Turnitin Boniesta C10

by Boniesta Zulandha Melani C10

THE IMPACTS OF INTERNET UTILIZATION FOR ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING (EFL) IN READING AND WRITING

Boniesta Zulandha Melani

Universitas Mataram

Introduction

Over the past decades, many language classrooms have integrated Internet technology to facilitate language learning (Arslan & Sahin-Kiil, 2010; Thorne, Black & Sykes, 2009). Internet is creatively adopted as a medium of learning to improve language competency such as through the use of chat (Coniam & Wong, 2004), and e-mail (Warschauer, 1995). Onother example is the use of website, to encourage students to use computers in realistic, authentic situations in order to develop communicative and critical thinking skills. The availability of Internet connection has familirized both language teachers and students with several types of programs offered through the Internet, that may be used to support their language learning. This study aims to identify the impact of Internet utilizationfor English language learning, finding out the potential benefits of incorporating such technology for language learning, as well as the possible challenges occur during its implementation. Besides, it is also important to verify the relationship of Internet utilization and learners' achivement in reading and writing skills considering that the development of these two skills are facilitated through this medium of learning.

Theoretical Framework

The advent Internet is believed to be used for many purposive functions such as to retrieve and access information. For example, students can use the World Wide Web (www) to access current information from countries around the world. They can obtain geographical, historical, social/cultural, economic, and political information from the countries in which the target language is spoken.

In classroom situation, the Internet has been used by some language instructors in creative ways - one of these innovations being used of electronic mail. E-mail can encourage students to use computers in realistic, authentic situations in order to develop communicative and thinking skill. Kroonenberg (1995), for example, employed e-mail in her ESL classes at Hong Kong International School. She provided students with topics of high interest in order to generate more writing in two classes of ESL multinational students in grades 9-12, and a homogeneous group of summer school students involving Cantonese-speaking 14 and 15 year olds. Writing on e-mail can therefore be used to generate ideas about a topic, or can enable learners to free-write without any impositions. Students read entries and then respond to them via e-mail. This allows each student to express his or her opinion.

Cononelos and Oliva (1993) also organized e-mail exchanges between entire classes of students in order to generate discussion, improve writing skills, and promote peer interaction. In this particular project, advanced level Italian students employed e-mail newsgroups to improve both their writing, as well as their knowledge of contemporary Italian society. The teaching of culture was also facilitated through the immediate feedback and contact of second language speakers who were interested in informing others about their culture.

E-mail can also be used to communicate long-distance with language learners in other

schools, or other countries for that matter. (Davis & Chang (1993) carried out a study exploring the potential of long-distance communication involving second language learners. The goals of the study were to provide students with a real context for improving their writing, help them to expand their ideas of "content-area" reading and functional writing across cultural boundaries, make students familiar with international telecommunications, and investigate with students, the potential effects of telecommunications on literacy acquisition (Davis & Chang, 1994).

However, the nature of the Internet itself can be challenging at times. When lines are busy due to many users, it may take time to access information or browse the Net and the appearance of technical glitches that may lead to frustration. Furthermore, the Internet offers access to all types of issues and topics, some of which are unsuitable for children, and this in itself may result in various problems. In terms of cost, schools and instituions have to Internet's infrastructure, which can be costly for some institutions. This is certainly discouraging for both language teachers and students in such educational settings (Mike, 1996). Many institutions such as these may also not have the computers or computing facilities necessary to implement such type of technology. Therefore, despite the benefits the Internet has to offer for language learning, several discouraging challenges are often occur.

Methods

In this study, 60 undergraduate students (fourth, sixth and eighth semester) of English Department in the University of Mataram registered in the academic year 2002/2003 were involved as respondents. Three data collection procedures were utilized in this research, namely questionnaire, document note, and in-depth interview. The questionnaire that consist of 48 items,focused on the students habit in utilizing Internet,and the possible benefits and challenges of Internet utilizationin learning English. To support the data from questionnaire, in-depth interview was carried out to uncover some of the information that could not be obtained from the questionnaire. The document note here refers to reports on students' achievement in reading and writing at the last semester taken from the GPL (Grade Point List). Data of the students' writing and reading scores were compared with the findings from the questionnaire and in depth interview. A Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was taken to calculate the possible correlation of frequency of utilizing Internet and the students' score in reading and writing.

Findings and Discussion

Findings from the questionnaire shows that 78.3% of the respondents are 'High' Internet users, 8.3% are 'Medium' users, and 13.3% are 'Low' Internet users. Moreover, 85% of them confirmed to use Internet for learning purpose. Internet is commonly utilized for several learning purposes such as to access information (83.3%), to get more English lessons (83.3%), to browse educational sites (76.7%), to read educational journal (83.3%), to learn vocabulary (80%), as medium to write in the target language (71.7%).It was further confirmed from the in-depth interview that most students experienced the effects of Internet towards the development of learners' English language competence. Thus, the various types of activities facilitated by the Internet allow learners to develop their English vocabulary, support their reading comprehension as well as writing ability in the target language. Most of the respondents (88,7%) agreed to the fact that Internet can be used as medium to learn English.

Graph 1. The Benefits of Internet Utilization for English Language Learning
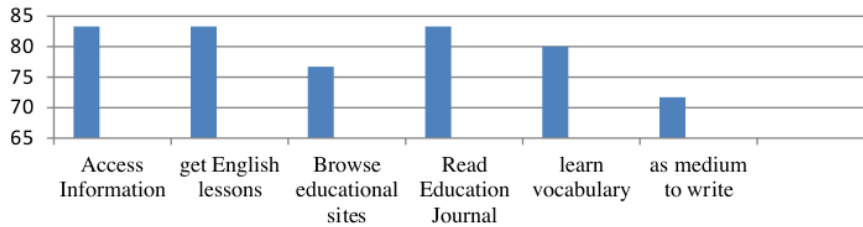
Having compared findings from the questionnaire and the documentation of the students' scores in reading and writing, it was found that most of the respondents in the 'High' Internet users group showed satisfying achievement in reading and writing subjects. A correlation analysis between students' frequency in utilizing Internet showed positive r value when correlated with their learning achievement in reading comprehension subject (r = 0.63), and in writing subject (r = 0.93). As an endless supply of reading materials, Internet can enrich student to continue the reading activity without having too much time to look up a word. The focus is on reading to learn, not learning to read. Similarly, writing in the Internet can give students access to their thinking process and can be a powerful aid to learning.

Besides, the potential benefits Internet may offer to language learners, several challenges were noted to be hinders for students. First, the respondents reported that the cost to acquire and maintain the technology (Internet) is high for the students and it takes much time to access when lines are busy due to many users. 45% of the respondents admitted to have a financial problem in utilizing the Internet. Furthermore, 20% of the respondents who are mostly women were reported to have an electronic phobia that caused them to have limited or no internet access to the Internet.

Considering the various benefits, Internet may bring towards the development of English language learning, it is impeartive that language institution as well as language practitioners to corporate with language learners in overcoming the challenging issues commonly occur during the implementation of Internet technology for EFL learning.

References

Arslan, R. S., & Sahin-Kizil, A., (2010). Computer assisted language learning. Taylor & Francis.

Coniam, D., & Wong, R., (2004). Internet relay chat as a tool in the autonomous development of ESL learners' english language ability: an eploratory study. *System,* 32(3), 321-335.

Cononelos, T.,& Oliva, M.,(1993). Using computer networks to enhance foreign language/ culture education. *Foreign Language Annals*, 26(4), 527-534.

Davis, B.,& Chang, Y. L.,(1994). Long distance collaboration with on-line conferencing. *TESOL Journal*, 4(2), 28-31.

Kroonenberg, N.,(1994). Developing communicative and thinking skills via electronic mail. *TESOL Journal*, 4(2), 24-27.

Mike, D.,(1996). Internet in the schools: A literacy perspective. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 40(1), 1-13.

Thorne, S. L., Black, R. W., & Sykes, J. M., (2009). Second language use, socialization, and learning in internet interest communities and online gaming. *The Modern Language Journal,* 93(1), 803-821.

Warschauer, M., (1995). *E-mail for English language teaching: bringing the internet and computer learning netwroks into the language classroom.*

Turnitin Boniesta C10