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# Innovation Of Arranged Input In Foreign Language Acquisition At Indonesian Pesantren

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## ABSTRACT

Language acquisition in *Pesantren* is handicapped by the system and environmental rule, providing arranged input to help students acquire targeted language. Various ways are used in providing these arranged inputs. This research explores a brief literatures review on the definition, significance and characteristic of input in language acquisition and deploys it to drive innovations in designing arranged input in Indonesian *Pesantren*. Some existing innovations are also mentioned, analyzed and commented to lead into better practical advantages.

**Keywords:** Innovation, arranged input, language acquisition, *Pesantren*.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of language acquisition has considered input as the most important element during the process of acquisition, therefore researchers have so far explored on four main domains related to the input (Sun, 2008), those are: [1] Processing and integrating input during language acquisition, leading to inter-language system; [2] Necessary amount of input enabling the process of acquisition; [3] Variety of attributes, facilitating or hindering the language acquisition and [4] The use of instructional method to enhance input. There is no doubt on the necessity of input in both L1 and L2 acquisition, although, the origin of its role is remaining in disputes (Troike, 2006). Behaviourist believe that input is functioned as stimulation and feedback in which learner can imitate and respond to. Meanwhile, followers of Krashen's Monitor Model believe on the sufficiency of comprehensible input to account the acquisition, since language is one way process according to them. Unlike supporters of universal grammar theory, that consider input as trigger to activate internal mechanism inside human brain, unless many aspects of language development. Within psychological approach, a term *intake* is used to describe the attended input by learners, as the most significant influence to the acquisition is laying on this intake, not to those which are available around. Input in language acquisition is strongly related to the hypothesis of interaction which is always related to the social and environmental aspects. Ortega (2009) proposed that in such linguistic environment, specifically in natural setting, also in modern communicative classroom, the exposure of input comes through oral interactions rather than interactions to written speech or discourse.

In many *Pesantren* in Indonesia, multi-lingual environment is designed by teaching Arabic and English, while the local and national language (Bahasa Indonesia) are still practically used in some occasions (Zulfiqar, 2015). This designed environment is aimed to equip students with foreign language skill in order to prepare them for the global competition and for religious study purposes. Unlike common school in Indonesia, *Pesantren* has improved its language teaching, not only by providing supportive environment by creating written input, but till the level of applying rules in which students must use foreign language to communicate each other in daily life. And according to Ortega's proposal (2009) that oral interaction gives more significant implication toward language acquisition rather than the written, it

means that *Pesantren* has so far ranked as a best educational institution (outside the native language country) to acquire targeted language, due to the sufficiency of both oral and written input, although the output may differ according to many factors and conditions. There are at least three factors determining *Pesantren* as the best place to learn language, specifically English (Umam, 2014): [1] the use of English as means communication beside Arabic; [2] availability of mentors and teachers who are able to speak English and [3] big attention for English as international language. First and second factors are again referring to sufficient input which may lead into sufficient intake and trigger acquisition. Besides, there are various supporting activities leading students into a better acquisition of certain language such speech-training, language camp, writing competition and many others.

## 2. INPUT IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Input is defined as linguistic data produced by other competent users of language (Ortega, 2009). Input is also described as linguistic forms (morphemes, words, utterances) or the streams of speech in the air presented for the non-native speaker (Long, 1983). The existence of input is a consensus of all theory of language acquisition, despite its dispute on how the input works as mentioned in the introductory section of this research. According to this definition, input encompasses every language material, both spoken and written, which can be accessed by learner in order to imitate, comprehend and response. Surely, that not every single language material can trigger someone into language acquisition, therefore Krashen (1985) proposed that only the comprehensible input (which later called by *intake*) has significant impact toward the process of acquisition. Krashen's proposal on what so called 'comprehensible', leads into broader investigation on the standard of good input. Arguing that, to learn language someone must not 'live in the country' to reach such a best competence, Krashen justified that a comprehensible input can be major alternative as long as it meet character of optimal input as followed: [1] Comprehensible; [2] Interesting and relevant; [3] Authentic; [4] Sufficient. Besides, there some other conditions which encourage input toward language acquisition, such: [1] Student shouldn't be put on the defensive; [2] Availability of equipments and facilities. Each character of optimal input will be explained more below:

### 1. Comprehensible

The word comprehensible can refer to stance where the content is still inside the linguistic competence of the learner, as Carroll (1990) as cited by Wang (2010) proposed that language material must be keep up with the range of exposure to the learners. A far beyond material may be not comprehensible or understood so that the acquisition is impossibility happen. Krashen (2009) argued that this characteristic explains the failure of radio and TV programs to teach foreign language, simply because the material is mostly un-comprehensible for the learners. Moreover, comprehension is a necessary condition but not sufficient, as it quite possible to understand but not acquire. Therefore, making a comprehensible input is such a first step to go acquire the targeted language. In order to produce a comprehensible input, Long (1982) suggested four ways: [1] modifying speech; [2] providing linguistic and extra-linguistic context; [3] orienting the communication to the suitable setting (place and manner) and [4] modifying interactional structure of the conversation.

### 2. Interesting and relevant

Optimal input focuses on the state of acquirer, on how they can better and effectively acquire language (Krashen, 2009). The purpose of making an interesting and relevant input is to stimulate learners and bringing them into a joyful learning situation which later expected to enhance their acquisition process. It is undoubted that a good behaviour of learner supports the process, including

language acquisition. Relevancy is still related to the state of comprehensibility for the learner. As basically, human will attracted to what is relevant to or what is happening around them.

### 3. Authentic

Is every single sentence produced by native speaker is authentic as what we need here in language acquisition? Wang (2010) revealed that, according to Cook (1991), it is not every single language produce by native is authentic and suitable for language learner. Both in spoken or written, language used by native are always only suits to the context of the speaker, not the learner. Therefore, short expression with no complete grammatical structure is often used, for instance “*You like it?*” for “*Do you like it?*”. Krashen (2009) called this shortcut expression as grammatically sequenced, and therefore he urges that the input must not be grammatically sequenced. Surely, the aim is to insert a complete understanding of language structure into learners, before learning broader into communicative context.

### 4. Sufficient

Input is set to provide an amount language saving for the learners to take advantage from (Wang, 2015). Therefore, the ensured sufficiency of input is hand in hand with the process of acquisition. Thus, sufficient quantity of input is also urged by Krashen (1982). Since the theoretical argument for quantity which is related to the communicative input, is believed to trigger acquisition when they are: [1] Not artificially constrained and [2] Supplied in sufficient quantity. Further investigation focused on how much input is needed to end every step in the milestone of language acquisition such: how much input needed to end silent period? And how much input is needed to construct advanced level of proficiency. Although, the exact amount of sufficient quantity is remain debatable, Krashen agreed with Newmark’s theory which suggest extensive side of input (for example in reading and listening) to be used along with the intensive one.

## 3. LANGUAGE INPUT IN *PESANTREN*

Language inputs are examined to produce a state of comprehensible, and therefore encompasses there resources: [1] Modified Input; [2] Interactionally Modified Input and [3] Modified Output. Modified input is an input which already been modified or simplified in any way before being exposure by the learners (Park, 2002). The way of modification can be through repetition, paraphrasing and reductions of sentence. When learners are interacting each other, or with the expert or even native speaker, an opportunities to create two sides understanding of what is being spoken is open. Modification and restructure during the interaction is then called by Interactional Modified Input. Meanwhile, the result of both previous inputs, as it is believed to trigger acquisition, is considerably used as parameter of the acquisition process and so called output. The modified output refers to a modification made by learners toward the previous absorbed input. In *Pesantren*, this triangle model is simultaneously applied through various arranged activities. These activities are arranged by the management to provide sufficient input in supporting language acquisition by students, and therefore in this small research are named as arranged input.

Generally, language learning activities in *Pesantren* can be divided into two sections; [1] Classroom Activities and [2] Out-class Activities. Risdianto (2016) had conducted his research on classroom activity of English language teaching at *Pesantren* in Surakarta, and revealed that the dominant models of classroom activities is teacher speech delivery and discussion (teacher-centred learning), books and videos are also used as teaching media to provide input for the students. In out-class activities, Zulfiqar (2017) has investigated some activities in one of the biggest *Pesantren* in Makassar, and revealed some activities which surely providing input for language acquisitions outside the formal classroom activities, those are: [1] Studying religious books in English; [2] Speech training; [3] Joyful symposium of English language or Arabic; [4] Incidental language training (usually once per month); [5] Discussion; [6] Language Super Camp; [7] Drama and *On-stage* competition. Confirming Zulfiqar’s expository, the researcher who was also student in different *Pesantren* in Surakarta, mentions several kind of arranged input (based on his own observation), which are also provided by the language enforcement section, they are; [1] Playing Islamic English song (*Nasheed*) routinely in the morning and evening; [2] Direct



inspection by member of language enforcement section for each person; [3] Watching Movie (Playing censored western film routinely); [4] Listening activities in Language Lab; [5] English wall-magazine competition; [6] Language Proficiency Competition; [7] Educational punishment by memorizing hundred vocabularies; [8] Early morning vocabulary enrichment (where students are ordered to listen three vocabularies from the Mosque loud-speaker and write it in their small pocket book); [9] Vocabularies submission to the mentor every day before sleeping; [10] Performance of designed conversation in English or Arabic, every week; [11] English radio performance; [12] Official rule which obligate all students to use English or Arabic in certain period **5** time (usually called English week or Arabic Week, or English month or Arabic month); [13] The **use of English as medium of instruction** for any announcement **and** calling; and [14] Presence of native English speaker as preacher, guest lecturer, language mentor or even journalist.

#### Commentary on Existing Arranged Input

Number	Activities	Possible Resource of Input		
		Modified Input	Interactional Modified Input	Modified Output
1	Studying religious books in English	*		
2	Speech training			*
3	Joyful symposium of English language or Arabic	*	*	*
4	Incidental language training (usually once per month)	*	*	*
5	Discussion		*	
6	Language Super Camp	*	*	*
7	Drama and <i>On-stage</i> competition		*	*
8	Playing Islamic English song ( <i>Nasheed</i> ) routinely in the morning and afternoon	*		
9	Direct inspection by member of language enforcement section for each person		*	*
10	Watching Movie (Playing censored western film routinely)	*		
11	Listening activities in Language Lab	*	*	
12	English wall-magazine Competition		*	*
13	Language Proficiency Competition			*
14	Educational punishment by memorizing hundred vocabularies	*		
15	Early morning vocabulary enrichment (where students are ordered to listen three vocabularies from the Mosque loud-speaker and write it in their small pocket book)	*		
16	Vocabularies submission to the mentor every day before sleeping		*	*
17	Performance of designed conversation in English or Arabic, every week	*		*
18	English radio performance	*		*

19	Official rule which obligate all students to use English or Arabic in certain period of time (usually called English week or Arabic Week, or English month or Arabic month)		*	*
20	The use of English as medium of instruction for any announcement and calling	*	*	*
21	Presence of native English speaker as preacher, language mentor or even journalist	*	*	*
Number of Input Resources		13 (33,3%)	12 (30,7%)	14 (35,8%)

According to the table, whole possible input resources are in almost balance percentage, around 30 and something, but it is revealed that the highest rank of it is Modified Output (35.8%). The trend is quite satisfying since output is always become the parameter of the learning outcome. However, it is unreliable to measure the learning outcome just by making sure that the modified outcome gets the highest percentage during the learning process and language acquisition. Each enlisted activities in the table are so far suitable enough with the *Pesantren*'s culture and rules. But, the management should really aware more on more, not only in the design of certain activity, but also how the students can experience a remarkable and impressive process of acquisition both consciously or unconsciously, by considering other variable such motivation, anxiety, attention, future purposes of learning, etc. For instance, in 'Playing Islamic English song (*Nasheed*) routinely in the morning and afternoon, based on the field observation, students are not really care to what is played, because at the time, they are busy preparing themselves for breakfast and going to school. At the afternoon, they are also having activities such general cleaning, *Mulaakamah* (Martial Arts Training), so then the playing English song is just becoming such an accompanying music for the other activities. Students mostly don't really care with what music or song is playing, since their focus is on another business. The solution for this problem is by providing periodical activities to encourage them paying attention to what is playing through listening and note-taking. Providing reward and such a hall of fame is pretty good enough to create a competitive habit. The song and music must also be updated simultaneously to avoid boredom and to trigger curiosity, since students inside *Pesantren* are a bit isolated from the social media due to the prohibition on bringing gadget.

Secondly, activities which are focusing on productive skills (such as 'Speech training and Performance of designed conversation in English or Arabic') are lack of academic scrutiny by mentors. Students are demanded to create their own speech and conversation, and thus presented in front of audience without any correction on the grammatical and phonological aspect. Mindset of English practice in this activity, so far, doesn't really care to theses aspect. Even though, in fact, a mistake in producing language can potentially turn in to fossilization. The risk of it is getting bigger while a mistake can be transferred from generation to others, since medium of instruction is also obligated to use English or Arabic, or through other activity such Radio Performance, etc. Therefore, a systematic reform of language use must be done and scrutinized by language experts, especially English. Some activities are really depended to the facilities, such 'Listening activities in Language Lab' or 'Free reading activity in Library'; however it is found that the facilities are a bit restricted or, if it's not, lack. Students can't borrow the English books due to the small number of average and readable English books. The most of English books are dictionaries, encyclopaedias and resources books. The Management need to provide some entertaining English books, like novel, short-story and etc. Reading activity can be integrated to the listening activity in Language Lab using audio books, based on the field observation, this kind of book is so far unfound in *Pesantren*.

### Possible Innovations

*Pesantren* promises more advantages by providing an integrated out-school education to equip more skills for students. Foreign language (English and Arabic) acquisition is included in this out-school education. Beside the existing innovation in providing input for English acquisition, in

this occasion, the researcher would like to propose some other innovations to complete the running system by providing:

#### **1. Pre and Post-learning Assessment**

As the out-school education is integrated to the school, there should be pre and post-learning assessment. Students are needed to be classified since the beginning, in which level of language are they, and thus the management can classify their specific need to be treated appropriately. This pre-assessment is also used to specify students' motivation and future orientation by learning English as it can be done annually. Management can collaborate to design the pre and post-test with the Psychological and Language expert in order to compose the design of material to use as input for the students. During the process, the result of this assessment can also be used to measure students' development in acquiring language.

#### **2. IT-based Language Learning Instrument**

The use of IT-based language learning instrument is so far very limited on Sound System and Radio Broadcasting machine, however, what we propose to use here is MP3 to help students simultaneously feed by English audio while they don't rely to the listening lab. Besides, *Pesantren* management need to consider installing TV connected to the International Channel such BBC or CNN, then, students are expected to be impressed and put more attention to the news update as they understand the language and start learning through it. To adjust with the *Pesantren* rule, the use of MP3 can be periodically scrutinized to avoid any wrong and irresponsible act of use.

#### **3. Written Language Board**

The board can be filled by up to date English news paper such as Jakarta Post, Washington Post, London Post and etc. Beside providing modified input in written form, students will be also triggered to be open minded seeing events across the world and inside the country. The original language of recent developing language use will also help them to be more friendly to the international world. Management will also need to create such a competition on summarising newspaper content or criticizing and commenting the headline.

#### **4. Rayon or Room-based Reading Corner**

Installing a reading corner in every 'rayon' or dormitory complex with encouragement on reading target per-week or month will also trigger them closer to an extensive reading activity. The reading corner can be equipped by English magazine, entertaining books (novel, short story, etc). It is important to create such a periodic up date to the books whether in every week or month to avoid boredom and anxiety.

#### **5. English Book Synopsis Writing**

Integrated to the previous program, the activity of summarizing English books will also lead them into active language acquisition process by reading part of the whole book, and then sum it up into one or two pages synopsis to be submitted to the mentors or teachers. The crucial thing in this type of activity is the feedback for students writing. There must be a comprehensive feedback given in order to grow students' confidence in writing. Running this activity must also avoid a perspective that students writing will only be wasted and thrown in dustbin at the end of the day. Mentors and teaches need to lead the students to preserve their writing as an academic treasury that will be useful and valuable in the future.

#### **6. English Debate**

Some countries where foreign language is taught in schools need effective activities that help students to practice language skills adequately both inside and outside classroom, one of the best activities which has been proved to enhance the language and presentation skills (Alamsari and Ahmed, 2013). In some *Pesantren*, the culture of debate and critical thinking is a bit restricted due to the understanding that Islam prohibit debate and logical fallacy in religious study, however, in some other *Pesantren* the culture of critical thinking get its portion through *Bahtsul Masaail* (Islamic jurisdiction debate) to investigate the verdict of Islamic law toward modern cases such; praying time in the space, the use of modern satellite to calculate Ramadhan start and etc. The researcher proposes the management to grow critical thinking through English debating



on the political, political, or educational issues in the national and international media. The use of debate is very good to provide three resources of input (modified input, interactional input and modified output), moreover, students will be so triggered to show their stance over certain case and thus they will also grow their confidence in speaking and expressing. To learn about debate, they can also watch International or National English debating competition which will be so much useful as language input.

#### **7. Modified Watching Movie Activity**

Movie or video can be very interesting to be used as learning instrument as well as input resource; therefore there must be a good systematic activity to maximize it. Safranji (2014) in his research on the use of movie in teaching English has specified that it was very dominant to enhance listening skill, compared to other skills and it also gained the amount of vocabularies for the learners. The use of subtitle during the watching movie will help the students to at least pay attention to it, since it helps them to understand the story and characters. The movie or video can be played without subtitle while students are obligated to take a note on some expressions which later be discussed in the class or language improvement activity, so the activity will be so much integrated one into another.

#### **8. Social-media based Learning Activity**

Students' learning through social media has been proved to bring positive impact toward students understanding and behaviour (Taylor, King and Nelson, 2012). It is also specifically supported by Mansor (2014), in her research on the use of social media in teaching English as second language in Malaysia. However, the use of social media is very restricted since gadget use is also prohibited by *Pesantren* management, but along with the globalization and modernization era there will be no other barrier on the use of gadget, especially when it helps learning and hence produce a good learning output. The researcher proposes the use of video vlogging by students, showing their activity using English language. Students can also be demanded to create inter-country relationship with students from Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi, Egypt or other country and communicate with them using English. Then, in some occasion, students will be expected to tell their story in front of the class. Besides enhancing their language skill, this activity will also train them to build relationship through social media. In further scenario, *Pesantren* management can cooperate directly with the inter-country schools to design a program in which each of students in a certain level will get their counterpart partner from the school. This program will be easier than the student exchange which often is difficult due to the financial matters.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the discussion, commentary and literature study, it is revealed that the highest percentage of input resource in *Pesantren* is the modified input (35.8%). It can also be concluded that availability of input in language acquisition is very important and grab significant impact for the learners; however, the availability is not enough to guarantee that acquisition is taking place. And therefore the term 'comprehensible' is promoted by Krashen. In order to make sure that an input is comprehensible, there must be standard character for a good input, those are; [1] Comprehensible; [2] Interesting and relevant; [3] Authentic; [4] Sufficient. In *Pesantren*, although there have been many innovations in providing language input, but much of them are off the comprehensible standards since neglecting psychological factors such; motivation, learning purposes etc. They are also lack in the integration with IT and Social Media to be used as learning instrument. Therefore, in this small scale literature review and critical analysis, the researcher is trying to promote several activities to enhance the innovation of language input in the *Pesantren*, such as Pre and Post-learning Assessment, IT-based Language Learning Instrument,



Written Language Board, Rayon or Room-based Reading Corner, English Book Synopsis Writing, English Debate, Modified Watching Movie Activity, Social-media based Learning Activity.

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