

Communication Patterns in Blended Learning At Sekolah Murid Merdeka, Medan

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Abstract. Sekolah Murid Merdeka is a school that applies blended learning or hybrid learning methods but uses mostly online methods. Sekolah Murid has education levels from early childhood education to high school. The use of online methods at the early childhood education level is also a challenge. In addition, the students of the Sekolah Murid Merdeka come from various regions or cities. This means that each student has a different cultural background such as language, dialect, religion and customs. So it is necessary to analyze the communication patterns of teachers and students at the Sekolah Murid Merdeka. This research is a qualitative research with data collection methods in the form of interviews. Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling. This research finds that Communication between teachers and students at Sekolah Murid Merdeka Medan has been effective. All teachers at the Merdeka Medan Students School use all communication patterns, namely primary, secondary, linear, and secular.

Keywords: communication pattern, blended learning, hybrid method, education research

1. Introduction

Educational success has something to do with teacher skills in managing learning. Learning is a core behavior in the educational process that allows students and educators to interact. Teaching and learning interactions are greatly supported by several factors including: educational goals, educators, students, educational tools and facilities, teaching methods, subject matter and environment.

The duties and obligations of a teacher are to convey subject matter to their students through communication in the learning process that they do. The success of a teacher in conveying messages or material is very dependent on the smooth communication of the teacher with their students. Because the main problem in communication is essentially a message, be it a message verbally or nonverbally [7].

Technological developments change many aspects, including aspects of education. Online learning has become a method that has begun to be implemented in educational institutions, especially when the Covid 19 pandemic hit Indonesia. The online learning method was also one of the methods implemented by Sekolah Murid Merdeka, even before the pandemic occurred.

Blended learning is something new in Indonesia, and has only been used during and after the pandemic. However, the Independent Student School has implemented this learning system from the beginning.

Sekolah Murid Merdeka is an innovative school that focuses on blended learning learning methods, which is a learning method that combines conventional (offline) and digital-based (online) learning systems. Sekolah Murid Merdeka is classified as a non-formal school (<https://www.sekolahmuridmerdeka.id/>).

This school has a complete level of education, from early childhood to high school. Sekolah Murid Merdeka can be followed anywhere. Therefore, in one class, Sekolah Murid Merdeka students come from various regions. Sekolah Murid Merdeka also accepts students with special needs. So it can be said, Sekolah Murid Merdeka students in one class have different cultural backgrounds. (<https://www.sekolahmuridmerdeka.id/>).

Digital-based education (online) has many challenges and tends to be difficult, especially in Indonesia. The most common obstacle is that the teacher (communicator) cannot convey the message properly because the student (communicant) has difficulty understanding what message the teacher is conveying. The difficulty of students in understanding the message conveyed by the teacher is caused by several things that occur in communication, one of which is the situational context. This can be resolved if the communicator is sensitive to the communicant's reaction.

The diversity of regional origins, types and ages of students is a challenge for teachers at Sekolah Murid Merdeka. This is what requires teaching staff at Sekolah Murid Merdeka to understand good communication patterns, not only for the sake of the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities, but also for building student bonds, especially early childhood education students.

Based on research by Permana H & Suhartini T [6] it is the teacher's job to determine learning methods or teaching techniques that suit the characteristics of the students being accompanied. Because seeing teaching is a formation of character, creativity or art in the style of teaching teachers to students. Creativity is the key to success for a teacher to motivate his students to keep their enthusiasm for learning online.

Based on Firdaus' research [3] in terms of using communication patterns, there are many obstacles that teachers go through such as the different characters of each student, but this does not affect the final results obtained because this can make them understand and master the character that each child has. that student. So, this study aims to evaluate communication patterns and the effectiveness of communication that has been done so far. This research is also expected to provide recommendations on what efforts can be made to find appropriate and effective communication patterns.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the effectiveness of communication is a determining factor for the success of online learning. So, in this study, we want to see how

communication pattern between teachers and students is in online learning at the Sekolah Murid Merdeka in Medan.

2. Methodology

Researchers use qualitative research methods. This research is a qualitative research because it processes and collects qualitative data such as the results of observations and interviews. Data collection techniques used observation and face-to-face interviews with informants using unstructured open questions to bring up views from informants [1]. The research subjects were selected based on the required informant criteria using purposive sampling, namely the informants were selected based on predetermined criteria. The informant criteria in this study were Sekolah Murid Merdeka teachers. This research was planned to be carried out for 1 year involving 1 research member. This study uses data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews and observation.

The analysis in this study (qualitative) consisted of 3 streams of activities presented simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [1]. Data reduction includes the activities of making summaries, coding, tracing themes, making ideas, making partitions, making memos. This data reduction/transformation process continues after the field research, until a complete final report is prepared. Drawing conclusions/verification is actually carried out by researchers while in the field, and these conclusions are tentative, temporary, and are treated with skepticism because they will continue to be tested in the field. Final conclusions may not appear until data collection is over as they are constantly being verified, including when they are discussed among colleagues for development.

In-depth interviews involved several people who would become research informants, especially teachers at Sekolah Murid Merdeka Medan, who could be categorized as key informants and base informants.

1. Key informants (key informants) are teachers at Sekolah Murid Merdeka Medan
2. The base informant is someone who understands the condition of the key informant, namely the leader of Sekolah Murid Merdeka Medan

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3. Results

In the study "Communication Patterns In Blended Learning At Sekolah Murid Merdeka, Medan", researchers had the opportunity to conduct interviews with 3 teachers and the school's leader. The first teacher is named Ridha. She had been teacher from April 2021 to June 2022, Ridha has been assigned as a early childhood education teacher at the Sekolah Murid Merdeka in Medan.

The second informant in this study is Aliza. She is an early childhood teacher who teaches offline or offline. Aliza has been a teacher at Sekolah Murid Merdeka for 11 months. Taking on the task of being an early childhood education teacher, Aliza has to be able to approach children. At the early childhood education level, of course, the learning method is more dominated by the method of playing while learning to recognize letters, numbers and others.

The third informant is Elisabeth. She carries out her daily life as a 5th grade teacher at the Sekolah Murid Merdeka, with the target of teaching 24 hours 35 minutes a week, outside of assignments and preparation. Leading 30 students is not an easy matter, because these students come from different regions and backgrounds. Not infrequently there are some students who feel inferior because of differences in language or accent when communicating. However, according to Elisabeth this was not a big problem, she worked around this by adapting communication to how the language they used, sometimes she had to teach bilingually with her students, so that all students could understand.

Farah Nuriah is the Leader of Sekolah Murid Merdeka Medan. Farah Nuriah was also a student parent who has 2 children. Her first child felt unable to adjust to conventional schooling because of her reluctance to do the assignments given by her former school teacher. Therefore, she decided to change and change the school system from conventional to homeschooling.

Informant Analysis With 4 Communication Patterns

a. Primary Communication Patterns

The three teachers who were informants in this study used primary communication patterns in teaching and learning activities both offline and online. In the aspect of verbal symbols, namely language, both Aliza, Ridha and Elisabeth used words or sentences that were easy to understand and familiar to the students' ears. Aliza greets her students as "brother" as her students call her at home, to increase the intimacy between her and her students.

In the aspect of nonverbal symbols, the three informants also use them to support or express what they convey. Aliza, for example, uses both hands to describe the shape of a teapot when explaining how to boil water to her students.

The primary communication patterns used by Ridha while teaching, by using verbal and non-verbal symbols. Verbal symbols are used by Ridha using Indonesian. The students at Sekolah Murid Merdeka come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, the use of verbal symbols must be used clearly and well. In addition, the use of non-verbal

symbols such as facial expressions, voice intonation and hand movements are used by Ridha to strengthen his verbal symbols.

The primary communication pattern that occurred when Farah and her first child showed a gesture that her child did not like going to school early in the morning by being lazy to do the homework given to her and even her child gave rise to a movement not wanting to go to school conventionally.

b. Secondary Communication Patterns

Zoom is a video conferencing support application that is currently widely used by the public. Ridha also uses this application as a medium to bridge him with students so that she can still teach even though she is in a different place. While teaching, Ridha uses language that is easy to understand as well as pleasant voice intonation so that the class runs smoothly.

In giving assignments, Ridha uses an application called Learning Management System (LMS). Through this application, Ridha can give assignments such as quizzes which can then be assessed immediately. Zoom recording videos are also uploaded in this application, so students are not required to be present during class.

Another application that is also used as a media is the Askmu application. Through this application, Ridha can communicate with parents of students, such as informing what equipment to prepare for their child's teaching materials. Other media that are also used are visual aids, which are used when students practice. These tools can be skewers, soap, even costumes.

Teaching offline makes it easier for Aliza to convey material to her students. But she still needs media assistance to make it easier for his students to understand. The second medium is usually used for practices such as making tea. Not infrequently Aliza uses objects in class such as tables or chairs to support the delivery of material. For example, when her students made a train by arranging tables and chairs, Aliza then gave basic knowledge about trains using these tables and chairs. She also uses books as a second medium.

Elisabeth even said that practice is the most awaited learning time for her students. Elisabeth uses a secondary pattern of communication with her students. Elisabeth uses two ways in the learning process, namely live (Zoom Meetings) and non-live (Video).

In this Zoom application Elisabeth and her students can communicate directly as well as between students. Elisabeth also prepares materials based on the school curriculum. In preparing the material to be distributed, Elisabeth is assisted by a team of learning designers. Elisabeth tries to package the lessons as attractively as possible so that students will not feel bored even though the learning process takes place from home.

Apart from using Zoom meetings, Elisabeth also uses video as a learning medium. An interactive and fun learning process can be built by presenting learning media in the form of video (audio visual). Learning through video will make it easier for teachers to convey learning material, as well as make it easier for students to understand the context of the subject. The stages of making a video are first making a script or script, pouring out everything needed and

then reviewing it by the Product team, does the video cover all the material, is the script too much, is the sentence easy to understand.

For secondary communication patterns carried out by Farah with other parties such as with students from schools that are fostered using Zoom meetings and Farah also communicates using email to ask the expert for suggestions regarding the homeschooling system that she will implement. According to Ridha, the use of the second media really helped her explain the material and made it easier for students to understand the material. It can be said that the secondary communication pattern is the most effective communication pattern in supporting teaching and learning activities.

c. Linear Communication Patterns

Planning before carrying out teaching and learning activities is something that is always done by all teachers in this study. In fact, this planning is something that is required by the SMM. This linear communication pattern requires preparation before the communication process takes place. The application of this pattern can be seen when Ridha prepares teaching topics for her students. Before class started, Ridha also made a rule for the students to turn off the microphone when it was not needed because it would disrupt the class.

According to Elisabeth, who is also a learning designer, they must conceptualize learning materials. The concept is then checked, assessed and evaluated and then refined again. Even if teachers are going to use video as a second medium, the duration and appropriateness of the video content are also examined. Meanwhile, Aliza provides a toolkit for teaching according to instructions from the Learning Management System (LMS).

Not only planning, Ridha and Elisabeth also made class agreements before the presentation of the material began. This is done to keep the classroom conditions conducive and the course of the teaching and learning process right on target and effective for all students.

d) Circular Communication Patterns

Both offline and online learning, the teachers in this study always get feedback at every meeting. Ridha even provides special time for her students to tell stories, express their opinions, ask questions and so on. Although through the media, the communication that exists between Ridha and her students is quite effective. Students often respond to Ridha's chats, even having discussions with her. Not only having conversations, students also carry out practical activities at home which are monitored via Zoom. This proves the occurrence of a circular communication pattern.

In Elisabeth's class, feedback usually occurs in a flowing manner. Students will ask questions and provide feedback if they feel the need or when given a special time. Feedback does not only occur in class but in LMS, where students can ask questions, discuss, argue and so on. Not infrequently things that happen in the LMS become a reference for teachers in evaluating learning methods.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis of research findings, it can be concluded that SMM Medan teachers use the four communication patterns in carrying out teaching and learning activities. In the primary communication pattern, the three teachers use words and sentences that are easy to understand. The teachers also use hand gestures, gestures to express what is conveyed. In the secondary communication pattern, the teachers use the second medium as a teaching aid. The second media are for example objects in class, objects commonly used at home, books, and special practices. Before starting a new semester, the teachers have made a learning method plan. This is also required by the central LMS. This planning is a form of linear communication patterns. Then, circular communication patterns can be seen by the feedback given by students both flowing and when given special opportunities.

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