Using Technology in Teaching English at Elementary School

by Sri Wahyuni

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Abstract

Technology enters our life in all aspects. Different from many years ago, nowadays even kids use technology in their daily activities. Seeing this as a factor, we can use technology and bring it to our class to teach our children in interactive ways. Unlike the old method which is only one way communication, expertise in education try to improve the method in teaching. They try to find unique ways to make the class more alive than it used to be.

In conducting this research, the writers use field approach. The writers observe the classes in real situation. Also, the classes are given some techniques to be applied in their routines. Then the results are compared between the class before applying new techniques and after applying them.

The result shows that after applying new techniques, the class is more alive. The students feel enthusiastic in conducting their class activities. The students feel comfortable with the teachers' techniques by bringing technology into their classes.

Keywords:*technology, elementary school*

Introduction

With all its aspects, internet has given many kinds of service which can be applied in human life. Nowadays the use of computer network is applied in many sectors: banking, health, economy, business, entertainment, security, information, and also education. From those sectors mentioned above, education sector is categorized in minimum level in using this computer network, especially language education.

Information and communication technology is not a new issue in education world, but it is interesting to follow its development. Teachers can use this kind of technology to increase work ethos. Besides, this technology makes it possible to do many kinds of activity fast, precisely, and accurately. The development of information technology shows that there appears varieties of activity based on technology.

The use of information and communication technology has been implemented in education sector since the goverment puts it in the curriculum of 2004. Information and communication technology is part of curriculum which is compulsory to be included in school intern activity. The purpose is that the students can optimize their skills, thus it can be applied in other lesson as cross curriculum. For example, the use of information and communication technology in english lesson. This cross curriculum is for getting around the development of society toward globalization, which sees information and communication technology and english as important. Thus the students is compulsorily equipped with those skills.

English learning will be easily understood by students when the teachers can deliver the material interesteringly. Students' understanding does not always run smoothly. When students face difficulty in understanding the material, there should be solution to solve the problem. This solution to solve difficulty in understanding the material can come from teachers or others students. This condition is called *zone of proximal development*. Johnson (2004: 109) explains based on opinion from Vygotsky (1978) who developed the concept of *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*

"…which he defined as "the distance between actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."

There is a strategy which can be applied in ZDP. This strategy is called *scaffolding*. Acoording to Bradley dan Bradley (2004)

Scaffolding identifies as simplifying the language, asking for complention not generation, using visuals: teacher can present information and ask for students to respond through the use of graphic organizers, tables charts, outlines, and graphs.

Scaffolding strategy can help students in understanding the lessons. When teachers can create fun atmosphere, students can be more relax in understanding the course. Visual usage can be gained by teachers from the internet: recorded video about the related course can be downloaded in *youtube*, the teaching material can be created by teachers themselves by using softwares which is freely downloaded from the internet, etc. Those activities are part of information and communication technology usage. If it is developed consistently, it will give big contribution to raise students' ability in learning English.

From the information above, we decided to conduct a research by making use the information and communication technology in English class. This treatment was given to the six graders of SDN Bendungan 01-02 Semarang. This school is located in the center of Semarang city, so most of the students are familiar with the use of internet and mobile phone. They also get a lesson which is called TIK (information, technology and computer). And the most important things, the school is provided with the internet so that the students can access information easily.

The objectives of conducting the research related to information and communication technology usage in English teaching are:
1. To find out how the English teachers in SDN Bendungan 01-02 make use the information and communication technology in class.
2. To finf out whether the usage of information and communication technology in English teaching can raise the students' enthusiasm in learning English in the teaching and learning process in the class.
3. To find out whether or not the use of information and communication technology in English in class works well to improve students' progress in learning English.

Kinds of Information and Communication Technology in Language Learning

Hartoyo (2008) states that there are some media that can be used in information and communication technology such as: *Interactive multimedia*. Technology helps to combine some

media such as: text, graphic, audio, video, and animation, to become computer application program. We can find multimedia in websites.

Television is also part of media for information and technology. According to Kenning (1984) television is *"It is a system for converting visual images (with sound) into electrical signals, transmitting them by radio or other means, and displaying them electronically on the screen*. He also added computer for another example of information media. *"An electronic device which is capable of receiving information data and performing a sequence of logical operations in accordance with a predetermined but variable set of procedural instruction program to produce a result in the form of information or signals* (Kenning, 1984).

One more media is sound system.It is usually in one package in computer set. There is sound system which is included in notebook set, but there is also sound system which is separated from the notebook set.

English teaching and learning process using information and communication technology

The usage of information and communication technology in English learning is close related to computer usage.*"ICT tends to be preferred term replacing IT (Information Technology), because it shows the importance of electronic communication such as e-mail, the web and videoconferencing, as well as computer aspect."* (Davies, et al, 2005:3). Computer is an important essence in the development of applying information and communication technology. Computer is not only making it easier for teachers to create teaching material by using *microsoft office (word, excel dan power point)* but it is also as communication tool. Nowadays we can easily communicate although there are thousand kilometers distance between us. This can be done by using facilities such as *email, videoconference*, etc.

The fast internet development will be useful for the teachers if they can grasp its contribution in English learning. Teachers can use facilities in the internet as teaching material, for example, to solve the problem in writing. The students are having difficulty in writing skill because they are difficult to express their feeling and write it down. The students even think that writing is a boring activity and there is nothing to write about. As Harmer (2007: 113)said *"Many students either think or say that they cannot, or do not want to write. This maybe because they lack of confidence, and they think I tis boring or they have nothing to say."* Teachers can encourage the students to create mailing list and use English to communicate each other. Mailing list community can habituate students to always using English in communication. Thus the students can get used to the writing activity. According to Nagel (1999)*"...mailing lists as a free service to help teachers and classes link with partners in other countries and cultures for e-mail classroom pen-pal and project exchanges."* Beside for upgrading the students' writing skill, mailing list can also function as discussion forum, cultural exchange forum (if teachers or students can invite member from other cities or countries).

Teachers Role

Teachers should habituate to give assignment which is *authentic assessment. Authentic assessment* will provide more room for students to develop their ability because students will be familiar with English which has correlation to daily activities. According to Brown (2001: 339) *"teacher has a smaller amount of encouragement to give real writing in the classroom such as writing telephone messages, e-mailing, post card, etc."* If teachers can do what Brown suggested, this will beneficial to upgrade the students' skill.

Applying information and communication technology in english learning can run continuously if teachers committed in running the program. Teachers should always motivate theirselves to expand information and communication technology. Consistent becomes key word and key factor in the success of information and communication technology to be useful in english learning. Queiroz (2003) states *"The constant and fast change of information and communication technology requires a continuous process of development of competencies online teachers should have and demands lifelong professional preparation and proper pedagogical training."* Continuous training in promoting information and communication technology in English learning will be needed because technology never stops extending.

Teaching English to the Elementary Students by using information and communication technology

In this research, the teachers taught the students the materials which are stated in the syllabus for elementary school, but they did not make use the conventional teaching. The teachers made use the technologies which are available in the school surrounding. The students did not have to be trapped in boredom for they had to listen to the teachers. Instead, they had to do some interesting activities. The activities are

1. Making use mobile phone for sending messages or having speaking practice in English
2. Making use internet for browsing short stories and the instruction is from the teachers. This activity is followed by retelling stories.
3. Making use *facebook* or *twitter* to share ideas or to have a chat with friends

The teachers decided which activities are suitable to be applied for improving the four language skills.

Data Collection Techniques

1. Observation
   The researchers observed the English teachers in presenting material in English, using observation sheet. It is to find out the process of learning English using information and communication technology or not. Observation was also made in the classroom when the teacher taught in class. It is necessary to get an overview of the performance of teachers in the classroom.
2. Documentation
   While documentation is required in order to obtain supporting data. Here the author tried to collect documents such as RPP, the Annual Program, the students grade progress,
3. Questionnaire
   Questionnaires are distributed to the 30 sixth graders of SDN Bendungan 01-02 Semarang.
4. Pre-test and Post-test
   Pre-test and post-test are used to find out the students progress after getting the treatment of learning English by using information and communication technology

Result and Discussion

The following are the result of the research:

1. In the first stage, it was found that the learning process in the class ran well, although there had been no application of information and communication technology in the classroom. The researchers captured the monotony of class activities undertaken by English teachers. This resulted in the boredom of the students in classes.

   In the second stage of research, the teachers had applied information and communication technology in teaching and learning activities in class. The application was using songs, movies, and internet to make the explanation clearer.

   The teachers used a cassette player to play songs in English. After listening to the song together, then a discussion was held to discuss the song. The focus was on the vocabulary. It became more interesting discussion after the students listen to songs together.

   In addition, English teachers were also playing a movie called "Farewell Party". The film was about a birthday party. After seeing the movie together, the teachers gave the task to find the English vocabulary. The students were enthusiastic. In addition to songs and movies, the teachers also uses the Internet to download data from you tube about Halloween news, after watching the news on Halloween. The teacher introduced a little bit about a foreign culture.

2. Four documents obtained from this method is the syllabus, lesson plans (Plans Teaching Program, teaching materials, and evaluation of test questions. The syllabus presented the material for one year which is divided into two semesters. RPP (Plan of Teaching Program) is prepared by English teacher is very adequate for the coverage period of the learning process for each meeting of 2 x 45 minutes. Worksheets are also available.

3. The questionnaire was distributed to sixth grade students of SDN Bendungan 01-02 Semarang. The questionnaire was intended to find out the application of information and communication technology. Information and communication technology are used by English teachers in the form of computers, LCD, DVD, and internet.

   The questionnaire was also intended to find out their opinion about teachers, English lessons, internet, information technology and communications used in class.

   The students use the Internet for entertainment, a social networking follow up and online games. In addition to entertainment, the students also use the internet to assist them in learning, for example, students use a search engine to download the materials relevant to their needs, not just for English lessons.

4. Pre-test and post-test

   There was an increase on the students' grade after they got the treatment of using information and communication technology.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that by making use information and communication technology can help to rise up the students' enthusiasm in learning English in class. And this condition will help the students to understand the lesson better, and finally the result of the learning progress can be achieved.

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Improving Students' English Spelling Ability Through Concentration Game and Tell A Story Game

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Abstract: The problem highlighted in this research is the low spelling ability of Kindergarten students in Al-Irsyad Madiun that is caused by (1) the uninteresting activities in learning English; (2) the students' difficulties in spelling English words; (3) the students' low motivation in learning. The theoretical review includes the nature of spelling, games in language, teaching English and the development of young learners, and the nature of motivation. The procedure of the research consists of identifying the problem, planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting the result of the research. In this research, the researcher acts as the teacher who conducts the action research in the classroom and she is helped by the classsroom teacher. In collecting the data, the researcher uses observational technique supported with tests. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses the field notes, teacher's diaries, students 'work supported with the cassette recording and photograph,then also compares the result of the students'pre-test and post-test to answer the research questions.There is significant improvement in the result of pre-test and post-test of cycle 1 and 2. In cycle 1, t_0 (3.87474) is higher than t_t (1.73) and in cycle 2, t_0 (1.934765) is also higher than t_t (1.73). From these two results, therefore, h_0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (h_a) is accepted. They practice their spelling through sticking activities such as *Concentration Game* and *Tell a Stray Game*. By conducting games, using interesting media, and creating various interesting tasks and activities can increase the students' motivation in learning English vocabulary.

Keywords:*Improving, spelling, ability, concentration and tell a story games*

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