

# Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: A Systematic Review of Pedagogical Effectiveness, Learner Engagement, and Implementation Challenges

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## Abstract

This focus study on three main areas includes pedagogical efficacy, its influence on students' participation and complications in placing into practice. The study aims to analyse the literature on blended English Language learning classrooms. The study looked at peer-reviewed research articles that were published between 2015 and 2025 and dealt with both school and higher education. A thorough examination of scholarly databases, which were subsequently subjected to thematic analysis to identify themes and perspectives. The study's findings demonstrate that blended learning can improve language learning results. In addition to increasing classroom engagement, blended learning enables pupils to acquire a language more quickly and accurately. Highlight challenges in implementing innovative teaching and learning methods and provide suitable solutions for them.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, English language teaching, learner engagement, digital pedagogy, systematic review, educational technology

## Introduction

The development of technology has significantly improved the manner in which education is delivered globally. The availability of digital tools, online platforms, and internet access is encouraging educators to explore more participatory approaches to teaching and learning (Graham, 2006; Hrastinski, 2019). English language teaching (ELT) professionals are paying increasing attention to the blended learning approach. Among other tactics, it has gained popularity as a teaching approach. This enables educators to combine opportunities for technology-based learning with conventional approaches (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Bonk & Graham, 2012). The value of blended learning even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. To continue blended learning method, student and teaching community forced to quickly to change to remote and hybrid modes of instructions throughout the world (Hodges et al., 2020; Dhawan, 2020). By assisting digital tools such as online discussion forums, digital tools, multimedia materials can be developed to help fundamental language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Blended learning has a number of pedagogical aids in English language classes (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019). Blended learning components can be perplexing for teachers, though it has more benefits in adoption for classroom teaching. In addition to integrating digital tools into their teaching methods in the classroom is much more difficult to manage both online and classroom activities (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013).

Additionally, students may encounter challenges that include uneven digital competence, restricted access to technology, and difficulty maintaining motivation in a self-directed learning setting (Hrastinski, 2019).

This study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. How does blended learning enhance the outcomes of English language acquisition?
2. How does blended learning affect students' engagement in English language courses?
3. What challenges do institutions and teachers experience when implementing mixed learning into ELT?

## Review of Literature

Over the past 20 years, blended learning has received a lot of attention from researchers, particularly in the fields of educational technology and language instruction. Scholars have examined blended learning's theoretical foundations, instructional design, and practical implications for teaching and learning (Graham, 2006; Bonk & Graham, 2012; Hrastinski, 2019). Teachers are being driven to forgo traditional lecture-based instruction in favour of techniques that promote more adaptive and student-centred learning environments as a result of the increasing integration of digital technologies into education. In view of Garrison and Kanuka (2004), producing more substantial and attractive educational experiences requires a careful combination of in-person instruction with online learning tools.

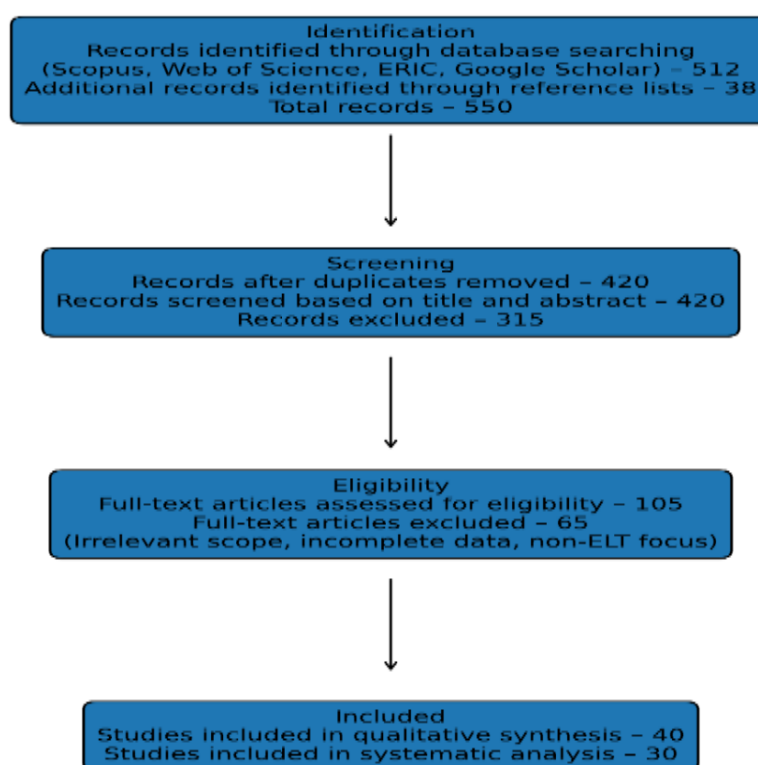
Rather, it ought to change education by promoting teamwork, flexibility, and active involvement. Because it requires continuous practice, contact, and communication, these qualities are especially beneficial in language education (Sharma & Barrett, 2007). Much research has shown how blended learning improves language learning outcomes. Using multimedia resources, students practice speaking and listening while receiving real-time feedback on their performance (Means et al., 2013). As per the study, a blended learning setting can increase engagement by providing a greater range of interaction possibilities and learning activities (Hrastinski, 2019). Online discussion, collaborative writing and Multimedia resources can motivate students to participate more actively in their education. Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal (2004) exposed that in connect with students in a traditional classroom environment, students in learning often report higher levels of engagement and pleasure. In spite of these advantages, academics have also identified a number of problems in putting blended learning into practice. Limited access to dependable internet connectivity and digital equipment can hinder the ability of online learning components in many institutions, especially in developing nations (Porter et al., 2014; Dhawan, 2020). Students who participate in blended learning courses often prove gains in vocabulary development, reading comprehension and writing skills (Albiladi&Alshareef, 2019; Zhang & Zhu, 2018). Students practice listening and speaking using multimedia tools, and get instant feedback on their performance with real-time experience.

#### **Prisma Flow Diagram (Systematic Review Process)**

In order to preserve transparency and guarantee a methodical approach in choosing relevant papers, the Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) format was used for the study. Five fifty-one records were found using database searches in Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar during the first phase. 420 records were left after duplicate entries were eliminated, and their relevance to the research topic was assessed by looking at their abstracts and titles. 420 records were considered after eliminating duplicate entries. 315 studies were eliminated during this screening phase since they did not meet the review's goals.

The remaining 105 full-text papers were then carefully examined to determine their eligibility. For various reasons, such as inadequate data, low applicability, or a lack of emphasis on teaching English, 65 of these research were excluded. Ultimately, 40 papers were included in the qualitative synthesis, and 30 studies fulfilled all the criteria to be included in the final systematic analysis. The general process for locating, screening, and selecting the studies is depicted in the PRISMA flow diagram that follows.

**Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram of the study**



**Table 1 Studies Reviewed in the Systematic Review**

|                      |      |              |                       |                          |                                                                                |
|----------------------|------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Garrison & Kanuka    | 2004 | Canada       | Conceptual study      | Higher education         | Blended learning enhances critical thinking and interaction                    |
| Graham               | 2006 | USA          | Theoretical framework | Educational institutions | Defines blended learning models and pedagogical integration                    |
| Dziuban et al.       | 2004 | USA          | Empirical study       | University students      | Blended learning improves student satisfaction and engagement                  |
| Sharma & Barrett     | 2007 | UK           | Case study            | Language learners        | Technology supports interactive language learning                              |
| Means et al.         | 2013 | USA          | Meta-analysis         | Multiple institutions    | Blended learning produces stronger learning outcomes than traditional learning |
| Porter et al.        | 2014 | USA          | Institutional study   | Universities             | Institutional readiness influences blended learning success                    |
| Zhang & Zhu          | 2018 | China        | Experimental study    | 120 students             | Blended learning improves reading comprehension                                |
| Albiladi & Alshareef | 2019 | Saudi Arabia | Literature review     | ELT research             | Blended learning enhances language skill development                           |
| Hrastinski           | 2019 | Sweden       | Conceptual analysis   | Online education         | Clarifies definitions and engagement in blended learning                       |
| Dhawan               | 2020 | India        | Analytical study      | Higher education         | COVID-19 accelerated adoption of blended learning                              |

## Methodology

This study examines the literature on blended learning in English language instruction using a systematic review methodology. This method helps identify strengths and gaps in the body of knowledge currently available on blended learning in ELT by carefully locating, choosing, and analyzing relevant studies. It allows researchers to gather data from numerous studies and gain a deeper comprehension of a certain subject. Systematic reviews are often employed in educational research.

### 1. Data Sources

The databases were chosen based on their thorough collection of peer-reviewed publications within the domains of linguistics, education technology, and education. This study utilised a number of renowned academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) to collect relevant data. By referring to a number of databases, this evaluation process was carried out, and various perspectives regarding blended learning within the domain of English language instruction were taken into consideration to enhance the overall reliability of the analysis.

### 2. Search Strategy

During search carefully chosen keywords "blended learning," "English language teaching," "learner engagement within blended learning," and "technology-based learning within ELT". This thorough strategy of searching enabled the discovery of studies that specifically address the application of blended learning within the domain of English language training.

### 3. Inclusion Criteria

To ensure that the evaluation represents recent advancements and current practices in blended learning, only research published between 2015 and 2025 was taken into consideration. Second, the studies that are selected must be particularly focused on teaching or learning English. Third, the study needs to examine blended or hybrid learning strategies in educational settings. Furthermore, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included to ensure academic legitimacy. Finally, the studies that were reviewed had to be published in English.

### 4. Exclusion Criteria

Studies that solely addressed online learning settings without any in-person components were not included in the current study, which concentrated on blended learning. The dataset was excluded from related research that did not incorporate English language instruction. Conference abstracts without full research papers were also deleted because they frequently lacked sufficient methodological detail. Additionally, the final analysis excluded books that lacked substantial theoretical discussion or empirical support.

### 5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to study the final collection of research following the screening and selection procedure. Finding recurrent concepts, connections between several research is a key component of this qualitative method. Every chosen article was thoroughly reviewed to comprehend its conclusions and contributions to the area. The literature was categorised into three main areas based on this analysis: learner engagement, educational efficacy, and implementation issues. It was simpler to synthesize the previous studies and provide a clearer picture of how blended learning affects English language instruction by grouping the findings into four topics.

## Analysis and Findings

The analysis of the chosen studies presents some of the most intriguing patterns on how blended learning creates suffering in the teaching of the English language. Research has consistently shown how blended learning can improve instructional strategies and student learning in a variety of educational settings. However, for blended learning to be successfully implemented, a few issues must be resolved. Pedagogical effectiveness, student involvement, and challenges of blended learning are three primary themes that were stressed in presenting the conclusions of the review.

### 1. Pedagogical Effectiveness

A study found that language acquisition is more successful with blended learning. Students receive extra learning resources to enhance their language skills when learning technologies are integrated with education. For instance, interactive exercises, multimedia materials, and online tests enable students to practice their speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills in more interesting and varied ways.

### 2. Engagement of learners

Another important finding of the study is how blended learning affects student involvement. Students are frequently more engaged in the learning process when they have access to a range of educational activities, including the use of technology. Students may have access to online tests, group projects, and discussions, for example, which could promote their involvement in the learning process. They can revisit their lessons according to their learning phase and even interact with their teachers and peers outside of the classroom thanks to the use of technology in education. They may even be able to contact each other through a range of technological channels, including messaging and online chats.

## Conclusion

Blended learning is one of the most important approaches to teaching English. The study's findings demonstrate how combining technology with traditional teaching techniques can result in more adaptable and stimulating learning settings. However, a review of the literature has revealed several challenges with blended learning. Numerous factors, including a lack of technology resources, teacher preparation, and student motivation, may affect how effective blended learning is.

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## Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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