

LANGUAGE TEACHING VIA THE INTERNET: PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS OF HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Internet is gradually gaining its popularity in Malaysian higher institutions. Today, many language teachers spend endless and fruitless hours of information surfing via the Internet but their painstaking effort sometimes ended up with information that is completely different and irrelevant. However, is not much evidence on the application of the Internet in Malaysian higher institutions as well as the teachers' view on their Internet application in language teaching. Therefore, the aim of this research is to seek the perception of Malaysian English language teachers of higher institutions on the use of Internet in language teaching and learning, particularly in English as A Second or Foreign Language. 15 respondents who are teaching in two universities were the subjects of the research. Their computing involvement, frequency of Internet navigation, and their opinions on their purposes of Web application were obtained. Results show that most of the teachers used the Internet in their language classes, allowed their students to communicate with them via E-mail, received the students' assignments via the technology and they also believed that the Internet is a valuable teaching tool in their language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the Internet became a "boom" in our country, it has possessed the potential of allowing individuals regardless of their background, age, experience, gender, ability or qualification to share the only resource that is not reduced when it is consumed, or not lost when it is given away - INFORMATION. Undoubtedly, the past few years have seen the emergence of the Internet as a prominent new technology and the influence of such a powerful technological tool has pervaded all aspects of business, economy, and education globally. As it is widespread in numerous fields and domains, the Internet also carries great potentials for educational use, especially in the second and foreign language education.

The Net is all about sharing ideas with others (World Wide Web) and communication (e-mail, newsgroup, etc.). It offers a range of authentic materials and ample opportunities to communicate in the foreign language. "Most teachers who have used it stress the fact that due to the very nature of the Internet, it fits into the current theories of communicative language learning and learner autonomy" (Graus, 1999). Dudeney (1997) elaborates on the application of the Internet:

"The Net is young - one day it will be complete. It's a vibrant place, particularly with regards to ESL/EFL teachers and what they are doing."

There are vast and plentiful resources in the Internet for language teachers. The teachers can experiment and apply those resources as well as explore ways to find materials in order to improve their teaching. Nonetheless, there is an urgent need for language teachers to equip themselves with the skills necessary to venture into the Internet revolution. They must be able to acquire the skills and utilize them in the classroom for the pupils because the Internet is gaining its popularity in the universities and colleges worldwide (Trokeloshvili & Jost, 1997). Though many educators and keen Internet users feel that the Internet is useful in the educational context, there is still not much empirical evidence that supports this claim.

Realizing the fragmented area, the objective of this research is to investigate the perception of Malaysian English language teachers of higher learning institutions on the use of the Internet in modern language teaching and learning, particularly in the teaching of English as Second Language and English as Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). To date, there has been no general study on the lecturers' perceptions of Internet application in language teaching in Malaysia. This study hopes to gain some insights into how language teachers apply the Internet in their language teaching. It also aims at providing teachers with several useful criteria for selecting good language learning websites. This is because there are teachers who painstakingly surf the Internet for a particular piece of information but end up with something that is completely different and irrelevant. Furthermore, there are many existing websites which claim to teach certain aspects of the English language excellently. These websites may be deceiving and are a waste of time, energy and money especially for teachers who want the best for their students. In this case, teachers have to be wary and selective in choosing the websites for language teaching and learning. Hence, this study will provide some useful insights for teachers who seek to integrate the Internet into their language instruction. The scope of this study is therefore confined to the English language teachers who are teaching in the two selected institutions of higher learning.

To limit this research, it is assumed that the reader has a basic knowledge and understanding of personal computers and the Internet. For the purpose of the study, it is also realized that the Internet is a vast realm and it changes very rapidly. It is therefore impossible to give a complete overview of its teaching possibilities the Internet has to offer.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers are mostly aware of what is involved in the process of language learning. However, it is quite difficult to determine how exactly a person learns a second language. In this case, in order to make the process of teaching and learning a success, sound theories of learning will be discussed in relation to the use of computers in this Information Age.

When talking about the learning theories, it would be insufficient if Krashen's Monitor Model is not discussed in detail. Krashen (1981) makes a distinction between a conscious process of language learning and a subconscious process of language acquisition. He claims that acquisition occurs subconsciously as in a child acquiring first and second language. When the emphasis is on the "message", the child acquires the language. Krashen believes that in such a condition i.e. child acquiring first and second language, language production process is initiated by the learner's acquired system.

Learning, on the contrary, takes place consciously during formal instruction i.e. teaching in the classroom. The learner learns when the emphasis is on "form" and Krashen also discovers that overt correction or explicit presentation of rules predominates learning (Ahmad et al. 1985:55). Learners 'acquired' system initiates language production but the output of the system is monitored by the 'learned' system. Krashen further elaborates that learners who fall into the category of the optimal 'Monitor User' are those who manage to balance the demands of learning via the form and acquisition vis-à-vis the message.

This explains why in the 60s and 70s, language teaching was conducted in classes where teachers monitored students' interactions by drilling as well as providing students with immediate correction and reinforcement. The basic assumption was that if verbal behavior was modeled and reinforced, students would quickly learn the language. Therefore, teachers engaged their students in stimulus-response-behavior pattern because they believed that students would learn the second language faster if they were given more drills.

When technology entered into the language education, language laboratory complete with series of booths and accompanying microphones and headphones was the fashion (Singhal, 1997). The stimulus-response behavior pattern was employed through teachers' dissemination of audio input through a central control panel in the lab. Although a positive step in linking technology and education, such activity was tedious and boring for both the teacher and students as well as insufficient in preparing

the learners for communication. Teachers who have been adapting to the behaviorist theory via the Audio-lingual Method (the "State of the Art" around 1950s and 1960s) have then shifted their emphasis. Many teachers prefer to concentrate more on Krashen's comprehensible input i.e., providing learners with the input which enables them to proceed to the next stage of learning (Chapelle, 1997; Yong Zhao, 1997). This factor then was the impetus that led to the shift to the communicative approach in second language education, namely Computer Assisted Language Learning – CALL (Singhal, 1997).

Computers are technologically different from language laboratories. They are definitely more versatile and their impact on language teaching and learning is likely to be different (Kenning & Kenning, 1988). A range of CALL programs have evolved over the last few decades, which include Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) and Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI). As they possess common characteristics related to interaction (Aviev & Frommer, 1987:177), this discussion will refer to both as synonymous to CALL. CALL offers a variety of applications including vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation software, spell checkers, writing and reading programs as well as various authoring packages to allow instructors to create their own exercises (Singhal, 1997). Another advantage of CALL is its potential to increase learner motivation (Ahmad et al, 1985; Aviev & Frommer, 1987; Singhal, 1997) apart from providing immediate feedback to students who can happily work at their own pace. This allows students of different abilities to find their own performance level. In addition, it motivates both the slow and the fast learners to discover their potential and need for remedial and enrichment exercises respectively. Another interesting CALL feature is the integration of sound, graphics, video and animation that is presented in a non-linear sequence (Kenning & Kenning, 1988).

However, despite the widespread of CALL, many educators believe that learning by applying grammar rules through fill-in-the-blank exercises does not guarantee a speaker's ability to produce grammatically appropriate utterances (Amstrong & Yetter-Vassot, 1994). Another limiting factor of CALL is its limited ability to provide opportunity for the spoken medium. This is apparently a problem for the computer since its ability to deal with speech is less developed than its ability to deal with written products. Another flaw is the inability of the software to process questions, which have no specific right or wrong answer (Ahmad et. al, 1985). For example, exercises on message production (notes and letters) and composition (guided and free) have several alternative structures that can be considered as correct.

Krashen's *Comprehensible Input*, his *Monitor Model* and the behaviorist model are insufficient to cater for the complete overview of this study. Krashen's idea of providing students with enabling input is definitely accepted but when discussing the possibilities of using the Internet in the classrooms, mere comprehensible language input is inadequate. Much have been said about the potential benefits the Internet offers to the language learners, as yet, the Internet has not been used on a broad scale in an educational context, particularly in the Malaysian setting. This high expectation of the language learners and teachers will therefore have to be justified by eliciting the views and perceptions of English lecturers who are Internet users in higher institutions. The lecturers' opinion with regards to using Internet in their language teaching is the main concern. Below are the procedures used in gaining the data for this research.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study was a descriptive qualitative study whereby it analyzed the effectiveness of teaching English as a second/foreign language via the Internet. Opinions from respondents on the effectiveness and practicality of the use of Internet in their language teaching were obtained. After selecting the respondents, the researcher designed the questionnaire to seek for their views. In the process of formulating the questionnaire, the researcher conducted an informal interview in order to improve the questions in Section 3 of the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire was formulated, the researcher gave the selected respondents a briefing on the purpose of the research. She also asked for their cooperation to complete the given questionnaire. No specific time was allocated for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. This was necessary in view of respondents' teaching workload and current commitments.

The only instrument used in this research was the questionnaire (refer to Appendix 1) which was adapted from Osuna and Meskill (1998). However, the items adapted from Osuna and Meskill (1998) only appeared in section 4 of the questionnaire. Sections 1, and 2 were designed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section of the questionnaire gauged the respondents' background and educational qualifications as well as their teaching experience. The second section, on the contrary, searched for the answers regarding respondents' computing experience. The third section of the questionnaire was formulated to elicit respondents' frequency of Internet navigation as well as their perceptions of good and uninteresting websites. The final part of the questionnaire, which followed the Likert Style format, consisted of miscellaneous questions intended to gauge the respondents' objectives of using the Web.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher managed to gauge the view of fifteen respondents who varied in terms of age, experience, gender, field of study and qualifications. These respondents were the experts in various fields namely TESL, TESOL, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics and Literature.

TABLE 1.1 : The Respondents' Internet Use

Quest. No.	Items	Response	Total no. of respondents	Percentage (%)
12.	Internet surfing	Yes	15	100
		No	-	0
13.	Frequency of surfing	Every day	6	40
		Every other day	1	6.7
		A few times per week	5	33.2
		Once a week	1	6.7
		Once in a fortnight	-	0
		Once in a month	1	6.7
		Never	-	0
14.	Competency of Internet use	Excellent	3	20
		Good	8	53.4
		Fair	4	26.6
		Poor	-	0
15.	Navigating purposes	Academic search	13	86.7
		General information search	14	93.3
		Fun	2	13.3
		Chit-chat	-	0
		E-mail	12	80
		Shopping	-	0
		Entertainment	3	20
		News	9	9
16.	Internet for language teaching	Yes	13	86.7
		No	2	13.3
17.	Purpose of Internet application in classroom	Search for articles	11	73.3
		Search for materials	11	73.3
		Assignments via e-mail	7	46.7
		Appointments	9	60
		Access web addresses	6	40
		Complete assignments	5	33.3
		Retrieve course information	1	6.7

All fifteen respondents (100%), as the above table illustrates, surfed the Internet. This evidence showed that those educators had begun to see the importance of the Internet technology in their daily activities by their frequent search in the Internet. When required to rate themselves as Internet users, 53.4% of the respondents rated themselves as good users. Another 26.6% of them felt that they fell under the fair user category. It was a good indication that no respondents felt that they were poor users. Perhaps this was because the members of the faculty had undergone computer training program. Nonetheless, it showed that those teachers had had some knowledge of the computer skills necessary for Internet navigation.

Table 1.1 also illustrates the purpose of the respondents' Internet navigation. Generally, most of the respondents (93.3%) searched the Web for general information. This was carried out when they needed to have some elaboration on something in particular or when they were curious about an idea, book or anything for that matter. 86.7% of the respondents searched the Web for academic purposes which were very much related to their job undertakings. A substantial number of the respondents (80%) used the Internet to send e-mails to their colleagues, students, and friends or vice versa. The table also shows that the respondents did not just navigate the Internet for academic purposes or e-mail writing but also for news discovery and worldly knowledge.

The purpose of the Internet application in language teaching also varied among the respondents. 73.3% of the respondents allowed their students to seek for articles and materials from the Websites. In addition, sixty percent of them encouraged their students to arrange appointments with them via e-mail. Another forty percent of the respondents provided their students with web addresses related to the courses they taught and expected the students to access the web addresses provided by them.

In short, the respondents' applications of Internet in their language teaching were not confined to only searching for articles in the websites as the tasks they gave to their students varied accordingly. The respondents were indirectly teaching their students to use the Internet and perhaps such teaching pedagogy will leave some impact to the betterment of both the students and teachers in the Knowledge Age.

TABLE 1.2 : The Respondents' Perceptions of Good Websites for Language Learning

Quest. No.	Items	Total no. of respondents	Percentage (%)
18.	Offers challenging exercises	3	20
	Tasks are exciting and fun	4	26.7
	Pages are colorful and attractive	5	33.3
	Notes are sufficient	1	6.7
	Exercises are interactive	4	53.3
	Links to other documents	11	73.3
	Notes are easily understood	2	13.3
	Feedback are motivational	4	26.7
	Materials presented systematically	5	33.3
	Exercises graded according to levels of proficiency	-	0
	Has preparatory elements	4	26.7
	Main page is user-friendly	6	40

Table 1.2 indicates the perceptions of the respondents on the criteria for good websites for language teaching. Significantly, 73.3% of the respondents felt that a good website offered links to other relevant websites. This was particularly true when they wanted to search for other websites if they were not satisfied with the contents of the present website.

The information obtained also indicated that 53.3% of the respondents perceived that a good website offers interactive language exercises for the students. Interactive here merely means that there was some form of two-way communication between the computer program and the user. A good example was

the feedback given to correct and incorrect answers provided by the students: “nice try”, “congratulations!”, “You miss the target” were among the interactive and motivational device used to stimulate students’ interests and boost their confidence. The findings also indicated that forty percent of the respondents perceived a user-friendly main page as an indication of a good website. This was perhaps because the main page of a website is the overall indication of the whole lesson or tutorial. As the first item seen before the lesson or tutorial, the main page must be attractive and motivating for the users to engage in the program more often.

TABLE 1.3 :The Respondents’ Response to Use of Internet in Language Teaching

Quest. No.	Items	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	I plan to integrate Internet into the course.	86.7	13.3	0
2.	Internet doesn’t help improve my students’ language skills.	13.3	6.7	80
3.	I wish I have own Websites containing my teaching notes.	66.7	20	13.3
4.	Websites with grammar and reading exercises aren’t helpful.	0	20	80
5.	I prefer to use the Web for teaching my course.	20	6.7	73.3
6.	The WWW is a valuable teaching tool for the course.	73.4	13.3	13.3
7.	I am more confident using computer technology than before.	100	0	0
8.	The Web is an unnecessary ‘add on’ for academic purposes.	13.3	20	66.7
9.	My students do not enjoy doing Internet exercises on the Internet.	0	53.3	46.7
10.	Other lecturers should integrate Internet in their teaching.	66.7	33.3	0
11.	My students send their assignments via e-mail.	53.3	13.3	33.4
12.	I contact my colleagues via e-mail.	93.4	0	6.6
13.	The Web doesn’t provide up-to-date information.	0	20	80
14.	I possess an e-mail account.	100	0	0

As shown in Table 1.3, 86.7% of the respondents planned to integrate the Internet into their teaching. In addition, 73.4% of them believed that the World Wide Web was a valuable teaching tool for their courses. 80% of the respondents felt that the Web provided up-to-date information and 66.7% of them felt that their colleagues should integrate the Internet in their language teaching. This high percentage of positive response towards Internet use indicates that the respondents were certain of the benefits the Internet presented for language teaching. It was most likely that they would apply the Internet or continue to integrate the Internet into their language instruction.

Apart from their intentions to apply the Internet in the educational context, the respondents’ Internet use was also evident. All respondents possessed an e-mail account and 93.4% of them contacted their colleagues by e-mail. This explains that the respondents found it useful to use e-mail as one of the Internet applications in their academic and personal pursuits. It shows that the respondents were beginning to regard the Internet as a new way of communication. Perhaps, apart from communicating for personal news with their colleagues, the communication also circled around academic purposes: exchanging notes,

articles, or information. In addition, the respondents' Internet use had also been expanded to their students. Students were encouraged to send assignments via e-mail and some lecturers also allowed the use of the technology for other purposes namely students' comments and responses regarding the course. Generally, it shows that the respondents realized the importance of the Internet in the educational setting particularly in their respective institutions.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

One of the main objectives of this research was to answer the question on the perceptions of teachers regarding Internet use in the language classrooms. The respondents were obviously very keen in integrating the Internet in their teaching. This was shown when 86.7% of the teacher respondents applied the Internet in their teaching. However, most of them were applying the technology but in a very superficial way. Their application of Internet was only pertinent to a few advantages offered by the Internet. Hence, they only allowed their students to seek information through articles and journals in the Internet, arrange for appointments, access web addresses, or send writing assignments by e-mail. Those restricted activities were very insufficient, for the Internet offers a vast realm of knowledge to the teachers and students alike.

Only a handful of the lecturers browsed through the exercises in the Web. This was evident when only one respondent answered the question on the criteria of websites, which were not interesting and helpful to the students. Therefore, the failure of the respondents in answering the question indicates that they were not that keen on allowing their students to access the exercises related to the course.

Having discussed the lecturers' lack of focus on Internet application in language teaching, how then can they best benefit from the Web as a supplementary resource? How can the lecturers apply the Internet in the classrooms when they themselves "do not know where to begin looking for on-line resources and information" (Frizler, 1995). Obviously, many lecturers are relatively computer literate, and have surfed the Internet before, either on their own or with assistance from friends. However, most of them are unclear about how to use the technology as a tool to foster language learning. In addition, they simply do not have the time or money to spend on training themselves to improve their Internet navigation. Though educators are convinced of the benefits of using the Internet, there are still a few practical matters to be dealt with before their students can benefit from using the Net in language learning.

First, they have to learn how to go about using the Internet. The following section will discuss the framework related to the educational use of the Internet. Second, a number of criteria need to be drawn up to help teachers select appropriate materials from the Web. Sometimes, teachers are "lost" in the Net because there is so much information available in the Information Highway. Finally, a number of conditions need to be fulfilled before the Internet can be applied as a learning kit in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Sometimes teachers who are keen in applying the Internet in their classrooms simply do not know where to start for they do not know what to expect. Some teachers may even have the idea that the Internet is only relevant to certain subjects or courses and not for the ones they are teaching. Teachers should realize that they play an important role in helping students to benefit from the Internet regardless of the various academic fields. This research finding is in line with Wills (1997). He had designed a model, which will provide teachers with a framework to help them understand the new technology and its support for the learning process. This model is worth discussing because it is strongly related to the findings of this study. Below is the model proposed by Wills (1997).

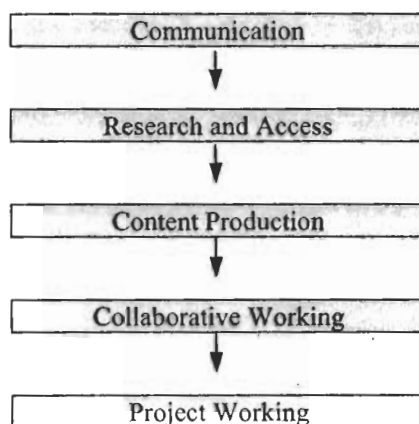


FIGURE 2.1 : A Proposed Model for the Educational Use of Internet Technology

The first stage is for teachers to focus on basic communication among students. Teachers should encourage students' participation in communicative activities offered by the Internet like e-mail, Internet Relay Chat, on-line discussions, and newsgroup. Those activities will foster real communication among the students, thus boosting their interest and motivations to discover more potential use of the Internet.

In the second stage, teachers need to assist students to research and collect information and data via the Internet. Teachers of course need to conduct a few sessions of efficient Web browsing and brief explanation on the various search engines useful for Web browsing. Will's (1997) third stage comprises of content production whereby students learn how to make and publish their homepage using appropriate applications in the Internet. It is foreseen that this stage will be motivating and stimulating to students. Moreover, in completing a project related to their course, students need to use the variety of resources available on the Internet. Hence, they will need to apply what they had learnt in the previous stages.

The proposed model provides the language teachers who are still grappling with ideas and methods on how to make the Internet as part of their teaching. However, in this case, not only do the students have to use the Internet but teachers too. Language teachers, as proven from this study, should be prepared to venture into more meaningful applications of the Internet apart from assessing the Web for general information search, academic search, news discovery or e-mail writing. Those applications of the Internet do not directly enhance language learning, instead, as language teachers, they should be more focused on the Internet applications which foster language learning. For example, they need to spend some time searching for materials related to the courses they teach and then recommend certain sites to the students. The model proposed by Wills (1997) above does not focus on any field of language teaching in particular. It is actually meant for all areas of academic study. Teachers of any academic area may apply the model as their teaching pedagogy and manipulate it to the advantage of their students. In addition, they will not lose track of what their students are doing because they have considered these aspects in their approach: communication, information search, learner autonomy, and project-based working. However, at some point, teachers need to start looking for suitable websites useful for their lessons. There are a number of times when teachers spend a considerable amount of time searching for a particular information but the surf is fruitless. Instead, they end up with something completely different and irrelevant. Though the respondents showed no indication of such problem, it is foreseen that they had problems evaluating the Web. This was because they failed to indicate how a website is not helpful to their students when the question was posed to them.

Graus (1999) had earlier identified such a problem and later he came up with a model for material selection. His model is worth discussing because he presented the model in a very systematic way. Following Graus' (1999) criteria, this section will provide a model for teachers who want to select materials on the World Wide Web. He stated that there are a few steps which are encompassed in the

model. Firstly, teachers must narrow down the topic. They will need to evaluate their purposes of surfing. They must answer the following question: Which types of data are they searching for -- stories, articles, facts or statistics? Once teachers are clear of their objectives, they will continue to the next stage.

In the second stage, they have to determine why they need to look for such information. By evaluating such criteria, teachers will be able to scan through the resources quickly before even reading the whole content of the information. Once the websites are determined, the final step is to test the sites. Graus divided the criteria used for this stage into two categories: criteria pertaining to the content of the web pages and those related to design and user-friendliness. He discussed that teachers can test the sites by using the SCAD checklist (Source Evaluation, Contents, Access, Design), which incorporates both mentioned categories. The SCAD checklist is summarized in the table below:

TABLE 5.2 : The SCAD Checklist. Source : Graus, 1999

Source Evaluation	trustworthy source, author's credentials, e-mail, organizational support, rated by known authority, meta information, bad grammar
Contents	accurate information, up-to-date, comprehensive, rounded story, audience and purpose, objectivity, fairness, reasonableness, moderateness, external consistency
Access	standard multimedia formats, does it require extra software or plug-ins, free, easy to reach or overloaded, download time
Design	well structured, easy to navigate, interaction, distracting visual elements, does everything function, functional design, working hyperlinks

It is hoped that the above checklist will help teachers to evaluate the websites they have selected for their lessons. Of course, very few sources will meet every criterion in the list but at least the list facilitates evaluating Internet sites and if used properly, it will be a useful aid to teachers.

Much research has been carried out to help provide educators with useful criteria for language learning websites. Therefore, teachers and students will need to be selective and extra careful of their choices of websites. This is because not all websites are good, and can offer what the teachers and students want.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications below are hoped to be of benefits to these different Internet users as well as the use of the Internet.

Teachers

The possibility of the Internet as the new medium in Malaysian education is enormous. Teachers are therefore recommended to integrate the Internet into their lessons. Teachers will of course no longer be in the limelight as the classroom becomes more student-centered but they will be involved in 'coaching' the students rather than 'teaching' (Graus, 1999). By involving themselves and their students in the Internet tasks and activities, teachers will be able to explore new ideas in language teaching. For example, they can offer extra information and language input to their students as well as facilitate the learning process. In fact, they will help to develop a new paradigm in education (Frizler, 1995).

Students

Apparently, the Internet has a positive impact on the students' learning experience too. The language input they obtain from the classroom will be varied and will help boost their motivation in language learning as shown by Muehleisen (1997); Newfields (1997); Osuna and Meskill (1998); Warschauer (1996); Kornum (1993); Liao (1999); Davis and Chang (1994) in their studies. Obviously, students' language proficiency can gradually improve with the Internet application. In this case, students should realize that world communication will become increasingly important and knowledge of English, as the world language will be paramount. Hence, students should acquire both computer skills and language skills in order to be successful in the Information Age.

Administrators

Educational policy makers will find this study useful for they can observe the potential benefits the Internet offers to Malaysian based language teaching. In addition, they can also evaluate the teachers' present perceptions via this study if the Internet were to be integrated into the curriculum. This is in line with the current trends in most academic institutions in the world whereby the integration of the Internet technology in the curriculum is the state of the art.

Teaching Methodology

Teachers have applied many strategies and approaches for the teaching of English. A few years back, they struggled to introduce the new approach in language teaching i.e., communicative language teaching by fostering communication via communicative activities to the students. The integration of the Internet is a better teaching methodology for it encompasses more than one approach: communication, learner autonomy, student-centered classroom, and project-based working. The frameworks proposed by Wills (1997) and Graus (1999) will be very useful for such purposes.

Web Designers

The impact of the Internet in society in general will be profound for the years to come. Evaluating the importance of integrating the Internet in the educational contexts, web designers should consider a few aspects when designing their web pages. Kimbal (1998) suggested several points for fruitful web-authoring:

- a) Organize texts and other data so that students can get involved and stay engaged.
- b) Create opportunities for students to become authors on-line.
- c) Seize opportunities for oneself to make connections with other teachers and researchers with similar interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study only presents the use of the Internet in ESL/EFL classroom in general. No specific area of interest was focused. It is hoped that future studies will look into a specific field of study namely the Literary Studies or the TESL course. This will enable the researchers to gain insight into the specific area and thus observe how teachers manipulate the Internet technologies in real classroom environment. It would definitely be an interesting exposure because it can explore the use of Internet in subjects, which one thinks the application of the Internet is not applicable. Another possible area is the effectiveness of the Internet application in the language learning process. Perhaps, future researchers should focus on the extent to which Internet can help improve students' language proficiency.

This study has discussed the potential use of the Internet in language teaching. It has also managed to come up with a few recommendations for people who are directly involved in the educational context and those who are interested in integrating Internet in their undertakings. Relating to the benefits

of applying the Internet in language classrooms, teachers must make use of the Internet in their English classes. Integration of Internet technology in language classrooms is obviously something new and unknown to many students. It is hoped that it will boost the students' motivation to excel in the course and indirectly stimulate their interest in making English a part of their lives.

Teachers must also be aware of their function in the digital age i.e., to communicate to the students the ideas and skills necessary to function well in English language learning. They will need to get more involved with the Internet in order to continue improving their teaching skills. Not just that, the Internet improves the students' learning abilities as well. Therefore, teachers need to prepare themselves well for the digital age without any more doubts.

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