The Using of Digital Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning English on the Well-being of Indonesian Students

Venny Eka Meidasari

University of Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia

venny_xiaofen@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper focuses on the using of digital media to enhance teaching and learning English as language difficulties is the critical issue of Indonesian students facing today. The study was conducted at University of Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, explored the experiences of students at fifth semester supported the hypothesis that language difficulties influence the level of psychological well-being among Indonesian students. As students from non-English speaking countries enter the globalization era where speaking English is the norm, they are faced with the challenge of learning a new language as a prerequisite to successful and further thriving. The use of digital media has implications for the well-being of Indonesian students as online communication stimulates young learners social connectedness. Academic achievement would also benefit from schools having access to a teaching material aimed at delivering skills for the use of Internet and digital technology. In this paper, the writer tries to explore the new trend of digital media to enhance teaching and learning English not just simply because the students are confronted with digital media in their daily life anyway, but because of the fact that the more channels for the reception of information are used, the better for the students' language acquisition or their learning process in general. The findings support the conclusion that the using of digital media boosts the English language proficiency, and reduces the levels of cultural stress, academic difficulties, and negative emotions among Indonesian students confronted with other students across the world.

Key words: *digital media, teaching English, language learning, well-being*

1. Introduction

Language difficulties are the most critical issue facing Indonesian students today. Language proficiency may have a profound effect on an individual's ability to learn and develop, due to its key role in the transmission of information and regulation of cognitive processes (Binder & Smith, 2013). When focusing on language proficiency, the communicative purpose of language is of primary importance (Baker, 2001). This is because the ability to communicate effectively is vital in the measurement of a person's capability to perform socially and academically (Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, & Schartner, 2013). As a result,

language proficiency is one of the key factors in the process of gaining both academic and career achievements.

The last two decades have witnessed a rapid transformation of traditional media into new media that encompasses digital, computerized, and networked information and communication technologies. The new digital media is now a valuable learning resource and all learning involves changes in the brain. The technology-based types of training from this media can improve working memory and others can provide mental stimulation that helps cognitive improvement as well.

The new trend of digital media technologies including social networks (e.g. Second Life, Facebook, Twitter) offer opportunities for teachers to challenge previous centralized models of learning by connecting, sharing and discussing ideas with their students outside of the class room and at great distance from each other. New digital media have become an important part in the life of our young generation. It is a natural for teachers to take a close look at the trend and take it into consideration when lessons are conceptualized. By using these media, teachers are offered a great possibility to increase motivation, oral participation and thus language competence in almost every field.

In this paper, the writer focuses on the impact of using digital media to enhance teaching and learning English on the well-being of Indonesian students conducted at University of Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, explored the experiences of students at fifth semester as language fluency is a major determinant of successful career in the globalisation era. The higher the level of English language proficiency, the lower the levels of cultural stress, academic difficulties, and negative emotions among Indonesian students.

As a teacher, I see that schools as institutions have to react to the emergence of this new media cultures. The greatest opportunity for change is currently found in after-school programs and informal learning communities. Schools and after-school programs must devote more attention to fostering the new media literacies; a set of cultural competencies and social skills that young people need to overcome the negative impacts of the new media technologies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Notion of Digital Media

According to the definition of the Communication Department at the University of Washington, digital media can be defined as any medium that uses digital interactive technologies as the engine for communication, e.g. video on demand services, interactive television, digital broadcasting systems and Internet based content distribution network. Digital media are a new form of communication, emerging as a result of ongoing technological change, that do not compulsorily require a physical carrier. (see M.C. digital media program. Department of Communication, University of Washington available at http://www.com.washington.edu/Program/MC/MC_Digital/faq.html). With the term digital media, we can refer not only to data storage product types such as CDs, DVDs, USB drives, memory sticks and MP3 players, but also to all the other new means of disseminating content through the various new digital technologies.

The term is developed into a term called "new media." The name of new media itself, according to James, et al. (2009:6), "Refer to the actual technologies that people use to connect with one another—including mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), game consoles, and computers connected to the Internet." Through these technologies, young people are participating in a range of activities, including social networking, blogging, gaming, instant messaging, downloading music and other content, uploading and sharing their creations, and collaborating with others in various ways.

Similarly, on their book Ito and colleagues (2008:12) stated that "We use the term "new media" to describe a media ecology where more traditional media, such as books, television, and radio, are "converging" with digital media, specifically interactive media and media for social communication." They use the term "new media" rather than terms such as "digital media" or "interactive media" because they are examining a constellation of changes to media technology that cannot be reduced to a single technical characteristic. Current media ecologies often rely on a convergence of digital and online media with print, analog, and non-interactive media types

Based on the theories above, the writer concludes that digital media here refers to applications of the computer that include multimedia, artificial intelligence and networking. Multimedia is the combination of the computational power of the computer with the presentation capabilities of video and audio. Artificial intelligence uses the computational power of the computer to support and in some ways mimic human cognition. Networking includes the uses of computers that are connected via landlines or microwave to each other and the Internet and World Wide Web.

On the table below are the main types of Interned-based social media that are within the scope of online language education:

Type	Examples
Social networking sites	Facebook, Google+, LiveMocha
Collaborative media	Wikis
Blogs and Microblogs	Blogger, Twitter
Content communities	Youtube, Picasa
Virtual game worlds	Warcraft
Virtual social worlds	Second Life

2.2. The Notion of Well-being

According to the Oxford dictionary, well-being is defined as a state of good or satisfactory condition of existence characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity. For the purpose of the study, the definition by Diener is the most relevant. He describes wellbeing as the extent to which people are able to experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness (Diener, 2000). Therefore, relating to the definition, failure to achieve the level of smooth communication may lead to negative psychosocial consequences for Indonesian students that seriously interfere with their adaptation in this globalisation era where most countries are speaking English and their capacity to achieve optimally in the academic setting. The better English speakers students become, the more they feel socially connected with English native speakers and the less the psychological stress they experience.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study and the study is all about exploring issues, understanding the phenomena of using new digital media, and answering questions aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Descriptive qualitative design was used to describe and interpret students' experiences to determine the meaning of their experiences of each in their learning participation and to explore students' experiences to develop detailed understanding of central phenomena (Creswell, 2012:16).

The object of the research is undergraduate students of Indraprasta University, fifth semester. However, the procedure used below is also adjustable for any level of language students.

The concept of digital media language learning is in the formative phase and is still being shaped by the emerging socio-technical landscape of web 2.0 tools. It has great potential for encouraging student independence and developing intercultural and communicative skills.

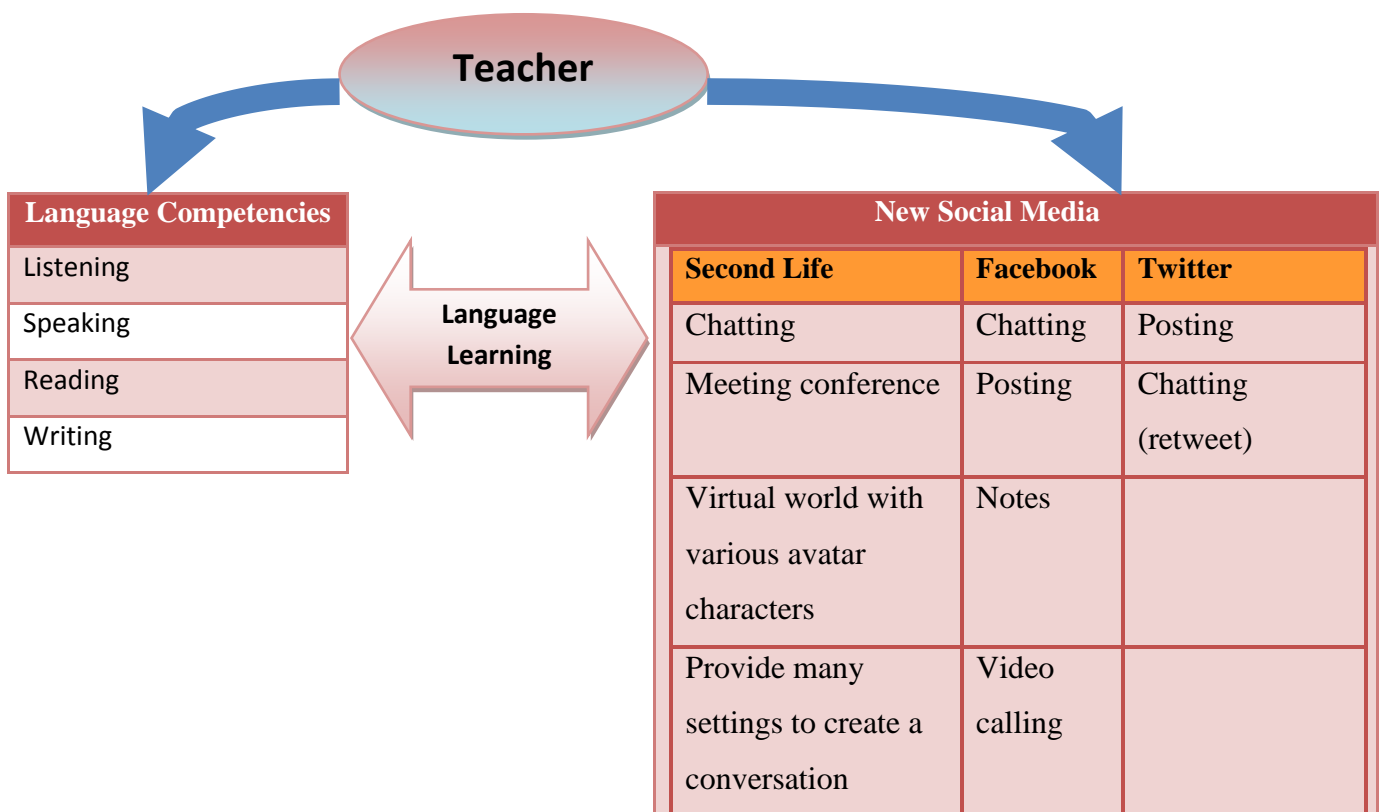Below is a check list design that the writer uses for starting a new social network learning group.

1. Create compatible groups.

   Build a profile of the participants such as: the subject the students want to learn; the level of ability; learning objectives; interests; learning styles; willingness to participate.

2. Select the most appropriate medium and tools.

3. Provide a clear introduction and agree the rules of engagement

   - Give an introduction at the beginning of the course: in what language communication is to take place; how the course will be structured – that is by time, by topics or by some other method; the rules and restrictions of the social network; the role of the moderator; participants' rights and responsibilities; how much group and how much individual work will be expected; how much work will be on-line and off-line; when and how often does the group meet on-line. The content of each session

- Ask students to introduce themselves in a discussion forum. In the basic level, students could do this in their native language initially, to replace it at a later stage with a description in the target language. In fact, that could be their first aim.

4. Set goals.

Students should set group and individual group. All students should share in creating group goals. Teacher as a moderator must ensure that goals are well defined, realistic and achievable; also that enough time is allocated to achieve them.

5. Encourage team working

Students should understand each other's goals and styles and be open to resolving conflicts. Simple tasks or games are a good way of becoming acquainted. Agree the rules (and possible roles) within the team. Another way to think of this is establishing rights and responsibilities.

6. Listen actively, participate, and provide momentum if necessary:
- Have tasks in mind during online sessions and consider giving homework assignments.
- Listen carefully without interrupting.
- Ask questions from time to time.
- Add some examples from your personal life – it gives more personal contact.
- Lead some discussions but not all of them.
- Express your own opinions about the topics
- Manage silence.
- Learn to recognise, use and deal with silences.
- Allow silences when students need time to formulate their thoughts and find the right words.

7. Fix problems, recognise and solve conflicts.

Although moderating seems to be less authoritative than teaching, language course moderators on a social network should deal with those that are not following the rules. This may mean reminding students about the rights of participants, warning or even punishing repeat offenders.

8. Evaluate

- Check for and give feedback.

- Ask if your support was enough or appropriate.

- At agreed intervals or at the end of a round of social network encounters surveys could be sent or made available online so that students can evaluate the course, the learning environment and the moderator.

9. Adapt

- Suggest other tools to be used.

- Make improvements to your own performance as well as the course and the environment.

The figure below describes some language aspects that can be improved through the procedure explained above:

Language Education through Digital Media

Teacher

Language Competencies
Listening
Speaking
Reading
Writing

Language Learning

New Social Media		
Second Life	**Facebook**	**Twitter**
Chatting	Chatting	Posting
Meeting conference	Posting	Chatting (retweet)
Virtual world with various avatar characters	Notes	
Provide many settings to create a conversation	Video calling	

Source: Meidasari (2012)

Observation

Students demonstrate what they think, know, and can do as they engage in various online classroom activities that require the application of language processes and learning strategies. Authentic materials such as daily schedules, parents' profession, and hobbies are used to assess students' knowledge and skills (Holt & Van Duzer, 2000). When teacher simulates by assigning tasks that students may need to perform, such as telling daily activities, hobbies and their parents' profession; students have a familiar sense and did not find so much difficulties doing the tasks. (Marshall, 2002b). Teacher can learn a great deal about students by observing them engaged in such processes as reading, writing, and interacting with others.

4. Discussion

Questionnaires were distributed to 117 fifth semester students of University of Indraprasta PGRI that are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Students' Responses after Learning English Using Digital Media

No	Question Concerns	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Students' fondness for English after learning using digital media	98	2
2	Students' difficulties in using digital media to learn English	25	75
3	Students' easiness to understand the message of an activity after watching a short movie using digital media	97	3
4	Students' easiness in retelling activity using English after watching a short movie using digital media	83	17
5	Students' difficulties in pronouncing a short text after watching and listening a dialogue using digital media	40	60
6	Students' motivation in learning English using digital media	90	10
7	Students feel in control of their learning using digital media	93	7
8	Students feel could work at their own pace	90	10
9	Students feel it is easier for them to review course materials as often as they wish because of using digital media	80	20
10	Students feel it is easier for them to be successful in their English classes after learning using digital media	86	14

Four questions in behavior aspects from question 2, 3, 4, and 5 and six questions in attitudinal aspects from question 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were equipped with reasons due to the questions purpose for confirmation of students' learning English progress.

Most students (98%) stated they liked English more after learning using digital media due to their willingness to be able to speak English well. Meanwhile only few students (2%) stated they disliked English due to their difficulties of vocabulary and sentences.

Many students (75%) stated there was no problem learning English using digital media. They had been familiar with digital media since senior high school. Rest of them (25%) stated digital media was a new thing and it took time for them to get familiar with it.

Most students (97%) stated digital media helped them to understand the message of an activity. Most students (83%) stated it was not their first time to watch a movie or a scene from digital media.

Many students (83%) stated retelling activity using English after watching a short movie using digital media is easier due to their easiness in recalling content. This finding also related to the students' motivation (90%) for learning English using digital media.

More than half students (60%) stated digital media helped them improving their pronunciation after watching and listening a dialogue over and over. Rest of them (40%) stated although digital media did give them some clues, however, it was not easy to pronounce English words due to the influence of their mother tongue.

Almost all students (93%) stated they felt in control of their learning using digital media because they could choose any topics they wanted to learn. This finding is also correlated with the most students' (90%) who answered that digital media enabled them to work at their own pace, and because of that, many students (80%) found it was easier for them to review course materials as often as they wish any time, any where. The rest (20%) who did not agree stated it was difficult to learn using digital media since they did not have free access to it. They had to

go to Internet cafe first where sometimes the condition was not conducive for them to learn peacefully.

Overall, many students (86%) stated they felt optimistic to be successful in their English classes after learning using digital media. They were so excited about playing educational games and getting their own digital learning profile outside of school. They not only adopted Facebook as their social network, but also adapted Facebook to serve as a highly effective tool for school project collaborations.

Based on the findings above the writer concludes that the using of digital media does enhance teaching and learning English and have a very positive effect on the well-being of Indonesian students. Students in general stated they learned most effectively when socializing informally. New digital media is more than a form of entertainment or amusement for these students. It helps them build and maintain relationships, which they lack in real life, and hones their communication skills by facilitating intercultural communication between themselves and the international friends they make online.

As a moderator, the writer also invited some of her English native speaker colleagues from various universities all over the world to teach language and all students can speak, listen, write to them, and read every material from each scene. Each scene teaches them new vocabularies and they will be put in a situation as if they are really there.

5. Conclusion

There seems to be a relationship between not being able to communicate effectively i.e. understanding what others say and being understood, and measures of well-being level (depression, anxiety and stress). A major source of most of their frustration stemmed from the fact that they could not communicate effectively.

Using the digital media has always been a challenge. Digital media provide teachers and students with creative and practical ideas. They also provide students with a lot of language practice and tasks which develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills activities that hopefully can boost Indonesian

students well-being by giving the students the confidence, the motivation and the ability to continue their learning outside the classroom.

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