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Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery By Using Blended Learning Model in Politeknik Negeri Padang

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Abstract: The research aims at improving the vocabulary mastery of students at Politeknik Negeri Padang for the 2015/2016 academic year by applying a blended learning model. Blended learning is an interactive learning model which combines face-to-face with web-based learning. Vocabulary is a vital sub-skill in mastering a language and thus a suitable topic for a classroom action research (CAR). The CAR theory applied is by Kemmis & L, (1998) and the Blended Learning theory used is by Bersin, (2004). The instruments are test, observation, field note and interview. Quantitative data are collected by a test result in which it is used to see how the student's vocabulary mastery progresses after applying the blended learning model. Qualitative data gathered included observation, field note and interview analyzed descriptively in order to find out the factors affecting student's vocabulary mastery by implementing Blended Learning..

Keywords: blended learning; vocabulary mastery.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary skill is a basic foundation of one's English ability. Someone can speak English fluently if they have a lot of vocabulary. The learner will be able to understand the message from an interlocutor, if they know the meaning of the words uttered. Moreover, adequate amount of vocabulary will enable the learner to express their ideas and thoughts on an English writing. Understanding the meaning of English vocabulary on the text read also will help in understanding the message. In short, one of the most important aspects in English skill is vocabulary.

Vocabulary is one of the first things to be mastered by the students in learning English. Unfortunately, the researchers' experience is that the vocabulary skill of Politeknik Negeri Padang students are low, particularly for the Telecommunication Department grade 1 student. Most students have very limited vocabulary. On the other hand, their English skill in grade 1 will determine their success on grade 2 English course later. For this reason, the researchers are interested in providing special treatment for the students by applying a new learning model closely related to their daily lives, including computer and internet. The purpose is to make English learning more attractive and integrated to their life. In general, the lecturer teaches General English course by giving some assignment and conducting students' individual assessment based on their performance in front of the class. Even though the classroom is equipped by some facilities like LCD and wireless, not many lecturers have used them optimally. Only a few dare to make innovation on the teaching method. Most of them stick to the given module. However, there are a lot of potential breakthrough could be made in presenting more varied materials by using the available technology.

For many years, in Politeknik Negeri Padang, the lecturers have applied traditional teaching methods where they take the position of the main source of knowledge in the classroom. Students are listening what has been explained by the lecturers in the classroom without trying to search more information related to the topic outside the class. Even though they are familiar with technology like the computer and internet, they rarely use those technologies to expand their knowledge. With the typical of Indonesian students who are not active in searching for other source of knowledge, it is important to apply learning model related to their interest which automatically force them to be more participative in the learning process.

Furthermore, the level of achievement and learning style of each student in one class is dissimilar, some of the students are having high achievement and visual or auditory

learning style, while others are having low achievement with verbal and physical learning style. According to Thorne, (2003) it is necessary to understand that everyone is not the same and knowing the differences is important in order to help the students to study. In fact, those different students get the same treatment in the classroom.

On the contrary, Blended Learning provide chance for the students to study based on their preference learning style. In class, the verbal students can dig more about the topic discussed by asking and discussing with teacher and classmates. In Online class, the solitary students can learn independently without interrupted by other pupils, visual and aural students can replay the tutorial and instructional video at anytime and as they want. In this manner, those students have more authority to manage how they study. Thus, Blended Learning model might accomodate studnets need to study at anytimes and anywhere.

Based on that condition, the researchers conducted Classroom Action Research to improve Telecommunication Engineering students' vocabulary skill by applying Blended Learning Model. This model integrates both face to face and web based teaching models. By using some online tools and resources, it allows intensive interactions among students and lecturers to discuss or share some information or material they get from various sources both in the classroom and outside the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an Classroom Action Research. The subjects on this research are 26 grade 1 students of Telecommunication Engineering Department, Politeknik Negeri Padang for Basic English 2 course. The data are taken at Politeknik Negeri Padang Campus during semester in 2015-2016 academic years. This study also includes some research instruments such as test, observation. Field recording, and interview. This study applies classroom action research offered by Kemmis & L, (1998) consisting of some cycles. Each of them consists of four phases: plan, action, observation, and reflection.

Each cycle consist of eight meetings in which 4 meetings are conducted by face to face and the rest are online. Face to face meetings are limited only for 2x45 minutes, while online class do not have time limit unless there is live interaction on a discussion forum. The first data are taken by testing students' vocabulary consisting of multiple choice, cloze procedure, completing the sentences, and presentation. The next data are obtained from observation and field recording conducted by collaborator.

The data are analysed descriptively by comparing pre-test and pre-test on students' vocabulary to observe how far their skills are improved after using Blended Learning model.

Furthermore, qualitative data, obtained from observation, field recording, and interview are analysed descriptively to see the factors influencing the application of this model on the learning process.

FINDINGS

The research is done in 2 cycles. The first cycle of this research shows that 71.87% students are actively involved and 28.12% student are less actively involved. Then, for vocabulary score, it slightly increase from 40.34 to 45.68

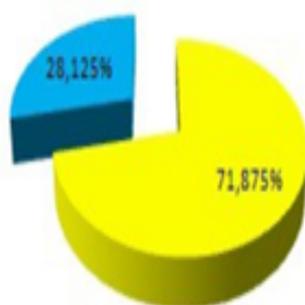
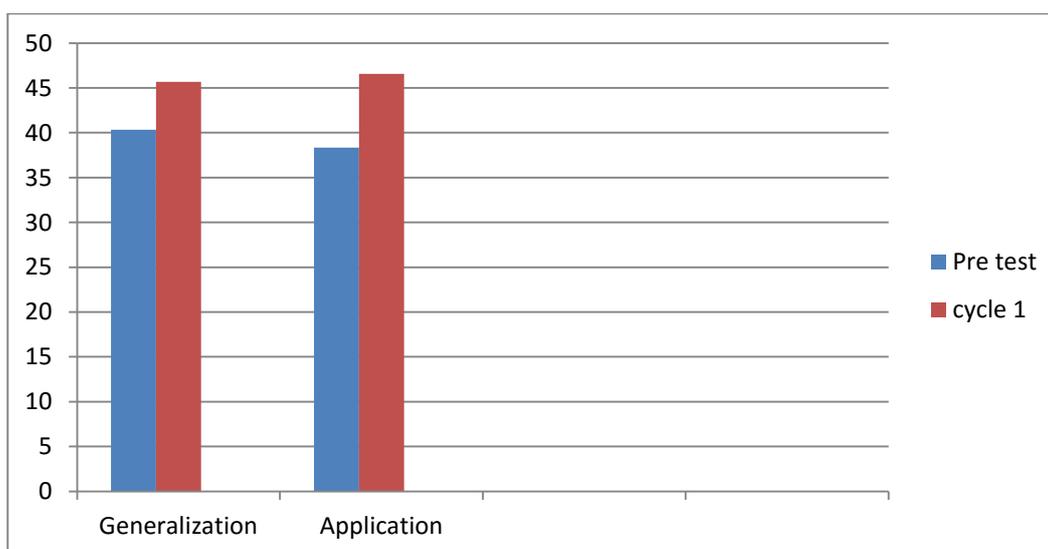


Chart 1. Students' participation in cycle 1



Graphic 1. Vocabulary score in cycle 1

Moreover, after conducting cycle 2, numbers of students' participation are increased into 87.5%.

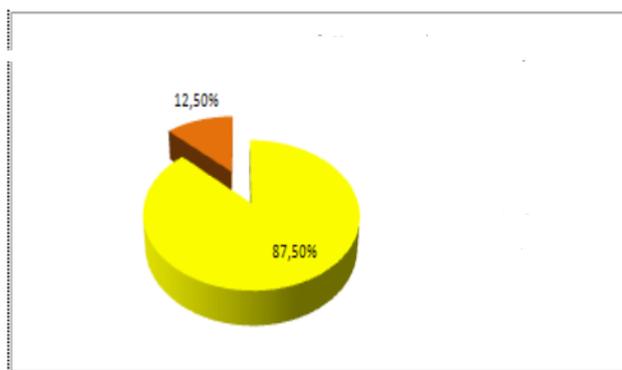
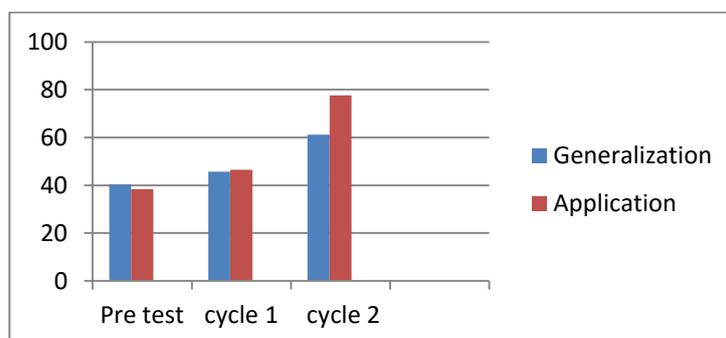


Chart 2. Students participation in cycle 2

The vocabulary score are also significantly increase for each indicator. For generalization, in pre test 40.34 it reach 45.68 in cycle 1 and raise to 61.26 in cycle 2. For application, from 38.33 in pre-test become 46.55 in cycle 1 and 77.58 in cycle 2



Graphic 2. Vocabulary score in cycle 2

DISCUSSION

This research is aimed at improving students' vocabulary skills by using Blended Learning and seeing how this model is implemented in the form of asynchronous with rotation model. The learning process are conducted in the classroom and online class. The teacher, in this case also as researcher, use Edmodo as a media to manage online learning. The activity perform in the face to face classroom are smallgroup discussion, group projects, individual tutoring and pencil/paper tasks in which those activities also done in online learning. The material, quizzes, topic of discussion are mainly given through Edmodo.

This research is conducted in two cycles in which each cycle consists of Plan, Action, Observation and Reflection. In Planning the research, the researcher prepared syllabus for one semester for classroom practice and completed with materials to be uploaded on LMS. In addition, the researcher create learning group on Edmodo, the students were divided into

several small groups to facilitate them having intensive discussion with their friends even when they are not in the classroom. This stage take more time for the researcher to prepare the class than organize the traditional class. It should be well arranged to make it easy for the students to understand what to do and when to do before starting the class in order to avoid mismatch instruction in face to face classroom and online learning.

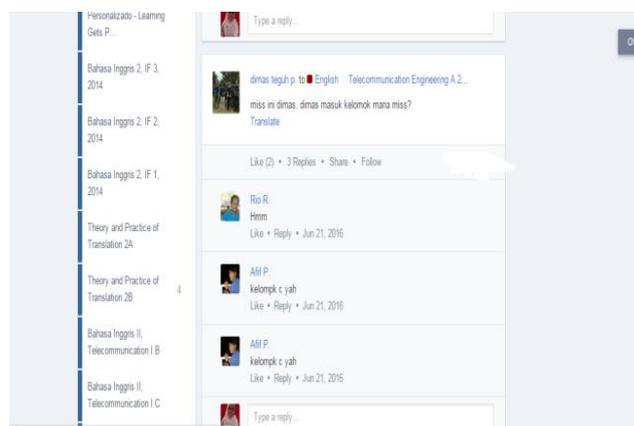


Figure 1 Student groups on Edmodo

The plan arranged is done in action stage. The researcher do the learning process in both in the classroom and online learning. The first cycle was started by having classroom instruction class. On the first meeting of this cycle, the students were given general explanation about the subject and how it would be conducted. The students are quite curious because it would offer new learning experience for them. It could be seen from the students enthusiasm in asking the details on how could they utilize the Edmodo as media for the online learning. Some of the students were already familiar with the feature of Edmodo but some were not. The respectable thing from the students were, they sincerely help their friends to operate its application which supporting other were rarely seen in the classroom activity.

After having general ideas about the course, the topic was given. The topic for cycle 1 was Health and Illness in which the pre-test and post-test was given on this topic. The researcher gave reading materials with some links for further reading. They are asked to comprehend some important on topic vocabulary. To assimilate those underlined vocabulary, the students are asked to find out the accurate meaning and study on how to use the vocabularies in appropriate context by looking at some open access or corpus. Then, they were ordered to do some individual exercises and discuss it in Edmodo groups.



Figure 2 Classroom activity

The next activity was led in online class. The students discuss the topic given on previous meeting on discussion forum. The noteworthy thing, the number of students who participate in the discussion forum, was enormous. Those students who are never involved in-class discussion, they actively take part in group discussion. The students contribute in finding the appropriate meaning even some have different ideas and argue for it. Even some of them occasionally use their native language. The remark point is that the huge number of students participation is because the students feel comfort to express the ideas and comment their friends thoughts with no worries of being stared by the others.

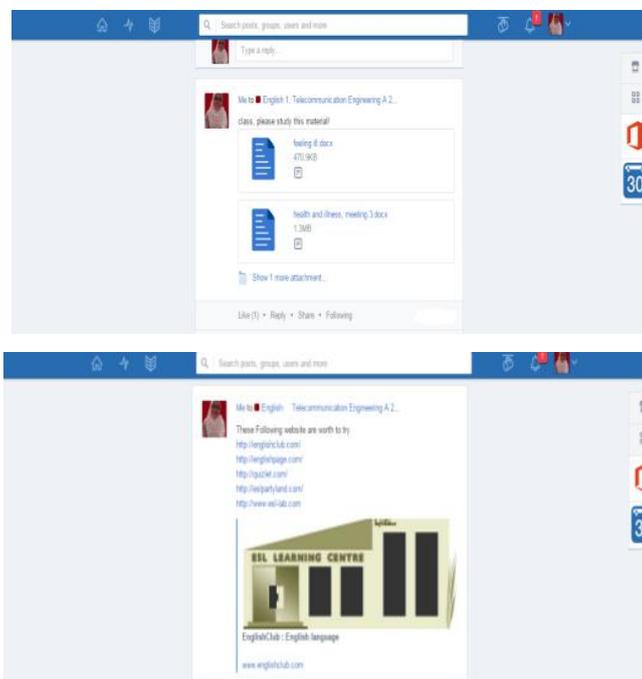


Figure 3 Edmodo pages

When the researcher do the action stage, observer were asked to observe the situation in the classroom and track the activity done in discussion forum of Edmodo. The observer have observation checklist and field note to see what happen in the classroom and Edmodo page while the learning process was conducted.

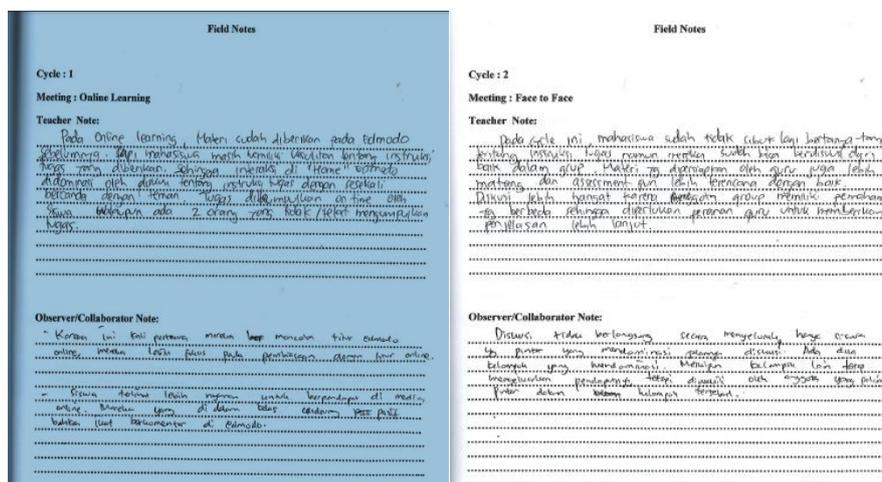


Figure 4 Field notes

Observation Checklist for Students' Response about Blended Learning				Observation Checklist for Students' activities in Online Learning			
Student 3				Cycle 1			
No	Indicator	yes	No	No	Indicator	yes	No
1	Do you like Studying English		✓	1	Giving Respond or comment to the teacher Instruction about the assignment	✓	
2	Do You think that you have Sufficient English Vocabulary?		✓	2	Asking Questions or Comment about their classmates' work		✓
3	Do you understand the instruction given by the Teacher in face to face classroom?	✓		3	Actively Involved in class discussion	✓	
4	Do you understand the instruction given by the Teacher in Online learning	✓		4	Actively Involved in group Discussion	✓	
5	Does Blended Learning can improve your vocabulary size?	✓		5	Students seems understand to what being assigned in Edmodo group	✓	
6	Does Blended Learning is enjoyable?	✓		6	Submit the assignment on due date	✓	
7	Does Blended Learning Improve your motivation to study English?	✓		7	Submit the assignment after due date	✓	
8	Does Blended Learning help you to study independently?	✓		8	Students can work independently	✓	
9	Does Blended Learning help you to work in a group		✓	9	Students seem enjoy exploring material given in edmodo	✓	
10	Do you have difficulties in studying English by combining Face to face and Online learning?	If yes., Please explain your difficulties in column May have works		10	Students have difficulty in operating Edmodo		✓

Figure 5 Observation Checklist

The observer was not only observe the students but also the researcher which also function as the teacher. The observer need to check the researcher activity if it is right to the syllabus and to what are already planned in plan stage. The observer also interview some of the students about the students activity outside classroom. The students said that by having this online class, they were not only browse the internet for their own pleasure but also for

study. They used to chat through social media but now, they can chat with their classmate through edmodo for their own things and study matter. Based on the observation, overall communication between teacher and students, students-and students run well. However, it takes more time in giving evaluation on students' assignment because they got personal feedback sent to their account.

The collaborator did interview the students who got the highest achievement and the lowest one. Here is the interview transcript.

Dosen: Apakah kamu suka belajar Bahasa Inggris?

Mahasiswa 1: nggak begitu suka buk. Kadang banyak kosakata yang saya tidak tahu artinya.

Mahasiswa 2: tergantung buk. Kalo dosen nya menarik, pandai mengajar mungkin saya tidak akan mengantuk dikelas buk. Tapi kalo ndak rancak caro dosen tu manarangan, maleh wak baraja buk

Mahasiswa 3: Lumayan lah buk,,awak lai nio baraja buk, tapi kadang ndak mangarati awak do buk. Apo arti kato kato di teks tu.

Dosen : Selama ini cara belajar kamu bagaimana?

Mahasiswa 1: tanyo ka kawan dulu buk apo arti kata kata nyo tu atau caliak kamus

Mahasiswa 2: duduak di kelas waak dangaan dosen tu manarangan tapi kalo lah tugas awak minta tolong kawan se lai buk.

Mahasiswa 3: Kadang lai nio cari cari tahu atau browsing tentang topic yang dibahas dikelas buk, tapi kalo ado kawan nan bisa ditanyo lo sasudah tu buk.

Dosen: Setelah belajar dikelas dan online learning ini, apa manfaat yang kamu dapatkan?

Mahasiswa 1: bisa awak tanyo kawan kawan ko bilo se buk, lamak lo awak mancaro kosakata tu di internet

Mahasiswa 2:sado alah nyo ado tersedia di edmodo buk, tingga mambuek an se lai buk

Mahasiswa 3: banyak kosakata baru buk. Beragam nan baru.

Based on this interview, this student does not like studying English because he has a limited vocabulary. The interviewer asked 3 students about how they overcome their vocabulary problem, student 1 find the solution by corresponding to the dictionary. Student 2, just listen and asking for his friend help. Student 3, He actually has willingness to study but

the vocabulary is a kind of obstacles for him. He find out his own solution by asking friends and browsing in internet about the topic.

Then, the students are asked about the advantages of online learning. Student 1 said that he can interact with his friends at anytime. Student 2 said that edmodo help him to manage and organize his work and the last student get more new vocabulary by browsing on topic vocabulary.

The last stage of the cycle is reflection which consider as vital stage. This stage is used to reveal how the first cycle was and notice what should be re-planned for cycle 2. The weaknesses found in cycle 1 were re-new and apply in cycle 2.

The points should be re-planned were the researcher should give clear instruction so the students could identify clearly what to do, when to do and how to do the assignment and project given. The materials should be selected based on their level of ability. Then, the researcher did action stage based on plan for cycle 2.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this study, the writer concludes that Blended Learning model can improve the vocabulary mastery and participation of the students in learning process. The students have wide range of vocabulary and can apply it appropriately. Moreover, In online class, the number of students participation is increased. The online class is provide space for the reluctant students to involve in discussion. They are also enthusiastic because the online class is new and connected to their daily preference that is internet. This research see the number of participation as a whole. However, further research might be done with the use of different mode and instructional media.

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