

# CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH BLENDED LEARNING IN KENDARI OF INDONESIA

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This paper focuses on the problem of class teaching and solutions through classroom action research. The main problem in teaching, namely students are less motivated to learn and therefore their English language skills are still lacking. From these two problems, we carried out several activities ranging from observation, interviews, to teaching in the classroom with the blended learning model, then discussing what had been done to find out the root of the problem. This action research uses the design of "action research spiral structure" advocated by Stringer (2007) which consists of three levels, look, think and act. The results show progress in teaching where students' summative grades are higher than the minimum requirement of completeness scores. This progress is obtained through transformation in teaching techniques by creating student-centered classes by involving them in class discussions, interacting, and integrating LMS Edmodo into the learning so that it becomes more interesting, interactive, and resourceful.

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## 1 Introduction

In today's digital era, almost all aspects of life have depended on the Internet (Amichai-Hamburger & Hayat, 2011; Choshin & Ghaffari, 2017; Vella-Brodrick & Klein, 2010). In the business sector, for example, goods and services providers must make adjustments to production and marketing strategies to maintain their business life because Web technology through the Internet has been proven to provide convenience and good opportunities (Tanduklangi, 2017). In the field of education, the use of this technology has been very advanced, making it a very interesting conversation in various educational and teaching seminar forums (Nayan *et al.*, 2017; Perifanou & Mikros, 2009). Castle and McGuire (2010) suggest that "e-learning" can improve learning experience because students can learn anywhere and under any conditions during the equipment used to connect the internet without having to follow face-to-face interaction. The concept of e-learning is an alternative solution to problems related to the allocation of learning time in the classroom (Alberth, 2018). However, the existence of teacher as educator in classroom cannot be completely replaced by "e-learning".

The use of technology in the realm of education is a concern of the government in a number of countries, including Indonesia in recent years. Learning through information and communication technology is much more flexible class without having to waste time and to take place to set up a learning process. In a number of studies many educational practitioners have shown positive results towards the use of web technology in teaching foreign languages (Tanduklangi; Alberth & Amri, 2014; Kim, 2009; Le & Witta, 2001; Gunawardena, Lowe & Carabajal, 2001). Teachers and students report that they have a high level of satisfaction with the use of technology in the classroom because online classes are more multi-dimensional, facilitating interaction between students and teachers, neater classroom material organization, and more varied ways of presenting learning compared to conventional classroom use (Roberts *et al.*, 2005). However, the use of "e-learning" in classroom cannot be done at any time, because students still need teaching through conventional, face-to-face model. Hence, the emergence of web based learning; particular blended learning into instruction mode of learning can accommodate both the use of online class and face-to-face interactions, both simultaneously and non-simultaneously.

From the three levels of e-learning, supporting, blended, and full online learning mentioned in Al- Maqtri (2017), it was the blended model that became the focus of this classroom action research. Blended learning which is relevant to the context of this study is a learning model where the teacher combines online teaching and face-to-face interaction in the classroom (Ardana,

Ariawan & Divayana, 2016; Janthon, Songkram & Koraneekij, 2015; Tolj, Leoni & Maslek, 2016). Rovai and Jordan (2004) defines blended learning as a combination of online and face to face to take advantages offered by face to face and an online classes. Similarly, the U.S Department of Education defined blended learning as “a combination of online and in class instruction with reduced in class seat time for students” (cited in Dziuban *et al.*, 2018). In the blended learning mode, especially the use of Edmodo there is several technological features or facilities that can help the mixed learning process include *Note*, *Assignment*, *Folder (Library)* and *quiz* features. With the *Note* feature, a teacher can present material just like in an ordinary face-to-face class.

Based on the results of our observations, we assume that the blended learning mode is a mode of learning which is most suitable to be made in the classroom action research at the state senior high school 6 in Kendari because learning with a full online mode may look heavier for students because changing mode of learning drastically will increase students level of anxiety.

The use of blended learning is believed to increase students' motivation and achievement in learning English, because online learning makes students more engaged of the availability of discussion, comment and chat features that allow students to interact with their teacher and classmates more flexibly (Tiene, 2000). In another context of learning environment, it was found that blended learning increases learning interactions (Dzakiria *et al.*, 2012). Based on the considerations and observations we have made with the participants, we finally decided to take the blended learning mode as an instruction mode in teaching English for senior high school students in SMAN 6 Kendari.

## 2 Research Methodology

This study has a qualitative research design with classroom observations, interviews with students, teachers and the school principal by applying the action research process: experiencing (through observation and field notes); asking and checking. The observation sheets used in this study were inspired by and adopted from the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (2017). Before the classroom action research took place, the researchers employed an open ended form to elicit information on the goals and outcomes of teaching as well as the teaching media to be employed. Later, while the teaching and learning was in progress, other tools were used such as an online course observation template and Online Organization and Design questions. Finally, when considering the course as a whole feedback, the researchers identified the strongest parts of the blended course that contribute to student engagement and found the strategies to improve the course design. This action research focuses on changes of behavior and knowledge of students for six weeks of

class sessions.

This classroom action research combines the theory of pragmatism philosophy, critical thinking and the stem think of interpretive paradigm (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The main purpose of this research is to identify issues concern with the schools, tools for gathering information and finding solution to the problem. The main concern of this action is to improve the quality of teaching in the classroom through “provision of media to make students engaged in a systematic investigation” designing “the right way to achieve the desired objectives and evaluate its affectivity (Stinger, 2007)”.

Interpretivism is the basic paradigm in this study to maintain the reality of subjectivity and guided by a set of beliefs and participants point of view on e-learning media and considers how to implement it (Goldkuhl, 2012). Epistemological idea is how we achieve knowledge by organizing and utilizing the resources or the appropriate technology to support learning.

The design of this study is ‘spiral structure of action research’, as suggested by Stringer (2007) that in action research there are three components:

- See: collect data, determine, and shortly describe the situation/problem;
- Think: search out and to analyze the problem and findings;
- Action: plan, implement, and evaluate.

The process of collecting data is divided into three phases. In the first stage is interaction with students about their problems and possible solutions. The second phase is guided by structured guidelines for interactions developed in the first interaction. The third phase is the stage of looking at their performance, thinking of solutions and implementing solutions. The primary data was taken from evaluation results of 36 students before starting a class action research. The data analysis of this study is channeled through qualitative understanding which requires understanding the feelings, expressions, perception, and English performance of the research participants. The data that has been collected, analyzed in six steps involved in analyzing the data: preparing and organizing, exploring and encoding, explaining the findings classified based on the theme, representing and reporting the findings, interpreting the meaning and validating the accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2012).

### 3 Planning for Classroom Teaching

There are various different problems occurred during the teaching and learning process. To resolve this problem, first we need to search out the cause of the problems. After knowing the reasons for the problem, the planning is made to solve the problems that exist in their learning.

### ***3.1 Pedagogical Problems***

The main problem is that students are lacking motivation in learning English. Of the 36 students only a few who paid full attention to learning sessions in face to face classroom. Students who show high level of interest in studying are relatively showing good abilities in English. While the rest seems doing activities that are not related to learning English such as reading other lessons, talking in Indonesian language with friends and being sleepy. In the early stages students interact through the system, some students seem skilled, but others seem confused and anxious.

### ***3.2 Methods of Finding Possible Reasons***

There are various methods used to find out why students are less motivated in the classroom as well as possible solutions to resolving the issue. Being in the classroom action research, students are involved in identifying their weaknesses and designing plans/actions to overcome those problems. Furthermore, observations, questions and answers, record and class assignment are a technique used to find out the reasons for lacking an interest. The method used is “see, think and act” (Reasons & Bradbury, 2008). Meanwhile, the response rate at the beginning of the online assignment was not fully satisfied; only 20 students submitted the first online assignment from a total of 36 students.

### ***3.3 Problem Solving and Strategy for Future***

To overcome the above problems, we provide advice on managing the class to make it more interesting and so that students can interact more optimally. Before the class starts, we designed material that was more authentic and contextual. With the teaching topic “News”, we raised the news or events from the earthquake and tsunami disasters in Palu and Donggala of Central Sulawesi which became headline news and were downloadable when the learning took place. From the discussion, it was noted that students should be encouraged and inspired to learn by using different techniques using online learning inside and outside the class which was preceded by the design of material in contextual topics.

In the first week we discussed the best possible solutions with the school principal and the English subject teacher, we determined to integrate e-learning, specifically using the LMS Edmodo platform in 6 meetings. Using LMS like this opens the door for students in group interaction, encouraging them to share their experiences in related topics, motivating them by showing knowledge through Edmodo site. Learning depends on the social interactions that occur in the classroom and the withdrawal from these interactions as a result of high

level of English anxiety which might be the most dangerous effect of English anxiety (Vygotsky, 1978: quoted in Pappamihiel, 2002). Class interaction is a major part of teaching and learning where students and teacher ideas are shared.

To encourage students to study more actively and lively, we applied the strategy of talking less, in which the teacher would speak less and let the students talk, interact each other, and activate questions and answers through pair work and small group discussion activities both in the face to face and online interactions. This is what the teacher should do is to design the activities and the contents in the form of communicative web-based learning. This is due to the fact that students feel freer to communicate with teachers and students through the system rather than asking directly to the teacher. This kind of learning environment will help motivate students toward learning. This is supported by a study by Baker *et al.*, (2010) which states that students seemed more relaxed in communication through online learning because they are embarrassed or intimidated when they share their personal experience through face to face interaction.

The same thing we found after many students seemed to communicate more relaxed in online learning because students gave more feedbacks compared with the question and answer session in face-to-face discussions, at least students and teachers could provide short feedback when they are available by simply replying or clicking the like or dislike buttons of each posting.

Regarding the next problem which is the students experienced with less interactive learning. From the results of our observation in classroom, after using *e-learning* students seemed to be more motivated and more focused on learning then before because LMS Edmodo makes it possible to conduct an interactive learning. Through LMS Edmodo the teacher can create and provide online quizzes with instant feedback that increase students' interest in learning. In addition, through Edmodo the presentation of teaching materials can be made available in the form of audio-visual, which makes students feel more interested and proud of in learning English. This learning materials are surely more engagement than it is only presented through textbooks.

In one occasion when working on online quizzes in face-to-face classes, students are generally very enthusiastic and motivated to complete quizzes, even though they are at an early stage. They were allowed to work with their peers or in small groups sharing their skill and knowledge because working on his/her own in the early stages will be difficult for them. While working on quizzes outside of the face to face classroom activities; the results were not satisfying on average. Students mean score on the first and second trial are 30 and 53 consecutively out of 100 total score. But their efforts are still appreciated by the teacher because they look if they were so keen of completing the quiz. This indicates that learning English through quizzes through Edmodo is

potentially increasing student's interest in learning English as well as students' level of English.

## 4 Action

This classroom action research is conducted in parallel with the regular teaching schedule as practiced by Thorne & Kiang (1996). This program runs for 1 month or four weeks of classes, face-to-face classes and online classes. For the purpose of this study, we chose one of the classes, namely class XII MIPA1 (science students) with 36 students. All students were observed to find out the changes or learning progress. Change in attitudes and behavior occurred when learning was recorded and discussed with the permanent English teacher at the school.

Before face-to-face and online classes run the teacher creates lesson scenarios, designs content and activities that will be displayed through the system. This activity is somewhat time-consuming to construct a learning tool but once completed, it will reduce the burden of the teacher. All face-to-face class material and online classes uploaded to Edmodo for learning purposes.

Lesson scenario for the blended learning activities for 2 hours of study (90 minutes) is shown in Table 1.

For activities other than face-to-face classes, learning is emphasized in the deepening and enrichment of discussion of learning topics. The material includes additional reading, repetition and drill for listening material, working on assignments and quizzes to improve students' English skills. Repetition and drill activities through the system can be done repeatedly without having to relate to the teacher. This is very beneficial for students, because they can carry out enrichment, repetition and drill activities without worrying about getting psychological pressure directly from the teacher. The core material of each meeting is organized into folders in each meeting. With this arrangement the teacher and students can easily find files related to the material or topic of discussion.

Students outside of the face-to-face class are encouraged to do repetitions and drills performed independently. LMS Edmodo assistance in the effort of increasing interest in learning can also be done with the use of digital library feature where all files (documents, images, videos, and links) that have been uploaded can be seen there. Generally, as observed students are happy with this feature. This way of learning is very popular with them because students can get the material for free without paying much fees and energy and are available when needed. So, learning through the Edmodo platform in this class

is much more cost efficient and cost effective than learning through copied paper based texts.

Table 1  
BLENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Duration	Teacher Activity	Student Activities	Group Discussion / Other Activities	Suggestions & Inputs from the Teacher
15 minutes	Teacher asks the students to review the lessons they had received in the previous blended learning with 80% English.)	Reviewing previous meetings. Enter Edmodo system together		Add or repeat from a review (5 minutes). Seeing the teacher presentation in Edmodo (10 minutes)
45 minutes	Teacher monitors and directs when online learning takes place Guiding students to follow the instructions in the system	Students learn through Edmodo Learning Management System	Students can ask and answer questions through peers regarding ongoing tasks / activities	
25 minutes	Teacher performs instructions in face-to-face learning, and teacher directs the discussion, practice activities	Students stop their activities through online learning and follow the teacher's next instructions	Students carry out various learning activities of face-to-face by peer review / discussion groups / pair / group roles / role play / presentation	The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides direction or additions related to student works
5 minutes	Teacher closes the class by passing question(s) and answer session	Students review their lessons		The teacher instructs students to continue activities in online classes outside of face to face class

#### 4.1 Other Activities

Many other activities as are parts of learning process. The second week after observation we provided training to students on how to sign up or login into the Edmodo LMS with a given six digits class code. The class code is a unique identification tool which is given to students so that the students can get into the system and access lessons via Edmodo.

In the third week the students have already looked skillful in using Edmodo, since then the students can benefit from the system. Activities that attract student's attention are watching videos. As the videos are available on Edmodo page, students are freely to replay them as they need as part of repetition and

drill activities. This flexibility encourages language learners, not to mention poor language learners to do repetition as they wish.

The next interesting learning activity is quiz session which is available in Edmodo or linked to other site (e.g., British Council site that provides hundreds of quizzes can be done by students either in the classroom or at their home as they need). This task can be done by each student independently without waiting for real feedbacks from the teacher because the computer automatically performs these tasks. In general, as observed, students feel happy with this session because they feel like playing.

Other activities that support teaching are various collaborative teaching techniques that take place in face-to-face classroom. After students get an online session during one lesson, then the teacher teaches English to the students by using various collaborative teaching techniques ranging from peer work, group work, group presentation, role-play, and dialogue, making students more mobile than the teaching they experience before. Again, as observed majority of students looked happily doing the group tasks, because with it each of them can share his/her English expressions freely without pressures from the teacher side.

The same thing we found in the online session, when the teacher gave a topic to comment on and discussed using English through online platforms, students felt more comfortable communicating through the “Comment” facility in LMS Edmodo. Even though their expressions, in some cases, in the forms of simple level of language, such as words, phrases, or sentences that are usually truncated but are still understandable.

#### ***4.2 Observation on the Use of Edmodo***

The observation took place on August 26<sup>th</sup> and October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018. The researcher seated in a corner of the classroom for each 90 minutes blended learning using observation templates in the forms of questions, such as “Are the learner requirements such as [computer assisted learning] needs and/or participants expectations described?” which is adapted from Center for Teaching Support & Innovation (2017) and “What aspect of the course do you see as strengths that will contribute to effective student engagement and learning [motivation]?” developed from Harrison, L, & Heikop, W (2016) cited in Center for Teaching Support & Innovation (2017). One week after the observation activities the research team members met to discuss the observation and conclusions.

The result of observations highlights student’s interest in learning when they are introduced to online learning in face-to-face classes. When registering as an online class member, they showed their busyness in finding out how to sign up and log in to the system. Some students who have successfully signed

up to class show expressions of satisfaction while helping classmates to do the same. Their attention is increasing when they find Edmodo front page display which is similar to the look of Facebook, which they have been using as social media, because indeed LMS Edmodo is also a social media intended for instructional purposes. Then what is their attitude towards the presentation of material prepared by the teacher? Because Edmodo can accommodate various types of multimedia files such as videos, based on our observation students are increasingly showing interest in learning English. Compared to before, they feel seem easier to understand the essence and meaning of the video as the dialogue in English. Before using this media, students' attention seemed less because the activities of English teachers in general only explain the tenses formulas on board and / or assign assignments to students that make learning very difficult for most students to follow. The use of LMS assistance makes students more interested, more independent in the overall learning process. With the use of this media they can decide their own need, plan their own learning, identify his/her own their weaknesses and then freely choose the materials s/he needs to drill to overcome his/her own problems.

The involvement of the students in online class helps them to increase their knowledge in a particular field. This also further enhances their writing skills in English. It is because the variation of tasks from the LMS is more challenging and more varied than completing the task through a notebook. In spite of the many advantages of using the system, some students remain disadvantage from using the system because they don't have learning equipment, laptops or smartphones. In this case, teacher asks students to work in pairs, those who have a device and those who do not have to learn in a social learning environment.

### *4.3 Weekly Reflection*

Through series of reflection activities of teaching and learning using the mode of blended learning with LMS Edmodo platform on August 26<sup>th</sup>, September 5<sup>th</sup>, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and October 10<sup>th</sup> the teacher researcher assessed the effect of teaching on learning then considered and practiced better way(s) for maximum learning outcomes of the learners. In doing, self-critical evaluation to adjust what should be done following each class hours of blended learning, the teacher researcher used a diary each time he taught.

The following is a description of reflections of the four weekly consecutive blended classes practicing LMS Edmodo in learning English:

- On the first week of blended class, 12 out of 36 listed students in the class could not get into the LMS Edmodo virtual class just because the students were not used to sign up with class code. To cope with the

- problem the teacher walked around to offer helps to the needy.
- On the second week of blended learning, the teacher experienced with interrupted internet school WIFI connection in the classroom. To solve the problem, teacher asks students to work with their own internet connected device. Teacher sets his device to activate tethering or personal hotspots.
  - On the third week of blended learning, the students work on a number of quizzes on LMS but the time for conventional learning (face-to-face) is seized due to technical problems (internet network) when the learning session takes place. We agree that checking and also doing *back-up plans*, such as providing alternative networks and secondary equipment are some of the things that should have been done before the lesson takes place so that technical disruptions do not disturb the course of learning.
  - On the fourth week of classroom interaction, the students already have high self-confidence to complete the given assignments; learning is more active and more focused than the previous of line and online classes. The use of repetition and training approaches (drill and practice) is done frequently by students at home to overcome and fill their shortcomings without feeling embarrassed.

Here students show willingness to participate or even repeat some material and quizzes. Until the last session, there are still 5 out of 36 students who have not completed the task online until the specified due date. The reason behind that failure is that that students run out of package (internet pulse) and other reasons. In addition, there is an indication that giving assignments online through Edmodo allows students to cheat. Therefore the use of *Assignment* feature is not safe enough to measure students' real achievement. Because of that, the teacher determined to use a paper based test for the implementation of summative student tests.

## 5 Findings and Discussion

The following is the table explains the descriptive data of students Grades after blended learning is done.

From the table below it can be seen that the summative values of students are in a very good range, namely a minimum of 80 and a maximum of 90 with an average grade of 84,054 which means that grade point average is already above the minimum requirement value of 75. This grade average demonstrates student success in learning English through blended learning.

Table 2  
STUDENT SUMMATIVE GRADES

	Value	
Smallest	16.00	80.00
Biggest	29.00	95.00
Average	17,611	84,054
Standard Dev.	2.155	14,900

After this action research is over, it is noted that students at present who are living in the fourth generation (4.0 generation) are more interested in learning in a fun way that involve sophisticated technology. Teachers have to adapt their teaching strategies to meet their needs. Otherwise, they will be left by their students. A teacher has to think about ideas and new approaches to encourage students to attend the class and to facilitate various types of learners with the help of web based teaching. Based on our teaching experience in this teaching environment for a period of one month, we think and we suggest that blended learning is suitable for all types of learners because blended learning is “best of both”, where face-to-face and online learning takes place in a learning session (Bruri, 2011).

## Conclusion and Implication

The use of blended *learning* can improve student motivation in learning and become a solution to a number of problems that students experience in learning. Integrating online and face-to-face learning can be taken into account as the best practice to accommodate senior high school students in Kendari particularly and in Indonesian context in general because not all students in city can receive full online learning suddenly. Teachers are expected to be able to improve or maintain student motivation in learning English by integrating e-learning technology into English learning. For this class, Blended Learning can be made as a temporary/permanent solution, depending on teacher creativity in developing learning contents in face-to-face and online classes.

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