



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

THE USE OF INTERNET RESOURCES IN TEACHING SECONDARY ESL CLASSROOMS IN KUCHING

Salbi Bt. Abu Bakar

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**THE USE OF INTERNET RESOURCES IN TEACHING SECONDARY
ESL CLASSROOMS IN KUCHING**

**SALBI BT. ABU BAKAR
12873**

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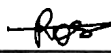
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(ROSLINE AK SANDAI)

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ABSTRACT

THE USE OF INTERNET RESOURCES IN TEACHING SECONDARY ESL CLASSROOMS IN KUCHING

Salbi bt. Abu Bakar

This research is conducted to investigate the use of Internet resources in secondary schools in Kuching. Internet has offered a variety of teaching resources and teachers need to be more sensitive in choosing the resources. Teachers have options in selecting appropriate teaching materials to teach English language. The objectives of this study are to identify the popular Internet resources used by the teachers, the criteria used by them to select the resources, the reasons of using the resources and the teaching strategies used by these teachers in using the Internet resources. In this research, questionnaires are used to collect data. The questionnaires are distributed to 240 English teachers in 30 secondary schools in Kuching. Based on the result of findings, articles and journals are the more popular Internet resources used by the teachers as compared to other resources such as e-mail, on-line discussion, stories, ESL websites, on-line newspaper, graphics, images, pictures and education portals. Besides, most of the respondents agreed that suitability is the most important criteria in selecting Internet resources than other criteria like the level of proficiency, content, skills, relevant and up-to-date. Based on the reasons listed in the questionnaire such as lack of materials, accessibility, suitability, free and authentic materials, majority of the respondents select suitability as one of the reasons why they use Internet resources in their classroom. Apart from that, discussion is the most popular teaching strategy. The teachers think that discussion is an appropriate teaching strategy which can be used instead of brainstorming, problem-solving, role-play and stimulation. Hence, it is hoped that these findings can be used as guidelines for teachers in utilizing Internet resources as their teaching resources in teaching English language.

ABSTRAK

THE USE OF INTERNET RESOURCES IN TEACHING SECONDARY ESL CLASSROOMS IN KUCHING

Salbi bt. Abu Bakar

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menyelidik penggunaan bahan-bahan Internet di dalam bilik-bilik darjah. Internet menyediakan pelbagai bahan-bahan pengajaran dan guru-guru perlu peka dalam pemilihan bahan-bahan tersebut. Dalam hal ini, guru-guru mempunyai pilihan untuk memilih bahan-bahan pengajaran yang sesuai untuk pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Objektif penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti bahan-bahan Internet yang popular digunakan oleh para guru, kriteria-kriteria yang digunakan oleh para guru dalam memilih bahan-bahan Internet, sebab-sebab mengguna bahan-bahan tersebut and strategi-strategi pengajaran yang digunakan. Dalam kajian ini, soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Soal selidik ini telah diedarkan kepada 240 orang guru bahasa Inggeris di 30 buah sekolah menengah di kawasan Kuching. Berdasar dapatan kajian, artikel dan jurnal adalah merupakan bahan-bahan Internet yang paling popular digunakan oleh para guru berbanding dengan bahan-bahan yang lain seperti emel, perbincangan online, cerita, halaman web ESL, surat khabar on-line, grafik, imej, gambar dan portal pendidikan. Di samping itu, kebanyakan responden bersetuju bahawa kesesuaian adalah kriteria yang paling penting dalam pemilihan bahan-bahan Internet berbanding dengan kriteria yang lain seperti tahap kebolehan, kandungan, kemahiran dan terkini. Berdasar sebab-sebab yang tersenarai dalam soal selidik kajian iaitu kekurangan bahan, aksesibiliti, kesesuaian, percuma dan bahan autentik, majoriti responden memilih kesesuaian sebagai salah satu sebab mereka menggunakan bahan-bahan Internet dalam bilik darjah. Manakala, perbincangan adalah strategi pengajaran yang paling popular digunakan. Para guru yang terlibat berpendapat bahawa perbincangan merupakan strategi pengajaran yang sesuai selain daripada sumbangsaran, penyelesaian masalah, main peranan dan stimulasi. Oleh yang demikian, adalah diharap bahawa dapatan-dapatan ini akan dapat digunakan sebagai panduan kepada guru dalam menggunakan bahan-bahan Internet sebagai bahan pengajaran mereka untuk mengajar bahasa Inggeris.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAD/CAM	-	Computer-aided Design/Computer-aided Manufacturing
CD-ROM	-	Computer Disc – Read Only Memory
CIE	-	Computer-in-Education
ESL	-	English as second language
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
ISP	-	Internet Service Provider
IT	-	Information technology
JARING	-	Joint Advanced Integrated Networking
MIMOS	-	Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems
TCP/IP	-	Transfer Control Protocol/Internet Protocol

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Internet resources are another alternative of teaching materials which can be used in teaching English. Tomlinson (1997) stated that there are more materials available in the Internet and teachers can make use of Internet texts as sources. According to McGrath (2002), teacher's roles will still be important in a programme which exploits the Internet as a source of material as in a traditional programme based on a textbook or materials supplied by the teacher. In this case, the teacher is the one who structures, synthesises, selects and sequences.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out what are the popular Internet resources used by the secondary teachers. This research also wants to identify the reasons Internet resources are used as well as the criteria in selecting the resources and teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching and learning processes.

This chapter discusses the background to the study. It also provides the statements of the problem, significance of the study, research objective, research questions and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the study

Commercial Internet in Malaysia began in 1990, after the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS, now MIMOS Berhad) launched JARING (Joint Advanced Integrated Networking), the first Malaysian Internet Service Provider (ISP). It was not until 1992, however, with the installation of a satellite link between Malaysia and the United State of America, Malaysian users gained easy access to the global Internet.

Monahan & Dharm (1995) stated that the original function of the Internet was to promote open communication and exchange of data among scholars and educators. It is in fact a loose collection of many regional networks that are all linked by a common communication protocol called Transfer Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol (TCP/IP).

Trentin (1999) mentioned that the first and most instantaneous use the users particularly teachers can make of the network is to access the extraordinary wealth of information and knowledge stored in a countless of computers world-wide, which can be done through a number of different services. The information available ranges from bibliographic material to multimedia material and anything that can be transmitted digitally.

Hence, the advent of the Internet in this era provides an opportunity for teachers to introduce new evolution in education. According to William (2000), the Internet can offer teachers a variety of resources, communication capabilities, instructional activities and

a wealth of ideas on how to improve lesson. The development of this technology allows teachers to make changes in education particularly in the teaching of English language.

Tunku Mohani & Zoraini (1998) have also pointed out that the Internet provides a means of teaching and learning English language. It is an advantage to teachers and learners of English as the resources on the Internet are in English. Thus, teachers should not face any difficulties in searching relevant resources for teaching materials from the Internet.

In addition, the Internet is an international resource and there is a great deal of information and authentic materials create by native speakers of various languages. The use of these materials has become a very important aspect of second language learning (Chafe, 1999).

The use of Internet resources in Malaysia schools is related to the implementation of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in schools. Chan (2002) stated that ICT is introduced in schools to ensure that Vision 2020 which highlighted the sustained and productivity-driven growth is achievable. In order to achieve Vision 2020, human resource must be equipped with a technologically literate and critically thinking workforce prepared to participate fully in the global economy of the 21st century. Furthermore, the Malaysia's National Philosophy of Education also stresses on developing the potential of individual in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious. The Ministry of Education

believes that properly designed and implemented computing and communication have the potential to revolutionise education and improve learning as profoundly as information technology has transformed medicine, finance, manufacturing and numerous other sectors of society. The Ministry views the concept of ICT in education includes system which enable information gathering, management, manipulation, access and communication in various forms. Consequently, a website, MySchoolNet, was set up by the Ministry to help increase the use of ICT in education. It offers links to help teachers and students access educational information readily.

In this study, the researcher focuses on the use of Internet resources in secondary schools. Based on the Form One English Language Syllabus, Malaysia Education Syllabus Specification, ICT skills are stated as one of educational emphases and one of them is the use of Internet resources. These skills are incorporated in the learning outcomes. Other ICT skills include the use of multimedia resources such as television documentaries and the utilization of computer-related activities like e-mail activities, networking and interacting with electronic courseware.

According to World Employment Report 2001, Computer-in-Education (CIE) programme was introduces to increase ICT literacy in schools. Therefore, at that time the Ministry provides computer laboratories at 90 secondary and 20 primary schools. In secondary schools, computer literacy was introduced as a subject for students in Remove class and Form One as well as a co-curriculum activity for Form Two and above. For the

secondary technical schools, students were taught designing and programming using software such as Computer-aided Design/Computer-aided Manufacturing (CAD/CAM).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Internet provides a variety of resources for teaching and learning of English language. It offers resources for all four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, grammar and sound system which helps teachers to ensure their teaching to be more interesting and effective. Thus, teachers can access and use the resources from the Internet at any time without any limit. However, not all of the resources are reliable for teaching and some of the resources are not suitable in term of their content, language, activities and the worst thing is when the resources are out of date. According to Tomlinson (1997), an effective classroom teacher needs to be able to evaluate, adapt and produce materials so that there is a match between the students and the materials used. Therefore, teachers need to spend time and make extra effort to select the relevant materials. Due to time constraint, teachers still prefer to use other types of resources such as commercial workbooks, newspapers and magazines. The common practice is still using textbooks which are provided by the Ministry of Education.

Another obstacle which is faced by teachers in using the Internet is lack of skills in using computer which make them reluctant to use Internet resources in their lessons. Grey (1999) pointed out that teachers who lack confidence in their own computer skills will function less in a stressful classroom situation. Many teachers may find teaching more

stressful in a computer room than in a conventional classroom. This situation does not motivate teachers to find resources in the internet although they have no problems in accessing it in schools. Nor Azilah Ngah & Mona Masood (n.d.) pointed out that the accessibility and availability of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is no longer a problem in school but teachers feel they lack the necessary skills to integrate ICT into their classroom.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to find out:

- 1.3.1 the popular Internet resources used by teachers,
- 1.3.2 the criteria in choosing Internet resources,
- 1.3.3 the reasons of using Internet resources in the lessons,
- 1.3.4 the teaching strategies in using Internet resources in the lessons,

1.4 Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1.4.1 What are the popular Internet resources used by teachers?
- 1.4.2 What are the criteria in choosing Internet resources?
- 1.4.3 Why do teachers use Internet resources in their lessons?
- 1.4.4 What are the common teaching strategies used by teachers?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will provide insight on the popular Internet resources used by teachers in their teaching and learning process. This shows that internet resources have become one type of teaching materials used in the classrooms instead of using textbooks, commercial books or other kind of resources.

In addition, this study can provide information to teachers on the criteria of selecting Internet resources. According to Wong et al. (2003), there are huge amount of web-based resources available and teacher need to be extremely cautious before they decide to make use of these free Internet materials. The design processes for these web pages are usually very inflexible as many web pages are of doubtful accuracy and poor usability.

This study also indicates teaching strategies in using Internet resource in teaching and learning process. Moreover, the findings on the reasons teachers used the Internet resources and how they used them will highlight the benefits of using Internet resources in classroom which grants effective ways of teaching.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The following terms related to the research are defined as follows:

1.6.1 Internet

The Internet is a network of computers, which can communicate and share data with each other (McBride, 1998).

Jimin (1998) stated that Internet is a computer network interconnecting numerous computer hardware or local computer networks. These networks are linked by a set of common technical 'protocol' that enable users of any one of the networks to communicate with or use the services located on other network.

1.6.2 Internet use

According to Chafe (1999), Internet use refers to all uses of computer technology whereby students can communicate, search and go online on computer for sources of information. In this study, the Internet use is focused on the teachers who are using Internet resources in their classroom.

Tunku Mohani & Zoraini (1998) suggested some activities where resources on the Internet are useful; project work, interactive writing, journal, news scanning, stories and fables, idioms and creative writing.

1.6.3 Internet resources

Resource refers to a thing that gives help, support or comfort when needed (Hornby, 1995). In this study, the Internet resources refer to the resources which can be used to help English teachers to teach English. These resources can be obtained from the Internet.

1.6.4 English as second language (ESL)

In this study, English as a second language (ESL) refers to English as the second most important language after Bahasa Melayu. In Malaysia national curriculum, English is a compulsory foreign language for all primary and secondary schools (Compedium, Vol 1/89)

1.6.5 Criteria

Criterion is a standard or principle by which something is judged (Hornby, 1995). Alexander & Tate (1998) stated the criteria which can be used to evaluate websites include accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency and coverage (cited in Herring, 1999, p.36)

In this study, the criteria are used in selecting relevant and appropriate Internet resources for the teaching of English language.

1.6.6 Teaching Strategies

According to Peytcheva, R. (n.d.) a teaching strategy does not only cover the teacher's activities but it is a plan for someone else's learning. It includes information presentation, students' assignments and activities, teaching, and learning materials which are used separately or together as proofs for the students' progress as well as the way they are identified and measured.

Teaching strategies in this study refer to the teaching strategies which are used in using Internet resources to teach English language.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Over the past few years, the Internet has emerged as a prominent new technology. The influence of such a powerful technological tool has pervaded all aspects of the education, business and economic sectors of our world. Therefore, the use of the Internet is widespread in numerous fields and domains, without a doubt, it also carries great potential for educational use specifically for second and foreign language education.

The Internet and its use in English as second language (ESL) classes show great potential. If we consider carefully the students' needs and tailor an interactive and supportive environment that integrates Internet activities such as email and web browsing into the curriculum, students will as a result find English a more important part of their lives and will be more likely to use it in a self motivating life long way (Fox, 1998).

Hence, the Internet offers valuable resources which can be used in ESL classrooms. Therefore, this chapter will discuss further on Internet in education, the use of Internet resources in teaching English, Internet resources for other purposes, criteria in selecting Internet resources, reasons of using Internet resources and the challenges of using

Internet resources. It also highlights the benefits of using Internet resources to teach English in second language classroom.

2.1 Internet in Education

There are many changes arising in the world of education in order to improve the quality of teaching. These changes are made to ensure that there is effectiveness in teaching particularly in teaching English language. One of the changes is the use of Internet in schools. Tan et al. (1999) stated that teachers need to upgrade and refine their technology skills due to many changes that have occurred in education during the last few years (cited in Tan & Wong, 2003, p. 18).

According to Bruce & Levin (1997), the Internet provides three basic types of tools which are tools for communication, tools for inquiry and tools for construction in education (cited in Grabe & Grabe, 2000, p. 17). As tools of communication, the Internet provides a remarkable tool for rapid communication for example through the use of email. In addition, the Internet also provides a huge variety amount of information. This enables students and teachers to access informative text, images, video and databases. Hence, as tools for inquiry, the Internet provides a number of different information exploration and delivery systems. The Internet as tools of construction is as an outlet for authentic student work. It gives students a reason for learning, for example in expressing personal understanding by constructing a product such as a web page. This requires students to use what they have learned in a meaningful way.