

## **Implementing Hybrid e-Learning on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Pre-service Teacher of an Islamic College**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The implementation of hybrid e-learning in English as A Foreign Language course could perhaps be a promising approach for teaching and learning particularly within Islamic higher education. Hence, this paper attempts to explore the initiative effort of familiarizing hybrid e-learning among Islamic college students in a speaking course. This study took the duration of five months to complete. Instructions were delivered via both face-to-face and online learning: seven times for face-to-face classroom meetings and five times for online classes. Nicenet was used as a virtual classroom. Online rubric was made available for students' self-assessment both in their mid-term test and final test. Eighty-five pre-service teachers took part in the study. They were asked to do online task instructions either independently or collaboratively with their course mates. Questionnaire and t-test were used to analyze the data. The study indicated that hybrid e-learning is applicable in the college. It promoted motivation and collaborative work for the students. In terms of test results, there was no significant difference in hybrid e-learning approach. The research suggests that the instructions and materials need to be adjusted in order to meet the learners' need.

*Keywords:* Hybrid e-learning, online learning, higher education, EFL

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In general, the advent of educational technology has presumably influenced the way English was taught and learnt. This may have affected specifically the traditional learning process of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The traditional face-to-face class needs to be injected with innovative teachings. This could be achieved by integrating internet technology that is considerably viable. In this case, as advocated by Ahmad (2010), the freely accessible web 2.0 platform of the internet could be integrated with traditional class for hybrid e-learning. It would be most currently appropriate if this hybrid e-learning model could be considered and implemented within the context of Islamic college.

As mentioned earlier, the hybrid e-learning does not require high cost for software application (Chandran & Kempegowda, 2010; Huang, 2010; Tsai, 2011). Most web 2.0 tools platform enables instructors to design and provide their lesson plan freely. This has triggered instructors to upgrade and improve on delivering courses in class. On that note, this study should also attempt to find answers to questions in terms of students familiarization with regard to their preparation,

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motivation, collaboration, course material, and course assessment in encountering the hybrid e-learning. Having answered that, it was hope that a possible way could be offered in tailoring hybrid e-learning. In a way, this paper also discloses the practice in delivering English as a foreign language, particularly in Speaking course that is incorporated with internet technology at Islamic college.

## 2.0 THE PROSPECT OF HYBRID APPROACH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

This study looks at the prospect of Hybrid e-learning approach as a successful teaching and learning method incorporating online and traditional face-to-face learning that leaves impact on learners' acceptance.

Apart from the idea of interconnection between people and association between artifacts (Clark, 2005), the term "hibridity" is also characterized as the merge of different entities such as computer technology and face-to-face to produce a new entity (Abdul Rahim, 2012). Evidently, they further elaborate the idea that this new entity could become a promising methodological approach to facilitate teaching and learning, thus, knowledge building. Relating to this idea, there have also been other studies scrutinizing hybrid approaches in teaching and learning process. The significant impact on teaching and learning proved by Mackenzie, Promnitz-hayashi, Castellano, & Hinkelman (2011). The study focuses on blended learning spaces for instructor specializing in foreign language learning at a Japanese university. They compared lessons between hybrid or blended and non-hybrid e-learning. The results were different lessons goals, different patterns of interaction, different types of homework, more variety of media, and more variety of input and output. Moreover, their study indicated signs of the increase of both learner autonomy and motivation. Tsai (2011) supports the idea of improving teaching and learning process. His study focuses on integrating learning theories into hybrid e-learning model. He proves that there is a great interest of a possibility to combine different learning theories into hybrid e-learning. Ansari, Shabbir, & Kazim (2012) offer the benefits and challenges for implementing hybrid e-learning in educational environment. They make use web 2.0 platform for web-based learning. The result of their investigation proves that by introducing this kind of learning the students are able to improve their learning environment significantly, such as evaluation, research capability, and communication skills.

Some models to deliver courses have been adapted in order to disseminate hybrid e-learning into the higher level of education. EL-Deghaidy & Nouby (2008) study the effectiveness of blended e-learning as an approach to a course. The model proves significant practical implication for teacher. Ijab, Anwar, & Hamid (2004) mention hybrid e-learning concept in designing and teaching courses. They implement this concept as a model into their institution. The finding indicates that the model provides a convenience to the students. Furthermore, they underline the factors that indicate success in implementing hybrid e-learning such as the access and level of technology adoption, language proficiency, reliability, scalability, security of Learning Management Systems, and the relevance of the syllabus and contents. In addition, Yuen (2010) claims that the trend of hybrid e-learning has become comfortable. Teaching approaches incorporating hybrid e-learning model become pedagogical practices. Approaches such as online discussion, online resources, course management and delivery, and specific pedagogy support were used for the learners' acceptance.

There are factors that significantly and directly impacted the learner's acceptance of hybrid e-learning courses. Ahmed (2010) assesses hybrid e-learning to the learners by using three critical factors, such as instructor characteristics, information technology infrastructure, and organizational and technical support. Kobayashi & Little (2011) evaluate a blended learning in EFL skill. They sum up that instructors have to consider many variables to improve EFL skill. Those are the proficiency

level of students, the length of time they have used the program, the limitations of the program's interface, and the learner's own level of computer literacy.

### 3.0 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This project was carried out in the Islamic college context in Indonesia with participants from pre-service teacher training program located in a rural area of Bone regency, South Sulawesi. The name of college is The State College for Islamic Studies or STAIN Watampone. It is a state-owned Islamic college managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The college has two faculties, namely Syariah or Law and Tarbiyah or Education Faculties. The pre-service training program is administered by Education Faculty namely *Tadris Bahasa Inggris* or English Education Department (EED).

85 students attended this course and were further distributed into four groups. Their age range between 20-22 years old with English language competencies of high beginning to low intermediate took part in this project. The students of EED are required to attend English courses. One of the courses which is discussed in this paper is Speaking 4 course. It is preceded by series of Speaking 1, 2, and 3 courses. The Speaking 4 course is delivered within 14 weekly meetings, which consist of 90 minutes for each meeting. The course assessment is based on the criteria for each attendance (25%), assignments (10%), mid-term test (30%), and final examination (35%). This compulsory English skill course is available in the third year of their study. So far, this course goal is to improve students' one way speaking skills for public speaking in any occasion. The class meeting in this study is combined with seven times face-to-face and five times e-learning. Basically, the prior course is delivered solely traditional face-to-face course.

At present, there are 12 lecturers teaching in EED by 2014. They are given the task of teaching education courses as well as English courses. They have to teach some subjects such as, psychology in education, philosophy, Islamic education knowledge, and sociology in education. Most of them deliver face-to-face instructions in their courses that is seven lectures to teach English skills and linguistics courses. Furthermore, three of them are trying to combine face-to-face and Information Communication Technology for their classes. However, they still have not a certain model for teaching material of hybrid e-learning. The educational background regarding to teaching English for those seven lecturers are five of them magister in English teaching. The other two are magister in linguistics.

The language interaction in a class is both English and Bahasa Indonesia. English is not solely used in all class interactions as English in Indonesia is used to communicate as a foreign language. The use of those languages depends on the content of the subject study. For example, English skills and English knowledge are mostly taught in English. Conversely, the courses such as Islamic values and teaching practice and other teaching subjects are commonly taught in Bahasa Indonesia. The Speaking 4 course is delivered in English both for face-to-face class and on-line class.

In terms of accessibility for on-line resources, the college provides wireless fidelity, which enables both lecturers and students to access the internet in the classrooms. This effort has been done since two years ago, even though, it sometimes could not be used effectively as the bandwidth issue and a service is often interrupted. On the other hand, the EED students have started to have their own personal computer or laptop for fun or social networking as well as a supportive tool for their study. Some other students who do not have a laptop go to internet café to search for supporting resources. This fact actually gives a chance and enables the lecturer and students to access and make use web 2.0 tools for the class or of their class assignment.

#### 4.0 METHODS

The method of investigation followed in this research was exploratory research aimed at initiating ways to improve English speaking skills by introducing hybrid e-learning among pre-service teacher training students of the state College for Islamic Studies (STAIN) Watampone. Exploratory research allowed the researchers to meet an issue that had not been clearly defined yet and aimed to open up directions for future research (Prapinwong, 2008). As little is known about using web 2.0 tools to support hybrid e-learning in the context of Islamic college, exploratory research seemed suitable method for the study. In other words, the exploratory research was to explore the lecturer and students' class interaction in hybrid e-learning. Inferential statistic of t-test was used to see the comparison of assessment score between face-to-face class and online class. This five months hybrid e-learning project requires face-to-face class once a week for seven weeks, while online learning in virtual class for five weeks. The students were then asked to do the midterm projects presentation after face-to-face class and final project presentation after online class. Then, the students were given a survey to see their perception on readiness, motivation, collaboration, and course material after attending hybrid e-learning class project.

Speaking 4 course is a two credit hour course which requires the students to have a class once a week. This course encompasses skill and knowledge of public speaking. Web 2.0 tools such as Nicenet and Rubric incorporate face-to face Speaking 4 course class to support this hybrid e-learning project. Web 2.0 tools is an available online resource that provides students with many types of learning opportunities beyond simple information access (Smaldino, Lowther, & Russell, 2012). This affordance has made asynchronous communication valuable to EFL teachers and students (Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2012). Furthermore, this tool enables students and educators to work collaboratively (Elam & Nesbit, 2012). The class assignments are designed for students in order to be done individually and also together with their friends. It allows creating active learning and student centered environment. Besides, most of the web 2.0 tools are offered free for public use. This makes it as a powerful and a widely used tool for academic purposes.

Nicenet is an internet classroom assistant that allows virtually any classroom (Nicenet, 2003). It is an online discussion board or discussion group. Nicenet is an electronic forum in which it facilitates people or group of students to share their ideas, comments, or questions on specific topics (Bikowski & Kessler, 1999). The asynchronous communication nature of Nicenet is able to facilitate the online class for lecturer and students. The lecturer could make online his class instructions, materials, or tasks to the students. Hence, the students who attend Speaking 4 course project read the online instructions in Nicenet and do the class activity individually or collaboratively whenever and wherever they are. Besides, Nicenet is easy to be accessed. The students have other options to open Nicenet as it is not only through their laptop, but also by using their mobile phone. This kind of learning offers flexibility and different atmosphere for the learners in this college.

Rubric is a set of assessment criteria for appraising or judging student products or performances (Smaldino *et al.*, 2012). A rubric normally consists of rating scale as a direction to measure achievement of performance criteria. The rubric helps the students to have a clear understanding of what they expect to achieve in a course. This project makes use of the online rubric Rubistar, which can be accessed in <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>. This online rubric is expected to give direction to the students for preparing and attending self-assessment after joining hybrid e-learning class. The scoring of this rubric is modified from Rubistar web and intended to be used both for midterm project presentation and final test project, which have similar criteria and scale.

Basically, the criteria of performance and rating scale in this rubric project are focused on oral presentation. The criteria are divided into five categories of performance and four rating scales. The

ratings counted as the lowest score is 1 and the highest is 4. The first category is intonation. All the ratings in this category concentrated on voice volume of the students in presenting oral presentation. It shows the rating 1 for volume is “often too soft to be heard by all audience members.” Rating 2 indicates that volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 80% of the time. Rating 3 shows that volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members at least 90% of the time. Lastly, rating 4 indicates that volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation.

The second category is enthusiasm, which focused on facial expression and body language. It shows that rating 1 is “very little use of facial expressions or body language.” In addition, it did not generate much interest in topic being presented. For Rating 2, facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat faked. Rating 3 indicates that Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others. Lastly, Rating 4 shows that facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.

The third category is a time-limit which concentrated on how long the students spend their time in delivering their speech or oral presentation: Rating 1, presentation is less than three minutes or more than six minutes. Rating 2, presentation is three minutes long. Rating 3, presentation is four minutes long. Rating 4, presentation is five minutes long.

The fourth category is posture and eye contact. This following category informs the criteria of how the students stand up and perform eye contact to audience: Rating 1, slouches and or does not look at people during the presentation. Rating 2, sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact. Rating 3, stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation. Rating 4, stands up straight, looks relaxed, confident and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.

The fifth category is content. The following are the ratings: Rating 1, does not seem to understand the topic very well by mentioning the items in header, introduction, body, and conclusion. Rating 2, shows a good understanding of parts of the topic by mentioning the items in header, introduction, body, and conclusion. Rating 3, shows a good understanding of the topic by mentioning the items in header, introduction, body, and conclusion. Rating 3, shows a full understanding of the topic by mentioning the items in header, introduction, body, and conclusion.

## **5.0 PROCEDURES**

The instructional design and development of hybrid e-learning in this project is guided by ADDIE (Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) approach (Branch, 2009). This approach was chosen due to the suitability of the elements that govern the steps considered in this research. ADDIE consists of five main steps. The first starts by analyse, in which the researcher identifies the probable causes for a performance gap or the problem that the lecturer wishes to solve. The second is design, which describes overall purposes and points of the instructional unit. It could also verify the desired performances and appropriate testing methods. The third is develop, of which the researcher creates the actual learning material, generate and validate the learning resources. The fourth is implement, which prepares the learning environment and engage the students. Finally, evaluate, in which the quality of the instructional product is assessed.

## **Analyse**

Some English lecturers in EED at the college of STAIN Watampone tried to make use of various sources from the internet to support their class material in order to enrich the content of their face-to-face class (Yauri & Zaitun Binti Haji Sidin, 2013). However, their efforts were not effective to encourage the learners to be independent learners. Actually, online learning system should promote students-centred learning. Even so, this expectance is being far from the reality. This might be caused by their lack of knowledge on how to develop online material, and their familiarity with the best tools for incorporating face-to-face class. So, the problem is how to develop a hybrid e-learning in the course to support students to be more independent learners. In this case, the researcher tried to initiate hybrid e-learning of EFL, particularly in Speaking 4 course.

## **Design**

The purpose of Speaking 4 course is to improve students' speaking skills, particularly for public speaking in various kinds of event. The content of course material in this project is divided into two modules, which include skill and knowledge for delivering a speech. The first module includes the skills of speaking delivered in a form of face-to-face class. The students are asked to understand, discuss, and practice the part of the module which consists of an outline of speech, technique to arrange speech, Master of Ceremony speech, practicing the speech, technique to develop ideas in speech, and practicing to develop idea. Subsequently, the second module is mostly concerning knowledge of speech, which covers pattern of speech, favourite speech, the strategy of English speech (1), the strategy of English speech (2), and behavioural aspects in the speech. The class instructions within the second module are created on the internet by means of Nicenet. Then, the students are asked to join Nicenet class to read instruction, follow the suggested link for reference, answer the questions, and do collaborative activity by practicing speech with their friends.

## **Develop**

This phase describes learning resources, tools, strategies, instructions, and selected media to facilitate learning process in hybrid e-learning. Books and articles from internet were resources for learning materials. The materials for face-to-face class were mostly delivered as the instructor explained more to the learners before they took part in practicing the speech. In online class, the instructions to the students were in form of questions to make sure that they had done the activities. For example, the instructor provided the link for course material and asked the students to do the activities, such as reading, sharing ideas, and speech practicing. The kind of questions was just to check whether the students had done the suggested activities or otherwise.

## **Implement**

This phase prepares the learning environment for the students. The phase is the actual learning environment where the student can begin to construct the new knowledge and skills required to close the performance gap (Branch, 2009). After attending a series of face-to-face class, the researcher introduces and asks the students to log in Nicenet by giving a class key. For the following lessons, the students attend Nicenet class as a medium of online discussion and to provide them with instructions and learning tasks. This class is fully online before they are given a final project.

## Evaluation

The students are required to attend face-to-face class and do their project to pass the first module. The requirement is also the same for Nicenet class. The students have to attend online Nicenet class and undertake the project of the second module. The evaluation for the first module was Mid test and Final test for the second module.

## 6.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Survey questions about the readiness of students to attend hybrid class or blended learning mode course generated a series of responses. More than half of the respondents (84%) have laptop or netbook and only 26 % have personal computers. All respondents (100%) made use a computer for typing their course assignment in word processor program and accessing the internet. In terms of the effort to access internet weekly, under half of the respondents (41%) accessed up to three times in a week. More than one fourth (33%) of the respondents come to access it for seven times or above in a week. Just under a quarter (20%) accessed it within four to seven times in a week. However, very few (1%) claimed that they had never accessed the internet within a week. (see Table 1)

**Table 1** The readiness of the students attending hybrid e-learning class

Survey questions	Yes
Do you have a personal computer?	26%
Do you have laptop or netbook?	84%
Do you use computer to type and internet access?	100%
How many times do you access to the internet in a week?	
Never	1%
One to three times	41%
Four to seven times	20%
More than seven times	33%

When asked to rate their experience related to motivation and collaboration in attending hybrid e-learning class, the majority of respondents (93%) claimed that this sort of class motivated them for learning. This could also be related to their willingness to do the class assignments in a course. High number (84%) of the respondents were more enthusiastic in doing the course task. Besides, the high number (90%) of students agreed that this class needed collaboration to solve the problems in a course assignment (see Table 2).

**Table 2** Motivation and collaboration

Survey questions	Yes
Is hybrid e-learning got more motivated you?	93%
I did my course assignment more enthusiasm	84%
I needed collaboration to find solution	90%

Almost all students' responses (97%) the need of material adjustment after experiencing hybrid e-learning course. In other words, a prior course material for face to face class was deliberated to modify the online course material (see Table 3).

**Table 3** Adjust course material

Survey question	Yes
Is course material by hybrid e-learning needed to be adjusted	97%

There was the first test or midterm test required to the participants for each of the 4 groups after attending seven times face-to-face class. It was followed by the second test or final examination after the participants attended five times online class. T-tests in data analysis of Microsoft Excel software was used to determine the significant difference between mid-term test and final test. The formula is  $p \text{ value} > \alpha$  then  $H_0$  is accepted. The  $p$  value refers to score in Mid and Final exams. The level of significance  $\alpha$  is 5% or 0.05. When  $H_0$  is accepted, it means that there is no significant difference between Mid and Final. However, if  $H_0$  is not accepted, it means there is a significant difference. The results are shown in Table 4 to 7.

**Table 4** t-Test paired two sample for means of Group 1

	MID	Final
Mean	74.375	75.83333
Variance	135.4619565	147.1014
Observations	24	24
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.525462967	
t Critical two-tail	2.068657599	

There were 24 participants in Group 1. The data shows that the mean score for Final exam is slightly higher than the Mid test. Even so,  $t$  table or  $t$  Critical two-tail shows 2.068657599 with  $p$  value 0.525462967. Furthermore,  $p$  value is higher than  $\alpha$  5% or 0.05. It means that there is no significance different between students' score in Mid test and Final test. In other words, the result of the Final assessment of online learning was hoped higher than Mid test of face-to-face. In fact, the result was almost same with a previous Mid test.

**Table 5** t-Test paired two sample for means of Group 2

	Mid	Final
Mean	79.76190476	75.71428571
Variance	176.1904762	353.2142857
Observations	21	21
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.433730413	
t Critical two-tail	2.085963441	

The participants in Group 2 were 21 students. The table displays that the mean of Mid test is higher than the Final test. The  $t$  Table is 2.085963441 and  $p$  value is 0.433730413. As the  $p$  value is still higher than  $\alpha$  0.05 so there is no significant score difference between Mid and Final tests.



**Table 6** t-Test paired two sample for means of Group 3

	Mid	Final
Mean	76.5	73.5
Variance	192.3684211	189.7368421
Observations	20	20
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.192138111	
t Critical two-tail	2.09302405	

Table 6 provides information of 20 participants. The mean score in the Mid test is higher than the Final test. The t table is 2.09302405 and p value shows 0.192138111. Based on the findings, the p value appears higher than  $\alpha$  0.05. Therefore, there is no significant score difference for Mid and Final test in this group.

**Table 7** t-Test paired two sample for means of Group 4

	Mid	Final
Mean	69	69.75
Variance	117.3684211	206.5131579
Observations	20	20
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.748136975	
t Critical two-tail	2.09302405	

The participants in this group were 20 students. The mean score is the lowest of all four groups. The progress of mean score for Mid and Final test remains the same. The data shows that the t table is 2.09302405 and p value is 0.748136975. The p value is higher than  $\alpha$  so there is no significant difference between Mid and Final score.

The data from all four groups show various results of mean scores. There is no high range of a gap between the mid and final tests. Group two and three score higher in mid-term test than the Final one. Group one scores slightly higher in final test than mid and group 4 obtain almost same score. Furthermore, p values in all groups are higher than the level of significance  $\alpha$ . This indicates that the comparative score between face to face class and online class of hybrid e-learning is not significant. This means that the participants were still familiar with face to face class rather than online class. Therefore, the content of material for online class should be modified to fit the students' need for virtual class.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The paper has described the initiating work to familiarize hybrid e-learning for teaching particularly English speaking skills in Islamic college students. This model provides convenience for the learners. It also promises high motivation and collaborative work to students in learning English skills, even though, the test scores did not indicate significant difference between face to face class mode and

online class within hybrid e-learning. From this study, it is suggested that the contents of material and instruction for hybrid e-learning need to suit the learners' needs.

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