

# Internet-Based Materials In Teaching Writing: How Does It Work?

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## ABSTRACT

*Learning using internet can direct students to learn by themselves and give more chances to dig materials up. This study aims to: 1) describe the implementation of internet-based materials in teaching writing; 2) to explore the usefulness of the implementation of internet-based materials in increasing the students' writing skill. One of Islamic Junior High School in Ponorogo is the setting of the study and English teacher of Bilingual class is the subject of the study. Interview, observation, and documentations are used in collecting the data. After analyzing the data, it is found that: 1) the students are motivated to discover activities improving their language development. The teacher tends to only use created materials in form of text to avoid the inappropriate materials by considering some aspects such as goal, theme, description, evaluation, language level, level of difficulty, length of the text, students' need, and content of the text. The steps done by the teacher in teaching using internet-based materials are: selecting a website, deciding the target of learning, topic, objective, arranging evaluation tool and giving score; 2) the students can enhance their writing skill and reach excellent achievement which is higher than passing grade's score.*

*Keywords: internet-based materials, teaching writing*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete (Ghaith 2002:1). Writing is one of productive skill which requires the writer to be able to generate ideas and support them with some supporting sentences with accurate and correct grammar. By using correct grammar, the writer can transfer his/her opinions, facts, and experiences well. However, in producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing is probably the most difficult thing to do in language (Nunan, 1999: 271).

According to Harmer (2004: 11), there are four steps in the writing process. They are planning, drafting, editing, and final version. In planning, the writers try and decide what it is they are going to say. A writer emphasizes the content and meaning rather than mechanics and conventions when he is in drafting stage. A writer puts down his ideas and thoughts, composes rough draft based on pre-writing and planning activities and considerations. Then, once the writers have produced a draft they then, usually, read through what they have written to see where it works or where it doesn't. The last, once writers have edited their draft, making the changes they consider to be necessary, they produce their final version.

Technology development has brought high technology in some field of our life. Information technology is one of technology development. Information technology (IT) is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the context of a business or other enterprise. In education field, information technology is realized in using computer and laptop. Those devices are familiar for everyone and almost everyone has it. Moreover, it is supported by internet connection or Wi-Fi. Furthermore, with the existence of computer and laptop which supported by Wi-Fi, the students can study using it by taking internet-based materials.

Somekh (1998) states that internet-based material is a learning material taken from various in the internet that are given to the students as an innovative learning and it can be considered as a part of teacher professionalism besides the use of the internet shows that the teacher is still up to date. Moreover, Tait (1998) explains that an extension of internet-based materials which the sources can be found from the internet in which the learners be able to access global rather than local materials.

One of school which uses internet-based materials is Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN) Ponorogo, especially at bilingual class. The school provides various facilities to support and improve the teaching and learning quality in order that its graduates are able to compete in globalization era. At the present, all classrooms are supported by LCD and internet connections.

To access the internet easily, the school provides hotspots and some computers laboratories with high-speed internet access in the hope that these facilities can fulfill the students' need to improve not only the learning process but also their learning achievement. Furthermore, the English teachers try to use the hotspots for teaching writing to make students be interested in writing class and to make teaching and learning process run well and effective.

Considering the background above, the researcher intends to analyze how the implementation of internet-based materials in teaching writing at the eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo in academic year of 2013-2014 and how far the internet-based materials is implemented to increase the students' writing skill. Furthermore, this study aims to get the clear description of the implementation of internet-based materials in teaching writing at the eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo in academic year of 2013-2014 and to explore the usefulness of the implementation of internet-based materials in increasing the students' writing skill at the eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo in academic year of 2013-2014.

## METHOD

The study uses qualitative research design. Qualitative research is descriptive. Frenkel and Wallen (2000: 502) write that qualitative research is a research study that investigates the quality and relationship, activities, situations, or materials in particular activity or situation. While, Bogdan and Biklen (1982: 27) state that qualitative research has natural setting as directed source of data, and researcher is the key of the instrument.

The study was conducted in MTsN Ponorogo. It is located on Jl. Ki Ageng Mirah No.79 Japan Babadan Ponorogo. It is a state Islamic Junior High School which provides Arabic and English lesson in its teaching learning process. The school has three kinds of classes; regular class, bilingual class, and acceleration class. The study was conducted in the eighth grade of Bilingual class in academic year of 2013/ 2014. All data taken from two sources (two data taken from primary source, and one datum taken from secondary source), they are activity, informants, and documents. The purpose data gathering in qualitative research is to provide evidence for the experience. There are three techniques which are used to collect data for the purpose of this research; they are interview, observation and documentations. In analyzing this research, the researcher uses Flow Model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994: 21-22). This type of data analysis is divided into four parts: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion and verification.

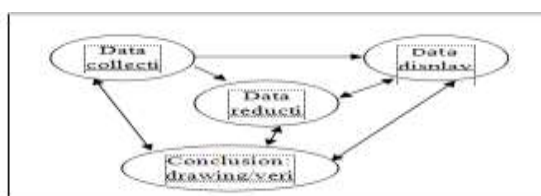


Figure 1 Flow Model Proposed by Miles and Huberman

### 1. Data Collection

Data collection is all of the information gotten from the whole informants is gathered to analyze.

### 2. Data Reduction

Data taken from interview, observation, and documentation are analyzed by reducing those data. Data reduction means summarizing the data, choosing the main issues, focusing on the important issues, and finding the patterns and losing unimportant issues (Sugiyono, 2008: 338). After reducing the data, the researcher focused on the data as follows: (1) the implementation of internet-based materials in teaching writing at eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo in academic year 2013-2014, and (2) how far the implementation of internet-based materials in teaching writing at eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo in academic year 2013-2014.

### 3. Data Display

After reducing the qualitative data, the next step is data display. In the qualitative research, data can be displayed in the form of narrative text, flowchart, and relation among categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the most frequent form of data display for qualitative research data in the past has been narrative text. So, in displaying the qualitative research data, the

researcher uses narrative text. By having data display, it will be easier to understand what actually happen in the setting of research, in this case, the implementation of internet-based materials at eighth grade of Bilingual class in MTs Negeri Ponorogo. Miles and Huberman (1994: 49) state that looking at displays help us to understand what is happening and to do something-further analysis or caution on what understanding.

#### **4. Conclusion Drawing / Verification**

The last step in analyzing qualitative data based on Miles and Huberman model are conclusion and verification. Here, the researcher makes an initial conclusion. It is hoped that this initial conclusion is able to answer research questions based on the qualitative data taken from interview, observation, and documentation, so the research would be credible.

### **RESEARCH FINDING**

The research findings showed that: 1) Internet-based materials motivated students to explore activities that would enhance their language development. They became more productive, creative, and adventurous as they appreciated the richness and variety of language. Internet-based materials offer various materials so that the students get challenges to find out the newest material. The students are more enthusiastic to study English because they can study interestingly using internet-based materials so they are not bored in the class. When choosing internet-based materials, the teacher considered some aspects such as goal, theme, description, and also evaluation. Besides, the teacher also considered about language level, level of difficulty, length of the text, students' need, easy to be understood and of course interesting text. The teacher used text when she was teaching English. The teacher also focused the text on created materials only to avoid the unsuitable materials for the teaching and learning process. In teaching and learning process, the teacher selected a certain website for the first. Then, she decided about the target of learning, topic, and objective. The teacher also arranged the evaluation tool and gave score for the last. There were some challenges when the teacher was teaching using internet-based materials. The teacher and the students had problems in using IT (Information and technology). The students also had difficulties on language. They had difficult to understand the language used in the internet-based materials. They also thought that the vocabularies used in internet-based materials are low frequency vocabularies; 2) Internet-based materials could support the students in increasing their writing skill. It motivated students to learn English enthusiastically so that they could understand the lesson deeply. Furthermore, the students got excellent achievement for their test. The students could reach score over passing grade (KKM)'s score. Besides, internet-based materials gave extra reference for the students when they joined English Olympiad.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **1. The Implementation of Internet-Based Materials in Teaching Writing**

Based on the description of the result in the previous section, teacher started the teaching learning process by arranging teaching planning which include syllabus, lesson plan, teaching materials and evaluation. The teacher used those teaching planning well which include preparing syllabus, lesson plan, materials, and carrying out the evaluation. Unfortunately, teaching syllabus and lesson plan of eighth grade do not mention the materials taken from internet-based materials. It means that the materials given to the students do not suitable to the syllabus and lesson plan. In evaluation, the teacher took questions of evaluation from internet. It is good because it is equivalent to the materials which taken from internet too. On the other hand, the teacher understands about the definition of internet-based materials and its role in language teaching. It is proven that the teacher's perception about internet-based materials is equivalent to Somekh's statement (1998) written in previous part. The teacher has applied internet-based materials in teaching English. The teacher stated that the implementation of internet-based materials support English teaching learning process. Internet-based materials provide various and newest materials to attract students joining the class. Internet-based materials also cover a wide range of reading, listening, speaking, and writing so the teacher can give different materials in every session to make interesting class. It is relevant to Somekh's (1998) statement written in previous part.

Internet-based materials are alternative learning materials chosen by the teacher to motivate students joining the class. By using internet-based materials in teaching learning

process, the teacher receives some advantages. The teacher believed that internet-based materials is a valuable resource in teaching English and enriches students' vocabulary development. Internet-based materials motivate students to explore activities that would enhance their language skills. They become more productive, creative, and adventurous as they appreciate the richness and variety of language. The teacher stated that internet-based materials provide various materials so the students have many choices to determine the most suitable for their learning. They also received challenge to find out the newest material which attractive for them so that the students were not bored and be able to enjoy the class enthusiastically.

Besides, the teacher expressed that internet-based materials are learning facility, learning source, and learning tool. Internet is one of facilities used by the teacher. It is free for every student and can be accessed during school time. The teacher received various materials from the internet to design joyful learning environment. Then, she used internet-based materials as a tool to explain the material for the students and to make students understand easily.

Those advantages received by the teacher are new advantages in using internet-based materials. Perrin and Mayhew (2000: 6) concluded that using internet-based materials are more effective because it can be accessed wherever and whenever without limited time.

When choosing internet-based materials, the teacher must make sure that internet-based materials meet some criteria. The teacher considered about goal, theme, description, and also evaluation. Besides, the teacher also considered about language level, level of difficulty, length of the text, students' need, easy to be understood and of course interesting text. On the other hand, Nuttal (1996: 155) states that internet-based materials are not only interesting for the students but also it should be relevant to the students' need, motivate students, develop students' competence, but also describe the combination of structural and lexical difficulty of a material. Besides, Nuttal (1996: 156) also states about other consideration when choosing internet-based materials including whether the materials challenge the students' intelligence without making unreasonable linguistic demands, whether the language reflects written or spoken usage, whether the language is natural or whether it has been distorted in order to try and include example of particular teaching point. The teacher's criteria in selecting internet-based materials for her teaching is good but there are some weaknesses because Nuttal (1996) states about other criteria should be considered includes suitability of content, exploitability, and readability. Furthermore, the teacher should consider whether the materials motivate students, develop students' competence, and challenge the students' intelligence. Besides, the teacher S also considers whether the language reflects written or spoken usage, or whether the language is natural to make the materials suitable for the students.

In teaching English using internet-based materials, the teacher chose text only. The teacher believed that by using text, the students will get new many vocabularies so that they will have many choices of diction when they are writing. The teacher also focused the text on created material only to avoid the unsuitable materials for the teaching and learning process. In this case, there is no certain suggestion from the experts about which one is better for teaching and learning process whether authentic material or created material. Tomlinson and Richards (2004: 263) only describe some characteristics of good language teaching materials. Tomlinson and Richards' statement can be conclude that good language teaching materials should provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes and it should maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional involvement that stimulates both right and left brain activities. Unfortunately, the teacher adopts only the materials from internet-based materials directly without adapts it. It makes the students have difficulties to understand the materials well. Besides, by taking materials from internet-based materials directly without adapting, it means that the materials used by the teacher are authentic materials, not created materials like the teacher says in the interview.

Internet-based materials are one of the most powerful materials for the teacher to help students collaborate, interact, and participate actively in the learning process. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher assists the students when they discover what they enjoy most according to their level of linguistic competence. The teacher is a facilitator helping the students builds their own learning strategies. The teacher also has role in planning, analyzing, organizing, coordinating, and problem-solving in a students-centered environment. Besides, the teacher is also responsible for the evaluation of all the web tools offered. The teacher used

some steps when teaching English using internet-based material. The first thing that the teacher conducted was determining the certain website. Then, she decided about the target of learning, topic, and objective. The teacher also arranges the evaluation tool and gives score for the last. The teaching steps carried out by the teacher are good. The teacher's teaching steps are not much more different with the theory described by Warschauer, M and Whittaker, P. W (1997: 1), include considering carefully the goal, thinking integration, avoiding to underestimate the complexity, providing necessary support, and involving students in decisions.

Internet-based materials offer a lot of benefits in language teaching and enrich the language learners. Students exposed to different texts through reading and practical classroom exercises have opportunities to interact with the text, to improve their linguistic knowledge and human experiences. When students read, they interact with the text. By interacting with the text they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they can express what they think by writing English more effectively. However, there are some challenges when the teacher is teaching using internet-based materials. The teacher and the students had problem in using IT. They knew IT but not totally so when they study using internet-based materials, the teacher asked help to IT teacher. The students also had difficulties on language. They had difficult to understand the language used in the internet-based material. They also thought that the vocabularies used in internet-based material are low frequency vocabulary. Safdar, Muhammad, et al (2010: 4) state that lack of hardware, lack of software, lack of training, lack of technical support, and power failure are the barriers/ problems in using internet-based materials in teaching English. Kuiper, Volman & Terwel, 2008, Madde, Ford, Miller & levy 2006; Safdar, 2010, Scott & O Sullivan, 2005; Walton & Archer, 2004; Bilal, 2001; Sorapure, Inglesby, & Yatchisin 1998 in Safdar (2010: 4) also found these barriers in the use of internet-based materials. Furthermore, it can be concluded that teacher's challenges in using internet-based materials are almost similar with previous research.

## **2. The Effectiveness of The Implementation of Internet-based Materials in Motivating Students to Study English**

Internet-based materials offer the latest and newest sources. When studying using internet-based materials, the teacher stated that the students were motivated during the class. They like browsing to get materials for their discussion or for finishing their assignment. They studied English more enthusiastic. Besides, the students could complete their assignment in short time. On the other hand, research on asynchronous internet-based materials in general reported high level of students' satisfaction with the courses (Collin, 2000; Fredericksen, Pickett, Pelz, Shea, & Swan, 2000; Jiang & Ting, 1998; Motilla & Tello, 2000; Oliver & Omari, 2001; Swan, Shea, Fredericksen, Pickett, Pelz, & Maher, 2000 in Hong 2003: 5). Swan et al. and Frederick et al in Hong (2003: 5) reported that the students have perceived a high level of learning with their internet-based material. Motilla and Tello in Hong (2003: 5) found that the students appreciated the flexibility of accessing the courses anytime and anywhere. Carswell in Hong (2003: 5) stated that the students felt that they gained valuable experience in using internet-based materials.

Internet-based materials encourage the students to study English deeply. The teacher stated that by using internet-based materials the students received inspiration so that they can express their idea through writing. Because of interesting and attractive materials from internet-based materials, the students studied English enthusiastically so that they received excellent score for their test. The teacher also stated that internet-based materials gave extra reference for the students when they joined English Olympiad. Kulik and Kulik in Hong (2003: 3) reported that significant achievement gains among students using computers compared to students in conventional setting. It means that internet-based materials support the students' achievement. However, most studies reported no difference in learning achievement between students taking web-based courses and students enrolled in traditional face-to-face classes (Carswell, 2000; Collin, 2000; Kearsley, 2000; Wegner, Holloway, & Gordon, 1999, in Hong, 2003).

## **CONCLUSION**

The teacher who was the participant of this research understands about the definition of internet-based materials and its values in language teaching process. Internet-based materials offer a lot of benefits in language teaching and enrich the language learners. The teacher

believes that internet-based materials are a valuable resource in teaching English and enriches students' vocabulary development. Internet-based materials motivate students to explore activities that would enhance their language development. They become more productive, creative, and adventurous as they appreciate the richness and variety of language. The teacher states that internet-based materials provide various materials so the students have many choices to determine the most suitable for their learning. They also get challenge to find out the newest materials which are attractive for them so that the students were not bored and be able to enjoy the class enthusiastically. When choosing internet-based materials, the teacher considers some aspects such as goal, theme, description, and also evaluation. Besides, the teacher also considers about language level, level of difficulty, length of the text, students' need, easy to be understood and of course interesting text. The teacher uses text when she is teaching English. She believes that the students will get many new vocabularies so that they will have many choices of diction when they are writing. The teacher also focused the text on created materials only to avoid the unsuitable materials for the teaching and learning process. In teaching and learning process, the teacher leads the students to explore the materials for their discussion. The teacher is a facilitator helping the students in building their own learning strategies. She selects a certain website for the first. Then, she decides about the target of learning, topic, and objective. The teacher also arranges the evaluation tool and giving score for the last. Unfortunately, there are some challenges when the teacher is teaching using internet-based materials. The teacher and the students have problems in using IT (Information and technology). They know IT. However, they know it partly so when they study using internet-based materials, the teacher asks a help to IT teacher. The students also have difficulties on language. They have difficult to understand the language used in the internet-based materials. They also think that the vocabularies used in internet-based materials are low frequency vocabularies.

Internet-based materials give many advantages in English teaching and learning process. Internet-based materials can support the students in increasing their writing skill. It motivates students to learn English enthusiastically so that they can understand the lesson deeply. Furthermore, the students get excellent achievement for their test. The students can reach score over passing grade (KKM)'s score. Besides, internet-based materials give extra reference for the students when they join English Olympiad. The students are familiar with texts used in English Olympiad because they have discussed it when they were studying in their class. It means that, internet-based materials not only can increase students' writing skill but also can be learning source for the students who join English Olympiad.

The findings of the research suggest for further investigations to critically explore issues related to this research. Future researchers can investigate the implementation of internet-based materials in other classes which are not focused on Bilingual class only. Different samples might be taken and other techniques are applied. It can be beneficial to replicate this study with different populations since it produces different results.

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