**INNOVATIONS IN EFL/ESL TEACHING[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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1. **Introduction**

Modern language teaching is signified by the shifting of teaching practice from the dominance of teaching methodologies which put the teacher as the central core of the practice to individualized learning and the use of multi media as teaching aids. Starting from the distinction of the three terms:approach, method, and technique, as proposed by Edward M. Anthony (1964), and widely socialized by Rodgrers (1993). Wilvers (1988) and Diane Larsen-Freeman (1988).Since then, popular approaches and methods such as gramar translation method, direct method, audiolungual approach, community language learning, communicative language teaching dominated the discussion on the teaching of English as a secodn or foreogn language.

The 21st century is signified by the rapid growth of information andtrelecommunication technology. The use of internet to personal cellular phone affected the development of second and foreign language learning. Teachers are no longer the central focus of language tewading and learning. Individual learning efforts are strongly endorsed. Teachers are encouraged to shift function from knowledge provider into learning facility provider. Uploaded learning materials available through internet have become close counterpart for the teaching and learning of language.

Innovations have become an inseparable part of teaching endeavor. Currently, many institutions are moving towards problem-based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative and can think critically, analytically, and solve problems. Since knowledge is no longer an end but a means to creating better problem solvers and encourage lifelong learning. Problem-based learning is becoming increasingly popular in educational institutions as a tool to address the inadequacies of traditional teaching. Since these traditional approaches do not encourage students to question what they have learnt or to associate with previously acquired knowledge (Teo & Wong, 2000), problem-based learning is seen as an innovative measure to encourage students to *learn how to learn via real-life problems* (Boud & Feletti, 1999).

In order for us to understanding the innovative attempts in teaching English as a second or foreign language, we need to understand the existing teaching practice, the theoretical basis and principles of language teaching and learning, and some examples of innovative activities of language teaching and learning.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

There are many theories of second language teaching and learning ranging from the traditional behavioristics theory, to the newer theories of constructivisme, connectivism, vygotsky, and universal grammar. Among these theories, Krashen’s five hypothesis has received wide acceptance and discussion elsewhere, the hypotheses are: learning vs acquisition, monitor model hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, comprehensible input hypothesis, and affective filter hypothesis. (see Yufrizal, 2008).

1. Acquisition vs Learning

According to Krashen, there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or '**acquisition**' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

The 'learned system' or '**learning**' is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.

1. Comprehensible Input

Language is not “soaked up.” The learner must understand the message that is conveyed. *Comprehensible input* is a hypothesis first proposed by Stephen Krashen. (Krashen, 1981) He purports that ELLs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. (Comprehensible Input +1)

An English language learner may understand the message "Put the paper in your desk." By slightly changing the message to “Put the paper in the garbage." the speaker scaffolds new information that increases the learner’s language comprehension. In order to do this, the teacher must provide new material that builds off the learner’s prior knowledge.

When newcomers are assigned to a mainstream classroom and spend most of their day in this environment it is especially critical for them to receive comprehensible input from their teachers and classmates. If that teacher lectures in the front of a classroom, the English language learner will not be receiving this input. Imagine that you and your family were sent to Japan for a year. Would you be able to learn Japanese by simply sitting in a Japanese classroom? You wouldn't unless the teacher made an effort to make the Japanese you were hearing comprehensible.

1. Comprehensible Output

According to research, learners need opportunities to practice language at their level of English language competency. This practice with English-speaking peers is called *Comprehensible Output.* Many researchers feel that comprehensible output is nearly as important as input. Cooperative learning groups are one way for new learners of English to receive plenty of understandable input and output. Here are some reasons why.

* A small group setting allows for more comprehensible input because the teacher or classmates modify or adapt the message to the listener’s needs.
* Speakers can more easily check on the understanding of the listener.
* There is more opportunity for oral practice and for repetition of content information as peers help new learners of English negotiate meaning.
* Student talk in this small group is centered on what is actually happening at the moment as the task is completed.
* Feedback and correction are non-judgmental and immediate.

1. Interaction

The Interaction Hypothesis, proposed by Second Language Acquisition expert Michael Long, offers an explanation of one way in which ESOL (ESL, EFL) students can best succeed at learning a target language. It posits that interaction between a non-native speaker (NNS) and a native speaker (NS), or non-native speaker of a higher level, creates a naturalistic Second Language Acquisition environment where the NNS learns through negotiation of meaning and / or becoming aware of gaps in their target language knowledge.

The Interaction Hypothesis "has taken as basic the notion that conversation is not only a medium of practice, but also the means by which learning takes place", more specifically when it comes to the negotiation of meaning (Gass p.234). "Especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the Native Speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (Long 1996, pp. 451-2).

The Interaction Hypothesis posits that when an ESOL (ESL, EFL) learner is attempting to negotiate conversation in the target language the gaps in their abilities are revealed to them. These abilities can include but are not limited to pronunciation, syntax, grammar and vocabulary. The Interaction Hypothesis concludes that this self-realization, brought about by authentic interaction, will encourage the second language learner to produce target language output to negotiate meaning and seek out the knowledge they lack. This interaction between the ESOL (ESL, EFL) learner and other students or the learner and the ESOL (ESL, EFL) teacher, results in language acquisition on the part of the learner, meaning they have internalized this chunk of language and will be able to produce it later when needed.

LANGUAGE TEACHING METODOLOGY

Within methodology a distinction is often made between methods and approaches, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. This distinction is probably most usefully seen as defining a continuum of entities ranging from highly prescribed methods to loosely described approaches.

The period from the 1950s to the 1980s has often been referred to as "The Age of Methods," during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. Situational Language Teaching evolved in the United Kingdom while a parallel method, Audio-Lingualism, emerged in the United States. In the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed as successors to the then prevailing Situational Language Teaching and Audio-Lingual methods. These alternatives were promoted under such titles as Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response. In the 1980s, these methods in turn came to be overshadowed by more interactive views of language teaching, which collectively came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Communicative Language Teaching advocates subscribed to a broad set of principles such as these:

* Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
* Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
* Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
* Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
* Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

However, CLT advocates avoided prescribing the set of practices through which these principles could best be realized, thus putting CLT clearly on the approach rather than the method end of the spectrum.

Communicative Language Teaching has spawned a number of off-shoots that share the same basic set of principles, but which spell out philosophical details or envision instructional practices in somewhat diverse ways. These CLT spin-off approaches include The Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, and Task-Based Teaching.

It is difficult to describe these various methods briefly and yet fairly, and such a task is well beyond the scope of this paper. However, several up-to-date texts are available that do detail differences and similarities among the many different approaches and methods that have been proposed. (See, e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2000, and Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Perhaps it is possible to get a sense of the range of method proposals by looking at a synoptic view of the roles defined for teachers and learners within various methods. Such a synoptic (perhaps scanty) view can be seen in the following chart.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TEACHING METHODS AND TEACHER & LEARNER ROLES** | | |
| **Method** | **Teacher Roles** | **Learner Roles** |
| Situational Language Teaching | Context Setter Error Corrector | Imitator Memorizer |
| Audio-lingualism | Language Modeler Drill Leader | Pattern Practicer Accuracy Enthusiast |
| Communicative Language Teaching | Needs Analyst Task Designer | Improvisor Negotiator |
| Total Physical Response | Commander Action Monitor | Order Taker Performer |
| Community Language Learning | Counselor Paraphraser | Collaborator Whole Person |
| The Natural Approach | Actor Props User | Guesser Immerser |
| Suggestopedia | Auto-hypnotist Authority Figure | Relaxer True-Believer |
| Figure 2. Methods and Teacher and Learner Roles | | |

As suggested in the chart, some schools of methodology see the teacher as ideal language model and commander of classroom activity (e.g., Audio-Lingual Method, Natural Approach, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response) whereas others see the teacher as background facilitator and classroom colleague to the learners (e.g., Communicative Language Teaching, Cooperative Language Learning).

There are other global issues to which spokespersons for the various methods and approaches respond in alternative ways. For example, should second language learning by adults be modeled on first language learning by children? One set of schools (e.g., Total Physical Response, Natural Approach) notes that first language acquisition is the only universally successful model of language learning we have, and thus that second language pedagogy must necessarily model itself on first language acquisition. An opposed view (e.g., Silent Way, Suggestopedia) observes that adults have different brains, interests, timing constraints, and learning environments than do children, and that adult classroom learning therefore has to be fashioned in a way quite dissimilar to the way in which nature fashions how first languages are learned by children.

Another key distinction turns on the role of perception versus production in early stages of language learning. One school of thought proposes that learners should begin to communicate, to use a new language actively, on first contact (e.g., Audio-Lingual Method, Silent Way, Community Language Learning), while the other school of thought states that an initial and prolonged period of reception (listening, reading) should precede any attempts at production (e.g., Natural Approach).

WHAT DO WE MEAN INNOVATION IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

Firstly, we must understand the traditional way of teaching, which according to Dhamodaran and Rengarajan (2009) has the following characteristics

* + Teachers often continuously talk for an hour without knowing students

response and feedback.

* + The material presented is only based on lecturer notes and textbooks.
  + Teaching and learning are concentrated on “plug and play” method rather than

practical aspects.

* + The handwriting of the lecturer decides the fate of the subject.
  + There is insufficient interaction with students in classroom.
  + More emphasis has been given on theory without any practical and real life

time situations.

* + Learning from memorization but not understanding.
  + Marks rather than result oriented.

There are so many examples of innovations in language teaching and learning. Some of the methods previously mentioned were meant to be innovation in the era. However, since the rapid advanced of IT technology, most innovations are colsely related to the use of computer, such as the use of multimedia through computer.

Multimedia, is the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, audio and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience. Traditional educational approaches have resulted in a mismatch between what is taught to the students and what the industry needs. As such, many institutions are moving towards problem based learning as a solution to producing graduates who are creative; think critically and analytically, to solve problems.

Another example of innovations in ESL and EFL Learning is the application of task based learning activities

Nunan (1993) summarises the dimension of tasks as follow:

A communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (p. 28).

According to Nunan (1993) an innovative task needs components such as goals, input data, setting, learner’s role and teachers role which is described as in the following figure:

**Components of task as proposed by Nunan (1993)**

GOALS TEACHER ROLES

**TASK**

INPUT DATA LEARNER ROLES

ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES SETTINGS

1. GOALS

Why did you get learners engage in Task X:

I want to develop their confidence in speaking

I want to develop their personal writing skills

I want to encourage them to negotiate information between each other, to develop their interactional skills

I want to develop their study skills

1. INPUTS

Input refers to the data that form the point of departure for the task. There are so many inputs that can be used as Hanover (1986) suggests:

- letters (formal/informal - calorie counter

- newspaper extracts - recipe

- picture stories - extract from a play

- Telecom account - weather forecast

- driver’s licence - diary

- missing person’ s declaration form - bus time table

- social security forms - notice board items

- business cards - housing request form

- memo note - star signs, and so on

Including results of browsing, face book data, and twitter

1. ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES

Skill Getting and Skill Using (Rivers and Temperley (1978).

## PERCEPTION

(of units, categories and functions)

COGNITION

(knowledge)

SKILL ASBTRACTION

GETTING (internalising rules relating

categories and functions

ARTICULATION

(practice in formulating

communication

PRODUCTION

(or pseudo communication

CONSTRUCTION

(practice in formulating

communication)

RECEPTION

(comprehension

of a message)

SKILL INTERACTION

USING (or real

communication) MOTIVATION

EXPRESSION (to communicate)

(conveying

personal meaning)

1. Teacher Roles
   1. The types of function teachers are expected to fulfil, e.g. whether that of practice of director, counsellor or model
   2. The degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place
   3. The degree to which the teacher is responsible for content
   4. The interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners
2. Learner roles

Richard and Rogers summarize the learner’s role as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approach** | **Roles** |
| 1. Oral/Situational  2. Audiolingual  3. Communicative  4. Total Physical Response  5. The Silent Way  6.Community Language Learning  7.The Natural Approach  8. Suggestopedia | * Learner listens to teacher and repeats, no control over content or method * Learner has little control; reacts to teacher direction, passive, reactive role * Learner has an active, negotiative role; should contribute as well as receive * Learner is a listener and performer; little influence over content and none over methodology * Learner learns through systematic analysis; must become independent and autonomous * Learners are members of a social group or community; move from dependence to autonomy as learning progresses * Learners play an active role and have relatively high degree of control over content language production * Learners are passive, have a little control over content or methods |

f.SETTING

Settings refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied in the task, and it also requires consideration of whether the task us to be carried out wholly or partially outside the classroom.

SOME EXAMPLES OF INNOVATION ACTIVITIES IN ESL LEARNING

1. Information gap tasks

In an information gap activity, one person has certain information that must be shared with others in order to solve a problem, gather information or make decisions (Neu & Reeser, 1997). These types of activities are extremely effective in the L2 classroom. They give every student the opportunity to speak in the target language for an extended period of time and students naturally produce more speech than they would otherwise. In addition, speaking with peers is less intimidating than presenting in front of the entire class and being evaluated. Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are forced to negotiate meaning because they must make what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task (Neu & Reeser, 1997).

  Ur (1996) lists the characteristics of a successful speaking activity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Learners talk a lot.** As much as possible of the period of time allotted to the activity is in fact occupied by learner talk. |
|  | **Participation is even.** Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all get a chance to speak, and contributions are fairly evenly distributed. |
|  | **Motivation is high.** Learners are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective. |
|  | **Language is of an acceptable level.** Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy. |

### Example of Vocabulary Activity using information gap task

Information gap activities such as the example below function as vocabulary lessons after students have already encountered the vocabulary in the text.

Teacher and/or class prepare 2 lists of about 20 items. List A contains people and animals. List B contains objects. The aim is to combine one words from List A with one from List B. Example: What can a/an A do with a/an B? Why does a/an A need a/an B? Students create a list of combinations.

An information gap activity can also be used as a main reading task when students need to share information they read from an assigned passage. An especially effective information gap activity is [A jigsaw reading](http://w3.kfar-olami.org.il/reed/resources/landmark/activities.htm) which is a type of activity that is done usually in groups. In a jigsaw reading, the teacher can use academic texts or texts from the students' coursebook.

In the traditional method of jigsaw reading, the teacher divides a text into sections and assigns each group a section to read. Each group is responsible for understanding its part. Then new groups are formed with one member from each previous team. The new groups now have one representative from each section and each can share what s/he understood from his or her part of text. Students then can either write a summary of the text or answer questions about the entire text.

c. Chained stories

A FAIR SHARE FOR EVERYONE

A poor peasant once found that he had no grain left.

He decided to ask his landlord for some.

But he did not want to go without a present

So he caught a goose, killed it, cooked it and took it to the landlord.

The landlord thanked the peasant for this fine present and then he asked him this question:

“There are six people in my family,” he said.

“My wife and I have two sons and two daughters.

How can we divide this goose so that each of us gets a fair share?”

=============================================

Another peasant lived next to this one. Although he was richer, he was not wiser than his neighbor.

He heard that his neighbor took a present to the landlord and that he was given both grain and money. He decided to the same. So he killed five geese and took them as a present to the landlord.

The landlord thanked him for this fine present and then he asked him this question: There are six people in my family,” he said, “my wife and I, our two sons and our two daughters. How can I divide these five geese so that each of us gets a fair share?”

The peasant thought for a long time, but he could not divide the five geese equally.

So the landlord called the first peasant back and asked him how he would divide them.

Disordered descriptive text 1:

**Hana’s Garden**

The garden is located in front of her house. It is near the gate. There are many plants and flower in the garden. There are mango and papaya trees around them. They are rose, jasmine, orchid, and so on.

Hana likes them very much. She waters them every morning.

Hana has a beautiful garden.

**Disordered descriptive text 2:**

**Surakarta City**

Surakarta is located 65 km north east of Yogyakarta and 100 km south east of Semarang. In Indonesia, Surakarta has an area 44.03 km2 making it the Indonesia’s tenth biggest city after Yogyakarta. There are 5 subdistricts and 51 administrative villages. The major tribe of Surakarta is predominantly Javanese.

Surakarta has a lot of historic places. There are Kasunan Palace, Mangkunegaran Palace, Klewer Market, Vastenburg fortress, City Hall Gedhe Harjonagoro, Market Loji Gandrung, and so on. It has also a lot of engaging places and shopping centers, there are Solo Grand Mall, Solo Square, Solo Center Grocery and many more. Restaurants, hotels and other public facilities can be found in all regions.

Surakarta is a city in Central java Indonesia. It is also referred to as Solo or Sala.

Surakarta is a center of Javanese culture especially dances, musics, and traditional ceremony, such as Gamelan music, Keroncong, Puppets, Show Sekaten, 1st suro night, Syawlan ceremony, and so on. It is also center of Batik, since it has the Biggest Batik center in Indonesia namely Klewer market. Moreover, there are some well-known foods, such as Nasi Liwet, Nasi Timlo, Gudeg, Bakpia Balong, Intip, and Serabi

Disordered descriptive text 3:

**MacQuarie University**

The university is located at the north Ryde Green belt, Sydney, where The New South Wales government sets aside 135 hectares for the institution in 1964. MacQuarie area was arural retreat on the city fringe, but today the campus and its surroundings have evolved beyond recognition. The North Ryde District has grown into a district of intensive occupation and hoted by a vibrans.

Blessed with a fortunate location and room to breathe MacQuarie can be proud of that carefulpalnning that get day and enrich the university most attractive natural features. A cross the campus, this emphasis on the importance of landscape has created images of the university are most likely to pleasurably recollect.

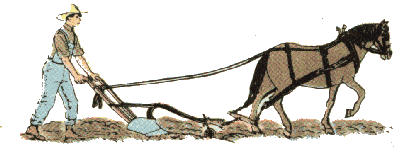
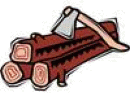
One of the highlight of the landscape creek sides and valley floor, a grass amphitheatre, and artificial take surrounded by nature plants and eucalypts.

Today, a railway station is under construction. In three years time, MacQuarie will be the only university in Australia with a railway station on site. MacQuarie is poised to be the most readily accessible in Sydney region by rail and motorway, yet training its beautiful side.

MacQuarie University is one of the largest universities in Australia. This year in 2011, it celebrates its 46th anniversary.

Activity 2:

Direction: you have to work in pair with your chairmate. a student is A and the other one is B. A should describe the thing about the characteristics of the thing in order to B can guess what it is. And then change conversely. You may choose one of the pictures below!



**Plow Cattle**

**Wheel Barrow**

**Hoe**

**Axe**

**Pitch Fork**

**Sickle**



**Garden Cart**

**Scythe**



**Cricket**

Activity 3:

Direction: you should describe the characteristic of the things in order to your friends can guess it! (Teacher chooses two of the picture combinations of farming tools and farming pest). While the others try to guess and fill the worksheet based on your descriptions.

**WORK SHEET**

Direction: write down your name and class. You have to fill the blank with the name thing that your friends are described in the front of class!

**Name :**

**Class :**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Name of the student | Name of things | | Comment\* |
| 1st thing | 2nd thing |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
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| 20 |  |  |  |  |

\*Note: for comment you can write based on your opinion is your friend good, enough, or bad.

1. **Jigsaw**

A jigsaw listening or reading activity is an **information gap** exercise. Learners hear or read different parts of a text, then exchange information with others in order to complete a task.

Example   
Learners in three groups hear different versions of an encounter with aliens. Together with other learners, they complete comprehension questions based on all three descriptions of the encounter.

In the classroom   
Jigsaw tasks are an excellent way to integrate the skills, as learners read or listen to a text, and speak and listen to others to reconstruct the information in the text. Most written texts can be made into a jigsaw activity easily. Managing a jigsaw listening exercise is more challenging as it requires multiple tape recorders, enough space to listen without disturbing other groups, and time.

C0NCLUDING REMARK

As a conclusion, innovative second and foreign language learning can be created by teachers as well as students by understanding the theory of and principle of language teaching and learning, understanding the existing language teaching methodology and principles of task design principles. Innovations can involve both IT and non IT materials. The IT materials involve the use of computer and its application, while non IT requires teachers’ creativity to make the learning situation more alive and thus create students to be willing to learn and achieve maximum results of second and foreign language learning goals. However, no matter good or bad a teaching methodology or learning materials, whether IT is present or absent, it is the teacher who plans an important role. In the hands of a good teacher, a bad methodology can be good, and hence a good methodology can be a disaster in the hands of bad a teacher. Therefore, it is the teacher who must transform him/herself to be an innovator. Innovative teachers will change their role as an information and knowledge provider into an information and knowledge facilitator.

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**Biography**

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1. Presented in One Day Seminar Learning English through Innovation in Modern Era to Face the Professional Teacher in 2015 Organized by English Department Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Sunday, 31 July 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)