The Challenges of Learning Practice for Students Mastering Vocabulary in Blended Learning

Dyaz Galuh Irianto[1], Muhammad Sofian Hadi[2]
{dyazgaluh@gmail.com[1], M.sofianhadi@umj.ac.id[2]}

English Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, Indonesia[12]

Abstract. The aim of this research is to find out the students' challenges in learning vocabulary and the effectiveness of teaching practice in students' vocabulary mastery. This research used a qualitative research method with a descriptive qualitative research design. The data source in this research was taken by participants at SMP Islam Terpadu Assalaam, in class 9C, in the academic year 2022/2023. The researcher used checklist observation and semi-structured interviews to collect the data in this research. This research shows that students' confidence and understanding are the main challenges of teaching practice for students in mastery of vocabulary in blended learning. Berfore using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, 3 of 6 students feel difficult and not interested to learn vocabulary. After using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, the result of the study shows that 5 of 6 participants need such interactive media. After learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, 5 of the 6 participants are interesting to learn vocabulary. 5 of 6 participants feel Role-play and YouTube videos can help them to master vocabulary in pronouncing the words, building sentences and understanding how to use the words.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Teaching practice, Blended Learning

1. Introduction

Language is an important component of communication activities. It is such a principal method of human communication by word and structures, it can be based on speech and gesture, sign, or writing. Human language can be defined as a human-learnable communication system with conventionalized form-meaning pairs capable of expressing all of a human society's communicative needs[1]. Every country in this world have their on language and it is difficult for humans to master every language in this world. But we can learn to master international language.

International language has been created for humans to communicate with others from different countries who do not share a common native language. English has been chosen as an international language. The position of English language in the world has been written as an International Language[2]. Since English has been chosen as an international language, every aspect of communication uses English. To communicate with other people from other country, learners should master four skills in learning the language. The four skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing [3].

When learners have already mastered four English skills, learners can access and exchange information. Linguistic competencies are closely connected to abilities in communication, and they are even regarded as equal. Linguistic competencies are related to the appropriate use of language, particularly written language, in scientific production and communication [4]. The ability of four English skills cannot be separated from vocabulary mastery of English as the requirement to reach linguistics competence.

Mastering vocabulary is a basic aspect that must be achieved by students to obtain other competencies. Foreign language learners are most aware of the importance of vocabulary. Vocabulary problems apply well to non-native language users who often find themselves searching for words to express themselves in speaking and writing. Lack of vocabulary knowledge can be an important reason for making learners reluctant to be exposed to the skills of reading and listening. Students who do not

master enough vocabularies struggle during their educational careers, which leads to a cycle of frustration and continued failure[5].

The definition of vocabulary is it consists of words that the student understands, can recall at will, spell correctly, pronounce correctly, and use constructively in speaking and writing[6]. So mastery vocabulary is not only by how many words that students find, but also the meaning of the words, the spelling, pronounciation of the words, and how the words is used inn sentence building.

Some people think that it is very easy to learn vocabulary because learners can learn everywhere and every time when they meet new words. But actually it takes some problems in the process of learning. The following factors that cause some words more difficult, there are the meanings of new words, spelling, pronunciation, correct use of words, and guessing meaning through the context[7]. It shows that to mastery vocabulary still has many factors that are difficult to understand and many students who learn to master second language will face that difficulties.

Thus, some of the students learn English vocabulary without understanding the meanings of writing and speaking comprehension. Lack of vocabulary causes students are not able to master language because vocabulary consists of the collection of words. And it is the single most powerful predictor of success [8].

There are several aspects of vocabulary that make students can be called mastery vocabulary. Students must learn five different aspects of vocabulary, i.e. word meaning, spelling, pronunciation, word classes, and word use[9]. Students may find difficulties to master through those aspects by only memorizing words. And learning by only memorizing words will make the learning materials to become boring. The teaching and learning process should change to become more active, effective, enjoyable, interactive, and joyful to improve the students' motivation to learn vocabulary.

Learners may use activation strategies that include various tactics such as practicing new words in different contexts. These strategies can be used in conjunction with other important learning strategies[7]. The researcher concludes the statement that teachers should replace their practical teaching with another one to increase the students' mastery of vocabulary.

A better practical teaching method should help the students to understand the meaning of vocabulary and how the vocabulary is used by making the teaching and learning process to be easier, enjoyable, and more effective, and making students interested. Practical work has been used in the classroom for a variety of purposes. One of them has been used to help students improve their skills and conceptual understanding[10].

Practical work in teaching can be called as practical teaching. In the teaching and learning process practical teaching is viewed as a crucial component[11]. The activity will help the students to increase their motivation to study because the students enjoy it. To improve students' skills and understanding, the researcher uses practical teaching as a teaching and learning process that involves the students observing or manipulating objects and materials to learn. This method really helps the students in mastering their vocabulary.

Practical work refers to the individual or collaborative activity that involves the students in observing and manipulating the lesson of the materials. The aim of practical work in science is to improve learners' understanding of the materials[12]. Practical work in teaching English is useful because this method will help the students to improve their motivation in learning and the students are taking a part in the teaching and learning process by practicing the new vocabulary that they already found.

This method also takes several advantages such as help the students to understanding the concept of materials, improving learners' motivation and interest, and improving learners' practical skills[13]. The researcher used video to involve the students in observing vocabulary and used role play to manipulate the learning materials. YouTube can assist students in exploring a target culture in a variety of ways, and it can assist students in developing their learning autonomy levels by encouraging them to watch videos and clips on a regular basis[14]. The researcher chose YouTube videos as a medium to observe the vocabulary. Role-play activity was chosen because it is a study activity that engages the students to act in specific roles by doing and saying[15].

YouTube video was chosen for online learning because it is a flexible medium to access[16]. And the used of Role-play activity is to improve the students' comprehension of the vocabulary and their application in practical situations through the process of role-play activity[17]. There are 3 types of Role-play ; fully-scripted role-play, semi-scripted role-play, and non-scripted role-play [18]. And for this research, the teacher used semi-scripted role-play. In This type, the teacher was described the clue to the students about how the words are used and about the story. Then, the students improved how to use the words.

On March 2nd, 2020, for the first time the government announced two cases of positive Covid-19 patients in Indonesia, reported on Kompas.com, written by Pranita (published on May 11th, 2022) [19]. This situation caused the teaching and learning process to become online learning. Online learning becomes more difficult and setbacks in students' understanding, especially in language learning. The teachers must utilize existing technological facilities to teach vocabulary so it doesn't take a long time and students don't feel bored while online. By using video in the teaching and learning process, the students will feel more comfortable in processing the material. Then, Since September 2021, the government of the education system has changed the system to become online-offline learning[20]. It can be called blended learning. The teaching practice can be held on offline learning by role-play activity to understand directly the use of the words.

Blended Learning is defined depending on the location of learning as a combination of material presented in the form of students studying some of the teaching materials outside the classroom and some of them in the classroom with the teacher's direction[21]./ Now, the method of learning strategies in Indonesia blends the system inside the classroom, face-to-face learning (offlin e learning), with learning based on technology, outside the classroom (online learning) [22]–[24].

By using the blended learning method, students are flexible in accessing learning materials. This method has several advantages. Several studies have found that students who participated in blended learning performed better than those who participated in face-to-face or online learning. Students have the opportunity to be both independent and autonomous in their learning, allowing them to study at their own pace[25].

Those advantages are the result of a diverse learning approach that includes active peer communication as well as processing newly acquired information with constant self-reflection. Besides the advantages, there are several challenges to teaching language learning using blended learning[26]–[28]. Lack of policy, lack of faculty support, lack of technological and computer skills, large class sizes, and inadequate technological resources are also challenges in using technology in blended learning[25]. In the use of appropriate technology, the researcher focus on utilizing technology to teach vocabulary using teaching practice method in Blended learning also has characteristics related to its advantages.

There are four concepts of blended learning ; combine web-based technology modes, combine pedagogical approach, combine every form of learning technology, combine learning technology[29]. From the concept of blended learning, this method can use the composition 50/50, in time allocation 50% face-to-face and 50% online learning. It can also use 75/25, in time allocation 75% face-to-face, and 25% online learning. And 25/75 in time allocation 25% face-to-face and 75% online learning. To use that composition, the teacher must analyze the required competence of learning, the purpose of learning, the students' characteristics, and the easily accessible resources to reach the components that we need. In this research, YouTube video was used for online learning and Role-play activity was played for offline learning to measure the students' ability in vocabulary mastery.

Based on the background of the research, the researcher is interested in conducting a study to find out the students' challenges in learning vocabulary and the effectiveness of teaching practice in students vocabulary mastery. The researcher expected that the findings of this study will be useful to other teachers in the teaching vocabulary learning process to conduct activities in the teaching-learning process that are more effective, joyful, and enjoyable. And the researcher also hopes that students will get easier to catch the material, enjoy the learning process, and can implement the material in real life.

2. Method

The method of this research is used qualitative research based on human understanding and behavior. The qualitative method depends on textual and visual data, and have unique data analysis steps, also implements a variety of designs[30]. Qualitative researchers affect and are affected by their data, rather than being impassive observers who don't engage with the participants[31]. Writing a methodology section for a qualitative research proposal also helps the readers explain the purpose of qualitative research. This research will be conducted at SMP Islam Terpadu Assalaam, in 9 graders, the academic year of 2022/2023, located at Jl. Sebret Raya, Pasar Minggu, Jakarta Selatan. The researcher estimates the research for about 1 month, in half of July to half of August 2022.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews and observation as a research design because this research explored the experiences and the phenomena process of the challenges of teaching practice for students mastering vocabulary in blended learning. Qualitative descriptive research design provides a comprehensive summary of particular experiences that individuals or groups of individuals have

experienced[32]. This study focused on the challenges of teaching practice for students mastering vocabulary in blended learning. As a result, semi-structured interviews and checklist observation will be used to collect the data.

In collected the data, the researcher did several steps, such as:

1. The researcher made a checklist observation to observe the participants and the place of the study by joined the online and offline classes.
2. The data were collected using semi-structural interviews to present more detailed experiences from the students to found the challenges of teaching practice for students mastering vocabulary in blended learning. The researcher interviewed 6 students from class 9C.
3. The participants were chosen by the teacher, based on their ability in mastering vocabulary, with the higher level, middle level, and lower level.
4. Interviewed the participants is conducted face-to-face. These semi-structured interviews were about the students' behavior, motivation, lack of sentence building, and the teacher's technique through the teaching and learning process in the blended learning method. The researcher used an audio recorder to back up the data and helped the researcher if there is something missing or forgotten in gaining the data to be more detailed.

3. Findings and Discussion

A. Findings

The researcher used checklist observation and semi-structured interviews as the instrument of this research. This research focused on the students' challenges in learning vocabulary and the effectiveness of teaching practice in students' vocabulary mastery in blended learning. The observation and interviews were to find out the students' problems in learning vocabulary, their motivation, and their ability to master vocabulary in blended learning. Here are the result of checklist observation and semi-structured interviews:

Table 1. Result of Checklist Observation

No.	Aspects are observed	The result of observation	
		yes	no
1	The teacher's technique in teaching vocabulary is only memorizing before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities	✓	
2	Students have difficulties in memorizing vocabulary before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities	✓	
3	Students have difficulties in spelling and pronouncing the new vocabulary before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities	✓	
4	Students lack building sentences before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities	✓	
5	Using YouTube videos as media in online classes	✓	
6	Using Role-Play activity in offline class	✓	
7	Using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities are making students more active in the class	✓	

Based on the observations in the table above, 7 points were observed concerning the teaching practice for students mastering vocabulary in blended learning at SMP Islam Terpadu Assalaam, Jakarta Selatan. The checklist observation was observed about the teaching techniques using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities in mastering vocabulary. The checklist observations are described that

the teacher's technique in teaching vocabulary is only memorizing before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities. The researcher found that the teacher teaches vocabulary by underlining the new vocabulary in the text, then the students should write the meaning of the vocabulary given by the teacher on their notes. After that, the students should memorize the new vocabulary. Students also have difficulties memorizing vocabulary before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities. The researcher found that students are having difficulties in memorizing the vocabulary because they seem not interesting in memorizing the new vocabulary. Students have difficulties in spelling and pronouncing the new vocabulary and they lack building sentences before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities. before using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities. The researcher found that lots of students are wrong in pronouncing the new vocabulary, and they forget in spelling the words, the students also had difficulties in building sentences, both orally and in writing. After observing students' behavior and motivation, the researcher found that the teacher used YouTube videos and Role-Play activities as a medium to teach vocabulary. The teacher used a Role-play activity to measure the students' vocabulary mastery. Start with how to pronounce the words, the meaning of the words, and how to use the words. Using YouTube videos and Role-Play activities are making students more active in class. The researcher found that students in the class are more active during Role-play activities. The teaching and learning environment also become more joyful and the students seem interesting, especially when their friends turn to play a role in front of the class.

Result of Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to support the data from checklist observation and to answer the research focus of the problems. The result will be answered several questions about motivation, lack of sentence building, and the teacher's technique through the teaching and learning process in the blended learning method. Based on research data found by the researcher, the researcher gained the following questions from the topic.

Table 2. The Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

Topic	Sub-topic	Question
Teaching practice using YouTube videos and Role-play activity	Teaching techniques	What kind of learning system is practiced in this school during the first pandemic? When did the school practice a blended learning system?
	Media	What media that teachers used for blended learning?
		What are the suitable media for the students to learn vocabulary in blended learning?
		What are students' perceptions to learn vocabulary with YouTube videos and Role-play activities in blended learning?
	Students' motivation	How are students interested to learn vocabulary without YouTube videos and Role-play activities in blended learning?
		How are students interested to learn vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities in blended learning?
		How are students' abilities in memorizing new vocabulary?
		How are students' abilities in spelling and pronouncing new vocabulary?

	Students mastery of vocabulary	What are students' abilities in building sentences using the new vocabulary?

Based on the answers provided by participants, during the first pandemic, the school practiced a full online learning system. This system is the government's recommendation to avoid the spread of the covid-19 diseases. In September 2021, the learning system of the school has been changed into a blended learning system. the teacher usually used Google Meet, and Google Form as a platform for online learning. Sometimes the teacher teaches using PPT, video, and play quizzes using other applications as the media in online learning. The platform and the media were assisted by the explanation from the teacher. And for offline learning, the teacher utilizes offline learning to measure the students' understanding by giving some tasks and doing dialogues.

For question number 3 about the suitable media for students to learn vocabulary in blended learning, the answers show that 5 of 6 participants need such interactive media. They also mentioned they need media that are more interesting. 3 of the 6 participants mentioned video as the media that is suitable for them. 1 of 6 participants mentioned quizzes, and 1 of 6 participants said that he already feels comfortable using Google Meet as a medium.
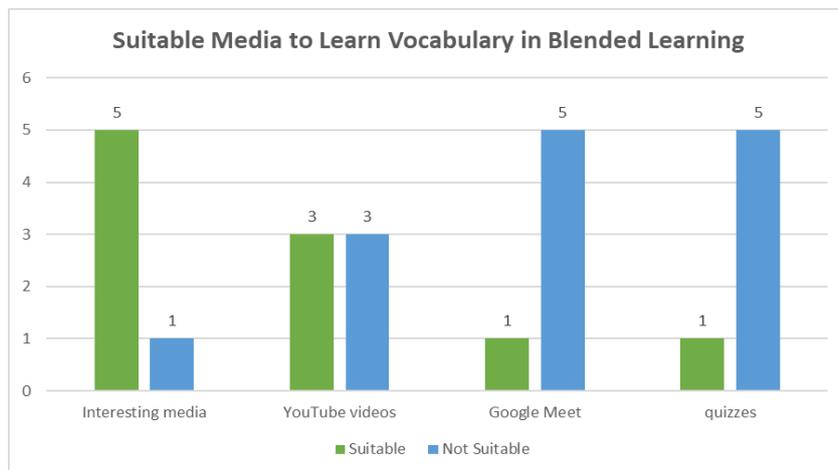

Figure 1. Suitable Media to Learn Vocabulary in Blended Learning

Question number 4 shows that the students have a variety of perceptions about learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play. Some of them feel interesting and easy to understand the material, but some others feel boring and prefer to learn the explanation from the teacher.
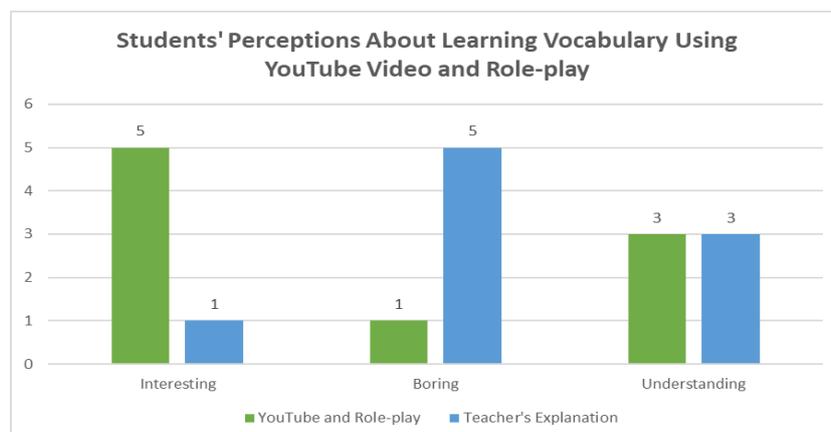

Figure 2. Students' Perceptions About Learning Vocabulary Using YouTube Video and Role-play

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From the chart above, the researcher found that 5 of 6 participants' perceptions about learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play are interesting, 1 of 6 participants feels boring to learn vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play, and 3 of 3 participants perceptions are easy to understand.

Question number 5 is questioning about the students' interest to learn vocabulary without YouTube videos and Role-paly activities. The answers show that 3 of 6 participants feel bored in learning vocabulary without YouTube videos and Role-play, and 1 of them is already having less interest in learning vocabulary. The 3 of 6 participants said that they still need another technique in learning vocabulary to be more interesting. And question number 6 is questioning about the students' interest to learn vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-paly activities. the answer show that 5 of 6 participants feel interesting to learn vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play, as long as the video shows a detailed explanation. They also feel joyful using Role-play. Role-play also help them to practice their speaking skill and make them more confident.

The researcher did a comparison with the students interested to learn vocabulary before and after using YouTube videos and Role-play activities. Before using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, 3 of 3 participants have less interest in learning vocabulary. After learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, 5 of the participants are interesting to learn vocabulary.
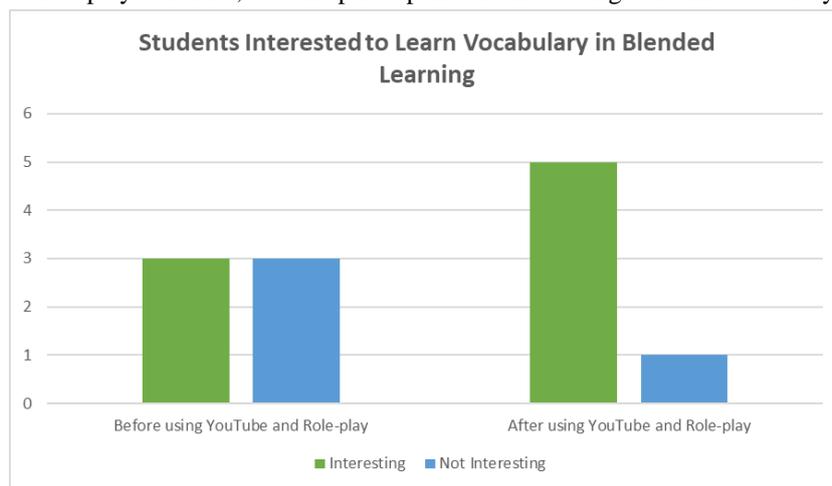

Figure 3. Students Interested to Learn Vocabulary in Blended Learning

From question number 7, the answers show that all of the participants feel easy to memorize the new vocabulary using the YouTube videos. The vocabulary makes them remember the scene in the video because using video will help the students in learning new vocabulary through audio and visuals. But for the Role-play activity, there is 1 of 6 participants whose still not comfortable playing a role.
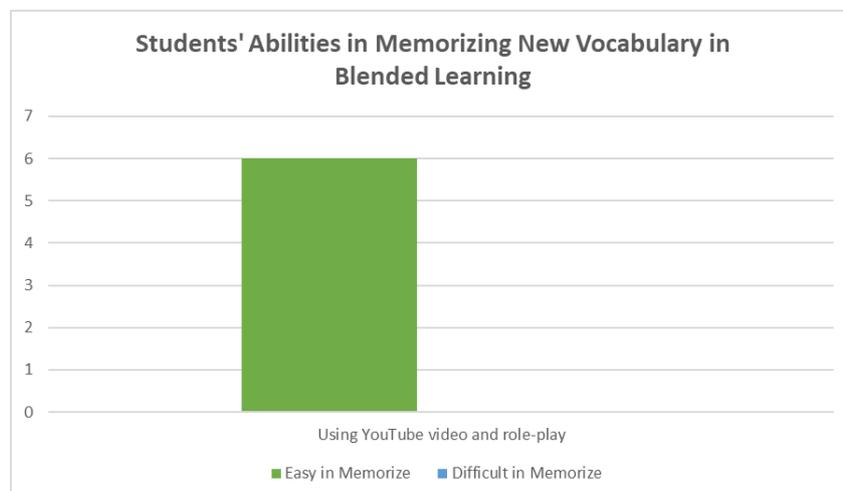

Figure 4. Students' Abilities in Memorizing New Vocabulary in Blended Learning

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The answers from questions number 8 show that 5 of 6 participants can improve their ability in spelling the words after watching the video, and 5 of 6 participants feel Role-play can improve their ability in pronouncing the words and help them to practice pronouncing the words after watching on the video.
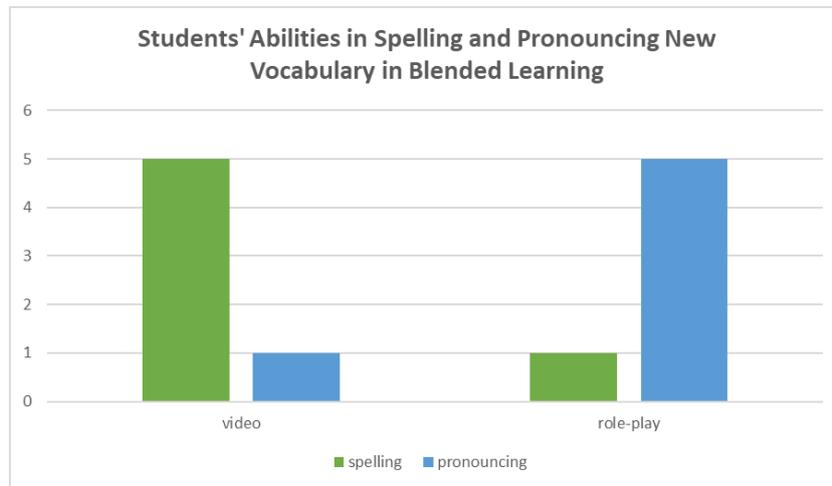

Figure 5. Students' Abilities in Spelling and Pronouncing New Vocabulary in Blended Learning

Based on the answers provided by participants about their ability in building sentences using the new vocabulary, 5 of 6 participants are getting easier in building sentences and understanding how to use the words. The data shows that students are having improvement in mastering vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play.
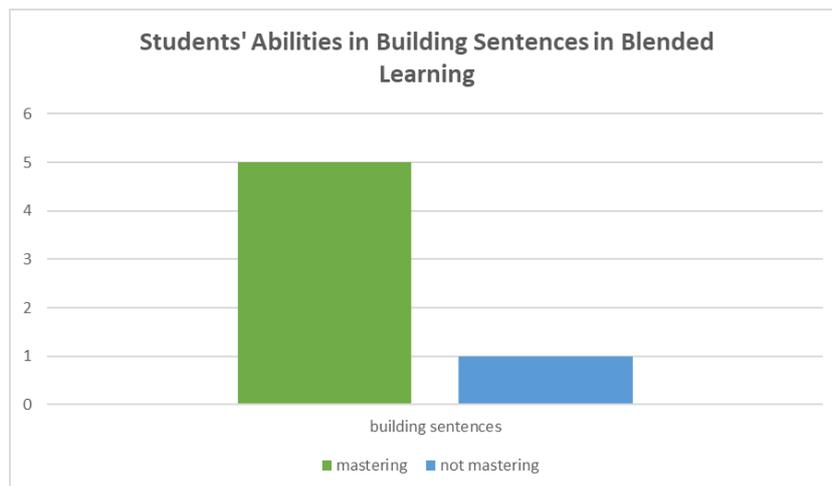

Figure 6. Students' Abilities in Building Sentences in Blended Learning

B. Findings and Discussion

The checklist observation, the researcher found the teacher's technique in teaching vocabulary is only memorizing before using YouTube videos and Role-play activities. The teacher taught vocabulary by underlining the new vocabulary in the text, then, students should write on their notes, and after that, students should memorize the new vocabulary. In the observation session, the researcher found that students have difficulties in memorizing vocabulary because they seem not interesting in memorizing the new words.

Based on the previous study, the student have difficulty in memorizing vocabulary because they are lack of motivation[23], [33], [34]. The teacher needs to be creative to find strategy for practical lesson online [27], [27], [35]. In this study based on findings, students not only memorize the new

vocabulary but also in spelling and pronouncing the words. The researcher found that lots of students are wrong in pronouncing the words and forget in spelling the words. Students also have difficulties in building sentences, both orally and written.

After using YouTube videos and Role-play activities as teaching techniques in the class, the researcher found that students become more active in the class and the environment changed to become more joyful and interesting. The teacher used a Role-play activity to measure the students' ability in mastering vocabulary. This checklist observation answers the researcher's focus on the problem of students' challenges in learning vocabulary.

In this semi-structured interview, the researcher will interpret the answers from the 6 participants of this research. Based on the answer from student 1, learning vocabulary using YouTube videos is better than just PPT, especially when the videos are entertaining to watch. The researcher concludes that teaching vocabulary only using PPT is not suitable for him and for other students with the type of student 1 will lose their interest in learning vocabulary if the media and techniques are not interesting. After learning new vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities, student 1 can remember the words clearly.

Student 2's perception of using YouTube videos and Role-play shows that these methods are not suitable for him because he feels that teacher's explanation is easy for him to understand the material. He also has less confidence to play a role. Learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities does not really help him build sentences because YouTube videos only help him memorize words and not understand using them.

Student 3 mentioned video as a medium and combine the explanation from the video and teacher. Student 3 felt the teaching technique from the teacher is interesting enough, but he needs more suitable media to make the teaching and learning process to become more interesting. He is a type of student who can memorize material easily.

Based on the answer from student 4, the student needs interesting media to make the learning process to become more joyful. Learning new vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities is interesting. These teaching techniques help student 4 to memorize easily starting with the use of the words, the pronunciation, and the spelling of the words because after watching the video the students will practice in the Role-play activities.

Student 5 felt interesting in the teaching technique using YouTube videos and Role-play activities. Student 5 felt that using YouTube videos and Role-play activities in learning vocabulary improves her ability in spelling and pronounce the words. She said confidently that her ability in building sentences improves and it can be measured by her performance in playing a role.

Student 6 had less interest in learning vocabulary. Based on the answer from student 6, learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities is more interesting than before. Learning vocabulary using YouTube videos and Role-play activities will help her to improve her ability in memorizing the new vocabulary, and the memory will be remembered for a long time. she can spell and pronounce the new vocabulary correctly after watching the video for several times.

4. Conclusion

This research focuses on the students' challenges in learning vocabulary and the effectiveness of teaching practice in students' vocabulary mastery. This research shows that students' motivation and the suitable media to learn vocabulary is the students' challenges in learning vocabulary. Students had difficulties in learning vocabulary by memorizing techniques and felt bored in learning vocabulary because the media that teacher used.. Their difficulties are not only in memorizing the words, but also in spelling, pronouncing, and understanding the words.

After the teacher used practical teaching with YouTube videos and Role-play activities, 5 of the 6 participants are interesting to learn vocabulary. All of the participants feel easy to memorize the new vocabulary using YouTube videos, but 1 of 6 participants was still not comfortable playing a role. The answers from the questions above show that 5 of 6 participants can improve their ability in spelling the words after watching the video, and 5 of 6 participants feel Role-play can improve their ability in pronouncing the words and help them to practice pronouncing the words after watching on the video. Based on the answers provided by participants about their ability to build sentences using the new vocabulary, 5 of 6 participants are getting easier in building sentences and understanding how to use the words.

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