

Course: EdPsy 796 Introduction to Learning Sciences II

Assignment: Final Paper

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## **Globalized Second Language Acquisition**

The Internet has proved itself to be a powerful factor in the spreading of globalization. Hundreds of countries, states and islands share the same bank of information, dipping their heads into the giant pool of the Internet and receiving the same electric shocks. (Maple, 2008)

“It's amazing to see how much it has developed in such little time,” said Sarah Maple, a popular online expert writer, about the fast growth of the Internet. The Internet has indeed gone from being an exciting commodity to an essential tool of 21<sup>st</sup> century life. Today we have online chat rooms to socialize, online newspapers to keep up to date, online shopping for weekly groceries, and online universities for education. Imagine Internet users from all over the world rush into websites like Google Scholar, Wikipedia, and Youtube for “edutainment:”<sup>1</sup> education as well as entertainment. Right now around 1,596,270,108 Internet users<sup>2</sup> are visiting trillions of websites<sup>3</sup> to acquire knowledge and become even more educated. In the meantime, as Tim O'Reilly pictures with his concept “Web 2.0,”<sup>4</sup> the contents of the Internet have been updated by its users instantly and constantly through their participation and personalization (P2P share). Thus, I became interested in exploring possible answers for the following questions: How would the Internet and globalization reshape the learning behaviors of its users? What types of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edutainment>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

<sup>3</sup>

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How\\_many\\_web\\_sites\\_are\\_there\\_in\\_the\\_World\\_Wide\\_Web](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_web_sites_are_there_in_the_World_Wide_Web)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html>

websites would ESL learners regard as the most helpful for English learning? Why?

### **Toward a synthesized framework**

Saettler (1994) defines the prime task of educational technology as “finding ways to enhance the educational experience,” but he also says, “it is exactly this area that is threatened because teachers and schools no longer are the sole dispensers of knowledge.” The statement becomes self-evident in today's context: more and more digital literates turn to search engines like Youtube or Wikipedia to receive tutorials from online sources. In this self- education<sup>5</sup> process, personal factors of web skills and playfulness are associated with perceived Internet usefulness (Anandarajan, et al, 2000). Playfulness is a tricky indicator. Unlike the formal education in schools, Internet users usually execute their free will and select the websites that potentially interest them or inform them. Nonetheless, the trait playfulness is a subjective value judgment, and as a proverb goes, “one man's treasure could be another man's trash.”

Another model, self-explanation, by Michelene T. H. Chi, Matthew W. Lewis, Peter Reimann, and Robert Glaser (1989) claims that learning involves the integration of new information into existing knowledge, and generating explanations to oneself (self-explaining) facilitates that integration process. In the Internet context, self-explanation could take place in exchanging real-time messages, sending emails, generating posts and replies, video/audio conferencing, or just in the mind (Jeon-Ellis, 2005; Hampel, 2004; Koutsogiannis, 2004). My hypothesis is that interactive ESL websites support online self-explanation, and users who browse these websites facilitate the integration of new and existing knowledge either by their own composition, or by responses from other users. “Good” online students, like “Good” physics students in the Chi, et al (1989) experiment, generate many explanation(s), which refine and expand the conditions for the action parts of the example solutions. These self-explanations are guided by accurate monitoring of their own understanding and misunderstanding. The problems of applying this self-explanation model to Internet users could be the needs of designed experiments to examine the multi-layered self-explanations (to the self, to the website, to other users) and the monitoring mechanism (how well monitored?).

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.motivation-tools.com/youth/self\\_education.html](http://www.motivation-tools.com/youth/self_education.html)

The third framework is portrayed in Schank, Roger C., Andrew Fano, Benjamin Bell, and Menachem Jona (1994): Goal-Based Scenario (GBS). It claims that outside school, people typically learn during their experiences while addressing desired goals. The Goal-Based Scenario (GBS) framework describes computer-based learning environments that exploit this simple fact. They propose a structure and a set of design criteria for learn-by-doing environments that enable students to work towards desired goals. A key issue they address is the content to be taught by GBSs. Because skills are the form of knowledge that, when applied, enable students to achieve valued goals. They argue that GBSs should be designed to teach a set of target skills required to achieve a specified goal. GBS is a handy framework, and it is perfect to use this lens to explicate the goal-driven surfer behaviors. Whether Internet users want to acquire knowledge in a certain field, like cooking, baking, gardening, computer skills, etc.; or simply want to relax and have fun, their goals and prior knowledge will lead them to sites to fulfill their needs. If you imagine the Internet as a super huge encyclopedia, with limited time and energy, a user can only poke into a fairly small portion of its contents in such an unabridged and ever-growing database.

The fourth lens from prior theories, last but not least, is “Immediate feedback.” In Anderson, John R., Albert T. Corbett, Kenneth R. Koedinger, and Ray Pelletier (1995), it reviews the 10-year history of tutor development based on the advanced computer tutoring theory (J. R. Anderson, 1983, 1993). They developed production system models in ACT of how students solved problems in LISP, geometry, and algebra. Computer tutors were developed around these cognitive models. Construction of these tutors was guided by a set of eight principles loosely based on the ACT theory. Early evaluations of these tutors usually, but not always, showed significant achievement gains. So, it would be natural for web developers and researcher to question: Would the traits of successful and helpful websites match the set of eight principles for computer tutors? Whether the answers are positive or negative, it would be illuminating to compare and contrast these two similar but different production system models. Besides, the “immediate feedback” model is also a crucial concept in the flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). The flow state, as its name suggests, is an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, where the person is

fully immersed in what he or she is doing. This is a feeling everyone has at times, characterized by a feeling of great absorption, engagement, fulfillment, and skill—and during which temporal concerns (time, food, ego-self, etc.) are totally ignored. Therefore, there could be novel addicts, video game addicts, and Internet addicts getting fully immersed in the flows. Websites with feedback mechanisms may well attract users to revisit them once and again.

Though, except playfulness, the lenses of self-explanation, goal-based scenario, and immediate feedback are not originally developed for the evaluation the online ESL websites, these theories, I would argue, do share some vital and essential ideas of the design an interactive website. Consequently, these four lenses would all be adopted to inspect the websites reported by the task-takers in the study, and be set as the fundamental patterns that might return repeatedly in the responses of the Internet users to the design principles of popular websites.

### **Method: design & participants (a pilot study)**

The research questions are: 1) How would the Internet and globalization reshape the learning behaviors of its users? 2) As ESL learners, what kinds of digital resources, esp. websites, would the users think most helpful to their English learning? I would try to explore the connections between the features of the online resources and the needs of the ESL learners. Please note that currently all three task-takers in the pilot study are international graduate students in UW-Madison who came from Taiwan. None of them are native English speakers.

The first part, the pretest, includes 5 questions and examines the participants' prior experiences of Internet usage<sup>6</sup>. In the second part, main task 1, is a think-aloud process and hands-on demonstration of the top 5 websites that the participants/Internet users regard as the best for learning English online. Here the researcher try to ask open-ended questions and see what topics would emerge. In the third part, task-takers are encouraged to compare and contrast 2 sets of assigned websites: online dictionaries as one category, and online English news as the other. The semi-constructed interviews are

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<sup>6</sup> Please see Appendix 1 for the first version of the set of questions in the interviews.

videotaped, transcribed and translated for further analyses<sup>7</sup>.

### Results & discussions of Q1 (pilot data)

The results of the first question show that all the three subjects have used the Internet for more than 6 years. The results of the second question indicate that the hours they spend now on surfing the Internet every week varies from 5-10 hours per week to more than 30 hours per week:

	Meishin	Akuei	Deryu
Hrs/week	5-10	>30	20-25
Q2: Hours spent on surfing the Internet every week			

After the pilot study experience, it turns out to be important to seriously consider variables like age, gender, and the majors/trainings of the participants. So, a personal information part will be added to the interviews. However, participants who spending fewer hours on surfing the Internet now doesn't guarantee they are less familiar with the online sources. On the contrary, it could be that they know exactly where to go for the desired knowledge or pleasure. The time spent on the Internet and the Internet expertise do not correlate positively.

	Meishin	Akuei	Deryu
Frequency	Pretty often	Often	Always
Q3: How often does the Internet affect your learning behavior?			

The participants' answers to the third question indicate that Internet users have different levels of awareness on the impact of the Internet. At least all three of them agree that the Internet has often or more than often reshaped their ways of learning. Like what Deryu suggests, now he goes to Google Scholar or Wikipedia for related information, turns to online libraries or databases, reads PDF files of journal essays, and responds to the readings in forums like Learn@UW. As he optimistically predicts, just one more step, we are so close to make the whole school system a virtual one.

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<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for the transcriptions/translations.

The last two questions are about the subjects' past experiences of using online resources for English learning. Q4 is for the self-inspected frequencies, and Q5 is for the exact times they remembered.

	Meishin	Akuei	Deryu
Times	5-10	2-5	5-10
Q5: How many times have you every tried to find some helpful websites for English learning?			

It is quite unexpected that the subjects self-report as “seldom” try to look for the online resources for English learning. It is possible that learning English online is not one of their major concerns. It’s also due to the reason that the participants are in the learners’ communities to be informed of the online ESL resources. The answers of the best ESL websites, as expected, vary from one participant to another, depending heavily on their own preferences/ priorities/philosophies in how to learn English well. For Meishin, she believes in immersion. For Akuei and Deryu, they shared the online resources for being successful in U.S. academies and English proficiency tests. In the near future, I would like to design more semi-constructed questions to poke through the myth of preferences. Moreover, it could be a good strategy to ask teachers or more experienced friends for useful ESL websites rather than digging into the endless search results online, because we are not sure how many pages Internet users can go on and on trying every single website on a search result list.

### Results and discussions of Q2 (Main Task 1)

The first subject Meishin reports her top 5 helpful websites as follows:

CNN	<a href="http://www.cnn.com">www.cnn.com</a>	News
Studio Classroom	<a href="http://www.goodtv.tv/SC/index.phtml">www.goodtv.tv/SC/index.phtml</a>	ESL magazine
Online Writing Lab	<a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/">http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/</a>	Writing
Global English	<a href="http://corp.globalenglish.com/">http://corp.globalenglish.com/</a>	Audio conferencing

PBS	<a href="http://www.pbs.org">www.pbs.org</a>	Parent education
Top 5 helpful websites for English learning (M)		

Meishin mentioned in advance that living in an English-as-a-first-language country like the U.S., it's much easier to learn English because we are now immersed in an English-speaking environment. However, she still set the CNN website as her homepage, and she thinks it's an easy access to everyday news, and CNN is good for reading and listening practices. Her second website, the Studio Classroom, is a very popular one in Taiwan. It has published a monthly ESL magazine for more than 45 years. And now they have their own TV channel, Good TV, on the cable system, and she loves to sharpen her listening and vocabulary skills there. The OWL (online writing lab) website by Purdue University provides basic information for general writing, English grammar, punctuation, and online writing exercises. The fourth one, Global English, is like an online chat room. Users have to pay for the service, and there are many English instructors all over the world who are ready to talk with the users, person to person, like they are chatting on the phone, or in an audio conference. The online teachers will have conversations with users on specific topics, give users real-time suggestions, and maybe correct their pronunciation. The last recommended website is PBS. There are PBS sites for kids and for parents. Meishin loves to acquire knowledge and pleasure from the PBS, and she also recommends the resources in public libraries. The types of websites Meishin reports cover different skills in English learning: CNN and Studio Classroom are mainly about English reading, listening, and speaking. OWL is like an online writing handbook. Global English provides a platform for practicing speaking, and PBS is a more like a reference book for parent education.

On the other hand, the top 5 websites by Akuei lead towards a quite different direction. His major concerns are the learning strategies, and better performance in an English-speaking world. So here are his favorite websites:

ASC	<a href="http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills">www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills</a>	Cost-effective
ASU	<a href="http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/writing">http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/writing</a>	Tutorials
UW-	<a href="http://writing.wisc.edu/">http://writing.wisc.edu/</a>	Writer's

Madison		handbook
Academic Advising	<a href="http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/lec-note.htm">www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/lec-note.htm</a>	Notes
Virginia Tech	<a href="http://www.composition.english.vt.edu/wc/WC_Home.html">www.composition.english.vt.edu/wc/WC_Home.html</a>	Writing & reading
Top 5 helpful websites for English learning (A)		

The first set of websites, No. 1 & 4, are the academic skill centers that provide self-tests for your English learning attitudes, and then propose strategies for taking notes, reading efficiently, and writing effectively. The other set, No. 2, 3, and 5, are the writing centers of Arizona State U, UW-Madison, and Virginia Tech. These websites demonstrate necessary techniques for successful academic writing; like MLA & APA formats, handbooks for writing, tips and timelines for composing an effective final paper or conference essay, and meeting the deadlines. Apparently, Akuei's choices focus on practical skills to survive in the highly-competitive graduate programs in the U.S.: taking notes, reading, and writing. However, listening- or speaking-related websites are excluded from his current list.

The third subject Deryu proposes a new perspective, or we can call it an old and traditional view of English learning in Taiwan: to learn English well means to get high scores in English proficiency tests like TOEFL, IELTS, or GRE. So, Deryu's top 5 websites are

IELTS online	<a href="http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/IELTS/default.htm">http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/IELTS/default.htm</a>	Test preparation
Grammar free	<a href="http://www.grammarfree.com.tw/tw">www.grammarfree.com.tw/tw</a>	Animations for grammar
Vocabulary workshop	<a href="http://www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/webroot.htm#act">www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/webroot.htm#act</a>	English roots and affixes
Time Magazine	<a href="http://www.time.com/time">www.time.com/time</a>	Reading comprehension
GTER	<a href="http://bbs.gter.net/bbs/index.php">http://bbs.gter.net/bbs/index.php</a>	Forum for GRE preparation

### Top 5 helpful websites for English learning (D)

The first website is designed for IELTS preparation and contains materials for 4-skills practices: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The second website, Grammar Free, helps learners memorize English words and grammar rules with short animations. The animations visualize the abstract linguistic concepts with amusing stories and give users vivid pictures of those rules. The third one, Vocabulary Workshop, explores the meanings and histories (etymology) of the prefixes and suffixes. This strategy is also a popular method for vocabulary building in Taiwan: making sense of the constitutional parts of the English words. The fourth one, Time Magazine, is regarded as one of the best sources for English reading comprehension preparation in Taiwan. The rich vocabulary in the articles makes it difficult for ESL students to comprehend those essays in various topics. Every single article in Time Magazine might become a perfect test for the learners' reading and vocabulary abilities. The last one GTER is an online forum constructed in Mainland China. People share information and experiences of TOEFL and GRE tests. It was originally a BBS version. Though it would be forbidden by the ETS to share the info of most-frequently-tested words in TOEFL or GRE, users still provide self-made glossaries, charts, and experiences for the tests. So, Deryu's emphasis is very test-oriented. The traditional, popular, and also practical view of English learning aims at getting high scores. The problem is whether you have got enough practices in advance to achieve your goals as a winner.

### **Results and discussions of Q3 (Main Task 2)**

The third part of the study, which is also the Main Task 2, is to compare and contrast two lists of websites that could be helpful for English learning. However, in order not to take too much time of each task-taker, the plan was shortly changed to just report a favorite website for online dictionaries and a favorite one for news (one in each category). The advantage is that this change saves the task-takers about 10 minutes to compare and contrast the similarities and differences of the suggested websites, but the payoff is huge: like the first task, participants are still answering open-ended questions, and the websites they report usually do not overlap, so the data cannot be analyzed on the same basis. Thus, main tasks 1 and 2 become almost identical with each other. For a

better research, I plan to reduce items on each list to only three most representative ones, and ask future participants to seriously play around with the assigned websites and tell the similarities, differences, preferences and reasons. Therefore, the study would be able to delve into the relationship between design mechanisms and users' responses. Current results: Meishin favors Google dictionary & CNN; Akuei suggests Yahoo dictionary & BBC; and Deryu recommends Google dictionary & Yahoo news. In the data, only Google dictionary appears twice. Through the lenses of playfulness, self-explanation, goal-based scenario, and immediate feedback, the attributes of these five websites are as follows:

	Playfulness of the site	Self-Explanation	Goal-based Scenario	Immediate Feedback
Google dictionary	X	X	V	V
CNN	V	X	V	V
Yahoo dictionary	X	X	V	V
BBC	V	X	V	V
Yahoo news	V	X	V	V
Evaluation of the usefulness of websites (range 1-10, posttest for tasks 1&2)				

This chart is an attempt to analyze the features of the popular websites and is not included in the pilot interviews. It could be hard to quantify how much playfulness there is in a website. It could also be hard to qualify whether an online dictionary website contains playful elements, or which parts of the websites provide room for online self-explanation. The ideas are vague enough to be represented on a 1-10 scale, so these four criteria for website evaluation must be made explicit and concrete for coding: if the viewers are allowed post comments or reviews in a blog-like or forum-like website, in the self-explanation part, the website should earn 2 extra points. Unless the criteria for critiques are made explicit for the task-takers as well as the researchers, requesting them to evaluate any website would simply be excessive.

### **Scientific importance of the study and its limitations**

The study could be expanded to three layers: web design principles (informational technology), Internet user interaction & mentality (educational psychology), and globalization via the Internet (socio-cultural). The first layer explores the traits of successful websites. The second layer focuses on the needs of Internet users as online ESL learners. The last layer connects the Internet to globalization. The relations/transitions of these three layers may inform each other and produce a complete picture of globalized second language acquisition.

But what could the cognitive ethnography answer? What are the prospects and limitations of this approach? With more participants in the research and a well-designed questionnaire, the first research questions could be answered: “How would the Internet and globalization reshape the learning behaviors of ESL students?” More and more students are going online for immediate instructions by online texts, video clips, or interactive games. From these 3 cases, the participants agree that the Internet has at least “often” changed their ways of learning. However, the researchers have to ask the right questions to find out exactly how the new types of learning take place. The websites in the first Main Task are the evidences that the participants have been responding to their Internet use. With only 10-15 minutes of playing around, the participants would be able to show the favorite and most frequently visited sites for English learning.

Does the study answer the second research question, “What types of websites would ESL learners regard as the most helpful websites for English learning?” I think the answer is yes. What’s more, with only 3 subjects in the pilot study, we’ve got pretty wide range of results. The divergent results (one’s best 5 out of trillions of alternatives!) reveal a fact that the self-taught online education is highly goal-directed. When Internet users have problems to solve, they turn to the globalized Internet for quick references and solutions. If the sample pool grows larger and the researchers’ interview skills are upgraded, the collected data would be more reliable and convincing, and it is likely that some popular websites would gradually appear on different participants’ “best 5” lists. That’s the time a researcher can generate statistic results.

The last research question is, “Why would people be fascinated by certain types of websites?” The researcher proposed some models in prior studies to answer the question, but the data and the interpretation are not good enough to solve the problem in

this pilot study. The synthesized model of with four lenses: playfulness, self-explanation, goal-based scenario, and immediate feedback, needs further development to quantify data for inputs and outputs. The feature “playfulness” needs to be specified as answerable questions for the participants, and so do the other features. Once the right questions are asked, and the coding and evaluation criteria are set up, the participants would have clear rules to follow in the tasks, and the researchers can avoid answering questions and interpreting the data with their own biases.

It is a pity that the interview skills of researcher are too immature that some very core and essential questions were not incorporated. The researcher will have to reframe the interview questions: ask the right questions and let the data talk.

## **Conclusions**

There are several myths that need to be clarified. First, the Internet is not simply equal to a collection of websites. There are online computer games like WOW or CS, distant communication tools like Twitter, Facebook or MSN, file transmission software like FTP & BT, and still many other applications on the Internet. So the discussions of the ESL websites only picture a certain part of the Internet impacts. Second, the helpful ESL websites may not be designed originally for global second language acquisition. Take online news websites for example, they are not managed to teach foreigners how to enhance their reading or listening abilities. On the contrary, these news websites could be designed to serve only native speakers. But online news websites, with fruitful sources of frequently updated articles and video clips, become one of the best sources for getting immersed in ESL materials, because English happens to be the medium to convey those messages. Third, Internet users can either learn collaboratively or individually with the websites. One may think that online self-educators are loners and computer nerds who lock themselves in their attics. This may be true for some websites like Google Scholar, Wikipedia, and Youtube, which seem to be used by one single user (but users may still post new articles or videos to receive responses and reshape the database), but there are plenty of blogs, forums, and online social clubs that are designed to form learners’ communities and help users study collaboratively.

A professor of computer science and psychology Roger Schank delineates in his

2006 article “Epilogue: the fundamental issue in the learning sciences” some benefits of an online curriculum: space not a problem, anyone can go to a high quality university, and professors have to work in the real-world version of the disciplines. Why do online universities have the magic to do so? In Schank’s ideal world, teaching would stop being to make students memorize information to pass tests, and the best thing is there would be no winners or losers in the program.

Indeed, the fast growth of Internet and globalization is an unstoppable trend. Learners are exposed to trillions of websites, updated daily by designers from all over the globe, along with the ever-expanding scope of knowledge. Yet, instead of learning for drills and tests in schools, learning from the Internet is generally playful and goal-based. It would be a great achievement if one can access the inexhaustible online resources to reach his/her goals, and/or learn more about what mechanism works best for “edutainment.”

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## Appendix 1: A set of questions for the interviews

Thank you so much for participating in the educational research. The whole session will take around 30 minutes. Please follow the instructions and answer the questions, and please understand that the whole think-aloud process will be videotaped for further analyses.

A) The pretest (~5 mins):

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) For how long have you been using the internet?  
a) less than 1 year b) 1-2 years c) 2-3 years d) 3-4 years e) 4-5 years f) 5-6 years g) more than 6 years
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) How many hours per week do you spend on surfing and browsing the internet?  
a) 0-5 hours b) 5-10 hours c) 10-15 hours d) 15-20 hours e) 20-25 hours f) 25-30 hours g) more than 30 hours
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) How often does the internet replace the learning activity for you? (e.g. looking up for the key words via the internet rather than a real dictionary)  
a) never b) rarely c) from time to time d) often e) no opinion
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Do you use the internet to look for English learning or second language acquisition information?  
a) no b) rarely c) sometimes d) often f) always
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) How many times have you ever tried to find some helpful websites for English learning online?  
a) never b) once c) 2-5 times d) 5-10 times e) more than 10 times

B) Hands-on main tasks (play around for ~15 mins)

- 1) What are the top 5 websites that you think would be the most helpful for English learning? (please specify and demonstrate.)  
If you don't have any website in mind, please use search engines to find some now. (ex. <http://www.studentpost.com.tw/>)
  
- 2) Please try to compare and contrast the following 2 sets of websites and tell us which one in each set is your favorite (unless you have a better option).<sup>8</sup>
  - a) online dictionaries:

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<sup>8</sup> For saving time, the plan was changed to reporting one favorite website for online dictionary, and another best one for online English news.

- i) [www.google.com/dictionary](http://www.google.com/dictionary)
- ii) [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)
- iii) [dictionary.cambridge.org](http://dictionary.cambridge.org)
- iv) [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)
- v) other similar websites that you'd recommend

b) online news websites:

- i) [www.voanews.com](http://www.voanews.com)
- ii) [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- iii) [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- iv) [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)
- v) [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)
- vi) [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)
- vii) your own choices

C) Think-aloud feedback (~10 mins)

- 1) Please explain why you think those 5 websites are the best ones for English learning.
- 2) Please specify the reason why the websites you've chosen could serve as the best one in each group.

## Appendix 2: Transcriptions

Meishin Transcription:

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Part 1. Pretest: Internet usage and prior experiences of learning English online.

H: For how long have you been using the internet?

A: More than 6 years.

H: How many hours per week do you spend on surfing and browsing the internet?

A: I used to surf and browse the internet more than 1 hour every day, so it should be like 5-10 hours per week.

H: How often does the internet replace the learning activity for you? (e.g. looking up for the key words via the internet rather than a real dictionary)

A: Pretty often.

H: Do you use the internet to look for English learning or second language acquisition information?

A: Sometimes.

H: How many times have you ever tried to find some helpful websites for English learning online?

A: Probably 5-10 times.

Part 2. Main task: Top five websites that you think would be the most helpful for English learning and why.

CNN ([www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com))

M: The one I used most often and put in my homepage is cnn.com, because it's easier to read the everyday news. And if I need, I can also watch the video, the news video. So, I think it's really helpful and it's good as daily-based.

Studio Classroom (<http://www.goodtv.tv/SC/index.phtml>),

M: The second one I used, yeah, actually this one I used most often when I was in Taiwan. I used to watch a video like this one here, and okay, let's move on a little bit. Right.

H: So, what's this one called?

M: It's studio classroom.

H: Oh, studio classroom.

M: Yep. It can provide, uh, the TV program for your English learning and, also, if I don't want to watch the TV, then I can listen by ears.

OWL: online writing lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/>)

M: And the third one I would recommend something like this. In some universities, they provide some ESL learning resources, um, for students and teachers. Like here, I can read about the general writing, if I want to learn how to write better. Or like grammar

and punctuation, spelling, and they provide some practices and exercises, too. And like this, I can...

H: So it's about grammar and writing.

M: I think they have more, but it's more like writing and reading. And it's different from the last two. The prior, the former two are more like, uh, focused on listening and, yep, focused on listening.

Global English (<http://corp.globalenglish.com/>)

M: And, let's see. And this one is the website I have used...I didn't use...I do not use it right now, but I used it before I came to the United States. Because here....

H: What is its name?

M: Global English. And you can see there are a lot of languages. So this one is for, like, all over the world, and every country can...like me, I can use the Chinese to....

H: So you have to pay for the service.

M: Yes, I need to pay for the service, and people can be online to talk with a teacher, and, uh, like an online classroom. So, people from different countries, they can talk in a chatting room, and with specific topic, and teachers can give you some suggestions, and also correct your pronunciation or your grammar.

H: So do you remember how much money it will have to cost you for the service?

M: Hmm, in Taiwan, I think it's forty dollars per month. Forty to fifty dollars per month, but

H: US dollars?

M: Yep, And that's the fourth.

PBS (<http://www.pbs.org/>)

M: The fifth one is PBS. This is PBS for parents, and my kids like it because they have PBS for kids. But for me, I can read some information about parents and it's good for me to learn some English, too. And to learn English from a different field, like, a parent field. So, it's good and I recommend this one. So, these are the five websites that I would recommend.

H: So could you send me the links to those websites?

M: Oh sure, sure.

Part 3: Specific categories: one favorite website for online dictionaries and one for online news. Explicate the reason why.

Online dictionary: Google dictionary ([www.google.com/dictionary](http://www.google.com/dictionary))

M: I like to use google dictionary, because, um, as a secondary, a secondary English learner, um, it's important for me to know the exact meaning of the word. And sometimes if I only use English to English; yeah, it's helpful but I want to kind of compare, or to know what it exactly means, especially some terminology. This one, google online dictionary, I can use English to English and English to Chinese, or Chinese to English. So this one really helps. It's really helpful for me. And that's the English website.

Online news: CNN ([www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com))

M: And as to the, uh...

H: The English news, please choose one.

M: Yeah, the English news, I like to use CNN.

H: And why?

M: Because CNN the website updated the news pretty often, and even I couldn't read the article thoroughly, completely every time, I can kind of just browse the topic, and then I will know what happened in the United States or all over the world a little bit, and so I put CNN website as my homepage. Every time when I turn on the internet, I can see the topics at that time.

H: And I can see they also have the videos.

M: Yes. And they also have the videos. So, if I kind of like to read more deeply, then I can read the article, the developing story, the full story. Then if they have the video clip, I can watch those video clips....

H: Are those video captioned?

M: No, I don't think so. But it's fine because the news, the reporters, their pronunciation, their accents are...

H: Excellent.

M: Yeah, their accent are more clear, so there should be no problem for me. Yep. That's all.

H: Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

M: No problem. Okay.

Akuei Transcription:

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Part 1. Pretest: Internet usage and prior experiences of learning English online.

H: For how long have you been using the internet?

A: More than 6 years.

H: How many hours per week do you spend on surfing and browsing the internet?

A: More than 30 hours.

H: How often does the internet replace the learning activity for you? (e.g. looking up for the key words via the internet rather than a real dictionary)

A: Often.

H: Do you use the internet to look for English learning or second language acquisition information?

A: Sometimes.

H: How many times have you ever tried to find some helpful websites for English learning online?

A: 2-5 times.

Part 2. Main task: Top five websites that you think would be the most helpful for English

learning and why.

Academic Skill Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/>)

A: The reason why I would first recommend this website is that it has very clear categories. If you want to test your own attitude toward learning English, to know how to manage your time, or to see how to take notes in English, you can click on the hyperlinks and have some tests or gain some helpful strategies.

H: Is the website constructed in York University in the U.K?

A: No, it belongs to ASC, which stands for Academic skill center.

H: Where does it...?

A: This is recommended by my friends in an learner's group online. We talked online and asked if anyone knew any websites that are good for English learning.

H: So, is it focused on training your writing skills?

A: Not just about English writing. When you use English as a tool to learn, no matter you're taking notes, reading, or writing, this website will provide you some practical tips.

H: Hmm-uh.

A: Like if you want to improve your speed for reading, or your pronunciation...

H: Do they have the tips for 4 skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking?

A: I think it doesn't say much about speaking.

H: Speaking is not the focus of the training here.

A: That's right.

H: And the other 3 skills are all included here.

A: Yes.

The ASU writing center (<http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/writing>) & the UW-Madison writing center (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/>)

A: The second recommended website is the writing center of ASU, Arizona State University, and the website is very much like the one of UW-Madison. It contains some techniques for English writing in academic writing or regular writing. Actually, the webpages of UW-Madison is pretty nice, too. It's excellent especially about the citation part.

H: You mean something like the APA style?

A: MLA.

H: MLA.

A: When you go inside the website, they will have very clear tables and tell you exactly what format would be acceptable. I was impressed even before I came to this school.

H: Wow. So would you often visit the writing centers of some nice universities or colleges?

A: Yeah, I am interested in those websites.

H: Are there any other keywords, except "writing center"?

A: Yeah, the writing center. Let me think...

H: So, your third preference would be the writing center of UW-Madison?

A: Yes.

H: I have seen on our writing center website that they even teach you how to teach.

A: Yeah, those are for teachers. I didn't read those parts.

H: I thought it was interesting, because it says rule no. 1 is to ask students about the

deadline.

College of St. Benedict (<http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/lec-note.htm>)

A: The fourth website belongs to College of St. Benedict.

H: What is this?

A: This website was suggested by one of my English teachers, she sent me this link. My question for her is the strategies to take notes in English. And she gave me this link to demonstrate the methods of taking notes more efficiently.

H: Have you ever tried this website? What's the features of it?

A: I have just used the part of outlining the notes. Like the professors are lecturing in class, and what are the best ways to jot down the most important concepts in the lecture without being distracted by the action of taking notes. The tutorial suggests using some symbols for specific purposes in taking notes. It's very interesting.

Virginia Tech (<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdyhelp.html>)

A: This is the one that I like best. I've used it for a long time.

H: Virginia Tech, something horrible happened there a couple of years ago.

A: Yeah, some gunfire.

H: Much more like a massacre.

A: This website has been updated. I am more familiar with the old one.

H: Why is there a "cook counseling" thing on top of the webpage?

A: What is this?

H: Kind of weird.

A: Why is that?

H: But there are also some study skills, seems to be right.

A: Yeah, actually, the reason why I visited this website is to prepare for the TOEFL tests. I wanted to practice....

H: So what's inside this website?

A: Note taking. Practicing listening and speaking. This web page is updated. They have some tips for speaking well.

H: Will they provide chances to chat online or just some strategies to a successful talk?

A: It's just about some strategies and concepts. It told me that grammar is not important; communication is the core of a successful conversation. If you can communicate with other people, a little bit grammatical errors wouldn't bother too much. But if you worry too much about making errors and stop talking, you will lose the chance to practice your own speaking skills. As for listening, it suggests that you may have to spend at least an hour a day to practice listening. It also provides a time schedule, but I can't find it in the new version of website now.

H: That's really good suggestions! Let's wrap up for this part and move on to the next.

Part 3: Specific categories: one favorite website for online dictionaries and one for online news. Explicate the reason why.

Online dictionary (<http://tw.dictionary.yahoo.com/>):

A: I often use the Yahoo-Kimo dictionary because it is the first online dictionary that I really tried to use seriously. It has the Chinese interface, and I set this web page as my

home page. Although there are more new online dictionaries with more powerful search engines, but I already got used to this dictionary. The advantage of this website is that you just need to key in the word you want in the search bar, and then you can get all the definitions in a very short time. The disadvantage of this website is that you can not find some slang or abbreviation words, and not to say some phrases and sentences.

H: Would the words come along with their pronunciations?

A: Yes, you can click on the icon to hear the voice. But you can only hear the voices of the single words. You can not ask it to read a whole sentence. These are the reasons why I used the Yahoo-Kimo dictionary.

H: Have you ever tried the Google dictionary?

A: Yeah, it's quite similar.

H: And you can translate words from English to Chinese, and also Chinese to English.

A: Yes, and also translate into Spanish, Japanese,....

H: Yeah, many different kinds of languages. How about the online news website?

Online news ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)):

A: I would like to recommend the BBC website. The reason why I liked BBC is...

H: Would the reporters have English accents?

A: Yes, yes. My father said that if you can conquer the British accent, you can understand American English even faster. So, I took his advice and started to use this website. The advantage of this website is that it has the real-time online news, and you can see these....

H: Are those video clips for updated news?

A: Yes, I actually tried to use BBC when I was a freshman in college. At that time the website didn't have the video clips online. So I listened to ....

H: MP3?

A: Yes, but I am not sure. Are those MP3? You just click on the hyperlink, and another window will pop out with the media player, like listening to a radio. I used it to train myself on English listening. If you want to, you can also recite and learn the intonation and accent from the reporters. You can also open up two windows and read the article when you listen to the news.

H: So you can read the text at the same time.

A: Yeah. When I graduated from college (in Taiwan), the BBC website had a new function to watch the video clips online, so the interface was adjusted a little bit. Another reason why I loved BBC news is that the BBC website has many other branches, like the BBC JAZZ, and many other field.

H: Like BBC drama?

A: Yep, that's right. And you can listen to someone telling stories online, or link to some other interesting stories. I chose the news part because the stories are shorter than other genres, and the reporters need to use limited time, like five minutes, to wrap up all the stories. So I believe that it will also be the shortcut for understanding things happening in the world.

H: Okay. Good. Thank you!

Deryu Transcription:

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Part 1. Pretest: Internet usage and prior experiences of learning English online.

H: For how long have you been using the internet?

D: More than 6 years.

H: How many hours per week do you spend on surfing and browsing the internet?

D: 20-25 hours.

H: How often does the internet replace the learning activity for you? (e.g. looking up for the key words via the internet rather than a real dictionary)

D: Always.

H: For example?

D: I often visit online search engines like google scholar to look for the academic resources now.

H: And you can know how many times the articles are cited.

D: Yeah, you actually don't have to go the a real library. You have digital versions nowadays.

H: Yeah, there used to be a lot of index cards in the library, but now...

D: Yep, the information is searchable online now.

H: Do you use the internet to look for English learning or second language acquisition information?

D: Sometimes, like when I was preparing for TOEFL.

H: There are supposed to be some...

D: Some websites for TOEFL preparation.

H: And GRE.

D: Yeah.

H: Most of the materials are from Mainland China.

D: Yes.

H: How many times have you ever tried to find some helpful websites for English learning online?

D: 5-10 times.

Part 2. Main task: Top five websites that you think would be the most helpful for English learning and why.

IELTS online practice materials (<http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/IELTS/default.htm>)

D: This website is the elc something, and this website provides the practices materials for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

H: Do you know what IELTS is?

D: It's like another version of TOEFL, but belong to another system.

H: Yeah, it's the British version of TOEFL. So there are free practice materials online for IELTS.

D: Yeah, like the listening test, you can hear a little piece of a conversation or an article, and then there will be some listening comprehension drills.

H: And how about the speaking part? How will they train you?

D: I actually don't know. I tried the listening part, and....

H: This morning I talked to another Taiwanese friend, and she said that there is a kind of website that will create some chances for online chatting, video conferencing with some English teachers all over the world. But you will have to pay for that kind of service. The teachers might correct your pronunciation or something.

D: Oh, that's something I don't know.

H: I didn't know, either.

Grammar Free (<http://www.grammarfree.com.tw/tw/>)

D: This is the second website. It's much more interesting. You can learn English grammar via animations.

H: Cool, could you please send me the links to these websites after the interview?

D: Sure. Like here if you want to learn about a noun, an abstract noun, you can key in the word, and there will be a short animation to help you learn the word better.

H: That's pretty interesting.

D: And there are some animations for grammar, too.

Vocabulary Workshop

(<http://www.southampton.liunet.edu/academic/pau/course/webroot.htm#act>)

H: Daphne, would you please come here and take Robert away? Thanks.

D: The website teaches you the basic concepts of prefixes and suffixes. It will tell you the meanings of the affixes. It just provides some brief definitions of the affixes, but I thought it's very helpful.

H: So is this website about words?

D: No, it's actually about parts of the words.

H: Oh, right, the prefixes and suffixes. This is really cool. Yeah, some of them came from Latin or other languages.

Time Magazine (<http://www.time.com/time/>)

D: The next one is for practicing reading. Time magazine.

H: Time.

D: There are a bunch of free and nice articles to read online.

H: Do they have some video clips here?

D: I am not sure about the videos. I only used this to read articles. Let me click the links and see one of the articles.

H: Do we have to pay to view these articles?

D: No, as I said, it's totally free. If the website shows that I need to pay for the service, I'll probably turn to other similar websites.

H: I see.

GTER: For GRE preparation (<http://bbs.gter.net/bbs/index.php>)

D: If you want to go abroad for further studies, you will have to prepare for the TOEFL and GRE tests. This website contains some useful information for the preparation. This is a Mainland China website, and it's a good one.

H: How good?

D: They have their own version of TOEFL dictionary, and some people will share their own experiences of the preparation. It's much more like a forum. They will list some most frequently tested vocabularies for GRE tests. And for TOEFL....

H: Are these also free, too?

D: Yeah, it's totally free.

H: So it's a place for sharing information.

D: Yep. Besides Ji-tuo, there's another one.

H: I've heard of a website named Tai-sha.

D: Yeah, Tai-sha. Ji-tuo and Tai-sha are the two biggest websites for TOEFL and GRE preparation. Some information on these two will overlap. I think they are very useful. The above are the five websites for English learning that I would recommend.

Part 3: Specific categories: one favorite website for online dictionaries and one for online news. Explicate the reason why.

Online dictionary ([www.google.com/dictionary](http://www.google.com/dictionary))

D: I would think the google dictionary as the most user-friendly online dictionary, because it's simple and convenient. The main reason is that it's multi-translate

H: Multi-lingual.

D: You can see various kinds of languages here.

H: Yeah, you can use the Chinese to English dictionary as well.

D: Chinese, English, German, French, Korean. Other websites are just English to English or English to Chinese.

H: That's right. I thought it can find almost the definition of every word. Like some terms as ADHD....

D: Yeah, many dictionaries do not have definitions for those special terms.

H: Yes. That's magic.

D: Yeah. And Google has so many other functions. Gmail and everything. So it's very convenient to use this.

Online news ([news.yahoo.com](http://news.yahoo.com)):

D: The online news I often visited is the Yahoo news.

H: But do they have an English version?

D: Sure, you just type [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) without the .tw in the end, and then you can see the English version.

H: Okay, then what's good about this website?

D: I can only tell you about the Chinese version. Let me say it this way. I've set this as my home page for 5 to 6 years. I am very familiar with the interface, and if I want to read news, buy something online, I always know where to go.

H: Yahoo sales. Is that different from eBay?

D: No, they are two different systems. We seldom see eBay in Taiwan. More people use Yahoo.

H: Like my American friends use facebook, f-a-c-e-b-o-o-k. The function is similar to MSN or skype, but....

D: Facebook, so you can see a lot of faces in the book?

H: Yes, you would like to upload some photos there, but....

D: Do people sell things there?

H: It's more like place to make friends and trace the activity of your old friends and also make new friends.

D: Oh.