Researching Current Topics in ELT

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National Institute of Education Singapore

2-hour Seminar held at UPH, Jakarta, 5 June 2012
What does current mean?

- Contemporary
- Recent journal issues
- Contextually relevant
Using jazz chants to teach pronunciation?

Contrastive analysis of students’ grammar errors?

Promoting critical thinking skills in the language classroom?

Incidental learning through meaning-focused learning?
Current Topics in ELT

Contemporary

Recent journal issues

Contextually relevant
Feedback revolution: What gets in the way?

Explicit grammar rules and L2 acquisition

If only it were true: the problem with the four conditionals
‘Teacher, the tape is too fast!’
Extensive listening in ELT

Metacognitive instruction for helping less-skilled listening

Adapting cooperative learning in tertiary ELT
From classroom to workplace: Tracking socio-pragmatic development

Teachers researching their own practice
Notes on contributors
Full Text (PDF)  Request Permissions

Rod Ellis
Editorial
Full Text (PDF)  Request Permissions
Language Teaching Research: 2009-2011

Extensive reading in a challenging environment: a comparison of extensive and intensive reading approaches in Saudi Arabia

Exploring the relationship between listening development and strategy use
Language Teaching Research: 2009-2011

What aspects of vocabulary knowledge do textbooks give attention to?

Listening to our learners' voices: what demotivates Japanese high school students?
Current Topics in ELT

- Contemporary
- Recent journal issues
- Contextually relevant (Indonesia)
Contextually Relevant (Indonesia)

- **Very High**: Denmark, Netherlands
- **High**: Germany, Malaysia
- **Moderate**: Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea
- **Low**: Saudi Arabia, China, Spain
- **Very Low**: Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>EF EPI Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norway</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>66.58</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Panama</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>31.74</td>
<td>Very Low Proficiency</td>
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</tbody>
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Indonesia: 34
• How GBA is carried out?
• Curricular or implementation problems?
• Alternative approaches to GBA
• Raising EL teachers’ proficiency.
1. Where would you place English teachers in Indonesia?
2. What would be an acceptable level of proficiency for English teachers?
**Band 8: Very good user:** has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

**Band 7: Good user:** has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
Band 6: Competent user: has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band 5: Modest user: has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

Band 4: Limited user: basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
Choosing a Topic

- Contextual Relevance
- Theoretical currency
- Practicality
- Expertise/Resource
- Personal Interest
Ellis’ 10 Principles

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning</td>
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Source: http://asian-efl-journal.com/sept_05_re.pdf
Proficient users of English have thousands of these fixed phrases.
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ellis’ 10 Principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case study: Belicia

- Avid reader since SMP years
- Has read some 200 English novels
- Some titles read over several times
Case study: Belicia

- SMAN 5 (Yr. 3) Bandung
- Scored 570 on TOEFL in Yr.1
- Member of award-winning debating team

Evidence of the power of extensive L2 input
Two of the most influential things in my journey of learning English: reading novels and watching TV series. … Of course, it doesn't happen instantly but over time. I began with easy materials before moving on to the more difficult ones.

Toefl score (2004): 593
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<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners</td>
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Case study

Membership over 1,000
A: My students speak English with bahasa structure. For example Mr. Andy where is? many time I hear that. I want to make this problem as my research. What is the suitable title for this research?. and what kind of theory should I use?. Please help me...

B: Seeing from your story, I'd say that the primary theoretical framework would be error analysis.
ANL: Mohon maaf sebelumnya, terus terang saya memilik ketertarikan untuk meniliti fenomena yang sama dengan pak A. Hanya saja saya ingin sekali meneliti dari segi proses yang menghasilkan bentuk kalimat seperti itu.

Ada satu model pemrosesan bahasa kedua yang sangat baru bagi saya, Competition Model - MacWhinney. Saya ingin sekali mengaplikasikan model ini untuk mengetahui dimana kecenderungan pembelajar Indonesia membuat kesalahan dan bagaimana proses yang mereka lalui di dalam kepala mereka sehingga menghasilkan kesalahan tersebut.
Theoretical Currency and Relevance

- Indonesianized sentences
- Error Analysis?
- Competition Model?
- ???
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>They haven't learned how to produce sentences using appropriate grammar rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>They haven’t had enough practice in producing these sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The teacher has not done a good job teaching them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>They are not very smart kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>They rely too much on their mother tongue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>They haven't seen nor heard enough sentences or language to begin with.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>...</td>
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</table>
Researching Your Topic
Researching your topic

• Advice from your supervisors, colleagues etc
• Look at research papers, chapters, books in the library
• Contact authors and ask for advice, their published papers, etc. (write nice email to them)
Researching your topic

- Paul Nation – Vocabulary (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx)
- Jack C Richards – TESOL (http://www.professorjackrichards.com/)
- Stephen Krashen (www.sdkrashen.com)
- Tom Farrell – Reflective Teaching
- George Jacobs – Cooperative Learning
Prof Paul Nation

Professor,
School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

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Street Address: Room 408, Von Zeidt Building, Kelburn Pde, Kelburn Campus

BEStud MA (Hons) DipTESL

Paul Nation is Professor in Applied Linguistics at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies (LALS) at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. He supervises MA and PhD research on vocabulary.
Dr. Richards has written numerous articles on a wide variety of topics in language teaching. The following are examples of recent articles for an audience of classroom language teachers.

Because they are in PDF format, you will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the articles. Please get it here.

- Competence and Performance in Language Teaching

- Moving Beyond the Plateau: From Intermediate to Advanced Levels in Language Learning

- Second Language Teacher Education Today

- Teaching Listening and Speaking: From Theory to Practice

- The Changing Face of TESOL
  - Jack Richards' plenary address at the 2009 TESOL Convention in Denver USA, March 27 2009

- Looking Back: Reflections on a Career in Applied Linguistics
  - This article was written at the request of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, (Beijing, China) to be included in an anthology of Jack Richards' works.
Researching Your Topic

Read, Read and Read!!

- Theoretical papers
- Research papers
- Critiques
- Practical papers
Identify Gaps

- What has / not been done?
- Contextual factors
- Different skill areas?
- Different data gathering instruments
Case Study: Willy’s MA student

Language Learning Strategy

Theoretical papers
Research papers
Practical papers
Critiques
… strategies are the L2 learner’s tool kit for active, conscious, purposeful, and attentive learning and they pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy and self-regulation (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002)
What the critics say?

1. Empirical support is weak.
2. Opportunity Cost
3. Learners already use strategies in their L1
4. Threshold hypothesis

Janie Rees-Miller, Marietta College

Andrew Littlejohn
Sultan Qaboos University in Oman

Michael Swan
Michael Swan (2008) – On compensatory strategies such as guessing from contexts:

…the ultimate purpose of language teaching is to give students the language they need in order to read texts, not to teach them to manage as well as they can without that language (p. 267)
Thinking process

LLS not useful for lower prof level → Choose one skill: Listening → Objective: Listening problem due to lack of practice or strategy? → Design: Descriptive Instrument → Survey and interview
What do experienced EFL teachers think about the role of strategies in listening?
Research Objectives and Questions

State clearly what you want to achieve in your research

- Descriptive
- Correlational
- Experimental
The objectives of this study are to find out:

1. If male and female students use different strategies in learning new vocabulary;

2. If the different strategies result in different types of learning;
The objectives of this study are to find out:

1. If amount and frequency of practice is correlated with types of motivation;
2. If amount and frequency of practice is correlated with levels of proficiency
The objectives of this study are to find out:

1. If extensive reading/listening helps students improve their general proficiency

2. If extensive reading/listening helps students develop more positive attitudes towards language learning
INTRODUCING...

Teacher Voices: Professional Development Group

Membership over 1,000
A Real Problem To Solve

Willy Renandya

IT'S FINE!! YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW EVERY WORD!!

I used to give this advice when my students had difficulty understanding what they read or heard. Is this good advice?

I've been thinking a lot about this lately and I'm beginning to have my doubts. Maybe I have given wrong advice to my students; maybe I've been following other people's suggestions blindly; maybe I have had too much faith on what L1 and L2 experts say about ELT.

Is it possible that our students actually need to know every word?
What do you think?
Six Thinking Hats

Six Thinking Hats

intuition, feelings, hunches, likes, dislikes
Six Thinking Hats

Facts and nothing else!
Six Thinking Hats

Plus points, values, benefits
Six Thinking Hats

Judging
Questioning
doubting
Six Thinking Hats

Creativity
Alternatives
New ideas
Six Thinking Hats

Managing the other hats
According to L1 & L2 Research, people ....

- listen/read for a purpose
- make predictions based on purpose and contextual information
- make guesses when things aren't clear
- Do not listen/read for every word
Willy says no …

- L1 and L2 research does not apply to Indonesia
- Students don’t have linguistic resources to make good guesses
- Students need to increase their vocab; not their guessing skills
Let’s use the 6 thinking hats to assess the genre-based approach to teaching English in Indonesia.
Choosing topic

Researching topic

Objectives and Questions

Methodology Who/What/How

Data Collection and Analysis

Writing up

Research Cycle