

**THE TEACHING OF ACADEMIC SPEAKING BY USING BLENDED LEARNING  
APPROACHES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UNISKA  
BANJARMASIN**

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**ABSTRAK**

*Blended learning adalah gaya pendidikan yang menggabungkan pembelajaran offline, tatap muka dan online. Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan (1) Untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis blended learning yang diterapkan dosen dalam pengajaran academic speaking selama pandemi COVID-19 (2) Untuk mengetahui implementasi blended learning dalam pengajaran academic speaking selama pandemi COVID-19 (3) Mendeskripsikan jenis-jenis platform yang digunakan dosen dalam mengajar academic speaking selama pandemi COVID-19. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, peneliti menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah dosen mata kuliah academic speaking pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Islam Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari Banjarmasin. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan wawancara mendalam dengan subjek penelitian ini. Sedangkan untuk menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan langkah-langkah analisis yang dikembangkan oleh Miles dan Huberman meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Berdasarkan hasil analisis ditemukan bahwa (1) Tipe blended learning yang digunakan dosen dalam pengajaran berbicara akademik adalah synchronous dan asynchronous. (2) Pelaksanaan blending learning asynchronous dilakukan dengan menggunakan WhatsApp dan Google Classroom untuk berbagi materi, menyerahkan tugas dan informasi, sedangkan blended learning synchronous dilakukan dengan menggunakan zoom sebagai platform untuk melihat kinerja siswa dalam berbicara (3) Jenis Platform yang digunakan dosen dalam mengajar speaking adalah WhatsApp, Google Classroom, dan Zoom. Oleh karena itu di masa pandemi COVID-19 ini dan juga pasca pandemi disarankan untuk menerapkan blended learning dalam dunia pendidikan. Semakin kreatif dosen, semakin efektif kelas online akan berjalan.*

**Kata kunci:** *Blended Learning; COVID-19; Academic Speaking*

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**ABSTRACT**

*Blended learning is an educational style that combines offline, face to face and online learning. This research has purposes (1)To recognize the types of blended learning are implemented by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic (2)To explore the implementation of blended learning in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic (3)To describe the kinds*

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*of platforms used by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic. To reach the goal, the researcher used descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. The subject of this research was a lecturer of academic speaking course at the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Islamic University of Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari Banjarmasin. To collect the data, the researcher used deep interview to the subject of this research. Meanwhile to analyse the data, the researcher adopted steps of analysis developed by Miles and Huberman comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Based on the result of analysis it found that (1) The types of blended learning used by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking are synchronous and asynchronous. (2)The implementation of asynchronous blending learning is conducted by using WhatsApp and Google Classroom to share materials, submitting the tasks and information, while synchronous blended learning is conducted by using zoom as platform to see the students' performance in speaking (3)Kinds of platform used by the lecturer in teaching speaking are WhatApp, Google Classroom, and Zoom. Therefore during COVID-19 pandemic and on the post pandemic is suggested to implement blended learning in the world of education. The more creative the lecturer, the more effective the online class will run.*

**Keywords:** *Blended Learning; COVID-19; Academic Speaking*

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### **PRELIMINARY**

Speaking can be described as a person's ability to express ideas or thoughts that involve other people in conveying information by composing word by word. Speaking skill can be said to be an interesting skill to train because it is not easy to practice due to the lack of vocabulary, self-confidence, grammar errors, fluency and so much more. Brown (2001) revealed that there are many aspects that make speaking as a complicated language skill for instance grouping, superfluity, decrease form, performance changeable, colloquial, rate distribution, stress, rhythm, intonation and English communication. Moreover, the students' lack of vocabulary, their less confidence to speak and judge of English as a tough subject make speaking as a complicated language skill. Bueno, N. A. et al. (2006) assumes that many English learners took some time for studying English yet they cannot speak properly and comprehensively.

In academic education, there are a lot of material designs that are taught in order to help the students to improve their speaking skill. Academic speaking is designed for the students to strengthen all aspects of speaking ability mainly in academic contexts. The students receive feedback on assignments in class or individually by the help of a lecturer.

At the present time, technology has developed rapidly. It roles as one of the most needed functional learning tools in the world of education especially in today's situation. Adanan et al (2019) confirms that English curriculum has been primarily applying technologies as a way to increase the learning and teaching environment and figure out the likely challenges. As an example, a lot of language classrooms have espoused the latest technologies such as online presentation and online applications. For a sample, blended learning can be used as a good method for a lecturer to approach the students in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic. Au Yong Oliveira et al, (2018) declare that inopportunately, there are some obstacles

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that should be underlined regardless the positive feedback and benefits derived from several learning. One of them is the awareness and limited knowledge of students and parents about the ability to use technology. It could be said that learning through technology is not easy. Che Musa, Koo and Azman (2012) assert that plenty of people reckon traditional classes are more beneficial rather than online classes.

However, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system not only involves students and parents, but also lecturers as educators that are always preparing their online classes to run as effectively as possible. Mahmoudzadeh (2014) states that the lecturer's gratification can be a crucial component that influences the applications of online teaching through managing and planning the materials for online teaching are difficult and take some time for them. In spite of all problems and limitations in the use of technology in teaching English, online classes can be functional during the critical situation of COVID-19. A new phenomenon where the lecturers need to overcome blended learning approaches which requires lecturers to be creative. Therefore, this research attempted to explore the teaching of academic speaking by using blended learning approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic in UNISKA Banjarmasin.

#### **METHOD**

This research was focused on the teaching of academic speaking by using blended learning approaches in the fourth semester of UNISKA Banjarmasin during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal was to get information, an in-depth and comprehensive overview, and to analyze the teaching of academic speaking by using blended learning approaches in the fourth semester of UNISKA Banjarmasin during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the type of relevant research method used in this research was a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. Bogdan (1997) claims that a descriptive research data is collected more by pictures than by numbers. For that reason, the research results are in the form of quotations to strengthen the data presentation. The data can be collected through interview transcripts, field notes, personal documents, memos and so on. Qualitative design is selected because it grants in-depth data that arises from the experiences of the participant using digital technology to conduct research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

There are three research questions will be answered in this research they are as follows:

1. What types of blended learning are implemented by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Based on the result of interview, the researcher found that there are two types of blended learning implemented by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic; they are synchronous and asynchronous blended learning. From the interview, the two types of blended learning that the lecturer used could help the lecturer to be more creative in teaching academic speaking class and also beneficial to encourage the students to be more active during or out of class schedule. Blended learning is the proper stability between online education which learning interaction is technology-based, personal speed and

privacy to engage the students to be motivated to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The list of questions on the interview guide and the subject's responses can be presented as below.

Table 4.1 The subject's responses of question items on this research.

no	Questions	Responses
1	During the COVID-19 pandemic, what types of blended learning did you use during the teaching?	The lecturer used two types of blended learning named synchronous and asynchronous learning.
2	How did you implement those types of blended learning during the teaching?	The lecturer implemented the two types of blended learning by choosing various platforms to keep the learning going on, so the teaching would run well.
3	What kinds of platforms did use choose in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic?	The lecturer used WhatsApp and Google Classroom for asynchronous and Zoom platform for synchronous learning type.
4	How did you use those platforms in academic speaking class?	The lecturer used WhatsApp to send the material before the virtual meeting, and also used Google Classroom to submit the students' assignments (Asynchronous). The lecturer also used Zoom to conduct the class (Synchronous).
5	In your opinion, the types of blended learning and the platforms that you used are effective to enhance the learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Yes, because the lecturer could implement the two types of blended learning well by the support of proper platforms to establish the online teaching and learning.
6	Is the time duration to teach online is sufficient enough to achieve the learning purpose?	Yes, because by using proper platforms and by implementing the two types of blended learning, the students in the class achieved all the learning well.

7	What difficulties did you find in teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic?	The internet network was the only obstacle that sometimes happened during the class. That is why the lecturer had to choose proper platforms to keep communicating with the students as well as the asynchronous learning type implemented well.
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2. How does the lecturer implement those types of blended learning in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Based on the interview, the lecturer used some platforms to support the synchronous and asynchronous blended learning during the class. Synchronous learning occurred when the lecturer had audio and video meeting/teaching with the students to present or to explain the material better that is called virtual meeting. From the interview, the researcher analyzed that the asynchronous occurred when the lecturer communicated with the students using other platforms so the lecturer and the students can keep in touch without virtual meeting and can discuss or deliver the teaching material whenever they want. These two types of blended learning made the learning process more effective and efficient.

3. What kinds of platforms are used by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking by using blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

From the interview, the lecturer used three platforms to run the class in accomplishing the online teaching and learning process. There was Zoom for the synchronous blended learning approach, WhatsApp and Google Classroom for the asynchronous blended learning. The lecturer used Zoom because on that platform, they had a video and audio virtual meeting to conduct the class and also to present about their material well, just like the offline class where the students could see the lecturer while explaining the material. The lecturer used WhatsApp and Google Classroom for the asynchronous blended learning because on these two platforms, both the lecturer and the students could keep communicating each other whenever and wherever they can. The lecturer sent the material on WhatsApp before conducting the meeting on Zoom. The purpose of this way is to give an opportunity to the whole class to read the material before Zoom meeting is conducted. Therefore, they can prepare the questions if any something unclear related to the material that the lecturer sent to them. The lecturer and the students also used Google Classroom to submit their assignments, so that they will have a superb performance or superb score.

1. The types of blended learning that are implemented by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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During this pandemic era, the educators are demanded to be creative to run the class effectively as there is no face to face meeting between the lecturers and the students. Therefore, to accomplish the online learning, the lecturer used synchronous and asynchronous blended learning in teaching academic speaking class during the COVID-19 pandemic. The teaching of academic speaking by using blended learning approaches was supported by the previous research by Suciati (2021) and Mawahdah (2021). First, Suciati (2021) found that the positive impact of blended learning in the pandemic era is that the educators learn more about information technology.

For asynchronous blended learning, the alternative solution was given by the educator to students by asking or contacting the educator directly (private chat) or in class groups. In this way the educator could find out which side the students have not understood about the material and she could provide an explanation of the learning material based on question. Mawahdah (2021) found that blended learning model is considered to be an alternative or learning solution during the COVID-19 pandemic. A learning plan is arranged systematically by the educator. Starting from preparing the material, the educator also arranged the learning schedules between online and face-to-face learning. Moreover, the educator also prepared special learning media for online learning such as power points.

In short, both of the researchers found that blended learning approaches could enhance the educator's creativity in teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic era. The difference between this research and the previous researches are the researcher focused on the implementation of blended learning approaches in academic speaking class and what kinds of platforms the lecturer used in teaching academic speaking class during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the similarity of this research, the researcher found that blended learning approaches could help the educators in both school or university educators in teaching speaking online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2. The implementation of blended learning in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The success of this research is influenced by the implementation of blended learning approaches itself. Blended learning is a new learning breakthrough that is beneficial for the educators in accomplishing the online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic as Alchamdani et al. (2020) defined that learning via online is a new experience that provides elasticity and ease without going to the university. Meanwhile Chaeruman et al. (2018) convince that blended learning can be defined as learning blended thusly for the best capability of synchronous and asynchronous learning to establish the learning experience to reach the learning result as planned.

Asynchronous blended learning is designed to increase the class experience for distant educator and students. The benefit of this asynchronous blended learning is that the flexibility for the lecturer and the students to keep communicating to each other. Asynchronous is implemented by the lecturer to send files or power points on topics they are going to discuss in virtual (synchronous) classes. In asynchronous learning,

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the lecturer gave the students the opportunity to understand or study the material they will present in virtual class. In addition, they can also ask questions about things that they have not understood before the virtual learning is conducted.

3. The kinds of platforms used by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The students can study the material and ask questions at any time while they stay in touch via WhatsApp group that have been created by the lecturer. Nowadays, WhatsApp is used for most people in the world to keep communicating each other. In the world of education, the lecturer use WhatsApp to implement the asynchronous blended learning. For the purpose of the students can see the material that the lecturer sent there before conducting the class so the students had the chance to ask the lecturer some questions based on material, out of class. Furthermore, the lecturer also used Google Classroom to give students chance for those who have not presented in virtual class due to the limited time. Zulfa et al. (2021) announce that the function of Google Classroom in education is crucial for all groups from school to universities. For this reason, they can send a video with the time duration at least ten minutes to present the same topic as occurred in the virtual class as a result to get an equal score like the others. Sudarsana et al. (2019) assert that the advantage of using Google Classroom to implement online education is to enhance the educators' and students' property in using technology smartly.

Synchronous blended learning is implemented by the lecturer through audio and video meetings using Zoom platform. The lecturer determined collaborative work groups for personal or groups. The lecturer could observe the student's or the group's work during the class. In synchronous learning, the lecturer gave students time one by one to perform in front of their friends to see directly how students present themselves in talking about a certain topic as discussed. Furthermore, aside to audio and video, Zoom also provides chat for question and answer sessions held by the presenter. As Chaeruman (2013) explains that the synchronous blended learning involves audio conferencing, video conferencing and chatting. Zoom is an effective platform for the education system, as Laili et al. (2021) claim that Zoom platform is the best learning platform because it enables distance learning and discussion between the lecturers and students similar to offline classroom. In that academic class, there were at least three or four students who presented themselves in one virtual meeting. However, the internet network often obstructed online classes.

### **CLOSING**

Based on the result of the research described in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that:

1. There are two types of blended learning are used by the lecturer in teaching academic speaking at the English Language Education Study Program; they are synchronous and asynchronous blended learning.

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2. The implementation of the two types of blended learning could be implemented well with the support of the proper platforms to accomplish online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. WhatsApp and Google Classrooms are both platforms used by the lecturer for asynchronous learning, while Zoom is a platform used by the lecturer for synchronous virtual classes.

To sum up, the researcher concludes that blended learning approaches can be used as an alternative or learning solution during the COVID-19 pandemic with good implementation facilitated by choosing the proper platforms to improve the student' speaking skill and the lecturer's creativity in online teaching. As a result, the learning objectives can be achieved during the pandemic era. The lecturer used technology appropriately by selecting some kinds of platforms that are in accordance as well as the primary plan so that students were selected one by one to be able to practice their speaking in academic speaking class. The learning process was carried out well with blended learning approaches. Therefore, these two types of blended learning can be said as a good learning solution during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher suggests some points that might be useful for the educator and further researches:

1. Since blended learning approaches can be used as an alternative or learning solution during the COVID-19 pandemic, the educators must play a role in spreading the concept of blended learning approaches to school / universities so that the use of these approaches can be implemented by other educators..
2. This research is for related institutions, especially educational institutions. This research can be used as consideration for determining new policies in the world of education. For example, it can be used as a basis in the preparation of learning that is integrated with the values of educational technology.

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