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# THE USE OF WEBQUEST FOR TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN AN EFL YOUNG LEARNERS CONTEXT

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#### Abstract:

In Globalization era, English teaching has been incorporated to the use of internet and virtual reality to build up language learning which is attracting academic interest. How to create a good English learning environment for the Indonesian primary students-whose native language obviously not English- to learn English has become a challenging issue. Web Quest is an inquiry-oriented online learning activity in which all of the information used by learners nowadays is drawn from the Internet. Online learning language through Web Quest is no longer limited to online communication such as mails, chat, forums, or other online activities for learners to visit occasionally. Some studies also addressed the use of Web Quest as an application in online leaning which were integrated in learners' study experience and able to promote English learning interest. This study is one of the examples of such issue in which it focuses on the effect of Web Quest-based learning on vocabulary mastery of primary learners. The study took place in Bandung, West Java. In addition, this was conducted in one of famous English course which is facilitated with the internet and computer as media for learning English language. The researcher took one class as participants of the study. They were primary students ranging from 9 to 10 years old that had mostly the same English language level. In addition, this study used pre-experimental design with one group pre-test-post-test design. The result of the study indicated that using Web Ouest was effective in teaching English vocabularies to the primary students. This means that there was significant difference of students' achievement in vocabulary mastery before and after Web Ouest treatment.

**Keywords:** Online Learning, Vocabulary, Web Quest, Young Learners.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

English as a foreign language in Indonesia has been introduced from primary to university level of education. Teaching method should be applied, therefore, it should be based on the students' characteristics and their needs. In learning foreign language, children and adults have different concept and perceptions of learning, because they have characteristics. It has been challenge to teach young learners of English to use a language other than their first language. In addition, teaching language will be more challenging if the language to be taught is a foreign language (Emmitt, 2006).

Primary young learners have been taught English starting from elementary level of education. It has made educators both in formal and non-formal schools try to facilitate the best way to teach and learn English. However, teaching English at the elementary school level in Indonesia is still controversial for several reasons. Based on the researcher experience and point of view, several problems can be identified. Firstly, young learners have been assumed as being 'a miniature adults', in which the way they learn a foreign language exactly the same as the way adults do. Mustafa (2008) asserts that this misleading conception can lead to failure, because children and adults are not the same. Therefore, English teachers need special skills and training to effectively accomplish the tasks. Secondly, teachers rarely use computer as part of instructional process and they may not see the value of instructional technologies in their particular content area of teaching. However, technology products which have created fun learning activities, such as

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multimedia, videos, internet surfing, etc likely to play an important role in students' life. The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) by language teachers such as multimedia technology, audiovisual, software and internet access materials have greatly improved and made the use of these resources in the classroom more practical. Thirdly, the lacks of use language in real situation which make the students receive less demonstration exposure in learning English. For young learners, it is necessary that the first learning experience has to fulfil the long term in their brain (Shankoff and Phillips, 2000). Lastly, teachers rarely exploit Internet which provides them with free (or low cost) authentic materials they need in teaching young learners.

According to the problems above, this study aims to investigate the solution of the problems and create a condition in which children have an opportunity to have different situation and fun learning to love English at early level by providing young learners suitable, good and interesting materials. Therefore, from the writer point of view, the use of media, particularly Website, is to attract young learners' attention and heighten their curiosity while the teacher is delivering the message. One of the alternative techniques which can be used in teaching English to young learners is using Internet. In such a condition, the existence of supporting instructional materials in the internet takes into the classroom which can give contribution to the readers and teachers. This study will also investigate the contribution of this model to teaching and learning processes.

### **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The uniform appearance that will assist the reader to read paper of the Experts in the field of young learners learning foreign language are actively debating whether students using Web-Based, specifically web Quest learning method equal to or better than students using more traditional. A review of literature reports on a number of primary research studies that have provided comparable data on student performance. Despite the fact that the use of Web Quest has gained momentum in recent years, a discussion on the relationship between young learners' learning and web Quest is elaborated.

# 2.1 E-Learning and Technology to Young Learners

It has been widely recognized in the research literature that technological change. which not only permits new activities but also makes those new activities superior in many important ways over the previous method of operation, creates long lasting innovations in society. Web-based education is one of those innovations (Franklin and Peat, 2001). "E-Learning" nowadays is usually used to describe "web-based" learning in literature reviews. Therefore, McKimm, Jollie, Cantillon (2003) point out that web-based learning is often called online learning or e-learning, because it includes course content. Whenever technology is used in educational setting, it is vital to reflect on how this effects students, courses and institutions (Barr&Tagg, 1995).

Web-based learning offers huge opportunities for learning and access to a vast amount of knowledge and information. There are some important remarkably fast growing innovations of web-based education. It is radically growing in the first world nations of the world, especially in the United States (Barker, 2002). It means that it will likely grow in other nations in the world, as the innovation dominates education at all levels. The classroom becomes a "virtual learning envirnment." Learning is no longer bound by space and time.

# 2.2 Web Quest and Its Characteristics

Web Quests have become very important in many educational areas and have received considerable attention from teachers educators since they were proposed and developed by Dodge (1997). Bernie Dodge - an American professor of educational technology at San Diego State University has focused on the design, implementation and evaluation of computer-based learning environments and created a learning model which has been widely used as an effective Internet-based educational tool in schools, colleges and universities for over a decade and is now one of the most popular and most effective Internet-based project models/ approaches. This approach clearly describes the process of the partly online Vol 1, Nomor 1, Januari 2016 Halaman:



learning experience which challenges, motivates and engages learners. In an early article about this method, Bernie Dodge defined a Web Quest as:

An inquiry-oriented activity in which most of all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. Web quests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking and levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Dodge, 2001).

He distinguished Web Quests in two levels. The first one is short term Web Ouest whose instructional goal for learners is to acquire knowledge and integrate it. The second one is longer term Web Quest, which aims at extending and refining knowledge. In addition, a Web Quest is a learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task to encourage and motivate students in answering open-ended questions, individual expertise developing participating in a group process that attempts to transform newly information into a more sophisticated understanding. In using Web Quest, the student is shown many thematic materials, exploited to the real world of learning and reflected on their metacognitive processes. The students may also work in group where they can analyze and master a particular aspect of an issue. As such, Dodge (1997) suggests students engaging with the method develop a deeper understanding of the content when compared to the usual way of learning. He recommends that a Web Quest includes the following basic structure: introduction, task, process, evaluation, and conclusion.



Figure 1 Parts of the Web Quest

# 2.3 The Strength and Challenge in Implementing Web Quest

The potential added value of online learning (or similar designations, such as "virtual learning", "technology-based learning", or "e-learning") compared to teacher- and textbook-based instruction lies in helping learners to acquire the right knowledge and skills in order to function as active, selfreflected. and collaborative learners (Govindasamy, 2002; Hamid, 2002). Web particularly, have become important in many educational areas and have received considerable attention from teachers and educators. Therefore, instruction supported with Web Quest-based applications, including the use of technology and the internet, might help students overcome their difficulties and enhance their motivation learn mathematics. Many research show that there have been many studies conducted in different areas about Web Quests and their implementation since 1997 (e.g., Halat&Jakubowski, 2001; Torres 2007; Wilson, 2008; Segers and Verhoeven 2009; Andersson and Grönlund, 2012; Peker&Halat, 2009; Gökalp&Ervilmaz, 2011).

For instance, Gökalp & Eryılmaz (2011) examined the implementation of Web Quests in a 9th grade physic classroom and the reactions of students to web-based instruction. Subramanian (2010) used a Web Quest and the 5E learning cycle (inquiry-based strategies) in a science classroom. Halat & Peker (2011) investigated the effects of mathematical representations developed through WebQuest and spread sheet activities on the motivation of pre-service elementary school teachers. Halat & Jakubowski (2001) worked with pre-service mathematics school teachers on the use of Web Ouests in teaching and learning geometry. Most of the above studies showed positive results on the students'learning.

According to Torres (2007), using Web Quest in learning has many advantages. Initially, Web Quest promotes the effective use of time; students use the links given by the teacher and search for information in a structured efficient manner. A further benefit of Web Quest use in learning is that it supports higher-order thinking. Students are required to read, think, analyze,

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synthesize, and evaluate (Halat & Peker, 2011; Torres, 2007). In line with them, Madhukar (2002) believes that the Internet as a teaching media has positive influences on learning as it is a source of information, provides independent and individualized learning, gives in-depth understanding, and improves learners' motivation.

In addition, Segers and Verhoeven (2009) suggest that Web Quest can be seen as a method that helps organize the learning process in line with the theory of dialectic constructivism. Investigating the effects of Web Quest on learning in elementary school classrooms in the Netherlands, Segers and Verhoeven (2009) found the effect size of learning from a Web Quest was moderate to high, as it offers a structured method by which students can engage with the Internet. This structure particularly benefited boys who learned more using Web Quest as opposed to a research environment.

However, Hallat (2008) also defines a couple weakness of this teaching and learning technique. He (2008) claims students should be given a clear directions of the Web Quest to follow and visit the reliable links selected by the teachers to get new information. Students are possible not to complete their works if they are distracted by other interesting and attractive websites. He also mentions that the students tend to feel bored and do not want to work on the Web Quest if they think the learning scenario and task are very difficult.

In addition, Andersson and Grönlund (2009) proposed a conceptual framework for understanding the challenges facing e-learning implementation in developing countries and for conducting further research. This conceptual framework consists of thirty Major challenges categorised under four major categories: individual characteristics (both students and teachers), technological challenges, course challenges, and contextual challenges. In line with them, Setyaningsih (2011) asserts some barriers exist especially when it is implemented in classroom where some facility is not installed such as computers and Internet access. Teacher's ability in using technology must also be adequate to work with computers and internet.

# 2.4 Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

In teaching new words in a foreign language, a teacher should consider that young learners are still building up their first language vocabulary and are still in process of acquiring and organizing concepts. The children relate the L2 with their L1 knowledge to develop and understand the meaning of a word. In addition, as it stated before, children learn language better because they are in the period where the elasticity of their brains is still conducive absorbing the language. Therefore, vocabulary as the basic part of language is very important lesson and should be best taught since childhood (Pinter, 2006:29).

Furthermore, Nation (2001) affirms that vocabulary learning is one sub-goal of a range of goals that are important in the language classroom. The mnemonic LIST is a useful way of remembering these goals, which are outlined in the table below. L=Language, which includes vocabulary, I=Ideas, which cover content and subject matter knowledge as well as cultural knowledge, S=Skills, and T=Text or discourse, which covers the way sentences fit together to form larger units of a language. Thus, Nation's statement above conveys the goal of acquiring vocabulary should be presented in a context which is familiar to the child. Visual support becomes very important to help convey meaning and to help children memorize new vocabulary.

The acquisition of a new lexical item in a second language is a complex process (Far. 2008). Aside from the word the word challenges, type and size, the way it is required, processed, stored, and produced is inevitably involved. Therefore, the proper way of teaching vocabulary is very important to be disused. Brewster and Ellis (2002) mention that there are techniques important in teaching vocabulary. First is by verbal technique, and second is by demonstration. Verbal techniques are including: explaining, defining the context, eliciting, describing, and translating, while demonstration techniques are using realia or objects, drawings, illustrations, pictures, photos, flashcards, pointing, touching, testing, and using technology.



#### RESEARCH METHOD

This study used quantitative research approach to investigate the research question. The research question was Can Web Quest help young learners develop their vocabulary mastery? In this research, the researcher used a pre-experimental study with one-group pretestposttest which was appropriate method to apply to solve the problem of the research. A preexperimental design is aimed to test of the hypothesis and also to test the effects of treatments. Sugiyono (2011:74) stated that there are some forms of pre-experimental design, they are:

One-group pretest-posttest, and Intactgroup comparison." From three of them, the writer chooses One-group pretest-posttest. The one-group pretest-posttest design can be represented as follows:

Table 1. One group pretest-posttest design

	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Group PretestPost Test.	$O_1$	X	$O_2$

O<sub>1</sub> is presented as observer and pertains to the pre-test on the achievement test followed by the treatment X (Web Quest) which is the strategy of this study and lastly, O2 pertains to the post-test of the achievement test-scores.

The population of this research was the fifth to sixth grade students of primary school at one English course in Bandung. In this research, the researcher used purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling selects a sample "on the basis of your own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of your research aims" (Latham, 2007: 9). Concerning to this technique, the researcher chose one class as the sample of this research. The selected sample was taken from children 4 class, while the numbers of classes were 18 students.

In this research, the researcher used measurement technique to measure students' achievement in vocabulary by using Web Ouest learning method. The measurement technique was held twice. The first was pre-test to collect the data in order to know the students' skill before the treatment. The second was the posttest to collect the data after

treatment.Moreover, the research hypotheses was tested at the 0.05 level of significance and stated in the null form: There is no significant difference in the achievement of the students before and after they were subjected Web Quest learning method. The tool of collecting data in this research was written test in form of multiple choice test. To compute the effective size of the treatment, the effect size formula was applied.

# Main Feature of Learning

This study concentrated on the use of an interactive Web Quest to young learners to improve students' vocabulary. This study also started with the exploration of the condition of teaching and learning of primary school, and followed by identifying the elements of English language teaching and learning namely, purpose, material. activity. media and achievement. One of samples of Web Quest in the topic of 'Eating Out' is elaborated as follows:

1. An introductory set of stages providing some background information.(Figure 2)



Figure 2 Screenshot from Introduction Page on Web Quest

- 2. A task that can be carried out and interesting to be accomplished.(Figure 3)
- 3. A set of resources needed to complete the task. Many (though not necessarily all) of the sources are embedded in the Web-based document itself as links to find information on the web
- 4. A description of the processes learners goes through in accomplishing the task. This process should be broken down into steps that are clearly explained.





Figure 3 Screenshot Task Activity on Web Quest

5. Some guidance on how to manage the obtained information. This may take the form of guiding questions, or directions to complete organizational frameworks.



Figure 4 Screenshot Evaluation Page on Web Quest

6. Evaluation task is varied in form of listening and writing worksheet such as placing objects or identifying people, multiple choice pictures, gap filling, and information transfer. Oral tasks are also given by asking straightforward question about what they are watching and asking them to point out people, things, say where the object is, what someone is doing, etc. (Figure 4)

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The use of Web Quest in helping students improve their vocabulary skill can be indicated from the value of t-test and the index gain calculation. In order to conduct the t-test, the variance's score should be equal and normally distribution (Hatch & Farhady, Therefore, pre-test score and post-test score were computed to find out the normal distribution and the variance homogeneity. Then, the calculation of paired sample t-test can be conducted. The paired sample t-test was aimed to investigate whether or not the pre-test and post-test means are significant (Hatch and Frahady, 1982; Sugiyono, 2007). Table 2 shows the statistic of the scores, while table 3 below shows the result of paired t-test.

Table 2. The Result of t-test counting

N	α	df	T table	Tcount
16	$\frac{1}{2} \alpha = 0.025$	15	2.131	11.049

Where:

n : the number of sample

df : degree of freedom (n-1)

t<sub>countn</sub>: the value that is obtained from computation result of t-test analysis

 $t_{table}$  : the value that is obtained from a statistic table of t-distribution at the level of significance ( $\alpha$ =0.05)

The calculation of the means of pre-test and the post-test were 70.18 and 76.38. If we compared the two means it was clear that the mean of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. The difference between two means was 6.20. It indicates that the treatment was effective. From table 2, the researcher described that  $t_{count}$ =11.049 with the degree of freedom is 15 (n-1) and the level of significance  $\alpha$ =0.05. (Two=tail ½  $\alpha$  = 0.025). The researcher found the value of  $T_{table}$ =2.131

According to the result of paired sample t-test formula above, it showed that  $T_{count}$  is 11.049 and the  $T_{table}$  is 2.131. It meant that t-count was higher than t-table ( $T_{count} > T_{table}$ ). As the result  $H_o$  unacceptable, it was because  $T_{count} > T_{table}$ . It meant that  $H_a$  was accepted. Therefore, there is a significant influence Web Quest learning method toward the students achievement in vocabulary. It could be seen by the result of the students score was higher after giving treatment.

The data of vocabulary test also showed that scores of the students increased from pretest and post-test. Most of the students have shown many improvements. Nevertheless, the gain score of every student was different. Some students' score significantly increased but some others got only few improvements on their score. Based on the gain score, the students' achievement can be classified into high index gain, medium index gain, and low index gain. The index gain was calculated to investigate the improvement of students' vocabulary score. Afterward, the result of index gain was interpreted using the following criteria:

 $\begin{array}{ll} \text{Index gain} < 0.3 & = \text{low} \\ 0.3 < \text{Index gain} < 0.7 & = \text{medium} \\ \text{Index gain} > 0.7 & = \text{high} \\ \end{array}$ 

(Hake, 1998)

The result of the index gain calculation is in the following graphic:

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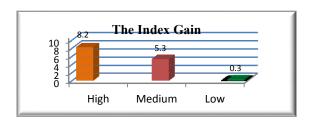


Figure 5 Index Gain Graphic

The data from the graphic shows that there is an improvement on the students' vocabulary test score. All students have different level of achievement. The index gain shows that 1students are at low index gain, 10 students are at medium index gain criteria, and 5 students of the students are at high index gain criteria. Number of students who are in the medium index gain is more than number of students got high index and low index.

In addition, the researcher highlighted some important points: from the computation, the researcher found that the students had a good progress in improving their vocabulary mastery through Web Quest. It can be seen from the result of the students' achievement and average of mean score in the post-test which is better than pre-test. Through this learning, students were able to read, think, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate materials given by the teacher. Moreover, learning vocabulary was much more fun, because the students were connected to reliable, interesting and authentic websites. Based on the observation, it was found that most of the students enjoy the learning situation where they can work independently and apply the lessons in practical and fun activities.

# 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study reported the result on the use of Web Quest in helping students to improve their vocabulary mastery. The purpose of this study is to discover whether or not there is a significant contribution of Web Quest to young learners. The data from vocabulary test shows that there is an improvement on the students' vocabulary test score. All students have different level of achievement. The index gain shows 6,25 percent of students are at low index gain, 10 students or 62,5 percent of the students are at medium index gain criteria, and 5 students or 31,25 percent of

the students are at high index gain criteria. However, all students showed positive improvement in their vocabulary score.

Furthermore, the calculation of paired simple *t*-test shows the  $t_{crit}$  for df = 15 at the level of significance 0.05 is +2.131and -2.131. The result shows that the  $t_{count}$  is -11.049 and P value 0.001. Since  $t_{count} > t_{table} (11.049 > 2.131)$  and P value is lower than 0.05 (0.001< 0.05). It means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean value of the class. Those findings lead to the conclusion that there is an improvement on the students vocabulary test score after the implementation of the teaching program. Therefore, Web Quest can help young learners to improve their vocabulary mastery.

In the other words, the result of teaching vocabulary to young learners through Web Quest in this study is considered successful, because it enables students not only memorizing the words in English but also the vocabularies learnt in meaningful context. The topics discusses in each meeting are within young learners' world. The teaching of vocabulary through Web Quest is successful, because the material is interesting, the learning environment is enjoyable, the period is short and the material used for here and now contextual situation.

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