THE FAMILIARIZING OF ROBY'S MODEL IN TEACHING LISTENING SKILL FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

Media for teaching listening has various types. One of them is by using software multimedia. As multimedia technology becomes more accessible to teachers and learners of other languages, its potential as a tool to enhance listening skills becomes a practical option. Thus, the writer is interested in familiarizing this software for teaching listening. This software multimedia has been equipped by some features to support teaching listening. Those features are: 1) Free space. This area allows teacher to type or copy dialogues from other sources, 2) F1 to F 12 buttons where each button has difference function. F1 buttons is used to insist on command and sound. F2 and F3 are for choosing the model of speaker and sound. There are seven models of speaker. All the voices of speaker are from British, America, and Australia. F5 and F6 buttons are used to set time. F7 and F8 are for setting the speed of speaking. F10 is used to listen per sentence and F11 and 12 are used for listen the dialogue per word and letter, 3) Model of saving. There are two types of saving: saving text and saving mp3.

The objective of this paper is to familiarize the application of software multimedia for teaching listening.

Keywords: multimedia, software, voice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching listening sill causes some problems. One of them is related to media. Involving media in delivering listening materials becomes important. It is because this skill needs special treatment for engaging students in catching the materials. As stated by Cahyono and Widiati (2009) that another factor which contributes to the success of listening instruction is the media used to present the listening materials. They add that language laboratory, for instance, can be used to provide language learners with various models of utterances spoken by native speakers and a means to record their own voices in order to be able to compare them with native speakers voices. However, not all teachers are eager to use media for supporting teaching learning process. Thus, it causes obstacle in learning listening.

Nowadays, teachers are demanded to be able to use technology as a media. The advance of Information Technology (IT) has caused the development of the ways of learning language in recent years. One important application of IT is using multimedia, which has become a common way of learning. As the development of IT, many areas of English learning have employed computers as learning tools. One of them is using computer as a media in teaching listening. It is in the line with Krashen's statement (1995). He said that for the last 20 years, the computer has been perceived as a useful tool in the teaching of listening skill, which has now been treated as a much more complex activity and is the "cornerstone of language acquisition".

However, the presence of computer has not been utilized maximally in teaching, especially in presenting listening materials. Some schools still rely on listening material packed in cassette recorder or compact disc. Then, the problem comes when a teacher wants to modify the content and situation as stated in Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan. In KTSP (Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasiona), a teacher has an authority to design the content of the material based on the school's condition and situation. It means that the contents available on cassette sometimes are difficult to be matched with the situation and condition of the students. It makes difficult for teacher in matching the materials.

Overcoming the condition mentioned above, the writers try to present software for listening skill. This software is designed by equipping speech synthesis. It is the artificial production of human speech. Text-to-Speech (TTS) refers to the ability of computers to read text aloud. A TTS Engine converts written text to a phonemic representation, and then converts the phonemic representation to waveforms that can be output as sound. This software can run under Windows XP and Windows Seven. Thus, teacher can use this software to design listening material. This flexibility gives a teacher to arrange or design listening material suitable for

students' need and level. Other advantages of this software, the teacher can copy a certain text from other sources and paste into this media.

By considering the limitations and weaknesses of this present study, it is suggested that this courseware can be used as a contribution to the teaching and learning of English in junior high school. It is also suggested that teachers can use this courseware to provide promoting self-directed learning.

2. USING COMPUTER AS A MEDIA IN TEACHING

Internet has provided huge number of material and software for teaching English. This makes teachers select one that best matches with the lesson's curriculum. The problem may arise when teachers do not have enough knowledge on how to use the internet and how to operate the software. The software takes an important role when we want a custom material for teaching. For instance if we want to teach listening, we need software called adobe audition or cool edit pro. With this software, teacher can edit audio file which means they can take some part of the audio and combine two or more files into one audio file by copying, cutting, and pasting the audio files of MP3 and WAV format. Teacher can also record their own voice with this software.

There is also much software for teaching English, for instance "Let's Speak" and "Tell Me More". Both are great software. They provide speaking assessment where students can talk to computer and computer can give response back. It may be a problem since the content is static which means teachers cannot create their own content that matches with the lesson's curriculum. Dynamic content will be more beneficial where teacher can create and modify the content such as software called "Hot Potatoes".

So, the content is the core of what we will use for teaching English. It takes the most important role of all. In this case, software that matches the need and easy to use is necessary.

3. SPEECH SYNTHESIS

Speech synthesis is the artificial production of human speech. Text-to-Speech (TTS) refers to the ability of computers to read text aloud. A TTS Engine converts written text to a phonemic representation, and then converts the phonemic representation to waveforms that can be output as sound.

Early electronic speech synthesizers sounded robotic and were often barely intelligible. The quality of synthesized speech has steadily improved, but output from contemporary speech synthesis systems is still clearly distinguishable from actual human speech.

Modern Windows desktop systems can have SAPI 5 (Speech Application Programming Interface) components to support speech synthesis. Microsoft Windows has its own speech engine that is accessible from the Control Panel. The speech engines are Microsoft Sam, Microsoft Mary and Microsoft Mike. Not all programs can use speech synthesis directly. There are third-party software available that can read text aloud such as TextAloud, Natural Reader and etcetera.

4. ROBBY'S MODEL FOR TEACHING LISTENING

As mentioned in abstract, the purpose of this paper is for familiarizing the software for teaching listening. This consideration is based on the fact that there are many schools which have not had English laboratory. This condition can affect teacher in teaching listening. Thus, writer wants to introduce this software as one of models in delivering listening materials. He hopes that by applying this model, teacher can create and modify the content based on the students' needs.

Briefly, this software consists of some features. All features are written in Bahasa Indonesia. It is because this media is addressed for Indonesia user especially English teachers. Those features are: 1) Free space. This area allows teacher to type or copy dialogues from other sources, 2) F1 to F 12 buttons where each button has difference function. F1 buttons is used to insist on command and sound. F2 and F3 are for choosing the model of speaker and sound. There are seven models of speaker. All the voices of speaker are from British, America, and Australia. F5 and F6 buttons are used to set time. F7 and F8 are for setting the speed of speaking. F10 is used to listen per sentence and F11 and 12 are used for listen the dialogue per word and letter, 3) Model of saving. There are two types of saving: saving text and saving mp3.

Here is the screen captured of the Robby's software:
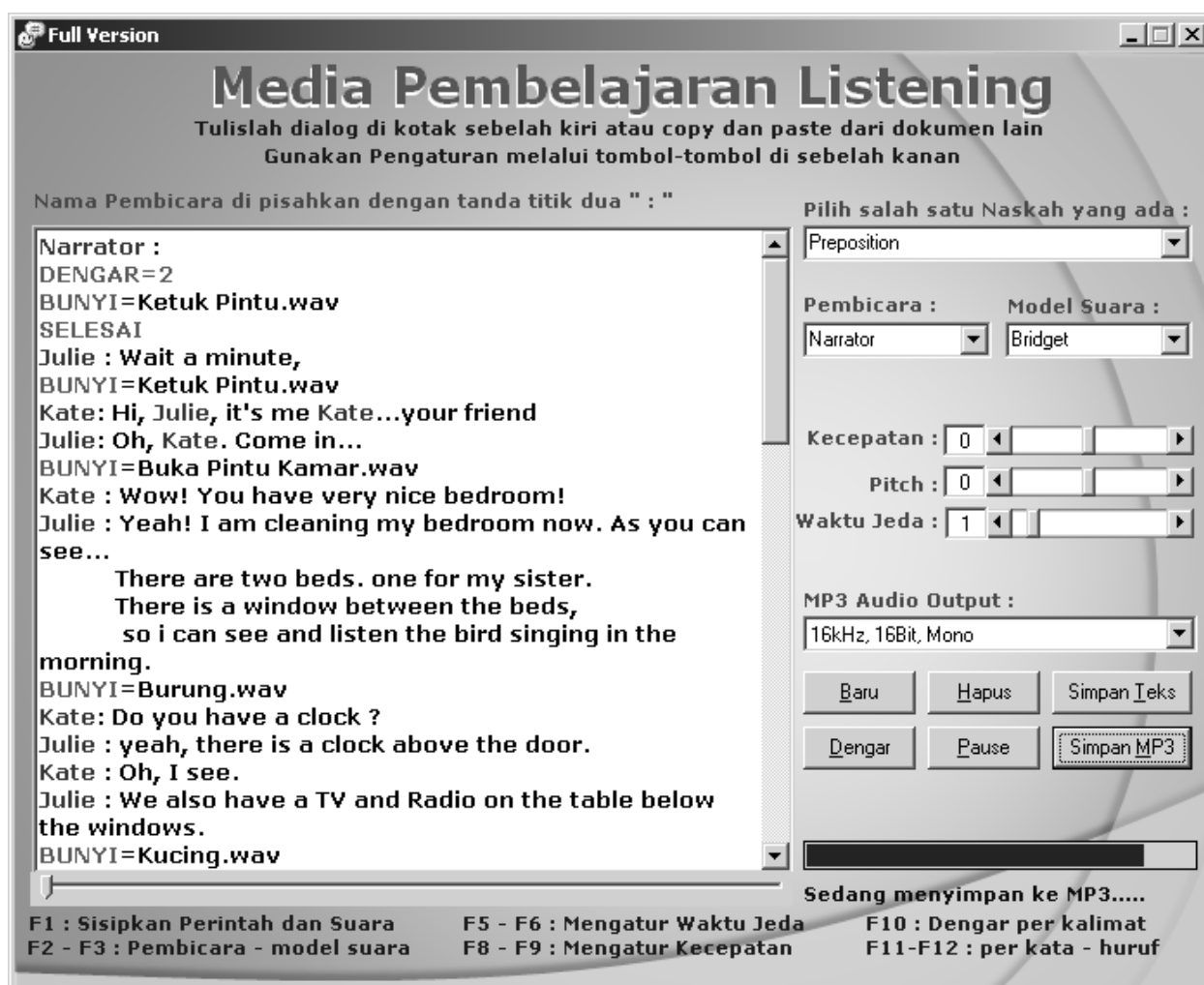
Unlike other text to speech software, this software is specially designed for teaching listening. It has much more features as follows:

1) All the command and button are written in Bahasa Indonesia

   It is specially designed for Indonesian teachers to make it easy to use.

2) Dialog capability

   The capability to generate sounds from a dialog text.

3) Custom Script are written in Bahasa Indonesia

   Custom Scripts are additional commands written in Bahasa Indonesia. For instance if teacher wants to play some sentences more than once, then they can write "Dengar=2", which means the sentences will be played twice. The sentences are ended by "Selesai" which means only those sentences above the script are played twice.

   Teacher can also give a certain second between each sentences or particular sentences, they can write the script "Jeda=3", which means there will be silence 3 second between the sentence above and below the script.

4) Other sounds insertion

   To make the dialog seems more realistic, teacher can insert a certain sounds. For instance, they can insert the script "Bunyi=Ketuk Pintu.wav". This means there will be sound of knocking the door played between the sentences. Many more sounds are available for download from www.freesound.org. Then teacher can put the sounds in the sounds directory/folder of this software.

5) Dynamically change the voice model

   The dropdown button of "Pembicara" consists of the list of the speaker in the dialogue. The dropdown of "Model Suara" consists of the list of voice model that can be set referring to the speaker of the dialogue. Testing the output sounds and change the voice model are very easy. Teacher only set the voice model anytime and clicks the "Dengar" button to test the output sound.

6) Speed of the voice

   Teacher can set the speed of the voice by setting "Kecepatan" slider. This is important since the level of students may vary in each class.

7) MP3 Output

The generated sound can be saved as audio files with MP3 and WAV format so that teacher can share the listening topic with their friends by sending the MP3 files via Email.

8) Pause, Spell and Listen to a certain sentence.
Other features includes pause, spell and listen to a certain sentence are necessary when students ask teacher to repeat a certain words. This can be done by selecting some words or phrase then clicking the "Dengar" button or by pressing F10 as the shortcut. Other shortcuts are F11 for listening by words and F12 for listening by letter or spelling.

9) Copy and Paste capability
Teacher can copy a dialog text from other resource, for instance from the website then paste the dialog text into the box. Then simply click "Dengar" button to listen the generated sound.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS SOFTWARE

This software provides some features that can be used to design listening material for all levels. It is because there is a blank space which is used to write or design listening text. It can be utilized not only for designing daily materials but also making tests. The following are some advantages for teacher and students in using this software:

1. Teacher can design listening materials.
2. Teacher can adjust the contents of listening material with the students' condition.
3. Teacher can create listening material based on students' needs.
4. Teacher can teach not only how to listen but also how to pronounce the word in right pronunciation.
5. Students can learn how to pronounce a certain word because of F11 button. This button can produce the sound based on the word we block.

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