

Language Assessment Practice in Hybrid Classes: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract. This article presents the students' perspective on the language assessment practice in hybrid classes using a survey research method. Preservice English teachers were chosen purposively as respondents in particular the ones that have passed Language Assessment or Language Testing subject. The respondents show positive views on the language assessment practice in hybrid classes. The result also reveals the role and importance of technological advancement in the process of assessing the language in hybrid classes.

Keywords: Language Assessment, Hybrid Class, Students' Perspectives

INTRODUCTION

The changes in the educational sector are unavoidable and undeniable. This could happen due to a lot of factors, the most recent factor which forces it to change is the Covid-19 pandemic. A lot of teaching methods which has been neglected for years are being reintroduced such as the use of blended and hybrid learning. Hybrid learning and blended learning provided another choice for the students and teacher to engage in a classroom context using the technology. In hybrid learning, an assessment is also one of the essential parts that the teacher must conduct to measure the success of their student's learning. Assessment is a valuable part of the teaching and learning process for every subject taught including language assessment in language classrooms.

Conventionally, the process of assessing language is conducted using paper tests, but in hybrid or blended classes, it is different. Because not every student can access the test using paper, the effective way is to apply the online test using the application available on the internet. Learning using the hybrid method is actually not something new because this type of learning has been introduced for a long time along with technological developments. Allen and Seaman (2010) have characterized the hybrid form of learning as a learning method that represents the best of both other learning methods, namely the fully online method and the conventional face-to-face method in the sense that the hybrid method provides all the convenience of online learning while still maintaining the importance of the face-to-face relationship experience. found in the classroom for students. Hybrid learning is considered to have emerged because a substantial proportion of content is delivered online, usually uses online discussions, and usually has a number of face-to-face meetings.

Hybrid learning can be said to be the result of advances in science and technology, of course, it needs to have principles in integrating it into learning. Erben et al (2009) stated that there are 5 principles of using technology in learning that an educator must understand, namely getting to know the students, selecting material that must be adjusted to the level of the students, understanding students' abilities in using technology, using appropriate language, and challenges in using it. technology in the classroom.

Dealing with the use of technology in language assessment, Jamieson (2005) states that the belief that computer-based exams should be superior to their traditional counterparts has been linked to the movement toward a larger use of computers in assessment, and certain corresponding actions have been implemented. Furthermore Green (2013) reveals that Computer technology advancements have made some strategies more feasible, such as scheduling and managing the delivery of assessments. They have created more opportunities to collect various types of data, like the average response time of each test taker to each item. However various software platforms also have their own set of restrictions. If the software isn't functional, it won't be able to deliver ideas for novel task formats, and some methods are actually simpler to handle on paper.

Assessment using technological advances which are also part of the supporting factors of the hybrid learning success is also addressed in Tarighat & Khodabakhsh's research. Tarighat & Khodabakhsh (2016) mentioned in their research that it was noted that using this kind of assessment during the Mobile-Assisted Language Assessment (MALA) process gave students the chance to take part and hone their speaking abilities while having their assessments done. Those views make us more aware that the practice of language assessment in hybrid classes is inseparable from the utilization of technology in language classes.

This research is intended to find out the students' perspectives on language assessment in hybrid classes and how they perceive the practice of language assessment in their hybrid classes specifically the integration of technology advancement in their hybrid class as one of the integral parts of hybrid learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a survey research design as a branch of the quantitative research method. Cohen et al (2018) state that surveys collect data at a specific moment in time with the goal of characterizing the nature of current conditions, establishing benchmarks against which current conditions can be measured, or figuring out the connections between particular occurrences. As a result of the survey, the researcher asserts or generalizes about the population. Page et al (2014) share that a survey can be made to gather quantitative data by giving respondents the choice to evaluate replies on a scale or by asking them to answer to questions with closed options (e.g., by rating how likely they are to agree with a statement).

The research data sources were selected purposively, namely, English Education students who have taken the Language Assessment course in the Undergraduate program at Universitas Negeri Makassar. The respondents were chosen because they are expected to have background knowledge about language assessment. The students were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed using Google Forms consisting of 9 statements related to language assessment in the hybrid class. 50 students voluntarily participated in this survey. The result of the research was then analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part is separated into two parts where the findings are presented first followed by the discussion about the practice of language assessment in hybrid class.

Findings

The following table represents the result of the questionnaire distributed to English education students about language assessment in hybrid classes. All 9 statements are displayed sequentially.

Table 1. The questionnaire results about students' perception of language assessment in hybrid classes

No.	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Tests that are carried out online make it easier for students to be fully present because they do not need to be present in person in class	16%	72%	12%	0%
2	Tests that are carried out online provide a great opportunity for cheating (cheating/dishonesty)	32%	52%	12%	4%
3	I find it difficult to take tests that are conducted online	6%	30%	62%	2%
4	Internet network constraints often make me late in submitting assignments/quizzes/tests that must be submitted immediately	28%	52%	16%	4%
5	I am a student who does not understand technology, especially when I have to take quizzes/tests using new applications	4%	18%	58%	20%

6	My lecturer seems confused about using applications on the internet that are used to give students quizzes/tests	6%	22%	58%	14%
7	Giving tests through conventional methods such as tests using paper is not suitable for hybrid classes	14%	48%	34%	4%
8	The exam in the hybrid class must use an online application	10%	60%	26%	4%
9	Giving quizzes online motivated me to study even harder	14%	52%	34%	0%

Table 1 shows that the respondents perceive that assessing the language in a hybrid class is pragmatic. Statement 1 shows that the easiness provided by the possibility of the test taker to have the test outside the classroom and not have to attend the test in person is something that the students perceive positively, proved by the 88% of respondents agreeing with this statement. Though Statement 1 provides easiness for the students, the respondents still believe that the possibility of cheating is still highly in demand if the test is conducted online or hybrid, 84% of respondents agree with Statement 2. The test taker's honesty is in question because the possibility of cheating is still considerable enough.

Statement 3 and Statement 4 provided quite supporting insights about language testing in hybrid classes. In Statement 3, 62% of respondents disagreed with the statement which stated about the students' difficulties in taking the test online, but interestingly there are around 37% of respondents agreed with this. This fact should be further investigated. There is also a probability that one of the reasons why there are around 37% of respondents hesitate to take the test online is because of the result from Statement 4 about the internet network constraints which often make the students late in submitting the test or quizzes that must be submitted immediately. 80% of the respondents agree that the internet network is still becoming a challenge to have an effective language assessment in hybrid classes especially those who had the test online.

Statement 5 and Statement 6 reveal that the students and the lecturers do not have disabilities in undertaking the activities online (using the internet) specifically joining the tests or quizzes online. The students perceive that both students and lecturers have the knowledge to access the internet platforms. Interestingly, the respondents still have various beliefs dealing with Statement 7 about the use of paper tests (conventional method) which is not suitable for the hybrid class. There are 62% of respondents support this, but there are also 37% of the respondents who do not

agree with this. This fact is quite absorbing because the possibility to access more activity on the internet is something that the students anticipate.

The next statement which is mentioned in Statement 8 states that the mode of the exam or test in a hybrid class should only use an online application that is mostly supported by the students as the respondents. 70% of them agree with this statement though there are still 30% of the respondents who disagree with the using of internet applications as the test tools in hybrid classes. The last statement in Statement 9 tries to connect the students' motivation to study hard if they were given the quizzes online. The result shows that 66% of the respondents claim that it is indeed motivated to study harder, but there are also 34% of the respondents disagree with this statement.

Discussion

The questionnaire presented in Table 1 shows a positive and supportive point of view from the students dealing with the use of the online environment in hybrid classes particularly in assessing the students' language ability. The online environment as a product of technological advancement has enriched the method and the process of assessing the language. As Levi & Inbar-Lourie (2020) state addressing local linguistic demands in students' language development, using language to convey academic material, taking into account the impact of technology on language acquisition, and requiring multilingual, multimodal assessment.

The students' familiarity with the technology used is not a new paradigm, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic. It is compelling that the students are forced to master the technology to cope with the recent condition of teaching and learning. This is in line with Xie et al (2020) who reveal that students can succeed in online education if they possess the fundamental technical skills, have access to technology (hardware and software), and are self-motivated learners who also practice self-discipline in managing their time. In the next normal, which will emerge after the COVID-19 pandemic, online education will still be crucial. Online learning will coexist with traditional learning in order to increase educational options, advance educational equity, and foster innovation in learning through the integration of artificial intelligence and mobile learning.

Baser et al (2015) who conduct research about Developing a technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) assessment for preservice teachers learning to teach English as a foreign language suggest that an essential objective is to equip educators to incorporate technology into the teaching of foreign languages. This paper provides foreign language teacher educators with a TPACK survey that can be used to evaluate the caliber of our technology integration coursework in EFL and enhance the way we teach preservice teachers to integrate technology. Connor (2017) also suggests the idea of proving the effectiveness of personalized, data-driven literacy instruction supported by technology in preventing severe reading difficulties.

As an integral part of the success of assessment in hybrid learning, technology and technology mastery are pivotal. Nakatsuhara et al (2017) find that the using of technology such as video conferencing tools compared to face-to-face speaking tests does not have any significant differences in conducting Speaking tests. This finding shows that the conventional way (in-person test) and the contemporary way (test using technology such as online tools) of conducting language assessment do not have a big gap in assessing the students' ability. In addition, Bahari et al (2021) mention that another novel goal presented by their study was to address the dynamicity and nonlinearity of individual differences during ongoing assessments throughout the semester. This allows us to leverage computer-assisted tools and affordances to address the complexity of individual differences through individual-learner-centered calibrated assessment content. This shows a similarity to the students' perception of this research which positively embrace the using of technology in hybrid class for measuring their ability.

CONCLUSION

The results reveal that the students have constructive views on the practice of language assessment in hybrid classes. The application of technology is also not perceived negatively. For the students of English education as preservice teachers, technology is not a barrier both for them and their lecturer. Undergoing the tests or quizzes in a hybrid class is not a drawback for them since they are already accustomed to the technology application in a hybrid class.

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