Is A Hybrid Teaching-Learning Model Feasible to Use in Language Classrooms

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IS A HYBRID TEACHING-LEARNING MODEL FEASIBLE TO USE IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS?

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Abstract

This preliminary study aims at describing how a hybrid class has been implemented in English class of non-English Department students. The questionnaire of the online survey was employed to collect the primary data. About 25 students from Management Study Program became the subjects of the study. This study found most students had positive perceptions towards the implementation of the hybrid model in terms of the curriculum, assessment, classroom management, materials, teaching and learning activities, and teacher's feedback. Despite the fact that most students favor the prevailing hybrid class, this combined model of the conventional and online learning is also subject to some weaknesses: time-consuming for giving feedback, copyright issues, the cost of buying the devices and internet connection service.

Keywords: *M-Learning, hybrid class, favorable teaching and learning, Google Docs, assessment*

While mobile devices are quite ubiquitous, many language instructors are still reluctant to integrate technology into their classrooms. Peachey (2010) surveyed more than 500 teachers concerning their views about mobile-learning. Nearly all the respondents mentioned they had their own mobile devices with the internet connection. However, only 34% reported that they

had used them for learning or teaching in the classrooms. The majority (60%) never implemented m-learning nor integrated any mobile app technology into their classroom. Peachey's findings may imply mobile learning is still challenging to most teachers.

Numbers of researchers mention mobile technology greatly assists students in improving their language skills (Kukulska-Hulme's 2009; Sharples et al, 2009; El-Hussein & Cronje, 2010). For example, Jeng, Wu, Huang, Tan, & Yang (2010) mentioned advantages of using mobile devices for learning such as enabling the students to share their learning portfolios, enjoy favorable learning condition with rich relevant feedback. Gui (2016) mentioned the mobile apps had provided a variety of topics, structures, content sizes, and focuses. They enabled the students to practice drilling, to enhance their pronunciation skills, to improve speaking skills either from video lessons, references, or authentic contents.

Oz (2015) studied mobile assisted language learning perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers. He found there was overwhelming evidence confirming the findings of the present study and the effectiveness of m-learning applications in educational environments. The findings also confirmed a great majority of pre-service EFL teachers agreed with the appropriateness of m-learning for L2 instruction. Thus, the highest perceptions were related to the facilitative role of m-learning technology in L2 instruction and learning, ease of prompt access to materials, perceived convenience of mobile applications due to their portability which helps teachers to readily share the teaching tasks with other colleagues and the convenient environment they provide for effective communication and discussion on teaching and learning topics.

Despite the fact that most language instructors agree upon the importance of mobile devices (73%), most of them seemed to be unprepared with the integration of technology into their classroom's activities (Peachey, 2010). Some questions need to be addressed: why do language instructors not make use of this technology for their teaching? Is it because they do

not know how to use it? Or, are they reluctant to use it? More specifically, the question is formulated as follow: is mobile learning feasible to use for teaching a language?

Based on this rationale, this preliminary research is conducted. By involving about 25 students of two study programs, this study aims at describing if a mobile-learning teaching approach is feasible to use in the language classrooms.

METHOD

The research was conducted in the English class for Management Study Program students, at the University of Ma Chung. This study started from late August to October 2016, involving as many as about 25 students as research subjects. This class applied a supplemental hybrid model (Zao & Breslow, 2013), a combination of a conventional classroom/face-to-face and online learning. In this supplemental model, the teacher asked students to attend the same number of class meetings, but to access technology-based materials outside of the classroom as additional resources. During the meetings, the writer did the following: giving lectures about new topics, having a discussion of the task or learning difficulties, or solving the problems the students had. For the online learning, the writer used several mobile applications such as Socrative (for evaluation purposes), Edmodo (for giving announcements, sharing the material, assigning the assignment) and shared Google doc (give feedback /collaborative projects). Data were obtained through online survey via survey monkey. The writer asked the respondents to use their mobile devices, opening their web browser on the internet. By typing and clicking the address link of the monkey survey, they answered all the questions available. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: focusing on the central tendency of respondents' responses.

FINDINGS

The present study covered ten questions: the relevancy of the hybrid

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English curriculum, willingness to use mobile devices, the handy use of mobile application, the assessment of Socrative application, the assessment of Edmodo application, the activities in the hybrid class, teacher's management skill, possible improvement of language skill, teacher's feedback, and students' beliefs on M-Learning as reliable teaching-learning strategy. The following are the findings covering the aforementioned issues, presented in the form of diagrams.

In question one, the respondents were asked if the hybrid English curriculum was relevant to their needs to learn English. The teaching objective of English Two as stated in the curriculum was that the students understood written and oral discourse in the field of science and master the principles of communication in English so as to apply it in presentations, discussions, writing academic essays in the discipline of science, and conducting interviews. Based on this objective, the teacher managed his instructions in order to make the students master basic English and vocabulary formats that determine comprehension, expository rhetorical patterns, oral presentation principles and the principles of interviews in English.

The finding shows that the majority of the students (56.52%) viewed the content of the curriculum relevant to their needs. Moreover, 8.7% of them even have given strong approval of this issue. For the majority, the curriculum was quite complete, allowing them to practice all language skills (reading, speaking, writing, and listening) and enriching them with relevant managerial language inputs. Only 34.78% mentioned the curriculum is enough relevant to their needs.

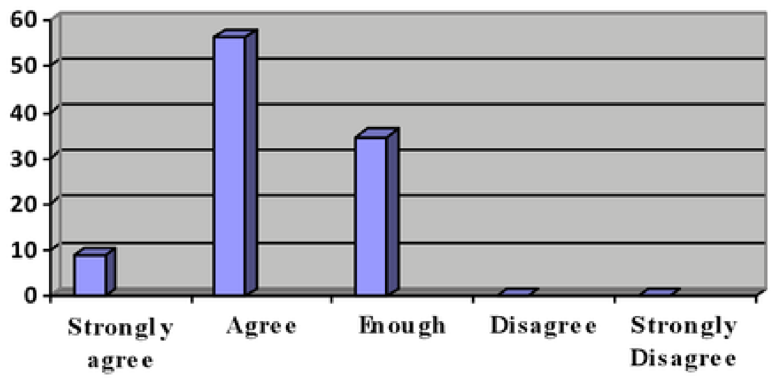

Figure 1. The Relevancy of Curriculum with Students' Needs

In question two the respondents were asked if they had no objection to using mobile devices for learning. 4.35% mentioned they strongly agreed with the statement. 34.78% agreed to have mobile devices for learning. Meanwhile, the majority (52.17%) had a neutral answer. The rest 8.7% disagreed with the statement. This finding implies that the students have had no objection to using the mobile devices for learning. When interviewed, nearly all of them mentioned that they had already had their mobile devices with them. They even said that their daily activities could not be separated with mobile phones. For that reason, using the mobile phones for learning fit their learning styles and needs.

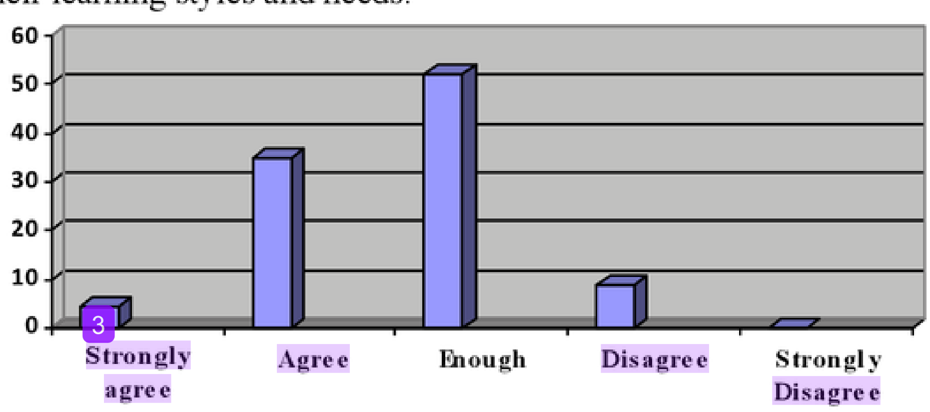

Figure 2. Willingness to Use Mobile Devices for Learning

In question three, the respondents were asked if they find the mobile application easy to use. In the class, the students needed to use three applications: Edmodo, Socrative and Google doc. This study found that the majority 56.52% agreed that they had no difficulties to operate the apps. Moreover, about 17.39% strongly agreed that the applications were very easy to use. 21.74% had a neutral response, with rest 4.35% stating their disagreement with the statement. . During the interview, most students mentioned the English instructional delivery using mobile phones was effective for them since they could learn all materials at their own pace. They could do all tasks regardless of space and time. They could access all the information the lecturer had given through Edmodo as the learning management system. To some extent, it was because Edomodo, Socrative and Google doc, were easy to operate because they did not require large bandwidths for the students to operate.

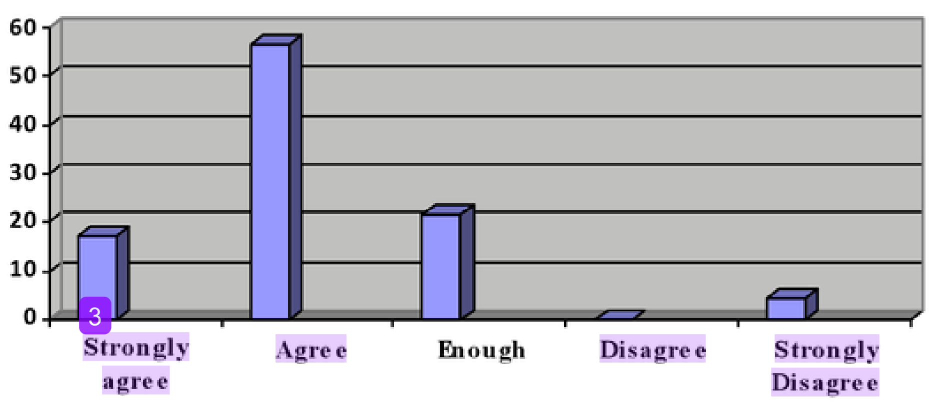

Figure 3. Mobile Application Handiness

Question four concerns how Socrative has helped the teacher and the students during the assessment. About 8.7% held the view that they strongly agreed with the statement. 47.83% agreed if Socrative was a reliable mobile application for assessment. About 26.09% held a neutral view. The rest 17.39% disagreed with the statement.

The students also said that they found Socrative effective because it

not only offered quick reliable results of the tests but also provided them with good information about their learning progress. They students were able to see all explanation or feedback to the answers they had given to the questions. With this way, they could learn why they did wrong to the questions. They also mentioned that taking the online test using Socrative was also fair because all the questions and options in this online multiple choice format were randomized. They hardly cheated during the test. During the formative test, the lecturer sometimes gave some chances for the students whose scores were below the passing grades. The students seemed to enjoy learning through this way. By contrast, for the minority, this internet based app is quite troublesome. In practice, they often have problems with the internet connection. Bad internet connection often kept them from doing the test at their best.

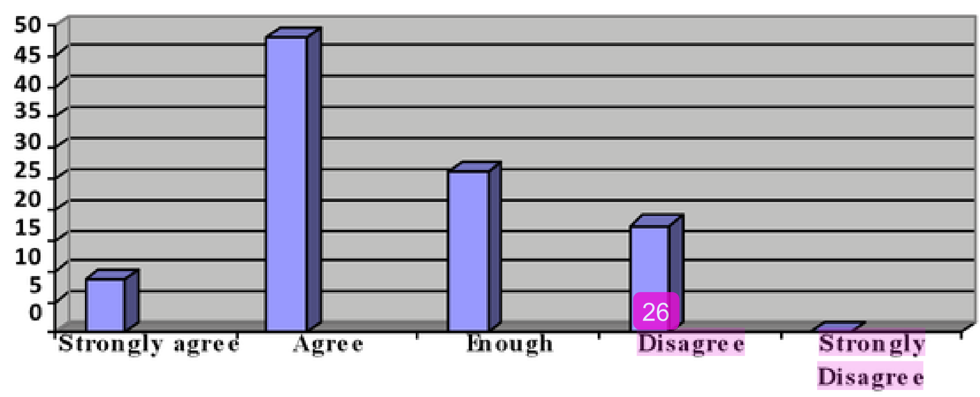

Figure 4. The Assessment of Socrative App

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In question five, the respondents were asked if Edmodo app was a relevant application to help the students updated with teacher's announcement. The finding showed that the majority favored this app: 13.04% strongly agree; 52.17% agreed with the statement, and 21.74% held a neutral view. This finding implies students view Edmodo very helpful. With this app, they were able to know teachers' current information, to submit an assignment, to get materials and to post their comments in the discussion forum. Only, a few numbers of students disfavored this app: 4.35% showed their disagreement, and 8.7% mentioned their strong disagreement.

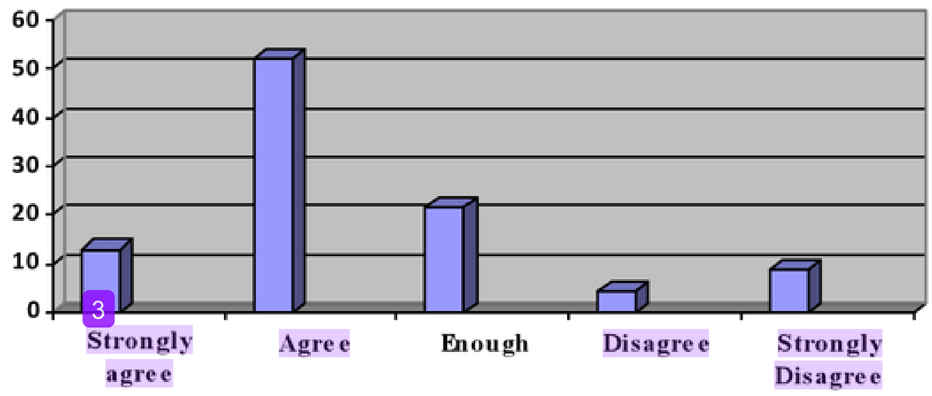

Figure 5. The Assessment of Edmodo App

In question six, the respondents were asked if the teacher had given interactive and various activities. The study found that the majority favored the teacher's teaching techniques in the hybrid class. They viewed that they found activities quite various and interactive, challenging them with a new learning experience. In this respect, 30.43% have shown strong agreement, and 52.17% agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, 17.39% held a neutral view.

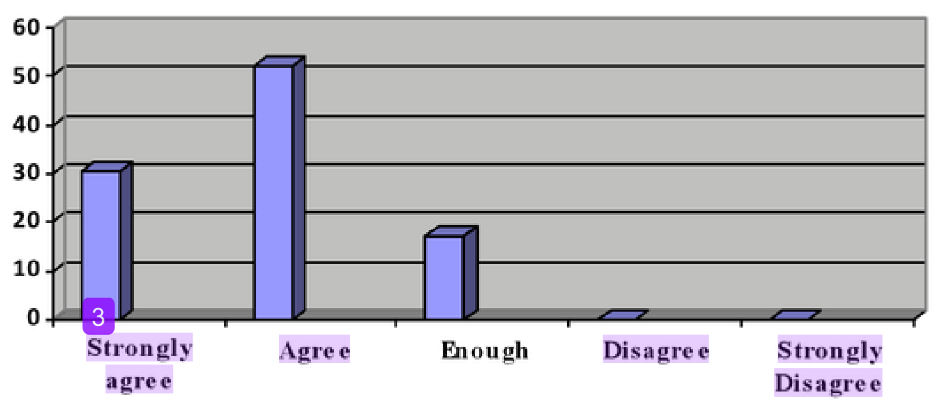

Figure 6. Activities in the Hybrid Class

In question seven is to ask if the teacher has a good class management skill. The majority enjoyed teacher's class management: 21.74% strongly

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agreed with the statement. 56.52% agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, only 21.74% mention it was enough for them to effectively learn with their teacher's class management.

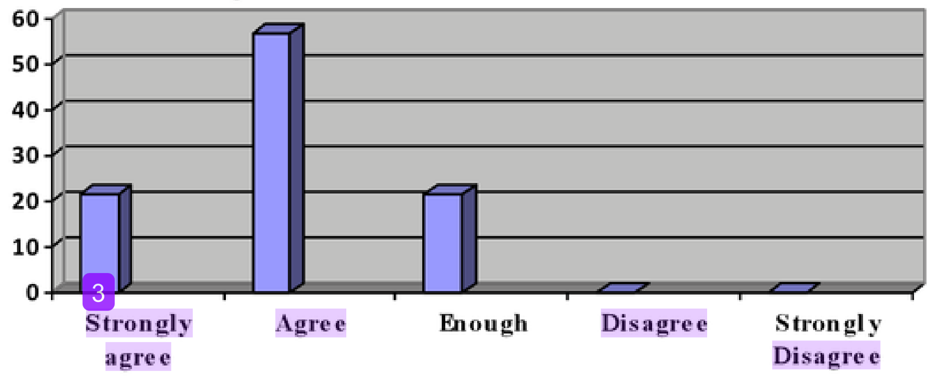

Figure 7. Teacher's Class Management Skill

In question eight, the respondents were asked if the activities in the hybrid class could improve students' English skill. 8.7% strongly agreed with the statement. 47.83% agreed with it. 39.13% say it is enough. Meanwhile the rest, 4.35% disagreed with the statement. This finding implies the students favor the teacher's class management skill: arranging the learning activities, organizing the group members, scheduling the activities, sharing the materials, etc.

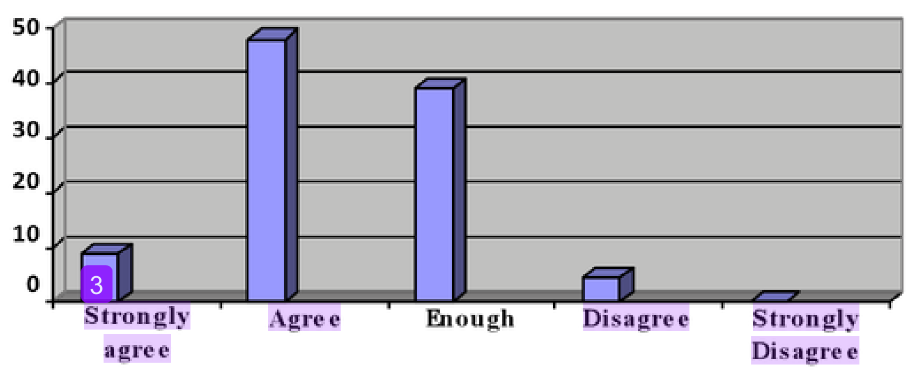

Figure 8. Possible Improvement of Language Skills in the Hybrid Class

In question nine, the respondents were asked if the teacher had given good feedback on students' work. 26.09% mentioned they strongly agreed with the statement. 34.78% mentioned they agreed with the statement. 34.78% held a neutral view. Meanwhile, 4.35% disagreed with the statement. This finding implies the students feel satisfied with the way teacher gives feedback to their work. While asking the students to work on the project using the Google doc, the teacher not only monitors but also give his feedback to the students work at his pace.

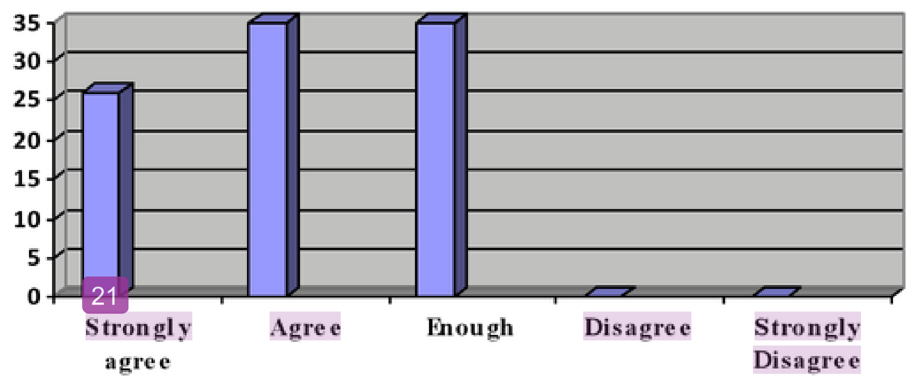

Figure 9. Teacher's Feedback in the Hybrid Class

In question 10, the respondents were asked if a hybrid class was a reliable teaching-learning strategy. 8.7% strongly agreed with the statement. 69.57% agreed with the statement and 21.74% held a neutral view. This finding implies that most students have positive perception about the hybrid learning. They believe that this teaching approach will be helpful to motivate, improve and help students with their language proficiency.

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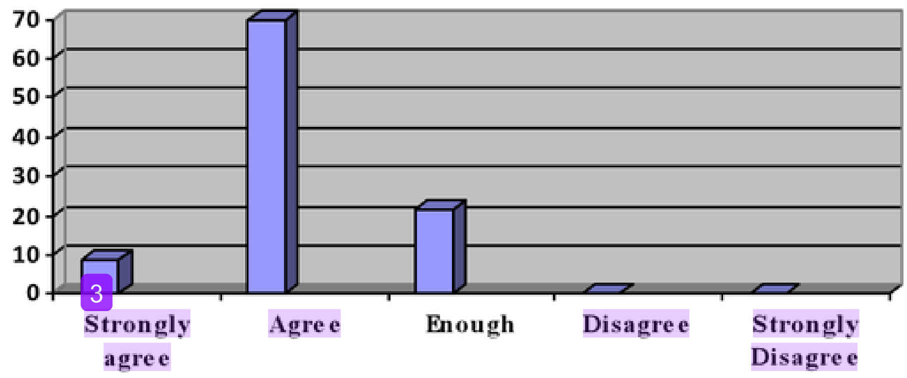

Figure 10. Students' Beliefs on M-Learning as a Reliable Teaching-Learning Strategy

DISCUSSION

The study found students had a positive perception of the hybrid model of learning, combination of conventional teaching and learning the process in the classroom and learning with mobile learning models. Almost all aspects of teaching and learning activities with this hybrid method are positively assessed by the students: curriculum content, teaching materials, strategies the way teachers teach, activity, quality feedback, until the mobile app from the app

While the model of conventional learning in the classroom enables a lecturer and students to discuss new topics, solve problems, and review the materials, m-learning has intensified the quality of learning through the following aspects such as mobility in physical space, mobility of technology, mobility in conceptual space, mobility in the social space, and learning dispersed over time (Sharples et al, 2009). The nature of mobility provided by mobile devices has offered the students autonomy to make decisions and take responsibility for the completion of their tasks (Carson, 2007; Ustunluoglu 2009; Reinders & White, 2016). They are free to determine when and where they study and do chores.

Connectivity with the students facilitated with mobile learning

is by no means free from problems: lack of access, the cost of mobile devices and wireless service, teachers' workload (Reinders, 2010). While some mobile applications are highly dependent on internet connection, students' work is likely to be hampered if the internet connection becomes unsFigure. Procurement of mobile devices with an internet connection would cost money. In general, almost all smartphones with android system allow us to run all applications. But for certain applications (Google doc / Google drive), smartphone model with a wider screen will be preferable, but with more expensive prices. In addition, the lectures are likely to have potential workloads. Given the increasingly favorable connectivity through m-learning, there will be numbers of students who want to interact with the lecturer: asking for feedback, advice, etc. Thus, the lecturers need to be wise; specifying the rules on this issue. Accordingly, they can avoid a pile of questions or workloads from the students.

CONCLUSIONS

The quality of learning can be intensively increased with a hybrid model. While the conventional class enables the teachers to discuss the new topics, solve the problems, and help their students with their learning difficulties in the classrooms, mobile learning also allows them to get connected, and to intensify the students' learning process: distribute and share the teaching materials, explain the topics, announce and arrange the assignments, give feedback, etc. However, teachers need to be mindful of the potential problems due to all favorable facilities offered by mobile devices application: the cost of the mobile devices and the internet service, and workloads.

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