

Creativity and Innovation in Language Materials Development and Language Teaching Methods In Asia and BeyondElda Martha Suri¹, Ungsi A.O.Marmai²¹ Universitas Ekasakti, E-mail: marthasuri.ems@gmail.com² Universitas Negeri Padang, E-mail: ungsimarmail@gmail.com**ABSTRAK**

Pendidikan di Asia sedang mengalami perubahan sebagaimana kita bergerak dari tahun-tahunmencoba dan menguji strategi pembelajaran hafalan dan berusaha untuk menciptakan keterampilan berpikir kreatif. Dalam rangka mendorong siswa untuk berkonsentrasi dan berpartisipasi dalam kelas, guru harus kreatif dan inovatif. Berbagai macam bahan dan metode pengajaran harus dieksplorasi dimana siswa berasal dari latar yang berbeda dengan gaya belajar dan kemampuan yang berbeda. Guru yang inovatif dapat mengambil informasi dari teks, audio dan visual untuk tujuan pengajaran. Tulisan ini dimaksudkan untuk menginformasikan, memotivasi dan untuk mengeksplorasi banyak kemungkinan membuat pengajaran tersebut kenyataan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pola berpikir sebagai model baru pembelajaran yang digunakan dalam pembelajaran di kelas.

Kata Kunci: Kreatif dan Inovatif, Metode Pengajaran, dan Pengembangan Materi**ABSTRACT**

Education in Asia is undergoing changes as we move from the years tahunmencoba and test strategy learning rote and tried to create creative thinking skills. In order to encourage students to concentrate and participate in class, the teacher has to be creative and innovative. A wide range of materials and teaching methods should be explored where students come from backgrounds with different learning styles and different capabilities. The innovative teachers can retrieve information from text, audio and visual for the purpose of teaching. This paper is intended to inform, motivate and to explore the many possibilities to make teaching such a reality. This study aims to explore the patterns of thinking as a new model of learning used in learning in the classroom.

Keywords: Creative and Innovative Teaching Methods, and Material Development

A. INTRODUCTION

Creativity and innovation in language materials development and language teaching methods in Asia and beyond are needed because in the last two decades many studies have reported that students in foreign language classrooms experience a considerable amount of foreign language anxiety compared with other classes. Language anxiety that has developed from an unpleasant learning experience affects language learning in various ways. Many anxious students achieve lower grades, engage in over-study without better results, and have more trouble taking in information in the foreign language, processing that information, and displaying their L2 abilities. Moreover, language anxiety influences language students' participation in classroom activities and their willingness to communicate, and influences the quality of performance tasks. Therefore, when communicative competence has become a common goal of language teaching, greater effort is needed to understand the causes of language problems in order to help learners feel less stressed about engaging in communication in class.

The sources of language anxiety in the classroom are into six categories: personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language learning, instructor learner interactions, classroom procedures, and testing. Of these sources, Young argued that personal issues have been the most cited ones. Similarly, the need for more studies examining the relationship between anxiety and learner characteristics. These studies would help us increase our understanding of language learning from the learner's perspective and provide a wider range of insights.

Today, the nature of testing is becoming less impositional and more humanistic. Such "inhumane" oral interview tests, however, still predominate, frequently as the curricular climax of a language course. Even though the purpose of oral testing is to assess the students' oral ability in daily communication, it has been empirically shown that some students cannot demonstrate the ability they have acquired because of anxiety. In order to allow students to demonstrate their skills fully, teachers will have to create a new form of oral test.

The fear of making errors and obsession with fluency are the most frequently mentioned causes of anxiety for students. Such anxiety might derive from the proficiency-oriented language education these students have experienced in the past, where the measure of achievement was based too heavily on accuracy and fluency, rather than communicative ability.

The student's feedback above touches on two critical problems in the traditional oral interview test. One is the students' anxiety, which is considered to affect their performance seriously. The problem is because the students has less awareness on the cause of this anxiety. The student quoted above explains her poor performance with anxiety. The problem of anxiety remains unresolved and becomes possibly a chronic mental block that affects her every performance. Anxiety is thus an important factor in the language learning process and should not be neglected. The repeated experiences of anxiety cause students to associate this mental condition with language performance. Once anxiety becomes a trait, it can have pervasive negative effects on a student's



efforts to communicate. This trait anxiety and defines it as the tendency to become anxious in anticipation of any threatening situation. The other problem is students' perceptions of oral communication abilities. Students think that oral skill is about answering a teacher's question with grammatical accuracy or fluency. Obviously, this is a negative influence from the traditional oral interview test, which puts too much emphasis on accuracy and fluency. In addition, in most cases, these tests consist of one-sided questions. Even in the multiple-task format, the communication between the tester and testee is a superficial exchange of words, not emotional interactions for true engagement.

In real human communication, the sender has to be not only in the sender position but also in the receiver position before he or she can send anything. Thus, the problem of the traditional test is its neglect of the fact that communication is a shared responsibility between speaker and listener, and the listener's preparedness to understand, which narrows the view of communicative ability. Purposes of the Research

1. To know how the creativity and innovation applied in language materials development to the students' learning process in teaching English in classroom.
2. To know how the creativity and innovation applied in language teaching methods to the students' learning process in teaching English in classroom.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

2.1. Language Materials Development and Language Teaching Methods

2.1.1. Self-Esteem in Language Learning

Similar to anxiety, self-esteem is also a multi-dimensional term. Heyde (1983) examined three kinds of self-esteem: global self-esteem, task self-esteem, and specific self-esteem. She defined specific self-esteem in language learning as "evaluations subjects consciously make of their worthiness in situations where they are using foreign language and evaluations they make of individual aspects of self-esteem such as language learning ability, educational self-esteem, and intellectual self-esteem"(p. 176).

In general psychology, Greenberg et al. (1992) posited a terror management theory to the effect that people with high self-esteem are less likely to be anxious and that threats to self-esteem cause anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) were concerned that foreign language learning can deprive learners of their normal means of communication, their freedom to make errors, and their ability to behave like normal people, which may lead to lower self-esteem. In an interview with Young (1992), Krashen indicated that people with low self-esteem worry about what their peers think and they are concerned with pleasing others, which has a great deal to do with anxiety.

That is, when students who were good at other subjects could not work well in the subject of English, their self-satisfaction in learning and intellectual ability could be affected, which may cause learner to feel anxiety when they use the foreign language.

2.1.2. Self-Perception of Speaking Proficiency

Self-perception of speaking proficiency refers to self-judgment about speaking ability level compared with others. Young (1991) considered that students who start out with a self-perceived low ability level in a foreign language or second language are the



most likely to be anxious in the classroom. Similarly, Foss and Reitzel (1988) discussed the need for an anxiety model that includes learners' self-perception. In her interviews with ten anxious French learners in college courses, Price (1991) found that many of her anxious participants believed that other students were better at learning foreign languages. This study also showed that foreign language learners compared their ability in the target language with that of native speakers of the target language. Specifically, the students who were afraid of making errors believed that they were not pronouncing words as native speakers would and felt embarrassed by their inability to pronounce correctly.

2.1.3. Promoting Self-Reflection on Communication

Prior to the conversations, an orientation session was held to explain the format and to encourage the students to think about humanistic communication. To enhance the students' awareness about communication, several questions were posed. Examples of the questions:

- (1) What do you think is important for communication?
- (2) What do you do if you don't know how to answer someone's question?
- (3) What do you do if you cannot make yourself understood?
- (4) How can you improve communicative competence?

While discussing the meaning of humanistic communication, rapport and empathy, the teacher was seated, keeping the same eye-level with the students, to create a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. Some suggestions for communicative strategies, such as asking for clarification or paraphrasing, were given to the students. Then, the teachers asked some students to perform in front of the class and gave constructive feedback from the viewpoint of communication (e.g. what words were effective to establish rapport). The examples and feedback helped the students to reflect on how they can make communication meaningful and enjoyable. The teacher also pointed out that while memorization of textbooks might be effective for short-term memory, it would not work well to enhance communicative competence. Because the students realized that it is necessary to communicate with their friends both in and out of the classroom, this process helped to promote students' independent learning.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Type of Research

Development of proposed models A review of literature on foreign language anxiety revealed that self-esteem in language learning, self-perception of speaking proficiency, and learners' beliefs about language learning are not only potential predictors of language anxiety, but are also interrelated during this prediction process.

A qualitative interpretive research approach has been adopted for this study. The qualitative approach breaks with traditional research methodology in that it does not focus on the production of objective and reproducible data but is concerned with meaning, and how it informs subjective understanding (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Where quantitative research primarily concerns itself with techniques and instruments



of obtaining data in hypothesis testing, qualitative research is concerned with the meaning of experience, language and symbol. Qualitative approaches aim at enriching our understanding of human experience.

In order to achieve the research objective, four models are proposed. All the proposed models are made up of four latent constructs. Language anxiety is represented by (a) communication anxiety and (b) fear of negative evaluation. Self-esteem in language learning includes two dimensions: (a) language self-esteem and (b) learning self-esteem. Self-perception of speaking proficiency is represented by two types of comparison: (a) self-perceived speaking proficiency, compared with classmates, and (b) self-perceived speaking proficiency, compared with native speakers. Finally, learners' beliefs about language learning include three types of language learning beliefs: (a) learners' beliefs about foreign language aptitude, (b) learners' beliefs about the difficulty of language learning and (c) learners' beliefs about the nature of language learning.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study consisted of EFL university students. The students had studied English as a school subject for six years at junior and senior high schools.

3.3. Procedure

Questionnaires in Indonesian translated from an English version by the researcher were administered to the participants. These contain questions on demographic measures and measures of language anxiety, self-esteem in language learning, and self-perception of speaking proficiency, and learners' beliefs about language learning. Participating in the study involved completing the questionnaire after class and returning it to the instructors.

Teaching creatively means assessing activities and materials for their potential to support creative teaching. Researchers have identified a number of dimensions of creative tasks: they are said to involve open-ended problem solving, to be adapted to the abilities of the participants, and to be carried out under constraints. Some of the features that Dörnyei (2001) identifies as productive language learning tasks can also be seen to promote creative responses:

- Challenge: tasks in which learners solve problems, discover something, overcome obstacles, or find information
- Interesting content: topics that students already find interesting and that they would want to read about outside of class, such as stories we find about sports and entertainment personalities we find on YouTube and the internet
- The intriguing element: tasks that concern ambiguous, problematic, paradoxical, controversial, contradictory or incongruous material stimulate curiosity

Creative teachers develop custom-made lessons that match their students' needs and interests or adapt and customize the book to match their students' interests. While in many cases a book may work perfectly well without the need for much adaptation, in some cases different levels of adaptation may be needed. Through the process of adaptation the creative teacher personalizes the text, making it a better teaching resource, and individualizes it for a particular group of learners.



D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In order to encourage students to concentrate and participate in the class, teachers need to be creative and innovative. A wide variety of materials and methods of teaching should be explored as students come in different packages with different learning styles and capabilities. But perennial problems plague both the novice and the experienced teacher. The innovative teacher can extract information from texts, audio and visual sources of information for teaching purposes.

In schools and institutes of learning, there are set curriculum guidelines to follow in the teaching of English as a second language. Usually, emphasis is placed on the teaching of the four skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. English language teaching is made difficult by the increasing large classes that we face and the hot afternoons where most of these classes are carried out.

1. How can I generate interest among students?

What is interest? According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, interest is a sense of curiosity or concern about something. Ask any student to define interest and he will normally associate it with the things that he likes to do; never with learning English. Given that most students will only actually use the English language within the four walls of the classroom, it is of utmost significance that teachers imbue that sense of interest for learning English within the hearts their charges. The power of stimulating such a sense lies predominantly in the hands of the teacher.

Many students are afraid to communicate in English for fear of being laughed at by their peers. We teach English because we want to pass on the joy of knowing, understanding and using the language well. The English language is certainly more than prescribed texts and objective questions. Therefore, a student getting a distinction for English in a public exam does not mean that he has caught the passion for learning English. How then can we as teachers inculcate an interest for learning English? Just three words: creativity, understanding and encouragement.

2. How can I make use of everyday objects to bring fun into the classroom?

Surrounding us is a wealth of information that can be used and reused in the everyday English language classroom. Trying to make our classes interesting can be one uphill battle. As language teachers we are always foraging for ideas to keep the class 'afloat' in the sea of indifference, passivity and nonchalance. How can we challenge our students to speak and to participate? How can we motivate students who are not able to visualize the importance of the English language in the everyday world and subsequently do not see the need to master it well?

Every teacher and student is creative if he is given the opportunity, time and support to express that creativity. Activities for language teaching can be based on everyday materials. We should not be afraid to try out unconventional tools based on personal experience in the classroom. Both students and lecturers have creative potential. Lecturers can incorporate their creative skills into the teaching of oral skills. Students when allowed to explore their creative skills find speaking in the English language interesting, relevant and productive. Some people may have creative potential, but it remains latent unless they manifest it in some observable form, by using



the creative resources available to them. Creative and imaginative activities help alleviate problems that hinder language learning.

3. Task-based teaching/ Activity-centred teaching

Students need opportunities to be active participants in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and practice language in communication with their teacher, their peers, and others.

Using projects and everyday materials to teach English is like an adventure. It basically consists of hands-on learning and debriefing. Hands-on learning is learner-based, process-oriented and relational. It involves shared experiences in a particular situation. Through active discussion, students discover language principles at work in the situation. Through debriefing, students are able to sort and order the information gathered and relate it to the lesson. The teacher guides the students but it is the students who actually discover for themselves what is being taught.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Creativity, understanding and encouragement will go a long way towards establishing rapport with our students and towards learning the English language. Using task-based learning to teach English does not fall into the well-trying comfort zone of traditional teaching. The average teacher feels comfortable with the prescribed textbook. The introduction of task-based learning into the classroom may bring about the fear that 'there is no teaching going on'. This unfortunately denies students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the English language.

It is necessary that teachers try using other materials as a teaching resource. The language of communication is real-life or authentic and untextbook-like in design. By incorporating hands-on projects into their everyday language classroom, teachers are preparing students to enter the real world. Teachers can create a non-threatening environment to encourage both shy and talkative students to participate. In short, teachers can help students catch the passion for learning English.

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