A Syllabus Design to Enhance Vocabulary and Reading Skills in Computer Assisted Language Learning

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Abstract. This article discusses a syllabus design for a subject called, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The syllabus aimed to enhance students' ability in constructing vocabulary in reading online authentic materials. The aim could be reached by implementing the syllabus to the process of learning in CALL. The author used two websites as the main tools and sources of online reading materials and vocabulary practice. The adaptation of using this technology was expected to meet the course objectives and to meet the demands of the syllabus. This study implemented descriptive qualitative research with two classes of students in the first semester as the participants. Data collection was conducted using questionnaire as the instrument in the odd semester of 2018. The findings show that by reading the texts, students gained new knowledge and updated information. They also found that by practicing the vocabulary exercise, it could increase their brain power in memorizing new vocabulary and know how to use the technology to support their learning.

Keywords: *CALL, Syllabus Design, Descriptive Research, Vocabulary, Reading*

1. Introduction

Various attempts on how to teach English have been carried on by lecturers in higher education. They have been experimenting diverse ways in qualifying themselves to be more competent and knowledgeable, so they can deliver the knowledge and guide their students to reach expected achievements. In order to reach a specific learning goal, lecturers are necessary to provide steps as a series of activity that is well designed based on learning objectives.

Since today's world technology has intervened humans' activities, apparently, it affects students learning behavior that the use of technology can be primarily counted as one of learning sources on the Internet. The fact that back in decades ago that students studied using printed books. Though books are still being used, they are replaced by an electronic book format nowadays. It is proven that technology has made a change in a way.

The course is officeially composed with a series of activities and equipped with elected materials, called syllabus [1] refers to (Widdowson, 1990) interprets a syllabus as "the specification of a teaching programme or pedagogic agenda which defines a particular subject for a particular group of learners . . . a syllabus specification, then, is concerned with both the selection and the ordering of what is to be taught".

Nowadays, we live in a digital era where Internet has a prominent role in our activities, particularly used in teaching and learning language. Taking an advanced thought taken by teachers since they have to expand their role and ability with the Internet both in and outside

classroom, teachers must develop the traditional guidance to incorporate a far greater number of learning activities in a sequence in which they can be completed which best suit to learning objectives. Furthermore, [2] agrees that the internet is a good tool to learn English language vocabulary and grammar indirectly and this make the learning task (as Luskin [9] & Parks [12] more engaging, enthusiastic, engaging, and extended. In addition, [2] brought evidence that students used the internet to learn English, the internet is useful for language learning, internet-based materials could enhance language learning, the internet helped them acquire vocabulary, motivated them to learn English, and was an indispensable aid in the process of language acquisition. Hence, the internet becomes a learning tool used by students where they also become responsible for themselves in accessing, arranging, acquiring, and deciding information to take to support their learning.

Nowadays, the advancement of technology demands adaptation from traditional to digital teachings. For instance, integration of Internet and computer used are applied in language teaching and learning. Specifically, computer and Internet used to support students' learning in achieving particular language proficiency where Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) takes a prominent role in the teaching-learning process. As defined by [3] any kind of process that him or her equipping self-using computer to enhance his or her language skill improvement as a result.

Moreover, prior researchers tried to explore the students' attitude toward using CALL, [4] refers the findings of (Ashiri, 2012), he tried to find out the students' attitude at Saudi Arabia's Industrial Colleges toward CALL was very interesting for students. Another study shows the strength for the use of CALL in language teaching to increase classroom interaction, [4] a CALL-based Lesson Plan for Teaching Reading Comprehension to Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners----- Teachers and students performed positive attitude when using CALL in language teaching and learning. Therefore, the lesson was arranged and used as a general framework that other teachers can adjust their subject when teaching using CALL. In addition, the use of the lesson plan proved that the implemented lesson using the lesson plan became more interesting for students, because they interacted more in the classroom.

In this study, the application of CALL was collaborated with two language skills; reading and vocabulary which a previous study also conducted a research related to reading and CALL, [4] refers to a research conducted by (Fardy et al., 2011) explored the effect of CALL on the reading comprehension of expository texts. The results proved that there were statically considerable differences between two groups because of using CALL-based instruction on reading comprehension. The similarity between the study and this study is that both employed CALL and reading skill. Meanwhile, the different between the studies is that this study added vocabulary skill connected to reading where in the previous study was not put as the concern.

To contribute the field of research in this particular study, the syllabus is designed as an instruction to make students achieving the learning objectives.

2. Method

This research employed a descriptive research to analyze the fact and characteristics of a particular population or area of interest factually and accurately. The researchers worked to find out suitable web tools and design a syllabus for CALL subject in improving students' vocabulary mastery and reading skill.

To conduct the research, firstly, the researchers browsed suitable web tools that can be occupied to increase vocabulary and improve reading skill. Then after finding out the suitable

web tools, the researchers designed the syllabus using the selected web tools. Eventually, after completing the course, the researchers investigated the impacts acquired by the students that defined their learning achievement.

Related to data collection, it was gained from a questionnaire as the instrument and distributed using an online form.

3. Results and Discussions

The findings are elaborated in the following explanation: 1) the web tools used to achieve the learning objectives, 2) the syllabus applied for the course, and 3) the learning impacts gained by the students after completing the course.

3.1 Web Tools

In this study, the course was designed for students in the first semester who participated in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) lecture. The writer combined two components; language learning and technology. The language skills learned in this course; vocabulary and reading, and the occupied web tools; www.vocabulary.com and www.newsela.com.

Vocabulary learning was taught in this course because it has a vital role in vocabulary enhancement and affects students' learning in other language skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing. Vocabulary is also considered to be the foundation of learning English that needs to be acquired by English learners to support overall English mastery. If students acquire sufficient vocabulary, they will be able to occupy the words in understanding text, composing paragraphs, listening and having precise comprehension in communication.

Furthermore, related to students' reading habit, most of them stated that they do not make reading as a habit yet. It was also found out that they only read for the sake of completing assignments. Therefore, if learners are seriously interested in enhancing vocabulary mastery, they have to engage themselves with reading and use the new vocabulary acquired from texts actively.

This lecture was carved with activities where it emphasized vocabulary building using www.vocabulary.com by reading authentic materials using www.newsela.com and the text levels can be adjusted with each reader's level in reading. There are five measurements that indicate the text levels; from the lowest is 580L, 820L, 1060L, 1220L and MAX. The selected web for reading is chosen because it delivers current situations in news, so this benefits students to broaden their horizon and keep up with global phenomenon. Therefore, by integrating the use of the web tools and the language skills, the goal to build vocabulary and shaping reading habit is expected to achieve.
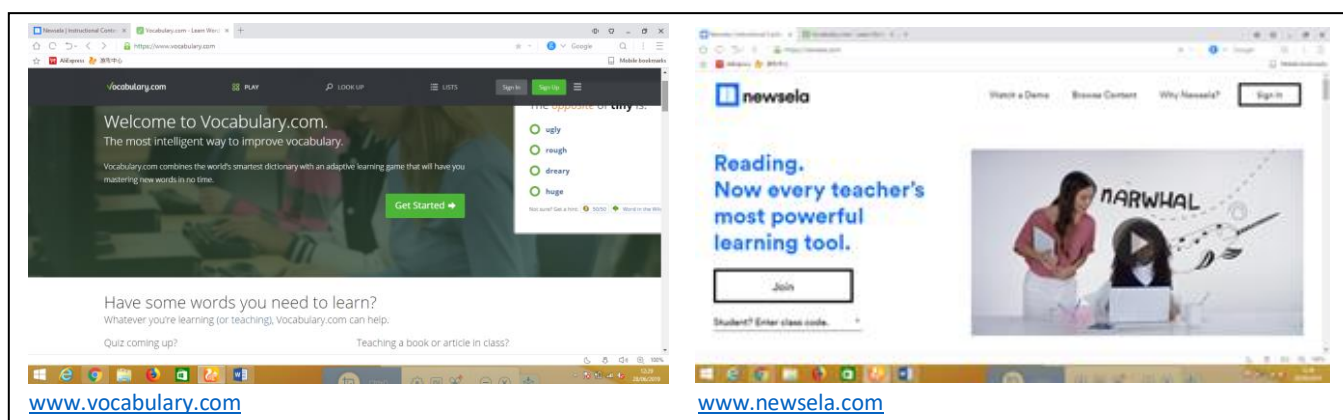
3.2 The Syllabus

The syllabus contents activities, structured in sixteen meetings with the elected web tools employed in this course. The lecturer did not select reading topics for the students. In fact, students picked preferable topics for themselves, with a requirement that the chosen texts must be based on their reading level. So when they read, they will find new words suit to their level, then listed and put the words on www.vocabulary.com. After the new words were available on

the web, students had to proceed practicing an activity, namely "play", aimed to occupy, comprehend and memorize the vocabulary.

Autonomous learning also participated as a part of this learning, because students needed to rely on themselves and had to be able to be responsible for their learning, assignments, due date, as well as being capable with the use of the technology. Applying autonomous learning, does not mean that the lecturers are hands off from the teaching, but they kept supervising and ensuring the teaching-learning process ran as planned in the syllabus.

As mentioned previously, students chose any topics as the reading materials on www.newsela.com and collaborated it using www.vocabulary.com to create words bank for new learned words to practice. By doing so, students gained basic knowledge in building vocabulary and fostering their reading habit. The web tools are shown in the following images.

www.vocabulary.com | www.newsela.com

Further discussion elaborates the application of the syllabus in the course. The language function of this course is CALL to improve vocabulary and shape reading habit. During the course, students are directed to extend vocabulary mastery and shape reading habit using the two following web tools as listed and instructed activities entail to perform by students.

NO	ACTIVITIES	SOURCES
1	Introduction to CALL	- www.padlet.com
2	Online vocabulary pretest to measure vocabulary mastery	- https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-level-test/vocabulary?utm_referrer=https://www.google.co.id/ - https://www.examenglish.com/leveltest/grammar_level_test.htm
3	Creating an email on gmail and familiarizing self for the use of google drive	- www.gmail.com - www.drive.google.com
4	Familiarizing the features and the function of www.vocabulary.com and	- www.vocabulary.com

|	creating students' vocabulary list on the website	
5	- familiarizing the features and the function of www.newsela.com and running the quiz of a chosen text from the lecturer - Students are required to complete the quizzes in all levels of the text	- www.newsela.com
6	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in writing with the minimum amount of 500 words	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
7	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in a spoken form based on the chosen text on www.newsela.com in three minutes maximum in length	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
8	**MIDTERM TEST (MID PROJECT SUBMISSION)**	
9	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in writing with the minimum amount of 500 words	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
10	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in a spoken form based on the chosen text on www.newsela.com in three minutes maximum in length	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
11	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com

	- Retelling the text and performing it in writing with the minimum amount of 500 words	
12	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in a spoken form based on the chosen text on www.newsela.com in three minutes maximum in length	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
13	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in writing with the minimum amount of 500 words	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
14	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in a spoken form based on the chosen text on www.newsela.com in three minutes maximum in length	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
15	- Creating vocabulary list on www.vocacbulary.com from a preferred text on www.newsela.com - Retelling the text and performing it in writing with the minimum amount of 500 words	- www.vocabulary.com - www.newsela.com
16	**FINAL TEST (FINAL PROJECT SUBMISSION)**	

The following elaboration is the findings applied during course and how it was carried on. Several projects were structured as the assignments within the course. Before coming to the activities and the assignments, pretests were conducted to measure the vocabulary mastery as mentioned in meeting two. After that, students needed to create an online storage platform to save their projects on Gmail account to access files in google drive. The online storage used to save writing assignments, vocabulary lists and submit speaking projects in video. After having an online storage, the activities were followed up by conducting hands-on activities by occupying the two web tools.

The lecturer guided the students to create an account on www.vocabulary.com so that they could log in using their Gmail account. After having the account, the teacher continued guiding the students to create an account on www.newsela.com. Eventually, students had those accounts and they were ready to experience and explore the learning using the web tools.

How to start learning was that students had to pick a preferred topic to read and did the quizzes in five levels as mentioned in meeting five. Then after experiencing reading the five levels, they could measure up their own reading level. The level was decided by the students by doing a self-assessment from exploring to read the selected text in five different levels.

After choosing the text and deciding the matched level, students read the text and listed new or unfamiliar words found from the text. Having the words, they proceeded the next step that was to put the words on www.vocabulary.com. After putting the new vocabulary, they had to practice using the new words in contexts as provided by the system. How to practice it was by clicking the "play" button where the system structured the new words randomly and automatically in a multiple choice form. They could also practice more using the words in different activities; practice, spelling bee and vocabulary jam as shown in the following image.
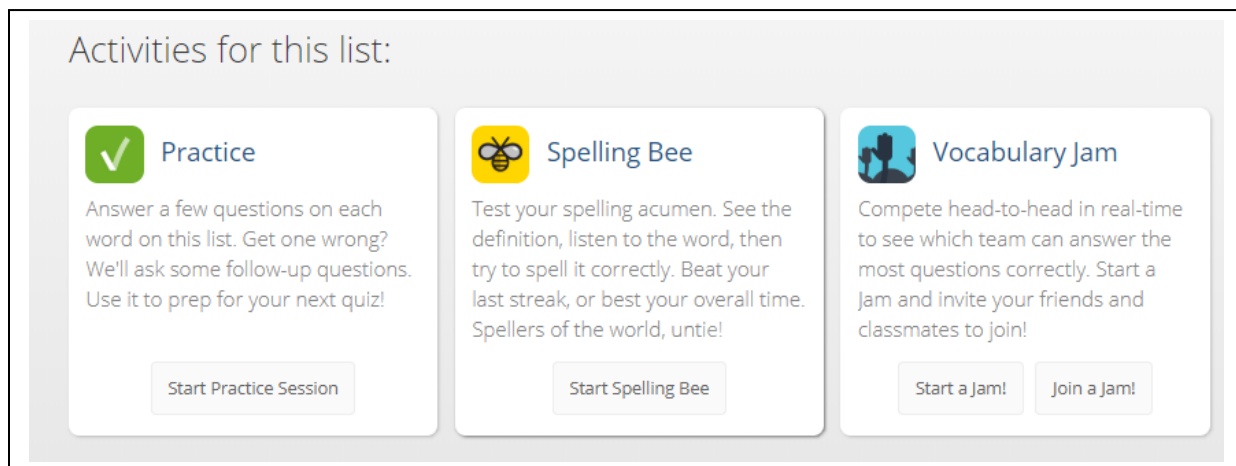
3.3 Learning Impacts

At last, the research also revealed the impacts gained by the students after completing the course. Students found the course brought positive impacts in their learning, such as in:
- experiencing the use of technology in learning vocabulary and reading
- increasing their vocabulary mastery
- increasing grammar understanding
- practicing memorizing new words
- pronouncing the new words correctly by pressing the audio button
- practicing reading articles in English
- figuring out the suitable reading level
- reading qualified texts on the reading web tool

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

This syllabus was designed based on the lecturer's options in selecting the materials, so negotiation to select materials with the students were not conducted. The web tools are suitable to use in this course, the syllabus is well structured to achieve the learning objectives and the course implementation brought positive impacts towards students' learning achievements.

Further research can investigate on matters such as students' motivation to improve reading skills, their determination to master writing skills, and so forth/focus on investigating the students' challenge when experiencing in their learning process. Then for the students, it is advised that they need to be persistent in repeating the new words as the practice, repetition can strengthen the brain to memorize the new vocabulary and remains in memory.

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