

# English Teaching and Learning as a Foreign Language

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the English teaching and learning as a foreign language. This study explained many theories related to teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The theories including English as a foreign language, learning English as a foreign language, teaching English to children, teaching and learning process, and assessment and evaluation. Teaching and Learning Process part include and discuss theories about vision and mission of the study, lesson theme in teaching, method of the study, reference and teaching materials, schedule and classroom settings, facilities, games, and class management.

**Keywords:** English Teaching; Foreign Language

## Introduction

Kachru in Harmer (2007: 17), at the first of his diagram circle says that the world of English is divided into three. The three parts are that English is the primary language, English is the second language, and English is a foreign language. In Thailand, English is a foreign language.

The teaching and learning of a language, regardless of whether it's foreign or second is defined as a process when a person learns a language that is considered non-native to him. That is, one which does not exist in the community where the person's language is typically spoken. There is often a major difference between what is considered as foreign and what is considered as second. A second language would typically refer to a language where the learner lives in the community where this language is typically used. Looking at it from a scientific point of view, in research, second language acquisition is defined as a language which is learned, with that language being typically foreign, in addition to exploring the human's mind and ability to learn other languages after they have acquired their native one. Many researchers and scholars have looked into this foreign language acquisition and what it means for a non-native speaker. Some of these fields included the following: education and anthropology, in addition to linguistics and sociology. Furthermore, psychology, and neurobiology has had extensive research regarding this. There have been many inquiries and research which led to the creation of certain ideas and innovations in order to provide certain insights on what would be considered successful strategies and methods to increase the proficiency and competence of a learner.

When a language is taught in a controlled setting such as a classroom and not spoken by the community, then this language would be considered a foreign language. Knowledge of

another language would create a person who is able to maintain an interaction in a very creative and effective way. This also will lead to the learner participating in certain situations, which are authentic by using the typical language which is used in such an interaction.

Furthermore, it would provide passages and open new doors, views and perspectives that are not limited to one person but to many more. It will also fasten and maintain the connections created across countries and continents in order to create Mutual Intercultural understanding. Since language is a vehicle which is responsible for one to one communication, this would lead to further mutual understanding of someone's culture, customs and language. When someone initiates the process of learning a language, this would provide him vast opportunities to acquire knowledge of social and linguistic nature in order to know the right time, place and manner for proper speech and creation of a constructive conversation (NSFLEP, 2014:15). There is a further aspect between the two words acquisition and learning. With learning referring to a formal study of language being second or foreign in a controlled setting typically being the classroom, while acquisition is identified as a learning process which occurs naturally with no need of formal instructions. Here, there would be a typical difference between children acquiring language in an effortless procedure, and the difficulty adults encounter when learning a language in a formal setting. Foreign language is defined as the learning of another language which is not the mother tongue, nor the one spoken officially in the region by the majority of the population.

### **1. Learning English as a Foreign Language**

English which increase and widespread today cannot be separated from globalization effect (Brewster, et al., 2004: 1). Globalization has driven the popularity of English as a lingua franca and it is studied by various societies. The wants to learn English usually come from parents who want their children get more opportunities in the economy, culture, and education fields (Brewster, et al., 2004: 1). It makes the government as well private school to teach English at an early age, with consideration that children will be faster and easier to absorb the lessons (Brewster, et al., 2004: 1).

### **2. Teaching English to Children**

Children have a special character in studying the language. The learning characters are stated by Brewster et al. (2004: 40) as follows.

1. Children are excellent observers and have a natural ability to grasp meaning in the L1 from a variety of sources.
2. Children learning their L1 often repeat words and phrases to themselves in order to become completely comfortable with their sounds and meaning.
3. In acquiring their L1 children have spent years honing their puzzling-out, hypothesis-testing skills.
4. Children are skilled at guessing and predicting and teachers can usefully draw on these skills and the other thought processes outlined as part of 'learning to learn'.



5. Children like to talk, even if they don't know much language, often with only two or three words plus key intonation patterns.

6. Teachers need to create a balance in their classrooms between providing support and providing a challenge.

7. When learning their L1 children seem to be good risk-takers and experimenters.

Young learners should have most activities including movement and involve the senses. Teachers may need to have plenty the objects and pictures and make full use of the school and surroundings (Scott, et al., 1995: 5). It is good to make up rhymes, sing songs, and tell stories and let them talk nonsense to experiment with words and sounds (Scott, et al., 1995: 5). It is important to have the variety of activity, the variety of pace, the variety of organization, and the variety of voice (Scott, et al., 1995: 5). It is good to have systems, have routines, organize and plan the lesson (Scott, et al., 1995: 6). It is good to make cooperation and not competition (Scott, et al., 1995: 6). Grammar is taught in informal way to make it absorb, by playing and other activities which they find enjoyable (Scott, et al., 1995: 6-7). From the beginning of assessment, it can be done in very simple terms, stressing the positive side of things and playing down what the pupil has not been able to master (Scott, et al., 1995: 7).

### 3. Teaching and Learning Process

Techniques and materials can be shared, but human relationships of teaching learning process cannot be learned through words alone (Anderson in Hamidah, 2000: 19). The teaching and learning process needs interaction between the teacher and student. The interaction is not enough by words. Empathy and emotional closeness are needed to build good relation between the teacher and students.

Abe in Karl in Hamidah (2000: 20) emphasizes that since the teacher is most likely the main source of the language, the words that the teacher used and – most significantly – the way the teacher speaks is prime importance. Here the teacher must be careful for what she talks about. The teacher's way to communicate information also needs to be rich. It would be better if the teacher communicates the information by the interesting way.

Ytreberg in Hamidah (2000:20) proposes that most activities for young learners should include movements and involve the senses. Young learners have active characters. It is should be adapted in teaching and learning process. In teaching learning process, students need to be active and do movement.

A good foundation for learning English as an additional language is embedded in quality early years practice. Good early years practice that Crosse (2007: 5-6) mention is based on the following principles:

- a. Equality of opportunity which enables all children to reach their full potential.
- b. Valuing play as an enjoyable and challenging activity
- c. Emphasizing and building on what children can do rather than what they cannot do
- d. An understanding of child development leading to appropriate activities for children.

#### 4. Vision and Mission of the Study

In a classroom, there is a need to have vision and mission. Vision and mission should be adjusted to the conditions, needs of students, as well as the objectives of the study which are to be achieved.

There are several goals which are usually wanted to achieve in learning English. The objectives of study, as said by Sugeng (2010, 60-63), the hierarchy are included the national education aim, institutional and curricular goals, general purpose, and specific objectives. To formulate the learning objectives, it is considered to the audience, behavior, condition, and degree (Sugeng, 2010: 74-77).

#### 5. Lesson Theme

Three main areas in choosing a literary text for teaching the students are the type of course, the type of the students, and certain factors connected with the text itself (Lazar, 1993: 48). Another things that also said by Lazar (1993:52-55), which needs attention is related to students' criteria (the age, emotional and intellectual maturity, interest, and hobbies), student's cultural background, students' linguistic proficiency, students' literary background, length of the text, exploitability, and fit with syllabus.

#### 6. Teaching Materials

Children need interesting material besides interaction with the community and field trip (Ashworth & Wakefield , 2004: 39 ). These interesting materials should be provided by the teacher or the school to improve student motivation. Learning centers, with their various themes and topics, allow children to stretch their learning experiences and experiment with new materials to them.

There are many ways of becoming literate -children choose their own paths by using the opportunities, challenges and materials Provided in their environments ( Ashworth & Wakefield, 2004 : 43 ). In the quotation above, new teaching materials are needed. The novelty can be at the level of themes and topics. Varied teaching materials will attract students to learn. Teachers can use the tools and materials in their environment to make teaching materials varies.

Thailand consists of multicultures. Therefore, in selecting the teaching materials, it required the following considerations.

- 1 . Noticed the age and needs of the students.
- 2 . Noticed where is the meaningful and relevant for the students.
- 3 . Noticed earnestly before the material is chosen, especially regarding the instruction , and the identification of the purpose and goals.
- 4 . Consider the materials suitable for all categories of the intellect and that can be used for the different varieties of skills and concept of learning.
- 5 . Choose the materials that promote exploration and inquiry.
- 6 . Choose the appropriate material for children, especially according to their physical circumstances.

Good multicultural classroom materials need to be free from biases, stereotypes, and misrepresentations of cultural groups (Melendez & Beck, 2010: 324). This is done to purify the study. Students shall learn freely and without tendencies or interests. By given these things, learning in the classroom can be quiet and safe.

### **7. Classroom Settings**

Class settings, especially the settings of the books, can affect the students' interest in their reading. Here is a quote that supports this statement. Morrow and Weinstein (1992) did find in an intervention study, however, that when library centers in kindergarten classrooms were physically inviting and contained books, children increased their interactions with these books during free play and their teachers more used books in their instruction. Additionally, literature activities planned by the teachers led to an increase of in student interest in books (Wyse, et al., 2010: 296).

Students can play in the classroom while occasionally see the books. By this class settings, students are motivated to, at least, hold the book when they were playing around in the classroom. In terms of classroom settings, environment of literacy will support the students language development (Bo, 2008: 119). To build the literacy environment it would need the reading books for children which are relevant and other matters related to the students characters such as posters. Those things are then compiled and arranged in such a way in the classroom to facilitate students' access.

### **8. Facilities**

The classroom should be well-supplied with enough furniture, toys and educational materials to enable the teacher to run a varied and flexible program (Ashworth & Wakefield: 2004: 83). These facilities can facilitate the teacher to give lessons to the students. In addition, students are expected to be more happy to learn. In the digital era, of course, we do not ignore the supporting facilities in the form of digital tools. Such tools can be useful in learning English depend on how the teachers can empower it optimally or not. Such tools may include tape recorders, video cameras, dictaphones and computers. Such resources can support and enhance the teaching of language and literacy in a variety of ways (Burnett & Myers, 2004:209).

### **9. Games**

Creative teachers encourage learners to experiment with different ways of creating and using the language, for example with new ways of using words, playing with different arrangements of sounds and structures, inventing imaginative texts and playing language games (Nunan, 2004: 66). Unskilled and unprepared teachers or facilitators will use irrelevant games and icebreakers (Coetzee, 2008: 176). A teacher or class manager may be found guilty or neglected if he or she permitted learners to play unsafe games (Coetzee, et al., 2008:227).

### **10. Class Management**

Classroom management is said effective if it creates an environment in which children and teachers feel comfortable and confident so they can work without distraction (Waugh &

Jolliffe, 2013: 17). This convenient situation should always be nurtured and maintained. There should be a good cooperation between teachers and students. However, the teacher is the one who takes a leading role to organize the classroom to create a situation that is expected. Then the teacher needs to have the ability to manage and conditioning class well in ways that well too.

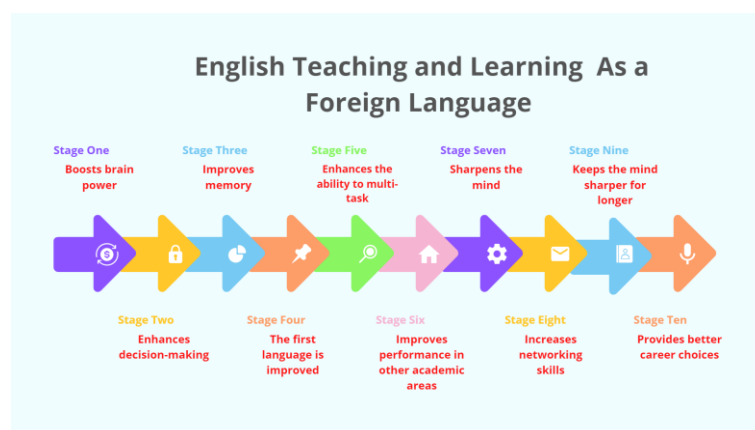
Class management problems might arise when teachers read to children if the children are not interested in the story or if the teacher does not make use of the skills (Waugh & Jolliffe, 2013: 140). Class management problems can occur from the students or the teacher. So it is important to be aware of the common interests. There are five critically important domains or areas that make up the broad topic of classroom management. The five domains are including academic instruction, time management, discipline, relationship building, and job protection (Groves, 2009: 2).

### 11. Assessment and Evaluation

They are some principles for assessing children's language learning. There are five principles that Cameron (2005: 218 – 221) says. The five principles are that assessment should be seen from a learning-centred perspective, assessment should support learning and teaching, assessment is more than testing, assessment should be congruent with learning, and children and parents should understand assessment issues. Evaluation is a broad, general set 'evaluation' is a broad, general set of procedures involving the collection and interpretation of information for curricular decision-making (Nunan, 2004: 138). Sugeng (2010: 189) said that the result of evaluation are always used a basis for a decision-making process.

### Knowledge from the Study

In a globalized world, where mobility is facilitated, learning a language is a wonderful benefit. Not only does it help when traveling, it is also a great advantage for studying in general and for career prospects abroad. Acquiring a second language enables us to develop various mental abilities at all ages.





### **1. Boosts brain power**

A foreign language is a whole new intricate system of rules, structures, and lexis. Learning a new language means your brain has to cope with complexity as it makes sense of and absorbs new patterns. As our brains work out the meaning, endeavoring to communicate, we develop key learning skills such as cognitive thinking and problem-solving. Highly developed critical thinking skills are a significant benefit both personally and professionally.

### **2. Improves memory**

Use it or lose it. How many times have you heard that phrase? It is a simple fact – the more the brain is used, the better its functions work. A new language requires not only familiarity with vocabulary and rules, but also being able to recall and apply this knowledge. Learning a language gives your memory a good work out in the brain gym. This means that multilingual people have brains that are more exercised and quick to recall names, directions, facts, and figures.

### **3. Enhances the ability to multi-task**

Multi-tasking is very stressful for those who are not used to it or don't do it well. According to a study from the Pennsylvania State University, people who are multilingual and proficient at slipping from one language system to another are practiced at this very demanding work for the brain. People who have developed the ability to think in different languages and move from one to the other become much better multi-taskers, reducing stress levels.

### **4. Sharpens the mind**

A study from Spain's University of Pompeu Fabra revealed that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They easily spot anything that is irrelevant or deceptive. They're also better at spotting misleading information. The study was conducted comparing multilingual and monolingual subjects and the former notably had the edge. Is it any surprise that famous, fictional detective characters such as Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot are skilled linguists?

### **5. Keeps the mind sharper for longer**

Several studies have been conducted on this topic, and the results are consistent. Language learning keeps your brain healthy. For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for those first signs is 75.5. Studies considered factors such as education level, income level, gender, and physical health, but the results were consistent.

### **6. Enhances decision-making**

According to a study from the University of Chicago, decision-making ability becomes an easier process for multilingual people. Aside from the rules and vocabulary that go with learning a foreign language, there are nuances and regional expressions that a student of language frequently judges for appropriateness and hidden meanings. Multilinguals are more confident in their decision-making choices as a result of practice, practice, practice!

### **7. The first language is improved**

Learning a new language makes you more conscious of the nuts and bolts of your own language. Terms such as vocabulary, grammar, conjugation, comprehension, idioms and sentence structure become everyday phrases, whereas your own language is probably absorbed more intuitively. Learning a new language also makes you a better listener as you are used to having to interpret meaning and judge nuances.

### **8. Improves performance in other academic areas**

As a result of higher cognitive skills, studies show that the benefits of learning a new language include higher scores on standardized exams in math, reading comprehension and vocabulary by multilingual students compared to the scores of monolingual students. Children may ask why they have to learn this language, but parents and teachers know better! Language skills boost your ability to do well in problem-solving tasks across the board, a fact recognized through compulsory foreign language learning curriculum in schools.

### **9. Increases networking skills**

Opening up to a culture allows you to be more flexible and appreciative of other people's opinions and actions. As a result, if you are multilingual, you have the advantage of seeing the world from different viewpoints, enhancing your ability to communicate in today's globally connected world.

### **10. Provides better career choices**

According to Eton Institute's Language Development in the Workforce survey (September 2014), 89% of our clients stated that multilingual employees add value to the workforce and 88% stated that recruiting team members with language skills is important to their organization. A multilingual ability is definitely a competitive edge in today's world.

Language learning helps develop strong cognitive skills, such as a better concept formation, mental flexibility, multitasking, listening skills and problem-solving, in addition to improving social interaction and encouraging connection between peers. What's your next language?

## **Conclusion**

English as a foreign language, otherwise known as EFL, is the study of English by non-native speakers who live in a country where English is not the official language (or, the official second language). Because English is the world's "Lingua Franca" (a common language that's used to bridge together speakers of other languages), non-native speakers are learning English as a foreign language in order to take advantage of the benefits which come with it.

If you've heard of the term "English as a Foreign Language" or EFL, then you may have also heard the term "English as a Second Language" or ESL. The two are often used interchangeably, but they are actually different.





While EFL refers to the study of English in a country where English is not the dominant language or second language, ESL refers to the study of English in a country where it is (but may not be the native language of a majority of the population). EFL classrooms and communities share a native language, which is not English. One of the challenges for EFL teachers is finding English models that work for their students, as many instructors are either non-native English speakers or are native English speakers who don't speak the local language.

The teaching and learning strategies have been linked to learning experiences. As teachers know their students learning styles and needs they may need to select alternative teaching and learning strategies or adapt those suggested to deliver the content. When teachers are asked to cater for individual differences it does not mean that every student must be given an individual work program or that instruction must be on a one-to-one basis. When teaching and learning is individualized it is reflected in classroom organization, curriculum and instruction. Teaching and learning strategies can include a range of whole class, group and individual activities to accommodate different abilities, skills, learning rates and styles that allow every student to participate and to achieve some degree of success.

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