

**THE INTERNET'S POTENTIAL IN MOTIVATING STUDENTS
TO LEARN ENGLISH USING THE INTERNET RESOURCES
THROUGH *THE INTERNET-BASED LEARNING***

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This action research was mainly aimed at increasing students' motivation to use the internet resources in their English learning. The result of the research is intended to provide information concerning the issue. In this research, I applied the model of Internet-based learning in four classes of Economic Faculty at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The population of this research consisted of 120 students in 4th semester that enroll the English Program in UMS Language Center. The sample was taken randomly using purposive random sampling. Forty students were taken as the sample, especially those who had complete marks for the whole cycle. The data of this research are in form of; (1) students' self-completed questionnaire, (2) observation and field note, and (3) students' tasks. The data were interpreted descriptively. All the activities of this research were arranged purposively to motivate/encourage students to be more active using the internet to enhance their English learning. It was not the within the scope of this research to compare the use of technology with the more traditional tool (i.e., textbook).

Key words: students' motivation, internet potential, internet-based learning

INTRODUCTION

Our current understanding of conditions, which facilitate learning of additional language, encourages us as language teachers to develop language tasks that provide opportunities for learners to interact socially and academically to the target language. Interacting in this context means that learners are not just part of the same group, but that they have reason to talk each others, negotiate meaning and understanding together. Moreover, the literature on conditions for language learning also indicates that learning takes place when language learners are active. Active learners focus on meaningful language and content language tasks. Such students have willingness to search resources both in textbooks and other resources (e.g. on the internet).

The internet can be very helpful to produce proficient students at the future. It can be very supportive as a means to supplement the teaching learning process, including the language teaching learning. Nowadays, there are more and more ESL/EFL websites provided in the internet. ESL/EFL students can use them as a means to support their learning. Several reasons for using the web in ESL/EFL learning are to increase the students' motivation, to explore authentic language material and to enhance the students' global awareness (cited in Meloni, 1998). Thus, using the internet in language learning might externally motivate language learners to be more active in learning process. Students' effort in exploring the internet as a tool to enhance their language learning can also reflect their motivation of

language learning itself. Many studies suggest that online learning is positive for learners. Many researchers such as Meloni, Warshauer & Healy discuss the increasing importance of the role of computers and multimedia in the classroom. They see the computer as being essential in the informational technology society. But there are various challenges to meet in the area of motivation and also in the technology itself. Generally, the blockage dealing with this technology is on how students access the internet and how to make it useful in their language learning. It seems that the most obstacles of our ESL/EFL students are their lack of awareness of this technology and they do not really realize its advantages toward their language learning process. Our ESL/EFL students even at the advance level do not really appreciate to use the internet to support their English learning. Language teachers should be keenly aware of this issue. Furthermore, the degree of students' interaction with this technology tool is not balanced and therefore it depends on how motivated the students toward the issue (i.e., internet-based learning).

THE INTERNET USE IN ENGLISH LEARNING

Technology, especially the emergence of the internet is affecting every aspect of education and changing the way we teach and learn (Kung and Chuo, 2001). Over the past few years, the internet emerged as an excellent new technology with great potential for education uses, especially in the area of ESL/EFL instruction (Singhal, 1997). Generally, using the internet is perceived to be able to expose ESL/EFL students to a wider range of English than is usually found in traditional textbooks. Moreover, browsing the internet might even simply engage students in interactive learning experience. According to Li and Hart (1996), the web multimedia capabilities and interactive functions have made it an attractive medium to conduct instructions. Through its capabilities, the internet gives us a chance to explore websites containing authentic and update materials. Internet can often make it easier to develop tasks during which language students of any age or language level are active and have opportunities to interact.

Grey (1999) cited in Lee and Johnny (2001) has identified four ways in which the internet can be valuable as an educational tool in schools. Those can also be considered as four basic function of internet in ESL/EFL classroom:

- a. *Searching and Receiving*
This category encompasses activities that are based on using the internet as an enormous essential library. In these activities students search for and retrieve information from these resources.
- b. *Talk to and Reply*
This category involves conversational activities that take place via the internet through e-mail correspondences. Severely speaking, this category could also comprise the internet phone chatting.
- c. *Publishing and Providing*
These activities involve not only the recovery, but also the publication of the information. The publishing is done on web pages, which are the crucial places where information is stored on the internet.
- d. *Collaborating and Learning*
This type comprises reciprocal task that involves students in two or more classroom that might be thousands of miles apart. The way of using the internet in this type generally involves one or more of the other ways.

The ESL/EFL students in their learning might take advantages from those functions. Mostly, our students use the internet merely on the first two functions listed above; *searching for and receiving* and *talk to and reply*. Thus, the students search for the authentic materials as their learning enhancement and also to take part on e-mail correspondence. Dealing with the activities in ESL/EFL classroom that are based on searching information from the internet, students can take advantages from World Wide Web. This is a huge library of authentic language learning classroom. Using the World Wide Web is might be an activity by which the ESL/EFL students experience the use of technology as a tool to search authentic language materials in order to enhance their learning. As we know World Wide Web covers a wide variety of topics and interests including entertainment, news, sport, health, etc. These sites provide information with which learners can interact in order to build their skills.

With careful planning, English teacher can use the Web in adult classroom to help learners prepare for the workplace, to introduce them to foreign culture and help them to improve their English language skills. As stated by Silc (1998), using the internet can facilitate the development of learners' language skills, employability skills and critical literacy.

- a. ***Language Skills***

A number of websites created for English learners contain exercise in vocabulary and reading. In order to find the information they need, they probably employ their skills on *skimming and scanning*, and *reading narratives, charts and graphs*. Hyper linked menus --- where readers click on highlighted words, phrases or images and move to another section of the page or site --- facilitate the use of those skills. Web reading includes both prose literacy (i.e., narratives) and document literacy such as; charts and graphs. Teacher can introduce learners to sites that may be relevant to course content, learners' level and personal interest. However, since most English language websites are written by and for English speakers, the language may be more appropriate for intermediate and advanced students.

In addition, the use of the internet in language class can also develop learners' skill on writing. Writing is a natural response to web reading as learners respond articles, request for further information on topic, completing forms and mailing. Teacher can also improve students' skill on writing by proposing task that requires them on writing a report of selected web articles. Thus, students are asked to write a report from articles found in the internet. This activity involves students' skills both on reading and writing. Moreover, learners' skill on communication/speaking can also be developed through the internet. This skill especially can be developed if learners take part on e-mail correspondence. In this activity, learners are involved in a conversational activities that take place via the internet through e-mail correspondence and internet phone chatting.

b. ***Employability Skill***

Due to the fact that one of the greatest challenges of searching the World Wide Web is finding the appropriate information, this activity might involve students' employability skills in term of:

- Problem solving
Effective use of the web requires skills on problem solving as learners need strategies to sort through the flood of information.
- Decision making
Through well designed internet-based learning, learners can also practice their skill on decision making, as they decide which articles or web relevant to their need.
- Analyzing and evaluating information
Projects that require learners to use the web to gather information of specific topic provide practice in analyzing and evaluating information. The analyzing and evaluating information that learners do to separate the wheat from the chaff is similar to what employee do at today's workplace as they gather information from inaccessible sources. Moreover, since searching the World Wide Web activity is very much related with technology uses, it will be very much helpful for learners in

developing their technology skill that is very essential in workplace. At least, learners become familiar with the technology as they use the mouse to point, click and navigate from screen to screen.

c. ***Critical Literacy***

In addition, since information on the web is not always accurate or objective, it can be also a great chance for the students to develop critical literacy skills. The web provides opportunities for ESL/EFL students to learn to question, classify, and analyze what they read.

However, those skills can be gained by learners' active participation along with the teachers' efforts of learning encouragement. This is because even though the internet-based learning can potentially energize the ESL/EFL classroom, this prospective may not always be achieved if teacher does not give effort in sustaining students' interest on it. Keeping students still interested and engaged in this activity is a challenge for ESL/EFL teachers because students might have different appreciation toward language learning through the internet. Their appreciation might be influenced by several factors. In order to be successfully energizing the ESL/EFL classroom in active language learning with the internet involvement, teachers should be first aware of how their students appreciate toward the issues and what factor contributing their perception/appreciation. And then, teachers can design some strategies to help their students and ensure the classroom activities that will keep them interested. If the classroom activity based internet is well designed, it can generate enthusiasm among students and provide excellent opportunities. One kind of internet-based learning as suggested by Egbert is *finding favorite*, where students first choose a topic of special interest. Then they search for the articles from the internet that is related to the topic. Students then make a report which contains evaluation and summary of main information of the websites. These activities can help learners developing their language skills. Engaging students in searching activity gives them practice in a very important research skill; that of distinguishing between information that is relevant or not relevant to the topic will involve reading skill, developing vocabulary skill and interpreting linguistic structure used in printed and electronic texts. And then, by asking students to make report/summary related to the chosen text will develop their writing skill.

MOTIVATIONAL ASPECT IN ESL/EFL LEARNING

Learners' motivation is generally assumed as their interest in joining a certain program. It naturally has to do with students' desire to participate in learning process. But it also concerns at the reasons and goals that underlie learners' involvement or non-involvement in academic

activities. In language teaching-learning context, learners' motivation is defined as their active participation to use the language and improve their competence in it. Motivation can also be defined as the impetus to create and sustain intentions and goal-seeking acts. Ames suggested that motivation is very important because it determines the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward the learning (cited in Hussein et al, 2000). Motivation, therefore, can be the students' power in learning process.

Motivation can be divided into these two following types:

➤ *Intrinsic motivation*

Basically, the main idea of motivation is to hold the students' concern and interest and to control their energy toward the learning. Intrinsic motivation is defined as motivation from within the learner. A learner is intrinsically motivated to study is merely because she/he wants to study. One is having personal interest in doing something and helping to set her/his goal(s) generally posse intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated student accomplishes the task not because she/he demands for reward but because doing the task itself is a reward for him/her. Lepper notes that a student with intrinsic motivation participates in her/his learning for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feeling of accomplishment it evokes. Thus, we can conclude that feelings of competence and self-determination are significant factors of intrinsic motivation. Moreover, an intrinsically motivated student demands more efforts from her/himself and he/she also has a need for deep understanding. In fact, to have intrinsically motivated students is the goal of all motivational development.

➤ *Extrinsic motivation*

Extrinsic motivation, on the contrary, derives from an anticipation of reward such as praises, awards, prizes and evaluation, and fear for punishment. Extrinsically motivated students do the task in order to obtain some rewards or avoid some punishments external to the activity itself. This kind of motivation refers to learning situations where the reason for doing a task is something other than an interest in task itself. Systematically the characteristic differences of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be seen in the following table;

Table 1. The Characteristic of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

	Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation
	➤ Interest for its own sake; satisfaction derived directly from understanding or skill	➤ In order to gain social acceptance either within the class/course, etc.

Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Desire to succeed; mastery represents something important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In order to gain tangible rewards or to avoid negative consequences
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Extrinsic motivation might be very helpful when intrinsic motivation is low or absent. In fact, intrinsically motivated student also needs an extrinsic motivation to maintain his/her motivation in learning. The question is that, does it really matter whether the students are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated toward learning? A growing body of evidence suggests that it does. When intrinsically motivated, students tend to employ strategies that demand more efforts and that enable them to process the information more deeply. That is why, as Fox stated, many teachers and instructors are naturally attempting to present a system of education that is intrinsically motivating rather one in which the motivation comes from the outside influences. However, teacher can externally motivate their students to be more active in learning process. Although students' motivational histories accompany them into each new classroom setting, it is essential for teachers to view themselves as 'active socialization agent capable of stimulating --- students' motivation to learn'. Thus, the language teachers should actively help their students become both intrinsically and externally motivating students. In this regard, teacher has to be 'smart' in employing technique of teaching and creating classroom climate. Classroom climate is essential to increase students' motivation to learn. If students can experience the classroom as a thoughtful, encouraging place where everyone is valued and respected, they will tend to participate more totally in the learning process.

Fostering students' motivation is not easy. Hussin Maarof and D'Cruz in their paper presentation suggested that a persistent problem faced by the teachers, especially non-specialists, is the attempt to sustain genuine interest in continuing to learn the subject and to use it once the examinations are over (2000). The challenges also occur due to the energizing students' motivation to create a real supportive effort to their learning process. Besides providing conducive classroom climate, teacher can also foster students' motivation by creating various activities and tasks dimension. Ideally, tasks should be challenging but achievable and relevant. It should also be able to promote motivation, as does 'conceptualizing' learning; that is helping students to see how skills can be applied in real world.

Since the *internet-based learning* is believed to be able to foster the students' motivation in English learning, I therefore, conduct this research.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The main purpose of this research is to increase students' awareness to the use of technology (i.e., the internet) in their English learning. All the activities of this research therefore were purposively arranged to stimulate students to use their internet habit to support their English learning. The class is designed as cooperative self-learning class. First of all, the teacher discussed about the use of the internet as supportive means in their English learning and introduced several ESL/EFL websites related to the specific subject. Then, they were divided into several groups. Each group they were asked search the English article from the internet related the Economic subject. At the next meeting, they discussed the content of their article and made summary from it. Then, there were presentation class for each group. The teacher observed their activities in class during the discussion and presentation session. The findings are described as follows:

Table 2. Students' Discussion Skill

No .	Aspects being observed	Score of the group								Total score	Average
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1.	Members' skill in conveying the material and idea/opinions	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	21	87,5%
2.	Team-work skill	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	23	93,8%
3.	Members' skill in group discussion and in associating ideas	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	23	93,8%
4.	Members' level of being active in discussion	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	21	87,5%

Note:

1 = Poor, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good

The findings indicated that the students were fairly active in discussion and their interest in such active learning is quite high. They appeared enthusiastic in discussing the topic of their interest among their friends in group. They also appeared enthusiastic in classical discussion. Close to 83% of the students were involved actively in this activity. Some of the students even reported that the discussion session help them to increase their self confidence.

Here are some comments from the students:

"Saya suka cara dosen mengatur kelas. Pada saat diskusi dan presentasi sangat menyenangkan." (I like the way teacher arrange the class. Discussion and presentation session are really fun) --- {student}

“Belajar dalam diskusi kelompok mengasikkan biarpun saya tidak kebagian jatah nyari artikel di internet.” (studying in group discussion was really fun, though it was not me who search the article form the internet) --- {student}

“Saya jadi pede berbicara di depan kelas setelah presentasi minggu kemarin.” (I feel more confidence to speak in front of the class after the presentation last week) --- {student}

Those statements strengthen my assumption that the students actually prefer to a model of cooperative self-learning. Those statements also indicated that their motivation toward this program is quite high. They gave positive responses to the *Internet-based activity*.

Questionnaires were given at the end of this program. The results of the questionnaire are presented and described in the following descriptions:

1. Students’ Overall Perception toward the Internet Use

Table 3. Students’ Overall Perception toward the Internet Use

No	Aspects	Students’ Responses Average				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I’m very excited using the internet in my English learning	30%	67,5 %	2,5%	-	-
2.	I think internet is very helpful to support my English learning	40%	57,5 %	2,5%	-	-
3.	The interactive features found in the internet motivate me to learn more	20%	77,5 %	2,5%	-	-

Note:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

From the questionnaire, it was found that the students perceived positively toward the internet uses in their English learning. From the table, we can see that 30 % of the students showed their strong excitement, 67, 5% reported that they were somewhat excited and only 2, 5% were still in doubt. Nobody pointed that they were not excited. Students also give positive responses toward the statement whether the internet is helpful in their English learning. There were 40% of the students pointed out that they were strongly agree that the internet is helpful in their English learning. The rest were; 57% expressed that they were somewhat agree and 2, 5% gave neutral response. This finding indicated that most of the students basically perceived the internet as a helpful means to support their English learning.

In addition, students also gave their positive response toward the features found in the internet. 20% of the students stated that they were strongly agreed if the interactive feature found in the internet motivate them to learn more. The rest; 77, 5% indicated that

somewhat agree and 2,5% gave their neutral response. This finding indicated that students' motivation and interest toward the internet use were partly influenced by the features of the materials found in the internet.

From the table, we can conclude that close to 98% of the students gave their positive appreciation toward the internet uses in their English learning.

2. Students' Perception toward the Teaching Strategies

Table 4. Students' Overall Perception toward the Teaching Strategies

No	Aspects	Students' Responses Average				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Teacher's instruction in online navigation is not necessary	-	17,5%	10%	65%	7,5%
2.	Teacher's recommendation of English websites is not necessary	-	10%	7,5%	67,5%	15%
3.	The instruction in online navigation is effective	12,5%	70%	7,5%	10%	-
4.	The teacher's introduction to the site content is effective	12,5%	67,5%	7,5%	10%	-
5.	Homework assignment using English website is challenging and effective	15%	72,5%	7,5%	5%	-

Note:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

The findings indicate that the number of students who demand the teacher's instruction in online navigation and the recommendation of ESL/EFL websites which are relevant to their need were quite high. The finding strengthens the preliminary research result that the students were lack of experience using educational resources from the internet.

From the table, we can see that 83% of the students pointed out that they were agreeing if the teacher's instruction in online navigation was effective. (i.e. 12, 5% students indicated that they were somewhat agree if the teacher's instruction in online navigation was effective, 70% indicated that they were strongly agree, 7,5% expressed their neutral response, and only 10% indicated their disagreement). Besides that, when they were asked whether the teacher's instruction to the site content is effective; 12,5% of the students expressed their strong agreement, 67,5% were somewhat agree, 10% were still in doubt, and 10% expressed their disagreement. Those results indicate that despite of their satisfaction to their teacher's strategies in *internet-based learning*, students basically still demand for more instruction in online navigation. They also still demand the teacher's recommendation of English websites that support their English learning. It was a good result actually because this indicates that students in general had a great

interest and motivation learning the internet and on how make it useful for their English learning.

A significant improvement occur in their responses concerning with the task arranged in this research. Most of the students perceived that the task/assignment was effective and challenging. This can be seen from the overall responses to the statement “the homework assignment is challenging and effective”. 72,5% of the students expressed their agreement, 15% indicated their strong agreement, 7,5% gave their neutral response, and only 5% pointed that they were disagree. This result indicates that their motivation toward the task is quite high. Their positive responses were probably due to the fact that the model of the task provides them opportunity to explore their interest topic on the internet searching/browsing.

3. Students’ Perception toward the Activities in this Program

Table 5. Students’ Overall Perception toward the Activities in this Program

No	Aspects	Students’ Responses Average				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	The program is an appropriate supplement to in-class instruction	47,5%	50%	2,5%	-	-
2.	I’m engaged in good efforts throughout this <i>internet-based learning</i>	12,5%	75%	5%	7,5%	-
3.	The task given is suitable to the <i>internet-based learning</i>	22,5%	72,5%	5%	-	-
4.	I enjoy the challenging work and task of this program	20%	70%	7,5%	5%	-
5.	Working in group help me to learn easier and it increases my team-work skill	27,5%	72,5%	-	-	-

Note:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

From the table, it can be seen that close to 83% of the students were engaged in good efforts throughout the internet-based activity. Thus, I can conclude that the students’ responses concerning the internet-based learning are quite positive. This can be explained with 47,5% of the students indicated that they were strongly agree if the program is appropriate supplement to in-class instruction; 50% indicated that they were somewhat agree. The rest; 2,5% were still in doubt and nobody pointed disagree. This finding indicated that most of the students perceived positively toward the *internet-based learning*.

4. Willingness of Further Learning through ESL/EFL Websites

Table 6. Students’ Willingness of Further Learning through ESL/EFL Website

No	Aspects	Students' Responses Average				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I hope the teacher can recommend more ESL websites to support my English learning.	15%	80%	5%	-	-
2.	Problems and difficulties occur in this program stop me to use the internet furthermore	-	-	10%	60%	30%
3.	I will look for more ESL websites myself	20%	80%	-	-	-
4.	I will use my internet skill to support my English learning	27,5%	65%	7,5%	-	-

Note:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

After the program was completed, the students expressed their positive tendency toward the further learning using the internet. Most of the students expressed their demand for teacher recommendation of ESL/EFL websites to support their English learning. Responding the statement of whether they hoped the teacher can recommend more ESL websites, 15% of the students pointed out that they were strongly agree, 80% indicated that they were agree, and only 5% of them were still in doubt. This result strengthened the remark which stated teacher's guidance and recommendation are essential for them in order to search authentic material relevant to their need in online resources.

The finding presented at the table also strengthens the claim that the internet-based activity is able to drive the students' internet habit and skill into positive point (i.e. as their English enhancement tool).

5. Difficulties and Problems Encountered

Table 7. Difficulties and Problems Encountered during the Program

No	Aspects	Students' Responses Average
1.	Timing problem	80%
2.	Cost (money) problem	95%
3.	Slow speed of accessing	77,5%
4.	Once online, figuring out where to go, clicking everyone	52,5%
5.	Some internet information costs money	45%
6.	Computer virus is a problem	72,5%
7.	Learning how to access is not easy and need a lot of time	45%
8.	Sometime good typing skill is needed when we are online	55%

9.	Reading on screen is difficult and hurtful	67%
10.	Sometimes the information is not up to date	40%
11.	When electricity is out, there is no access	40%
12.	Language problem	80%

Table 7 showed that the students encountered difficulties and problems toward the internet uses. The main problem perceived was on cost of accessing (there were 95% of the students reported that it was a problem). It is understandable because the cost of accessing the internet is still expensive. Language also considered as a great problem for them (80% of the students reported that they had difficulties in understanding the instruction found in the internet). Timing of accessing and speed of accessing were also claimed as a great problem for them. This indicated that the students were dissatisfied with the technical stuff concerning the internet use. They also perceived that the computer virus was annoying.

CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that the Internet-based activity is able to increase the students' motivation to use the internet resources in their English learning. It is also reported that students recalled some problems and difficulties dealing with the internet use. Cost of accessing, language and technical problems were perceived as their main problems concerning the issue. However, the data reveal that despite some difficulties encountered, students in general had positive attitude to use the internet resources as their language enhancement. Thus, I suggest that teacher and institution can actively help their students to overcome those problems and difficulties.

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