

On Exploiting New Methods of Language Acquisition Offered by the Internet

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Abstract

Instructive lessons in the language classrooms are extremely constrictive to language learners in improving their English skills, thus, the use of technology in education plays an important role in a language classroom. Results of language proficiency improvement of the learners vary depending on the extent of supplementary materials offered by the internet delivered to the learners. The purpose of the present study is to explore and propose a new approach of language acquisition offered by the internet. This study presents effective methods of using the internet in carrying out the written work. In this paper, we show that the relationship between participation of the learners in the class activities and improvement of English writing skills are mutually proportional.

Keywords : SLA, ESL, E-learning, Computer interaction, Multimedia Language Learning, TESOL

인터넷이 제공하는 언어 습득의 새로운 방법 활용

미셸 미희 최*

요약

강의실에서 활동이 영어 학습자들로 하여금 그 유창성을 익히도록 하는데 제한적이기 때문에 언어에서 기술의 사용은 교육 도구로 매우 중요하다. 학습자의 주요 학습의 주제를 포함하고 있는 온라인 상의 보충자료를 얼마나 활용하느냐는 학습자의 학습 능력 향상에 결정적인 역할을 한다. 이 논문의 목적은 인터넷을 통해 제공 되어지는 모든 잠재적인 가능성의 활용에 근거하여 언어 습득에 관한 새로운 접근 방법을 제시하고자 한다. 영어 쓰기 과제를 학생들이 수행하는 과정에서 인터넷을 활용하는 효과적인 방법을 제시하고자 한다. 또한 학생들의 참여와 그 영어쓰기 실력 향상과의 비례관계를 보여준다

키워드 : 제 2언어 습득, 제 2언어로서의 영어, 컴퓨터 인터넷 학습, 멀티미디어를 이용한 언어학습, 영어 외의 모국어 사용자들을 위한 영어 교육

1. Introduction

Changes in the world occur daily. Our concern is not whether these changes are big or small but how these changes can affect or

have affected people's lives in a particular way. It has been apparent that some practical tools have been replaced and enhanced by new technological devices. Thanks to internet and other digital gadgets and tools-functions that used to be inconveniently executed and inaccessible have been made available to people in all walks of life. Prior to the emergence of high technology, it was impossible to imagine that these changes can impact the efficacy and transformation of teaching, especially teaching a language (Grasso & Roselli, 2005). With the advancement of technology, the teaching of

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English as a Second Language (ESL) has highly improved.

Technology plays a crucial role in this globalized society which demands that people adapt to the advancement in technology. As in business and education, the demand for the implementation of technology in the field of EFL has been ongoing. Today E-learning or electronic-based learning is deemed to play a key role in L2 learners' acquisition of knowledge or improvement of language skills (Nunan, 1988). The learners' enthusiasm for computers leads to explosive learning online. Their familiarity with the computer since grade school in using computer programs and playing games on the computer make the learners inseparable from the internet and the computer, especially since they spend much of their time completing assignments and playing games on the computer. These circumstances present an advantage which renders integration of multimedia computer-assisted teaching ideal for such L2 learners in the instruction of English in the classroom.

2. Theory of English Teaching Methods and Realities

2.1 English Instruction Classes

According to Rost (2005), "in virtually every language learning setting, but particularly in EFL settings, learners cannot make and sustain sufficient progress in the L2 because they do not receive enough instruction, not nearly enough attention in class, not clearly enough input or meaningful interaction or opportunities for serious output." The circumstances are quite similar in Indonesia.

In higher education, the institution may place more emphasis on learner's major subjects to the exclusion of English instruction in their curricula. English instruction offered to non-English departments focus on fostering

constructive attitude in learning a foreign language. Most institutions provide two-credit English instruction classes approximating 100 minutes once a week. Due to these circumstances, EFL instructors cannot provide effective instruction; they are required to teach language skills that satisfy the academic needs of the students under a limited time while covering all materials. Moreover, having English instruction once a week does not benefit L2 learners in improving their English proficiency; there are very few opportunities outside the class for the students to use and learn English.

"Some studies in language immersion have estimated that a typical learner needs a minimum of 4 hours a week of quality contact with a language in order to make progress. Even if this estimate is not true for all learners, it is clear to most EFL teachers that learners need more language instruction than teachers can provide in the classroom" (ibid). This indicates that students in Indonesia, who can only access 2 hours of English instruction a week, do not have sufficient exposure to English language. Consequently, upon graduation from university, these students cannot rival the graduates from universities abroad due to their poor English skills.

2.2 Computer and Internet as Educational Aids

Multimedia has been influential in ESL education. The term multimedia refers to various forms of media working together as a single unit (Judit, Laszlo, Gabor and Laszlo, 1996). There are multiple kinds of media but the most commonly used ones are: text, audio, animation, video, and graphs. Text is one of the most important elements in multimedia. Despite the use of various images, including audio, text introduces information with precision. In other words, text cannot be replaced by video images.

Implementation of computer-assisted and internet-based instruction in language teaching and learning is expanding exponentially. Computer supported instruction supplies myriad benefits in the process of language learning according to Kenning and Kenning (1983: 2-3):

- The computer provides personalized instruction and responds to the student.
- The computer acting as a tutor, corrects and explains the learner's responses and provides assessment of the learner's responses and records them.
- The computer adjusts the instruction according to the abilities of the learner while directing him to the right response
- The computer provides private instruction that alleviates the learner's fear of ridicule from his peers when he makes errors.
- The computer enables the learner to set the time and speed of his learning freely to fit his needs.
- The computer enable the learner to review the same material as many times as is necessary.
- The computer is dependable and unchanging, impartial and takes no recess.
- The computer provides recorded exams and assesses the learner's progress.

These advantages differentiate computers from other types of technological tools. Moreover, the implementation of the internet is beneficial for language learning as there are many types of Learning Management System (LMS) softwares some of which are ATutor, Moodle, Sakai Project (Nadire Dogan, 2009). The current LMS in existence facilitates processes such as forum, blog, 2chat, learning process, collections of questions, scoring, multimedia support, wiki, group assignment, and language support (Man Lee, 2007). Furthermore, "students generally have a

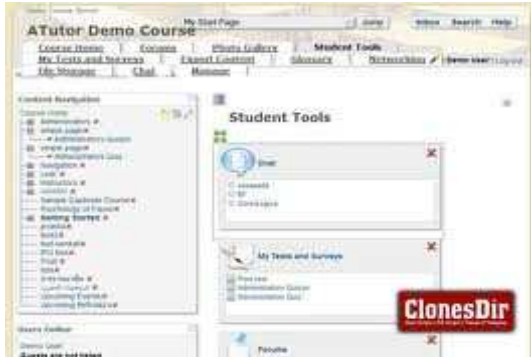
positive attitude toward technology in the classroom. Studies have consistently shown that students have positive attitudes about computer technology being used in the classroom and that such technology does have a positive impact" (Warden, 1995; Chen, 1988; Nash et al., 1989; Brady, 1990; Herrmann, 1987; Johnson, 1988; Phinney & Mathis, 1988 cited in Chen, 1996).

3. Media in the Language Class

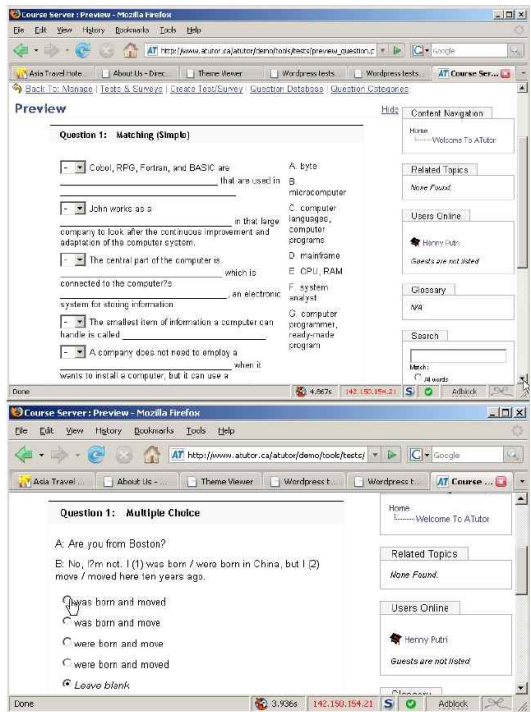
Multimedia exercise enhances the learners' reading speed and comprehension, and strengthens their writing skills (Choi, 2011). EFL learners tend to find improving English proficiency rather challenging since most do not study English outside the classroom. Integration of multimedia technology in teaching English not only provides necessary support as a supplementary teaching tool for insufficient classroom activities but also motivates the younger generation L2 learners who possess great enthusiasm for learning with computers (Multimedia in Education). This study explains a CALL (Computer assisted language learning) program designed to improve L2 learners' English skills through online self-study on topics relevant to the students' majors.

3.1 ATutor as supplementary material

ATutor is a leaning management system for online learning. Teachers can use it as a useful learning tool for students when they are not in the classroom. Tests, quizzes and questions can be made or uploaded for students to complete at home. The EFL teacher can control and track how many times a student attempts to do an activity.



(Figure 1) ATutor Demo Course



(Figure 2) ATutor Vocabulary Lesson

Using ATutor, teachers can monitor and check students' progress which enables the teacher to adjust the difficulty level accordingly (Figure 1). As shown in figure 2, categories can be made to suit the teacher's needs. These can include but are not limited to vocabulary and reading (Figure 3).



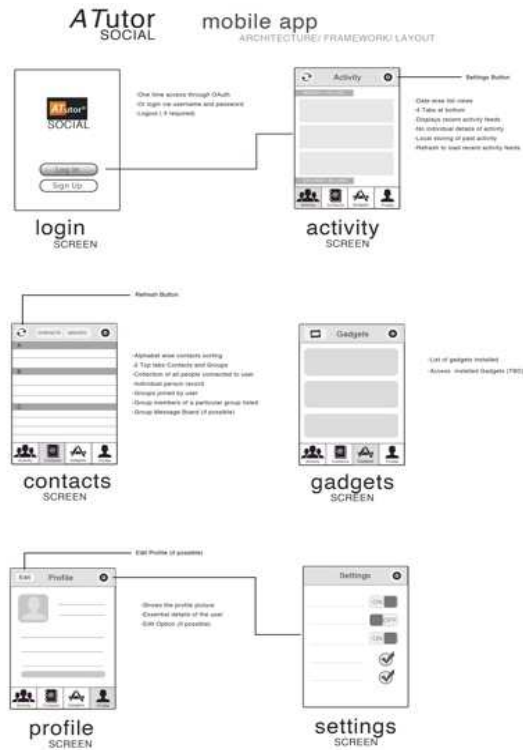
(Figure 3) ATutor Social Reading Lesson

Access to the online information can be restricted by your preference. How many times a student can access the material and how often can also be restricted. Information can be locked and unlocked by the student's progress. For example, if a student does not complete the activity correctly, the next level of information will not be unlocked. By recording and observing useful data with this program, teachers can tailor the activities and information to the needs of the students.

3.2 Integration of Multimedia

The use of media has been successful in ESL teaching for many years now. Awhile back, text and audio were utilized in isolation but their integration has reaped excellent results. Multimedia, nowadays, have pulled together the best elements from each media thereby creating a more efficient tool that can be used in various ways to aid the general public which is also beneficial to both ESL

teachers and ESL students (Figure 4). Moreover, since the process of learning is unlimited, the acquisition of language instruction has never before been easier and convenient for both educators and students.



(Figure 4) ATutor on Mobile App



(Figure 6) ATutor Video Lesson

As mentioned earlier, with the multimedia's integration of text, images, video, and other essential elements working together, the media-user gains phenomenal outcome (Figure 5 and 6). With this in mind, the use of multimedia in ESL language acquisition can help ESL educators promote and strategize teaching ESL courses to their prospective students. It is without doubt that the efficacy and convenience of multimedia in the language acquisition process can be an enjoyable experience for both ESL teachers and students, with the teacher acting as the monitor and not the director of the learning process.

4. Conclusion

It is amazing to see technology develop and improve in up till the 21st century. The use of computers and Internet play an important role in a language classroom as well as provide an audiovisual effect to the learners which can initiate active participation. In order to challenge learners' motivation in learning English and provide learners with high quality education, it is essential that language instructors integrate a supportive teaching tool to ensure the learners' mastery of English proficiency. Integration of computer-assisted language learning programs has advantages



(Figure 5) Viva E-learning Demo

for learners. For example, the emergence of the media softwares, for instance, 'A Tutor' as one of LMS (learning management system) software, can be an effective teaching tool for both learners and teachers in enhancing the four language skills, especially for written composition. Instructive lessons in the language classrooms play an important role in promoting learning proficiency of the learners. Various supplementary materials are required in the language classrooms to provide learners with good quality education. For educational efficacy, further research on teaching materials must be carried out along with the exploration of new language acquisition application.

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