BLENDED LEARNING METHOD THROUGH WHATSAPP GROUP TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the application of blended learning method by means of WhatsApp group (WAG) to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. This study used case study to investigate the steps of implementation a blended learning in teaching vocabulary learning, to find out the teacher perception of blended learning via WA Group to improve students' vocabulary mastery and to figure out the students' responses toward blended learning method through WhatsApp group to improve students' vocabulary skill. The participants were chosen purposively, consisting of a lecturer and the tenth grade students of Vocational School in Tasikmalaya consisting of ten students. Three research instruments used were observation data, interview, and the questionnaire. To assess the data instruments, the writer interpreted the results by means of triangulation as from Cresswell (2012, p. 536). The findings showed that the implementation a blended learning consists of planing, designing, implementation, and reviewing. The findings also revealed that the advancement of blended learning for the teacher is easy to give teaching instructions. It provides material, assignments and online discussion and for the students to easily access the teaching materials that have been given by their teacher. The findings also showed that the students enjoyed learning the proposed blended learning strategy in teaching vocabulary as it allows them to work independently at their own pace and bad Internet access often hinder the success of the method.

Keywords: *blended learning, vocabulary mastery, Whatsapp Group*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary ability is the most crucial element of the language, both in the learning process and in the language development. Vocabulary is a group of words used to arrange sentences. According to Alqahtani, (2015, p. 22), "vocabulary skill is regarded as a important tool for EFL learners because it determine students' success in communication."

Vocabulary is also very crucial for EFL learners, because it is a primariry component of a language and the beginning for students to speak well, listen, read, and write. According to Alizadeh, (2016, p. 22), "vocabulary is the words to form sentences as used in listening and speaking or it is gained from printed forms such as words that we know and applied in reading and writing."

In the modern era, as an English teacher must adapt strategies to make students comprehend meaning and like learning vocabulary. According to Vasbieva, Klimova, Agibalova, Karzhanova, & Bírová (2016, p. 1196), "the strength of communication and network technologies as well as the teaching process have improved and learning solution has provided meaningful learning schemata for learners in academic settings. Thus, combination method that is expect improve a traditional learning method by inserting a technology as a supporting media in the learning process is called blended learning. Glahn, Gruber, & Tartakovski (2011, p. 1) states that blended learning needs to included into learning setting along with with paper, classroom experience, and technology.

According to Lalima & Lata (2017, p. 133), say that the advantages of blended learning are 1) as part of learning tool is done through Information and communications technology, the teachers and students spend much time in the classroom to have exercise creatively and innovatively, 2) students get the goodness of online learning without missing social aspect of classic teaching', 3) it generates more chance for communication. Communication plot is sophisticated in blended learning which is impossible to follow in classical approach, 4) students are getting more tech-savvy and they get developed digital fluency, 5) students have more advantaged professionalism as they enhance qualities like being self-motivated, self-responsible, disciplint. Djiwandono (2013) said that blended learning is merely mentioned as the composition of classical face to face learning with online instructional activity through the Internet.

However, the present study focuses on students' vocabulary mastery the use blended learning method. More specifically, the writer focuses on teacher's steps in implementing of blended learning method, teacher's perception and students responses toward the implementing blended learning that did not investigate in the previous studies. Furthermore, this study fills the gap by investigating the issue on implementing blended learning in teaching vocabulary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of blended learning in university level has highly improved over the past decade. According to Bryan and Volchenkova (2016 p. 28) "blended learning is a comprehensive learning experience controlled and guided by the instructor either face-to-face communication or on line." Similarly, Kheirzadeh and Birgani (2018, p. 108) suggests that blended learning as a kind of distance learning that combines the advantage

of distance learning on with the real features of classical education, such as classroom interaction.

Punam Bansal, (2014, p. 3), "Blended learning is used to elaborate learning combining different event-based activities, including classroom classrooms, live on line learning, and independent instruction. In another simple term, it can be said that blended learning is learning that adapt classical and on line learning, where teachers and students interact directly, each can exchange information about learning materials. Independent learning or E-learning is self-study online, sending assignments to teachers.

According to Raja and Nagasubramani (2018, p. 34) "technology taking part in the education has four aspects: it is a part of the curriculum, as an teaching media system, as a means of supporting instructions and also as a means to improve the comprehensive learning process. In particular, mobile technology is learning tools in facilitating the teaching and learning process. According to Hashim, Md. Yunus, Amin Embi, & Mohamed Ozir (2017, p. 45) mobile technology is making the potential language learning enhance the English teaching and learning.

Mobile technology is a tool to improve the quality of education. In mobile technology there are applications that can be used as learning tools. According to Kuri, Maranna, & Janti (2016, pp. 7), state that mobile phone-based educational applications is very important to know and understand the concept quickly.

The mobile phone is not only for sending short messages or calls, but mobile phones can be one of the cellular media that can be utilized as a learning media. Boyde, (2012, p. 45) students can also used mobile phones during blended learning learning because it has more functions to send text and receive calls. In another function the mobile phone can take photos, videos, listen to podcasts and record sound.

There are many applications that can be modified as a tool in the teaching and learning process. As stated by Glahn, Gruber, and Tartakovski (2011, pp.9) "The most popular application in the mobile phone is WAG along with other navigation application such as, Facebook, Youtube and e-mail". Thus, the writer focus on using whatsapp applications as a tool in the blended learning learning. WAG is a quick messaging system similar to SMS and calls that you normally use on your smartphones. According to Awada (2016, pp. 3) states that WAG is the most benefitial application to improve the group communication that can improve the interaction among the teachers and teachers and vice versa in teaching process.

WhatsApp has advantages that is creating a group. In WhatsApp group it can be place to discussion in learning activities. according to Bouhnik, Deshen, & Gan (2014, p. 1) states that WAG is used for four main reasons: communicating with students; promoting the social setting; making dialogue and sharing among students and as a learning design.

The great benefits of using WhatsApp messaging system (Barhoumi, 2015, pp. 222-223), elaborated as follows:

1. WAG quick messaging provides online collaboration system among online students and teachers and vice versa connected from school or home.
2. WAG is an easy used-free apps that is easy to use.
3. Groups connected to WAG quick massaging system can share easy learning objects through comments, texting and messaging. Discussions dealing with to the material content given 100% in-class.
4. WAG provides students with the skill to create a class publication and then publish their work within the group.
5. It is easy to construct and share Information and knowledge WAG instant messaging.

According to Karkour (2014, p. 18) blended learning is combining mobile phone-mediated activities that students do on their own time and at their own pace with more traditional classroom instruction in which students and teachers interact in person on a fixed schedule. In other hand, Punam Bansal, (2014, p. 3), states that the purpose of blended learning is to generate the most practical and effective instruction experience by combining learning methods.

According to Bath & Bourke (2010, p. 6), "these blended learning steps are conducted to learn more about how to improve the teacher's and students' learning and process. The following are the steps of blended learning purposed by Bath & Bourke (2010):

Plan the integrated blended learning into your class. Before applying blended learning as an English teacher must consider about some citical considerations before jumping in to designing the blended learning components. For example, they must consider what they require to support this learning? (Bath & Bourke, 2010, p. 9)

Design and develop the blended learning element. In this procedure an English teacher should review some general design principles which are presented. An English teacher combine blended learning experiences in your class in communication, daily

course activity and collaboration, examination and the management.(Bath & Bourke, 2010, p. 13)

Implementing the blended learning design. In this procedure an English teacher should get your students ready for blended learning course, always support, and sustain students learning until got a good ending (Bath & Bourke, 2010, p. 56-59)

Review (examine) the effectiveness of blended learning platform. In this procedure, the students get feedback about different aspects of the course experience (including content, design, learning and teaching activities, assessment) are crucialin the learning process. Giving timely and well-prepared feedback will assist you to review different elements, and consider which improvements can be created to improve student learning at school (Bath & Bourke, 2010, p. 61).

METHOD

Based on the research questions presented before, the writer applied a case study because it investigated the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. In line with this, Creswell (2012, p. 30) also explained that "case study is a strategy to inquire in which the researcher reveals in depth program, case, activity, process, or one or more persons." Purposeful sampling was used in this study because it includes the respondents who understand the phenomenon being observed. Creswell (2012, p. 206) also claimed that "Purposeful sampling enables researchers select individuals and sites on purpose to learn or understand the main phenomenon." Thus, the writer chose the English teacher and the students at class X-OTKP-1 consisting of 10 students of Vocational High School in Tasikmalaya. The school chooses because in this case there is a teacher who uses blended learning method and it was suitable with the requirement of this study. The school uses technology in teaching and learning, the school has adequate facilities that support the teaching and learning process including a computer laboratory and hotspot area.

To answer the research question, the writer used classroom observation, interview and also questionnaire to investigate the phenomenon in this study. The writer used those instruments to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the overview of each instrument could be seen in the following descriptions.

The first technique is classroom conservation. According to Creswell (2012, p. 236) the result of the observation would like to use to answer the research questions. In order to answer the research questions of the study, the data from observation was analyzed by

transcribing, exploring and categorizing. The writer analyzed all the data from observation completely. Then the writer interpreted the data and discussed the interpreting data with theories.

The second instrument is interview. It was implemented to answer the second research question. According to Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun (2012, p. 451), interviewing process comprises a series of questions designed to elicit prticular answers from respondent.

In addition, the interview data was compared with the observation data to crosscheck and validate the findings. In this sense, the writer conducted a triangulation process by analyzed the data gathered from more than one method of data collection, i.e. observation data and interview data. According to Creswell, (2012, p. 259) "Qualitative triangulates among various data sources to increase the data accuracy. Triangulation is the process of data check-crossing from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection."

The last instrument was used a questionnaire. The use of likert sclae questions that consist of ten questions in questionnaire beaddressing to investigate students' responses toward the implementing blended learning yhrough whatsapp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. The items in likert-scale questionnaire are analyzed by means of the quantification process in percentage computation purposed by Hatch and Lazaraton (1991, p.136) revealed as follows;

Proportion =

$$\frac{\text{Number of Frequency} \quad \text{x } 100}{\text{Total Number}}$$

The aims of the questionnaire itself to know to investigate the respond of the students to a blended learning method through WhatsApp group in teaching vocabulary learning is defined by Jeffrey J. W (2003, p. 224), Closes-ended questionairre provides a series of possible statements from respondent that may select quicker and easier to answer questions. The answers are easier to tabulate, analyze and closed-ended questionnaire is marching to use in multi-item scales that produce a single score.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study has observed the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. The results of the analysis were designed

to present important findings to answer the three research questions. The teacher has initially prepared the on line classroom in "WAG" used as a forum for discussion and vocabulary learning. Next, in the learning process, the teacher becomes a facilitator for those who observe their students' activities and played her role as their teacher.

The first finding revealed in teaching vocabulary using blended learning have several steps such as planning, designing, implementing and reviewing (Bath & Bourke, 2010).

1. Planning is the initial step in blended learning for the teacher to figure out the students' classroom situation.
2. In the preparation of design and developing, the teacher prepared the teacher' material, for teaching classroom and online learning activities.
3. In the implementation, the teacher led the students in each of the classroom activity and virtual learning.
4. In reviewing, the teacher has two assessments for the students (students' performance and learning material).

All groups were used to enhance students' performance in learning vocabulary.

The second finding shows that the advantage of blended learning on in learning vocabulary is in line with teacher's perception. Thus, the result indicates that the benefit of blended learning can be experienced by teachers and students. For teachers, blended learning makes teaching materials easy to provide and students easily access teacher's material and practice the tasks given. This finding underlines the perspective of Yan Ju & Yan Mei (2018, 171-172).

The third finding showed that the students' response on the implementation of blended learning through WhatsApp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. Specifically, the questionnaire session from 10 items. The questionnaire is includes students' interest, students' attitude, effectiveness of using blended learning method, un-effectiveness learning method, difficulties of using learning method.

The writer found that the students have good response dealing with the use of blended learning in teaching vocabulary. First, the students seem more confident in learning vocabulary when using the blended learning method through WAG. Second, most students like this learning process and they consider that it can improve their vocabulary because the students can study independently everywhere. It is similar with the previous findings from Vasbieva et al. (2016, p. 1201). Furthermore, the writer also found the disadvantages toward the implementation blended learning show the low

internet connection is the main problem they face in using blended learning through WhatsApp group.

The comparison between this presents study compared with previous studies in is conducted to add, empower, or mark some contrast things to previous studies on blended learning. The first previous study was conducted Dinara G. Vasbievaa, Irina I. Klimovab, Elena L. Agibalovac, Natalya V. Karzhanovad and Jana Bírováe. This study discussed the effects of the blended learning to teach English vocabulary to EFL learners. The students have conducted 2-month training by giving the post-test. Diagnostic/experimental study was applied to this study. In short, the findings of the present study well-demonstrated the efficiency of the training.

The findings are elaborated as follows; the proposed blended learning strategy improved the achievement of the students' vocabulary. Most of all, the students liked the proposed blended learning strategy in learning vocabulary and they liked the classical classroom-based learning because it allows them to learn independently at any place. Second, Blended-virtual vocabulary teaching could be benefitial to assist EFL learners increase their vocabulary knowledge if digital tools are selected in accordance with students' need and interest.

Moreover, the finding of previous study is similar with the present study about student's satisfaction under blended learning approach dealing with how the students can learn on their own at any place and that is one of the advantages encountered by the authors of this study.

The second previous study is from by Sezen Tosun. This study analyzed investigating the effects of blended learning strategy in teaching vocabulary and the students' perceptions of blended learning approach in learning vocabulary. The students have receive a written vocabulary test was managed to both groups of students. The experimental group studied the target vocabulary items by means of blended learning strategies while the control group had the same vocabulary test by means of classical way of teaching. In this study, the researcher encountered the: first, the teaching vocabulary through blended learning instruction model does not have a positive effect on the vocabulary test scores. Second, although students were interested in learning and practicing new vocabulary items through blended learning, they did not like the digital tools as well as in-class activities. Third, Blended online vocabulary teaching could be benefitial to help EFL learners improve their vocabulary knowledge if digital tools are selected in line with students' need and interest.

Besides, the finding of previous study was also in contrast with the finding of the present study as which the present study's finding shows that the students didn't feel feel more confident in learning vocabulary using the blended learning method through WAG.

The third of previous study by Djiwandono (2013). In this study, he stated that blended learning must be facilitated with intensive exercises that refresh the storage and retrieval of the new words. He used the small-scale exploratory research, because of the quasi-experimental design was admitted that the blended learning technique could be less controlled, a limitation that somehow must consider when generalizing the next findings.

In this study, the writer found out the followings: the first, this approximation was supported by the data from the questionnaires, which indicated that most learners experienced difficulty in memorizing the meanings of the new words from the blog. The second that blended learning is highly favored among the learners. Moreover, the finding of previous study was similar with the present study in that student favored the implementation of the blended learning method and how students can learn independently at their own pace.

CONCLUSIONS

The answered of the first research question concerning with the steps of the use of the blended learning method by means of WAG in teaching vocabulary learning according to afforementioned procedure. So based on that procedure, the steps of the use of blended learning such as planning, designing, implementing and reviewing are as follows;

1. Planning is the initial stage in the blended learning; the teacher must figure out the students' classroom real setting.
2. Prior to designing and developing, the teacher prepared the material, for teaching and online learning activities.
3. In the implementation, the teacher guided the students in each of the activities classroom and online learning.
4. In the reviewing, the teacher has two evaluations for the students (learning material and students' performance in practicing).

Regarding the second research question about the teacher's perception toward the implementation of blended learning method through WhatsApp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery the writer found the advantages of blended learning are: for

teacher blended learning makes it easy to give teaching instructions. It provides material, assignments and online discussion. And for the students to easily access the teaching materials that have been given by their teacher

Based on the third research question about students' responses toward the implementation of blended learning method through WhatsApp group to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. The result indicated: firstly, the students feel more confident learning vocabulary when using the blended learning method through WhatsApp group. Second, most students like this learning method and they think that it can improve their vocabulary mastery as the students can learn independently at any place. Third, the disadvantage toward the use of blended learning show bad internet connection is the main problem they face in using blended learning through WhatsApp group.

Based on the previous conclusions, the writer has the suggestion to the institutions, teachers, and the further researcher who will condguct the research in the similar field.

The institution must try to facilitate the teaching and learning process, particularly for English lesson which requires comfortable conditions that requires qualified teachers, supporting teaching media such as, internet access, projector, etc.

The writer recommends that teachers also apply learning media. Another suggestion for teachers who have not used blended learning is to better prepare material, design learning to attract students' attention. Blended learning is a teaching method combining face-to-face classroom activities and e-learning. Blended learning is also very helpful for teachers and students in conducting learning activities easily.

Finally, the recommendation goes to the researchers who want to the same research, should take more time in doing the research for more accurate data.

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