

Edmodo-Aided Language Exposure to Boost False Beginners' Language Performance

Suharno Suharno

*Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jl DR Setiabudi 229, Bandung, Indonesia
suharno@upi.edu,*

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Abstract: Lack of exposure in language learning is commonly believed to result in low performance in real communication encounters. It is publicly acknowledged that graduates of high schools and universities in Indonesia are generally incompetent to handle even for survival communication purposes regardless years of studying the language, commonly termed as false beginners (Beare, 2017). The popularizing use of social edu-media has open up possibilities to provide engaging language exposure to boost the learners' language performance. Edmodo, as one of social learning platform is believed to be able to cater the needs of the exposure. The research is aimed at investigating how much Edmodo-aided exposure can enhance students' language performance at the end of the semester. Quantitative data were gathered from a sample of 74 students who completed a pre-test at the beginning and a post-test at the end of the semester. The result of the analyses showed that Edmodo-Aided Language exposure had significantly enhanced students' language performance.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is a common knowledge that secondary school graduates in Indonesia are usually unable to communicate in English even for simple communicative purposes despite the fact it is compulsory subject at schools, and the graduates have lengthily studied the language. Nukamto (2003), Setiyadi and Sutarsyah (in Putra, 2015), assert that one of the main causes is that students are taught knowledge of the language, not skills. Teaching and learning fall into discussing strategies to be able to tackle test problems like UAN (National Final Examination).

Methodologists suggest that exposure is imperative to acquire the learned language. Krashen (1981) distinguishes acquisition from learning. The first happens to those who especially acquire L1 through a subconscious process during which they are unaware of grammatical rules, while the latter refers to conscious process, like those learning L2. Krashen (1981) suggests that in order to acquire L2, the learner needs a source of natural communication. The emphasis is on the text of the communication, not the form. In other words, in order acquisition to happen, give students big loads of practices in a real-like designed situations rather than learning forms of

language. Galliotapril (2007) stresses that language acquisition is a matter of exposure. Hardwick (2015) confirms that the more the students are exposed to L2, the better. Immersing students in L2 helps them use it more independently and this can lead to increased confidence and better vocabulary. Therefore, it is obvious that teaching knowledge of language (form), not function in Indonesia, is not in accordance with language acquisition.

The emergence of ICT followed by the invention of social media has brought about substantial changes in language learning. Teacher can facilitate his/her students with ample exposure to the learned language virtually outside the classroom. Students can share and collaborate with classmates and get access to boundless learning sources. Numerous research on edu-media has been reported to enhance learning, thus improving students' language performance.

Teaching and learning process, however, practically remains unchanged. Teachers are reluctant to make use of ICT and social media; besides, teaching language forms is dominant in the classroom. As a result, students have missed language exposure to widen the opportunities to acquire language skills to eventually enhance their language performance.

1.1 Edmodo

Foreign language teaching and learning nowadays has been revolutionized along with the emergence of ICT and social media. Even though the roles of teachers are irreplaceable, ICT and social media have taken a big portion of the roles. Moreover, teaching and learning can take place in no time and no place. Learners can follow their teachers' instruction and submit assignments from distance. Learners can interact with their teachers, classmates, parents whenever they like. However, in case of foreign language learning, the advancement in technology has made exposure to the language massive that can facilitate acceleration of acquisition that leads to progressing language performance.

Edmodo, education social media founded in San Mateo in 2008, is one of the most popular edu-media with 76.9 million users in May 2017. It is currently being adopted by teachers and students in every US state and in over 210 countries. In addition, 85 of the 100 largest school districts in the US have officially adopted Edmodo to support their objectives for driving online learning and collaboration for their students. It is used to share educational content, manage projects and assignments, conduct quizzes and facilitate highly engaging learning experiences among students and teachers. The platform allows teachers, students, parents, school and district administrators, and content publishers to each play a role in supporting student learning objectives.

Numerous studies have been conducted to find out users' perception, preferences, and effectiveness of this platform to facilitate learning for university students. Take, for example (Purnawarman at all, 2016), (Balasubramanian at all, 2014), Ali (2016), (Charoenwet and Christensen, 2016), (Ekici, 2017), etc., showing that this platform is proven to be effective. In addition, users, especially students and teachers, give positive perception on the application.

1.2 Language Exposure

Major dictionaries defines 'exposure' as the state of being in contact with something. In relation to language learning, however, exposure refers to the learners' contact or interaction with the language they are learning. According to Dulay at all (1985) language environment '...includes everything the language learner hears and sees in L2. It may cover a wide variety of situations - exchanges in restaurants and stores, conversations with friends, watching television, reading street signs and newspapers, as well as classroom activities

Spitek (2002) emphasizes the importance of exposure as the necessity to be proficient and productive English language learners. He asserts that English language learners (ELLs) should be given a lot of opportunities to interact in academic and social like circumstances in the classroom. As a matter of fact, it is common knowledge that in Indonesia, language exposure is often neglected by teachers. Teachers are reluctant to use L2 during the class session. Traditional way of teaching in which teacher dominates is common sight in foreign language class. Mukundan (2016) says that teachers are dull as they lose their creativities, teaching with incompatible methodologies and approaches. He urges that teachers have to design their class so that the students can use the language they are learning.

1.3 False Beginners

Major English dictionaries define a beginner as someone who has just started to do or to learn something. If transferred to an English for Another Language (EAL) learner, the term refers to someone who has just started English learning. Beare (2017) divides beginners into absolute or true (also Monaco, 2017) and false. The first refers to those who have had no or very little English instruction, while the latter refers to the learners who have studied English at length but never required any real grasp of the language. Jone (2013) postulates that absolute beginners are the students who have no or very little knowledge of English and they have to be taught the basic rules and vocabulary to be able to perform in simple communicative situations. However, Grundy (2013) claims that, thanks to the status of English as a world language, there is no real beginner of English. Particularly nowadays, most students are exposed to English through gadgets, social media, music, films, online games, etc., traditional categorization may not be taken into account.

The first year Indonesian Language and Literature Education students learning English, in this respect, fall into false beginners of learners as they have studied the language at length but fail to acquire the language even for survival communication. The average TOEFL score is below 400, the score categorized as low beginners by English Testing Service (ETS). They have little English skills despite the fact that they have experienced learning the language and, they are not isolated from English as they come in contact with the language quite often especially through electronic and social media.

1.4 Competence and Performance

Chomsky defines language competence as what a speaker intuitively knows about his language (Robin, 1980:p37); that is the system of rules and symbols that provides a formal representation of underlying syntactic, semantic, and phonological structure of sentence (Crystal, 1987) while language performance refers to the actual use of language in concrete situations (Robin, 1980:p37); it is the actual application of this competence in speaking and listening (Chomsky, in Clark and Clark, 1977). Competence, which is the knowledge of language is distinguished with performance, ability to use the knowledge in real communication. Performance is frequently not an accurate reflection of competence. Take for example, if a speaker of English makes mistakes in daily conversation is not necessarily resulted from lack of knowledge, but it is attributable to variety of performance factors like tiredness, boredom, drunkenness, or other distractions (Gleason and Ratner, 1993).

Various studies in L2 acquisition (SLA) shows that language performance can be enhanced through exposures of L2. The study conducted by Thordadottir (2011) confirms that there is close relationship between exposure and performance. As previously defined, exposure means the state of being in contact with something, thus, being exposed to language being learned (L2) means that the learner see, hear, speak, read, and write in the language being learned. In the era of internet and digital technology, it is not hard to be in contact with L2 as learners watch TV, listen to songs, read internet content, etc., in L2. Study by Kupphens (2010) shows that foreign language exposure through television result in foreign language acquisition. Larsson and MacLeod's study (2011) strongly indicates that music, electronic, and social media are important sources of English exposure that has significant influence on learners' foreign language acquisition.

2 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The participants of the study were 74 freshman majoring in Indonesian language and literature education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. They learned English as a compulsory subject in one semester.

Teaching and learning process was conventionally took place in the classroom but quizzes, mid-semester test and final examination were managed online through Edmodo. For the

purpose of the research, which is to find out the effect of Edmodo-aided exposure on the students' language performance, however, the students were initially given a pre-test. Due to time constrain, the tests were only productive test, speaking and writing. Then, the students were given various engaging online activities through Edmodo to expose them with target language. To find out how much effect of exposure to the participants, they were given post-test, in the form of performance test using the test material and rubrics which were similar to those used in pre-test. To find out how they perceived their learning experience aided with Edmodo, making use of its feature, Poll, a small-scale survey, with only 4 questions, was administered.

During the research, the students were assigned to participate in a number of teacher-facilitated out-of-class online activities through Edmodo. First, they were assigned to be involved in discussion forums. The teacher posted current issues on matters attracting public attention as well as those close to their world. They were to put forward opinions or comments on the issues and their classmates' opinions or/and comments. After a week, the issue would be replaced with another one. Secondly, the teacher posted links from which the students read, listened, and watched videos, related to learned lessons. Based on what they learned, the students were also guided and instructed to do individual or/and collaborative assignments, then submit them to the teacher and share them with their friends online. Take, for example, when they learned how to describe one's physical appearance, they would be exposed to related texts, audios, and videos. When the assignment was, for instance speaking, they had to submit their own video showing off their skill in describing one's physical appearances in the form of monolog or dialog (conversation). Their assignments were commented by classmates and given feedback by the teacher as well. When the feedback was private, Edmodo feature 'direct message' was used.

At the final stage, the result of the test was quantitatively analysed using t-test provided in Excel. The analysis yielded some descriptive data such as mean, standard deviation (SD), degree of freedom (df), and t-value. This information was then interpreted to discover if the hypothesis accepted or rejected. If the t-value was greater than t-table, the hypothesis was accepted.

3 RESULT, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Result

The result of pre-test and post-test were visualized in figure 1 and 2, while the result of the poll was depicted in figure 3.

Speaking:

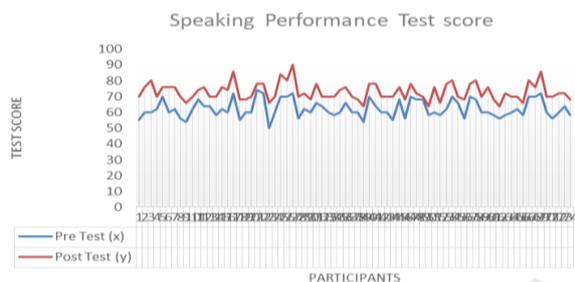


Figure 1: Speaking pre-test and post-test score.

Data analysis using t-test reveals the following information: Participant 74, df 73, S-dev 7.6, t-value 9.4, t-table at $\alpha.05$ and df 73= 1.994.

Writing:

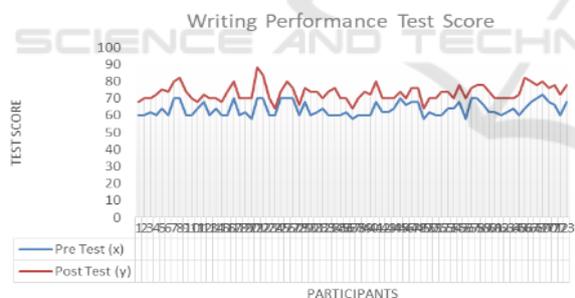


Figure 2: Writing pre-test and post-test score.

Data analysis using t-test reveals the following information: Participant 74, df 73, S-dev 6.5, t-value 9, t-table at $\alpha.05$ and df 73= 1.994.

The interpretation of the data showed that, in both speaking and writing pre-test and post-test, $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$. It means that, null hypothesis is rejected. This finding from data analysis reveals that Edmodo-aided exposure yielded significant effect on boosting students' language performance.

3.2 Discussion

The significant improvement in participants' performance can be attributed to the lecturer-participants, and participants-participants engagement outside the classroom created by the lecturer facilitated with Edmodo. The students were exposed with numerous models whether they were spoken and written English. They were, then, practiced immensely to be able to perform well as in the models.

The participants-participants engagement had probably made effective exposure to the use of, especially, interactive written English as they were managed to involve themselves in virtual conversation. The researcher observed that the use of interactive written English was getting better from time to time viewed from both quality and quantity of written utterances produced. They wrote longer and longer with more various diction and better grammar. Incorporating Edmodo had probably encouraged both participants' engagement and responsible learning, which was similar to the finding in (Balasubramanian, 2014)

It was also revealed that the participants were enthusiastic with the program from the very beginning. This was probably as a result that this program provided new experiences as they were previously taught conventionally. Participants' eagerness could be observed in their statements in interactive conversation. Soon the researcher provided an issue to which they had to put forward their views and responded to each other in a virtual discussion, most of them gave their views and responded to their friends' view immediately.

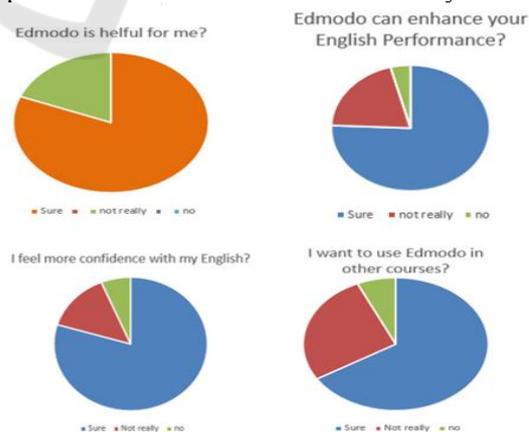


Figure 3: Participants' perspective in using edmodo.

The 60 out of 74 participants (81%) were strongly confident that Edmodo was helpful for their learning.

None of the participants thought that the edu-media was not helpful. The participants felt that numerous models and chat (interactive conversation) with classmates and lecturer had made them somewhat accustomed to using English. Furthermore, most participants felt that the learning platform could enhance their English performance, as a result, they felt more confident in using English for real communication. Most participants believed that the learning platform was useful not only for English but also for other courses. 49 out of 74 participants or 66% wanted to use Edmodo in other courses, on the other hand, only 5 out of 74 or 6.7% did not want to use the platform in other courses.



Figure 4: Lecturer-participants, and participants-participants engagement.

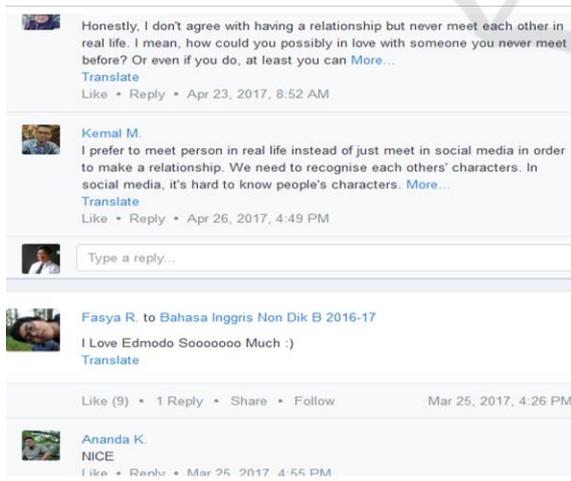


Figure 5: Participants eagerness in using Edmodo.

3.3 Recommendation

Albeit that English is viewed as a very important subject, especially in tertiary level of education, it is not handled professionally in Indonesian universities. The subject is commonly given in one semester only with the learning process that falls mostly into translating technical texts. As a matter of fact, students' proficiency is regarded as 'false beginner' that needs exposure in the use of English for real communication. Therefore, I recommend that measures should be taken for students in universities to grow their English proficiency.

First of all, the use of EMI (English as medium instruction) in universities. EMI has been a trend in universities outside Indonesia. Many countries have already adopted EMI in their universities and make measures to make effective implementation such as in Japan (Rose and McKinley, 2018)), and China (Ibrahim, 2004). Indonesia needs its application at least partial immersion of the program due to Indonesian-classroom nature (Ibrahim, 2004). EMI can be better solution for learners' language problems, than learning the language as subject. It can make room for more exposure to the language (comprehensible input) and more opportunity to use it (comprehensible output) (Ibrahim, 2004)

Secondly, Technology or social media should be used to address the problems of limited exposure. Frequent research has been conducted to see the effectiveness and efficiency of English instructions using technology or social media such as (Park et al., 2012), (Gikas and Grant, 2013), (Kabilan et al., 2010), and all suggest positive result. Given the fact that almost all students in universities in Indonesia nowadays can get access to internet facility, and obviously positive result to improve student's proficiency, there is no reasons for not making use of technology and social media.

And finally, the needs of guidance for lecturers teaching General English. Teaching English in non-English department are handled by the lecturers from each respective department whose major are not English. They do not have knowledge of English teaching methodology and language acquisition, so they do not know how to teach the language, except what they experienced when they were students. Therefore, it is hard to yield in good English instruction. The lecturers need knowledge in methodology and language acquisition, so they have idea what to do in classroom practices. It is essential that the university where they work provides guidance for them.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The research 'Edmodo-aided Exposure to Boost False Beginners' Language Performance' confirms the advantages of the learning platform to improve language performance previously researched in different ways. In addition, the learning platform is well-liked by students. When the result is obviously positive, the platform is also well accepted by the students, and internet is well-accessed, the application is on the hand of the lecturers, and support from universities.

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