Cheria Video Conference to Improve Students' English Ability and Character at SMA 3 Padang

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Abstract

The purpose of learning English for Senior High School students is to make students able to use spoken and written language in interpersonal, transactional, functional and essay text. This target quite difficult to be reached since the time allocation for learning English is only 2 hours (90 minutes) a week. To give chance for students who are interested in learning English, the school provide an English club, namely the English community. This club is a kind of extracurricular activity. The meeting which was held every week after the school hours initially attended by many students. However, the number of students decreased week by week. After interviewing them, it was found some reasons that make them lazy to attend the meeting. They were tiredness, having other kinds of extracurricular activity, and boring activities. They need something to challenge them to speak with people from other countries. To overcome this problem, the teacher used Cheria Video Conference. Cheria is the acronym of Chatting through Social Media and Video Conference. Cheria is done as the replacement of the meeting. Since the students are close with social media, so the teacher used social media Line and Whatsapp to discuss the topic for incoming Videoconference. Through Generation Global, students could share ideas with other students from other countries about many topics such as community, faith, charity, celebration, and many others. Moreover, this activity also could make them practice their English and well as building their characters such as nationalism, religious, collaboration, integrity, and independent.

Key words: ***Cheria, Video Conference, characters***

A. Background

The purpose of learning English for Senior high school is to develop students' communicative competence in form of interpersonal, transactional, functional and essay text. This objective could be reached through the guidance from the teacher in using spoken and written English coherently, accurately and acceptable. Moreover, the teacher should guide the students in applying the factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive competence and build the students' character through the activities. Kemdikbud (2017) in the Press release said that teacher should build students' character through co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

In fact, the objective is quite hard to be reached. Time allocation in learning English is one of the obstacles to reach the objectives. Time allocation for learning English is only 90

minutes or two hours per week. This condition makes students lack practice in using the language. This problem leads to other problem such as feeling ashamed to use the language because they are afraid to be laughed at by their friends and have no idea to speak or express their feeling.

To overcome the problem, the teacher guided the students in extracurricular activity namely English Community. This community is opened for all students who are interested in learning English and want to practice their English. This activity is held once a week on Wednesday after the school's hour. Most of the students involving in this club are from grade X and XI since the grade XII have the additional class to prepare them for the national examination. At the beginning of the beginning of the club, there are many students attended the activity (more than 40 students). Then it diminished week by week. This condition made the teacher worry. After interviewing them, it was found that the students felt tired after learning since the morning. Some of them have some other extracurricular activities and take a course outside the class. They also said that the activities done in the extracurricular were not interesting and challenging. Herbert Putcha and Mitchael Schratz in Harmer (2013; 84) said that the failure of the teacher in teaching the teenagers is the inadequacy of the teacher to bridge the gap between the teacher's need and students' world. The new challenges need to be done to make the students use their English in the real context.

To overcome the problem above, the teacher used Cheria Video Conference. Cheria is the acronym of chatting through social media. Video conference is a visual connection and communication between two persons or more in a separate location. Chatting through social media such as Line and WhatsApp application is used to replace the meeting. It also gives them chance to practice their English. This strategy is also used to replace the regular meeting. Moreover, since most of the students are familiar with the social media and use the applications so chatting through social media will make them use social media for learning. In addition, social media also make the students practice their English without the time and distance barrier. Whilst video conference is used to give the students a new challenge in using English. They used English in a real context. Through this media, the students have a dialog with friends from other countries about a certain topic.

This video conference is facilitated by Generation Global. Through video conference, students interact directly with their peers around the world through the issues of culture, identity, beliefs, values, and attitudes. This activity is not only engaging students through dialog but also enhance their character building. The 21st-century skills such as critical

thinking, creativity, religious, teamwork, collaboration, and communication, are also built as well.

B. Problem

To improve students' ability in English, the teacher held extracurricular activity namely English Club/Community. The meeting of the club is every Wednesday after school. The first meetings were attended by many students, around 40 students, but then the number of students decreased every week because of some reasons. Those reasons are tiredness after studying for hours, involving other extracurricular activities, and boring activities in the club. Moreover, the activities in the club are not challenging for them.

C. Strategies to Solve the Problems

To overcome the problem, the teacher then used Cheria Video Conference. Cheria is the acronym of chatting through social media while video conference is the online dialog between two people or more through video. Chatting through social media is used to solve the problem of the meeting. Through dialog in social media such as in Line and WhatsApp, the students can practice their English without the time and place barrier. There are some reasons to use this strategy. It will be described as follows.

Firstly, social media is familiar to students. Studies conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2005) and the Pew Internet and American Life Project in Palloff (2007), note that approximately 87 percent of youth between the ages of twelve and seventeen are online and also using other forms of technology, such as cell phones and gaming technology. Moreover, they are engaging with social networking sites on the Internet such as Line, WhatsApp, Instagram, and many others. They use this media for entertaining, gaming and learning. To make them use the social media wisely or for studying, so the teacher make a group in Line and WhatsApp to discuss the club and the topic for Video Conference.

Secondly, social media is used to resolve the problem of students' absence in the meeting. Since through social media, the teacher and students could communicate and discuss the topic that would be discussed in the incoming video conference. Through social media, there is no barrier time and space so that they can practice their English whenever and where ever they go.

Furthermore, Video Conference is used for some considerations. They are first, giving chance for students to practice their English in the real context with their peers from other countries. This is a new challenge for them. As Harmer (2013: 422) said that the use of

virtual learning such as video conference is increasingly common and let the teacher communicate and collaborate with other teachers in other parts of the world. Video Conference which is facilitated by Generation Global (GG), provides the teachers to collaborate with other teachers from 20 countries. GG is part of Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. The organization which is based in England and Wales facilitate the students to have a dialog with their peers about the topic provided by GG. Through the topics, the students' critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication would be enhanced. Seremilesson.com says that in the globalization era, the students need the skills to prepare them to face the 21st century. They will face many differences. They need skill and competence to learn and understand the difference. It is needed to avoid conflict and create a sense of security for the future.

The four 21st century skills can be described through the activity in the Cheria Video Conference. The critical thinking can be seen when the students discuss the topic that they are going to talk about the topic. They will search for information from many resources to prepare them to the dialog. In the dialog, the students are asked their own perspective on the topic. In order to have something to talk, they have to find some resources so that they can talk something based on their own perspective. Creativity could be seen from the students' efforts to make their peers get the description of what they talk about. In one occasion, when a student talks about a festival in West Sumatera, namely Tabuik. She has to draw a picture to make their peers understand her. In addition, the character of collaboration can be seen from the preparation stage. In the preparation, the students work together to prepare the room, chairs, in focus, camera, and speaker. During the Video Conference, the students also help their peer when one of them get stuck and has nothing to say.

Moreover, the character building is also described in the video conference such as nationalism and integrity. It is shown that the students tell the culture, religion, festivals, and community in their own countries. Nationalism and religious are described when the students have to tell about their culture and their religion. It increases their loving in their country. Students' independence increase when they have to prepare themselves for the dialog before it is consulted to the teacher.

Mutual cooperation is reflected before, during and after the video conference. Before the Video Conference is done, students prepare everything together such as preparing chairs and tools needed to make the activity runs well. It is also needed to overcome the problems that can interfere with the dialog such as the use of a microphone and camera. Not only on technical issues, when one of his friends who is in a dialogue loses an idea and forget certain

word other students will help their friend. After the Video Conference takes place, students work together to return all the equipment to their place before they go home. This shows that cooperation between students is well established through this activity.

There are three stages are used in implementing Cheria Video Conference. They are described as follows:

1. Preparation Stage

At this stage, the teacher discusses the topic for incoming Video Conference. The discussion is done through English Community meeting or chatting through Line. Then the teacher finds a dialogue partner or books the schedule of Video Conference. The teacher then receives the email from the GG facilitator about the confirmation of the Video Conference. GG also mentions the schedule, the dialog partners, the topic and the rules in doing the Video Conference. The teacher then sends the email to the students in the Line group and discuss the topic and asks them to prepare themselves about the topic. She also reminds the students to read the module provided by GG and other materials to strengthen their arguments. In the meetings before the Video Conference, the teacher does the simulation of the Video Conference. The teacher gives some inputs to students' opinion. Then the class decides who will be the first speaker, the second speaker, and others. The teacher also appoints students who will ask questions and gives a reflection at the end of the Video Conference. At this stage, the teacher also motivates students to respond to what their friends will say and gives some input and reminds them to follow the video conference rules such as introducing themselves before they speak up and saying thank to end their dialog. The teacher also reminds the students to listen to their peers to show appreciation to others.

2. Implementation Stage

At this stage the teacher and students prepare everything related to implementation such as computers, ensuring internet connection, cameras, load speaker and in focus. Thirty minutes before the activity, the teacher enters the room using the address given by GG facilitator. Generation Global technicians will ensure that audio and visuals are clearly received by all dialogue participants. In several dialogues, there was an inadequate internet network and equipment constraint. However, this problem can be solved after the alumni bought the camera and speaker. Furthermore, for the network problems, it can be solved by providing a new server at school. It also used to prepare the school to face computer-based exams.

After checking with the Generation Global technicians, all students sit in the seats provided and prepare to have a dialogue. The dialogue will be preceded by a moderator from

Generation Global, by introducing each participant and conveying the topics and rules during the dialogue. The moderator then asked one of the schools to initiate the dialogue and proceed with the submission from another school. After all the dialogue participants presented their material, each school is given the opportunity to give each other questions or responses to the dialogue. During this process, all participants listen to each other. The activity is closed by giving the opportunity for each school to give a reflection on the Video Conference.

3. Reflection Stage

This activity was carried out after the Video Conference. The teacher discusses with students about their feelings after the Video Conference. On this occasion, the teacher and students discussed the activity that has been done. Reflection activities were also carried out after the teacher received video footage from Generation Global. After downloading the video, the teacher and students discuss weaknesses and improvements for the next activity.

D. Conclusions and Recommendations

Practice makes perfect. This wise word implies that to master something requires practice, including learning English. Two hours (90 minutes) for English as a compulsory subject is not enough to make students practice using English. Extracurricular activities that are usually a place for them to practice are also less desirable. This can be seen from their presence and motivation to come to the meeting. This condition happens due to the lack of challenging English club activities. They need to communicate with the actual context. Looking at the above conditions, the authors use the Cheria Video Conference strategy to solve the above problems.

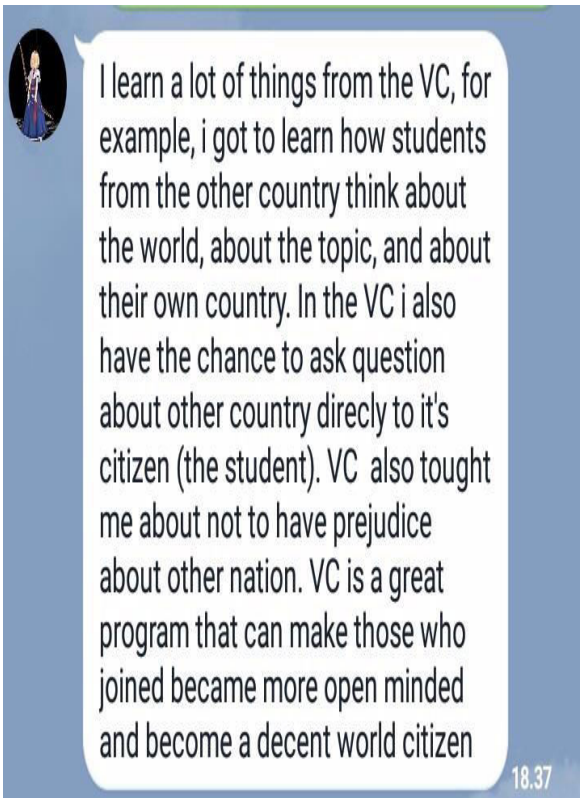
After implementing the Cheria Video Conference strategy for approximately 3 years, there was an increase in the students' attendance at the English community meeting. In addition, this activity also fosters their confidence in using English. It can be seen from their courage to perform and compete with other schools in various competitions held by schools, institutions, and universities.

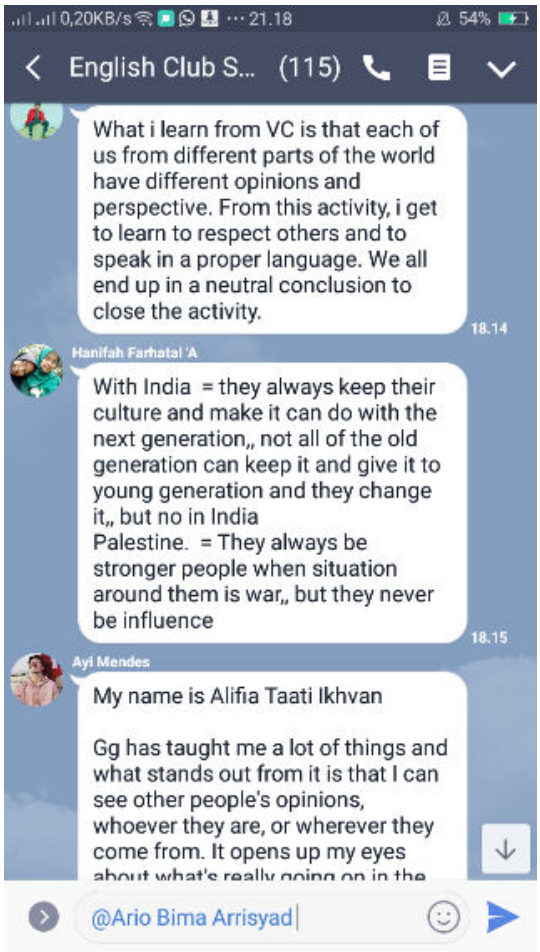
21st century learning such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, is reflected through this activity. Moreover, this activity also strengthens their characters such as religious, integrity, mutual cooperation, independence, and nationalism. Those characters build from the preparation stage to the reflection stage of this activity.

Based on the results of the implementation, it can be recommended that firstly, Cheria Video conference strategy is good to be implemented at school because it can give chance for students to practice their English. Secondly, this activity can also be used in regular class hours. Thirdly, it is hoped that other schools can conduct similar programs for extracurricular activities at their schools.

E. Lesson Learned

During the implementation of Cheria Video Conference over the past three years, there has been an increase in students' speaking ability. In addition, the interest of students to participate in extracurricular activities is also increasing. This can be seen from the increased attendance during preparation, implementation and reflection stage. In addition, their confidence also increased. Their ability to express thoughts in English and understood by their dialog partner adds to their confidence. This also has an impact on one of the English Community member with autism. He revealed in the chat through social media increase his confidence in using English. He also learns from other chats so he can prepare himself for the video conference. In addition, this strategy also fosters students' awareness of various views and beliefs in the world. This makes students appreciate these differences more. This was revealed when the teacher asked for their opinion on the implementation of the Video Conference. Following are the responses of some students delivered through Cheria.


I learn a lot of things from the VC, for example, i got to learn how students from the other country think about the world, about the topic, and about their own country. In the VC i also have the chance to ask question about other country direcly to it's citizen (the student). VC also tought me about not to have prejudice about other nation. VC is a great program that can make those who joined became more open minded and become a decent world citizen
18.37


0,20KB/s 21.18 54%
English Club S... (115)
What i learn from VC is that each of us from different parts of the world have different opinions and perspective. From this activity, i get to learn to respect others and to speak in a proper language. We all end up in a neutral conclusion to close the activity.
18.14
Hanifah Farhatal 'A
With India = they always keep their culture and make it can do with the next generation,, not all of the old generation can keep it and give it to young generation and they change it,, but no in India
Palestine. = They always be stronger people when situation around them is war,, but they never be influence
18.15
Ayi Mendes
My name is Alifia Taati Ikhvan
Gg has taught me a lot of things and what stands out from it is that I can see other people's opinions, whoever they are, or wherever they come from. It opens up my eyes
@Ario Bima Arrisyad

Zaki, class XI IPS, revealed that from this activity he learned a lot about how students from various countries think about the world, their culture, and learn about their own country. He can also get the real information from its citizen. He learned not to have prejudiced against other countries. Zaki revealed that this program is very good because it can open up his insights and prepare him to become a world citizen. Zerlina, class X, stated that Video conference built her awareness on the importance of respecting other people for differences. She learns how to speak well and despite differences in views between one country to another. She adds that the dialogue always ended with a neutral conclusion. Hanifah, a class X student, revealed that she only found out that India was so protective its culture, as well as its young generation. She also expressed her admiration for the strong Palestinian students despite the war in his country. The same thing was expressed by Alifia, class X. Her views were increasingly open to what is happening in the world, and how different views in each country. In addition, this activity builds her confidence to talk to foreigners. Ario, one of the

students with autism, revealed that his confidence is increasing improved. He suggested that every school in Padang City conduct similar activities.

In addition, the courage of students to participate in various competitions and join exchange students also increased since they participate in Video Conference. One of the students from the club is joining the students' exchange program in U.S.A and two students are in the national selection for the same program

Based on the data from the observation, interviews, and the achievements of students in the past few years, it can be concluded that Cheria Video Conference can solve the problem of students' lack of motivation in attending the extracurricular activities as well as improve students' ability and character in SMAN 3 Padang.

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