Interactive Learning: An Innovation for English Language Acquisition

Rusreena Rusli, Haida Umiera Hashim, Harwati Hashim, Melor Md Yunus

Abstract: The education field is constantly venturing into many creative forms. Interactive learning is a hands-on approach to boost students’ engagement and confidence. With new innovation, interactive learning enables students to reinforce critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in second language acquisition. Thus, the aim of this research is to design and create a new interactive tool for second language teaching which can benefit both teachers and ESL students. This teaching and learning tool can be used for the 4 basic skills in ESL classrooms namely reading, listening, speaking and writing. A total of 30 students from a rural public secondary school were involved in this study. This interactive tool can help in building students’ motivation in learning especially among the low proficiency students and create autonomous learners who enjoyed and have fun while learning English. In conclusion, it is hoped that this research could add knowledge to the field of interactive tools and promotes creativity among second language teachers.

Keywords: Active Learning, Connectivism, ESL, Interactive Learning, Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

I. INTRODUCTION

In this 21st century, classroom setting will never be limited to the teacher’s dominance as a source of information. There is a continuous move towards more students’ autonomy in second language acquisition. Consequently, creative teaching and learning strategies are always the spotlight in language acquisition [1]. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of people and groups who are learning a language consequent to learning their first one and the proc of obtaining. It is also additionally called the target language and students who can explore learning with imagination and creativity, research, or English [3].

What is learned in acquiring a second language and how it is learned, is usually affected by many factors [4]. These learning factors are significantly impacted by social, cultural, and economic components that influenced the status of target language and students [2]. The interesting inquiry of why some L2 students are better than others expects educators and researchers to explore the broad aspects in second language learning. Students should be engaged in an interactive way of learning process to encourage attention in producing practical second language acquisition for real life circumstances [5].

Therefore, in this paper, the researchers aim to design and create an innovation for second language acquisition through interactive learning. This innovation may be utilised as a learning material for students and also act as a teaching tool for ESL teachers.

II. INTERACTIVE LEARNING

Interactive learning is based on active learning, involves computer based learning and experiential learning, prompt feedback and also suggests reflection. It connects the joint between content delivery and critical thinking in language class [6]. Interactive learning combines tutorials and activities into interactive classes with numerous iterations of theory, model, exercise, solution and reflection [6]. Teachers educate and practice small chunks of information in short cycles. They utilize quick responses in activities to improve the learning experience in enormous classes so that students can easily reflect and perform their knowledge [7].

Hands-on exercises in class uphold students' motivation commitment and permit continuous appraisal over the course [8]. Interactive learning bolsters critical thinking skills which are the foundation of the analytical reasoning that students need. Student who can explore learning with imagination and logic is learning how to decide, instead of simply memorizing information. Additionally, interactive learning shows students how to team up and work effectively in groups, an essential ability in working environments in the future.

Furthermore, this approach anticipates dynamic participation of students and the utilization of technology in the study hall. Blended in the technological advances with face to face conduction in formal classrooms can solidifies learning and provide interactive settings for second language acquisition [9] [10] [11]. However, teachers ought to give proper direction during the learning procedure to prevent confusions and to ease the learning process. Interactive learning depends on dialogue and requires students' dynamic cognitive commitment while handling creativity, research, or difficult tasks.
Teaching second language acquisition may require both student-teacher communication and peer cooperation between students [12]. Interactive learning tools can encourage students to be autonomous. Students ought to be given greater flexibility in the teaching and learning process as education is currently heading towards the student-centred approach [13]. Through the benefits of this approach, students can be progressive which helps to improve their language acquisition, particularly when the students assess this approach positively. Besides that, it is normal that the students are more than ready to utilize them in their language learning due to the fun and interesting aspects [14]. In conclusion, interactive learning stresses the significance of involvement of students in building knowledge. Real-life and practice-based encounters in real world environments are viewed as drives for effective teaching and learning. Teachers need to balance factual, practicality and life experience as the basic components in second language learning.

III. CONNECTIVISM

Connectivism is a conceptual framework which refers to learning as technology and socialization influenced [15]. In connectivism, the beginning stage for learning happens when information is actuated by students involving and taking part in a learning community. Engagement can bring up conversations among students and other individuals from the community. These conversations in the web 2.0 era comprises not only words but also pictures, video, interactive media and so on [16]. As indicated by Connectivism theory, it is not appropriate to consider learning simply as an internal development of knowledge. In fact, learning is also taken by what the students can reach in the external networks [17].

Many learning institutions that comprehend the changing situation of how students learn, where they learn, and what they need to learn, have made use of sites like Edx, Moocs where anybody can take a course as well as take part in public conversations in many given topics. These platforms have created a network of students who keep on driving the discussion forward. They have utilized technology and innovation to share their work and take part in open discussions [18].

Following are the eight principles of Connectivism Learning Theory by [19]:

- Learning and information rests in a variety of opinions.
- Learning is a procedure of associating specific nodes or data sources.
- Learning may begin in non-human machines.
- Preferences to know more will be more crucial than what is presently known.
- Supporting and keeping up connections is expected to encourage continuous learning.
- Capacity to see associations between fields, thoughts, and ideas is a center expertise.
- Up to date and accurate thinking is the purpose of all connectivist learning practices.
- Decision making is itself a learning procedure.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This developmental research approach is based on [20] whereby three phases are applied in the study:

A. Needs Analysis

A needs analysis was conducted involving 30 rural high school students as the respondents. The particular respondents are from the public schools in the area of a state in Malaysia. The students are between 13-15 years old. The researchers interviewed the students and had a discussion with them about their perceptions and personal experiences in learning English language, especially during their English lessons in the classroom. The respondents were also asked about their preferences when it comes to learning English language in the classroom. Based on the need analysis conducted, the researchers found out that the students had issues to understand English language because they think that the materials that are always given to them are quite plain or in simpler words, not interactive. They also had less interest in learning the subject as they felt that English was very hard to learn and they were not having fun in their learning. Most of the students also revealed that they wish that their school teachers can be more interactive and provide them with more relatable and interesting materials.

B. Design Phase

The findings from the analysis phase are used to design a learning and teaching materials for teaching English. The particular material is an interactive video which is believed to be able to help learners to be more intrigued in learning English language. The video can also be used at home as self-learning materials for learners. The researchers recognized the importance of the learners to master basic skills in learning English, so researchers believed that this particular material will be able to help learners in all aspects of ESL learning namely i) Listening and speaking skills and ii) Reading and writing skills. The main ideas are to create interesting and interactive video that can attract the learners’ attention. This is also to ensure the learners can make use of the video to help them in real life communications.

C. Developmental Phase

Once the design phase was done and settled, researchers then analysed the findings, also sources from the previous stage. The researchers recorded the content for the video at several locations for several days involving a few relatable real-life contents in order to provide students with such interactive materials. The vlogs were recorded using a camera with the green screen as the background and later was edited using a video editing software.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding, which is the product of this study is then later analysed to be useful to be used for the integration of different skills of English as a Secondary Language (ESL) Learning namely; listening and speaking also reading and writing. The particular interactive video designed and developed is believed to be able to help students with their ESL learning skills.
When it comes to listening and speaking, the particular interactive video is believed to be able to help students with the way the pronounce certain words and also the way communication is formed. Through the material, students are able to hear every single word mentioned in the video and will be able to copy the way certain words are pronounced. Students will also be able to relate to this particular material as it is designed and developed to be meaningful and relatable to the students. The contents of this particular product are all real-life based situations and are believed to be related to the students’ life. Researchers believed that authentic and interactive materials for teaching and learning are important in acquiring languages. [13] mentioned in their study that interactive materials are able to help students to become more autonomous in their learning. They will be able to relate to the materials given to them better and it also helps to spark their prior knowledge.

Fig. 1. The interactive content of the video on asking students to read along

Figure 1 shows how the particular video works. The interactive content of the video asks students to read along while watching it. This is to ensure students to be able to be more participative and autonomous in learning English language. This is also to make sure the students to be more interested in watching the video. Other than listening and speaking, this video is also believed will be able to help students to improve their reading and writing skills. Another special trait of this particular video is that the subtitles are provided in helping the students to have an easier process of learning. These particular traits of this particular interactive video are proven to be able to assist students to comprehend the content better. In terms of assisting students with better writing skills, the content of this video provides students with meaningful and life-based situations. Students are able to make use of the contents of the interactive video as a reference in brainstorming ideas for their writings.

VI. CONCLUSION

Acquiring a language, especially English language is a complex process and it takes an army of practice to be proficient in English language. Today’s era of globalisation has provided both teachers and students with more advanced ways of teaching and learning. Teachers should be able to play around with more interactive and meaningful materials where students are able to relate to rather than merely just plain notes or handouts. It is believed that teachers should facilitate their students more and let them explore the language on their own. Teachers, in particular must be more productive in being more innovative and interactive during the teaching and learning session in order to provide students with more meaningful session of learning.

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