The Use of Adobe Flash as a New Technology in Teaching Essay Writing

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Keywords: Adobe Flash, Writing, Essay, Technology, Teaching

Abstract: The development of information and technology has affected many aspects of life including education. Essay writing has an important role in the language academic writing process. Technology also gives a positive effect toward the students' motivation in learning English, especially in essay writing. Nowadays, a computer technology application is developing writing materials by using adobe flash professional. The purpose of this research is to show that the role of technology today is very important in learning process specifically in teaching essay writing, so that it can help teacher and students to make lots variations in teaching. In the past, teaching writing only used conventional ways like books but nowadays teachers and students can use multimedia technology like education interactive software, smartphone, and computer which can make studying more effective and interactive. In this research the writers try to analyze and demonstrate the new technology as a solution to the old problem of teaching essay writing.

1 INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is the age of globalization and information technology. English is one of the important tools in communication in the world, so it is important to learn the language. As a result, English language teaching has been one of the important subjects in education.

In the conventional ways, teaching essay writing skills and strategies are still poor and undeveloped. The speech-dominated education employs a teacher-centered, book-centered, grammar-translation method and focuses more emphasis on rote memory than other practicable skills. The development of computer and the internet have brought the most significant changes in the technology of writing.

Recent advances in computer technology allow the delivery of digital video and audio in the same interface as written text. Although writing is now well recognized as critical dimension of language learning, it still remains one of the least understood processes. Technology may at first entered to the language classroom in the form of the language multimedia laboratory.

It is irrefutable that the development of multimedia technology has great potential in changing the educational system in Indonesia. Multimedia also provides the opportunity for the educators to develop learning technique to produce the maximum result in teaching specifically in teaching essay writing. And for the students with the new technology in multimedia, they can easily absorb the knowledge faster than using text book.

The use of multimedia that can present visualization from the subject will be helpful not only for the teachers in presenting the material but also for the students as a learning subject. So that learning objectives can be achieved. The use of multimedia in teaching is in order to answer those needs. Multimedia language laboratory enhances the process of teaching and learning essay writing, which is considered difficult to accomplish

2 MULTIMEDIA AND EDUCATION

2.1 What Is Multimedia?

Multimedia is important in our life. This is because it is pack with various elements such as text, graphic, sound, video and animation. All of this element can be seen in our surrounding. The

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principle known as the "multimedia principle" states that "people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone" (Mayer, p. 47). It is also used in various fields such as in education, training, business, games and science and technology. This is a proof that multimedia is important. In fact, multimedia is changing the ways of learning itself. Instead of just limiting students with a linear presentation such as reading text from a book, adobe flash makes many improvements in learning by bringing various elements in order to make it more dynamic.

2.2 Multimedia Learning Environment

PM. Neo and T. K. Neo (2000) provides "multimedia as a technology-based constructivist learning environment where students are able to solve a problem by means of self-explorations, collaboration and active participation. Simulations, models and media rich study materials like still and animated graphics, video and audio integrated in a structured manner facilitate the learning of new knowledge much more effectively" (2009:254-266). The interactive nature of multimedia provides the room to enhance traditional "chalk-and-talk" method of teaching with more flexibility to learners to adapt to individual learning strategy. It enables both the educators and learners to work together in an informal setting. The role of educators and learners are extended. Furthermore, it encourages and enhances peer learning as well as individual creativity and innovation. (2009:149-158).

3 ADOBE FLASH – BASED INTERACTIVE LEARNING MULTIMEDIA

Adobe Flash (formerly called Macromedia Flash and Shockwave Flash) is a multimedia and software platform used for creating vector graphics, animation, browser games, internet applications, desktop applications, mobile applications and mobile games. Flash displays text, vector and raster graphics to provide animations, video games and applications.

Adobe Flash is open-source software that primarily used to design graphics and animation, but supports action scripting and debugging. In software development, there is a standard process called SDLC. (tutorialspoint.com, *Software Development*

Life Cycle (SDLC) Simply Easy Learning by Tutorialspoint.com).

"Most people associate the term 'language-learning materials' with course books because that has been their main experience of using materials. However, in this book the term is used to refer to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language. Materials could obviously be videos, DVDs, emails, YouTube, dictionaries, grammar books, readers, workbooks or photocopied exercises. They could also be newspapers, food packages, photographs, and live talks by invited native speakers, instructions given by a teacher, tasks written on cards or discussions between learners. In other words, they can be anything which is deliberately used to increase the learners' knowledge and/or experience of the language." (Tomlinson, 2011:2).

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K.V. Madhavi (2015) on his journal states: "Computer-assisted language Learning is often considered as an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to the production, substantiation and evaluation of material to be learned, usually including a significant interactive element. Learners are given freedom over their own learning process so that they can decide when to repeat the questions, exercises or sequences based on their own progress. Grammar practice, communication activities and vocabulary enhancement can be acquired with ease and enthusiasm."

Education courses and instructional design, skills and knowledge are often taught in a context. To overcome this, the use of multimedia as an education tools help to provide a real-world example using a computer with high quality content. The various type of software available on the market can also help to provide a friendly interactive method of learning. Multimedia and tool such as the internet can provide teacher an instant excess to millions of

resources available. These materials can help the teacher to provide the students with cooperative learning, critical thinking, discussion, and problem solving. So, multimedia language laboratory approach in education provide many advantages over the traditional teaching method.

4 DEFINITION OF ESSAY WRITING

Essay is writing that explains what a term means. Some terms have definite, concrete meanings, such as glass, book, or tree. Terms such as honesty, honor, or love are abstract and depend more on a person's point of view. Essays are used to assess your understanding of specific ideas and your ability to explain these in your own words.

Essays are usually written in a discursive style, bringing together ideas, evidence and arguments to address a specific problem or question.

Brown (year) brings up the complexity of teaching writing: "Just as there are non-swimmers, poor swimmers and excellent swimmers, so it is for writers. Why isn't everyone an excellent writer?" (2001:334) This is a relevant question for us to ask since we hope to meet ways of working with writing that can take the poor writers to the next level; the opposite to some of our experiences of writing in school that has restrained students' development in writing.

"A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language…" (Brown, 2001:335). Writing is more complex than this; hence writing pedagogy is important, as Brown states by claiming that writing is "as different from speaking as swimming is from walking".

"Writing is an expression of logic that is the product of thinking. Thus, the writing that you produce is a reflection of your intellectual abilities. It puts into words your knowledge and your conceptual understanding and shows evidence of your critical thinking." (McMillan & Weyers, 2007:6).

"Writing an essay or assignment is a challenging and fulfilling activity. It brings together all your relevant knowledge and understanding of a topic in response to a particular task – but it is more than that. From writing tasks, you will gain both an adroitness in use of language and effective communication skills. In addition, you will carry the associated critical thinking skills with you into your

professional life after university" (Don Shiach 2007:1)

5 THE ADVANTAGES OF USING ADOBE FLASH AS A NEW TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ESSAY WRITING

As the multimedia technology becomes more readily available to all of us, it seems appropriate that the language teachers should integrate it into their lesson and assessment planning in the same way they have been doing with video, film and computer assisted learning strategies. The students are surrounded by technology and this technology can provide interesting and new approaches to language teaching because "the use of technology for teaching and learning is moving their institution in the right direction" (Healey, 2008:17). In this way, the teachers of English can take full advantage of technology. The following are some of the important advantages of the use of multimedia language laboratory technology in teaching essay writing:

5.1 Motivating Students to Learn Essay Writing

Moreno and Mayer (2007, p. 310) note that "motivational factors mediate learning by increasing or decreasing cognitive engagement" and "metacognitive factors mediate learning by regulating cognitive processing and affect." The traditional teaching methods are unpopular and less effective in the English language classrooms. Now, multimedia adobe flash technology, with the help of audio, visual and animation effects, motivates the students to learn English essay writing quickly and effectively. It makes an easy access to information regarding the culture of the target language. With such features as abundant-information and crossing time and space, multimedia creates a real-life or native speaking country context for teaching writing, which greatly cultivates students' interest and motivation in learning the lesson.

5.2 Improving Teaching Efficiency

Using multimedia language laboratory technology in the essay writing learning improves teaching contents and makes the best of class time. It breaks the teacher-centered traditional teaching method and fundamentally improves the teachers teaching

efficiency and has become "central to language practice" (Motteram, 2013:5). For large classes, it is difficult for the students to have speaking communication, but the utilization of multi-media sound laboratory materializes the face-to-face teaching. The traditional teaching techniques only emphasize on teachers' instruction and provide limited information to the students. But multimedia technology goes beyond time and space and creates more real-life environment for English teaching. It stimulates students' initiatives and economizes class time, providing more information to the students.

5.3 Enhancing Interaction among Students and between Teachers and Students

Gary Motteram is one of the scholars to work on the effectiveness of technological use in the language classrooms. He says that it is still "the case that most teachers work in physical classrooms and looking at ways that these spaces can be augmented with digital technologies is a very good starting point" (Motteram, 2013:7). In fact, multimedia technology in teaching focuses on the active participation of students and enhances the importance of interaction among students and between teachers and students. One of the main uses of multimedia technology in the classrooms is to improve students' ability to listen and speak, and thereby develop their communicative competence. In this process, the teacher's role as a facilitator is particularly prominent. The utilization of multimedia technology can create a context for the exchange of information among students and between teachers and students, emphasizing "student engagement in authentic, meaningful interaction" (Warschauer, 2009:2). This media has improved the traditional classroom teaching model. So, the teachers in the multimedia language laboratory no longer force the students to receive the information passively.

5.4 Creating a Conducive Teaching Environment in the Classrooms

The use of adobe flash as a new multimedia technology creates a favorable environment for language teaching. Highlighting the importance of its use, Healey et.al. Say, "Bad teaching will not disappear with the addition of even the most advanced technology; good teaching will benefit from appropriate use of technology to help learners achieve their goals" (Healey, 2008:17). This technique makes the language class lively and interesting, motivating the students to participate in the classroom activities. Multimedia technology has its own features such as visibility and liveliness that produce special effects on the participants. While teaching English language through it, the sounds and pictures can be set together that enhance the active participation of both teachers and students.

The teachers can show pictures and images of kind of essay to enrich the sharing of information effectively. They also imagine different contexts while preparing for the lesson. In the similar way, using the multimedia language laboratory technology, the students in the class can receive abundant information about the language clearly. Thus, using adobe flash technology in English language teaching is effective in cultivating students' interest in learning, improving the teachers' interest in teaching essay writing.

6 DISADVANTAGES OF USING ADOBE FLASH AS A NEW TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ESSAY WRITING

There are many disadvantages of using multimedia technology in in teaching English essay writing despite it has facilitated the language teachers to improve their efficiency in teaching. These are some of the disadvantages that this study has found in the context:

6.1 Emphasis on the Supplementary of effective Teaching

The use of multimedia language laboratory technology is a supplementary tool for teaching essay writing, not an end in itself as the blackboard is "supplemented by the overhead projector, another excellent medium for the teacher-dominated classroom, as well as by early computer software programs" (Warschauer,2009:2). If the teachers are totally dependent on multimedia devices during their teaching, they may turn into slaves to multimedia technology and cannot play the key role as a facilitator to the students. In practice, many teachers are active in using multimedia technology, but they are not proficient enough to handle it properly.

If the teachers stand by the computer all the time and students are just concentrating on the screen, the teachers cannot have the direct eye contact with the students. The development of multimedia technology in the language classrooms is considered

effective and many benefits of the traditional teaching model have been forgotten. Therefore, the teachers should understand that the multimedia technology should be used as a supplementary instrument rather than a target. For example, "Electronic communication within a single class might be viewed as an artificial substitute for face-to-face communication" (Warschauer, 2009:4). It should be considered and used as a tool for effective teaching and learning.

6.2 Limited Social Interaction

A common disadvantage of online education is limited social interaction. While online students often engage peers in online discussions and interact with teachers via e-mail, this doesn't replicate the face-to-face experiences in a traditional classroom.

6.3 Lack of Structure

Self-disciplined students can benefit from the flexibility and convenience of online classes, but the lack of formal structure can be a pitfall for undisciplined or unmotivated students.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Multimedia technology and language teaching have been hand in hand for a long time, and have contributed as teaching tools in the language teaching specifically in essay writing. However, the use multimedia language laboratory technology is still full of fears and insecurities by many teachers everywhere around the world despite the latest developments applicable to teaching essay writing such as websites, blogs, online journals, and so on.

The application of multimedia technology to teaching can make improvements in English language teaching and at the same time has enabled "teachers to re-think what they are doing" (Motteram, 2013:7). However, the teachers should play the leading role even if they use multimedia technology. Their position should not be replaced by the computers and other devices. For example, when each lesson is introduced and spoken English is taught, the students can easily improve their listening and speaking skills which the multimedia technology cannot do. Even, the teachers' interpretation during the language teaching should not be overlooked. In principle, English should be

used frequently in the language classes in order to improve the students' communicative

8 CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of using adobe flash as a new multimedia technology in language teaching specifically in teaching essay writing is to help raising students' motivation and learning interest in studying how to write essay writing.

In conclusion, the utilization of adobe flash as a new multimedia technology can fully improve the students' thinking and practical language skills. This will ensure and full fill an effective result of teaching how to write an essay writing. Despite some disadvantages of using multimedia.

Using the technology of adobe flash software in teaching essay writing is one of the best alternative to make the learning process become more effective and attractive to improve student's ability in studying essay writing.

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