Enhancing Students’ Writing Quality in a Blended Learning Environment

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Abstrak
This study aims to explore the best implementation of Blended Learning Model to enhance students’ writing quality. This is a Classroom Action Research where Blended Learning Model was applied using two different media. The mean score result show that students' writing quality improve from 67.83 to 75.74 at the first cycle, where videos was applied in Blended Learning Model. At the second cycle where video was switched to PowerPoint, the students’ writing quality reach the mean score of 83.10. These findings suggested that the application of PowerPoint in Blended Learning could address the students’ problem in term of word choice, generic structure, and grammar better than videos. Students also showed positive attitude, response, as well as active participation in learning. It shows that the application of PowerPoint in Blended Learning Model could maintain students’ attention that could give better result in learning writing. Therefore, the media selection in Blended Learning environment should consider its ability in maintaining students’ attention.

Keywords: Blended Learning; Online Learning; Learning Media; Writing Quality

INTRODUCTION

English teachers are always expected to develop and apply an effective and innovative strategy in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, English teachers should always be updated with the recent information about the recent development in teaching and learning process especially the strategies in teaching language skills. Among the four language skills, teaching writing always becomes a challenge for the teacher to teach both online and offline. Teaching writing requires creativity and patience; therefore, teachers have to be able to create a good atmosphere during the instructional process so that the students are motivated to learn.

A preliminary study in a junior high school in Denpasar shows that the students still have difficulties in learning writing due to the lack of teacher’s attention in online learning, students are not ready to learn independently, especially in writing activity, therefore students tend to be passive learners and have a very low creativity in writing. Students' score in the eight grade shows that their writing quality are very low, with the mean score only 68.16 and the percentage of the students who can achieve the minimum passing grade only 20.93%. 79.06% students were not able to achieve the minimum passing grade of 80.

Students writing product shows that they have difficulty word choice, they failed to compose proper generic structure of the text, and made many grammar mistakes; especially subject verb agreement. So, the students are not able to fulfill the requirement of competency of the syllabus. Those kinds of problem were also found and investigated according to previous study (Muhajiroh, 2019; Septiani, 2018; Hasanuddin, 2019). Previous studies suggested that Blended Learning could solve teaching learning
problem related to teacher-students engagement, because this blended or hybrid style encourages students to learn in an open, flexible, and critical manner in order to solve problems and orient the empirical reality with real world action through experience learning, by Zainuddin & Keumala (2018).

Watson (2009) mentioned that, there are several form of Blended Learning implementation, namely:

a. Fully online, with the option of doing face to face learning.

b. Partially or fully online, with a certain amount of time required for face to face learning, either in the classroom or laboratory.

c. Mostly or fully online, with students continuing to study conventional classes or laboratories every day.

d. Traditional classroom study, but kids are required to participate as an enrichment or extracurricular activity.

e. Traditional learning by incorporating internet materials and online activities in which students are not required to participate.

This research applied fully online Blended Learning Model which combined both synchronous and asynchronous learning process because of the pandemic that requires learning activities to be carried out online time.

According to Ramsay (2001) that was basically three stages in Blended Learning Model there are: seeking of information, acquisition of information, and synthesizing of information; however in this research the researcher added one stages namely applying knowledge because in this research the focus was on the writing quality as a language product. This research is expected to generate a suitable implementation of Blended Learning Model to improve students' writing quality, especially in the aspects of the word choices, generic structure, and grammar.

**METHOD**

The classroom action research (CAR) cycles by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) would be employed in this study. The cyclic steps of the research are including: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data in this research would be obtained from eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar in the academic year of 2020/2021, the participants focused on VIII D which had 43 students consisting of 19 male and 24 females.

There are two kinds of techniques of collecting data in this research, such as: qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were taken from result of observation sheets and interview. Meanwhile, quantitative data were taken from the result of the writing test. The data to be obtained on the observation sheet, interview, and writing test are analyzed. Reflection was done at the end of each cycle to reflect on accomplishment of the research target. The research target that could reflect the best implementation of Blended Learning in this action research is that the class mean score in writing achieved the minimum passing grade of 80.

The data analysis process was taken place before, during and after research. Quantitative data were used to determine the mean score of the students' writing tests in order to determine whether or not improvement has happened and target is achieved. After the students did the writing tests, the result of the individual score was calculated by scoring rubric that adapted from Mcdonough (2018). The students are tested on three indicators, they are: content, organization, and language.
use. The result of the mean score of the writing test would be compared with the result of the mean score of the writing test in previous test session to assess if the participants' achievement in writing quality had improved.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Pre-Cycle**

The preliminary research was done before classroom action research was conducted. In this step, the researcher observed in the teaching learning process by interview the teacher and several students and conducted pre-test. Considering the result of preliminary research, the researcher identified the problem in writing quality in term of word choice, generic structure and grammar that were faced by the students are caused the lack of teacher's attention to students because online learning during the pandemic of Covid-19 situation and students have many homework but not accompanied by face to face learning and requiring students to study independently make students tend to be passive in learning, and also cause from the teaching and learning process, there was not any effective media in teaching learning process to support or guide the students in writing and they need the new learning model and new atmosphere to make the students feel excited, comfortable, and easy to deliver the material are given by the teacher in learn English especially in writing. To overcome the problem, the researcher proposed to improve students’ writing quality using Blended Learning Model was applied using two different media. The pre-test was in the form of instruction for writing the past experiences to determine students’ writing quality, especially in writing recount text. The mean score that was followed by 43 students was 67.83, the minimum passing grade was 80. The data of students’ score that was 10 students passed the minimum score, that only 23.26% subjects could reach the minimum standard of passing grade and 33 students are failed, that 76.74% subject could not reach the minimum standard of passing grade for the eighth grade students SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar that was 80.

**Cycle I**

Based on the result of preliminary research the classroom action research cycle was started, of which the cycle consists of planning, actions, observation and reflection. The students’ test result was gathered through the test that was given to the students at the end of every cycle, while the activity data was gathered from the observation in learning activity. In this research the present classroom action research was separated into two cycles, each consisting of two sessions. The pre-test was given by the researcher to know the students’ pre-existing writing quality before the blended learning model was implemented. Then, at the cycle I had done the implementation by using Blended Learning Model. Based on the data of the post-test in the first cycle it was showed mean score that was followed by 43 students was 74.75. The data of student’s score that was showed 22 students passed the minimum score, that 51.16% subjects could reach the minimum standard of passing grade and 21 students were failed, that 48.84% subject could not reach the minimum standard of passing grade for the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar that was 80. The data analysis was taken by a given post-test for the student. The result of the post-test in cycle I showed that the students’ development of generic structure and students’ interest in writing recount text was improved by using video and WhatsApp group as the media to implement the blended learning
model in the teaching learning process.

The result of observation and interview some students need improvement. There were some students who showed that they had difficulties in writing recount text. The use of learning media in the form of videos could help students in mastering writing quality especially in aspects of generic structure because the students are more interesting and could follow the steps of good writing in recount text and the use of WhatsApp as a blended learning was significant in helping the students write better. However, most of them were lacking in terms of word choices and grammar in writing a recount text because the video does not detailed in the explanation of the material, students have to remember from scene to scene and by using video the students come less active in interacting with the material given. Nevertheless, there were some other students who had good writing but still needed guidance to improve, so the researcher needed to continue the second cycle who focused on the term of word choice and grammar of recount text. In conclusion, the first cycle failed to achieve the learning indicators. Then, researcher planned to conduct the second cycle and observation to improve the student’s writing quality of recount text by using a Blended Learning Model, in cycle II the researcher replaced the learning media by using PowerPoint.

Cycle II

Based on the result of the post test in cycle I in which the increase of the students' mean score in word choices and grammar of writing recount text was not satisfactory yet, cycle two was conducted. The researcher continued to cycle II to prove that implementing the blended learning model improves the students' writing quality which was focused on word choices and grammar. In the cycle II the students needed more practice about word choices and grammar in writing recount text. The process of cycle II had the same step of cycle I, such as planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data of the post-test in second cycle it was showed that mean score that was followed by 43 students was 83.10. The data of student’s score that was showed 37 students passed the minimum score, that 86.05% subjects could reach the minimum standard of passing grade and 6 students are failed, that 13.95% subject count not reach the minimum standard of passing grade for the eighth grade students SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar that was 80.

The result of the post-test in cycle II showed the students’ development of word choices and grammar because the teacher used power point media or multimedia presentation to explain the material in the teaching and learning process. The use of learning media in the form of multimedia presentation or Powerpoint could help students to improve the writing quality especially in aspect of word choice and grammar because the students pay attention more detail on each slide of the material given and the students also could discuss with the teacher if there are in the slide of Powerpoint that material are the difficult to understand during the learning process in implementation of blended learning. This result was consistent with previous research (Rahimi, 2020), which was finding that the use of multimedia presentation (PowerPoint) had a significant influence on writing quality. In the process of the classroom action research by using Blended Learning Model at the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar in the academic year of 2020/2021 were successfully improved of students’ in writing quality it could be seen from mean score and percentage of the students
who passed the minimum score from writing test of pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II as follows:

Table 1. The improvement of students’ writing quality in each cycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>The Score of Writing Quality</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Cycle</td>
<td>2917</td>
<td>67.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle I</td>
<td>3257</td>
<td>75.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle II</td>
<td>3573</td>
<td>83.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the result in table 1, the mean score of the post test cycle II was 83.10 and 86.05% of the students could reach the minimum standard of passing grade. That was the improvement of eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Denpasar in the academic year of 2020/2021 in writing quality of recount text after they were given treatment. Because the subject had achieved the minimum mastery criteria in cycle II, it means that it was not necessary again to continue the research by conducting the next cycle III. In this study, the researcher decided to stop the research up to cycle II as the achieve the research target which was the mean score 80 or more and the percentages of the students who can achieve the minimum passing grade more than 75% obtained by the subjects in cycle II compared to the score obtained by the subject in cycle I.

In cycle II the teacher changed the media previously in cycle 1 that used video and in cycle 2 the teacher that used PowerPoint as the learning media, it was because first, the video does not detailed in the explanation of the material because students have to remember from scene to scene and by using video the students come less active in interacting with the material (Munir, 2004). Second, using PowerPoint does not only make the learning process more interesting but also to make the learning process easier, and more effective to convey the material and that PowerPoint presentation can prove successful in enhancing the students’ grammar and vocabulary and also the students’ have a positive attitude toward the use of PowerPoint presentation. This finding was in line with previous research (e.g., Mulyanah, 2018, Akhlaghi, et al, 2015). This statement was also supported by the result of students’ interview in cycle II which showed students were more active and interested in the learning process by using PowerPoint. Besides, the content that was delivered through PowerPoint in the form of grammar and word choice that was important in the writing process for students, this was also conveyed by Putra (2020) mention that students’ perception of their ability to express ideas in the right rules of written expression including spelling, punctuation and also the correct sentence structure or grammar will be better reflects the quality of their written product.

Based on qualitative data, it was taken from the result of observation and interview. The researcher found that the online learning process could be done effectively and students were more active while online learning. It was because the researcher further improved the way of teaching process by arranging the material to be interesting in the form of video and PowerPoint and we always discuss our difficult material so we could solve the problem of the students especially in writing recount text. It made the student score improved and achieved the minimum score. It
indicated that by the implementation of Blended Learning Model the students are more interested and enthusiastic in learning English especially in writing quality of recount text.

Based on the explanation above, it could be stated that the implementation of Blended Learning Model was acceptable and effective in improving students’ writing quality in recount text especially in the terms of word choice, generic structure and grammar. After implementation blended learning in the second cycle by using PowerPoint as the media in learning writing that was consists of two meetings every cycle, overall writing performance (i.e., content, organization, and language use), was improved as shown in Table 2. On the other hand, the students’ writing quality could achieve the target score of the research after the implementation of the Blended Learning Model. It could be seen from quantitative data of the mean score and percentages score increases in every test are given it could be seen in Table 2. Besides, it was proven from the qualitative data that by implementing Blended Learning Model could increase the students’ activeness during the learning process especially in writing quality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that Blended Learning Model could enhance students’ quality in writing especially in the terms of word choices, generic structure and grammar. Blended Learning applied with PowerPoint media works better in maintaining the students’ attention than Blended Learning applied with video. PowerPoint serves as a media with better flexibility to be used with teacher guidance. PowerPoint presentation can be stopped at any point to give more explanation as needed by the students, which cannot be applied when using video. This implementation pattern of Blended learning and PowerPoint was best to help students understand diction, generic structure, and grammar in writing better. Therefore, teachers are suggested to use the Blended Learning Model with PowerPoint presentation media as one alternative in teaching writing especially in the terms of word choice, generic structure and grammar.

There are several limitations of this research. First, this research only focused on the increased writing quality in recount text especially in the term of word choice, generic structure and grammar. Second, students need more time to complete the post-test given in writing recount text, so that they are not sending assignments on time. It would be better if the researcher gave the students more time to finish the post-test. Third, the individual works is less interesting, therefore it would be better to apply collaborative writing and students are involved in small group activities in order to train their cooperation and exchange their ideas. Other researcher are also expected replicate this study to gain better insight on the result. Besides, comparison studies in a form of experiment or causal comparative studies are required to confirm the superiority of PowerPoint in maintaining students’ engagement over videos.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

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