

ENGLISH TEACHER'S PROBLEM USING BLENDED LEARNING TO TEACH STUDENTS DURING NEW NORMAL IN SMKN 1 MARABAHAN

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Abstract. This study addresses several problems when teachers teach students using blended learning (BL) in SMKN 1 Marabahan. In a pandemic world where people have to stay at home, teachers and students have to learn different ways to continue their teaching and learning process. One of several ways to do that is by doing online learning and then continuing the materials offline. This study was conducted in SMKN 1 Marabahan using a descriptive qualitative method. Then, the questionnaire and interview were used as the research instruments. Furthermore, triangulation is used to analyze the data that consist of data reduction, data display, and conclusions. The data analysis shows there are five perspectives answered by the participants. The answer is 1) student behavior or problem 2) time duration that shortened 3) teacher's competency 4) more teacher's problems 5) problem with internet connection 6) problem about technical issues. In addition, the solution from the participant's perspective from the problems they facing, such as asking them to come to school if they have no internet data, re-explaining the data, making a coordination with parents.

Keywords: Teachers' perspective, online learning, teaching problems, strategy

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of foreign languages in the current era has shown a significant shift in terms of the way teaching and learning are conducted. Many aspects can be discussed about teaching and learning a foreign language, in particular English. According to David Crystal, One of the importance of learning English is its use to communicate between communities around the world. Because of the reason stated above, English is also essential to be taught at school. In teaching English, the teacher should notice some aspects, such as the student's interest, subject matter, students need, and also think about what they can do to help their students. As for how important English is, all students must take an English Class in SMKN 1 Marabahan. In this class, the students learn the four necessary skills of English including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Teaching a language, specifically English as a foreign language, the teacher should consider the method and strategy that will be used. According to Diane Larsen-Freeman, there are nine teaching methodologies; Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Communication Language Teaching, Content-Based, Task-Based, and Participatory Approaches. Technology has affected a lot of our everyday lives, including education. It highly improves the teaching method and strategy, known as e-learning or online learning; they utilize technology to ease and support students in learning especially within this time on new normal. The use of technology in teaching means mixing learning and teaching practices in good ways. According to Clark and Mayer, e-learning is defined as a study delivered by computer, including CD-ROM, internet, or intranet, that is designed to support and achieve learning objectives. Therefore,

nowadays, there is a teaching strategy called blended learning. According to Josh Bersin, Blended Learning is a teaching method which is combining traditional teaching methodologies with online ones. This teaching strategy could help students avoid their boredom with the repetitive face-to-face teaching and learning process. Thus, the term blended learning has grown to mean the integration of classroom learning with online or e-learning.

Blended learning combines traditional and technology-assisted teaching methodologies. Blended learning allows the integration of the innovative and technological advances that online learning offers with the collaboration and participation that traditional learning delivers (Marsh Debra;2012). Wilson and Smilanich (2005) stated that Blended learning typically involves the use of two or more approaches or strategies to accomplish learning objectives. It means that every educational learning using the World Wide Web through an internet connection as a tool for encouraging the learning process in the class can be called blended learning. The use of the Web stands as a teaching media and an assessment tool that gives students newly different challenges and experiences. Many websites can be supporting media of blended learning, such as PeerWise, Edmodo, Schoology, and English Discovery.

There are some studies conducted on blended learning, as to how its effectiveness or how it is applied in a class. In a study by Nina Sofiana, blended learning application in an extensive listening course, and the student's perspective toward blended learning is the main discussion of this research. The result of the research indicates that students and teachers are continuously involved in the face-to-face learning process and conversation online. While the students have a positive view of the learning process. Hanum has conducted the same research in SMK Plus-NU with the subject of the research is in tenth-grade students. Study findings revealed that the teacher prefers to apply the feature of the Flipped Classroom model. The teacher does well in applying the strategies based on theories. Whereas, the students' perception of the learning model's implementation shows the students have a positive opinion of the strategies.

Those previous studies have discussed blended learning, its effectiveness, and how it was implemented in the learning process, including the students' perceptions. Furthermore, those previous studies did not focus on the teachers' side, such as their perception or problems. Talking about teachers' problems is crucial because it could help teachers improve their teaching skills. While this present study focused on blended learning applied in higher education, it was different from the second previous study, which discusses blended learning applied in Senior High School. Teachers of SMKN 1 Marabahan has applied blended learning as one of the teaching strategies to attract students' motivation, including in English Class. Considering this as a new method of teaching English in English classes, the researcher was going to find out the teachers' problems in applying Blended Learning and solutions the teacher used to overcome the challenges. The researcher expects that this research will give a different contribution, knowing that in SMKN 1 Marabahan, the students come from various majors and backgrounds, students also have a different skill level.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of data used in this research is descriptive, descriptions of explanations from oral or written document data, the behavior of subjects observed in the field also becomes data in the collection of the results of this study the subject where the data is obtained. The location of this research is Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) Negeri 1 Marabahan which is located at Jalan Jend. Sudirman No. 87, Marabahan District, Barito Kuala Regency, South Kalimantan. The teachers of SMKN 1 Marabahan are the participants of this research. This research used the interview as the main instrument and an open-ended questionnaire as the second instrument. However, before the interview, the researcher used an open-ended questionnaire to gather the first information. The interview is the core information to get once the data from the open-ended questionnaire is acquired. From the interview, the researcher could have further filtered information from the participants. The interview was conducted on March 21, 2023, until March 22, 2023. As the participants were interviewed to describe their opinions on blended learning as the new normal. The interview length in a meeting is approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The researcher also recorded the interview using a voice recorder and was used to gather and documented the information from the participants.

In qualitative research, data analysis is best done from the beginning of the research. Researchers should not wait for complete data to be collected and then analyze it. Researchers from the beginning read and analyze the data collected, whether in the form of transcripts of interviews field notes, documents, or other materials in an analytical crisis while conducting credibility tests and checking data validity continuously.

Furthermore, Marianne Coleman and Ann R.J. Briggs (Marianne Coleman and Ann R.J. Briggs: 2002) suggest three data analysis activities, namely:

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, separating, and transforming the "raw" data seen in written-up field notes. Therefore, data reduction took place during the research activities. This means that data reduction has been carried out before data collection in the field, namely at the time of preparing the proposal, when determining the conceptual framework, place, determining research questions, and selecting approaches to data collection such as making inferences, coding, creating themes, making clusters, making separations and writing memos. Data reduction continued after fieldwork until the final research report was complete and finalized. A reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, selects, focuses, discards, and organizes data in a way in which conclusions can be drawn or verified.

After reducing the data, the next step is to present the data, where the data that has been reduced is then presented based on the aspects studied at the school which is the research location. Presentation of data briefly and clearly may make it easier to understand the overall picture or certain parts of the aspects that have been studied.

Conclusions require verification by other people who are experts in the field to be studied, or also check with other data. Conclusions in qualitative research are new findings that have never existed before. Findings can be in the form of a description or description of an object that was previously unclear so that it becomes clear after research.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Findings

In SMKN 1 Marabahan, they still have to proceed on doing learning with blended learning on the new normal. They don't have to be fully committed to online learning anymore. Based on interviews with several teachers in SMKN 1 Marabahan, on the new normal they still use online media to teach their students such as WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom, and Google Classroom and there's also an app funded by the government called "Smart School". The app is similar to Google Classroom but more specified only for SMKN 1 Marabahan. Here are some findings that the researcher found when interviewing the teachers about their problems with Blended Learning:

1.1.1 Teaching Time and Duration of Blended Learning

During blended learning, is there any significant difference between online and offline learning of it?

The time duration for Blended Learning in this school turns out to be shorter than regular meetings for this school which is only 30 (thirty) minutes instead of 45 (forty-five) minutes for each lesson. So in one session of class usually the duration for a regular class is $45 \times 3 = 135$ minutes, now it is only $30 \times 3 = 90$ minutes per session which is shorter. The teachers also explained that sometimes it can be even shorter than that if they use online learning.

"the usual time for one teaching session is usually 45 minutes while for an online meeting is 30 minutes and maybe even shorter, our teaching sessions usually not fixed at the time on when it will start or stop"

Teachers explained that they also cut some subjects during their blended learning session who is usually 3 or 4 subjects per day to only 1 to 2 subjects per day

"Sometimes we also didn't teach full courses, our school usually teaches students 3 or 4 subjects per day, but during blended learning, we can only teach 1 or 2 subjects per day. This we think could make the teaching not optimal since the regular schedule for it is 3 to 4 subjects per day"

1.1.2 Teacher's and Student's Activity during Blended Learning

The teacher explained what are their activity during blended learning. According to the teachers in SMKN 1 Marabahan, they are using 2 media, which are WhatsApp and Google Classroom. And the class is a little bit different than the regular class which is only an offline meeting.

According to the teacher in SMKN 1 Marabahan, online classes of blended learning have to adapt to students' participation time by starting the class a little bit later. This is different compared to offline classes where everyone has to attend the class at a fixed time.

"in an online class, we are using two media for student's assignments which are WhatsApp and Google Classroom, and then we use Zoom for an online meeting. We usually start the class a little bit late so students can still participate because sometimes our students cannot really come in time and not miss anything, and then we pray together, I also have to list the attendance of the class, and then finally starts the class. If it's the final session of the class, we also pray at the end of lessons."

They also explained that sometimes students are late during offline classes as well because they are used to learning online.

"There is usually no difference in offline classes during the new normal that, we still start the class as I have explained but sometimes even offline classes usually still come late. Maybe its because they are already accustomed to studying at home at late time so they cant accustom themselves to studying again in offline classes"

1.1.3 Teacher's interaction during blended learning

During online meetings, teachers usually initiate conversation between them, what happens during the online meeting?

"during online classes, students hardly responded when they were questioned if they understands the materials or not, while students usually more responding on an offline meeting. Students have 50% less interaction during online classroom"

According to the teacher, during online classrooms in blended learning, students have less interaction with the teacher to students and vice versa. According to the teachers, students is harder to monitor during online class because they cannot see their students during an online meeting

"When we do online classes, we don't know if the students still listening to teachers or not because they probably can do something else in the background. So it is hard to monitor the students during online classes because we can't see what they doing. They could play games with a muted microphone and no camera. For the offline class, we don't have any problem monitoring them because we can see what they doing. we also have to repeat and explain the materials again just in case"

1.1.4 Teacher's problem using online media for Blended Learning

During Blended Learning, teachers usually use online media for their teaching, is there any problem when using online media for blended learning?

According to the teachers, the internet is one of the reasons they have a problem conducting blended learning. They have poor internet connection even from the wi-fi the school had facilitated. This makes learning much harder because of buffering from Zoom or loading students' assignments from google classroom. The teacher also has a hard time listening to their students if there are any questions from them.

"during blended learning, there's an internet problem that happened. Not only from the teachers but also from the students making the teaching and learning process harder. Sometimes teachers didn't get enough internet connection making video call lag so if there's a question from students, teachers can't hear what they saying because of lag. There are also student's connection problems and from what I heard, some students have to climb trees just to get internet connections. There's also media used for Blended Learning as well, teachers sometimes have to learn things again when using Smart School. Sometimes there are also errors that teachers don't understand how to fix it and have to ask other teachers to fix it for them. Students are usually late to submit the assignment during online class making scoring was not delivered on time"

1.2 Discussion

Based on the findings above it can be explained that teachers sometimes have problems teaching blended learning during the new normal in school

Blended learning consists of two words: Blended and Learning. The word Blend means "mixed, together to improve the quality" (Collins Dictionary). Bersin (in Sulihin b. Sjukur, Journal of Vocational Education, 2012:3) defines blended learning as the combination of different training "media" (technologies, activities, and types of events) to create an optimum training program for a specific audience. The term blended means that traditional instructor-led training is being

supplemented with other electronic formats. In the context of 34 this book, blended learning programs use many different forms of e-learning, perhaps complemented by instructor-led training and other live formats. While According to Thorne (2003), "Blended learning is a combination of multimedia technology, CD ROM video streaming, virtual classroom, voicemail, email, and telephone conferencing, online text animation and video streaming. All of this is combined with traditional forms of classroom training and one-on-one training".

From the findings above, Teachers conduct Blended Learning that combines different ways of delivery of instruction, and a variety of technology-based media. The teachers also combine direct instruction for their students for their assignment or face-to-face which is explained by Husamah (2013:16) described as the characteristic of Blended Learning.

Teachers in SMKN 1 Marabahan use the flex model to teach their students during Blended Learning this was explained by Clayton Christensen Institute's Journal (2012), the majority of blended-learning programs resemble one of four models: Rotation, Flex, A La Carte, and Enriched Virtual. The Rotation model includes four sub-models: Station Rotation, Lab Rotation, Flipped Classroom, and Individual Rotation. Flex model—a program in which online learning is the backbone of student learning, even if it directs students to offline activities at times. Students move on an individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities, and the teacher of record is on-site. The teacher-of-record or other adults provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and 41 individual tutorings. Some implementations have substantial face-to-face support, and others have minimal (e.g., some flex models may have face-to-face certified teachers who supplement the online learning daily, whereas others may provide little face-to-face enrichment; others may have different staffing combinations; these are useful modifiers to describe a particular Flex model).

During blended learning, teachers have to cut their teaching shorts by several minutes, while some students are also late during online teaching. This is one of the challenges that Boelens et al. (2017) explained. The author gives four main challenges, including flexibility in integration (in terms of time, place, and learning progress), interaction (face-to-face and online interaction), support of student learning (monitoring and assessing students), and creating an effective learning environment (creating motivation and encouragement, showing empathy, individualizing learning).

During Blended Learning classes, students also have less interaction with their Teachers compared to normal face-to-face meetings. This can cause teaching to become less effective because of passive students in class which makes teachers unable to know for sure if their students fully understand their teaching or not. This is also one of the main challenges that Boelens et al. (2017) explained that students have less interaction in class

There are also internet problems during online meetings that the teachers have to face during Blended Learning. Slow internet can cause problems during Zoom calls or uploading assignments for students.. teachers also have several problems when using media to teach their students. Teachers don't understand how to operate online apps to teach students, they lack understanding to solve these problems on their own therefore they have to collaborate with other teachers to solve their problems together. The problem with teachers with communication techniques, teaching strategies, and information technology skills necessary for online teaching and blended learning is also mentioned in the studies (Attard and Holmes, 2020).

CONCLUSION

After researching the problems that teachers faced during blended learning in SMKN 1 Marabahan. It can be concluded that the teachers of SMKN 1 Marabahan have faced several problems in conducting blended learning during the new normal.

In time, the teachers were concerned that they could not the materials fully since they had to cut some materials. Lack of interest from students can also be a factor since on blended learning in SMKN 1 Marabahan they can get away to do something else because teachers cannot see them. The Teachers also collaborate by teaching each other how to use online classes properly. They were also competent in understanding online applications for teaching. But then still, there are some problems they faced outside of it such as internet collections that are not reliable sometimes. They are also concerned about how the students handle it since students don't always have Wi-Fi at home even then not all of them have stable connections. The teachers were also facing problems

from students they usually come to online classes late, and sometimes it's no different from offline classes.

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