
ALTERNATIVE LEARNING METHODS EMPLOYED BY LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE NEW NORMAL OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Learning activities should be conducted effectively to create conducive learning conditions to develop students' creativity and their higher learning competence. Through conducting appropriate and effective learning activities, the learning objectives and learning competencies are easier to achieve. To create effective learning activities, teachers are required to have adequate understanding and competence in employing learning methods. This study aims to explore effective learning methods to create more creative learning activities for the students. This study found several alternative learning methods that can be utilized in the time of the new normal of covid-19 to continually improve the students' competence. This study implies that teachers should continually expose themselves to various learning methods to establish conducive learning conditions in the classroom.

Key Words: language; teachers; alternative; learning; methods

ABSTRAK

Kegiatan pembelajaran harus dilakukan secara efektif untuk menciptakan kondisi pembelajaran yang kondusif untuk mengembangkan kreativitas dan kompetensi belajar siswa yang lebih tinggi. Melalui pelaksanaan kegiatan pembelajaran yang tepat dan efektif, tujuan pembelajaran dan kompetensi pembelajaran lebih mudah dicapai. Untuk menciptakan kegiatan pembelajaran yang efektif, guru dituntut memiliki pemahaman dan kompetensi yang memadai dalam menggunakan metode pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali metode pembelajaran yang efektif untuk menciptakan kegiatan belajar yang lebih kreatif bagi siswa. Penelitian ini menemukan beberapa metode pembelajaran alternatif yang dapat dimanfaatkan pada masa new normal covid-19 untuk terus meningkatkan kompetensi siswa. Studi ini menyiratkan bahwa guru harus terus-menerus mengekspos diri mereka kedalam berbagai metode pembelajaran untuk membangun kondisi pembelajaran yang kondusif di dalam kelas.

Kata Kunci: bahasa; guru; pembelajaran; alternatif; metode

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INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of Covid-19, which were swept the world, has had an impact felt by all elements in human life, one of which is education. The increasing number of cases infected with the coronavirus made the Republic of Indonesia implement the Large-Scale Social Restrictions policy on this matter, impacting all educational institutions to be closed until an undetermined time. Learning activities were conducted through online learning (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Consequently, the use of learning technology becomes highly essential to answer the new system of learning. Teachers were forced to teach their students through online learning using various existing platforms. This situation put teachers in a challenging dilemma to create effective learning activities. However, many innovations were born to answer existing challenges (Gamage et al., 2020; Gurgur & Uzuner, 2011). Eventually, teachers were able to teach through online learning and created several innovations to suit their students' needs in learning.

Even though it is now considered a new normal period, online learning is still widely used in the teaching-learning process. An online learning system is a learning system without direct face-to-face communication between teachers and students, which is

carried out online using the internet network (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Teachers must ensure teaching and learning activities run effectively even though students are at school. Teachers are required to design innovative learning activities by utilizing online learning systems (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007). Consequently, a good internet connection becomes a high necessity for both teachers and students. An internet network connection is one of the obstacles students face in a rural area with difficulty accessing the internet. Sometimes the network is unstable because the geographical location is still far from cellular signal coverage. Additionally, some students cannot pay for the internet connection since they lack financial support (Mulyawan, 2020).

Considering various obstacles in conducting online learning in Indonesia, teachers must make various efforts to conduct meaningful communication. Therefore, teachers sometimes made a variation in teaching using several online learning platforms. It is important to establish positive learning transformation. Thus, the success of learning activities is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the communication process that occurs in the learning (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007). Effective communication in learning is a process of transforming messages in

the form of science and technology from educators to students, where students can understand the meaning of messages in accordance with predetermined goals, thereby increasing knowledge of science and technology and online learning systems may help teachers to provide better learning activities for their students (Widiastuti, 2018).

Concerning the learning process, effective communication in learning must be supported by interpersonal communication skills that must be possessed by the teachers (Astawa et al., 2018). In teaching and learning activities, interpersonal communication is a must so that there is a harmonious relationship between the teacher and the students. The effectiveness of communication in teaching and learning activities is very dependent on both parties (Childs et al., 2005). However, because the teacher controls the class, the responsibility for healthy and effective communication in the classroom lies on the teacher. The future perspective of learning methods should acknowledge the importance of classroom communication even in the situation of online learning to create a conducive learning atmosphere. Therefore, communication skills are key for successful learning (Radhika, 2017).

Additionally, the quality of learning is influenced by the effectiveness of the communication that occurs in the classroom (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019). Effective communication in learning is a process of transforming messages in the form of science and technology from educators to students, where students can understand the meaning of messages in accordance with predetermined goals, thereby increasing knowledge of science and technology and causing changes in behaviour for the better learning condition (Su et al., 2005). The teacher is the party most responsible for implementing effective communication in learning, and teachers are required to have good communication skills to produce an effective learning process (Widiastuti, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that the quality of teaching and learning can be seen from how the communication system takes place in the classroom. Consequently, effective communication should be always be maintained during the implementation of learning methods (Brata et al., 2021).

Many studies on the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic have been carried out by various researchers who reveal views on implementing learning, especially the successes of online learning and obstacles faced by teachers and students (e.g. Robles &

Braathen, 2002; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006; Gamage et al., 2020). However, hardly any study specifically investigated the prospective learning methods utilized by school teachers during the new normal. Therefore, the study focused on investigating the alternative learning methods school teachers use to continually inform educators to create an effective and creative learning atmosphere.

METHOD

Research Design

The study was conducted as a descriptive, explanatory sequential mixed method design. The study was carried out in two stages: the quantitative stage was intended to collect quantitative data. The qualitative stage was to gather the qualitative data to complement and elaborate the quantitative data. An online survey was done to collect quantitative data, and online interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. This research design was considered appropriate to collect the data required to figure out the alternative learning models employed by language teachers in Bali.

Research site and Participants

This study was conducted in several schools in Bali. 208 language teachers participated in this study. All

teachers who participated in this study were asked to answer the questionnaire, and 20 teachers were selected to be interviewed. Those 20 teachers were selected to be the representative of the whole participants. They were interviewed through google meet and conducted in a very relaxed situation to ensure that teachers provided the appropriate information according to the real existing phenomena.

Data Collection and Analysis

The quantitative data were collected through an online survey using Google form, and qualitative data were collected through interviews with the selected teachers by utilizing interview guidelines to obtain verbal information directly from the teachers about the learning methods that have been carried out during the time of new normal to establish to support the data collected through an online survey. The data analysis was done descriptively and carried out interactively and continuously until complete clear data were established.

Data analysis were started by doing a reduction process which means summarizing, choosing the main data, focusing on the important things, looking for themes and patterns, and discarding unnecessary ones. The presentation of data was done in the

form of brief descriptions to make it easier to understand the phenomenon. Data verification is carried out where the researcher tries to find patterns, themes, relationships, similarities, things that often arise, and some of the data was obtained to draw conclusions. The data that have been concluded were verified during the research. Verification is an examination of the veracity of a report, to ensure its validity. In this study, the data validation technique used was triangulation with sources. Triangulation with sources means comparing and double-checking the degree of trustworthiness of information obtained through an online survey and interviews.

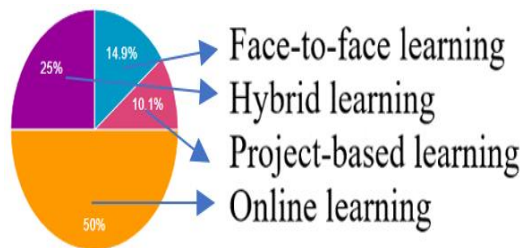
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The new normal of covid-19, teachers, were cautious in conducting the teaching-learning process. this was because Covid-19 was still spreading. Therefore strict health protocols were implemented in all learning activities. The government policy, which aimed at stopping the spread of Covid-19, caused several limitations in direct classroom interaction. Consequently, teachers mainly chose to teach from home through online systems. In the normal time, some teachers chose to

conduct face-to-face learning with a limited number of students in the class, especially for those in the area where internet connection was very poor or no connection at all. Teachers in the green area also conducted these learning activities. However, some teachers chose to conduct a hybrid learning system to minimize the direct contact, and when the face-to-face learning was conducted, the learning time was shortened.

Moreover, strict health protocols were carried out for all teachers and students. The teachers conducted some learning strategies during the new normal such as online learning, limited face-to-face learning, hybrid learning, and project-based learning. This graph shows the percentage of alternative learning methods employed by language teachers.



Graphic 1. Graph of learning methods implementation

The graph above showed that 50% of the teachers conducted online learning, this was understandable that

the spread of Covid-19 was still very high in certain areas in Bali. Only 14.9% of teachers conducted face-to-face learning with a limited number of students according to the health protocols, and 25% of teachers conducted hybrid learning, which was a combination of face-to-face learning with limited numbers of students and online learning. There were 10.1% of teachers who conducted project-based learning. These were mainly the areas where the internet connection was too poor to conduct online learning. Teachers in these areas taught students through WhatsApp by giving them tasks to be solved at home and discussing the tasks with their friends through WhatsApp. Teachers occasionally monitor the students through WhatsApp messages to ensure students do the tasks properly.

The interview results also supported the data from the questionnaire in which most teachers described that face-to-face learning was tough to conduct due to the worry of being infected by Covid-19.

"I conducted online learning entirely for all learning processes, and I don't want my students infected by the virus."

"I think it's too risky to conduct face-to-face learning. I give my students tasks to do, and my

students find it too difficult to join online learning because they don't have a good internet connection."

"well, I conducted a short face-to-face learning because my area is in a green zone but with stringent health protocols."

"I carried out hybrid learning several times during the last semester because the situation of the pandemic is decreasing. My students preferred seeing me directly, but when conducting face-to-face learning, the learning time was shortened by half, and everything conducted complied with health protocols."

The interviews showed that most teachers still mainly carry out online learning and sometimes conducted hybrid learning to ensure that students gained adequate learning competence. The face-to-face learning was only conducted in the green zone area, and all the learning activities were strictly conducted in compliance with the health protocols. The schools were also well-equipped with sufficient facilities to ensure that all students were safe against infection of Covid-19.

Discussion

Apart from the obstacles related to an internet connection, online learning should be conducted due to limited

direct access for teachers and students to meet directly personally. Therefore, it is important to enrich teachers' competence in understanding various applicable online learning methods. In its application, online learning requires a variety of methods to achieve the expected results. On the other hand, variations in online learning methods also create enthusiasm from students to participate in the online learning process. Based on the interviews with the respondents of this study, prospective learning methods can be employed during the new normal of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The learning methods may include online, face-to-face, project-based, blended, and hybrid learning.

Online learning is conducted by utilizing the online system for all learning activities consisting of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities (Timmis et al., 2016). Using a robust online method, students remain in their homes in a safe state (Fitriani et al., 2020). The online learning process can be carried out using Google Meet, Zoom, WebEx, Teams applications, etc. In addition, educational activities can be carried out using a Learning Management System (LMS). Moreover, teachers and students may also use social media, including Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, for teaching-learning activities.

Moreover, online learning provides an opportunity for students to control the success of learning independently. Learners are free to decide when to start, when to finish, and which part of a module they want to learn first. If, after repeated, there are still things that he does not understand, the learner can contact the instructor, resource persons via email, chat or participate in interactive dialogues at certain times.

Meanwhile, face-to-face learning or offline method is a learning model carried out outside the network. In a sense, this learning is carried out face-to-face by considering the zoning and applicable health protocols. This method is very suitable for students in the yellow or green zone, especially with the strict health protocol. In this method, students are taught in turns or shift model to avoid crowds in which ideally less crowded classroom is more appropriate to avoid infection against the spread of the virus. This method is designed to deal with students who have difficulty joining online learning systems (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). This offline learning should be conducted in a limited number of students in the classroom should be carefully conducted to continually prevent the spread of the virus during the new normal of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Strict health protocols should be strongly

implemented during the learning process.

Project-based learning is another learning method used during the new normal of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This method is considered to be effective because students are required to carry out their own learning projects so that they are away from the crowd during the learning process. Moreover, this method improves students' higher thinking skill and their creativity in doing things scientifically (Syakur et al., 2020). Additionally, in this method, several subjects can be taught integrative and various learning topics in an integrative manner. In addition to integrative learning, the project can be done collaboratively and with team teaching. The implementation of project-based learning is considered very safe for students against the spread of the virus since limited contacts among students and teachers can be created.

Hybrid learning is one of the methods that can be used during the new normal of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This method uses two approaches at once. Hybrid learning is the ease of learning that combines various modes of delivery, teaching models, and learning styles, introducing a variety of media options for communication between teachers and students. Hybrid

learning combines face-to-face and online teaching, but more than that, as an element of social interaction (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). Hybrid learning provides the best opportunity to learn from classroom transitions to Learning. Hybrid learning involves classroom (or face-to-face) and online learning. This method effectively adds efficiency to classroom instruction and enables increased discussion or review of information outside the classroom.

Hybrid learning can also avoid students and teachers being infected against the virus or other infectious diseases. This method can be done by integrating an online system and limited face-to-face learning with strict health protocols. However, a face-to-face meeting can also be replaced by google meetings or zoom meetings. This indicated that hybrid learning could be utilized in many situations of learning. Hybrid learning can be introduced for all students who can entirely attend online learning as some help from the teachers can be given during face-to-face learning (Amin et al., 2020). Eventually, by doing this learning activity, students become more familiar with online learning. Then after the situation is permitting, fully online learning can be carried out to enhance the students' competence independently. The most important when conducting blended learning is to

make the students actively in participating the lesson by combining face-to-face learning and online systems.

In the new normal of the Covid-19 pandemic, online learning systems can be continually utilized in the teaching and learning process to help students achieve optimal learning outcomes because it provides an easier way of learning. However, blended learning or hybrid learning may be more suitable (Adas & Bakir, 2013). This is entirely based on the local situation depending on the virus condition. Some teachers during the interviews stated that currently, there are still many students who think that online learning is something difficult, tedious, and boring, so not a few students have difficulty understanding lessons that were delivered online. Therefore, the teacher should have the ability to change the learning activities to make students happy, thereby arousing student motivation. Students' activeness and process skills in the following lessons are very important to be nurtured. There are many ways for teachers to deliver the lesson that make students feel happy, including using the right approach and being assisted by the presence of media that support teaching and learning activities.

Effective learning is a learning method that involves more activities of students in accessing various information and knowledge to be discussed and studied in the learning process in the classroom so that they get various experiences that can increase their understanding and competence. Effective learning can be in the form of active learning, and students are expected to actively try to find knowledge through learning by doing (Metzger, 2015). Moreover, effective learning can also be in the form of creative learning. It is a learning process that requires teachers to motivate and bring out the creativity of students during learning, using several methods and strategies that vary, for example, group work, role-playing, and problem-solving. In creative learning, teachers should stimulate students' creativity, both in developing thinking skills and in taking action in learning. Both active and creative learning cannot merely be carried out through direct learning but can also be conducted through online learning.

Teaching can help students obtain information, ideas, skills, values, ways of thinking, means of expressing themselves, and ways of learning how to learn. Learning is an attempt to teach students. Implicit in this sense, there are activities to choose, determine, develop methods to achieve the desired learning

outcomes (Astawa et al., 2018). This method's selection, determination, and development are based on existing learning conditions. The learning process is a process that contains a series of implementations by teachers and students based on reciprocal relationships that take place in educational situations to achieve certain goals (Maba & Mantra, 2018). This interaction or reciprocal relationship between teachers and students is the main requirement for the learning process.

In reality, teachers are often too active in the learning process in schools. At the same time, students are made passive so that the interaction between teachers and students in the learning process is ineffective. If teachers dominate the learning process, learning effectiveness will not be achieved. To create effective learning conditions, teachers are required to manage the learning process that provides stimulation to students so that they are willing and able to learn. The teacher should provide the same service so that students who are responsible for the class experience the same attention (Tremblay, 2013). To provide the same service, it is necessary to find the right strategy so that the objectives that have been formulated can be achieved. Therefore, teachers should utilize active, creative, effective, and fun

learning during the learning process, even through online systems (Lancaster et al., 2014).

This study revealed that most teachers conducted the online learning system using groups on social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, google meet, google classroom, zoom applications, or other media as learning media. Thus, the teacher can ensure students take part in learning simultaneously, even in different places. The problems that occur are not only in the instructional media system but the availability of quotas which require quite high costs for students and teachers to facilitate online learning needs. The quota purchased for internet needs has increased, and many parents are not ready to increase their budget in providing internet networks. This also becomes a critical issue for students, what time they have to study, while their parents are low-income or from the middle to lower class.

Based on the interviews, teachers clarified that future learning methods should use variations between online and face-to-face learning to make the learning activities more interesting and more effective. Most teachers, additionally, explain that face-to-face can be done through video conference if the Covid-19 virus or other virus

pandemics still become a threat. Of course, in a certain area, direct face to face may be needed due to the situation of the students, but most teachers believe that online learning systems are more flexible and more effective in learning and give the students have the opportunity to develop their competence more independently. This learning condition is certainly beneficial for students for their future life and beyond.

To make future learning models effective, teachers in this study urged that the learning model be delivered based on active, creative, effective, and fun learning principles. Active learning means that in the learning process, the teacher must create an atmosphere so that students ask questions, question, and express ideas. Creative learning is intended the teacher creates a variety of learning activities to meet the various levels of ability of students, and students can also be creative in the learning process. Effective learning is learning that succeeds in achieving the goals as expected. Meanwhile, fun learning is learning that has an impressive atmosphere so that students' attention is fully focused on the lesson so that the time of attention is high so that the achievement of the objectives in learning is achieved properly. Through active and creative learning s model was developed to make the learning

situation experienced by the students more exciting and motivate students to carry out active learning activities that ultimately achieve optimal learning outcomes and improve the quality of English learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

In essence, effective learning is a teaching and learning process that focuses not only on the results achieved by students but also on how an effective learning process can provide good understanding, intelligence, persistence, opportunity, and quality and can provide behavior change and apply it in their lives. To realize effective learning in terms of conditions and atmosphere and efforts to maintain it, the teacher as the supervisor must be able to carry out the learning process optimally. In addition, to create an atmosphere and conditions that are effective in learning, there must be certain supporting factors such as the learning environment, teacher expertise in teaching, adequate facilities and facilities, and good cooperation between teachers and students. Prospective learning methods that can enrich students' competence in the time of new normal of Covid-19 pandemic can be in the form of online learning, small size face-to-face learning, project-based learning, blended learning, and hybrid learning. This study implied that

teachers should continually develop their competence in teaching to ensure the learning activities effectively enhance students' learning achievement in gaining various skills to equip themselves to face the development of the world.

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