

IMPROVING BASIC ENGLISH SKILL OF POLBENG FIRST SEMESTER STUDENTS BY USING WEB-BASED LEARNING MATERIALS

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***Abstract:** The aims of this study was to describe the learning atmosphere of the implementation of Web-based learning materials and to find out how the improvement of the students' basic skill during the implementation of Web-based learning materials. This was classroom action research type of research. The participants of this research were the Business Administration students of State Polytechnic Bengkalis. This research was conducted in two cycles by following the procedure of action research, i.e. planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. In collecting the data, the researcher used observation, interview, questionnaire, and test. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data were analyzed using Interactive Model of Data Analysis as propounded by Matthew M. Miles and A.M. Huberman. The results of the research showed that the learning atmosphere also improved. The class became more active, confident, and enjoyable. Furthermore, a Web-based learning material was able to improve the students' Basic English Skill. It was proven by the increase of the students' mean score from 41.22 in pre-test to 46.74 in cycle 1, and 49.92 in cycle 2. This result shows that the use of Web-based learning materials has proven to be an effective way in teaching-learning of Basic English skill.*

Keywords: *Web-Based English Learning Materials, State Polytechnic Bengkalis*

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of learning English is to expand the students' linguistic skills and it's obviously used as a tool for communication. To achieve this purpose, both students and teachers need more effort. The students might

not learn English only by relying on textbook, listening to teacher explanation and only restricted in the classroom only. They need to get more exposure and access more information and knowledge about English outside the classroom. Since they only have

less opportunities to use the target language in meaningful context.

Moreover, the university students whose good ability in English will have more advantages, since they are going to use their English proficiency both in academic context and they will apply it in workplace and other settings. Therefore, the teachers have to teach the students by using creative and innovative method and technique, such as by facilitating them a learning media which can be accessed anywhere and not limited in the classroom only.

One of the learning media which can be used to teach and accessed by the students anytime is web-based learning media. Web-based activities is one of the suitable sources to provide the students with diverse information about English through the use of computer and internet. This owes largely to the advent of the World Wide Web, a system for accessing and viewing information on the Internet. Using the web in teaching learning process, that is usually called as web-based learning, can be a tool for transferring the knowledge to the students, accessing information and as a medium of communication.

State Polytechnic Bengkalis is one of the colleges that promotes the use of website in teaching and learning processes especially for English subject and provides the students with the hotspot area surrounding the area which support the Internet connection. In addition all of the students in each department will learn English in every semester and use the language in academic context. Based on the result of observation during the teaching and learning processes in the classroom, the students are lack of confidence in using the language since they have limited knowledge of language. They have could not attend the learning processes in the classroom effectively since they have insufficient English ability. Therefore, it is highly required to improve their English proficiency especially their basic English skills to prepare them in attending English teaching learning processes in every semester in which the material and the level of difficulty being learned by them will be different.

Based on all consideration above, this study tries to improve basic English skills of the first students of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis by using web-based learning materials

which met the needs and proficiency level of the learners.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1.English Learning Material

The materials are one of the most important components in language instruction that help learning and teaching process and should teach students to learn. The materials give detailed content and specification of the content of the curriculum.

There are many materials that can be used in the teaching and learning process in the classroom, it can be take the form of printed materials such as textbook, handout, workbooks, worksheets; non-printed materials such as cassette or audio materials, videos, or computer based materials; and materials that comprise both print and non-printed sources such as self-access materials and materials on the internet (Richards and Rodgers, 2006:251).

There are some characteristics of good materials as noted by Hutchinson and Waters (2008: 107-108) and these characteristics will be a guide in developing an English learning module for Islamic boarding school students. The characteristics are

described as follows:

- 1) The materials provide a stimulus to learning and contain interesting texts, enjoyable activities, and opportunities for students to use their existing knowledge and skills. For example, the materials involve Islamic culture and history or modified the Middle East Islamic stories which are suitable with Islamic values and contexts.
- 2) The materials must be clear and systematic, but flexible enough to allow creativity and variety.
- 3) The materials reflect to the nature of the learning tasks. In the previous chapter should be noted that language learning is a complex process involving many different kinds and levels of knowledge.
- 4) The materials provided should be good models and the materials are suitable with students' cultures of Islamic boarding school in order to support them in learning English.

The characteristics of good materials that are proposed by

Hutchinson and Waters are similar to Richards and Renandya (2002: 80-89). They give a nutshell that effective teaching materials must be contextualized; language development requires learners engagement in purposeful use of language; the language used should be realistic and authentic; classroom materials will usually seek to include an audio visual component; second language learners need to develop the ability to deal with the written as well as spoken genres; teaching materials foster learner autonomy; materials need to be flexible enough to cater to individual and contextual differences; and learning needs to engage learner both affectively and cognitively.

2.2.Web-Based Learning

2.2.1 The Nature of Web-Based

Web-based learning is associated with learning materials delivered in a web browser. Web-based learning entails content in a web browser and actual learning materials delivered in web format. Web browsers support hypertext, a form of cross-referencing in which a highlighted text selection is linked to other documents (Li and Hart in

Richards and Renandya, 2002:375). In addition, Roblyer and Doering (2010: 300) state that web-based language learning as one of the common ways to make efficient use websites in foreign language classes. It is a strategy in which a teacher identifies the websites and resources for students to use to aid their learning process.

Moreover, Harris in Roblyer and Doering (2010: 248) explains that web-based add information to a collection that would be shared with others. Next, a website can serve as a virtual meeting place to support students' communications as they work together at distant location. These websites might also offer links to support project activities and make gathering information for project work more efficient. Then, the websites can display past and current student work. It means that the websites can be used as web publication centers in which students show examples of their poem, stories, and other products. Some sites also show ongoing descriptions of past, current, and planned project activities. The last, websites sometimes are set up for the specific purpose of inviting new distance learning projects.

Websites can be useful resources in fostering English language learning. In particular, their capacity to offer authentic language tasks (e.g., reading authentic materials, participating in online chat, listening to native speaker recordings, and communicating with native speakers) and to boost students' motivation holds promise for facilitating the acquisition of English. Some studies have shown positive effects of using web-based activities on the students' conversational, reading, and writing skills (Gu, 2002; Kung & Chuo, 2002; Lin, 2003).

2.2.2 Web-based instructional models

According to Khan (1997: 375-380) there are several web-based instructions as follows:

- a. conversing, discussing
Students are relating and comparing perspectives with other students and classrooms. Students could be tasked with reading a common book and discussing perspectives. It would be helpful to have access to e-mail, discussion boards, or chat software.
- b. mentoring, questioning, supporting a partner

Teachers might review student's work and provide critique or scaffold process and can be asked or interviewed online. Students might partner with and help one another. It would help to have e-mail, live, synchronous cameras for mentor to discuss, chat rooms with white boards, or digital drop boxes for file sharing and written critiques.

- c. debating
Students defend a position on some issues, typically involves preliminary research online and in libraries, collecting evidence to support one or more perspectives. Debate can be held in class or online with tools such as e-mail and discussion boards.
- d. sharing data, analyzing
Students are collecting information locally and sharing it with others remotely. Then, making use of data collected globally to analyze trends and issues. It helps to have e-mail, spreadsheets, and data analysis software.
- e. accessing tutorials with exercises, quizzes, questions, online drill-and-practice

Students review content materials online, and then access interactive exercises to practice or apply the materials presented. It helps to have software for creating virtual exercises, knowledge of multimedia development programs (e.g. Director, Flash) and/or mechanisms for placing them on the Web (e.g. Shockwave, Java).

2.2.3 Learners characteristics and needs

In web-based learning environment, the learner is responsible for actively seeking solutions to problems confined within the knowledge area being studied with guidance from the teacher. They are expected to view problems and questions presented by the teacher and those of other students. Students in the web-based learning environment are also expected to learn collaboratively and cooperatively (Khan, 1997 in Brooks W. D et al., 2002:68). Students are expected to work together in order to generate deeper levels of understanding of the course material. Students are also expected to share the resources and other materials they find with other learners. In the role of process management, students are

expected to participate with minimal guidelines and interact with one another. Students must be willing to speak out when they have an opinion on something (Palloff and Pratt, 1998 in Brooks W. David et al., 2002:70).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This research applies the principles of action research. The design of this kind of research was based on the spiral model suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart (Koshy, 2005:4). The researcher plan, act, observe and reflect on the students' basic English by using skill Web-based learning materials.

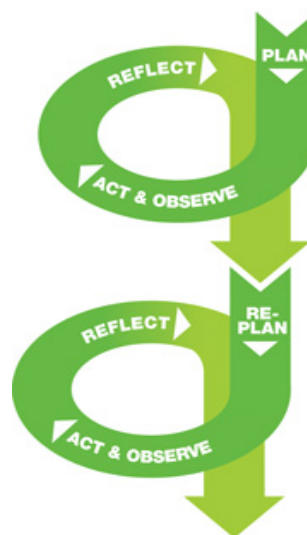


Figure: Spiral Model

1. Plan

Before using the method, a researcher must prepare the lesson

plan, material, media, time, schedule and instrument in order that researcher can design the materials what will be as learning process as possible.

2. Action

Researcher gives explanation about the materials and gives treatment by using skill Web-based learning materials. The process of teaching using Web-based learning materials begins. The product of this study is a set applicable web-based English material for the first semester students. The students might access the website at english1polbeng.ga. The product was equipped with nine menus. They are Home, Grammar, Pronunciation, Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing, Contact us And Login and Sign in menus. All of the activities or tasks were designed based on the students' needs and preferences.

3. Observation

In this step, the researcher as the practitioner implemented Web-based learning materials in the teaching and learning process, and the English lecturer as the

collaborator observed students' understanding, participation and activities in the teaching and learning process. Observation was one of the techniques which were used in collecting the data.

4. Reflection

After carrying out the process using Web-based learning materials, the researcher and collaborator recited the result of the activities which occurred in classroom as the reflection of the action. They evaluated the process and the result of the implementation of Web-based learning materials. It was a basic consideration to make plan and to conduct the next meeting.

3.2. Research Setting

This study was conducted in State of Polytechnic Bengkalis and the subjects are the first semester students of Business Administration Study Program

3.3. Sample

The participants of this study were first semester students of Business Administration Study Program of State Polytechnic Bengkalis (N=24).

3.4. The Instruments

Suharsimi (2010: 192) defines research instrument as a tool used in research. Research instrument is everything used and needed in the research. In doing the research, the four instruments to collect the data for this research. They are questionnaire, interview, test and observation:

1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a set off questions provided to obtain responses indirectly as it is occurred in non-face-to-face situation. It was given in the form of written questions with available answers in ranged-degree. It was aimed to know the students' personal problem faced in Basic English skill.

2. Interview Guide

The interview is held outside the classroom in order that the researcher gets more opportunities to ask many questions as possible to explore information needed for the researcher. Cohen et al (2000: 349) state that interview as a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used; verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. Interview is used by researcher to assess the condition such as to collect the data about the students identifying variable,

parents, education, attending, and attitude to do something. In interview, researcher brings the manual of the points of something which will ask.

3. Test

Suharsimi (2010: 193) states that test is questions or exercises and another tool which is used to measure the ability, intelligence knowledge, capability or talent of individual or group.

4. Observation

Observation can be the facts, such as the number of books in classroom, the number of students in a class, the number of the students who visit the library in a given period. The manual of observation consists of the draft of kinds of the activities which will happen and will be researched. Observation is done in order to get information about the students basic English skill.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data collected was analyzed in different ways that were quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative data, After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the scores from those tests by calculating the mean of pre-test and the post-test by using descriptive statistics. The researcher

used it to answer whether there was difference between students' English skill before and after the action.

The mean or average is computed by adding a list of scores and then dividing by the number of the score. The mean of the pre-test and post-test can be calculated with the formulas as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \qquad \bar{Y} = \frac{\sum Y}{N}$$

Where: \bar{X} = means of pre-test scores

\bar{Y} = means of post-test scores

N = the number of sample

To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher applied Interactive Model of Data Analysis as propounded by Matthew B. Miles and A.M. Huberman (1992). This model includes four different interconnected process: data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification.

4. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After the implementation of Web-based Learning materials in the cycle 1 and cycle 2, there are some points can be taken, there were:

- a. Learning Atmosphere Improvement.

Teaching learning process through Web-based Learning materials made the students made easier to understand the materials of the Basic English skill. They became more enjoyable in learning process. They showed their contribution and participated well in the teaching learning process.

- b. Students' Basic English Skill Improvement.

After giving the tests, it could be concluded that Web-based Learning materials could improve the students' Basic English Skill.

The students' scores improve from Pre-Test, cycle 1 to cycle 2 which can be seen on the following table:

Test	Mean Score
Pre-test	41.22
Post-test cycle 1	46.74
Post-test cycle 2	49.92

From the table above showed that there was an improvement of students' test result before and after the action.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be drawn conclusion as follows:

- a. Web-Based Learning Materials can improve the learning

atmosphere. The learning atmosphere becomes more interesting and enjoyable. Because the materials from the topic that related to daily life and about science and technology. Besides that, interesting activities included in the website.

- b. The Web-Based Learning Materials can improve students' Basic English skill. It was proven by the increase of the students' mean score from 41.22 in pre-test to 46.74 in cycle 1, and 49.92 in cycle 2.

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