EMPLOYING ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE
FOR COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

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I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.
(Chinese proverb)

ABSTRACT

The EFL teaching in Indonesia has been considered as a failure as proven by the fact that senior high school graduates cannot use it in the society. Studies conducted to improve students speaking skill seem to miss the importance of language inputs. Therefore, in this article the writer tries to give ideas on how to design and English teaching materials for workplace/workshop English class for Civil Engineering students following Hutchinson and Waters (1987:108). With such a model, a lesson (material) consists of four elements: *input, content focus, language focus, task.* Inside this model, there is a vocabulary building part. And to be comprehensive, the tasks consist of language task, writing task, and speaking task.

Key words: *failure, input, learning principles, workplace*

The teaching of English in Indonesia has been considered as a failure (Lestari, 1999). This is due to the fact that senior high school graduates are unable to use the language in daily communication. Sadtono (1997) says that one cause of the failure is the social situation which is not particularly conducive to learning English as it is not spoken in the society.

Many more have written about the difficulties associated with student silence in EFL classes in Indonesia. Surely almost all teachers have dealt with this problem, and many have conducted researches of creating approaches, teaching and learning activities, and professional development in response to the problem. All are intended to foster communicative and interaction from their students. There have been some successes; however, many students still do not speak in language classrooms.

Since the primary purpose of language learning is communication, using language to communicate should be the central in all classroom instruction. Often the case, speaking lessons in EFL teaching are offered to provide communicative opportunities in the students' environment. Unfortunately, the large class size in high schools and the emphasis on examinations force the students to learn English in order to be able to pass the examinations, not to be able to use English in daily communication.

As long as EFL teaching aims at passing national examination, it is then treated as a knowledge subject which is explained, analyzed, and practiced in the same way as other subjects. Therefore, students' communicative abilities—speaking and writing—are ignored. As a result, when high school graduates continue their studies to colleges, they are not so competent in speaking that they are unwilling to communicate in the target language.

Meanwhile Nashruddin (2011) says to be able to communicate orally is not an easy task mainly for EFL learners. Further he notices that a great number of successful studies conducted to improve students skill in speaking seem to miss the importance of language input that the students need. In his article he addresses inputs received from the teacher, texts, and classmates as basis of speaking activity.

In this present article the writer tries to highlight environmental/natural input to break up the stuck with English in the workplace/workshop for communication and interaction. The discussion includes the principles of language learning in determining strategies of how to signify English in the workplace/workshop.

In her article Widowati (2011) proposes a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach to succeed her teaching on condition that it is given to an ESP class of approximately tolerable 24 students with prior knowledge in three classroom lessons (3 x 45') per week. It is proved that the approach has brought about betterment in communicative performance. Besides, she has already completed her proposal with some materials intended to encourage the 'sleeping' communicative performance by exposing English in the workplace such as drawings of building, plugging a wall, foundations, etc.

In the material implementation the communicative performance has been exploited from the very beginning when responding the section 'Before You Read'; discussing the content of input reading comprehension 'Development', in which the students are required to focus on the content and 'Language Practice', in which the students are required to focus on the language use. In the next section of productive skill 'Writing Practice' students are required to combine both the content and language focus to do the task of writing. In this phase they are freed to give additional input of the language focus and his own knowledge and abilities in expressing his understanding of the content they want to write. Having completed their writing task, the students have to go to the project of the most 'difficult' productive skill of 'Speaking Practice'.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative approach has developed since the early 1980s. It highlighted the fundamentally communicative properties of language, and classrooms were increasingly characterized by authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks. Today Brown (2001:43) offers six characteristics of CLT which are outlined below:

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative compet-ence (grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic, and strategic).
2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes.
3. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
4. Students in a communicative class ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom.
5. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
6. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge.

Further, Brown (2001:45) presents 22 CLT features listed by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983). To compare, it can be seen that the six characteristics he offered are in line with the following features:

1. Meaning is paramount.
2. Contextualization is a basic premise.
3. Language learning is learning to communicate.
4. Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired.
5. Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it.
6. Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.

Let us sum up some other "profiles" of CLT proposed by Hariyanto (1997) below:

1. The objective is to enable the learners to use the language to communicate in social context; that is appropriate to setting, topic, and participant.
2. Learners will only master the structure points which appear in the communicative contexts presented.
3. The exercises should give learners the opportunity to solve problems or accomplish tasks either in group or individually (Huda in Hariyanto: 114).
4. The learner's role is to response to stimuli based on his understanding and personal information.
5. The teacher's role is providing stimuli or simply involving the learners in solving communication problems in the target language, but not very dominant.

To illustrate the practical classroom implementation of those ideas, the following principles of language learning outlined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:128-130) should be considered.

1. Second language learning is a developmental process. Learners use their existing knowledge to make the new information comprehensible.
2. Language learning is an active process. It is not enough for learners just to *have* the necessary knowledge to make things meaningful; they must also *use* that knowledge. Language processing activity is the organization of information into a meaningful network of knowledge.
3. Language learning is a decision-making process. The process of developing and using a network of knowledge relies upon a train of learner decisions: What knowledge is new? How does it relate to the existing knowledge? What is the underlying pattern? Is there a rule of appropriacy here? Which bits of information are relevant? Which are unimportant?
4. Language learning is not just a matter of linguistic knowledge. The second language learner is someone who is conceptually and cognitively mature, but is linguistically an infant.
5. Language learning is not the learner's first experience with language. Every second language learner is already communicatively competent in one language. They do not know the specific forms, words or possibly some of the concepts of the target language, but they know what communication is and how it is used.
6. Learning is an emotional experience. Our concern should be to develop the positive emotions by, for example:
   - putting less emphasis on the *product* and more on the *process* of getting an answer;
   - making 'interest', 'fun', 'variety' primary considerations in materials and methodology, rather than added extras.
7. Language learning is to a large extent incidental. You can learn a language incidentally, while you are actually thinking about something else. The important point is that the problems should oblige the learners to *use* language and thereby to fix the language into the matrix of knowledge in their minds.
8. Language learning is not systematic. Laying out information in a systematic way will not guarantee learning.

In addition, some principles of EFL learning (Brown, 2001) that must be emphasized on communicative performance are:

1. Automaticity: to gain automaticity, do not overanalyze, do not think too much about forms and rules. Help learners achieve fluency.
2. Meaningful learning: meaningful learning leads toward better long-term retention. Avoid too much grammar, too much drilling, too much testing.
3. Intrinsic motivation: classroom techniques must be self-rewarding; they must be fun, interesting, useful, or challenging.
4. Language ego: learners may feel helpless, defensive, and shy. Treat them with tender loving care. Show supportive attitudes, do not criticize.
5. Self-confidence: learners are likely to be really successful. Help them gain self-confidence by believing that they are capable. Sequence techniques and concepts from easier to more difficult.
6. Risk-taking: successful learners must be willing to be "gamblers". Let them try out language. Do not penalize guessing.

Communicative competence: it is the goal of a language classroom. "Correct answer" is not everything. Give room for fluency and help

learners be independent.

English in the Workplace

To encourage the students to speak, they are asked to express their ideas in writing which acts as a stimulus for oral work. Brown (2001) breaks down real writing into three categories. One suitable category for ESP is vocational/technical writing in which genuine directions for some operation or assembly might be given. This is called 'English in the workplace'.

Writing exercise will generally be used simply to reinforce the learning of specific grammatical points or lexical items as stated by Harris (1969:68). An objective of teaching students writing is to enable them to consolidate their knowledge of the language, so the most effective writing exercise in practice will be realistic or authentic (Grant, 1991).

However, it must be considered that one of the most notable features of current approaches to teaching writing is the emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy. One approach is to use prompts, such as visuals and real objects to stimulate ideas (White, 1995:3). Workplace/workshop practice offers authentic model for the students. Besides, it makes writing activities more meaningful and therefore increases students' motivation to write.

Material Design Model

Knowing the outlined principles, a material model is designed to provide the integration of learning aspects. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:108) the model consists of four elements: *input, content focus, language focus, task.*

a) *Input*: This may be a text, dialogue, video-recording, diagram or any piece of communication data which provides a number of things:
- stimulus material for activities;
- new language items;
- correct models of language use;
- a topic for communication;
- opportunities for learners to use their information processing skills;
- opportunities for learners to use their existing knowledge both of the language and the subject matter.

b) *Content focus*: Language is a means of conveying information and feelings about something. Non-linguistic content should be exploited to generate meaningful communication in the classroom.

c) *Language focus*: Aimed at enabling learners to *use* language, learners have the chance to take the language to pieces, study how it works and practice putting it back together again.

d) *Task*: The ultimate purpose of language learning is language use. Material should be designed to lead towards a communicative *task* in which learners use the content and language knowledge they have built up through the unit.

To expand a material model the four elements are extended by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:118) like the following figure.
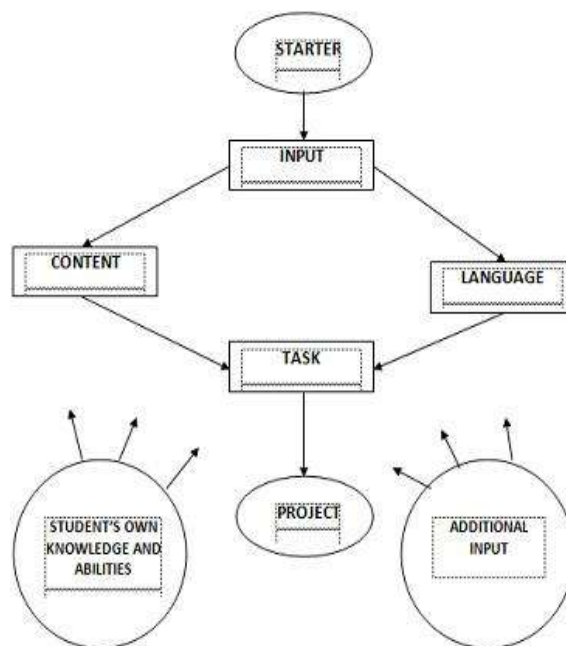

Figure 1.Four Elements of Learning Material
(Hutchinson and Waters (1987:118)

Procedure

The four elements can be practiced in the following sample material (see Appendix) with reference to some of reviews by Hutchinson and Waters (1987):

Unit 3
　I.　RAEDING DEVELOPMENT

A.　Before You Read:
　　- What must you construct before erecting a building?
　　- What is foundation?
　　- What is the function of foundation?
　　- What types of foundation do you know? What are they?
　　- What is each type for?

B. Text

FOUNDATIONS
When a structure is to be erected ...

1.　The *starter* of 'Before You Read' plays some important roles:
   - creating a context of knowledge for the comprehension of the *input*.
   - activating the learners' minds and getting them thinking.
   - arousing the learners' interest in the topic.
   - revealing what learners already know in terms of language and content.
   - providing a meaningful context in which to introduce new vocabulary or grammatical items.

   Interaction which has occurred in the opening session can be employed to direct learners to the input through some questions in this part to create a context of knowledge. Littlewood in Gebhard (2000:50) calls it 'precommunicative activities' aimed at isolating specific elements of knowledge or skill that comprise communicative ability, giving learners opportunities to practice them.

   Some things about the subject that learners got in the preceding semesters or on-going semester are asked to draw their attention on a certain topic. To answer the questions they have to recall their knowledge or workplace/ workshop experience about the matter and they can use the answers to comprehend the content of the input text. The communicative learning activity starts when they connect the English subject with the context of workplace/workshop experience called English in the workplace/workshop.

   In other words, starter brings about a learning factor of orientation to topic within which learners' existing knowledge is employed.

2.　Language is approached through an area of content, here the topic of *input* English in the workplace 'Foundations' represents a common form of technical discourse. The informative/expository input 'Comprehension Development' contains a reading text (or dialogue) which exposes an ESP of civil engineering matter as well as some lexical items in the form of technical terms/words.

   Accordingly, a good input should be of the learners' level and interest as a learning factor.

C.　Vocabulary Building

　C.1.　Open your dictionary and look up the meaning of each word on the left (1–6) by matching it with word/phrase on the right.

　C.2.a.　Draw a raft foundation; a continuous footing; and a separate footing; then give an example when to use it.
　　　b.　Draw some pictures describing how to construct cast in-situ; a pile; and a pier; then give an example when to use it.

3.　Part C is a comprehension check. This *content focus* 'Vocabulary Building' practices taking out information from the *input* 'Foundations' and begins the process of relating this content and language to a wider context.

   The lexical items are expected to be able to build vocabulary acquisition through the exercises of 'Vocabulary Building' taken from the input and designed to raise learners' awareness of the use of lexis. In this section learners are expected to direct thinking toward their workplace/workshop experiences. When they experience the

idea of a new vocabulary, they will correctly use it in context to be meaningful.

D. Comprehension

D.1. Answer the following questions briefly.

D.2. State whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE according to the text.

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4. Learners should always be encouraged to find answers for themselves wherever possible. As soon as the basic information contained in the *input* has been identified, it is possible to incorporate opportunities for them to use their own knowledge and abilities at any stage. They are required to go beyond the information in the *input* 'Foundations' to relate the subject matter to their own knowledge and reasoning powers using the language they have been learning.

    'Comprehension' is an exercise to improve the learners' ability to understand the language. From the presentation of the text 'Foundations', the learners are expected to be interested in it and able to derive understanding of the content. When it occurs, it means that the learners are able to connect English with their contextual circumstances.

    Part C and D represent the learning factors of skills development and retrieving information.

II. LANGUAGE PRACTICE
Study these sentences:
   - A structure is to be erected.
   - A foundation is needed.
   1. State the pattern of the sentences above.
   2. What do you call such sentences?

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5. 'Language Practice' is *language focus* which gives practice in some of the language elements needed for the *task*. These may be concerned with aspects of sentence structure, function or text construction. The points are drawn from the *input*, but they are selected according to their usefulness for the *task*.

    'Language Practice' is to exemplify the language use. First, learners are asked to study some sentences from the text, then to mention the pattern of the sentences. This section deals with linking the instructional material with learners' prior knowledge and experience in English subject. Hence sentence pattern is not given directly instead of brain storming.

    In doing this part learners build the learning factors of consolidation and analysis.

III. WRITING PRACTICE

In pairs, write about an experience in which you practiced making something in the workshop. What was the practice? What did you do?
Don't forget to use Passive Voices wherever possible.

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6. Further input related to the rest of the unit in terms of subject matter or language can be introduced at any point in order to provide a wider range of contexts for exercises and *tasks*. This 'Writing Practice' helps learners to see how their limited resources can be used for dealing with a wide range of matters.

    'Writing Practice' is designed to help learners develop informative/expository writing to share knowledge and give information, directions, or ideas (O'Malley, 1996:137) after going through an exposure to the technical matter, lexical items, and language use. It encourages learning community in the process of drafting and revising. Learners can work with their peers to generate ideas and revise the draft. The advantage of the writing practice is the material elicitation in which learners are encouraged to use the language.

    One has to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures which are important for effective

communication in writing (Byrne, 1991). Accordingly, the students' tasks are meant constructing sentences in the subject matter, grammaticalising and extending the lexical items which require learning through use and learners involvement as the learning factors.

IV. SPEAKING PRACTICE

In pairs, change your workshop report into a dialogue and present it.

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7. A gradual movement from guided to more open-ended work is developed for the learners. This 'Speaking Practice' gives them self-confidence for completing the *task*, as they have to create their own solution to a communication problem. In doing so they use both the language and the content knowledge developed through the unit. In other words, they are being asked to solve a problem *using* English, rather than to do exercises *about* English. This *task* also provides a clear objective for them by establishing benchmark of achievement—communication *project.*

'Speaking Practice' is an oral language assessment aims to capture a learner's ability to communicate for both basic communicative and academic purposes (O'Malley, 1991). Sometimes it can be the representation of the informative/ expository writing practice in describing, explaining, giving information, or giving instruction which are based on workplace/workshop experience.

Dialogue, pair work, and group work are established to vary the speaking practice. They include the social functions of report, procedure, explanation, exposition, and discussion (Tomasowa, 2009:21) in which learners are able to report a condition referring to natural or social phenomenon; describe the order or instruction; explain a process or how something operates; deliver an opinion or an argument; draw a conclusion by recommending an evidence.

The learning factors involved in this last part are relevance to own interest and face

validity.

In addition to the communicative input it is worth considering a teaching technique implied by Baradja as quoted in Hariyanto (1997:117) to end this discussion*: "Communicative activities are a must. …Of course, to plunge directly into communication is not realistic, but we should always remember that communication is our destination. We can start with manipulation, but we have to move quickly to the area where language is practiced relatively…"*

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Appendix: Example of the Material

I. READING DEVELOPMENT

A. Before You Read :
- What must you construct before erecting a building?
- What is a foundation?
- What is the function of foundation?
- What types of foundation do you know? What are they?
- What is each type for?

B. Text

FOUNDATIONS

When a structure is to be erected, a foundation is needed to carry the weight of the structure to the stratum of soil on which it rests, called the foundation bed. Depending on the locality, one of several types of foundation beds may be used. Although any kind of foundation will settle, rock is usually preferred because it will support bearing pressures up to 15 tons per square foot. Gravel will support loads of 4 tons per square foot. Sand will support an equal weight if the lateral pressure can be held back. Clay, if it can be kept dry, will support 2 tons per square foot.

The foundation itself, which is usually made of reinforced concrete, may be a single unit or a separate unit. A mat, or raft, which is a single slab over the entire foundation bed, is often used. A bearing wall around the outer limits of the structure is supported by a continuous footing. Separate footings may be used to support columns.

When the surface soil stratum is too weak to support the structure, piles and piers may be used to transfer the weight to stronger substrata. Concrete piles are either pre-cast or cast-in-situ. The pre-cast type is formed of steel bars set in concrete, which is then driven into the soil. To construct the cast-in-situ type, a hole is first drilled into the soil at the desired location and then filled with concrete. It may or may not be reinforced. This type is often preferred because it takes less time and requires no molding.

C. Vocabulary Building

C.1. Open your dictionary. Look up the meaning of each word on the left (1-6) by matching it in word/phrase on the right:
1. bearing - supporting
2. m a t - a box into which water cannot flow, used during under water construction
3. footing - form by pouring into a molding
4. molding - a widening of a foundation or base to spread the weight over a large area
5. cast - caisson
6. cast in situ - a structure to hold concrete to hold until it has hardened - a slab or a beam which resists upward soil pressure.

C.2.1. Draw a raft foundation; a continuous footing; and a separate footing; then give an example when to use it.

C.2.2. Draw some pictures describing how to construct cast in-situ; a pile; and a pier; then give an example when to use it.

D. Comprehension

D.1. Check

1. What is the function of foundation?
2. What is the best of foundation bed? Why?
3. What weight will sand support?
4. What is a reinforced concrete?
5. What if the foundation bed is not strong enough to support a structure?

D.2. Check whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE according to the text.

1. Foundation supports the load of a construction.
2. Foundation bed is the soil stratum where a construction rests.
3. Several types of foundation beds may be used for a construction.
4. Locality is important to choose the type of foundation bed.
5. Sand and gravel do not support loads of the same weight.
6. Dry clay supports the least load.
7. Footings lie after the bed.
8. Piles and piers are solutions to weak soil.
9. Stronger substrata are usually deeper than the weak strata.
10. Pre-cast type needs a mechanical hammer to drive it.

II. LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Study these sentences:

- A structure is to be erected.
- A foundation is needed.
- Several types of foundation beds may be used.
- The lateral pressure can be held back.

1. State the pattern of the sentences above.
2. What do you call such sentences?
3. Find out some passive voices from the text then change them into interrogative and negative statements.

Example:

- The lateral pressure can be held back.
- Can the lateral pressure be held back?
- The lateral pressure cannot be held back.

III. WRITING PRACTICE

In pairs, write about an experience in which you practiced making/doing something in the workshop. What was the practice? What did you do? Don't forget to use Passive Voice wherever possible.

IV. SPEAKING PRACTICE

In pairs, change your workshop report into a dialogue and present it.