The Implementation of A Web-Based Learning Activity to
Enhance Students' English Speaking Proficiency and Confidence
(Shelma Shakira Bhakti, Kheryadi)

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A WEB-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITY TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING PROFICIENCY AND CONFIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

The use of the web to link the students with the other students in another country is an alternative way that is applied to provide opportunities to speak English. It is thought that if Indonesian students are linked with native-English speaking students in another country through teleconferencing in order to work cooperatively on a shared project their English speaking can be improved. The research has been conducted in the two semesters which were running from August to March and the students who were in the study are 38 students of 7th grade The result of this research shows that the use of a web learning activity results in positive effects in improving students' spoken English.

Keywords: web-based learning activity, speak English, teleconferencing

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INTRODUCTION

Promoting a new activity for language learning is a challenging thing for an English teacher to do, especially on how to make students be more active in speaking. The teacher requires finding out what the proper activity that can encourage students to speak which is not only speaking in good English but also experiencing with authentic speaking context. Something authentic and remarkable activity is not easy to find while doing speaking activity is quite monotonous and boredom only by doing the textbook activity.

In 2014, we did a research as a result of the condition in our class in speaking activity which revealed that the activity of grouping them to discuss some topics or doing role play activity seemed to be common for them. In group discussion activity, most of the students in the groups did not want to speak English instead of *Bahasa* and when we had come closer they started to speak a bit English. Active students who were confident were not many and they couldn't encourage others to speak English as well. Thus, role play activity was a well-organized activity stated on the textbook. The students have already obtained the outlined of topics which endorse with gambits. When they were asked to make their own ideas of making conversation, for instance, they were restricted with the expressions. As a result, they felt that making conversation must be based on the textbook or they had to follow all of the structures and

instruction on it. In fact, there was no more challenging activity that could encourage students' creativity on making ideas for speaking or even being experienced using their English.

In order to overcome those problems, we have conducted a research to connect students with students' English speaking country, so that they would experience on applying their English and they were attracted to communicate in order to increase their speaking confidence. In this case, we took students in Maryland Secondary School in Maryland, USA. The both groups of schools had the same age as 12 and 13 years old and level of study and had also 20 students in a class. Along the activity, we would involve the students to use the web as a tool to support the connection of both countries so that the students could be in touch with one another. The webs used in the study are; email, DropBox, Edmodo, and Skype. The students did email and making a video of themselves through DropBox while the teachers used Edmodo to publish and discuss the activity. After finishing the activity the students did teleconference through Skype to discuss the activity which they had done.

The result of the study shows that the students were so enthusiastic and eager to speak English. They were interested in learning something new about other culture and school. However, the time difference of two countries became such a barrier in the

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study. Once making a teleconference the teacher and us in charge in Maryland required deciding the best time for us. The early morning in Jakarta is the late afternoon in Maryland and vice versa.

To overcome the barrier of the previous research we would like to conduct the research by modifying the connection and the activity since the benefit of the research is useful to enhance our students' confidence in speaking.

Using technology in the classroom is not something new recently, however, it is a challenging activity for teachers as long as they know the usage of it can improve the students to be more eager to learn. Computer and the internet are sorts of technology that can be applied to enhance learning process since the internet provides various materials and sources of learning for its sophisticated features. Some reasons for teachers using the internet in the classroom are as follows (Gavin Dudeney and Nicky Hockly, 2007):

> Teachers can find ideas and select a proper activity for their students easily and fast. The Internet offers various materials and the latest techniques that can inspire a teacher to create an alternative way of learning.

> Teachers can integrate the technology into teaching-learning process, for examples students may do essay or project in word processing or video

recording and send or upload it through email or the web.

The Internet is easily accessed by both teachers and students so that students can practice their English and even can do any tasks simply at home or anywhere.

The Web as a learning tool features contents of certain learning objectives that are proper in line with students' needs and curriculum demand (Said Hadjerrouit, 2010). It has also reusability elements that can be applied not only to one subject but also two or more in the different setting as integrated learning. For example, English teacher can collaborate to integrate one or two subjects with other teachers' non-English subject into a project by using the web along the activity.

The use of web learning in this study is only restricted with the use of email, Facebook messenger, forum and Skype in order to endorse students in two countries easily to communicate each other, especially for students age 12-13 years old. For the students, email is very handy to communicate as a personal or as a group; even they easily send files or photos. Facebook messenger is used by the teachers to communicate with ease and quick response even the teachers could simply post the students activity through Facebook. The forum is the web which is used as a media to communicate with schools,

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teachers, and even students. It can be used as well to post pictures and videos.

Lastly, Skype is used to conduct face to face communication among students around the world. They can discuss and share the work they do together even they may figure out how students other countries like.

However, to succeed the use of the web for the learning process, it requires both teachers and students' understanding about how to use it wisely. They must be familiar with how to conduct it and wisely to use according to the objective of the learning. Teachers must concern about how students behave on using it because they must aware that once students involve in the internet as an unlimited media, there must be a filter that can secure them to be not out of control.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research question to be investigated in the study addresses how to apply web learning activity in order to enhance students' confidence in English speaking we also observe how students' behavior along the activity, especially 7th-grade students.

The objectives of the research tend to the effectiveness of web learning activity for supporting 7th-grade students' confidence in English speaking and the significance of the study tends to the implementation of the method theoretically and practically. The research has been conducted in the two semesters which were running from August to

March and the students who were in the study are 38 students in 7th grade. Theoretically, the benefits of the research are to proven the recent theories related to the research. The theories must prove that the students are more interested and eager to speak in English by learning through web learning activity. The research is also benefit for the teachers who are willing to use web as the alternative activity in order to attract students' interest in speaking for it is suitable for the needs of the students to be experienced to speak with other students' English speaking country and the teacher will be used to having technology in classroom. For the school, it is useful to improve the school qualification in terms of inviting learning environment for the students.

In order to overcome the barrier in the previous study, for this study, we apply the use of the web for 7th-grade students; especially in one of the six classes which each has 36 students. We took a part in IIME 2015 (International Intercultural Mural Exchange) as an annual program for the ASP-NET school of UNESCO. It is followed by schools in 63 countries around the world and the study has started from August 2015 to March 2016. The regulations of the program are as follows:

> First, as a school of ASP-NET of UNESCO, the school registers to the committee for joining in the program. Second, the committee will assign the school with a school from one of 63 countries around the world.

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Third, the committee will provide the team of school sheets of discussion before starting the activity.

Fourth, the program is designing the team of schools to discuss the diversity of two countries that can be viewed from cultures, school life, and natures and so on. Then the result of the discussion is reflected through the painting of the mural.

Fifth, the committee will provide the schools with mural and painting equipment. The schools can decide what school paints first as a half mural and the other will finish the rest.
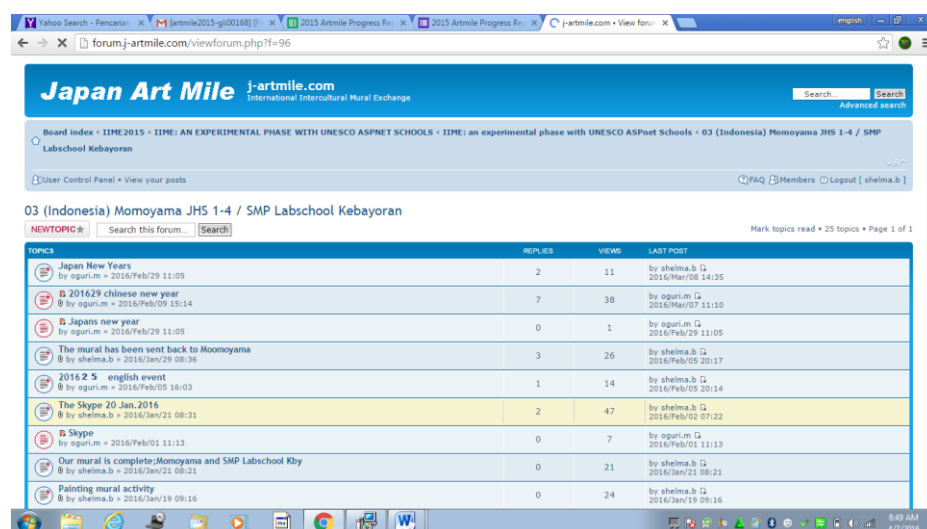
Sixth, the last school that has a turn to finish the mural will exhibit it in the school before sending it back to the committee.

Seventh, the committee will exhibit the whole of the paintings.

Along the study, the schools are provided with a forum named Art Mile Forum. The forum is used as a media to communicate both teachers and students even among schools. We can take a look all schools activities in the forum even we can send pictures and videos about the activity we do in the schools.

The partner school is Momoyama Junior High School in, Japan. It is located in Kyoto and it is a school attached to the education faculty of Momoyama University as same as my school. The students for the sample are the same level and ages as mine and some of the students in Momoyama are used to speaking English as they have lived in America or other western countries. Besides the forum, my school and my partner have agreed to use email, Facebook messenger, and Skype for the teleconference and also to communicate and to ease our activity along the study. The forum is designed by the committee with the easy features for the teachers to report and to communicate each other. Before using the forum, the committee provides the teachers in charge of the program with username and password.

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(Figure 1: The activity of our school and partner along the study)

RESULT AND FINDINGS

The First Cycle. We were connected with Momoyama Junior High School in Kyoto in August 2015. At that time, two teachers from the school visited my school in two days. We talked and discussed the timeline of the project and also the topics that are suitable for our students.

They also observed our English class and activities in our school, including joining our school specialty occasion in commemorating Independence Day. In the discussion, we agreed to initiate the project earlier for Japanese New Year coming in February though the schedule of the project for the whole participants would end in March. We designed as well for the chance of having teleconferenced for three times and the topic that we set up for the project was about culture diversity between Indonesia and Japan, then we agreed to have the first teleconference on 27th of August.

In English class, the teacher assigned the students to write each other about introduction themselves as initial activity and posted them in Japan Art Mile Forum. They wrote about their daily activity in the school and also a bit about their city. They sent their photos in the forum to be attached with the mail. The teacher assisted them to post it using the forum. Along the activity of writing the mail, the teacher was around to check and facilitate for any questions students had.

After they got the replies, the students were reading them and discussed the topic they wanted to talk in the first teleconference. They were very excited to have the replies from their new friends in Kyoto especially when they were quite unfamiliar with the names of their new friends, as well as having

their pictures too. Meanwhile, the teacher communicated through the Forum and Facebook messenger to set up for the proper times for the two schools to have the teleconference. The first teleconference would be conducted in the afternoon at 1.40 p.m. Jakarta time and 11 a.m. Kyoto time since the time difference between the countries is about two hours earlier Jakarta. Before having it, the teachers of the two schools checked the running of the connection a day before the teleconference.

In the first teleconference, the teachers and the students gathered in English class on the third floor with the setting of teleconference as a big screen, a computer, and an internet connection by using *Skype*. There were two English teachers assisted by IT teacher and 36 students of 7A. The session began on scheduled and on time. The students were overjoyed to meet their new friends via Skype. They introduced each other and told about the letter they wrote in the Forum. They shared their excitement of having different school life and also cultures. At the end of the session, the teachers and the students were amazed when the students in Momoyama Junior High School did their respect with Indonesia Independence Day by showing Indonesia's flag. The students felt so impressed and the feeling of the friendship was already inside them. They couldn't wait for another conference and kept on working on the mural project. In addition, the connection was running smoothly and the discussion lasted for an hour. At last, the first teleconference was definitely succeeding and satisfying.

The second cycle. The teachers evaluated the previous activity and discussed for the next activity. The students were still writing emails through the Forum to discuss the materials that they wanted to paint the mural. The mural would be divided into two; the Japan had first in painting and my school would finish the remaining. The students had agreed to paint about the diversity of their culture which is about traditional clothes, food, and other things.

On November 2, Momoyama Junior High school's mural finished and arrived at our school. The parcel was not only the mural but also the painting colors set and a set of the students' handwriting letters. The English teacher brought the letters to the class and shared to the students. The teacher asked the students to work in pairs and write the letters as the replies. In the Art class, the Art teacher assigned the students into groups and asked them to make the rough draft as a design for their mural. They discussed the design while the Art teacher and English teacher were observing the activity. The students were serious and enthusiastic to design the mural. The Art teacher divided them into 3 sessions on a painting that they did after school. For this activity, there were 15 out of the 36

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students involved and did the painting as they discussed in the class.

The activity of the painting was under a supervision of the Art teacher and English teacher. After finishing it, the teachers dealt to have the second teleconference to show up the finishing mural before it would be sent back to Japan. It would be conducted on January 21 and as the prior teleconference, the teachers checked the connection on January 19.

On January 21, the teleconference was held in Art class at 1.40 p.m. until 4.45 p.m. The students had designed the class and put the mural as the background of the teleconference. The students also had prepared for some materials which were in the mural, such as *Angklung*, the replica of Prambanan temple, and *Wayang* as they made it with paper and wood sticks. For this teleconference, the Art teacher was in to observe the activity and the students presented the materials they had painted in the mural.

The students showed the mural and explained the pictures in the mural. They performed *Angklung* that made the students in Kyoto amazed and interested. They were delighted to see how it is made and played. The more detailed of the mural painted by Momoyama students were explained in the mails in the Forum.

For the second teleconference, it was running smoothly. It took more than an hour with the result all the students could communicate with one another. The both schools were more satisfied with the activity.

The third cycle. As the mural finished, the teacher sent it back to Japan and it arrived safely on February 5. The teachers of the both schools discussed the parcel and further activity which was still possible to do since the schools had accomplished the program earlier. The teachers made the agreement to have two other Skype in February to present the celebration of Chinese New Year in Indonesia and Japanese New Year as the extending of the program. The teachers set up for the two dates of the Skype as 9 and 19 February for presenting Chinese New Year and Japanese New Year, especially on February 19 the Skype would be attended by 30 teachers from some schools in Japan. They wanted to observe the activity of collaborating program of Lab school and Momoyama Junior High School.

In English class, the teacher asked the students to work in a group to discuss Chinese New Year in Jakarta. They were asked to write the result of the discussion and prepared for the next Skype. Meanwhile writing mails in the Forum was still going on.

On February 9, the Skype was held in a multimedia room in the school library at 1.40 p.m. The students brought Chinese special

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stuff for the celebration such as moon cake, fortunate envelope, Chinese special snack and one of the students wore Cheong Sam as Chinese traditional clothe. However as the first time having Skype in the multimedia room, the technician was hard to connect the Skype though for many times of efforts to reach the connection, as a result, it was failed. Fortunately, the teacher had Ipad and used it to communicate still using Skype and it succeeded. In some ways, it was a little bit late not as like the prior ones but it was running well though the students must have moved the Ipad to communicate with their Japanese friends. In this session, the students were impressed to see Momoyama students used Indonesian such as "*Selamat Siang*", "*Apa Kabar?*", "*Nama Saya…*" and "*Sampai jumpa lagi*." The students were glad to hear it and felt that in every Skype there was always a surprise from their Japanese friends. At last, it was conducted in about one hour and Momoyama students were interested to see the presentation. They asked the students to tell more about the cake and snacks.

For the last Skype on February 19, the Skype was held in Art class and the connection was well. The students greeted their Japanese friends in Japanese such as "*Minasan Ohayou* as "Good morning, guys" and "*Ohisashiburidesu ne*" as "Long time no see". The students and the teachers were amazed and gave the big applause for the greetings. The Momoyama students did a great presentation and in once performance, they asked Lab school students to say some Japanese words as their traditional games. They also performed how they pray in Japanese New Year and explained the traditional food and snacks in every Japanese New Year celebration. To end up the Skype Lab school students showed Japanese flag and left taking in Japanese.

The study has run from August 2015 to March 2016 and according to the observation of the study the result of the study show as follows:

First, our students are very delighted to have new friends from Japan. They like talking through the Skype and learn a lot about Japanese culture such as food, traditional clothes, flowers, and also school life in Japan.

Second, for the first time having a connection through Skype, we need to prepare it a day before and it is good. However, in our place sometimes the bad connection happened especially at the time we moved the class for the meeting.

Third, our students learn about the Japanese culture and school life and they do appreciate it. They also learn about how to build communication with overseas students and they are fond of being a part of the global citizen.

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Fourth, the teachers are very keen on being facilitators on the project. They have learned about how to conduct distance conference and apply the technology as well. They are also delighted to be connected with the teachers from overseas school.

Fifth, The students increase not only their confidence in speaking but also improve more skills such as writing activity and sense of art as painting mural as well as using technology to support their speaking.

Sixth, although the students are not connected with the students' English speaking country as the previous study Japanese students have shown the ability to communicate in English properly.

Seventh, the barrier of difference time as the previous study not happened in this study.

From the result above, the students are excited with the activity because they have a new experience on having friends from Kyoto even they can communicate and can see what their life are like. They can also practice their English with confidence though their partners are not from the students' English speaking country. They learn how to respect each other and the beauty of the diversity of two cultures.

CONCLUSION

Since the study ran about seven months, it is concluded that 7th-grade students were interested in using the web for their speaking activity and involved in it well. The topics to be deal with are their own choice so that they are eager to speak to the students in Kyoto. The students themselves are interested to read the Momoyama students' mails and they felt confident in speaking with their friends in Kyoto. Moreover, the students not only have learned much about improving their English but also about improving the character of being respectful and appreciating the diversity of other culture.

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