

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate the use of web sites in ESL classrooms in a local institution of higher learning. This chapter will first summarize the findings presented in the previous chapter to arrive at certain conclusions based on the findings. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of using web sites as a teaching and a learning tool and some suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the use of web sites as a teaching and learning tool for ESL learning. The study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. How does the use of web sites help ESL learners in their language learning?
2. What are the perceptions of the learners on the use of web sites in language learning?
3. What are the perceptions of the teachers on the use of web sites in the ESL classroom as a tool in helping their students learn English?
4. What are the problems faced by the learners when using web sites for language learning?
5. What are the limitations and implications of using web sites in the language learning and teaching context?

To gather the data for this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting data were used. The researcher used three types of instruments – classroom observation, student questionnaire, student interview and teacher interview.

To obtain the quantitative data from the students, the researcher used two sets of questionnaires. The first set of questionnaire was administered after each session while the second set of questionnaire was administered after all the sessions were completed.

To obtain the qualitative data, the researcher carried out classroom observation. The focus was basically on students' responses and participation in the web site activities. The researcher also conducted student interviews and teacher interviews with ten students and five teachers respectively. The data obtained from the interviews were used to verify the findings from the questionnaire.

The sample for this study included 40 Part Three Diploma students and 5 English language teachers from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam, Selangor.

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The significance of the responses was then discussed after the data had been tabulated. The opinions and comments given by the students and teachers were presented and their responses to the questions were discussed. The findings from the interview were used to triangulate the data obtained from the questionnaire.

5.2. Summary of Findings

This section will present a summary of the findings according to the research questions posed earlier.

5.2.1 The Use of Web Sites in Helping ESL Learners in Their Language Learning

The findings from the study reveal that the web site is a useful tool for language learning. This is because students enjoy doing activities in web sites since they provide interesting and suitable materials covering all the four language skills. Students like doing fun and enjoyable activities such as the quizzes. However, due to some constraints such as technological constraints and the time factor, the web site is more suitable as a tool in teaching the reading and writing skills.

5.2.2 Perceptions of Learners on the Use of Web Sites in Language Learning

Students have positive perceptions on the use of web sites as a tool for learning English. They find the web site an informative tool where they can obtain information and knowledge on various topics. They view the web site as a useful tool because it helps to enrich their vocabulary. They are involved in active learning where they go through different kinds of activities that can enhance their language learning. The web site is a tool that can help in improving students' language skills especially in reading and writing.

5.2.3 Perceptions of Teachers on the Use of Web Sites in ESL Classrooms as a Tool in Helping ESL Learners

The teachers perceive the web site as a useful tool in helping ESL learners. This is because it adds variety and fun to learning. It should be used consistently and regularly if ESL learners want to improve their English. This is because English should be used daily in order for any ESL learner to get better achievement in learning English. The suitability of the materials should be a factor in determining the success of learning using web sites. Teachers also should be well-prepared and familiar with the web site so that lessons can be carried out smoothly and according to plan. The exercises that are used should be evaluated before hand so that they suit the objective of the particular lesson. The teachers also perceive the web site as a tool that is widely used in this new millennium that offers various benefits to teachers as well as to learners.

5.2.4 Comparison between the Perceptions of Teachers and Students on the Use of Web Sites as a Teaching and Learning Tool

The findings indicate that both teachers and students perceive the web site as a suitable tool for language teaching and learning in the ESL context. This is probably due to the many useful aspects of web sites, which have motivating activities as compared to classroom activities. Both teachers and students mention that using web sites is an alternative method in teaching and learning English where it is both suitable and practical to be used since being computer literate is an added advantage nowadays. Both groups admit that using the web site as a teaching and learning tool can create an interesting, exciting and enjoyable learning process.

5.2.5 Problems Faced by Learners when Using Web Sites for Language Learning

From the findings, both teachers and students admit that there are problems that need to be looked into if the web site is to be utilized as a teaching and learning tool. One of the problems that is related to the learner is the lack of language proficiency that can hinder one's ability to understand the lesson. Problems also arise if the students are computer illiterate as this can hinder the learning process. Other problems have to do with technical matters such as server failure when attempts are made to locate web sites. Inadequate facilities such as a lack of computers and computer labs / language labs can also create problems in utilizing the web site as a learning tool. Another problem in this area has to do with hardware and software that are out-dated, which can cause problems if the web page requires the latest software in order for some activities to be accessed.

5.2.6 Limitations of Using Web Sites in the Language Learning and Teaching Context

Although it is undeniable that the web site is a useful tool in language learning and teaching, obviously there are limitations to its utilization in class. One of the limitations is in the case of power failure which can cause the computers not to be functioning. The other limitation is the time factor. Sometimes, it takes up too much time to go from one link to another link and it is time-consuming if teachers have big groups in their classes. Another limitation is that if the server is down, teachers have to have a back-up lesson, so that time will not be wasted waiting for the server to make the link to the desired web pages. The final limitation is

inadequate training for teachers and students which can lead to frustration in teaching and learning. Therefore, it is advisable that both, teachers and students have at least a basic knowledge in operating and working with computers first.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications of the Findings

As shown in this study, teachers and learners have become increasingly aware of and interested in using web sites as a tool for teaching and learning English. The findings of this study have important implications on classroom practices as suggested below :

- a) teachers and students should be adequately trained on how to utilize web sites as a tool for teaching and learning English. Teachers must be taught on how to use the resources from the Internet to improve their teaching of English.
- b) there should be equal opportunity for teachers and students to explore and utilize the Internet (web site) capabilities to the fullest.
- c) adequate computing facilities should be made available to support Internet use in higher learning institutions.
- d) the class size should be relatively small for the type of teaching using web sites
- e) some hours should be allocated for language lessons to be held in the computer lab.
- f) each faculty should encourage the use of web sites as a teaching and learning tool by making available a language lab for the use of teachers and students.

In addition, some considerations to be taken into account when using web sites in class for teaching purposes include:

- a) adequate level of censorship procedures for resources which are unsuitable to be viewed by students and supervision by teachers during the exploration of web sites.
- b) quality control of the level of accuracy and standard of information available in the Internet.
- c) sufficient technical support for maintenance of computers and Internet connectivity.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of the study, the following are some recommendations for future research:

- 1) A detailed study could be carried out to ascertain the impact of using web sites as a tool in teaching and learning a particular language skill such as the reading skill or the writing skill.
- 2) Future research could be done on the use of web sites by ESL learners of different levels of proficiency. Therefore, a comparison could be made between different groups of students to investigate whether the web site is a suitable learning tool for all levels of students.
- 3) A larger sample of students could be used for future research by including students from other faculties or other universities which use web sites as a tool in English language learning.
- 4) More English language educators can be interviewed in order to obtain a wider perspective on their perception on the use of web sites as a teaching and learning tool.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has provided some insights into the utilization of web sites as a tool for teaching and learning the English language. It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage the administrators in improving computer facilities as it is necessary for ESL educators and ESL learners to exploit web sites as a means of keeping up with the latest information and development in ESL. Thus, Malaysian teachers and learners in general need to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills through the use of the Internet via web sites. However, it is important to take note of ethical and moral considerations while accessing web sites due to the range of materials available in the Internet. There is a need for supervision in the use of the Internet. However, in the end, the benefits of using web sites as a teaching and learning tool far outweigh the potential problems.