collection, I observed the teacher trying to help the children make meaning and develop their vocabulary. Her strategy, as detailed in my research notes, was as follows:

The teacher used a song to teach the children vocabulary related to parts of the body. She started the class by asking the children to clap their hands and said, ‘ayo anak-anak kita nyanyi yuk (Come on, children, let's sing a song). Having gotten their attention and seeing them clap their hands, the teacher told them to stand up and form a circle. She then took a position in between two children. The teacher started singing a song,
The teacher had the children listen to her sing the song and then sing it themselves while making the accompanying gestures.

In her journal, the teacher noted her strategy for using this song which had both an English and a Bahasa Indonesia version. She felt that the lyrics, as well as the gestures that involved touching the parts of the body mentioned in the song, helped the children learn the associated vocabulary in both languages. She also used pictures, cards and posters to support language learning by asking children to read loudly and repeat the words. In conversation, the teacher confirmed that she often used posters to teach the children vocabulary and also question and answer activities. In the videorecording of her using a poster to teach the names of body parts, the children seemed excited and enjoyed taking part in this activity.

The teacher’s journal indicated that she most frequently used drawing as an activity for language teaching. She found that the children loved using coloured pencils and liked to talk about their pictures in Bahasa Indonesia. She felt that drawing them helped the children recall and identify parts of the body. She wrote in her journal:

In this activity, I can get the children to draw parts of the body and then ask them to tell us what is in their Figure.

The teacher also described that she did not prepare scenarios as well as certain play materials for dramatic play activity. She considered that dramatic play was free play which consisted of children running around without teacher guidance or structured objectives for learning and development.
After identifying these issues, the teacher and I some time to summarise the challenges that related to the focus of this study. This allowed us to identify priorities that had to be addressed. We recognized that it would not be possible to address all the issues during the course of this Action Research Project and it was necessary to focus on certain challenges and issues that could be changed. We came to an agreement about which issues to work on and what kinds of outcomes could be expected. These are contained in the table below.

**Table 3. Issues and Challenges Identified in Activity Cycle 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Potential action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dramatic play (free/unstructured play)</td>
<td>• Dramatic play implemented two-three times a week (30 mins a day/per session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implemented once a week/fortnightly at recess (15 mins)</td>
<td>• Setting up opportunities for dramatic play with teacher involved in helping children play and learn in accordance with ZPD concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inadequate teacher guidance in helping children play in accordance with ZPD concept</td>
<td>• Preparing scenarios to develop targeted knowledge about curriculum themes for use in dramatic play activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No scenarios in use (free play consisted of children running around without teacher guidance or structured objectives for learning and development).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The teacher and I agreed that dramatic play should include both teacher-guided activities and self-directed play. This guided play would replace the unstructured play that took place at recess. The plan we developed would make use of the following strategies:

a. Creating an environment for dramatic play three times a week for two months.

b. Incorporating ‘about school’ curriculum theme into dramatic play activities.

c. Creating a learning environment which would allow children to use their imagination and creativity as well as active language for communication through designing dramatic play scenarios. At this cycle 1 stage, the theme proposed was ‘to know about your school.’

In her journal, the teacher noted her awareness of the need to improve play-based activities. She wrote:

I think I need to improve the learning environment to allow the children to play and have fun while learning. (J 1)

Before observing the class, I was given a lesson plan. It stated that the objective of the learning process was to help the children learn, understand and use greetings in English through dramatic play. As noted in the management plan, the teacher was to set up a dramatic play scenario which addressed the curriculum theme of Knowing about School and involved teachers and children as the main participants. In informal discussion prior to the implementation of this activity, the teacher stated that she felt no special materials would be needed for this scenario because the children would be playing the role of students and teacher; the scenario related to the environment that already existed in the classroom. This activity ran as described in the following excerpt from teacher journal:
It is time for play for three boys and seven girls. Some of the children are running around, while others have not yet arrived. The children who are present are all excited. The teacher is busy preparing the props. The teacher then announces that today the class is going to play ‘teacher and student’. ‘Who will be the teacher?, the teacher asks. Several children raise their hand while others are still running around. The teacher tells them to take their seats. The children run to sit down and wait for further instructions. The teacher then picks a girl to be the teacher. She then prompts the girl to answer a question: ‘If you are the teacher, what will you do and say to the students?’

The girl looks a bit confused, so the teacher adds, ‘Say good morning, ayo ulangi [Repeat it].’

The girl responds to the teacher’s instruction to say good morning.

The teacher then says, ‘Good morning, kids.’

Some children respond, ‘Good morning teacher’, while others say nothing.

The teacher explains, ‘Kalau ‘teacher’ nya bilang ‘good morning’ jawabnya apa, anak-anak? [If your teacher says ‘good morning, what should you say?]’
The children say, ‘Good morning, Teacher.’ In harmony.

Figure 9 was obtained from a video recording of the session and it shows the teacher helping a student to play the role of teacher. The child was instructed to repeat the teacher’s sentences to greet her classmates in English (Good morning; how are you, children?) and express simple responses (very good, teacher). The child playing ‘the teacher’ repeated whole sentences as follows:

Teacher: Say good morning.

Child: Say good morning (follows teacher’s lip movement with her eyes)

As noted above, the teacher helped the children learn new words through drills and repetition. As the result of this intervention, the children did repeat the word ‘say good morning’ as well. During the session, the teacher realised that the children appeared to memorise and repeat words without focussing upon meaning making. She wrote; ‘I think children simply repeated my words and expression in English without knowing what it is.’ Children responded to the teacher’s instruction by standing up, for example, when directed or turning in a specific direction.

At the start of Activity Cycle 1, I asked the teacher to look at the recording and consider the children’s expressions. She was then asked to answer some questions in her reflective journal that required she consider what aspects of the activity were not working as intended. She was also encouraged to note the things that did work but could use some interventions on as well as her reasons for identifying these issues. She was also urged to think about whether the dramatic play activity was fun for the children. Her responses would be central to planning for the next cycle. The teacher reflected as follows:

**How do you feel about your class today?**

*I was not happy with my class today. The children did not smile much and didn’t seem happy during dramatic play. I feel they did not enjoy it very much.*
What was not working? Why?

After watching the video of my class, I feel the children did not know how to play the role of student and teacher. In my view, children don’t know much about school and what teachers and students do in the classroom because this is the first week of the school year and their first experience with school activities.

What worked reasonably well but needed intervention on and what worked very well?

The children followed directions and learned some new words and sentences such as a greeting in English. Some of the children were able to respond.

I think I need to make dramatic play more fun and model how to play the role of student.

Her journal entry shows that the teacher realized the activity that took place in Activity Cycle 1 was not playful learning, and that the children did not enjoy it. She was not happy with this first session of dramatic play and hoped to improve on it in Activity Cycle 2, specifically to develop the teacher role and add some props for the children to use.

6.3 Activity Cycle 2

The teacher and I planned Activity Cycle 2 over the course of a week. It was hoped that dramatic play could be introduced two or three times a week, but this turned out to be impossible due to unexpected circumstances; the teacher was absent from school for attending a local workshops and training. The second cycle took place a week after the first because the teacher was away for an out-of-school program. Based on the experience of Activity Cycle 1, it was apparent that the children would need adult guidance to know how to play a role and what kinds of things they could do as part of this scenario. The teacher felt she would like to have the children develop their own understanding of the role of teacher and student. She planned to model the things a teacher could do and say and then ask a student to repeat those actions. I suggested she might also model student behaviour for the children by sitting in one of the children’s chairs and pretending to be a student. The teacher agreed that she could develop her part in dramatic play by taking part in this way.
The teacher was then asked to write a lesson plan for Activity Cycle 2. The lesson was to take 30 minutes and would consist of dramatic play on the theme of Knowing about School. Her lesson plan was as follows:

**Table 4. Teacher’s Lesson Plan for Activity Cycle 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson plan for Activity Cycle 2 Written by the Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning objective of dramatic play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources/materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area/theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teaching and learning role/input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In her lesson plan, the teacher recognized that she had a part to play in dramatic play and also would need to provide props for the children. She noted that the child who was to play the teacher could use model fruit to practice vocabulary items. Looking at her lesson plan, I realized the outcomes were the same as in Activity Cycle 1, but I suggested that the aim of Activity Cycle 2 could be to help the children learn to play, rather than focus on teaching them English. The teacher agreed that learning English vocabulary could be postponed until the children were able to take part in dramatic play in a natural, active, playful and fun way. For this reason, we decided that the learning objective in Activity Cycle 2 would be to help the children engage in and enjoy dramatic play.

I made audio and video recordings of dramatic play in Activity Cycle 2. There was no change in preparing the physical learning environment involving managing seats from Activity Cycle 1 and Activity Cycle 2. Children sat in two different sets of chairs (see Figure 10 below). Observations in this pre-school
indicated that children normally sat in rows at desks and listened to the teacher speaking at the front of the room. The desks were arranged to leave aisle space between them. I tried to ask about the rationale for this type of seating arrangement in informal discussion with the teacher. She suggested that this was a management strategy aimed at instilling discipline and preparing them for the context of formal schooling.

The teacher began the class by announcing that the class was going to have fun in dramatic play as they did the week before. The video recording of the class indicated there were several major changes that occurred in Activity Cycle 2: the teacher scaffolded the children to learn the roles they were to play; the teacher took part by playing a student; and children were allowed to volunteer to play the teacher, rather than be selected to do so as before.

Figure 10: Classroom Layout in Activity Cycle 2

The teacher began the class by announcing that the class was going to have fun in dramatic play as they did the week before. The video recording of the class indicated there were several major changes that occurred in Activity Cycle 2: the teacher scaffolded the children to learn the roles they were to play; the teacher took part by playing a student; and children were allowed to volunteer to play the teacher, rather than be selected to do so as before.
Figure 11. The teacher gave children a chance to volunteer
to play a role

As Figure 11 demonstrates, three children wanted to play a role when given the
opportunity.

The teacher also took part in dramatic play in Activity Cycle 2 by
playing a student, instead of giving directions as she had in Activity Cycle 1
(Figure 11). This time, she imitated the children’s behaviour and even tried to
speak in a child’s voice.
Figure 12 shows that, when the teacher took part in dramatic play by acting like a student, the children observed her pretending, and most of them still repeated what she said. They tended to watch their real teacher, rather than the child who was playing the role of teacher. Sometimes the teacher said the words and sentences they were supposed to use in responding to the teacher’s questions. A child acted as teacher and began using English vocabularies.

In this cycle, the teacher also introduced props. These consisted of models of fruits (toy fruits), as noted in her lesson plan. The aim of this was to teach various vocabulary items. In this cycle, the child playing the role of teacher told her classmates to say the name of the fruit she took out of a bowl. Some of the children, along with their teacher (pretending to be a student), called out the names of the fruit. Interestingly, a number of different languages were used.

Observation of and reflection on Activity Cycle 2 took place between the teacher and I on the same day over coffee after school. The teacher was enthusiastic about the changes she had made and was willing to try something new the next day. She felt the class had had more fun than in Activity Cycle 1.
She believed her participation in the dramatic play activity was a positive influence on the children. In her journal, she wrote:

* I think my involvement helped direct the children’s actions and got them to engage in the activity.*

The teacher and I developed a set of reflective questions based on the Activity Cycle 2 observations. These questions were designed to allow the teacher to gain more insight into her own practice and determine what worked well, what still needed intervention and what would be ideal in the context she worked in. Her responses to these questions were as follows:

**Reflections on Activity Cycle 2**

- **What worked well in Activity Cycle 2? What areas need improvement? Why?**
  *In my view, my involvement in the dramatic play experience by playing the role of student helped the children engage in the scenario. I observed the children watching how I acted, and they seemed so excited because normally they see me as the teacher standing at the front of the class.*

- **How can I provide opportunities for the children to extend their engagement in the play scenarios?**
  *I will further develop the scenarios. For example, I could lead children to act out what would happen if one child comes late and encourage them to engage in conversation with the child playing the teacher.*

- **What can I do to help children interact with others through dramatic play?**
  *I plan to have the children pretend to ask questions and ask for help from the child playing the teacher so that they interact with each other.*

- **What props can I use to encourage the children to engage more in voluntary, natural, and fun dramatic play?**
  *I think I need to improve the props. I will provide a poster of fruit to use in dramatic play. We will sing a song about fruit, and I will have children use the poster as a vehicle for learning new vocabulary.*

These reflections in her journal suggested that the teacher saw the value of dramatic play and planned to further expand the activity to offer more variation and wider experience to the children.
In conversation, she stated that she felt positive and excited about further improving her practice in Activity Cycle 3. She said:

*I feel certain I will be able to help the children develop their language through dramatic play. I can be a role model in the activity and take part in the scenario.*

Her modified plan for Activity Cycle 3 contained three related elements. They were:

4. To improve the props
5. To improve the dialogue and scenario
6. To increase teacher engagement in the dramatic play activity.

**6.4 Activity Cycle 3**

In Activity Cycle 3, the teacher again changed her practice based on her reflections on Activity Cycle 2. As mentioned above, she felt she still needed to improve three aspects of her practice: better props; a more developed scenario with target dialogue; and her own participation in the scenario. Activity Cycle 3 took place in the third week of data collection. The researcher was again present in the classroom and recorded the dramatic play activity using both video and audio devices. The activities of Activity Cycle 3 included the following (based on the researcher’s notes):

Nisa (aged 6) stood in front of class pretending to be a teacher. She was quiet and seemed to be waiting for the teacher’s directions. The teacher sat on one of student chairs and pretended to be a child. The teacher asked two girls to pretend to come late to school. She explained to them what to do in Indonesian (their second language) which included the story they were to act out (the plot of the scenario) and also what to say (the dialogue). The two girls left the room and stood next to door. One of them knocked the door and they came into the classroom.

The teacher thought children had not followed her directions and sent the two girls out to try again. Communication between teacher and children
was commenced in Bahasa Indonesia. The teacher told the girls to use English upon entering the classroom, such as ‘good morning’. They attempted the scenario three times, pretending to be late; going out and knocking on the door, and entering the room while greeting friends, ‘good morning’. Nisa who was playing the teacher repeated what the teacher told her to say. The other two girls finally returned to their seats. The teacher asked Nisa to get a poster from the front desk and told her what to do and say about it.

Figure 13. Dramatic play in Activity Cycle 3

Later on that day, after school, I watched the video of the class with the teacher. Again, the teacher felt that the children did not have fun. From the video, she felt they needed a clearer script to play the role of teacher, and she would have to prepare this in advance so they knew what to say and do. I suggested that the children did not necessarily need a script. Instead, they could benefit from a learning environment that encouraged them to use their imagination. I reminded her of the first 10 minutes of the video where the children were unsure how to act and she had them redo the scene. She agreed that they had not been able to use their imagination and that they were repeating
dialogue she told them, rather than developing their own characters, roles, and rules for play. I then suggested she try to further develop reflective questions in her journal that would allow her to think about what dramatic play should involve. She determined that the significant questions based on Activity Cycle 3 included:

- Did the children use their imagination in play?
- Did the children change their attitudes, behaviour and emotions on their own during play?
- Did children modify the story on their own?
- Did children extend or adopt new props in dramatic play?

The teacher hoped to think about these questions and note her responses over the course of the next week. She felt she needed to watch the video again and think about it herself. She suggested that she needed to read more about dramatic play and its aims and was especially concerned about her understanding of the whole concept. I lent her a few books in translation that related to the concept of dramatic play and the ways it could be developed in the classroom.

In the fourth week of data collection, the teacher and I met to discuss her journal and plan for Activity Cycle 4. She had further developed her ideas since Activity Cycle 3, and the focus of her reflection was role play, use of props/play materials, pretending/make-believe, social interaction, and communication.

**Role play**

She found that in Activity Cycle 3, the children did not discuss and negotiate their roles in the scenario, nor did they manipulate the setting or props. They tended to imitate the teacher’s actions but did not add their own interpretation based on their imagination.

The teacher wrote in her journal:

*Throughout Activity Cycle 3 I saw myself as the initiator of dramatic play and had to prompt the children to develop dialogue. However, I now realise that I played more of a role in directing them to develop the plot of dramatic play than they did.*
I need to work on how to help the children develop their imagination and create roles, characters, and settings of their own.

This response indicates that the teacher realized she still needed to think about her own role in dramatic play and the ways in which it could encourage the children to use their own initiative.

**Use of props/play materials**

In her journal, the teacher noted that the children were not using their imagination to use the props in new ways of their own. She wrote:

*The children used the props the way I told them to. I did not see them use their imagination to use the props provided. From the beginning to the end of play, I noticed children used the props the way they would in real life.*

The teacher seemed to realize that she had to find a way to encourage the student to take the initiative in using the props in new and creative ways that they had not considered before.

**Pretending/make-believe**

The teacher noted that the children did not seem to be pretending. Instead, they were following instructions to act out what they felt was a predetermined scenario. She wrote:

*The children seemed to memorise the dialogue and act out the script.*

**Social interaction**

The teacher noted that the children remained focused on her and her directions, rather than interacting among themselves.
Communication

The teacher observed that the children did not communicate spontaneously with each other during the activity. In her journal, however, the teacher recorded her perception that teacher-directed learning was still required:

\[
\text{When I thought about integrating play into the curriculum for my class, I was confronted by the challenge of reaching literacy and math learning outcomes. I felt the pressure reaching these levels of achievement meant that play opportunities had to be a lower priority so we tended to create a teacher directed learning context.}
\]

The teacher remained very much aware of the difficult task of implementing dramatic play in her class. This perception was similar to what she recorded at the beginning of the study and continued to represent a considerable challenge.

6.5 Activity Cycle 4

The changes implemented up to this point did not address the second goal of this study, namely to use dramatic play for teaching and learning a foreign language, because the teacher and researcher had agreed to improve the quality of dramatic play before attempting further innovation. As this was a collaborative Action Research Project, discussion of the teacher’s journal entries, lesson plans and guided readings were integral to the planning and implementation of the study. In the fourth week of data collection, we evaluated the changes that had been made over the previous three activities cycles, reassessed their impact and discussed whether they had contributed to the intended outcomes. This summing up was necessary to develop a more effective plan for Activity Cycle 4.

My field notes indicate that four major changes had been implemented over the first three Activity Cycles of the project. First, the frequency of dramatic play had been increased from once a week or once every two weeks to once or twice a week for 30 minutes each time. However, this had not always run smoothly. Despite the teacher’s agreement to this course of action, there was no extra time set up for dramatic play, it was only possible to have the activity once a week. The teacher argued that she had commitment to another
responsibility, for example tutoring program outside of school. She appeared to have a very rigid plan with no room to add anything in the way of extra time. Second, during the Activity Cycle 1, the children had not been given enough props to support the activity. This was changed in Activity Cycles 2 and 3. Third, the teaching strategy had been enhanced. Where, at the beginning, the children had been instructed and then made to memorize expressions and imitate the teacher, in later Activity Cycles, they were encouraged to express their own ideas and use their imagination in the dramatic play. Finally, the teacher began to take part in the activity and play a role along with the children, rather than act as an instructor.

My view of the teacher’s role in dramatic play was somewhat different than the teacher’s initial idea. I explained to her that I felt the teacher should not expect that the children would follow a set plot and dialogue in dramatic play but should use their imagination and creativity to communicate spontaneously. My viewing of the video recordings suggested that the teacher was still directing the children and telling them what to say and do. They imitated her speech and actions, but the children did not use their out-of-school experiences as a source for dramatic play. They seemed to be using the memorized dialogue rather than communicating spontaneously or engaging in fantasy play. I felt this was significant and should be addressed. For this reason, I explained some of the theory behind dramatic play to the teacher as a way of emphasizing the relevance of dramatic play in the preschool context.

We then informally discussed some of the theory relating to the management of dramatic play. I felt that the teacher’s journal entries reflected a set idea that dramatic play should involve the children acting out predetermined scripts. I suggested she read some of the work on dramatic play that explained the need to encourage imagination, fantasy, and engagement in play. We discussed the ideas of Vygotsky (1986), Piaget (1962) and Elkonin (1977;1978) as well as more current views on the management of dramatic play by Sims (2010), Edwards and Fleer (2010). Everything we looked at stressed the importance of children using their own imagination to construct social meaning in their play, develop an ability to self-regulate, and engage in active communication. The teacher responded positively and was excited by the
possibility of expanding her conceptualization of dramatic play to include new approaches.

After we discussed the issues that had arisen during Activity Cycle 3 and the potential approaches to addressing them, the teacher modified her plan for use in Activity Cycle 4. She felt she needed to change the nature of her actions because the children did not seem to be engaging in playful learning during her planned dramatic play sessions. They tended to be focused on her instructions. She had also recognized they were not using their imagination or communicating spontaneously with each other. They also did not seem interested in developing their own plots for the activity. She decided it might be useful to have two different dramatic play locations, each with its own props.

Her modified design for learning was as follows:

Table 5. Teacher’s Plan for Activity Cycle 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan for Play</th>
<th>Support for Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Change the physical and/or social environment</td>
<td>1. Give children a choice of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Set up two centres of play instead of one</td>
<td>2. Support the children’s choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide playful experience which will enhance children’s imagination and creativity</td>
<td>3. Help the children develop the skills of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide props/materials</td>
<td>4. Provide a model of play behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Set up play centres</td>
<td>5. Provide a story prior to dramatic play using props/materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Help children engage in play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Provide a comfortable and safe learning environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher suggested that the dramatic play could involve various scenarios. She wrote:
I think the children would like to cook. In West Sumatra, we love cooking and eating. And they might also like to play doctor’s office.

She felt that these two scenarios would appeal to the children but would require some additional props that the school did not have. On the day the new activity was to take place, she was very excited to be coming to class with new props and new ideas. The following is an excerpt from the beginning of Activity Cycle 4:

The desks were used as the dramatic play area. The children seemed excited when they saw the teacher come into the classroom with a baby doll and other nursery items. The teacher placed the props on the desk, which included cooking utensils and the nursery items. Some of the children who had been running around outside rushed into class when they saw the props. Even those of the children who were quite shy seemed intrigued by the new materials. The teacher began the class by saying to the children: ‘If you want to play a doctor, you can do that today. I think all of you like to help Mother cook at home, so let’s cook your favourite meal now.

The teacher suggested ways the children could play with the props. She encouraged them to use them creatively.
Figure 14. Preparing for Activity Cycle 4 Dramatic Play

As shown in Figure 14, the teacher got the children started by telling them a story that set the scene for dramatic play. She explained to them that the nursery was for sick children who had to come to the hospital. She also told them that the baby (doll) might be crying and needed to be cuddled. The children seemed eager to extend the story and began to respond as follows:

Child A: My mother always takes my baby sister to the doctor when if she gets sick.

Child B: I do not like to go to the dentist. It was a bad experience.

Child C: I want to be a doctor.

The video of the class showed that most of the children were quite involved in the activity when the teacher got them started with a scenario that offered many opportunities for dramatic play and expansion of what they had been told.
Figure 15. The Children Began Negotiating with Each Other in Dramatic Play in Activity Cycle 4

Figure 15. shows the children beginning to negotiate roles and characters as part of the dramatic play in Cycle 4. For example, when the teacher asked the group who was going to be the father of the pretend family, one girl pointed to a male classmate and said, ‘He is the father.’

In the other play area, the children were acting out being a doctor and patient. She says in single language, *Bahasa Indonesia*; ‘saya dokternya, jangan takut. ayo ahh (I am your doctor, stay calm, now say ah)’
One of the girls played the role of a doctor and examined the patients (the other children in her class). The teacher also took part in this scenario and played the part of a sick person waiting to see the doctor. She observed the children from this position and gave them directions when she felt they needed it. In the other play area, some girls were pretending to cook and were making cookies using playdough. When their baking was done, they placed the pretend cookies on the table and told the other children that dinner was ready.

Observation and reflection of Activity Cycle 4 indicated to the teacher and researcher that the children were beginning to use their imagination and extend the story without specific instructions from the teacher. The teacher felt this was an indication of playful activity. In her journal, she wrote that the children were beginning to negotiate roles and the rules for play, were interacting more spontaneously with each other, and communicating through gestures, language, and symbols. She felt sure she would be able to successfully encourage them to develop the skills of play.

While we were sharing our ideas about ways to improve, I noted that there were three boys in the class who did not take part in the play scenarios.
Looking back over the video record, three of the four boys in the class did not take part in the dramatic play in Activity Cycle 4. This was of great interest to the teacher and researcher. The teacher felt she should have noticed that not all of the children were participating in play. She also commented that two of the boys were shy, which might have had something to do with their behaviour. She resolved that, in the future, she would make an effort to create a setting that encouraged shyer children to participate.

As a result, the less outgoing children became the focus of Activity Cycle 4. The teacher was anxious to figure out why they were not participating. In informal discussion, the teacher explained that the boys may not have been interested in scenarios that were centred on activities commonly considered feminine in their community, such as cooking and enacting nursery stories. I countered by saying that both of these activities could be engaged in by boys. The teacher felt, however, that cooking in West Sumatra was viewed as a women’s activity. In her journal, the teacher wrote that she felt the boys might have learned at home that cooking was a female activity, which she thought reflected a prevailing social norm. She noted in her journal:
I think the girls are more likely to play dress up, cooking, and nursery. At home, only women prepare the food. In my view, the boys will prefer to play with more masculine toys, instead of cooking.

This reflection is interesting in that it shows the relationship between the subject and community. In this respect, the teacher’s awareness and interpretation of social norms and her perception that it was important to conform to them. She associated certain props with a specific gender and believed the children were making this same assumption. This relates to the sociocultural context of the study and will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Nonetheless, I was surprised by this gender stereotyping on the part of the teacher and said that I felt she could act to counter any gender bias that emerged during play. In other words, I felt she could positively affect the children’s perception of gender by trying to free them of stereotyping. She agreed but still planned to provide more traditionally male props.

6.6 Activity Cycle 5

The teacher and I worked to develop Activity Cycle 5 based on the observations and reflections made in Activity Cycle 4. The two scenarios had been effective in encouraging the children to use their imagination and creativity in play and had also made them noticeably more enthusiastic about the activity. Nonetheless, some of the boys were reluctant to take part. It seemed important to try to adjust the situation to make it more attractive to the shyer children.

Addressing the needs of shy children was considered important at this preschool level so the teacher made a concerted effort to set up an opportunity for dramatic play that would allow the less outgoing children to take part. In her journal, the teacher noted some of her strategies for dealing with these shyer children:

I will try to build relationships, trust, and a comfortable feeling with the shy children by spending extra time involving them in dramatic play. I might ask them what they are doing and engage in simple conversation with them. I can invite other children to interact with the shyer ones as well.
The teacher felt certain the shy children just needed her encouragement to become involved in play. She continued in her journal:

*I do not agree with labelling some children ‘shy’. They are nice children and active, but they sometimes do not know how to interact with others or react to other people’s actions. Sometimes aggressive children make others withdraw. They need me to help them interact.*

The teacher was positive and enthusiastic about her plan for Activity Cycle 5. She designed two more scenarios for the cycle and planned to implement them over three consecutive days for 30 minutes a day. Her lessons plan for Activity Cycle 5 was as follows:

### Table 6. Teacher’s Plan for Activity Cycle 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan for Play</th>
<th>Support for Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Change the physical and/or social environment</td>
<td>1. Help withdrawn children become involved in dramatic play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Set up four centres of play instead (nursery, cooking, selling juice; building)</td>
<td>2. Spend extra time involving shy children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provide playful experience which enhances children’s imagination and creativity</td>
<td>3. Give children a choice of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Set up four play centres</td>
<td>5. Help children develop skills of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Provide a model of play behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Provide a story prior to dramatic play using props/materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I recorded the dramatic play in Activity Cycle 5 as in the previous Activity Cycles. This time, four different play centres were available to the children, which required that the classroom be rearranged. The desks and chairs were moved to create four areas, one each for a nursery, cooking, a shop selling juice, and for building. Space was left for children to move between the areas, and appropriate props were left on the desks to facilitate play in each location as the following Figure 18 and 19.

The area of doctor’s office was placed in front of the classroom.

| 8. Help children engage in play |
| 9. Provide a comfortable and safe learning environment |

![Children engaged in four different activity in the Activity Cycle 5](image18.png)

**Figure 18. Children engaged in four different activity in the Activity Cycle 5**
Play in this Activity Cycle 5 took the following form:

In a doctor’s office, Nisa was pretending to be a doctor and examined a patient using a stethoscope. Lily was making notes on a piece of paper. ‘Here is your prescription,’ she said. ‘You should take one pill in the morning and another pill at night after eating.’ (the spoken language translated from Bahasa Indonesia)

At the building area, Anton developed and stacked a few blocks up. When his teacher came and approach him, ‘what are you building?’ (responding in Bahasa Indonesia). He responded in Bahasa Indonesia, ‘I make hospital’. In the building area, Anton was playing with blocks. When the teacher approached and asked, ‘What are you building? (in Bahasa Indonesia), Anton responded, ‘I am making a hospital (responding in Bahasa Indonesia).’

In the cooking area, Andien was pretending to cook. She placed the food on the small table. Another girl pretended to eat, saying, ‘Yummy! I love it.’
In the area set up as a juice stall, Anita told some of the other children she was selling juice. Dinda asked, ‘What kind of juice is that?’ Anita said, ‘I have banana juice.’ She showed the other girls a model banana. She added, ‘I have pineapple and strawberry.’ Anita then put some of the fruit models into a jar and pretended it was a blender. Dinda, the customer, waited patiently for the juice to be ready. When it as served, she handed over the money. (The spoken language translated from Bahasa Indonesia)

This plan for Activity Cycle 5 was implemented on three days in a single week for 30 minutes per day. The teacher and researcher met to discuss the cycle after the third day. This was different from the previous cycles where we met to discuss our observations and reflections after school. This time, however, the teacher felt it would be more effective to try the modified plan for a few days and the reflection on the outcomes at the end. The teacher’s reflections on Activity Cycle 5 were as follows:

What worked well in Activity Cycle 5? What areas need improvement? Why?

I was so happy that most of the children were involved in the dramatic play. They looked very happy. I think the scenarios provided succeeded in getting the children involved, developed their imagination, and helped them communicate with each other. I observed the children extending the story on their own, for example, when Dinda bought juice from Anita, she pretended to give her money. I did not instruct the girls to extend the scenario in this way. They did it on their own.

- How can I provide opportunities for the children to extend their engagement in the play scenarios?

I will develop more scenarios so the children have more options to play. We will really have fun.
• What can I do to help the children interact with other through dramatic play?

By designing five dramatic scenarios: nursery, builder, zoo, cooking, selling juice, and sports, I will help the children engage in all the different dramatic play activities. I will encourage them to create their own stories as well.

• What dramatic play props can I use to get more of the children engaged in voluntary, natural, and fun dramatic play?

I will provide more space and materials for dramatic play, such as a nursery kit, cooking set, blocks, and stuffed animals.

The Figures 18 and 19 taken of dramatic play indicate that much of this activity did not occur in the areas set up for it. For this reason, I suggested to the teacher that she consider rearranging the physical layout of the classroom. In earlier cycles, the children played nursery and cooking on their desks. This allowed them to face each other, which was a change from facing the teacher at the front of the room, but it seemed they might benefit more from playing on the floor. The teacher agreed with this suggestion and was planning to think about getting carpeting for the classroom. At least, she decided a rug could be provided as a place for the children to engage in dramatic play where more space would be available.

6.7 Activity Cycle 6

Activity Cycle 6 took place in the seventh week of data collection. The previous cycles had focused on improving the experience of dramatic play for the children. In this cycle, the focus was both improving the quality of dramatic play and introducing English as a foreign language. Our reflections and observations indicated that the teacher had made successful improvements, and the children were beginning to use their imagination and creativity to engage and communicate on their own. The teacher noted in her journal her desire to link dramatic play with EFL learning. She wrote:
I now feel more comfortable and confident in helping the children to use English in their dramatic play.

I had used some English words in previous cycles and I am now sure that I will be able to develop a process where dramatic play can be used to develop the children’s awareness of the English language.

I am engaged in their play activities to observe, listen, and help them extend their learning and play experience.

When we met, the teacher explained that she was feeling more confident about her ability to manage dramatic play activities than she had in Activity Cycle 1. She emphasized that she had begun using English in the previous Activity Cycles. She now felt ready to move to the next stage of the project in which the aim of helping children develop English vocabularies and simple expression through dramatic play could be addressed.

In designing the activities for Activity Cycle 6, we were able to apply our understanding of various theories about the way children learn language. We discussed a number of these theories, ranging from the classic views in the field to more current perspectives. Our aim was to link this theoretical knowledge to our practice to try to take advantage of the opportunities made possible through dramatic play.

For example, we noted there are two separate perspectives on the use of the target language as the language of instruction. One view holds that it is best that the target language not be used as the language of instruction but to allow code switching to the target language as appropriate (Haliza, 2012). Code-switching is the use of mixed languages for communication. The teacher and researcher both agreed in principle that the children should be exposed to English as much as possible in the context of dramatic play because language learners are generally exposed to more use of the target language than the children in this study. This was the case in Haliza’s (2012) study in Malaysia. Because English is an official language in that country (it is not in Indonesia), learners were able to see the language in use outside of the school context. The teacher in this study made a number of points about the use of English based on her experience and perspective. She explained some points in her journal:
I think the use of both the children’s language and the target language in teaching and learning helps the children understand the use of words associated with a given context.

I think the children are already familiar with code-switching because they use their native language at home and the national language in school.

I do not think children will enjoy the dramatic play experience if they have to use a single target language.

The teacher also felt the obligation of the use of single target language might negatively affect her ability to teach effectively. She wrote:

I will not feel confident if I have to use a single target language in dramatic play.

I know that English is not used as the language of instruction, even at university level. For example, a lecturer in the English Department does not lecture only in the target language. He or she switches between English and the national language as needed.

Based on these reflections, we agreed to use a code-switching strategy in introducing English vocabulary and basic expressions into the dramatic play scenarios. In Activity Cycle 6, we hoped to test the effectiveness of code-switching in dramatic play. We were curious about the impact of using multiple languages in the classroom context, especially at this level of education.

The dramatic play activities in Activity Cycle 6 took place over three days in one week for 30 minutes per day. The focus of this cycle was to give the children an awareness of the English language and introduce them to some basic terms and phrases. Our observations, therefore, focused on the teacher’s code-
switching behaviour and her strategies for using various language input in the context of dramatic play.

At Activity Cycle 6, the teacher suggested that she developed the learning environment by providing children more scenarios than cycle 5. At this moment, the teacher thought she could optimally use actual props/materials, animal toys and bowling toys. In her journal, she wrote;

*I think I can develop two more different scenarios. We have animal toys and they can be used for ‘Zoo’ scenario. I believe children love visiting the zoo and act out as either visitor or zoo keeper.*

*I also have bowling toys in class so I use them for a bowling centre. I think children can learn colours (in English) while playing bowling.*

This Activity Cycle 6 involved six different play scenarios: nursery, cooking, selling juice, and, zoo, bowling, and builder. At this cycle, the teacher provided some carpet for some areas of the play room. During informal discussion, I suggested to the teacher that the classroom could be provided with carpet in some corner to allow children to have more space and actively explore play experience at fullest. She agreed with my suggestion and provided carpet as described in Figure 20.

The Figure 20 below illustrates the new learning environment at Activity Cycle 6, in particular classroom design which used carpet at the back of the classroom. A baby’s cot was placed at the corner. It was expected that the children might play with a doll as the baby. Balls in baskets and toy fruit were placed at the carpet floor. An old broken computer was placed next to baby cot.
From recorded data, it is clearly illustrated that children participated in different series of dramatic play experiences. They chose dramatic play props and themes that match their interests. There were two girls enjoyed making fruit juice using toy fruit. One of them acted out shaking and using a bowl as a pretend blender (shown in Figure 21). In the zoo area (as shown in Figure 22), a boy enjoyed setting up a cage for his animals. He pretended to be the zoo keeper. He fed his animals and sometimes had a walk with the toy animals. At the other corner, a girl pretended to be a nurse handing out patients’ reports to her doctor. In meantime, a girl acted out as a patient was holding her baby. Figure 24 shows children enjoying exploring different themes of dramatic play; they moved from one dramatic play centre to another.
Figure 21. Children pretended to make fruit juice in Activity Cycle 6.

Figure 22. Children pretended to be zoo keeper and look after animals in Activity Cycle 6.
As stated at the beginning of this Activity Cycle 6, the teacher and I would focus on observing language use experience during dramatic play activity. This cycle 6 aimed at developing children’s awareness of English words and simple
expression; such as colours, numbers, fruits, and animals. The teacher had agreed to use combination of languages during communication. In other words, the teacher picked up and integrated some English vocabularies and simple expression in her language during communication with children.

For example, as shown in Figure 21, the teacher engaged in ‘making fruit juice’ play experience and acted out as a customer. She ordered a glass of juice. While picking up a papaya from a basket, she said, ’bisa saya pesan papaya juice’nya?’. The teacher used Bahasa Indonesia and picked one English word, papaya. Expressing herself in a variety of languages appeared to help children make meaning of the object and the new word expressed.

It was very interesting when a girl gave a response by using three different languages in her sentences, ’Ibuknya nio papaya’. Papaya refers to papaya (in Bahasa Indonesia), nio refers to wants (in Minang/Native language), and Ibuknya (in Bahasa Indonesia) means the teacher. This situation illustrates that through the use of combination of languages, children are able to make meaning of the object, papaya. The girls kept on enjoying their experience selling fruit juice. I observed children were able to integrate English words into a combination of two different languages in their interaction with other peers as described in the dialogue below:

The teacher: what juice do you like?

Tika: ndak juice strawberry do. (It is not strawberry juice)

Helga: juice apa? (so what juice)

Tika: juice anggur (grape juice)

The teacher: grape?

Tika: ndak pake grape do. (I don’t want use grape)

During interaction, the teacher emphasised the word grape and picked the pretend grapes. A girl, Tika responded using Minang and Bahasa Indonesia, along with integrating the English word in her sentence: ‘ndak pake grape do’ (I don’t want use grape)
Figure 22 illustrates a boy playing with a zoo animal. The teacher helped him to design his own zoo. The boy created a cage and placed different animals in one cage. The teacher used interactive and dialogic questioning, in this moment she used a variety of languages, Bahasa Indonesia and English. She asked the boy, ‘what is this?’ She then switched her language from English into Bahasa Indonesia, ‘apa ini Hakka?’. Hakka gave a response, ‘harimau’(tiger). To respond to his answer, the teacher combined her language, she said, ‘oh.. ini (this is) Tiger. Apa ini nak (what is this dear)?’ Hakka then responded, ‘Tiger.’

Hakka left his zoo and played at doctor’s office centre. The teacher invited another boy to engage in the Zoo play centre:

The teacher: oo ada zoo ya? dimana zoo? zoomya disini coba lihat
(Wow.there is a zoo here.Where is the zoo? Look, it’s here! )

At this moment, the teacher encouraged other peers to engage in the zoo scenario. Along with it, she picked the word, zoo and integrated it into her language, Bahasa Indonesia.

The teacher:Animal-nya apa apa aja? Oo Nicholas ada animal disini Nicholas.(tell me what animal you have, oooh, let’s come closer here, Nicholas. There is an animal here)

Nicholas did not give any verbal response, he enjoyed managing his zoo. But his peer gave a verbal response in Bahasa Indonesia:

Farid: ada  gajah..ada  gajah..(there is a an elephant ..there is an elephant)

The girl repeated her sentence twice. The teacher then gave a response by inserting the word ‘elephant’ in her sentence:

The teacher: iya ada  elephant.(yes you are right, there is an elephant)
The teacher: Nicholas sini nak sayang. cholas.?
The teacher: ini apa ini? (what is this?)
Tika : tiger
The teacher: harimau ya? tiger.(this is a tiger isn’t it? A tiger)
The teacher: ini  lion.(this is a lion)
Tika : singa (a tiger?)
Teacher : ini? elephant.(how about this? elephant)
Nicholas : gajah.
At this moment the teacher helped children develop vocabularies relating to animals using the zoo scenario experience. Some girls who attended the scenario responded and mentioned words in Bahasa Indonesia, but the teacher repeatedly mixed and used English and Bahasa Indonesia in order to help them make meaning of an object with a variety of languages.

After school, we returned to the discussion of reflection and observation. There were three points of reflection in this cycle 6. First, the teacher mentioned that she found a boy who did not engage in a variety of scenarios. He appeared to focus on a single dramatic play centre. I posed questions for the teacher; such as how to encourage a child who appeared inactive in dramatic play. The teacher thought of improving her role to encourage the boy to engage in variety of scenarios. She wrote:

I think children will get more opportunity of learning and development if they engage in a variety of dramatic play scenarios rather than focus on single dramatic play experience.

Second, when asked if satisfied about the change she made, she expressed her satisfaction that using the combination of languages really worked. She wrote:

I am so excited when I found one of them (children) showed me fruit, animals, and colours in English. I observed some began using ‘thank you’ and the peers gave response of ‘you are welcome.’

I think combining languages really helps children make meaning of the target language. It is fun and children are not required to either repeat after me or memorise words. We are having fun and children pick up target words and expression naturally.

Last, the teacher committed to improving her engagement in dramatic play experience and modelling the use of language in order to optimally help children develop target vocabularies. The video data showed this classroom became more interesting when participating children began inserting English as a foreign language into the combination of second language and first language during communication with peers and teacher. This reflection helped us plan for the next Activity Cycle 7.
6.8 Activity Cycle 7

As mentioned at Activity Cycle 6, the teacher and I noticed that children began raising their awareness of English words used during dramatic play experience. Therefore, at this Activity Cycle 7, we planned for the next three activities. The teacher argued there was no particular change of learning environment because she believed that children began developing their imagination, initiative, and communication in the play.

However, she meant to improve her role as initiator and modeller of language use during dramatic play experience. She wrote in her lesson plan:

*I mean to improve my role in this Activity Cycle 7; which is to help children make meaning of target vocabularies and encourage them to continue using the vocabularies independently during dramatic play experience.*

Activity Cycle 7 involved 30 mins x 3 days in a week. The teacher decided to keep on going on three 30 min-activities without stopping for reflection, because she thought that she felt comfortable to keep going on. In this sense, she believed that there was no particular change of intervention required, but she thought it was necessary to see the outcome after the 3 x 30 min-activities were complete in order to better understand the outcome.

After we discussed the weekly activities, we returned to the discussion of reflection and observation. The teacher expressed her feelings and thoughts about dramatic experience and language use at Activity Cycle 7. She revealed that she felt much more satisfied and happy than the previous activities, as described in this voice recording data of an informal interview:

*I feel great when children get used to say ‘thank you’ and responded with ‘you are welcome’ in natural and spontaneous way during their dramatic play experience.*

The teacher was excited when children began using English without her supervision and spontaneously used it in their interaction during dramatic play experience.
The teacher and I then observed the video recording. We trace a simplified illustrative example of vignettes that demonstrated the development of spontaneous use of English.

In the doctor’s office scenario, a girl acts as a patient and is checked by a doctor. A nurse helps her prepare the prescription and the invoice.

Keyza: *Dila pithi ni a.* (in Baso Minang/first language)  
(Dilla, this is the cash, manage it)  
The doctor reminds her nurse to manage cash on the table.

Keyza: Eyes?  
Pointing out her patient eyes with telescope

Dila: Eyes (while pointing out her eyes)

Dila: Sick

Keyza: *Dah* (done)

Dila: Thank you..

Keyza: Doc?

Dila: Thank you Doctor.

Keyza: You are welcome

The patient leaves the room.

Kayla: Ayla ayla ayla (calling for other patient)

The dramatic play experience above occurred without teacher’s supervision. It appeared that children began using English vocabularies and simple expression in their communication. Another vignette showed children beginning to count up to 30 in English. At the first day of this activity 7, for example, a boy was guided by his teacher to count the level of his hospital building.

A boy, Nicholas, was playing with blocks with other peers. The teacher approached him.

The teacher: wow. tinggi dia. (Wow it’s a tall building)
Nicholas: one two three four five six seven eight nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen fifteen sixteen seventeen eighteen nineteen.

Nicholas was counting the level of his building. He suddenly stopped, apparently he did not know the rest in English. The teacher gave him a hint.

The teacher: *ya* go on! seventeen?eighteen
The teacher: nineteen

Nicholas: nineteen

The teacher: twenty

Nicholas: twenty

The teacher: twenty one

Nicholas: twenty one

The teacher: twenty two

Nicholas: twenty two

The teacher: twenty three

Nicholas: twenty three

Figure 25. The teacher counting the levels of the building
The description along with Figure 25 above illustrates the way the teacher engaged in play and helped Nicholas develop and learn numbers in English through playing with blocks. The focus of reflection of Activity Cycle 7 was to the use of language. We then agreed the activity worked well.

During further discussion and reflection, the teacher and I spoke about the overall development of learning and play in order to generate the outcome of 7 activities cycles. In particular, I encouraged the teacher to critically think and reflect whether her dramatic play activity looked like play-based learning? She wrote:

*I see there is significance of learning environment from Activity Cycle 1 to Activity Cycle 7. I observe children seems to be actively engaged in imagination, manipulation of props/materials, explorations with props/materials, bringing their social experience to dramatic experience, and interactions with peers and me.*

From her journal and our informal interview, I came to a conclusion that over two month reflection and practice, she changed her beliefs, values, and attitudes toward play and developed her practice reflectively. What I learned and understood from her journal was that she had found satisfaction in establishing targeted dramatic play activity. From the recording data of Activity Cycle 7, I agreed with her ideas that dramatic play activity was more developed than the Activity Cycle 1. The following is the detail of standard of play-based learning she established over all 7 Activity Cycles, along with evidence consisting of snapshots of video recording data:

**Children actively engage in imaginative and manipulative play experience.**

For example, children began to manipulate props/materials. In the selling juice scenario, a girl pretended to use tools to make juice, but in fact there was no blender/juice maker in the site.
In Figure 26, it is clearly illustrated that the props/materials provided were pretend fruit, basket, shelf/rack, cups, and colourful ball. As seen in the Figure, there was no juice maker available. However, they used a cup to represent a juice maker and acted as if they turned on the juice maker and said, ‘done’. In this sense, they were able to further manipulate available tools to represent the action of how it looked in social reality; that making juice requires a juice maker. Children developed their imagination through this activity using props/materials.

**Children engage in explorations with props/materials**

Using a cup to represent a juice maker as described in Figure 26 is an example of exploration with props/materials. The girls used their imagination and fantasy to explore props/materials. Another example of exploration with props/materials is described in Figure 26. The girls used a small ball to represent a bowling ball. They seemed to be having fun playing bowling. The teacher then came and helped them count the bowling pins which they successfully hit. The teacher asked them to mention colour. In Figure 28, a boy came and engaged in play. He acted as a coach. He acted as
if he used a whistle to start the bowling game, but there was no whistle available. These two Figures clearly show that children engaged in exploration of props/materials.

Figure 27. The girls playing bowling.

Figure 28. A boy acting as a coach in playing bowling scenario

Children bring their social experience to dramatic experience

In Activity Cycle 7 it was seen that children bring their social experience into dramatic play activity. For example, in the doctor’s office scenario, a girl who acted as doctor’s assistant gave a token gift to a patient. Figure 29 illustrates that children bring their social understanding of how a doctor treats a patient at the end of the visit.
Children engage in interactions with peers and teacher.

The intervention learning environment helped children establish positive interaction with peers and the teacher. They began sharing, taking, sharing play props/materials. In particular, during interaction, they demonstrated the mixed use of three languages; first, second, and foreign language. They had a rich variety of language experience through the use of mixed languages. Children and the teacher actively interacted during all dramatic play activity.

We also highlighted another point of development of learning and play, that more knowledgeable child offered assistance to other peers during play activity and used English vocabularies for communication. For example, Nicholas helped his peer to count the level of his building in English. When his friend created a building with blocks, he approached and helped him count the levels completed.

Nicholas: *bara tingkek?* (how many level?)
Nicholas asked his friend using first language.

Hakka: *satu dua tiga* (one, two, three)

While mentioning the level, Hakka counted the level of his building using second language, Bahasa Indonesia.

Nicholas: one, two, three

Nicholas used English counting the level. Noticing his friend using English, Hakka then switched his language from Bahasa Indonesia to English.

Hakka: One, two, three.
They sometimes used Bahasa Indonesia and English in counting.

The teacher and I feel satisfied by the evidence that children appeared not only to independently use English vocabularies and simple expression during dramatic play experience, but also helped other peers make meaning and use the target language.

The teacher and I realised that reflection to practice does not have an end point in this context. In other words, reflection is a continuous process because teaching and learning is dynamic and contextual. However, as soon as we agreed that the activity generated outcome which solved the focus of problems established over Activity Cycles (Stern, 2014), we decided to end the cycle. From reflection of Activity Cycle 7, we have made significant transformations and solved many problems. Moreover, I found that the teacher expanded her beliefs, values, and attitudes toward dramatic play experience along with the improvement of her confidence and practice through these Activity Cycles.

For example, the teacher successfully transformed the learning environment from a serious learning format to play-based learning. The teacher was able to develop play as a vehicle for learning when the teacher began engaging in the play and helped children create meaningful play. This was seen from the way children engaged in dramatic play experience. The collected data illustrated the improvement of children’s engagement to be more active, positive and meaningful rather than Activity Cycle 1, which looked like a traditional learning approach. In relating to language use, the teacher successfully developed her understanding of her role as initiator and modeller of language.
use during dramatic play experience so that children became informed with vocabularies and simple expression of English. In this respect, she developed her confidence in using English for communication during dramatic play experience.

Most importantly, the collected Activity Cycles generated problem-solving related to language use in dramatic play experience. Using mixed languages helped children to make meaning and develop vocabularies, and simple expression worked in this context. The reason for this was that participating children were already accustomed to using mixed languages during communication both in the school and home context. The evidence shows that they mixed first language and second language during communication in classroom. Therefore, in my view, to integrate another new language expression was not a big deal for the children. In this respect, the key force required at preschool context was the initiator and modeller of using new vocabularies, the teacher and peers.

Even though the collected Activity Cycles demonstrate that using mixed languages worked well in helping children make meaning and develop vocabularies through dramatic play experience, the teacher in this study felt pressure to continue applying multilingual language. In her journal, the teacher noted the high expectations parents had for their children in terms of English language instruction. Also, the teacher was concerned with the way society valued the use of mixed languages. In this sense, society shows disrespect for using mixed languages. She wrote:

In our daily life, people (in West Sumatra context) showed disrespect when parents speak mixed languages (first language and second language) during communication with children at home. For those who understand it, the parent mean to teach their children the use of Bahasa Indonesia and prepare them for official language at school. However, many do not understand the reason behind it, they even make fun and joke over it, ‘sakarek ula sakarek baluik’ (translated from spoken and written first language: ‘a half snake a half eel’).
In an academic setting, I remember a presenter of a local workshop of teaching professional development reminding preschool teachers of the importance of the use of single target language for instruction in classroom. The reason behind it is to provide children with full target language exposure. She said, ‘if your English is ‘šakarek ula sakarek baluik’ (translated from spoken and written first language, ‘a half snake a half eel’), don’t teach children English.’

From the teacher’s journal, it is clear that society played a big role in shaping the concept of learning English and attitudes toward the approach of teaching and learning language. Detailed discussion of this topic will be presented in chapter seven.

6.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter describes the detail of the process of Activity Cycles in Action research. The first Activity Cycle identified a number of tensions and contradictions of teaching and learning using dramatic play activity, followed by plan, action, and reflection. Through the initial reflection of Activity Cycle 1, the teacher and I found complex challenges of using dramatic play, involving cultural and historical beliefs, values, and attitudes toward play. In Activity Cycle 3, the teacher felt she still needed to improve three aspects of her practice: better props; a more developed scenario with target dialogue; and her own participation in the scenario. In Activity Cycle 4, the teacher expanded her involvement during children’s play, so that in this cycle children began developing their scenario and negotiating roles in the play. In Activity Cycle 5 the teacher expanded her understanding of the way to react to shy children who withdrew from dramatic play activity. In order to resolve to encourage shy children to engage in the play, the teacher prepared more props and materials as well involved in the conversation with the children during play. In this cycle, the teacher developed various scenarios and prepared props and different scenario centres in order to provide children a richer dramatic play environment. The focus of reflection on Activity Cycle 6 was expanding the quality of dramatic play and introducing English as a foreign language. In this cycle the teacher
gained her confidence of using EFL during interaction with children in dramatic play activity. In Activity Cycle 7, the teacher successfully helped children raise their awareness of English words used during dramatic play activity. The overall Activity Cycles have led the teacher to a better understanding of ideal play-based learning and to develop a reflective new learning environment. The most important change throughout the Activity Cycles were the teacher’s beliefs, values, and attitudes toward play; because they strongly impact on teaching and learning practice.
Chapter Seven
Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the interpretation and analysis of the findings of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to link back to my research questions in conjunction with my findings. When I began this Action Research with a pre-school teacher, a focus area had been selected and a theoretical perspective had been clarified. Dramatic play could be a potential context for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Eventually the teacher and I designed the next step to generate a set of meaningful research questions to guide the inquiry and to discover in what way dramatic play could be a potential context for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). We began this Action Research with a basic design question: How can a pre-school teacher re-conceptualise dramatic play as a pedagogical strategy to enhance children’s foreign language learning and development in a multicultural language context? During our first collaborative reflection in Activity Cycle 1, the teacher and I extended the key question into three supporting questions:

10. How could a pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language at a pre-school setting?

11. What happens if the teacher re-conceptualises her perspective in dramatic play experience?

12. What happens if the teacher uses a multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?

In answering the questions in this discussion chapter, I will present my interpretation of the findings and what I perceive are the implications of these. The discussion will include interpretation of what happened over multiple Activity Cycles, how the context of the teacher influenced her practice in play and pedagogy, how the questions were responded to, the related theoretical framework supporting the interpretation and implication of the findings, and any unexpected findings. This Action Research enabled us to critically learn and
consider dramatic play as context for learning EFL. In particular, by using the lens of CHAT in our learning process, we were able to learn and understand how cultural and historical aspects which affected the shifting pedagogical way of thinking and practice had led to the outcomes.

Building on the interpretation and implication of my findings, this chapter illustrates the uniqueness of play and pedagogy practice in Indonesia. Through a process of Action Research and its multiple Activity Cycles, two critical contributions to the understanding of these issues emerged: firstly, this research confirmed the importance of the role of the teacher in dramatic play within Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) concept; and secondly, the study generated new knowledge of the use of a multilingual approach which can be potentially effective in the use of dramatic play to enhance language learning. No less importantly, this research allowed me to see and understand the cultural and historical challenges inherent in educational practice at the pre-school level, which became potential factors which affect play and pedagogical practice in the learning context. For example, social expectations potentially influence teaching and learning practice at pre-school settings.

This chapter represents my interpretation of observed phenomena involving the teacher’s practice, the national/local curriculum and other data collected as part of this study. I incorporate relevant theory and other research into this discussion in order to present a critical dimension and to highlight the theoretical perspectives of this research. This chapter then presents a reflective and critical analysis of how the concept of dramatic play can be used as a play-based learning strategy for enhancing language learning among pre-school children in a classroom setting in Indonesia, particularly in the context of EFL.

7.2 Question 1: How could a pre-school teacher re-examine her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language at a pre-school setting?

In considering how the findings answer this question, I will analyse how the teacher re-examined her experiences and pedagogy through reflection, the changes she made in her practice and the reasons why, what she found and how she shifted her beliefs and practice through the Action Research cycles. As described in the previous paragraph, this Action Research required ongoing
reflection. This participating teacher was intrigued by the study and wanted to become a part of the Action Research project because she understood that Action Research is a learning project for self-development and therefore provided a means of analysing challenges in her self-practice, and responding, developing, and reflecting on practical strategies of using play as a context for learning.

This research has shown that tensions and contradictions have a significant role in fostering the change of teacher’s belief and practice. As a part of reflection and seeking for tensions and contradictions, the research shows the approaches relying upon changing the teacher’s thinking make extensive use of the resources relating to play-based activity and learning, such as literature reviews, the national standard curriculum, and persuasive communication through discussion between the teacher and me. She began to express discomfort and uncertainty regarding the success of her traditional approach of teaching and learning language after having access to the resources. Atkins and Murphy (1993) identify this uncomfortable response as the first stage of reflection, what Engestrom (1999) identifies as tensions and contradictions. Also, she acknowledged her fear of the potential inadequacies of parents’ expectations of children’s learning outcomes and her practice. Moreover, she began to understand there was tension and contradiction between her prior beliefs and values and new knowledge. According to Atkins and Murphy, when the teacher began to relate her feelings to knowledge, she had come to the second stage of reflection which is known as a critical analysis. Her recognition and articulation that her pedagogy was being affected by the pressures on her coming from parents for ‘academic’ outcomes, enabled her to clarify and acknowledge her own desire to use play-based pedagogy and thus enabled her to take the first step towards that. In this respect, the reflective thinking by the teacher and myself, on the tensions and contradictions faced by the teacher, was a beginning step for both in understanding, reflecting and making changes in practice. This was known as the last stage of reflection: the development of a new perspective.

7.2.1 Reflection

At that point this new perspective, self-awareness, and understanding of established beliefs and values about the importance of child play had become an
initial step of reinforcement of her practice. The process of changes in self-awareness and understanding is in line with what Engestrom says, which is that tensions and contradictions are the ‘motive force[s] of change and development’ (1999, p. 9). In describing beliefs and values about child play and learning, the research shows the teacher (in Activity Cycle 1) might hold the belief that learning for academic skills is more important than play-based activities. This belief was also reflected through past practice where dramatic play was allocated at recess time once every two weeks. During this time, the lesson plans mostly focused on academic learning. Props were not considered as critical in dramatic play, and to maintain props was more important than to facilitate the children’s play. The teacher gradually adopted new beliefs and values in her approach to child learning, shifting from her traditional approach to a new perspective of play-based context for support of learning.

The process of how the pre-school teacher re-examined her experiences and pedagogical practices in teaching and learning language at pre-school setting conforms with Fook and Askeland’s (2006) perspective on the process of reflection:

Part of the power of critical reflection in opening up new perspectives and choices about practice may only be realized if the connections between individual thinking and identity, and dominant social beliefs are articulated and realized (p.53).

The use of critical thinking or critical analysis of what happens around teaching and learning contexts had led to the teacher’s awareness and understanding of the implications of her own background, assumptions, and school management, and the effects local and national political contexts and pressures have had on her practice. She was then challenged to use play-based contexts for learning language. She attempted to do something different which went against dominant expectations from parents and school management and local, academic context learning. She also expressed her willingness to apply play-based learning which was different from her traditional approach, which had included techniques such as drilling and memorising. This research shows that her strong willingness has indicated the change of her beliefs and values regarding child play for contexts for learning.
In discussions of beliefs and practices, one controversial issue has been established about the relationships between the teacher’s beliefs about teaching and learning and her practice in the classroom. Thompson (1985) argues that beliefs about teaching and learning are consistent with practice. Others even highlight that the awareness of the difference between the teacher’s beliefs about her/his pedagogy and practice will lead to reflection and change (Lerman, 2002). My research shows that the teacher developed her awareness that she wanted to make a difference after finding out the issues of implementing the play-based program, including tensions and contradictions between national curriculum goals and social expectations, lack of time frame for play, lack of curriculum guidance and training, and social and historical aspects which have been discussed in Chapter 5. When it comes to the topic of the relationship between the teacher’s beliefs about pedagogy and practice, the teacher and I readily agree that we intend to change when we find something is not working or contradicts the standard. An interesting finding illustrates that the teacher was already aware of play-based concepts as appropriate pedagogy which is mandated in local and national curriculum, however the evidence shows her practice was informed by traditional pedagogies of being teacher-centred.

Maughan et al (2012) highlight four aspects which lead to changes in practice: leadership, planning and preparation, practice development, and M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation). In term of case of aspects that initiated the change, this research finding shows that the two aspects which led her to change her beliefs and practice were the recognition of the tensions and contradictions of her practice, planning and preparation and practice development. First, according to Maughan et al (2010), effective reflection and planning involves the context of practice such as a local and national agenda. In this research, the reflection on the children’s engagement, the conversations the teacher had with me and her changing understanding of the teacher’s role in the ZPD had led her to change her practice. The evidence shows the teacher felt satisfied with these changes she made, as well as the outcome of the changes which will be described later as the response to the third question of this Action Research. The findings illustrate the focus of changes; the beliefs and teacher’s values on child play, her role in child play, and designing play-based environments are all driven by reflection.
Second, building on the evidence I reviewed and developing theoretical underpinnings in regard to the importance of child play as a context for learning and development has significantly encouraged the teacher to change her beliefs and values on play. For example, this reflection on theoretical underpinnings is done through extensive reading, sharing ideas, and active discussion involving open-ended questions with me as her research partner. In addition to developing theoretical knowledge, learning by practicing through the Activity Cycles and the EFL learning that occurred enabled her to see learning differently and develop new pedagogies. This research highlights how the teacher’s beliefs about how to manage play could be potentially changed; at least she has developed her awareness of the importance of play as context for learning (Liljedahl, 2008). In this respect, she thought differently about how to work with the children in their ZPD and to use different pedagogies to foster and scaffold the learning – shifting from instructional transformative pedagogies to child-centred play pedagogies that had positive outcomes for the children’s learning. It also impacted on her beliefs about learning and about teaching in that she was able to view play and learning differently from previous perspectives (Fleer, 2003; Lerman, 2002).

7.2.2 Time

This research demonstrates that positive beliefs and values about the importance of child play manifest gradually and adjusted the teacher’s practice. This finding is in line with Holmes’s (2011) research which shows adults who hold a strong belief and value about the importance of child play will facilitate children with play learning environments as well as engage in the play. In my research, the process of manifesting the belief and value into practice was not necessarily immediate and complete; the nature of change in practice occurred over time and was a gradual process. Some changes should require repeated reflections. The nature of the change of practice was a little challenging in the beginning but the teacher could cope with it. For example, when the teacher began to facilitate children with dramatic play activities in Activity Cycle 1, she did not provide particular props/materials; she used a drilling approach of developing dramatic play, and she positioned herself as the teacher and instructor. The initial version of dramatic play practice was then extended when
the teacher developed her awareness and understanding about the important of props/play materials in dramatic play and her engagement in child play. In the later Activity Cycle, she extended her involvement in the play along with facilitating a set variety of play scenarios and props/play materials. The research shows that the change in practice occurs over time within repeated reflection of both belief/value and practice. In other words, the change does not necessarily complete one focus of change at once, but requires an ongoing process along with another focus of change.

This Action Research enabled the teacher to learn how to scaffold play and learning – shifting from instructional transformative pedagogies to child-centred play pedagogies that had positive outcomes for the children’s learning. She began to become more aware of the importance of designing play experiences that acknowledged the essential attributes of play itself: intrinsic motivation, free choice, pleasure, and spontaneity (Hughes, 2010). For example, in the beginning of Activity Cycle 5, she began to expand her practice to be more consistent with her beliefs and values about dramatic play by allowing the children to use their imagination more to act out various real life social experiences. In this respect, with great willingness, she intended to reflect theoretical underpinnings of what motivates children to play, and implement them. On the other hand, through extensive reading and open-ended discussion she gradually developed her understanding of the characteristics of play-based environments, which are intrinsic in motivating children to engage and enjoy playful activity (Hughes, 2009). The change of her intervention occurred as the result of reflection, including reflection on the importance of various dramatic play centres. Her view that dramatic play could be a context for language learning began to be more apparent through repeated reflective practice.

7.2.3 Environment

The research findings also illustrate how the teacher eventually changed the design of the play-based environment. This Action Research had enabled the teacher to learn and understand that in order to design play and learning environments which foster children’s motivation and interest to play, she should provide play materials/props, designing various dramatic play centres and
scenarios, and engaging herself in the play. For example, while changing the environment was an outcome of reflection, it was also cyclical in that the changes to the environment elicited responses from children that further enabled the teacher to reflect and change practice. The changes to the timetable, the resources, and the organisation of the physical space changed children’s responses and gave the teacher valuable feedback on what was effective in supporting children’s play, as well as what the children were capable of.

Using CHAT in examining the teacher’s experiences and pedagogical practices has resulted in interesting findings of the teacher’s experience about play, which has significant influence on the way she views play and her practice; what aspects have influenced her beliefs and values, as well as practice. Engestrom (2000) suggests that a person involved in a culture would create ways to reflect his or her accumulated experience. When the teacher was asked to reflect on her perceptions about the nature of children’s play, especially those that related to her role in play as an adult in child play in a classroom context, she wrote in her journal that she did not feel children required adult supervision, as this was what she experienced as a child herself. She explained that she played with her siblings and cousins and they watched out for each other. They played in an unstructured manner, climbing trees and hills, running on the dikes in the rice fields, and playing games like hide and seek, tag, and marbles. The research finding shows that her childhood experiences were consistent with the way she views the importance of adults in child play. I reviewed her journals, and noted how her belief that adults’ involvement in providing play-based environments is not essential had influenced the way she structured play in the classroom; for example, in Activity Cycle 1 she played her role as an instructor in the classroom, providing dramatic play without props and materials, and using drilling and repetition (a traditional approach). After undertaking ongoing multiple reflections on the role of adults in play in ZPD concept and the importance of play-based environments, she eventually began to become more aware of the importance of her involvement in child play to motivate children to engage in play. The findings show she began modelling and picking up the role in dramatic play scenarios with confidence. Also, as a result of this reflective
intervention, she eventually believed that her engagement in child play had driven children enjoy and engage in play.

7.2.4 Family expectation

Another finding of the initial reflection illustrates that the teacher’s perceptions of the demands of parents were in line with what the literatures say about hidden curriculum and Asian parent perspectives on play and learning. Hidden curriculum, which focused on meeting parents’ expectations on teaching and learning results/outcomes in order to help children achieve academic skills, has affected the process of teaching and learning at pre-school (Ng, 2014). This hidden curriculum refers to unofficial expectations, lesson plans, and outcomes of the pre-school program (Halstead & Xiao, 2010). A similar finding carried out by Singer et al (2009) also indicates that parents in Asia did not think time for play in either a school or home context was important, while parents in Western countries often did. The parents whose children were involved in this study, however, expected pre-school teachers to give their children specific skills in reading, writing, and counting that would give them an advantage when they entered elementary school. This motivation was strong in the West Sumatran community because of the ways in which the school system operates. As a result of these parents’ motives, the teacher faced dilemmas in preparing child play environments because she had to rush to meet these expectations.

In regard to the use of English language as instruction for the support of learning EFL, the teacher acknowledged her fear of using English in the classroom. This finding shows that extensive reading about the use of a multilingual approach to teaching English and discussion between the teacher and me had removed negative beliefs about herself. She expressed her willingness to use something different; she used a multilingual approach in helping children to develop their EFL vocabularies and simple expression.

By using CHAT lens, we were able to confirm that social perspectives on child education and play had an impact on how the teacher in this study perceived her role in facilitating the children’s play (Fleer, 2003). In the case of the role of an adult in Asian classrooms, the research findings highlight that the role of the teacher in child play is to control students’ behaviour and prevent them from distracting each other. For example, this finding at the beginning
Activity Cycle shows how the teacher in dramatic play controlled the children’s play, for example by giving instructions on what and how to engage in the play. A similar study carried out in 2010 highlights that the role of parents in child play in Asia is to control and shape moral (Roopnarine, 2010). This supports Rogoff’s idea that the development of the teacher can be ‘understood only in the light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities – which also change’ (2003, p. 3-4)’

7.3 Question 2: What happens if the teacher re-conceptualizes her perspective in dramatic play experience?

Having established the ways in which the teacher re-examined her belief and practice of play, this section aims to describe the response of the children as a result of the change of intervention. As described in the previous discussion, the teacher extended her belief and value toward dramatic play, changed the play environment, and enhanced her role in dramatic play. This research enables me to understand that the development occurs within the ZPD (Zone Proximal Development); that is what children can do without intervention and what children can achieve on their own later, after intervention. The intervention provided by the teacher in ZPD refers to the play environment, involving play settings, props/materials, and teacher-children interaction. In this respect, the findings show the change of environment and the role of the teacher in dramatic play for children has fostered children’s intrinsic motivation to engage in dramatic play, to freely choose their play, and to develop spontaneous play.

According to Hughes (2003), intrinsically motivated means that children engage in dramatic play for their own sake. Most scholars have viewed dramatic play as child-initiated, spontaneous and voluntary (Piaget, 1962; Gupta, 2007; Lillemyr et al, 2013). In this research, however, I explored the conceptualisation of dramatic play developed by neo-Vygotskians like Similansky and Hefatya (1990) and Anning, Cullen and Fleer (2004). A key concept of Vygotsky’s theory is that adults play a central role in assisting children to create a play environment which motivates children to engage in play and learn (Kozulin, 2003). The research finding shows that at the beginning of Activity Cycle 1, some children did not appear to engage in play; some even withdrew themselves. In this instance, I was concerned about the emotional responses of these
children; dramatic play at Activity Cycle 1, which looked like acting out a script, resulted in some anxiety. The reflection has enabled the teacher to reflect and extend her role in dramatic play by involving herself in the play and picking up a role as a pupil. For example, she acted out being a pupil and raising her hand for asking questions. The change of role of the teacher, from an instructor to co-player or player, has resulted in changes to the children’s emotional responses; children appeared to relax and have fun. The finding shows the presence of props/materials as well as a variety of dramatic play centres has significantly fostered children’s intrinsic motivation to play (Hughes, 2003); they rush to grab the props, explore the play on their own, negotiate rules and roles among them, and develop scenarios. Established from the finding, a play environment with the support of props/materials has a significant influence on children’s responses, in particular their motivation to engage in play.

In particular, the finding shows that a variety of dramatic play centres has allowed children to freely choose their play. The data illustrates that children are motivated to move from one scenario to another, which leads to a positive outcome of play and learning. In reviewing the seven cycles of activity in this study, children are motivated to explore and develop scenarios for their own sake. The most significant result found that the children became very excited and began to pay attention to the teacher’s actions and words when they learned their teacher was a part of the scenario. The teacher’s participation in the activity appears to encourage the children and support their motivation to take part.

The aspect of participating in the play herself is interesting to highlight because the teacher’s beliefs about her role in child play changed after reflection over seven Activity Cycles. In the initial cycle, her role in child play was to control the children’s behaviours, to discipline, and to give children permission to play within and outside the classroom at recess time only. Over Activity Cycles 1-7, by dropping her role as teacher and switching to a player role, the teacher was being a model of ‘playfulness’ within the classroom. Fleer (2010) suggests that teacher engagement in child play activity creates a playful learning in classroom. This could be seen as providing the necessary ‘disruption’ of the pre-existing classroom mode where play was seen as separate from learning, only permitted at certain times, and where the teacher was not involved.
The change has led to changes to the children’s responses. The evidences demonstrate they eventually engaged in natural and spontaneous dramatic play and began to understand that the learning environment was intended for play and to have a good time. Natural dramatic play began to appear when they observed the teacher playing with them. I observed that the teacher’s participation created a richer environment for the children to play and learn and gave the children an extended opportunity to do so. In dramatic play specifically, it was not enough for the teacher to make props available and set aside time and space for dramatic play; she had to be actively and meaningfully involved in play in order to support the children’s motivation to engage. A responsive teacher’s engagement creates natural and authentic dramatic play experiences (Elkind, 2008).

Analysis of observations made as part of this research indicates that the most important aspect of learning through dramatic play was the development of this motivation. The teacher played a significant role in creating an intrinsically motivating environment to participate in dramatic play in the school context through preparation, by making a quality environment available, and by participating in the dramatic play herself. Presumably, classroom environment affects play and learning motivation (Lippman, 2010; Singer, 2006).

From the research evidence I concluded that, in this society where learning is not seen as play and play is not seen as learning, a preschool teacher has to look differently at the play from the way she thought about child learning and development. As described in Activity Cycle 1, her perception was influenced by her own life experiences to the way this thinking evolved over the Activity Cycle 7. She then actively reflected on the way she structured play and provided a model for the children. This research finding confirms Daniels’ idea (2012), which emphasises the psychological implications of changing the play environment, where props/play materials, classroom design and the supporting physical environment as well as the teacher’s involvement in play has a significant influence on the children’s psychological responses.

7.4 Question 3: What happens if the teacher uses a multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?

One of the interesting aspects of the findings was when the teacher herself was able to identify the EFL learning that she could see happening and
then acknowledge the results and drive to take this further in using dramatic play as a result. The way the teacher was able to use the children’s language to help them know, learn, and make meaning from new English words and expression during dramatic play and what happened when the teacher changed her intervention of language will be discussed in this section.

While a considerable amount of research has considered the role of dramatic play in first or second language development (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Singer et al, 2006), this study considered the use of dramatic play in learning and developing an awareness of the use of a foreign language. Research findings show dramatic play can support children’s ongoing language development in a first and second language and also support foreign language learning. In the CHAT perspective, tools and materials as well as language are required in dramatic play (Kozulin, 2003). Observations and analysis of the multiple Activity Cycles in this study indicate that the pre-school teacher played a role as an initiator and model for use of the target language (English in this case) through the use of a new vocabulary and simple expressions in the course of dramatic play. As noted above, the teacher came to participate in dramatic play by providing time and space for the activity and also by taking an active part by asking questions, playing a role, and acting out the scenario with the children. In this respect, once children appear to be intrinsically motivated to play and enjoy their play, the teacher has the opportunity to initiate new language use and also serve as a model.

The research findings show the intervention of language during dramatic play has resulted in developing children’s English vocabulary and simple expression. The result can be seen from teacher’s initial journal which described children’s response to new language. Later after multiple activity cycles children demonstrated the use of English words during dramatic play when the teacher was not present. This evidence demonstrates that Action Research has successfully helped children connect new language items to concepts they know and generate unique language use for their own sake. In the early stages of this study, I understand that the children lacked EFL concepts. Gradually, as they developed the motivation for play and learning, an awareness of language also emerged. In particular, EFL words and phrases were gained through mediation.
In the episode described above, the children were able to spontaneously use EFL words and phrases without the teacher. When Dilla, the patient, said ‘thank you’ to Keyza, the doctor, she was able to respond ‘You are welcome’ without prompting.

### 7.5 Summary of the Chapter

This project has shown the importance of reflection which enabled the teacher to re-examine and change her pedagogy. The findings strongly suggest that teacher shaped her belief and practice through reflection. The findings of this Action Research confirm that the reflection which generates tensions and contradictions have become a motive of change for a teacher (Engerstrom, 1999). As discussed in Chapter Five, ‘knowledge comes from doing’ (Miller, 2003, p. 6). Despite the fact that many researchers have stressed that dramatic play is an important means of fostering language development in children (for example, Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1962; French, 2007; Bodrava and Leong, 2005), other interesting findings of this research have shown that its application to the pre-school context in West Sumatra presented unique challenges and problems. These include a hidden curriculum, cultural value on child play and learning EFL.

This chapter has discussed the importance of Action Research using CHAT and the result in play and pedagogy. A combination of Action Research and CHAT has enabled me to see the complexity and uniqueness of the implementation of dramatic play in Indonesia. The teacher and I found issues and challenges through identifying tensions and contradictions between the elements of CHAT. Established through the tensions and contradictions, this research highlights that the issues and challenges have driven the teacher to reflect and change her belief and practice. She began to develop her understanding about the importance of her role in child play, play-based environments, and strong belief about the importance of play for learning and development. At the end of the Activity Cycle, she expanded the use of English in dramatic play which could help children pick up vocabularies, make meaning of concepts, and use them during their interaction with peers in dramatic play. The research findings show children are able to use English in context and in a natural way during various dramatic play activities.
Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This research project was born from the idea that English as a foreign language (EFL) could better be supported through the use of play-based pedagogies, especially dramatic play. Back in 2010, I was a lecturer in child language development in early childhood teacher education in Indonesia; as a part of my PhD study, I began my journey to work with a preschool teacher using Action Research as a means of exploring English language development. The teacher and I initially discussed tensions and challenges that were encountered as a part of reflection. An important area worth investigating was identified, hence the focus of this study was about how teachers could utilise social interactions that occur in dramatic play activity, as a vehicle for promoting English language development.

Let’s take a step back to the beginning of this Activity Cycle. The reflections revealed that the teacher did not advocate supervision of child play. She perceived children should play freely and unsupervised, the way they played at home. Consequently, the children were given time for free play at recess. From the teacher’s view, dramatic play activity was defined as memorising text and acting out the text in the classroom. The teacher thought materials and props were unnecessary as children repeat her words and action. Later, through observation and reflection upon video-recorded data, the teacher noticed what children were doing, their behaviour, and their activities. She found that the children appeared stressed and unhappy when acting out the drama and repeated EFL sentences; it was clear that dramatic play of this form did not appear as playful learning (Fleer, 2013). This initial reflection was a key step in which the teacher reconceptualised her understandings about play, she thought more about what the children needed during dramatic play, and reframed the way she supported their play in order to become a vehicle for foreign language learning to happen.

As a result of the Action Research and dialogue that occurred between the teacher and I in the initial Activity Cycle, the teacher’s understanding of play was challenged and moulded and began to reshape her values and beliefs about child
play once she realised that learning through play was not a part of her cultural and historical way of knowing. Early on in Activity Cycle 1, the teacher’s notions of dramatic play for teaching English was solely a form of rote learning, with children being instructed to repeat words and actions. During her reflection upon this cycle, it became apparent to the teacher that it was important for teachers to be aware of the ways in which they respond to children, so as to provide support for empowering children’s motivation, developing imagination and language. Therefore, the significance of this research is that it provides insights about the teacher’s transformative conceptual understanding of play and the way in which her thoughts and practice shifted through repeated reflections within multiple Activity Cycles.

The contribution of this research is that it has explored in depth how the teacher plays her role in managing dramatic play activity in order to effectively and successfully scaffold children’s developing EFL, which was achieved through this Action Research. As a result of the modification of play experience through multiple Activity Cycles the teacher reported positive outcomes in terms of children’s ability to practice the use of English in play scenarios. In particular, there are two interventions worth sharing based on the following research questions: ‘What happens if the teacher reconceptualises her perspective in dramatic play experience?’ and ‘What happens if the teacher uses a multilingual language approach during dramatic play experience?’

First, let’s look back to Activity Cycle 1, when children appeared unhappy when acting out a script; play was not seen as playful, however as the project progressed the teacher began to shape her perception of the play as learning and also her emerging perspective about play as learning. The teacher later advocated a change in the play environment and enhanced her own role in the dramatic play. As established from the findings, this transformation led to a change in the children’s responses, most significantly in their enjoyment of the playful environment. In this respect, the children were intrinsically motivated to engage in dramatic play for their own sake; they explored props/materials, negotiated rules and roles among themselves, and developed scenarios. This situation has become the most significant outcome of the teacher’s transformation.

Second, the intention of the second intervention was to seek ways of using English as a foreign language during dramatic play which would be beneficial in
helping children grasp new English words, sentences, and utterances. The multilingual approach during the dramatic activity was applied against the existing paradigm of learning English as foreign language in West Sumatra, which perceived the effective use of a single approach of targeting language development during explicit teaching and instruction in English. As mentioned in the analysis chapter, this society lacked respect for the use of mixed languages for communication. Early in the project, it was revealed that the children had no understanding of the English language when their teacher used English only for communication in class. As established from the findings, we considered the use of a multilingual approach valuable in assisting the children to gain meaning from new English words, and the dramatic play approach created a stress-free play and learning environment. The evidence showed that using a multilingual approach was successful in helping children make meaning of new English words, sentences, and utterances. Most importantly, we noticed the children were using these spontaneously for communication during dramatic play. This was demonstrated by them starting to count and saying ‘thank you’ in English when playing with one another. This Action Research project indicated that foreign language use became spontaneous and seemingly natural during dramatic play activities. Although the community to which the centre belonged generally mocked the use of mixed language, this research indicated that adopting such an approach created engaging language opportunities and experiences for children.

The most interesting finding of this study is the link between notions of play and social beliefs, where the cultural and historical context influences every aspect of play and learning in preschool settings. This research shows that the teacher’s social beliefs and values shaped the way she perceived play. The society within which this research was conducted shared beliefs and values about play and learning based on the philosophy of ‘let nature be your teacher’. This means the dimension of the source of knowledge derives from sensing, experiencing, and observing. Children in this context engaged in totally free play with nature, including alongside roads, rice fields, farms, and forests. These ways of obtaining knowledge influenced the teacher’s perception of her role in children’s play activity. For example, the teacher considered play to be
free/unstructured without the need for adult supervision, intervention, and planning with goals and props.

A range of evidence was discussed in Chapter Six, indicating that adults’ beliefs and attitudes towards child’s play in both preschool and home contexts have an effect on their attitudes towards play in the preschool context. In the context of this study, the teacher initially viewed play as wasting time. This Action Research confirms that not all communities perceive play as important for learning and development (Roopnarine et al. 2003). This research shows play is often seen as free/unstructured where children play around in a group in their environment. Given this sociocultural experience, it was found through conversations with the teacher in this study that parents of the preschool children had a negative attitude towards play in preschool. The parents and the community expected that the preschool provide a serious approach to learning. The teacher revealed that parents expected extra homework to be given so that they could control their children’s leisure/play time at home. For parents, free play around the home after school was considered a waste of time.

This research indicates an interesting contradiction between the social belief ‘let nature be your teacher’ and the nature of school environment. The former suggests children become active explorers and creators of knowledge. In contrast, children in the school context are the consumers of knowledge. The educational environment in this preschool confirms this role, with children sitting in rows at desks, listening, and doing activities as instructed. The teacher simply stood in front of the class and gave instructions. The children were told what to do. In this research context, the community believes that the role of the teacher is to become the source of knowledge where he or she is considered as the central actor. Aside from the recognition, the teacher is also considered the person who should be given the most respect. Children see their teacher as the most powerful person in classroom, instead of as a facilitator and co-learner.

This study indicates the Action Research journey could potentially enable the teacher to satisfy the national curriculum’s mandate to promote learning through play in preschool settings. For example, the daily routine of teaching and learning focuses on literacy and maths development by using rote learning
methods such as memorisation and dictation. The traditional approach to teaching and learning enacted was focused heavily on teacher instruction, to enable children to achieve desired learning outcomes. The teacher’s transformative thinking has empowered her to a different way of seeing play and dramatic play in particular as a way of learning, which had been absent before. Even though a considerable amount of money was spent to promote this play, the concept was not reflected in practice in this classroom. Moreover, the inconsistency of application of curriculum goals, lack of time allocated to play, the lack of understanding of the importance of children’s play for learning, and misleading concepts about learning for children might result in early childhood educational failure.

Therefore, the teacher’s transformative thinking in this Action Research has profound implications on how teachers in a similar context might conceptualise play and thus leads to a way of thinking about the link between policy and the actualising of this policy based on teacher understanding. This research informs practice and policy in play-based learning which requires social, historical, and cultural understanding because of the complexity of teaching practice in different contexts.

8.2 Recommendations for future research

This research involved a particular outcome which might not occur in an identical situation, and there are no absolute solutions that can be transferred to other situations. However, I consider this study crucial for audiences of research who intend to grow knowledge by linking an individual’s cultural background and value/belief with actual practice in classrooms. In this respect, we present two focuses of recommendation: recommendation for future research and recommendation for policy and practice in the Indonesian context.

Firstly, future research might explore play and learning practice with a larger study sample, in a range of contexts, of longer duration, and with a focus upon the children’s behaviour. Given the diversity of culture and history in Indonesia, a comparative study of play and learning practice is worth exploring as well. The development of the concept of play with cultural and historical
perspectives is worth expounding on in order to gain better knowledge of children’s play in this diverse context.

Additionally, further research on the impact of parents’ attitude towards EFL learning and dramatic play could also be undertaken. As described throughout the thesis, using mixed language was essential for a child’s language development. For that reason, this promising multilingual approach of teaching EFL coupled with the children’s native language should be studied and further explored in different scenarios. This research revealed an important aspect of play and pedagogy that occurred as a consequence of the impact of parental expectations on children’s learning process. Starting with the parents, this research contextualises the cognitive demands of a task, and a variety of research techniques, such as interviews, having teacher think aloud as they solve problems, and analysis of errors, can be used to explore the mental processes that examinees actually engage in during play and pedagogy practice. This research did not examine perceptions of parents regarding the importance of child play and learning. Yet the data showing the perceptions of parents was illustrated in the participating teacher’s journal. I suggest that further research examine how the relationships between parental perspectives of the importance of child play and foreign language learning could lead to deeper insights into the relationships between parental expectations and teacher practice. This research used CHAT, providing a lens which informed the teacher and myself that play and pedagogy were associated with a complex combination of sociocultural and historical aspects, such as the teacher’s experiences, the community’s perception on child play and learning, and policy and practice. The limitation of this study is the reliance on the teacher’s experience. Therefore, further studies investigating the family and children’s experience on dramatic play and language learning using CHAT as a lens would potentially lead to a stronger research outcome.

This research has advanced the knowledge base on how teachers develop understanding and critical thinking associated with their performance in the classroom. For this reason, there is an opportunity for developing teacher practice and preservice teacher education in Indonesia. The findings suggest there is a need for preservice teacher education, as well as professional development programs that include strong components of play and learning, to support play-
based practice and the educators’ ability to advocate. In order to provide support for play-based practice and knowledge, there is a need for research that more broadly explores play and learning in the Indonesian context.

### 8.3 Limitations of this research

Indeed, the implications of this research cannot involve broad claims because of the small sample size and the single setting, but the knowledge generated from this study is potentially relevant to other contexts and may be applicable to the wider early childhood field, particularly in societies with a similar cultural and historical understanding of play and learning. This research was an ongoing learning process by which the co-researching teacher pursued reflection, change, and understanding of the practice of dramatic play as a context of learning language. Using dramatic play activity as a context for learning EFL at the preschool setting should remain suggestive and tentative because the research focused on a limited scope and context. However, I see promising and important implications of this research for aspects of play and pedagogy. First, Action Research can be used as a way of examining and building practice and reflection for teachers. Another important implication for educational research overall is that using the Action Research approach might better reveal the ways in which a teacher learns, understands, and resolves the challenges of teaching and learning practice by using cultural and historical understanding to generate knowledge that is responsive to culture.

Through Action Research, this study has produced important findings which not only focus on the development of the teacher’s individual practice and her transformative understanding but also provide an understanding of the nexus between theory and practice. The research shows that theory does not account for the social and cultural context and may not be relevant or effective in understanding the situation. This study focused on understanding the context of the phenomenon of play as it existed in a single site which was in itself shaped by its cultural and historical context. Therefore, this research has emphasised the importance of using a CHAT lens to conceptually think about ways to understand complex situations relating to teaching and learning practice.
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UNESCO. (2003). Early childhood care and education E-9 Countries: Status and outlook. Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education Division of Basic Education. Paris: Education Sector UNESCO.


UNICEF. (2012). Early Childhood Development: Ensuring All Children’s Right to a Fair Start in Life, UNICEF.


Content description and achievement standards
for language development (Focusing on Bahasa Indonesia/national language)
(Source: Department of Education, 2008)

Basic competence
Children are able to listen, develop oral communication, develop vocabularies, and develop phonological awareness as initial steps of learning writing and reading

Outcome: Children are able to listen and identify a phoneme and spell it.
Indicator of achievement
Repeating phonemes
Repeating 4-5 words

Outcome: Children are able to understand a simple sentence and to communicate it.
Indicator of achievement
Doing instruction in correct order

Outcome: Children are able to develop oral communication with correct spelling.
Indicator of achievement
Mentioning name, family name, sex, address
Telling experience

Outcome: Children are able to use vocabularies for appropriate communication context.
Indicator of achievement
Mentioning body movement, such as sitting, standing.
Mentioning things relating to his environment.
### Example of daily lesson plan

#### Daily unit/program.

**Group : B (Ages 5-6)**

**Week unit :** First week

**Thematic :** About myself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/time</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Learning experience/activity</th>
<th>Props/Materials/Tools/artefact</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7.30-10.30am</td>
<td>1. Obeying school rules and policy</td>
<td>1. Sunday morning official national tribute (15 mins)</td>
<td>Flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Telling life experiences</td>
<td>2. Preliminary activities</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Mentioning name, family name, address</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Walking forward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Describing natural phenomenon such as the process of plantation, mixture of colour, and gravitation</td>
<td>3. Main activity (science)</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Making circle, line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Counting from 1-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Clapping hands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memorandum

To: A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
   School of Education

B

cc: Ms Dewi Mulia

From: Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC)

Date: 03 July, 2012

Subject: 2012-153

The role of play in teaching English as a foreign language in early childhood settings in Indonesia

Please quote this project number in all future communications

The application for this project was considered at the DU-HREC meeting held on 02/07/2012.

Approval has been given for Ms Dewi Mulia, under the supervision of A/Prof Alex Kostogriz, School of Education, to undertake this project from 2/07/2012 to 2/07/2016.

The approval given by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Human Research Ethics Unit immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time.
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project.
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- Modifications are requested by other HRECs.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

DUHREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Human Research Ethics Unit
research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
Telephone: 03 9251 7123
Introduction:

My name is Dewi, and I am currently undertaking a PhD at Deakin University, Australia. I have a Master of Education degree and have worked for eight years in the early childhood sector in Indonesia.

The importance of learning English at an early age has been well established in the recent years in Indonesia. The Indonesian National Curriculum (2009) emphasises, in particular, that English as a foreign language (EFL), should be introduced at a pre-school level. A number of research projects have shown, that play is instrumental in promoting children’s language development. This study will investigate the relationship between children’s participation in dramatic play and their language development with a focus upon the effects on vocabulary size, the construction of word meanings, complexity of syntax and on children’s literacy skills, more broadly. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate how dramatic play can be more effectively implemented by pre-school teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in early childhood settings in Indonesia.

Your Participation:

As a principal of a pre-school, you are invited to voluntarily take part in this research by allowing me access to your school and providing copies of your policies and curriculum. You may disagree to participate in this research or change your mind to withdraw your consent and discontinue the participation of your teachers and students in this study without any penalty or loss and without any effect on your future school reputation.

With your consent, and the consent of your teachers and the parents of children, two digital video cameras will be used to record play activities and interactions that are occurring in your
pre-school. These interactions, together with other collected data and teacher interviews, will be analysed, to address the following six research aims:

1) explore the role of dramatic play in developing English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) learning in early childhood education settings in Indonesia;
2) observe, discuss and explore in collaboration with practitioners the role of play design, textual-semiotic materials and language use during dramatic play in order to promote children’s EFL development;
3) explore how children communicate in English with their peers and teachers during their engagement in dramatic play;
4) discuss the problems found by teachers during EFL learning through play, develop an action plan and implement it to address these problems in order to enhance children’s language learning;
5) propose a framework for enhancing EFL development in early childhood through strategic teaching and learning.

In order to achieve the aims of the project, action research will be applied. The process involves the designing of play activities, implementing them, observing the children's engagement and reflecting on the teachers' work and children's learning. 10 pre-school children will be observed for eight weeks and their interactions in play will be videotaped. In particular, the focus will be on the interactions between children and teachers - i.e., on how the two teachers in the classroom 'scaffold' (i.e. guide/assist) children's EFL development.

The potential benefits of participating in this research may include opportunities for your teachers to reflect on teaching English as a foreign language at pre-school through dramatic play. More specifically, your teacher will share and discuss the problems found during EFL learning through play with the researcher. Then, they will develop an action plan and implement it to address these problems in order to enhance children's language learning. There will be no anticipated risks expected to arise from this research. There will be no additional costs to your school or payment to any participants taking part in this research.

In case a parent of a child doesn’t agree to participate, there will be no consequences to either the child or the parent. In the process of recording, the videocamera will not focus on a non-participating child, and the videofile will be deleted if the non-participating child is recorded unintentionally. In order to get to know children well and make them feel comfortable with the video camera, I propose attending the classroom prior to videorecording, and teachers will introduce me to the children as their teaching partners. All videos taken during this research can be used and accessed for reflection purposes. In order to protect participant’s privacy and confidentiality, all names will be coded.
A summary of results will be made available to you, your teachers and families if requested. The results of this research will be used in my PhD thesis. Results may also be reported in peer-reviewed journals, presented at national and international conferences, and used for teacher training purposes. This may include the video data if only consent from all the participants appearing in video be given.

All digital data collected will be stored on a password-protected computer at Deakin University, and hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. As I am a student at Deakin University, my research will be monitored by my supervisory team to ensure it complies with ethical guidelines.

This research is partially funded through Higher Directorate General of Government of Indonesia Scholarship and the School of Education at Deakin University.

Participation is voluntary:

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project, and you may ask for any further information you require. You are free to withdraw your consent if you change your mind to participate. Your decision, whether or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University. If you agree to participate, please sign this consent. Any data collected from you will not be used without your consent. The data will be stored for 5 years after the date of the final publication after which time it will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team and complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, please quote project number ________________ and contact:

The Manager, Office of Research Integrity,
Deakin University,
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125,
phone: 9251 7129,
fax: 9244 6581;
email: research_ethics@deakin.edu.au

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your consent to participate or if you have any problems concerning this project, you can contact:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia
School of Education
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC
phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Pre-school Principal Consent Form

Date: _____ / _____ / _____
Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA
Reference Number: ____________
Student Researcher: Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher: A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher: Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher: Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

I agree to the on-site recruitment of a member of my staff and students from (name of the school) for the above research project. I have had read the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I will keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing for:

The student researcher to explain the project to staff, at a staff or faculty meeting and for copies of the Plain Language Statement to be left for perusal by interested staff.

The student researcher to explain the project to children’s parents and care-givers and for copies the Plain Language Statement and consent forms to be sent to them.

I understand that teacher’s and children’s participation is voluntary; they can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that they can withdraw at any stage of the project.

I understand that the teacher will participate in sharing their experiences on teaching EFL through play, reflecting on the moments that they consider successful and/or problematic to improve the effectiveness of their pedagogy, developing and, then implementing play and pedagogy to teach EFL in their regular classroom.

I understand that children will participate in natural play activities as prior to school curriculum.

I understand that any identifying features of the participants and school will be removed prior to publication of the thesis or other research outputs.

I am aware that this research has ethics approval from Deakin University- Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct research in schools.

Name (please print) ...............................................................................................................................
Role/Position at organization .............................................................................................................
Signature ................................................................. Date: .........................................................

This form will be collected from the early childhood centre or may be returned to:
Mrs. Dewi Mulia
School of Education
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC

phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Revocation of Consent Form (Pre-school Principal)

Date: _____ / _____ /_____
Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA
Reference Number : __________
Student Researcher : Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher : A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher : Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher : Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW the consent for teachers, families and children of:
............................................................................................................................................. (Pre-school name)
............................................................................................................................................. (Pre-school Address)
to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardize my relationship with Deakin University.

Name (please print) ................................................................................................................................
Role/Position at organization ........................................................................................................................
Signature ................................................................................................................... Date: ........................................

This form will be collected from the early childhood centre or may be returned to:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
School of Education email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC

Or

The Manager, phone: 9251 7129,
Office of Research Integrity, fax: 9244 6581;
Deakin University, email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
221 Burwood Highway,
Burwood Victoria 3125
Plain Language Statement and Consent Forms
for Pre-school Teacher

Date: ___/___/____
Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA
Reference Number: ___________
Student Researcher: Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher: A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher: Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher: Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

Introduction:

My name is Dewi, and I am currently undertaking a PhD at Deakin University, Australia. I
have a Master of Education degree and have worked for eight years in the early childhood sector
in Indonesia.

The importance of learning English at an early age has been well established in the recent
years in Indonesia. The Indonesian National Curriculum (2009) emphasises, in particular, that
English as a foreign language (EFL), should be introduced at a pre-school level. A number of
research projects have shown, that play is instrumental in promoting children’s language
development. This study will investigate the relationship between children’s participation in
dramatic play and their language development with a focus upon the effects on vocabulary size,
the construction of word meanings, complexity of syntax and on children’s literacy skills, more
broadly. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate how dramatic play can be more
effectively implemented by pre-school teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in
early childhood settings in Indonesia.

Your Participation:

As a teacher, you are invited to voluntarily take part in this research by allowing me access
to your classroom and providing copies of your policies and curriculum. You may disagree to
participate in this research or change your mind to withdraw your consent and discontinue your
participation in this study without any penalty or loss and without any effect on your future
personal reputation.
With your consent and the parents of children, two digital video cameras will be used to record play activities and interactions that are occurring in your pre-school. These interactions, together with other collected data and teacher interviews, will be analysed to address the following six research aims:

1) explore the role of dramatic play in developing English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) learning in early childhood education settings in Indonesia;
2) observe, discuss and explore in collaboration with practitioners the role of play design, textual-semiotic materials and language use during dramatic play in order to promote children’s EFL development;
3) explore how children communicate in English with their peers and teachers during their engagement in dramatic play;
4) discuss the problems found by teachers during EFL learning through play, develop an action plan and implement it to address these problems in order to enhance children’s language learning;
5) propose a framework for enhancing EFL development in early childhood through strategic teaching and learning.

In order to achieve the aims of the project, action research will be applied. The process involves the designing of play activities, implementing them, observing the children's engagement and reflecting on the teachers' work and children's learning. 10 pre-school children will be observed for eight weeks and their interactions in play will be videotaped. In particular, the focus will be on the interactions between children and teachers - i.e., on how the two teachers in the classroom 'scaffold' (i.e. guide/assist) children’s EFL development.

The potential benefits of participating in this research may include opportunities for you, as a teacher, to reflect on teaching English as a foreign language at your pre-school through dramatic play. There will be no anticipated risks expected to arise from this research. There will be no additional costs to your school or payment to any participants taking part in this research.

In case a parent of a child doesn’t agree to participate, there will be no consequences to either the child or the parent. In the process of recording, the camera will not focus on a non-participating child, and the video file will be deleted if the video captures the non-participating child unintentionally. In order to get to know children well and make them feel comfortable with the videocameras, I propose attending your classroom prior to videorecording, and you will introduce me as your teaching partner. All videos taken during this research can be used and accessed for reflection purposes. In order to protect participant’s privacy and confidentiality, all names will be coded. A summary of results will be made available to you, your school and children’s families if requested. The results of this research will be used in my PhD thesis. Results may also be reported in peer-reviewed journals, presented at national and international
conferences, and used for teacher training purposes. This may include the video data if only consent from all the participants appearing in video be given.

All digital data collected will be stored on a password-protected computer at Deakin University, and hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. As I am a student at Deakin University, my research will be monitored by my supervisory team to ensure it complies with ethical guidelines.

This research is partially funded through Higher Directorate General of Government of Indonesia Scholarship and the School of Education at Deakin University. There is no other party which may claim a financial or other interest in this research.

Participation is voluntary:

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project, and you may ask for any further information you require. You are free to withdraw your consent if you change your mind to participate. Your decision, whether or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University. If you agree to participate, please sign this consent. Any data collected from you will not be used without your consent. The data will be stored for 5 years after the date of the final publication after which time it will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team and complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, please quote project number _______________ and contact:

The Manager, phone: 9251 7129,
Office of Research Integrity, fax: 9244 6581;
Deakin University, email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
221 Burwood Highway

Burwood Victoria 3125, If you require further information, wish to withdraw your consent to participate or if you have any problems concerning this project, you can contact:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
School of Education email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC
Pre-school Teacher Consent Form

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA

Reference Number: ____________

Student Researcher: Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher: A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher: Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher: Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement and I, ________________________________________________________________ (your name), teaching at _________________________________________________________ (your centre) agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Plain Language Statement, which I will keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Participate in action research with my class and the researcher, and talk about my experiences of teaching practices;
- Allow the class activities (dramatic play) and conversations to be video-recorded;
- Accommodate the researcher in ongoing observation (approximately 36 hours over 8 weeks);
- Join with the researcher in face-to-face audio-recorded conversation about teaching practice after the observation that should take no longer than 4 hours over the 8 week period;
- Collaborate with the researcher in the co-construction of an action plan and reflect on its implementation;

Signature .................................................................   Date: ........................................

This form will be collected from the early childhood centre or may be returned to:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
School of Education email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC
I, __________________________________________________________ (Participant’s name),
teaching at ____________________________________________________ (Centre Name) hereby wish
to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such
withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University.

Signature .......................................................... Date: ..............................................
Plain Language Statement and Consent Forms  
for Parents and Guardians

Date: ____/____/____
Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA
Reference Number : ______________
Student Researcher : Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher : A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher : Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher : Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

Introduction:

My name is Dewi, and I am currently undertaking a PhD at Deakin University, Australia. I have a Master of Education degree and have worked for eight years in the early childhood sector in Indonesia.

The importance of learning English at an early age has been well established in the recent years in Indonesia. The Indonesian National Curriculum (2009) emphasises, in particular, that English as a foreign language (EFL), should be introduced at a pre-school level. A number of research projects have shown, that play is instrumental in promoting children’s language development. This study will investigate the relationship between children’s participation in dramatic play and their language development with a focus upon the effects on vocabulary size, the construction of word meanings, complexity of syntax and on children’s literacy skills, more broadly. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate how dramatic play can be more effectively implemented by pre-school teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in early childhood settings in Indonesia.

Your Participation:

As a parent or a care-giver, your child is invited to voluntarily take part in this research by allowing me access to record your children’s activities at school, in particular during dramatic play. You may disagree with your child’s participation in this research or change your mind to withdraw your consent and discontinue your child’s participation in this study without any penalty or loss and without any effect on your future children’s reputation.
With your consent, two digital video cameras will be used to record play activities and interactions that are occurring in your pre-school. These interactions, together with other collected data and teacher interviews, will be analysed, to address the following six research aims:

1) explore the role of dramatic play in developing English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) learning in early childhood education settings in Indonesia;
2) observe, discuss and explore in collaboration with practitioners the role of play design, textual-semiotic materials and language use during dramatic play in order to promote children’s EFL development;
3) explore how children communicate in English with their peers and teachers during their engagement in dramatic play;
4) discuss the problems found by teachers during EFL learning through play, develop an action plan and implement it to address these problems in order to enhance children's language learning;
5) propose a framework for enhancing EFL development in early childhood through strategic teaching and learning.

In order to achieve the aims of the project, action research will be applied. The process involves the designing of play activities, implementing them, observing the children's engagement and reflecting on the teachers' work and children's learning. 10 pre-school children will be observed for eight weeks and their interactions in play will be videotaped. In particular, the focus will be on the interactions between children and teachers - i.e., on how the two teachers in the classroom 'scaffold' (i.e. guide/assist) children’s EFL development.

The potential benefits of participating in this research may include opportunities for your children to develop their English as a foreign language through dramatic play. There will be no anticipated risks expected to arise from this research. There will be no additional costs to your school or payment to any participants taking part in this research.

In case you do not agree with your child’s participation in this project, there will be no consequences to either the child or the parent. In the process of recording, the camera will not focus on a non-participating child, and the videofile will be deleted if the video camera captures the non-participating child unintentionally. In order to get to know children well and make them feel comfortable with the cameras, I propose attending the classroom prior to videorecording and teachers will introduce me as their teaching partner. If children appear uncomfortable or distressed at being videotaped, then those activities will not go ahead. All videos taken during this research can be used and accessed for reflection purposes. In order to protect participant’s privacy and confidentiality, all names will be coded.
A summary of results will be made available to you and teachers if requested. The results of this research will be used in my PhD thesis. Results may also be reported in peer-reviewed journals, presented at national and international conferences, and used for teacher training purposes. This may include the video data if only consent from all the participants appearing in video be given.

All digital data collected will be stored on a password-protected computer at Deakin University, and hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. As I am a student at Deakin University, my research will be monitored by my supervisory team to ensure it complies with ethical guidelines.

This research is partially funded through Higher Directorate General of Government of Indonesia Scholarship and the School of Education at Deakin University. There is no other party which may claim a financial or other interest in this research.

Participation is voluntary:

Your children’s participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project, and you may ask for any further information you require. You are free to withdraw your consent if you change your mind to participate. Your decision, whether or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University. If you agree your children to participate, please sign this consent. Any data collected from you will not be used without your consent. The data will be stored for 5 years after the date of the final publication after which time it will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team and complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached.

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The Manager,                                      phone: 9251 7129,
Office of Research Integrity,                     fax: 9244 6581;
Deakin University,                                email: research-ethics@deakin.edu.au
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood Victoria 3125,

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your consent to participate or if you have any problems concerning this project, you can contact:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia                                      phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
School of Education                                  email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC
Parental/ Guardian Consent Form

Date: ___/___/___

Project Title: THE ROLE OF PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN INDONESIA

Reference Number : __________

Student Researcher : Mrs Dewi Mulia
Principal Researcher : A/Prof Alex Kostogriz
Associate Researcher : Dr Sarah Ohi
Associate Researcher : Dr Anne Marie-Morrissey

I have read and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement and

I, ________________________________________________________________ (Participant’s name),

parent or guardian of ________________________________________________ (Child’s Name)

agree to their participation in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement, a copy of which I have been given to keep.

I agree that …

my child participates in this study,
my child is videorecorded as he or she participates in normal classroom activities and conversations
I give consent for the use of selected video clips in which my child may appear for presentations at national and international conferences, and to be used for teacher training purposes provided consent is granted by all participants appearing in the video.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my child’s identity or personal details, if information about this project is published, or presented in any public forum.

Signature ........................................................................................................ Date: .............................................

This form will be collected from the early childhood centre or may be returned to:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
School of Education email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC
I hereby wish to WITHDRAW the consent for my child,

__________________________________________________________________ (Child’s Name),

to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with their early childhood centre or Deakin University.

Name (please print) ..........................................................................................................................

Signature ................................................................. Date: ..............................................

This form will be collected from the early childhood centre or may be returned to:

Mrs. Dewi Mulia
School of Education
Deakin University
Greenwood Park, Cnr. Station Street & Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC

phone: +61411258064/+6275133768
email: dmulia@deakin.edu.au