



LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF BLENDED LEARNING IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. *This paper reviews the effects of blended learning (BL) in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms by reviewing existing research. BL has gained popularity due to technological advancements and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global education. Studies indicate that BL enhances student engagement, supports personalized learning, and improves language acquisition by incorporating multimedia content, gamification, and real-world interactions. The literature review suggests that BL improves vocabulary retention, writing skills, and speaking fluency compared to traditional methods. However, challenges such as unequal access to digital technology, lack of trained teachers, and student self-discipline remain obstacles to successful implementation. BL is likely to become more common in ESL education as technology advances, provided that educators carefully integrate digital tools to maximize learning outcomes.*

Keywords: *Blended Learning, ESL, Language Acquisition, Online Learning, Student Engagement, Technology-Enhanced Learning.*

Introduction. Blended learning (BL) is becoming popular in education. With internet access rising from 41.1% to 67.9% in the past decade, online learning tools have become more accessible. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this process by making platforms like Khan Academy and Duolingo familiar with learning.

Blended learning combines traditional classroom teaching with digital resources. More than just mixing online and in-person instruction, it aligns teaching methods with practical strategies and technologies. BL is about adapting learning methods to meet institutional goals and student needs (Hofmann, 2018).

Main body. Unlike fully online or face-to-face methods, BL offers a flexible approach. Students use resources such as videos, interactive exercises, and AI-powered tutors alongside teacher-led lessons. Research suggests that BL allows self-paced learning, which is especially useful for ESL students progressing at different speeds (Graham, 2006).

Sharma and Barrett (2011) state that BL chooses the best instructional strategy for each learning objective. Researchers argue that digital tools provide better exposure to real-life language use, which allows students to practice listening and



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speaking in dynamic environments. Warschauer and Kern (2000) highlight that BL enables students to interact with native speakers through online platforms, improving their language fluency.

One key advantage of BL is increased student engagement. Online tools introduce gamification, multimedia lessons, and adaptive learning systems that adjust to individual student needs, making students more interested in class. A Uzun (2020) study found that ESL students in BL environments showed higher motivation and participation than those in traditional classrooms.

Research on learning outcomes supports the effectiveness of BL. A study by Zapata and Sagarra (2007) on vocabulary acquisition found that students in BL environments retained 40% more words than those using traditional methods. Similarly, Warschauer (2015) found that learners in BL settings developed stronger writing and speaking skills due to increased exposure to multimedia content and online discussions.

However, the success of BL depends on proper implementation. Neumeier (2005) warns that if online activities are not well integrated with classroom lessons, students may struggle to see their relevance, leading to disengagement. Despite its benefits, BL has challenges. The digital divide is a significant issue. Students from low-income backgrounds may lack reliable internet access or devices. Reinders and Hubbard (2013) underline that teachers may struggle to integrate technology effectively without proper training, reducing BL's potential impact.

Another challenge is student self-discipline. BL learners need to manage their study time, which is difficult for younger or less motivated students. Stockwell (2012) found that some ESL students underperform in BL settings due to poor time management and lack of self-motivation. However, Graham (2013) argues that BL can significantly improve ESL education by combining online flexibility and face-to-face interaction with proper planning and teacher support.

Conclusion. Research shows that BL increases student engagement, improves language acquisition, and provides flexible learning opportunities (Uzun, 2020; Zapata & Sagarra, 2007). Studies show its effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary retention, writing skills, and speaking fluency compared to traditional methods (Warschauer, 2015; Sharma & Barrett, 2011). However, BL has problems such as the digital divide, lack of teacher training, and student self-discipline issues (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013; Stockwell, 2012). Educators should use digital tools to maximize their potential, ensuring they align with language learning goals (Neumeier, 2005).



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BL will likely become essential to ESL education as technology and online learning platforms become more advanced. While BL is not a one-size-fits-all solution, it presents a promising path for language learners when applied with care and appropriate support.

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