



# Hybrid Teaching and the Hybridization of Education: Thai University Teachers' Perspectives, Practices, Challenges

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## ABSTRACT

While most of the literature on education during the COVID19 pandemic concentrated on full online synchronous and asynchronous teaching, studies on hybrid teaching and teachers' teaching practices and experiences during this unprecedented time are limited. This study examines English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' hybrid teaching practices, challenges, and perspectives in a university in Thailand. Using an open-ended questionnaire and a follow-up individual, online interview, findings revealed that hybrid teaching is perceived as a synchronous online and onsite teaching, where online students were connected through an online platform, and onsite students attended the class physically in the classroom. Moreover, class time, other online platforms for language reinforcement activities, and technical tools such as multimedia projectors were significant in facilitating hybrid teaching. However, teachers also encountered issues like conducting language assessments, making hybrid teaching student-student interactive, and presenting lesson explanations and examples to online students. Limitations and implications are discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID19 pandemic not only changed the educational landscape in all educational institutions in the world, but it has also stirred up interest among educational scholars and practitioners to address the challenges of, and innovate ways to deliver, online classes. Recently, the fields of English language teaching (ELT) and language education have been the focus of a number of empirical and theoretical studies (see [Latif 2022](#); [Moorhouse & Kohnke 2021](#); [Moser et al. 2021](#); [Yi & Jang 2020](#)), examining and theorizing the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL), teachers' practices, teaching modalities, and online pedagogical innovations during the COVID19 pandemic when all educational institutions in the world closed their physical classrooms and migrated to a virtual classroom to continue the teaching and learning process. Much of these studies report that using technologies is essential in creating a space and a community for continued teaching and learning in online and remote teaching. *Zoom*, *Microsoft Teams*, *Google Meet*, *Facebook*, and *Google classroom* have become the most popular online platforms and tools that language teachers utilize in their online language teaching ([Klimova 2021](#); [Kohnke & Moorhouse 2020](#); [Ulla & Perales 2021a](#); [Tarteer et al. 2021](#)). However, although these online teaching platforms may have eased the transition from residential to virtual classroom during the pandemic, [Moser et al. \(2021\)](#) note that migrating to virtual teaching in times of a global health emergency like the COVID19 pandemic requires innovative teaching strategies. Such pedagogical strategies are essential to maintain students' engagement in online language activities since the teaching is done in an environment where all learners are separated geographically. Thus, depending on the provision of internet connectivity and electronic gadgets, a number of language teachers employed synchronous break-out room group discussion while others had an asynchronous discussion forum on their chosen online platforms ([Kohnke & Moorhouse 2020](#); [Ulla & Perales 2021a](#); [Tarteer et al. 2021](#)).

While these various online instructional modalities may have demonstrated positive recognition and results among language teachers and learners ([Klimova 2021](#); [Moser et al. 2021](#); [Ulla & Achivar 2021](#)), the adoption of online language teaching during the COVID19 pandemic may not be a permanent approach. Schools and universities worldwide have slowly opened classrooms for face-to-face residential teaching and learning as the COVID19 cases begin to drop and people have been inoculated against the virus. However, although schools may open and welcome back students, [Neuwirth et al. \(2021\)](#) acknowledge that this pandemic will not end soon and that everything will not return to normal as the current situation will become a 'new normal'. In addition, [Neuwirth et al. \(2021\)](#) reiterate that "the mode that faculty should be in is not resumption, but rather re-envisioning and re-imagining the design and delivery of the curriculum during these unprecedented times" (p. 143). Therefore, teachers and students must learn to adapt to the changing landscape of education during these times. For ELT classrooms and ESL/EFL teachers, this implies remodeling the approach to language teaching so that ELT is still carried out based on the learning preferences and needs of the students.

In Thailand, many schools and universities have begun to open campuses for students to study in the classroom physically, especially in provinces, where the COVID19 cases continue to drop. However, most of these schools do not compel their students to come to the campus and study. Since there may be a number of parents and students who are still hesitant about the reopening of the classes, fearing that they may catch the virus, these schools give their students an option to study onsite or online, hence; hybrid teaching. However, a number of EFL teachers may not have fully understood the pedagogical attributes of the hybrid teaching approach, which may impact their teaching practices and their students' learning outcomes. It may be a new teaching approach for some language teachers who need training to implement and conduct hybrid teaching.

While most of the literature on language teaching during the COVID19 pandemic concentrated on fully online synchronous and asynchronous teaching, studies on hybrid teaching in ELT classrooms, including EFL teachers' teaching practices and experiences during this unprecedented time, are limited. Additionally, there has been no consensus on what constitutes hybrid teaching as the term is often used interchangeably with blended learning in most studies in the literature (i.e., [Linder 2017](#); [López-Pérez et al. 2011](#); [Smith & Hill 2019](#)). This present study addresses the gap since it looks into and examines the concept of hybrid

teaching and explores its potential as a teaching model in post-COVID19 language teaching and education by examining EFL teachers' teaching practices and challenges in a university in Thailand. Although the concept of hybrid teaching is not new, little is known about how it is facilitated in the current context of the COVID19 pandemic.

## WHAT IS HYBRID TEACHING?

Hybrid teaching is defined in this article as a teaching methodology in which the teacher and a few students are inside a physical classroom while the rest of the students join the class online through a platform such as *Zoom*. In other words, hybrid teaching combines both face-to-face classroom teaching and online teaching. Linder (2017) defined hybrid teaching as a hybrid pedagogy that employs technology to provide students with various learning atmospheres. Students who cannot attend the class physically can join the online classroom synchronously through an online platform. Language learning activities can be done on a chosen online platform to encourage active participation of the residential students and the online students. Moreover, Linder also emphasized that classroom teachers who utilize a hybrid pedagogy address various students' learning preferences while improving their learning outcomes and competencies. Unlike a fully online classroom, where students and teachers may continue the teaching and learning process remotely, either synchronously or asynchronously, through an online platform, a hybrid classroom provides students and teachers with a space for face-to-face and online interactions. However, Vernadakis et al. (2011) noted that "hybrid courses have significant e-learning activities, including online quizzes and synchronous or asynchronous discussions, in addition to traditional classroom face-to-face teaching and learning" (p. 188). These online learning activities, conducted synchronously or asynchronously, would be a distinct feature of a hybrid classroom, where face-to-face and online interactions become engaging, and students are provided with multiple avenues for learning.

While hybrid teaching combines two modes of lesson delivery: online and onsite, it is often used interchangeably with blended learning. Several other scholars (Garrison & Kanuka 2004; Garrison & Vaughan 2013; Graham 2006; López-Pérez et al. 2011; Smith & Hill 2019) defined blended learning as a combination of face-to-face and online instruction. For example, Garrison and Kanuka (2004) mentioned that blended learning "is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (p. 96). It is the combination of the best of both worlds (Graham 2006), where "learning designs are informed by evidence-based practice and the organic needs of the specific context" (Garrison & Vaughan 2013: 24). However, Garrison and Kanuka clarified that blended learning differs significantly from face-to-face learning or online learning. Blended learning constitutes an integrated approach to teaching and learning dynamics (e.g., discipline, developmental level, and resources). In other words, depending on the teaching contexts, blended learning may require teachers to complement their teaching practices to engage students in learning. Most importantly, blended learning takes advantage of the combined face-to-face and online means of communication (Garrison & Vaughan 2013). Thus, López-Pérez et al. (2011) believed that blended learning's success is more than just the basic integration of technology with the face-to-face methodology. Its success lies in how teachers reflect on their traditional teaching practice and redesign such practice to adapt to a different teaching and learning environment, mediated by technology.

Generally, although other scholars have referred to hybrid teaching as blended learning in that both utilized the combined face-to-face and online learning environment, Smith and Hill (2019) argued that the definition of blended learning is problematic, ambiguous, and broad. They emphasized that blended learning's definition "does not specify the scale and nature of that fusion, making it hard to see the essence of blended learning" (p. 384). Such argument was also supported by Saichaie (2020), acknowledging that the differences among blended, hybrid, and flipped learning models are questionable and that their boundaries are unclear. For blended learning, the model focuses only on learning design and experiences (Garrison & Kanuka 2004; Garrison & Vaughan 2013) since it is most commonly used in training within an organization and not in public education (Oliver & Trigwell 2005). This suggests that the focus of blended learning is on the students' learning achievements rather than on teachers'

teaching practices. However, Saichaie (2020) also mentioned that despite the ambiguity and problematic distinction among these teaching models, they “represent a departure from instructor-centered pedagogies (e.g., lecture) to student-centered pedagogies (e.g., active learning), where the focus is less on instructor delivery of content and more on student application of content (e.g., problem-solving)” (p. 96).

Thus, the present study used the concept of hybrid teaching to refer to a teaching methodology employed for learners who may be learning in the classroom and online during the COVID19 pandemic. The concept, which also includes other related concepts such as hybrid classroom, hybrid lecture, and hybrid pedagogies, highlights the role of the teachers in a hybrid classroom, including their pedagogical practices, reflections, and experiences.

## THE HYBRID TEACHING CLASSROOMS

Although blended and hybrid learning differences are problematic, they hold common features that distinguish them from other teaching models. These features include the change of student and teachers’ expectations regarding lesson delivery, the fluidity of the class time, and integration of technology (Saichaie 2020). However, Saichaie (2020) also highlighted that using technology to replace class seat time is intentional in hybrid teaching. Such intention was to promote an environment for student learning.

Much of the literature on hybrid teaching was conducted during the pre-COVID19 era when sophisticated online tools and platforms such as *Zoom*, *Microsoft Teams*, *Google Meet*, *Facebook*, and *Google classroom* were not yet widespread. These studies (Dowling et al. 2003; Linder 2017; Vernadakis et al. 2011) advocated hybrid teaching, suggesting that such a teaching approach effectively enhanced the teaching and learning process, particularly in second language acquisition (Klimova & Kaceti 2015). In addition, the literature also reveals that a number of these studies only examined the effectiveness of hybrid teaching, which was carried out by electronic communication tools, such as TV, CD-Rom, and PowerPoint slides aside from face-to-face classroom lectures. For example, the study conducted by Dowling et al. (2003) in Australia examined the correlation between students’ learning achievements whether students improved their academic performance in face-to-face lectures or hybrid lectures. With a sample of 206 university students, the study found that hybrid teaching effectively improved students’ learning achievements. However, the hybrid teaching in their study was done in a flexible delivery model, in which the teacher used the Netshow on a CD-Rom and students used a computer to watch the PowerPoint slides while listening to the audio narration at any time and place.

Similarly, the study by Vernadakis et al. (2011), which was conducted in Greece, compared the effectiveness of a hybrid learning approach and traditional lectures in delivering a course in computer science. One hundred and seventy-two first-year university students, who were randomly assigned to the two teaching methods, participated in the study. The results revealed that students taught in a hybrid lecture achieved higher scores than those taught in a traditional lecture. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that hybrid teaching not only facilitates students’ understanding on tasks planning, it also gives students an avenue to remember and understand factual and conceptual knowledge.

In language teaching, studies on hybrid teaching also examined teachers’ experiences in a hybrid teaching course. For instance, Drewelow (2013) explored how 15 graduate teaching assistants in a public university in the United States perceived their roles in a hybrid foreign language class. Using an online questionnaire, the participants perceived that the hybrid course facilitated student-centered instruction and favored the implementation of communicative language tasks, which were essential for language acquisition. However, participants also had a limited perception regarding the purpose of online activities. They believed that online activities were meant to prepare their students for face-to-face instruction. Thus, the researcher recommended teacher-training to address their limited understanding of the virtual component of hybrid teaching.

In another study by Solihati and Mulyono (2017) in a private university in Indonesia, the researchers critically reflected on their teaching experiences in a second language teacher

education hybrid classroom. To hybridize their classrooms, they used *Google classroom* alongside face-to-face instruction. The face-to-face instruction was done once a week for 12 sessions, with every session running for 100 minutes, while the virtual activities were held within the week without time restrictions. Based on their reflections, the researchers suggested that the hybrid classroom offered benefits for teachers and students since the delivery of the lesson became convenient and accessible. They also believed that using a hybrid classroom allowed direct feedback on their students' learning achievements. Like Drewelow's (2013) recommendation, the researchers also suggested that teacher training for language educators in their university should be conducted to maximize the use of other forms of technology in a hybrid classroom.

While all the mentioned studies explored the implementation of a hybrid classroom, including its effectiveness, teachers' experiences, and reflections, none of these studies examined the role of the teachers, including their pedagogical practices, reflections, and experiences in a hybrid classroom during the COVID19 pandemic. More importantly, there has been little to no research about hybrid teaching that considers the perspective of EFL teachers as regards what constitutes hybrid teaching, including teachers' teaching practices. The studies by Dowling et al. (2003) and Vernadakis et al. (2011) tended to compare only traditional classroom teaching and hybrid teaching. Likewise, in Solihati and Mulyono's (2017) and Drewelow's (2013) studies, the hybrid teaching was not implemented synchronously, where face-to-face instruction was done simultaneously with online instruction. Instead, the face-to-face and online instructions were conducted on separate days within the week. Thus, the present study aimed at addressing the gaps by exploring the following research problems:

1. How do EFL teachers in a university in Thailand perceive hybrid teaching?
2. What challenges do EFL teachers encounter in a hybrid classroom?

## METHODOLOGY

### SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

The study was conducted in a university in Thailand, which reopened classrooms for students to study on-site during the third term of the academic year 2021-2022. However, the university did not require all students to be back on campus. In other words, students were given a choice whether to study online or on-site; thus, hybrid teaching.

Through a purposive-convenience sampling, 23 English language teachers teaching in a hybrid classroom were invited to participate in the study. A letter of consent and an open-ended questionnaire, approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), were forwarded to them, either to their institutional email address or in the *LINE* group chat, a social media platform of which all language teachers were members. They were also asked if they were willing to participate in a follow-up online interview. After two weeks, the open-ended questionnaire was retrieved.

Of the 23 language teachers, only 14 answered the open-ended questionnaire, and only six teachers (four males, two females) committed to participating in the follow-up online interview. These participants, who were fellow lecturers of the first author, had teaching experience of between 4 and 11 years. Their age ranged between 33 and 43 years old. One participant held a doctorate, three had obtained an MA, and two held BA/BS degrees.

Participants were informed about the study, its purpose, and their voluntary participation. It was also emphasized that they could withdraw from the study anytime, and that all the information obtained from them would be treated with confidentiality.

### TOOLS

An open-ended questionnaire and follow-up in-depth semi-structured interviews were tools used to collect the data for the study. The open-ended questionnaire, consisting of three questions, was posted in a *LINE* group of the language teachers in the university, where the first author was also a member. All the questions, which were written in the English language, asked for the participants' perceptions of hybrid teaching, practices, and challenges. However, it

must be noted that the open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A) was only used as baseline data to identify participants willing to participate in the in-depth semi-structured interviews. The answers were included in the presentation of the findings.

In addition, a follow-up semi-structured individual interview was conducted with participants who volunteered for the study. The purpose of such an interview was to probe further the participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about hybrid teaching, including their classroom practices and teaching challenges. The follow-up interview provided more in-depth data that not only strengthened the data from the open-ended questionnaire but also provided a more focused data treatment. The open-ended questionnaire and follow-up in-depth semi-structured interviews data were treated as one type of data as they are all qualitative data.

To elicit conversation, guide questions were prepared, and additional questions were asked to clarify some points. Employing a semi-structured interview, both the researchers and the participants had a comprehensive discussion about the topic under study.

The interview, which lasted from 30 to 60 minutes, was done using *Zoom* during the participants' free period. All participants agreed to record the online interview.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Transcripts from the online interviews and answers from the open-ended questionnaire were the source of the data of the study. The researchers read the transcripts repeatedly and did the manual coding of the data, highlighting the data that addressed the research questions posed for the study. Manual coding allowed the researchers to engage and have a deeper understanding of the qualitative data.

Furthermore, after the data had been coded and the patterns highlighted, they were categorized and subjected to thematic-analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) by "making the text manageable," "hearing what was said," and "developing theory" (Lewins & Silver 2007: 262–267). To ensure data credibility and authenticity, transcripts were sent back to each of the participants to check for errors, misinterpretation, and for modifications.

Interview and open-ended questionnaire transcripts were included in the data presented below. For the transcripts from the individual interviews, participants were given codes (TP1, TP2, ...). For the open-ended questionnaire transcripts, participants were coded as survey participant 1, survey participant 2, etc. (SP1, SP2, ...) to protect and hide their identities. Since these data were treated as one type of data, they were merged and analyzed together.

## FINDINGS

### HYBRID TEACHING IS ZOOM AND ONSITE TEACHING

The open-ended questionnaire revealed that all of the participants practised hybrid teaching as using *Zoom* and teaching in the physical classroom synchronously. They revealed that since students had been provided with options by the university whether to study onsite or online during the third term of 2021–2022, a number of students had taken the opportunity to return to the campus and study in the physical classroom. SP1 said:

Hybrid teaching is when you are in the classroom with some of your students, but you open and log in to *Zoom* to meet the rest of your students online. Funny, right? It's like teaching two different worlds synchronously. Some students are in the classroom, and some are online in *Zoom*. (SP1)

While the university mandated the conduct of hybrid teaching, teachers were provided with a *Zoom* account and had to come to the classroom for those students who opted to study onsite. They revealed that their classrooms were also equipped with the technology needed to do the hybrid teaching.

For me, hybrid teaching is *Zoom* and onsite teaching. I had to teach in the classroom while using *Zoom* provided to us by the university so that online and onsite students could learn at the same time. The classroom has its computer connected to the internet, a projector, and a white screen, making it easier to do hybrid teaching. (SP3)

SP4 recalled that she had 30 students in one of her classes, but because the university required every lecturer to come to the class for their onsite students, she had to do hybrid teaching.

The university required us to meet our students who wanted to study onsite. So, I came to the classroom and teach [online and onsite students]. (SP4)

## **HYBRID TEACHING MADE STUDENTS EXCITED TO GO BACK TO THE CLASSROOM**

Although participants had split opinions about their perceptions of hybrid teaching, they agreed that it gave options for students whether to study online or onsite. During the follow-up interview, TP1 mentioned that hybrid teaching is challenging, but it also made students excited to go back to the classroom:

I may not like it at first because it was very challenging, and to be honest, I didn't know what hybrid teaching is, but students before the start of the third term have been sending me messages saying that they were excited to come to the classroom. And, I think hybrid teaching gives the students the option of how they want to study. After many months of online learning, it made them feel excited to return to the classroom. Some want to study online, while some want to come to the classroom.

Furthermore, teachers perceived that their students were excited to join the onsite class and, as teachers, they were also happy to be back to classroom teaching. In the interview, TP2 said that hybrid teaching made some students excited to go back to the classroom, knowing they would meet their teacher and classmates after over a year of fully online classes. She said:

We cannot tell our students to go online so that we can have a fully online class. Maybe students came to the classroom because they were excited to meet their teacher and classmates. They have been studying online for almost two years, so they are very excited, especially the first-year students.

Likewise, students were not the only ones excited to be back to onsite learning. Teachers were also happy that they were doing hybrid teaching because they had already missed teaching in the classroom. TP3 opined:

I miss the classroom, and I am happy and excited because I got to meet some of my students in the classroom even though most of their classmates were still online. Even if hybrid teaching was challenging at first because this is another new teaching method in this pandemic, seeing my students in the flesh for the first time after almost two years is a breath of fresh air.

While other participants held positive perceptions of hybrid teaching, a few teacher participants expressed a negative attitude towards hybrid teaching. During the interview, they revealed that hybrid teaching caused them stress and anxiety since they needed to teach from their classroom with some of their onsite students and in *Zoom* with their online students all at the same time. They argued:

If I were to decide, I don't want to do hybrid teaching again. I hope we will be back to onsite teaching by the incoming term. The thing is, it causes me stress. Imagine two groups of students, one onsite and one online, and as a teacher, you need to make sure that there is an equal learning opportunity for them. I need to think of strategies that students are engaged in the activities. It doubles my work. But of course, as teachers, we need to be compassionate during this pandemic, and hybrid teaching is the best solution for students who are still afraid to return to the campus. (TP4)

Hybrid teaching makes me anxious and worried because I don't know if I do it right. Even if some of my students participated in my class discussion, there were some times that I felt that I needed to improve my teaching. I felt that I was starting all over again in my teaching career. At first, I struggled with my online teaching in the previous terms. Now, I am again struggling to do hybrid teaching. (TP5)

Although teachers acknowledged that they did not have training before doing the hybrid teaching, they were thankful for the affordance of technology by the university as they helped design their hybrid classrooms. When asked how they delivered their hybrid teaching, they emphasized having a 'class time' of their language instruction. For example, SP5 said:

Most of our language courses have two hours of class time, except of course for 4-credit courses, which are run for four hours each week. For my 2-hour class, I usually do 1 hour of hybrid synchronous teaching in *Zoom*, including teacher-student interaction and students-students interaction. For the remaining hour, I give students offline homework. During this time, students do the language tasks individually. Onsite students either submit their work directly to me [via email] or upload it in our google drive.

The emphasis on class time was also supported by TP6 in an interview. For one language course, TP6 taught 4 hours for two sessions each week with two hours each session. In the following excerpt, he described how he utilized the 'class time' to conduct hybrid teaching.

For my 4-hour class, I do hybrid teaching during the first meeting of the week. In the second meeting, I give my students offline language reinforcement activities. Of course, since it is hybrid, I have students attending the class physically in the classroom. For my online students, I used *Zoom*. During the hybrid synchronous teaching, it's like the usual classroom teaching but with a *Zoom*. I log in to *Zoom*, switch on the multimedia projector so that onsite students would see some of their classmates online, share the *Zoom* screen of my lesson in PowerPoint slides, and use the microphone in teaching. I must say that this multimedia projector is a very important tool in hybrid teaching because while you are sharing your *Zoom* screen for your online students, everything you share is also projected on a white screen in the classroom which allows the onsite students to see and follow the lessons you are teaching.

Meanwhile, TP1 corroborated TP6's claim that the multimedia projector facilitated hybrid teaching. However, how TP1 approached his hybrid teaching was different in that he also let his onsite students log into their *Zoom* accounts to join their online classmates. TP1 emphasized that letting his onsite students open their *Zoom* accounts was done only during the group discussion in the breakout room sessions. He maintained:

During group discussions and group brainstorming, I would request my onsite students to open their *Zoom* so that they can join some of their groupmates online. I only do this to engage all students with the work and connect with their classmates online. I don't want to create walls between my students. If I don't do this, the tendency is onsite students will likely form their groups, and online students will also form their groups. I wanted them to be engaged with each other.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HYBRID TEACHING**

Based on the open-ended questionnaire, a number of survey participants pointed out the issue of the use of whiteboards for class lectures and discussion. Most of the teachers complained that since they were used to using the pen marker and whiteboard where they could write their explanation to some of their class lectures and discussion, they had difficulty explaining their lecture or giving examples of their lessons in hybrid teaching.

I think one of the challenges in hybrid teaching is how and where to write language examples or other activities because you have two groups of students. If only all of my students are onsite, I could use the whiteboard to illustrate my examples so that they would understand my discussion. (SP8)

The problem mentioned by SP8 was also the same issue raised by SP9. SP9 said that she had to open a word document and type the examples she wanted her students to understand.

When we still had the full online teaching last term, I usually opened a word document and typed all the examples and other activities that I wanted my students to follow. At first, it was really challenging, but once you get used to it, it's no longer difficult.

Another issue that the teachers mentioned was conducting their graded formative and summative tests. Participants opined that cheating was the common issue they faced in the hybrid class.

My hybrid teaching problem is the same as the problem we had during the online class, cheating. But what I do with this problem is I conduct individual oral tests, like a speaking exercise, so that I would really know if they learned something. I also used other online tools [like *Socrative*, *Google form*, and *Kahoot*] for my reinforcement assessments and activities. (SP10)

During the interview, TP4 shared that her main problem with hybrid teaching was putting the students in groups with onsite students joining online. She expressed:

I think every teacher's problem is how to get their online and onsite students to be in a group when we do group work or pair work. That is why in my classes, I make use of the *Zoom* breakout room session and I also asked my onsite students to log in to their *Zoom* account.

Although teachers encountered such issues in their hybrid teaching, they recognized the importance of hybrid teaching not only for giving the students the option to learn online or onsite but also for their professional development. Conducting hybrid teaching during the COVID19 pandemic enabled them to learn new teaching skills and strategies. As emphasized by SP11:

In fairness, I learned new teaching strategies during this COVID19 pandemic. Last year, I learned how to do online teaching. Now, I learned how to manage my hybrid classroom. These are the teaching situations which we did not learn how to manage during our pre-service teaching years. I valued them because they improve my teaching and the way how I manage my students in different learning contexts.

## DISCUSSION

This present study explored the concept of hybrid teaching by examining EFL teachers' perspectives, teaching practices, and challenges in a university in Thailand. Based on the experience of EFL teachers, hybrid teaching is synchronous online and onsite teaching. While students who studied online were connected through an online platform, *Zoom*, onsite students attended the class physically in the classroom. Such a definition and practice of hybrid teaching is contrary to previous studies conducted by some scholars in the literature. However, it should be noted that previous studies explored hybrid teaching practice during the pre-pandemic period, while the present study was conducted in the middle of the COVID19 pandemic when teachers were not trained or prepared to shift to online or distance teaching modalities. For example, in the studies conducted by Dowling et al. (2003), Drewelow (2013), Solihati and Mulyono (2017), and Vernadakis et al. (2011), the elements of hybrid teaching, the face-to-face and online instruction, were not implemented synchronously. Instead, the face-to-face and online instruction were conducted on separate days within the week. Hybrid teaching in the mentioned studies was only implemented by integrating technology into the teaching practice (Saichaie, 2020).

Furthermore, the findings present not only the conceptual definition of hybrid teaching through teachers' practice, but also clarify the differences in pedagogical practice between hybrid teaching and blended learning. Since hybrid teaching was used interchangeably with blended learning by a number of studies in the literature, it is evident in the present study that from the experience of EFL teachers, hybrid teaching carries different pedagogical approaches compared with blended learning. While blended learning focuses on online and offline learning design and experiences (Garrison & Kanuka 2004; Garrison & Vaughan 2013), hybrid teaching concentrates on simultaneous online and onsite teaching and how teachers used

their classroom pedagogical skills for students' language learning. For instance, participants mentioned some pedagogical practices in their hybrid teaching. Instead of using a white board in their physical classroom, where they could write their language examples, instructions, and other language activities, participants utilized the word document to illustrate to their online and onsite students the language topics, examples, and activities in their hybrid teaching. They shared the screen of their word document with their online students while also allowing onsite students to engage with the lessons.

Furthermore, participants also employed other online tools like *Socrative*, *Google form*, and *Kahoot* for their language reinforcement assessments and activities. Individual oral tests were also conducted to check the language ability of their students. And, to engage their students in language learning with their classmates during the hybrid teaching, they also put students in *Zoom* breakout room sessions and required their onsite students to log in to their *Zoom* accounts to participate. Benjamin Moorhouse also suggested this practice in the interview conducted by Yeo (2021) regarding hybrid teaching. Moorhouse said he also let his onsite students log into *Zoom* to make the hybrid teaching student-centered. Letting the onsite students log into *Zoom* makes hybrid teaching student-centered and promotes inclusivity. It also allows onsite or online students to engage together in language learning.

Another important finding from the study that impacted pedagogy was the use of 'class time' to manage a hybrid classroom and enhance and facilitate students' language learning. Findings suggest that the teaching and learning during this unprecedented time sees the importance of having a 'seat time' where students are learning with the teachers in the hybrid classroom and an independent 'task time' which students spend learning on their own. This implies that there should also be a time for offline independent language activities, giving time for learners to work on their own after the hybrid instruction. For example, within a 2-hour class period, a teacher may choose to conduct the hybrid teaching for the first hour and let students work on their own for the remaining hour either in a hybrid set-up or offline. Linder (2017) and Saichaie (2020) highlighted that class time can be used for students to perform language learning activities while making them independent learners. Saichaie (2020) defined class time as "seat time" or time students spend learning in the classroom. Likewise, Linder (2017) mentioned that "a typical hybrid course might meet one hour a week in person and have the remaining hours for the course (amounts vary depending on the course credit load) consist of technology-enhanced activities for students to engage with outside of class" (p. 11). In other words, 'class time' is a split time for hybrid teaching class time and students' independent learning time. Having a 'class time' for hybrid teaching not only gives an opportunity for learners to manage their own learning but it also allows teachers to manage their time to design their teaching materials and activities based on how much time they will allocate for hybrid teaching.

Such an impact of hybrid teaching on pedagogy suggests that hybrid teaching indeed changed the course of teachers' practices to fit the new teaching and learning modality, which was not reported by previous studies in the literature. Although teachers had no training in conducting hybrid teaching, they found ways to navigate the terrain of the new teaching approach by employing their existing pedagogical practices and embracing such challenges to develop in their profession. For instance, participants utilized their online teaching experience during the early months of transitioning to fully online teaching and combined it with their face-to-face classroom teaching experience to support their hybrid classroom instruction. Moreover, participants also acknowledged the role of ICT tools as essential components of hybrid teaching, assisting them in delivering their teaching and learning activities in their hybrid classroom. These tools included a multimedia projector, microphone, camera, and PowerPoint slides. They perceived that these technical tools were important components of hybrid teaching since they helped facilitate their hybrid teaching and connected their onsite and online students.

Lastly, despite the challenges faced by participants in conducting a hybrid classroom, they also recognized its opportunities since they also learned new teaching skills. Conducting hybrid teaching during the COVID19 pandemic allowed participants to relearn their teaching skills in different contexts. They may have experienced teaching in a face-to-face and an online classroom environment, but combining these two teaching and learning environments as a hybrid classroom provided them with a different environment that not only challenged their pedagogical skills but also equipped them with additional teaching skills.

## CONCLUSION

Previous studies have used the term hybrid teaching interchangeably with blended learning. In the present study, hybrid teaching was synchronous teaching, where some students joined the language learning from the classroom while others were learning online, and both groups of students were connected through an online platform, *Zoom*. Findings also revealed that hybrid teaching changed the teaching and learning landscape during the COVID19 pandemic as it greatly impacted teachers' pedagogy and practice. In managing 'class time' for teaching design and for students' independent learning time, other online platforms for language learning, and ICT tools were also found important in facilitating hybrid teaching. Although teachers did not have prior hybrid teaching training, where they encountered teaching issues, they learned to adapt to the new teaching practice by employing their existing pedagogical practices. They also acknowledged the opportunity for professional development, especially since they perceived hybrid teaching as a new learning experience. From the findings, it can be concluded that hybrid teaching may offer an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in the teaching and learning process in the post COVID19 pandemic. It not only provides students with the option to study onsite or online, it also provides a new opportunity for teachers to explore their teaching skills and develop more in their profession.

Although the study was conducted in a university in Thailand, it has implications for other teaching contexts, especially in exploring the potential of hybrid teaching. First, considering that many schools and universities have begun to open their classrooms to welcome back students, teachers must clearly understand what hybrid teaching is so that they can design their teaching and learning practices effectively. Second, schools and universities, administrators, teachers, and policymakers must also recognize that hybrid teaching requires an element of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills, tools, and online platforms to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Thus, technical and pedagogical support should be afforded to teachers to equip them with skills and knowledge to manage a hybrid classroom. "Building a community of practice (CoP), where teachers are afforded not only quality training but also a community where they can freely express, share their ideas, and learn from each other" (Ulla & Perales 2021b: 2) is also important for teachers. Third, 'class time' must also be considered to allow both teacher and students breather time. This means that fully hybrid teaching must be conducted only for a specific time, so there is also time for students' independent learning.

Lastly, while the study examined teachers' pedagogical practices and experiences in a hybrid classroom during the COVID19 pandemic, it recognized its limitations. Methodologically, the study was conducted using an open-ended questionnaire and follow-up in-depth semi-structured interviews. Studies that employ classroom observations would be an interesting endeavor since such a method would look at how hybrid teaching is conducted and examine teachers' pedagogical practices. Future studies are also encouraged to explore students' perceptions of hybrid learning and how such a learning method affects their learning achievements.

## ADDITIONAL FILE

The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix A.** The hybridization of the English language classrooms in a Thai university: Perspectives, practices, challenges. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.758.s1>

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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