



Students' Challenges in Writing Personal Letter during Online Learning

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Abstract

The Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic has spread all over the world including Indonesia. There are many aspects affected by this virus, one of which is educational activities. Education in Indonesia has a big change caused by this virus. Schools or educational facilities have to close to prevent the spread of this virus. So that, the students cannot come to classroom and they have to run online learning. This research aimed to find out the challenges faced by eleventh grade students of SMA Pertiwi 1 Padang in writing personal letter during online learning. This research is a descriptive research. The samples of this research were 157 students of eleventh grade students of SMA Pertiwi 1 Padang, where the samples were selected by using proportional random sampling technique. The technique of data collection was using questionnaire. The students were given 24 questions related to process of writing, aspects of writing, generic structure of personal letter and language features of personal letter to find out their challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. The result showed that mostly the students have challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. It can be proved from the result of this study where the mean score of process indicator was 2.72, the mean score of aspect of writing indicator was 2.78, the mean score of generic structure of personal letter was 2.65 and the mean score of language features of personal letter was 2.75. The highest mean score was 2.78 in the aspect of writing, which was in the difficult category. So, the students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning were in difficult category.

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A. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic has spread all over the world including Indonesia. Education in Indonesia has a big change caused by this virus. Schools or educational facilities have to close to prevent the spread of this virus. So that, the students cannot come to classroom and they

have to run online learning. Online learning is a learning process where the students do not have to attend the classroom to learn and they just learn from home by using computer devices connected to the internet connection. It is in line with Hockly and Clandfield (2010) which states that online learning is a learning activity by using computer devices connected to the internet to communicate and learning take places. Means et al. (2009) define online learning is as a process of learning from distance connecting someone to the others by using internet connection.

However, in implementing the online learning, there are many difficulties or challenges faced by the teacher and the students in learning English. Teaching English writing text is considered do not optimal during online learning. It is caused by the limited of time of learning process, so that the teacher is not optimal to explain about the material of the text to the students.

Due to this pandemic, the eleventh grade students of Senior High School just learn two English texts. They are analytical exposition and personal letter. However, the researcher focused on personal letter. Personal letter is a letter sent by someone to a relative or close friend to express congratulations, thank you, condolences, etc. To achieve a good result in writing personal letter, the students have to master the process of writing, aspects of writing, generic structure of personal letter and language feature of personal letter. It is in line with Haris (1969) stated that to produce a good writing, the writer requires to master the part of writing skill such as content, forms, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics (punctuation and capitalization).

There are some studies that relevant to this research. Rifal (2020) discussed the challenges of writing personal letter in non-pandemic era, while Zakiyah (2019) focussed on teaching personal letter through google classroom. In addition Mora (2021) investigated the difficulties in writing recount text during online learning.

The special thing that makes this research is different with previous researches is that there are only limited researchers that conducted the research about students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. The other reason is the teaching writing process is not running optimally. Because of that, the researcher is interested to conduct a research to find out the challenges faced by the students in writing personal letter during online learning especially in SMA 1 Pertiwi Padang.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive research. According to Mukhaiyar (2017) Descriptive research is a research that describes occurrence or phenomenon based on existing facts without any manipulation or special treatment to the object of research. The aimed of this research is to find out the students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. The population of this research was eleventh grade students of SMA Pertiwi 1 Padang in the academic year 2021/2022, who have studied personal letter. This research uses proportional random sampling in selecting samples that will be used as research respondents. According to Sugiyono (2009) proportional random sampling is process of selecting the sample of the research based on the population proportion where all of the populations have the same chance to be the sample of the research. Therefore, as many as 157 students were selected as respondents in this research. 13,4% samples of this research were from XI MIPA 1,

14,0 % were from XI MIPA 2, 14,0% were from XI MIPA 3, 12,1% were from XI IPS 1, 12,7 % were from XI IPS 2, 12,1 % were from XI IPS 3, 12,1 % were from XI IPS 4, and 9,6% were from XI IPS 5.

Questionnaire was used as the instrumentation of this research which the indicators relate to students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. The questionnaire consists of 24 statements where the questions number 1-8 were related to the process of writing, questions number 9-17 were related to aspects of writing, questions number 18-21 were related to the generic structure of personal letter and questions number 22-24 were related to the language feature of personal letter. The researcher used likert scale and it was divided into four points; 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). Validity and reliability were used in this research to ensure whether the questionnaire is valid and reliable or not. The researcher asked for help from one of the lectures of English Department Universitas Negeri Padang who is an expert in writing to test the questionnaire validity. Then, Alpha Cronbach's formula using SPSS program version 25 was used to measure the questionnaire reliability.

In conducting this research, the researcher used these procedures: first, the researcher asking permission to the English teacher for distributing questionnaire to the students about students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning. Then, the researcher explained the instruction should be followed by the students in answering the questionnaire. After that, the researcher spread the questionnaire to the students. Next, the researcher calculated the number of the students who have already answered the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher analysed the questionnaires to get the conclusion from it.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

The statements on the questionnaire will answer four research questions. The first research question is students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning related to the process of writing. There were 8 statements in the questionnaire. The following data results are shown in the table below:

1. Students' Challenges in Writing Personal Letter during Online Learning Related to The Process of Writing

Table 1. Process of Writing Indicator

Indicator	Items	Mean	S.D	Category
Process of writing	1. I have difficulties in selecting topic that I will develop in writing personal letter during online learning.	2.69	.678	Difficult
	2. I have difficulty in mapping the points that I will explain in writing	2.78	.673	Difficult

personal letter during online learning			
3. I don't know what aspects I have to check when editing in writing a personal letter due to online learning	2.74	.690	Difficult
4. The teacher does not allow me to send my personal letter's revisions repeatedly during online learning	2.01	.844	Difficult
5. The process of writing personal letters in online learning is more difficult than offline learning	2.96	.835	Difficult
6. I have difficulty writing personal letters during online learning because there is no direct control from the teacher	2.89	.859	Difficult
7. I am not used to writing personal letters because I am used to chat or video calls	2.52	.829	Difficult
8. Online learning makes me difficult to ask the teacher about what I don't understand about writing personal letters	3.15	.726	Most difficult
Average	2.72	.767	Difficult

Based on the table of the data above, it can be seen that the average mean scores of indicator of process of writing is 2.72 and the Standard Deviation is .767. It can be interpreted that students find difficulties during the process of writing personal letter. The average was obtained from mean score of eight statements on the indicator process of writing, where the mean of first statement is 2.69 and the Standard Deviation is .678. The mean of second statement is 2.78 and the standard Deviation is .673. The mean of third statement is 2.74 and standard deviation is .690. The mean of fourth statement is 2.01 and the standard deviation is .844. The mean of fifth statement is 2.96 and the standard of deviation is .835. The mean of sixth statement is 2.89 and the standard deviation is .859. The mean of seventh statement is 2.52 and standard deviation is .829. The mean of eighth statement is 3.15 and the standard deviation is .726. From that description, it can be concluded that students have difficulties in writing personal letters during online learning especially in the process of writing and difficulties in communicating the topic (item 8) particularly.

2. Students' Challenges in Writing Personal Letter during Online Related to The Apects of Writing

Table 2. Aspects of Writing Indicator

Indicators	Items	Mean	S.D	Category
Aspect of writing	9. I have difficulty communicating the topic that I will develop in writing a personal letter with the teacher during online learning.	2.82	.703	Difficult
	10. I feel the ideas that I shared in writing personal letter during online learning not clear and well organized	2.52	.739	Difficult
	11. Online learning makes it difficult for me to connect one idea to another in writing personal letter	2.75	.773	Difficult
	12. I feel that the ideas I developed in writing personal letter are not optimal due to online learning	2.79	.661	Difficult
	13. Online learning makes me unmotivated to learn grammar related to writing personal letters	2.82	.775	Difficult
	14. I have difficulty in writing personal letters during online learning due to lack of grammar knowledge	2.95	.658	Difficult
	15. Online learning makes me unmotivated to expand vocabulary	2.66	.756	Difficult
	16. Writing a personal letter during online learning is difficult for me due to lack of vocabulary	2.86	.655	Difficult
	17. I have difficulty in mastering the mechanics of writing personal letters in online learning	2.83	.687	Difficult
	Average	2.78	.709	Difficult

Based on the table of the data above, it can be seen that the average mean scores of indicator of aspects of writing is 2.78 and the Standard Deviation is .709. It

can be interpreted that students find it difficult to decide content, to decide organization, to use correct grammar, to use appropriate vocabulary, and to use the correct mechanic. The average was obtained from mean score of nine statements on the indicator aspects of writing, where the mean of first statement is 2.82 and the Standard Deviation is .703. The mean of second statement is 2.52 and the standard Deviation is .739. The mean of third statement is 2.75 and standard deviation is .773. The mean of fourth statement is 2.79 and the standard deviation is .661. The mean of fifth statement is 2.82 and the standard of deviation is .775. The mean of sixth statement is 2.95 and the standard deviation is .658. The mean of seventh statement is 2.66 and standard deviation is .756. The mean of eighth statement is 2.86 and standard deviation is .655. The mean of ninth statement is 2.83 and standard deviation is .687. From that description, it can be concluded that students have difficulties in writing personal letters during online learning especially in the aspects of writing and due to lack of grammar knowledge (item 14) particularly.

3. Students' Challenges in Writing Personal Letter during Online Related to the Generic Structure of Personal Letter

Table 3. Generic Structure Indicator

Indicators	Items	Mean	S.D	Category
Generic Structure	18. I have difficulty distinguishing the placement of the sender and receiver in writing personal letters during online learning	2.52	.789	Difficult
	19. I have difficulty in making small talk sentences in writing personal letters during online learning	2.77	.688	Difficult
	20. I have difficulty in writing important ideas that I will convey in writing personal letters during online learning	2.69	.667	Difficult
	21. I am confused about how to end a personal letter due to the lack of references during online learning	2.61	.749	Difficult
	Average	2.65	.723	Difficult

Based on the table of the data above, it can be seen that the average mean scores of indicator of generic structure of personal letter is 2.65 and the Standard Deviation is .723. It can be interpreted that students have difficulties in using generic

structure of personal letter. The average was obtained from mean score of four statements on the indicator generic structure of personal letter, where the mean of item 18 is 2.52 and the Standard Deviation is .789. The mean of item 19 is 2.77 and the standard Deviation is .688. The mean of item 20 is 2.69 and standard deviation is .667. The mean of item 21 is 2.61 and the standard deviation is .749. From that explanation, it can be concluded that students have difficulties in writing personal letters during online learning especially term of using generic structure of personal letter and difficulties in conveying the idea (item 20) particularly.

4. Students' Challenges in Writing Personal Letter during Online Related to the Language Features of Personal Letter

Table 3. Language Features of Personal Letter

Indicators	Items	Mean	S.D	Category
Language features of personal letter	22. I am not used to using contracted forms in writing personal letters during online learning	2.87	.617	Difficult
	23. I have difficulty translating daily language into English when writing personal letters during online learning	2.69	.733	Difficult
	24. I am not used to using punctuation marks (...) or <i>ellipsis</i> in writing personal letters during online learning	2.59	.785	Difficult
	Average	2.72	.712	Difficult

Based on the table of the data above, it can be seen that the average mean scores of indicator of language feature of personal letter is 2.72 and the Standard Deviation is .712. It can be interpreted that students have difficulties in using language features of personal letter. The average was obtained from mean score of three statements on the indicator language features of personal letter, where the mean of item 22 is 2.87 and the Standard Deviation is .617. The mean of item 23 is 2.69 and the standard Deviation is .733. The mean of item 24 is 2.59 and standard deviation is .785. From that explanation, it can be concluded that students have difficulties in writing personal letters during online learning especially in the language features of personal letter and difficulties in using contracted forms particularly.

Discussion

According to Onno W Purbo (2002), online learning is one of the technologies of information form that is put in the Educational aspect in the form of indirect schools. Since pandemic spread all over the world especially Indonesia, the government choose

to change the learning process to avoid the spread of covid-19. The learning process which was originally carried out face-to-face, but now has to be replaced to online learning due to Covid-19. This rule applies both at school and at university. Changing the learning process from offline to online is not easy. There are many obstacles, challenges or difficulties faced by the teacher and students to run it. For example, in writing personal letter during online learning. To see the students' challenges in writing personal letter, there are four indicators were developed in this research. Those are process of writing, aspect of writing, generic structure of personal letter and language feature of personal letter.

The first indicator aimed to find out students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning related to the process of writing. In the process of writing, the students' challenges are related to planning, drafting, editing, and making final draft. Based on the data processing result, the average mean scores of indicator process of writing were 2.72. It means that the process of writing indicator were in the difficult category. It also showed that the eighth statement is the most difficult part of process of writing faced by the students in writing personal letter. The statement is related to the communication between the teacher and students about personal letter material during online learning.

The second indicator aimed to find out students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning related to the aspect of writing. There are five aspect of writing should be learned by the students. They are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Based on the data processing result, the average mean scores of process of writing indicator were 2.78. It means that the aspect of writing were in the difficult category. Grammatical term is item no. 14 which is the most difficult item faced by the students in the aspect of writing. It can be proven from the mean score of grammatical term is higher than the others. It also supported by Fika (2019) that has same finding with this research. She found that lack of vocabulary mastery and grammar becomes the most problem during the writing process.

The third indicator aimed to find out students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning related to generic structure of personal letter. Based on the data processing result, the average mean scores of generic structure of personal letter indicator were 2.65. It means that the generic structure of personal letter were in the difficult category. It also showed that the most difficult indicator that faced by the students was making small talk. It was happened because the students still lack of vocabulary. So that, they confused to organize the idea that will be delivered on the personal letter. It also supported by Mora (2021) who has conducted the research entitled *Students' Writing Difficulties in Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic*. She stated that there were 4 aspects of students' difficulties in writing. They were sentence construction, organizing a text and paragraphing, text cohesion, and register/style.

The fourth indicator aimed to find out students' challenges in writing personal letter during online learning related to language feature of personal letter. Still many students do not understand and have difficulties to comprehend the language features of personal letter. It can be proven from the data processing result that showed students in have difficulties in using appropriate language features, especially on using

contracted form (item no.22). It means that the students do not understand the language feature of personal letter.

Based on the data processing result above, the students have difficulties in writing personal letter during online learning due to fourth indicator above. They are process of writing, aspect of writing, generic structure of personal letter and language feature of personal letter. In addition, they have difficulties they are not used to write personal letter and they use social media more often to exchange messages.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the research result and discussion on, it can be concluded that the students have difficulties selecting the topic, mapping the points, editing, difficulties because there is no direct control from the teacher, and difficult to communicate with the teacher related to the material of personal letter. Based on the mean score of process of writing stood at 2.72. It means that all sub indicator of the process of writing are considered difficult. However, the difficulty in communicating with the teacher to ask materials that they do not understand about personal letters is the main difficulty faced by students in the process of writing.

In the aspects of writing, the students have difficulties in develop the topic, organize their writing, connecting the idea, lack of grammar knowledge, lack of vocabulary, and difficult to master the mechanic of writing personal letter. Based on the mean score of aspect of writing stood at 2.78. It means that all sub indicators of the aspects of writing are considered difficult. However, lack of grammar is the main difficulty faced by students in terms of aspects of writing.

Then, the students still difficult in mastering the generic structure of personal letter. It can be proven from the number of students who are still confused in determining the placement of sender and receiver, difficult in making small talk, and difficult to convey the important idea. In addition, the mean score of generic structure of personal letter stood at 2.72. It means that all sub indicator of generic structure of personal letter are considered difficult. However, conveying the important ideas is the mean difficulty faced by the student in the generic structure of personal letter indicator.

Lastly, the students are also not accustomed to use the contracted form, difficult to translate daily language, and not accustomed to using ellipsis punctuation in writing personal letters during online learning. It can be proven from the mean score of language feature of personal letter indicators stood at 2.72. It means that all sub indicators of language features of personal letter are considered difficult. However, Unaccustomed to use contracted form is the main difficulty in language features of personal letter indicator.

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