

Students' lived experiences in learning English language in a hybrid learning modality: A phenomenology

Kimberly Ablaña¹, Lucel Marie Andales¹, Mark Jayward Bandolon¹,
Rogela Flores¹, Joemar Miñoza^{1*}

¹Cebu Technological University - Tuburan, Cebu, Philippines

*Corresponding author: joemarminoza9.14.92@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

DOI:10.46223/HCMCOUJS.
soci.en.16.4.3549.2026

Received: July 09th, 2024

Revised: January 14th, 2025

Accepted: January 19th, 2025

Keywords:

challenges; hybrid learning
modality; interpretative
phenomenological analysis;
lived experiences; perceptions

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of students learning English in the hybrid learning modality. Employing a qualitative research method, specifically the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the data were gathered from seven informants using a purposive sampling technique and an interview guide. The study identified themes branching into two facets: Perceptions of students toward English language learning in a hybrid learning modality and Challenges encountered by students learning English language in a hybrid learning modality. Perceptions manifested themes such as Enhanced Independent Learning and Welfare, Improved learning materials or/and information, draining impact of online class, and Overreliance on technology that affects the quality of learning experience. Meanwhile, Challenges emerged in themes like financial constraints, poor network speed, and the Instructor's technological ineptitude as a barrier to effective English learning. The study suggests that a hybrid environment is advantageous, particularly during online sessions, emphasizing the importance of tailored guidelines for instructors in a hybrid setup to optimize the learning experience. It revealed that students encountered both complexities and successes within the hybrid modality, advocating for the conceptualization of a concept plan containing comprehensive plans and guides to proactively ensure an equitable and enriching language learning experience for students.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic has posed significant and unprecedented challenges and threats to the educational landscape, affecting not only the countries where the virus initially originated but extending its impact globally to every corner of the world. It disrupted education systems by forcing primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities to close worldwide (Dagdia & Silva, 2022). As a result, it evokes institutions to seek ways for continuous education despite the global health crisis. Alternative learning methods, such as modular and online learning, have been implemented. After the lifting of several pandemic restrictions, hybrid learning became increasingly popular across the world.

Hybrid learning is a teaching approach that blends traditional in-person classroom instruction with online education. The terms blended and hybrid learning are often used interchangeably in pedagogical discourses, as most authors agree (Graham & Robison, 2007). Potter (2015) suggests that the hybrid learning approach has been successful because it effectively blends the best aspects of both in-person and online learning environments, thereby creating a more flexible, engaging, and comprehensive educational experience for students. This exciting approach offers students the best of both worlds and maximizes their educational experience.

Bell et al. (2014) stated that hybrid learning permits the integration of external expertise into the educational process. This integration leads to a more comprehensive variety of perspectives and concepts being presented to students. The collaboration and connection between students who are physically present and those who are remote create more in-depth learning experiences, resulting in more prosperous outcomes. Another study conducted by Hall and Villareal (2015) identified that engaging in instructional activities within hybrid courses significantly fostered student motivation and deepened their understanding of the course content. This positive impact was attributed to the unique combination of online tools and traditional face-to-face interactions that hybrid learning provides. The presence of online resources alongside in-person sessions not only offered students the convenience of accessing learning materials at any time but also allowed them the flexibility to progress through the coursework at their own pace. This dual approach facilitated a more personalized learning experience, catering to individual learning styles and needs, and leading to a richer and more comprehensive grasp of the subject matter.

Despite the hybrid learning modality's advantages, it has its drawbacks. Satsatin et al. (2023) conducted a study that found that teachers who use hybrid learning methods encounter difficulties while conducting hybrid learning classes. These challenges encompass problems related to the quality of classroom equipment, internet connectivity, preparation of instructional materials, and methods for motivating students during regular classes. Similarly, Vereshchahina et al. (2018) discovered that while ESL university teachers utilizing hybrid learning possess strong content knowledge, pedagogic skills, and pedagogical content knowledge, their technological proficiency is lower. This is especially evident in their ability to create multimedia resources and utilize collaborative tools such as video conferences, webinars, and wikis.

Based on previous studies, using a hybrid learning modality has provided unique opportunities and challenges for students. Many studies have focused on the immediate transition to online and hybrid modes. However, there is a lack of in-depth exploration of students' long-term experiences and perceptions in this new educational landscape. Furthermore, few studies explore the unique challenges and benefits of hybrid learning exclusively, and there is a need for more comprehensive phenomenological research on students' experiences, specifically in the context of English language learning in Cebu Technological University-Tuburan, in order to develop a deeper perspective of such phenomena as opposed to understanding it solely on a surface level. The goal of this research was to fill a gap in the existing literature by investigating the experiences of students studying the English language in a hybrid learning environment. The aim of the study was to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 by exploring the experiences of English language students in a hybrid learning environment, with the aim of improving the quality of education and the overall learning experiences.

This study aimed to determine the lived experiences of students in the hybrid learning modality. Specifically, it aimed to explore the perception of the students toward English language learning in a Hybrid Learning Modality, and the challenges they have encountered while learning English in a Hybrid Learning Modality. It is essential to delve into students' rich and nuanced experiences, examining the intricacies of their language learning journey, their interactions with peers and instructors, and their engagement with online resources, equating to their overall perceptions and challenges. By examining students' experiences, this study aims to inform the design and implementation of effective hybrid learning models in English language studies, benefiting students, teachers, and other stakeholders involved in language education, contributing to the achievement of SDG 4.

Research questions:

1. What is the perception of the students toward English language learning in a Hybrid Learning Modality?
2. What are the challenges students have experienced while learning English in a Hybrid Learning Modality?

2. Conceptual background

This study is anchored on the concept of Hybrid Learning Modality. It is an approach of education that has been widely sensationalized nowadays as a catalyst parallel to the needs of the time; characterized by the idea of teaching and learning process influenced by the alternate utilization of in person interaction and online learning or discussion within the academe in which drastically impacted the mainstream experiences of the learners toward education.

Due to its potential to improve student outcomes and meet a variety of learning styles, the development of hybrid learning modalities - which combine traditional in-person instruction with online components - has generated a lot of interest in the past years. Examining hybrid learning's effects on students' real-world experiences comprehensively requires an understanding of its theoretical foundations.

The manifestation of hybrid learning modality and students' experiences in learning English language are the two identified variables of the said study. In the study of Doghonadze et al. (2021), a combination of remote and in-classroom learning in time for the re-opening and preparation for the potential resurgence of classes, coming from a pandemic, is what the hybrid mode is meant to accomplish.

It may be used as a transitional step from an entirely face-to-face educational process, where teachers and students are not habituated to online learning, to complete e-learning because it integrates elements of both face-to-face and online teaching and learning (Gherheş et al., 2021). Online asynchronous classrooms were seen by students as helpful for reviewing material before in-person classes, reinforcing concepts, administering exams, and discovering new resources (Hall & Villareal, 2015).

Hybrid learning encompasses a pedagogical approach wherein educators engage in simultaneous instruction for both on-site and remote students, supplemented by the utilization of asynchronous teaching methods to enhance synchronous face-to-face instruction (Sumandiyar et al., 2021). Essentially, the hybrid learning modality has emerged as the prevailing standard, propelling educational endeavors in most academic institutions, in direct response to the societal demands and needs of the present era caused by the pandemic.

By synergistically harnessing the advantages of online and on-site learning, hybrid courses aspire to cultivate a dynamic and efficacious learning environment capable of catering to diverse learning styles and preferences. On the other hand, the dependent variable such as the experiences are divided into two facets: perceptions and challenges. In the context employed here, an essential aspect of experience lies in its possession of a distinctive phenomenal quality, commonly referred to as its phenomenology (Siegel, 2021).

3. Methodology

This study attempts to investigate and comprehend the lived experiences of the students who are learning English Language Studies in a Hybrid Learning Modality through a phenomenological lens utilizing a phenomenological qualitative design. The study population consists of the students from Cebu Technological University, Tuburan Campus, specifically the 2nd-year students who are learning English Language Studies. The researchers chose seven (07) informants purposively to be interviewed. The number of informants was determined through intensive planning and suggestions to strengthen the data collection and credibility of the present study. To gather relevant information from the informants about their perceptions and challenges faced toward English language learning in a hybrid learning modality, the researchers utilized a researcher-made interview guide, which is a method used for structuring and conducting face-to-face interviews.

In-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews are used to collect comprehensive data which comprised of four (04) major questions with six (06) sub-questions to explore informants' perception and challenging experiences in learning English through Hybrid Learning Modality. A 20-minute interview is conducted with each informant individually. The entire interview, including the consent of the informants, is recorded on two phone recorders to ensure accuracy and thoroughness, allowing a faithful representation of the conversations. The interviews were meticulously transcribed word for word and subsequently translated into English, aiming to preserve the precise expressions and subtleties of the respondents' answers. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied in this study to investigate the subjective learning experiences of students in the hybrid learning mode for English. IPA is a well-suited approach to uncovering the meanings students attach to their learning process and gaining insights into their unique challenges and successes within the hybrid learning modality.

4. Results and discussion

Perceptions in the context of this study are centered on how the informants perceive English Language learning in relation to their subjective experiences under a particular phenomenon. This section presents the informants' perceptions in the context of learning English in the hybrid learning modality. These themes projected positive and negative feedback toward the informants' experiences during hybrid learning. Themes one (01) to five (05) reflect informants' perceptions, while themes six (06) to eight (08) reflect on informants' challenging experiences in learning English in a Hybrid Learning Modality.

Theme 1: Enhanced independent learning and welfare

Most of the informants acknowledged that the manifestation of hybrid learning within the academic realm has been of great help in empowering their learning experiences through the effective utilization of technology. They added that their ability to be able to use gadgets has been essential as a learning tool and elaborated how they can maximize their time for task completion and develop independence in learning. At the same time, they also elucidated how

hybrid learning helped their well-being by having the luxury of rest, as the modality is a weekly alteration of in-person classes and online. As highlighted in the response of informant 1:

“It's very useful when it comes to the hybrid learning modality because when we use gadgets inside the classroom, it makes learning more efficient ...” she also added,

“At the same time, we could take pictures of the lessons, and we could also record some of our performances for future reference, etc.”

It is emphasized that the hybrid learning modality has increased the mainstream effect of technology in learning which made learning efficient through having the liberty and initiative to take pictures and videos as learning references.

This is reflected in the findings of the study of Hall and Villareal (2015), which indicated that students valued both the flexibility to work at their own pace and on their own schedule as well as the support of their instructors when both in-person interactions and online resources were available. The hybrid modality provided a positive impact on them by allowing them to take initiatives to perform creatively and independently, having enough time for the compliance of various academic workloads, in contrast with the everyday pure online or the mainstream face-to-face classes.

The study of Setyaningsih (2020) supports the finding that the synchronous online sessions offered a better performance for students. There are students who feel safer having more time to access the internet, even with the face-to-face option. The idea of face-to-face and online classes for improved welfare is one of the advantages of the hybrid modality. Being able to pause from interacting with people in person offers students the chance to relax and take a break from their schoolwork. Simbolon's (2021) study showed that students' favorable impressions of time flexibility came from the fact that teachers often post about a topic in a group chat after school hours. The students were free to submit their answers at any time that was convenient. The mobile learning mode enhanced their use of digital tools for educational objectives. The impact of hybrid learning on English language learners in a university setting yields significant findings on integration of technology, with gadgets empowering students in their learning experiences being the key.

Research participants acknowledged the noteworthy influence of blended learning on enhancing their educational journeys via efficient technology utilization. With the flexibility to access resources and interact with educational materials at their own pace, hybrid learning has helped students improve their comprehension of syntax. Furthermore, in semantics, the theme of promoting autonomous learning is quite apparent. With online materials, multimedia presentations, and interactive exercises, students can investigate a variety of semantic intricacies through hybrid learning. The alternating schedule of in-person and virtual classes allowed them to take advantage of the luxury of relaxation and recognized the significance of striking a balance between personal well-being and scholastic demands. A more comprehensive and successful language learning process is facilitated by maintaining motivation and mental health.

Theme 2: Improved learning materials or/and information

Another theme that has emerged is how hybrid learning modality has given enormous access to learning materials when it comes to language learning. As the set-up has branched out its route, the immersion of students in the online world has given them an opportunity to widen the scope of where they can absorb knowledge. According to the informants, they find the incorporation of technology very helpful in acquiring various information and knowledge from the internet that they could apply in their lives as students. The manifestation of a higher level

of digital literacy has been seen to be a key component of the students' growth and grip on an updated and enhanced set of information.

Informant 4's Response in English Translation:

"It's enhanced in a way because you have access to a wealth of information from the internet, especially that which can help you in your work or techniques."

Informant 6's Response in English Translation:

"It helped, like when you submit your tasks on Google Classroom, it's easier. It's organized there."

In relation, this finding is reflected in the study of Marey et al. (2022), which found out how students can leverage the evolution of technology to extend their learning flexibility and capitalize on the lessons they gain from online information and communication technology tools, which completely resonates with the informants' responses. Similarly, in the study of Hall and Villareal (2015), it was revealed that hybrid courses kept students engaged and motivated, leading to a deeper grasp of the subject matter. The participants, represented by the graduate students, found that varied opportunities for interacting with the content to be very important.

Furthermore, Baker et al. (2020) discovered that students prefer hybrid classes because they offer the convenience of flexibility and accessibility of online materials along with the benefits of face-to-face learning between instructors and students. The students' affirmation of earlier research highlighting the importance of hybrid modality learning activities in fostering strong relationships between teachers and students was also evident. In the hybrid learning landscape of English language learning, the theme highlights the transformative impact of technology on students' educational journeys. Students express a deep appreciation for digital resources like online materials and internet-based information retrieval, recognizing unprecedented opportunities to explore diverse perspectives and authentic language content, extending their learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries, and significantly contributing to language acquisition.

Beyond linguistic competence, technology ensured that students remain updated on the latest developments in the English language, providing access to contemporary information and multimedia content. This theme underscores the active role of students in utilizing technology not only for language acquisition but also for applying acquired knowledge autonomously in their academic pursuits, emphasizing their empowerment in navigating the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Theme 3: Hybrid environment as a better approach to learning and benefits students, especially during online sessions

Hybrid classes provide a better approach to learning, mainly because they give students control over their tasks or activities, and they can also keep their learning pace within their convenience. They prefer to study under this setup because it makes them more efficient, gives them more rest, and allows them to interact with their peers simultaneously.

Informant 2 said:

"Yes I do. It actually makes my, my studying very efficient, not just in my own point of view, but my, but for my observation in our class since the use of gadgets or the internet is very useful for us." Informant 2 then added,

"In my perspective, I would say that it is a better approach because we can rest in between classes."

Informant 3 also said:

“So if we go back to that setup, I would also prefer a return to it. It's because having interactions with the teacher and students is better. It's easy to approach the teacher when you're confused.”

This finding aligns with Nashir and Laili (2021), who revealed that 81.8% of the 85 students surveyed favor hybrid learning over completely online or entirely in-person learning. The study highlighted that hybrid learning facilitates easier practice of conversation during Intensive English classes and enhances students' learning outcomes and scores, particularly in speaking. This is reflected in the sentiments of Essa (2023), which found a positive correlation between hybrid learning and academic mindfulness and deeper learning. Meanwhile, Nikolopoulou (2022) discovered that students favor hybrid education because it combines the advantages of both online and face-to-face learning.

Students prefer hybrid learning and appreciate its flexibility and control over workload and speed. They can learn easily since online access increases productivity and lowers stress. While face-to-face contacts promote collaboration and deeper social ties, alternating between online and offline sessions offers relaxation and improves focus. As students use technology for online tasks and the resources that are accessible to support review and customized learning, technological literacy develops. Based on this and other research, hybrid learning improves academic performance, communication skills, and overall learning outcomes more than online or traditional learning alone. It is done by creating a balanced and productive atmosphere.

In addition, this serves as a valuable insight into the perceived benefits of hybrid learning and its potential to enhance the learning process for students. By addressing the challenges and continuously improving its implementation, hybrid learning can become a powerful tool for creating a more personalized, flexible, and effective learning environment in the post-pandemic era.

Theme 4: Draining impact of online class

The emergence of positive influences in the must not only be the ones that must be considered. Considering the enormous transition in education that we have faced over the past years and continuously carrying the effects up to date, these areas note an equal importance on the informants' experiences during the period of hybrid learning. This section presents the informants' perceptions that are considered undesirable in the context of learning English in the hybrid learning modality. Apart from the notable impacts that hybrid learning has brought, there were also informants who emphasized the draining impact of online classes in hybrid modality.

Informant 4 in English Translation:

“... it can be draining to spend so much time in front of the computer.”

“As an English Language student, we have to harness our skills in speaking, and if we're only having online classes, it's not like very helpful for us to enhance our capacity to speak English.”

The study conducted by Simamora (2020) provides some support for the previously stated finding. It found that students have expressed dissatisfaction with the online class schedule due to its unfavorable effects on anxiety, focus, boredom, and frustration. Similarly, Chyr et al. (2017) discovered that students struggle with reading, writing projects, and getting ready for in-person classes because they feel alone, alienated, and unmotivated in their online

learning environment. Likewise, Terhune (2015) revealed that although online chat and technology can be very motivating for English language learners, not everyone is suited for face-to-face communication. The rigorous schedules of online English language learning may prove to be draining. It was also emphasized by Erliza and Septianingsih (2022) that students showing no excitement toward language learning would be hesitant to render adequate attention throughout the learning session or process.

It can be discerned from the findings that the sense of drain does not merely stem from technical adaptation; it delves into the heart of language learning dynamics. The feeling of exhaustion is not just a result of technical adjustment; rather, it goes deep into the dynamics of language learning and development. Online learning reduces the subtle grasp of language cues and inhibits spontaneity, which is essential for verbal communication. Major language courses suffer in this digital age as students struggle with difficult ideas without immediate clarification, especially those that center on grammar and syntax, as there is an absence of physical interaction in between sessions. As this finding reveals the complex difficulties associated with using digital platforms for language instruction, it is crucial for instructors to consider creative solutions such as synchronous interactive sessions and virtual immersion experiences in pursuit of a better and more successful online language learning experience for students.

Theme 5: Overreliance on technology affects the quality of the learning experience

Learning in a hybrid modality requires more than the usual basic requirement for education, which only concerns showing up in the institution to be able to attend classes. In hybrid, students are expected to equip and emerge with technology to maximize the learning experience and their ability to adapt to various online applications. Thus, there were students who found that too much exposure to technology interfered with the absorption of quality learning. As highlighted in the response of informant 4:

“However, it can also hinder in a way because sometimes, with the abundance of tasks, we rely solely on what we find online, and we don’t have time to truly absorb the knowledge. We end up just copying. It can really interfere with our learning.”

In a hybrid setting, a laptop is considered highly essential to leverage quality learning experience during online week classes. In this case, some students find it hard to cope with maximizing learning as being dependent on gadgets sabotages motivation in learning if there is an absence or scarcity of resources that are important in achieving quality learning experience.

The finding has undeniably been supported by the study of Adling (2022), which found that learners who learn best by listening to direct instruction might struggle with asynchronous learning, where the information is presented independently. Furthermore, these students might also find it difficult to manage their own pace and feel isolated without the structure and interaction of a traditional classroom, which jeopardizes their learning experience and involvement. Moreover, the findings of Barrot et al. (2021) found that a lack of space or resources in students’ home learning environments can occasionally hinder students’ capacity to learn efficiently. A few variables, such as the resources at their disposal, the degree to which they could communicate with instructors and fellow students, and the guidelines established by their educational institution, have all been identified to affect how well they performed in the online learning environment.

It was also emphasized in the study of Rintaningrum (2023) that the limitation in terms of using technology for learning can be challenging for some because not everyone has the

equipment they need and can eventually afford it, as expressed by most of the respondents. Even though technology seems like a great way to learn English, there just may not be enough time to cover everything during a regular class.

While digital tools offer diverse resources for language proficiency, there is a delicate balance that needs attention. The amalgamation of factors identified in these studies - information overload, home learning environment, and limited facilities - exerts a profound impact on the learning experiences of students pursuing language courses. The challenge of information overload raises a crucial concern, as students may grapple with the overwhelming array of technological tools, hindering their ability to engage effectively with language resources and diminishing the overall quality of their learning experiences. Moreover, the influence of the home learning environment introduces a nuanced dimension. Varying resources, spatial limitations, and the dynamics of virtual interactions with teachers and peers significantly shape students' depth of understanding and engagement with language materials. As these external factors come into play, language courses must adapt, recognizing individual preferences and offering tailored approaches to create a supportive and inclusive learning atmosphere.

Theme 6: Financial constraints

Financial constraints emerged as one of the challenges students faced in adapting to English learning in the hybrid learning modality. According to the informants, limited funds pose a significant challenge in hybrid learning due to increased financial demands. One notable aspect is students' need to purchase a data load to participate in online classes. As highlighted by informants 1 and 2:

“I’m... a daughter from a middle-class family so I guess what hinders me [being] in a middle-class section is that there are times... where we lack allowance [money] because of the contributions... in our department and the program or in our classroom or projects... So, we do not have the load to stream [access] to the internet, or subscribe [load]...”

“I would say [it is a challenge] when it comes to purchasing [mobile data] load for internet access since we are not from a well-off family...”

This finding resonates with the study of Blundell et al. (2020), as they found that income inequality has been more pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic, playing a crucial role in students' education. Similarly, Negash et al. (2021) reported that less than half of students felt they needed more financial resources during the Covid-19 pandemic due to several factors, such as job loss, lack of parental support, and price increase. The Covid-19 pandemic has unraveled multiple economic and financial inequalities in the context of hybrid learning.

The challenges brought about by financial constraints in the context of hybrid learning are multi-faceted; they involve the need for internet load in online classes, transportation expenses for face-to-face sessions, and financial burdens related to project and activity contributions. These difficulties have greatly affected students from low-income families, ultimately impeding their access to fundamental resources for learning. Mani et al. (2013) also found out in their experiment that college students performed worse cognitive tasks when prompted to think about the financial burden of college.

Hence, higher education institutions should formulate comprehensive contingency plans. Providing long-term assistance such as collaborating with local transportation companies, lessening school contributions, and collaborating with telecommunication companies to offer internet load bundles for reasonable prices are a few examples that institutions can incorporate.

Through these steps, higher education institutions can create a more inclusive hybrid learning environment that lessens the impact of financial constraints on students' education.

Theme 7: Poor network speed

Poor network speed is another challenge that affects the learning experience of students learning English in a hybrid learning modality. This problem is primarily affecting the online aspect of the hybrid learning modality. Some students sometimes miss classes and fail to participate in class discussions due to a sluggish internet connection. As informant 2 pointed out:

“... Our geographical location is not also blessed with a good internet connection. This circumstance has been one of the factors that sometimes we fail to attend classes...”

This narrative is reflected in the study of Cahyani et al. (2021), which found that low bandwidth slows the completion of the study, and learning can be delayed due to the time spent on connection readiness. Strong internet connection is important in learning English online as it allows students to access global networking materials, develop reading skills, improve writing skills, complete vocabulary, and develop motivation to learn English (Gogilashvili, 2021). In a similar study, Ando et al. (2022) found that slow or inconsistent internet connections and limited access from rural houses prevent pupils from falling behind academically.

A strong internet connection is necessary for learning the English language in a hybrid learning modality, especially when some teachers prefer to conduct discussions during the online learning week and schedule assessments and activities for the face-to-face week. It allows success for students in the online learning environment, but not all students have access to that privilege. Broom reports that only half of the global population has access to the internet. In the least developed nations, the connectivity could be higher. Several higher education institutions in the Philippines have taken steps to help with the issue of internet accessibility in the online learning setup, such as giving connectivity kits to students. However, there is a gap in distribution- some students may benefit, while others do not (Bahinting et al., 2022).

Moreover, students contend with the psychological toll of frustration and stress caused by poor network speed. The constant battle with slow or unreliable internet disrupts the flow of learning, hindering students' ability to engage with course materials seamlessly, eventually lowering their performance in the online aspect of hybrid learning, and causing a butterfly effect on the students' overall learning experience. In remote or underserved areas, students face the dual challenge of inadequate infrastructure and limited resources, worsening the struggle for a stable internet connection. Consequently, the goal of providing equitable learning opportunities for all students is hindered by the educational disparities caused by access inequality.

Infrastructure recommendations for optimal face-to-face and online learning was also crucially acknowledged by one of the informants based on her observation and experience as a student of a hybrid learning setup, and she shared her suggestion since it could significantly help the students at stake.

According to Informant 6:

“For face-to-face, maybe there should be enough classrooms, and for online, the internet connection may vary, so it would be better if they develop a site or platform that's more feasible for everyone, regardless of the bandwidth they are using.”

Thus, efforts to address this challenge should encompass technological solutions, policy interventions, and infrastructure development. To create a more inclusive English language hybrid learning environment, collaborative initiatives involving government bodies and telecommunication providers should be given more attention. The digital divide can be overcome by having a comprehensive approach that considers both immediate connectivity issues and the long-term goal of fostering equitable access to education.

Theme 8: Instructor's technological ineptitude as a barrier to effective English learning

The technological ineptitude of instructors emerges as one factor that challenges the learning experience of English language students in the hybrid learning set-up. One of the adverse effects is that it disrupts the smoothness of the class by opting to use less efficient online platforms, which the instructor is more familiar with, causing difficulty for students.

Informant 1 claims,

“... some instructors do not know how to use this app [or] site, and the chatter in in that site, which is actually very efficient and good for the students but the teacher doesn't know how to use that... so we are forced... to turn to another site, which is actually hard for us and it's not that efficient, so it makes... [the] recording [of] our scores kind of hard and sometimes our tests or our scores are kind of lost...”

This sentiment is echoed by informant 3, who recounts an experience where a teacher, despite presenting important subject matter, struggled with basic technology, hindering the learning experience. In this case, students resorted to alternative learning methods, such as receiving PowerPoint presentations on Messenger and self-learning, instead of discussing it in online synchronous learning.

In learning English, there are concepts that students need help understanding, like syntax or phonology, for example. It is not enough for instructors to leave students with learning materials without discussing them. Hence, learning is even more productive if the instructors know how to use technological tools to promote active learning. Students' engagement and comprehension can be enhanced by incorporating interactive platforms and multimedia resources. Adding depth to these challenges, informant 7 points out a prevalent issue of instructors needing to attend classes, leaving students to navigate new material independently. As substantiated by informant 7:

“... for online courses, the most common issue is instructors not attending our classes. They'll just say in our class, “Just read this PowerPoint and stuff and we will discuss it in the next meeting or we'll have a quiz.” So, it's very hard for us to study it [the lesson] on our own without having any prior knowledge about it, since it's new and we're starting from scratch ...”

This finding aligns with the study of Vereshchahina et al. (2018), which demonstrated that ESL university instructors possess significant content, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge. However, their technological expertise, particularly in creating multimedia resources and utilizing collaboration tools like visual conferences, webinars, and wikis, was relatively lacking. This also aligned with Satsatin et al. (2023) findings, which highlighted challenges faced by hybrid learning educators, including issues with class equipment quality, internet connectivity, instructional material preparation, and motivation techniques for daily classes.

Additionally, Cobo et al. (2023) highlighted that the effectiveness of a hybrid learning approach relies on a teacher's ability to utilize technology purposefully, design a student-centered learning environment, monitor students' engagement, and progress, and adjust learning activities, as necessary. As informant 1 claimed, the instructors' technological ineptitude has resulted in scores getting off track and needing to be traced quickly, eventually affecting their grades. According to Lopres et al. (2023), educators who struggled with adjusting to the new teaching and learning formats during the pandemic should be willing to explore and adopt online teaching methods to enhance their teaching and technological abilities.

There is a significant reliance on technology in learning English in the hybrid learning modality. Instructors equipped with technological knowledge are better positioned to make an effective and engaging learning environment, while instructors who need more technological knowledge fail to maximize its advantages. Implementing training programs for instructors to enhance basic technological knowledge and develop technological content knowledge to create engaging online content, foster interactive discussion, and effectively utilize technological tools is necessary.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Perceptions in the context of this study is centered on how the informants perceive English Language learning in relation to their subjective experiences under a particular phenomenon. This section presents the informants' perceptions in the context of learning English in the hybrid learning modality. Based on the findings, both positive and negative perceptions were revealed in the lived experiences of students learning English. There were three positive themes identified: Enhanced independent learning and welfare, Improved learning materials or/and information, Hybrid environment as a better approach to learning and benefits students, especially during online sessions. The negative perception was also expressed by some informants, revealing two themes: Draining impact of online class, and Overreliance on technology that affects the quality of learning experience. Furthermore, learning English in the hybrid learning modality presents certain challenges and difficulties. Three themes emerged from the informants' responses: Financial constraints, Poor network speed, and Instructor's technological ineptitude as a barrier to effective English learning.

In conclusion, hybrid modality within the context of English language learning had a positive impact on the students' pursuit of accumulating knowledge and quality learning experiences because of the expansion of resources aided by the advancement of technology. It is not alien to us that as the technology evolves, what comes with it is the evolution as well of the strategies and techniques in the core of education, including in the Bachelor of Arts in English Language program. The ability to adapt, strategize, and master the complexities and advantages of technology in language teaching-learning would result in impeccable student learning experiences resulting in producing quality learners and successful linguists. These findings call for future research, school administrators, stakeholders, and teachers to address the challenges faced by students learning English in a hybrid modality in order not to jeopardize the quality of learning experience that would serve as the foundation of their success as the next generation of workforce in the country.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

The manuscript clearly identifies a research gap; the manuscript presents statistically and practically significant findings; the manuscript opens new directions for further research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CRedit: **Kimberly Ablana**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft; **Lucel Marie Andales**: Supervision, Validation, Visualization; **Mark Jayward Bandolon**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft; **Rogela Flores**: Writing - Review & Editing, Software, Investigation, Formal Analysis; **Joemar Minoza**: Writing - Review & Editing, Software, Investigation, Formal Analysis.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

- Adling, N. M. J. (2022). Flexible blended learning experiences of Filipino students in an English as a Second Language (ESL) learning context. *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*, 6(1), 28-38. <https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v6i1.5104>
- Ando, K., Basilisco, J., Deniega, A., Gador, K., Geraldo, P., Gipulao, W., Redondo, M., Sumampong, M., Talledo, M., Villacis, F., Taneo, J. D., Cabello, C., & Minyamin, A. (2022). Learning without learning in the new normal: College education students lived experiences in blended learning modality. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2(6), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6791799>
- Bahinting, M., Ardiente, M., Endona, J., Herapat, M., Lambo, D., Librea, H., Librando, M., Libron, J., Petaluna, M., Ygot, G., Taneo, J. D., Cabello, C., & Minyamin, A. (2022). Stronger than the Internet connectivity: A phenomenology. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 2(6), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6791820>
- Baker, D. M., Unni, R., Kerr-Sims, S., & Marquis, G. (2020). Understanding factors that influence attitude and preference for hybrid course formats. *E-Journal of Business Education & Scholarship of Teaching*, 14(1), 174-188.
- Barrot, J. S., Llenares, I. I., & Del Rosario, L. S. (2021). Students' online learning challenges during the pandemic and how they cope with them: The case of the Philippines. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(6), 7321-7338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10589-x>
- Bell, J., Sawaya, S., & Cain, W. (2014). Synchronodal classes: Designing for shared learning experiences between face-to-face and online students. *International Journal of Designs for Learning*, 5(1), 68-82. <https://doi.org/10.14434/ijdl.v5i1.12657>
- Blundell, R., Costa Dias, M., Joyce, R., & Xu, X. (2020). Covid-19 and inequalities. *Fiscal Studies*, 41(2), 291-319. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12232>
- Cahyani, N. M. W. S., Suwastini, N. K. A., Dantes, G. R., Jayantini, I. G. A. S. R., & Susanthi, I. G. A. A. D. (2021). Blended online learning: Combining the strengths of synchronous and asynchronous online learning in the EFL context. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Dan Kejuruan*, 18(2), 174-184. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jptk-undiksha.v18i2.34659>

- Chyr, W., Shen, P., Chiang, Y., Lin, J., & Tsai, C. (2017). Exploring the effects of online academic help-seeking and flipped learning on improving students' learning. *Educational Technology and Society*, 20(3), 11-23.
- Cobo, C., Sabarwal, S., Bonni, A., & Abu-Jawdeh, M. (2023). *Why blended learning is (still) relevant*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/education/why-blended-learning-still-relevant>
- Dagdia, Z. C., & Silva, A. C. S. e. (2022). Effects of Covid-19 pandemic on education and society. *STEM Education*, 2(3), 197-220. <https://doi.org/10.3934/steme.2022013>
- Doghonadze, N., Dolidze, T., & Vasadze, N. (2021). Face-to-face, hybrid and online English as a foreign language learning efficiency in higher education (Georgian and Italian students' views). *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region*, 7(1), 120-143. <https://doi.org/10.31578/jeps.v7i1.254>
- Erliza, S., & Septianingsih, P. A. (2022). Undergraduate Students. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 7(1), 231-243. <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v7i1.782>
- Essa, E. K. (2023). The effectiveness of hybrid learning in enhancing academic mindfulness and deeper learning of university students. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 9(1), 188-202. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.3081>
- Gherheș, V., Stoian, C. E., Fărcașiu, M. A., & Stanici, M. (2021). E-learning vs. face-to-face learning: Analyzing students' preferences and behaviors. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084381>
- Gogilashvili, M. (2021). Internet for English Teaching. *Intercultural Dialogues Transactions*, 6(1), 324-328. <https://doi.org/10.52340/idw.2021.538>
- Graham, C. R., & Robison, R. (2007). Realizing the transformational potential of blended learning: Comparing cases of transforming blends and enhancing blends in higher education. In A. G. Picciano & C. D. Dziuban (Eds.), *Blended learning: Research perspectives* (pp. 83-110). Sloan Consortium.
- Hall, S., & Villareal D. (2015). The hybrid advantage: Graduate student perspectives of hybrid education courses. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 27(1), 69-80.
- Lopres, J. R., Niadas, G. Y., Minez, G. P., Lopres, G. M., Gutierrez, M. I., Quiap, A. M. Q., & Bangot, S. R. O. (2023). Divulging the lived experiences of public school teachers in the U.S.A. during Covid-19 Pandemic: Phenomenological analysis. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(5), 180-205. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.5.9>
- Mani, A., Mullainathan, S., Shafir, E., & Zhao, J. (2013). Poverty impedes cognitive function. *Science*, 341(6149), 976-980. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1238041>
- Marey, A., Goubran, S., & Tarabieh, K. (2022). Refurbishing classrooms for hybrid learning: Balancing between infrastructure and technology improvements. *Buildings*, 12(6), 738-750. <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings12060738>
- Nashir, M., & Laili, R. N. (2021). Hybrid learning as an effective learning solution on intensive English program in the new normal era. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 9(2), 220-232. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v9i2.2253>

- Negash, S., Kartschmit, N., Mikolajczyk, R. T., Watzke, S., Matos Fialho, P. M., Pischke, C. R., Busse, H., Helmer, S. M., Stock, C., Zeeb, H., Wendt, C., Niephaus, Y., & Schmidt-Pokrzywniak, A. (2021). Worsened financial situation during the Covid-19 pandemic was associated with depressive symptomatology among university students in Germany: Results of the Covid-19 international student well-being study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *12*(743158), 1-12 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.743158>
- Nikolopoulou, K. (2022). Face-to-face, online and hybrid education: University students' opinions and preferences. *Journal of Digital Educational Technology*, *2*(2), 1-7 <https://doi.org/10.30935/jdet/12384>
- Potter, J. (2015). Applying a hybrid model: Can it enhance student learning outcomes? *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, *17*, 1-11.
- Rintaningrum, R. (2023). Technology integration in English language teaching and learning: Benefits and challenges. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2022.2164690>
- Satsatin, K. A. C., Latayan, J. C., Jr., F. P. P., Sapin, S. B., & Tesoro, J. F. B. (2023). Lived experiences of social studies teachers conducting hybrid classes amidst Covid-19 pandemic. *Advanced Qualitative Research*, *1*(2), 17-27. <https://doi.org/10.31098/aqr.v1i2.1589>
- Setyaningsih, E. (2020). Face to face or online learning: Students' perspectives on blended learning in Indonesia. *Journal of English Language Studies*, *5*(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.30870/jels.v5i1.6256>
- Siegel, S. (2021). *The contents of perception (Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy)*. Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/perception-contents/>
- Simamora, R. M. (2020). The challenges of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic: An essay analysis of performing arts education students. *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, *1*(2), 86-103. <https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v1i2.38>
- Simbolon, N. E. (2021). EFL students' perceptions of blended learning in English language course: Learning experience and engagement. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, *11*(1), 152-174. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v11i1.2518>
- Sumandiyar, A., Husain, M. N., Sumule G, M., Nanda, I., & Fachruddin, S. (2021). The effectiveness of hybrid learning as instructional media amid the Covid-19 pandemic. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi (Indonesian Journal of Communications Studies)*, *5*(3), 651-664. <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v5i3.3850>
- Terhune, N. (2015). Language learning going global: Linking teachers and learners via commercial Skype-based CMC. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *29*(6), 1071-1089. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2015.1061020>
- Vereshchahina, T., Liashchenko, O., & Babiy, S. (2018). English language teachers' perceptions of hybrid learning at university level. *Advanced Education*, *5*(10), 88-97. <https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.148368>

