



EFFORTS TO OPTIMIZE INTERNET USE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

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The use of the internet in learning English has become increasingly significant along with technological developments and the need for high language skills in the digital era. This research aims to identify effective strategies and methods in optimizing the use of the internet as a tool in learning English at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The research results show that the use of the internet in learning English at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi significantly improves the quality and effectiveness of learning. The implementation of video and audio from digital platforms, e-books and online articles enriches students' learning experiences, while e-learning platforms make class management and interaction between teachers and students easier. Interactive applications and educational games increase student engagement, and the use of blogs, online forums, and video conferencing tools strengthen students' writing and speaking skills. Additionally, social media and writing platforms provide additional access and collaboration opportunities, supporting more dynamic and enjoyable learning.

Keywords: Optimization; Internet; Learning; English; Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

The increasingly developing world of education with the presence of technological advances has had quite an impact on teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Modern technology, such as the internet, educational software, and digital communication tools, has changed the way teachers deliver material and how students receive information (Rachmijati, 2018). Traditional teacher-centered teaching methods are starting to shift towards a more interactive and collaborative approach, allowing students to actively participate in the learning process. E-learning platforms, educational applications, and online resources provide unlimited access to information and learning materials that can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Hamidah & Yanuarmawan, 2018).

Apart from that, technology also supports the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills which are very important in today's world of work (Zubaidah, 2016). This transformation brings new challenges and opportunities for educators and students, requiring adaptation and effective use of technology to improve the quality of education. Thus, the integration of technology in the world of education not only enriches the learning experience, but also prepares the younger generation to face increasingly complex future challenges (Iswahyudi et al, 2023).

In the English language education process, a teacher has a significant role in achieving English language education activities at school. Teachers are the spearhead of creating an effective and meaningful English language education process (Julaika et al, 2024). Even though a teacher has intelligence and extensive knowledge, without the support of good educational media, the English language education process tends to be boring and less attractive to students (Dewi & Budiana, 2018). In this modern era, the role of the teacher is not only as a deliverer of material, but also as a facilitator who is able to utilize various learning resources and educational media to improve the quality of learning (Fauzi & Mustika, 2022).

The growth of Science and Technology (IPTEK) in the English language education process enriches the learning resources and educational media available (Suhardiana, 2019). The use of computer media in education, for example, provides advantages that other educational media do not have, namely the ability of computers to interact individually with students (Hambali et al, 2023). Studies related to the role of technology in education, such as those conducted by Andri Rogantina Meri (2017), show that technology plays a very important role in improving the quality of education. Apart from that, technology can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process, making it easier to achieve educational goals.

In English education, the existence of educational media such as the internet is very important. The internet as a learning medium allows students to access information easily and quickly according to their needs. With the internet, students can search for references, read e-books, watch educational videos, and communicate with experts or classmates in various parts of the world (Melati et al, 2023). The internet also facilitates students in sending school assignments via email, participating in online discussions, and taking virtual classes. This convenience not only increases learning efficiency, but also broadens students' horizons through various sources available on the internet (Rofii et al, 2023).

Apart from the benefits for students, teachers also feel the convenience of the internet in the educational process. Teachers can look for more varied and up-to-date teaching materials, prepare materials better, and use various applications and online learning platforms to make the teaching and learning process more interactive and interesting (Supit et al, 2023). The internet also allows teachers to communicate with students outside of school hours, provide additional guidance, and monitor student learning progress more effectively. The use of the internet in education creates opportunities for teachers to continue to develop teaching methods that are innovative and relevant to current developments (Husna et al, 2023).

Utilizing the internet as a learning medium is very important to create good and quality education. In this digital era, online learning has become an inseparable part of the education system (Sadikin et al, 2020). With technology, learning can be done anytime and anywhere, without being limited by space and time. Technology allows the creation of a flexible and adaptive learning environment, so that students can learn according to their own style and pace. However, implementing online learning also presents its own challenges. The availability of adequate technological infrastructure, stable internet access, and the digital skills of students and teachers are determining factors for the success of online learning (Chaeruan, 2017).

In relation to the utilization and use of the internet, teachers as class managers must be able to optimize students' ability to access the internet. When accessing the internet, there are positive and negative aspects that need to be considered. Therefore, the role of teachers is very important in guiding students to use the internet wisely and responsibly (PURwanti, 2021). Teachers must ensure that students access content that is useful and relevant to learning, and avoid content that is inappropriate or harmful. Apart from that,

teachers also need to teach digital ethics to students, such as how to behave in cyberspace and maintaining privacy and security of personal information (Farid, 2023).

So that learning can be adapted to the pace of technological development, innovation is needed so that Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) run well, smoothly, effectively and enjoyable. Innovation in learning can take the form of using e-learning platforms, interactive educational applications, as well as more creative and collaborative learning methods. In this way, the teaching and learning process becomes more dynamic and interesting for students. Teachers also need to continue to develop their digital competencies so they can make optimal use of technology in English language learning. With the right innovation and adaptation, the use of the internet in education can improve the quality of learning and prepare students to face the challenges of the digital era.

METHODS

The method chosen for carrying out this community service activity was a seminar or providing information to the teachers teaching English at SMP 1 PGRI Bekasi, totaling 5 people. This service was carried out at SMP 1 PGRI Bekasi which is located at Jl. Linggar Jati I, RT.012/RW.009, Duren Jaya, East Bekasi District, Bekasi City, West Java 17111. The main method used in this P2M (Community Service) activity is seminars, especially for English teachers. They will be given training in the form of giving class assignments using image media and optimizing the use of worksheets as an effort to make teaching and learning activities more effective and enjoyable.

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method where the author will produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people or actors observed during the research. Moleong (2006: 6) says that qualitative descriptive research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions and so on, holistically and by means of descriptions in the form of words and materials, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods.

Furthermore, the activity steps taken are carried out in four stages as follows:

1. Stage 1: Problem Identification. At this stage, the implementation team conducts observations and interviews to identify the problems faced. Observations and interviews were carried out by discussing with students and teachers. Through this activity, the implementation team can collect data and information related to challenges and needs in learning English.
2. Stage 2: Information Processing and Determining Problem Solving. At this stage, the implementation team processes all information obtained from observations and interviews. Theoretical and empirical studies are collected to find solutions to the problems that have been identified. One solution that immediately needs to be implemented is the use of the internet as an optimal learning medium for English. The use of the internet is expected to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning process.
3. Stage 3: Preparation of Training Materials. At this stage, the implementation team begins to prepare training materials for the participants. The material prepared includes various relevant references and supports learning optimization. The preparation of this material was carried out carefully to ensure that the training would run well and provide maximum benefits for teachers.
4. Stage 4: Implementation of Activities. This stage is the most important stage, namely the implementation of activities. This seminar activity was held at the PGRI Building

on May 6 2024, from 08.00 to 16.00. The seminar began with providing material which lasted approximately 30 minutes, followed by a question and answer session. During the question and answer session, participants can ask questions and discuss to deepen their understanding of the use of image media and worksheets in English learning.

Through these stages, it is hoped that community service activities can run smoothly and make a significant contribution in improving the quality of English learning at SMP 1 PGRI Bekasi. Teachers are expected to be able to apply the knowledge and skills obtained from training to create a more interesting, effective and enjoyable learning atmosphere for students.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Teachers generally already know the function and use of the internet as a means of searching for information and connecting with other people or the outside world by utilizing the internet network. This is very well understood and understood by the English teachers at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi. They realize that the internet is not only a communication tool, but also an invaluable educational resource. The internet allows them to access the latest information, learning materials, and various resources that can be used to enrich the learning process in the classroom.

English teachers at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi stated that the existence of internet technology was very helpful in the learning process. One of the main benefits is the ease of finding teaching materials. With the internet, they can find various types of texts, articles, videos and interactive materials that suit their learning needs. These materials can be adapted for different levels of student ability, making learning more inclusive and effective. In addition, the internet also allows teachers to access online dictionaries, which are very useful in enriching students' vocabulary and language understanding. Online dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster, Oxford, and Cambridge provide definitions, usage examples, and pronunciations of words that can be easily accessed by students and teachers.

All English teachers at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi agree that internet technology is very necessary to support teaching and learning activities, especially in the field of English studies. They see the internet as a tool that facilitates more dynamic and interactive learning. Through the internet, students can participate in online discussions, do interactive exercises, and even take English courses offered by top educational institutions around the world. This opens up wider learning opportunities and provides a richer and more varied learning experience for students. Apart from that, the internet also supports collaboration between teachers and students as well as between students themselves. E-learning platforms and social media enable more effective and efficient communication. Teachers can provide real-time feedback, while students can work together on group projects even in different locations.

Based on the results of a seminar conducted for English teachers at SMP 1 PGRI Bekasi, optimizing the use of the internet in learning English can be seen from several main aspects that have been identified and agreed upon as effective strategies. The following are details of how to optimize:

1. Utilization of Online Resources

The use of video and audio is an effective way to improve students' listening and understanding skills in junior high school. Teachers can integrate videos and

audio from platforms such as YouTube, TED Talks, and podcasts into English language learning. Through videos, students can listen to native speakers speaking in various accents and speeds, so they can become familiar with different ways of pronunciation and intonation. Videos can also be used to introduce culture and a wider language context, so that students not only learn the language but also understand the culture behind it. For example, video documentaries about daily life in English-speaking countries or clips from popular films and television shows can make learning more interesting and relevant for students.

Apart from that, e-books and articles are very useful resources for improving students' reading comprehension skills. Teachers can assign reading e-books or articles appropriate to students' ability levels, followed by class discussions or comprehension tests. This not only helps students enrich their vocabulary and sentence structure, but also develops their analytical skills. Articles from online journals can also be used to introduce students to scientific topics and current issues, encouraging them to think critically and discuss different perspectives. By accessing various reading sources, students can develop their interest in reading and become more independent learners. It also provides students with the opportunity to read more varied and in-depth material compared to traditional textbooks.

2. Interactive and Collaborative

E-learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, or Moodle provide great advantages in managing online classes for teachers and middle school students. With this platform, teachers can organize and deliver lesson material, assign assignments, and provide feedback efficiently. Students can access study materials anytime and anywhere, so they have the flexibility to learn at their own pace and time. This platform also makes it easier for teachers to monitor student progress, provide assessments, and interact with students through discussion forums or direct messages. In addition, e-learning allows the integration of various types of media, such as text, images, video and audio, which makes learning richer and varied. Thus, the use of e-learning platforms can increase student involvement and motivation in the learning process.

The use of interactive applications such as Quizlet, Kahoot!, and Duolingo is also very beneficial for middle school students. This app makes learning English more fun and interactive, which is very important for maintaining student interest and motivation. Through Quizlet, students can learn and repeat vocabulary with interactive digital flashcards. Kahoot! allows teachers to create interactive quizzes that can be played in real-time in class, creating a healthy and fun competitive atmosphere. Duolingo, on the other hand, offers language practice that is adaptive, adjusting the level of difficulty according to the student's abilities. These applications not only help in strengthening understanding of vocabulary and grammar, but also develop other skills such as listening and speaking. By utilizing this technology, teachers can create a more dynamic and effective learning experience, which can ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

3. Writing and Speaking Skills Development

Blogs and online forums are very useful tools for improving junior high school students' writing skills. By writing blogs, students can explore their ideas, construct arguments, and express opinions in writing. This process not only strengthens their ability to construct sentences and paragraphs, but also helps them develop a writing style that suits an online audience. Additionally, participating in online discussion

forums provides students with the opportunity to practice writing in a more interactive way, communicate with classmates or other readers, and receive constructive feedback from teachers and peers. This feedback is very important to improve the quality of student writing and improve aspects that still need improvement. This way, students not only learn to write better but also gain practical experience in communicating digitally.

Video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet offer an effective way for speaking practice and group discussions in English. These tools allow students to practice speaking directly with teachers and classmates, providing opportunities to develop speaking and argumentation skills in English. Through video conferencing sessions, students can engage in interactive conversations, presentations, and in-depth group discussions, improving their intonation, pronunciation, and speaking fluency. Group discussions also help students learn how to express their opinions clearly and listen to other people's perspectives, which are important skills in communication. By utilizing video conferencing technology, the learning process becomes more dynamic and students gain more real speaking experience, approaching real communication situations.

4. Preparation and Use of Digital Worksheets

Interactive worksheets offer an innovative way to increase middle school students' involvement in the learning process. By using platforms like Google Forms, teachers can create digital worksheets that allow students to fill in answers online. This not only makes collecting and grading assignments easier, but also provides fast and direct feedback to students. The digital format allows teachers to create varied questions, such as multiple choice, short answers, or open answers, and integrate multimedia such as images or videos. In this way, students can work on assignments in a more flexible and interactive way, and utilize technology to explore the subject matter in more depth.

In addition, utilizing educational games and interactive activities in worksheets can significantly increase student engagement. Educational games such as crossword puzzles, quizzes, or competition-based games help students learn new concepts in a fun and challenging way. This interactive activity not only makes learning more interesting, but also motivates students to actively participate and try harder to understand the material. By including game elements in worksheets, teachers can create a more dynamic learning atmosphere and reduce boredom that often occurs in traditional learning. This supports a more effective learning process, as students feel more involved and motivated to learn.

5. Use of Social Media and Writing Platforms

Social media offers an effective way to expand middle school students' learning experiences through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. By following accounts that share educational content, language learning tips, and daily practice, students can access a variety of additional sources of information beyond traditional study material. For example, educational accounts on Instagram often share infographics, short videos, and language learning tips that can help students understand concepts in a visual and interactive way. Pinterest, with its pins and boards, offers creative ideas and resources for language learning projects, including activities, games, and additional materials that support learning. Through social media, students can stay connected with the latest information and innovative learning

methods that make the learning process more interesting and relevant to current developments.

On the other hand, writing platforms like Wattpad and Google Docs provide excellent opportunities for creative and collaborative writing projects. Wattpad allows students to write and publish their work, such as short stories or poetry, and get feedback from a global community of readers. This gives students additional motivation to improve their writing skills and practice writing with a wider audience. Google Docs, as a collaborative tool, allows students to work together on writing projects, such as group essays or shared stories, making it easy to share ideas and real-time revisions. The platform also supports the development of communication and collaboration skills, as well as providing opportunities for students to learn from each other. By using this writing platform, students can explore their creativity and gain practical experience in collaborating and composing better written works.

CONCLUSION

Optimizing the use of the Internet in learning English at SMP PGRI 1 Bekasi shows many benefits and potential for improving the quality of education. The use of video and audio from platforms such as YouTube, TED Talks, and podcasts allows students to develop listening skills and understand culture and language context in more depth. E-books and digital articles provide opportunities for students to strengthen their reading skills, with assignments that encourage analysis and discussion. E-learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Moodle facilitate efficient management of online classes, allowing teachers to assign materials and assignments easily, and monitor student progress more effectively. Interactive apps like Quizlet, Kahoot!, and Duolingo add a game element to learning, increasing student engagement in a fun and motivating way. The use of blogs and online forums gives students the opportunity to improve their writing skills through writing and feedback from the community, while video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet support speaking practice and group discussions, strengthening speaking and argumentation skills in English. Interactive worksheets and educational games further support dynamic and engaging learning, with ease in collecting and grading assignments. Finally, social media and writing platforms such as Wattpad and Google Docs provide access to additional resources and opportunities for collaboration, broadening students' learning experiences in beyond traditional subject matter. All these innovations support a more effective, relevant and enjoyable learning process, with the ultimate goal of improving students' English skills and preparing them for future academic and professional challenges.

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