

Research Article

A plan for students' independent study of blended learning in the English Department of STKIP Al Maksum

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to evaluate how well students are performing on their own in blended learning in language courses at institutions, STKIP Al Maksum with the ultimate objective of finding obstacles and opportunities for self-directed study. 100 students from the Department of English, STKIP Al Maksum will be surveyed online in October 2022 as part of this study. Several significant conclusions can be derived from the findings. The socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds of English Department faculty members influence students' abilities to self-organize and effectively use technology to study a second language. Students completing independent work in blended learning of foreign languages at the English Department face the following challenges: technical and the need for support from a technical specialist; the inconvenient nature of a blended learning system; the requirement for additional technical skills; the complexity of blended learning. It has also been determined, on average, how effective the blended learning system and technology make the learning process.

Keywords: independent study; blended learning; English; curriculum

1. INTRODUCTION

Blended learning (BL) is currently being utilized as a means by which students can develop their professional capabilities within the context of their proficiency in a foreign language. This is due to the current state of affairs and the trend that has followed the digitalization of the learning era. At the very least, the use of the term can be traced back to 2007 (Hockly, 2018), and during the course of the previous decade, there has been a substantial shift in the emphasis placed on education. Work completed by students in BL is supposed to be arranged in a manner that is distinct from any other, with an emphasis placed on the use of informal channels of communication and collaborative learning through the utilization of digital resources (Ju, 2018), which promotes student autonomy (Hubackova and Semradova, 2016). BL serves many purposes, including but not limited to the following: developing English Department professional and informational competencies; fostering students' motivation to learn a foreign language (Banditvilai, 2016; Arkhipova et al. 2017); improving the quality of instruction; enforcing social order (Ju, 2018); enhancing students' ability to think constructively and algorithmically; and improving the overall quality of instruction (Banditvilai, 2016). The phrase "blended learning" is used to refer to any educational strategy that blends the more conventional "face-to-face" (Hockly, 2018). In the twenty-first century, one of the most important skills one can possess is the ability to use multiple forms of media successfully (Jiang et al., 2019).

The ability of students to self-organize and function independently, the level of preparation of the English Department for online learning and work in a virtual environment, the quality of the virtual environment, and the usage of BL technologies by the English Department are all variables that affect how well blended learning facilitates independent work (Hubackova and Semradova, 2016). It is difficult to evaluate the efficacy of blended language learning due to the little amount of research that has been undertaken on the responses of students to independent work assigned by the English department. In order to provide a concise summary of the responses received from students, the writers participate in self-reflective appraisals of BL (Tomlinson and Whittaker, 2013). Several academics have investigated the students' subjective reactions to the difficulties that come along with adopting the BL approach in order to gain a better understanding of the circumstances in which the BL technique may be successfully adopted in the classroom (Nazarenko, 2015). The purpose of this research article is to evaluate the effectiveness of students' individual efforts in blended language learning at universities, with the intention of identifying both the problems and the potential for students to engage in self-directed study.

2. METHOD

Materials in this Blended learning (BL) should be prioritized properly by students. Also crucial to the success of blended learning is the sharing of information among participants. The practical application of information and knowledge is crucial; as a result, practitioners should share English Department insights with theorists. Students actively participate in the development of English Department own educational experiences. In the context of cross-cultural encounters and student migration, the group's demographic make-up can also have an impact on the educational experience. Space is another crucial requirement that is frequently disregarded. There shouldn't be strict limits imposed on the learning environment by the materials. Accessibility, a well-defined context, specific learning strategies, and the ability to leverage social media as a separate area and platform for education are all factors that students should take into account while designing English Department classrooms. Storage, dissemination, and structuring of interaction and knowledge should all be enabled through technological methods.

There are two prerequisites for cooperation. Learning involves a socially sophisticated self-organization of unpredictable behaving subjects. These individuals make up distinct populations distinguished by Department of English age, gender, nationality, culture, and behaviours. Blended learning is frequently revolutionized by teamwork or group work due to each member's unique input to the growth of English Department own personal processes. In fact, it lends credence to the theory that education fosters innovation. As a result, the pros and cons, requirements, components, and models of blended learning are actively explored in the scholarly literature. As a result, there is a dearth of research on the topic of students' individual efforts' impact on blended language learning at the university level.

The notion of self-organization serves as the theoretical foundation for this research project, which focuses on the independence of college students engaged in the simultaneous study of two languages. The scholarly article surveyed university students in STKIP Al Maksu in October 2022 using a questionnaire filled out entirely online. The research method of choice was a structured interview with a total of 24 questions: 1) about the efficiency with which the blended learning system and technologies are organized (Questions 1-10); 2) about the efficiency with which the blended learning system and technologies are used in the classroom (Questions 11-20); and 3) about demographic information (such as age, gender, and major) (Table 3). The students ranked statements 1–10 on a scale from 1–4, with 1–strongly disagree and 4–strongly agree, and statements 11–20 on a scale from 1–5, with 1–strongly disagree and 5–strongly agree. 260 students from different academic programs at a Department of English of Students answered the questionnaire (Table 2). Among those who participated, 41.4% are sophomores, 13.8% are juniors, 41.4% are seniors, and 3.4% are graduate students. Around half (62.1%) of those who responded were between the ages of 18 and 20, and about a third (37.5%) were between the ages of 21 and 22.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Data

	Course of Study	Sex*	Age**
Average value	3.069	1.5517	1.3793
Median	3.000	2.0000	1.0000
Standard deviation	.9975	.50612	.49380
Dispersion	.995	.256	.244
Minimum	2.0	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.0	2.00	2.00

Note:

* 1 – male, 2 – female;

** 1 – age 18-20 years old and 2 – age 21-22 years old. Source: calculated by the authors.

The following statistical methods of processing the survey results have been used in the study, namely:

- 1) Pearson's Chi-Square Test of Independence in order to determine the impact of social- demographic characteristics of students on the level of self-organization and autonomy of students. The value of Pearson's statistics and the level of significance have been used to draw conclusions about the presence or absence of influence.
- 2) Mean and Standard deviation have been used to determine the differences between the level of self-organization and autonomy of students depending on gender.
- 3) Independent Sample T-test has been used to determine the differences in the level of self- organization and autonomy of students depending on gender (Table 3).

Table 2. Survey on the Effectiveness of the Blended Learning System (Questions 1-10) and the Learning Process Based on the Blended Learning System and Technologies (Questions 11-20)

No.	Statements	Grade				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think I would like to use the blended learning system in the future					
2	I find blended learning difficult					
3	I thought the web learning system was easy to use					
4	I need the support of a technician to use blended learning technologies					
5	The various functions of blended learning are successfully integrated and interact with each other					

No.	Statements	Grade				
		1	2	3	4	5
6	There are many inconsistencies in blended learning					
7	Blended learning technologies can be learned quickly					
8	The system is not easy to use					
9	I felt confident while using technology					
10	I needed additional skills prior I started using technology					
11	The goals of learning a foreign language were understood and defined in the system of blended learning					
12	The process of organizing work in the blended learning system was well organized					
13	The material is presented interestingly; it is easily accessible					
14	There were enough videos, examples and illustrations in the system					
15	Concepts, materials and ideas were understandable and clearly presented					
16	The duration of training was sufficient for learning a foreign language					
17	The training expanded my professional and communication skills					
18	I can use the acquired knowledge in professional activities					
19	Blended learning is as effective as traditional methods					
20	I am satisfied with the organization of work and the level of autonomy in learning a foreign language					
21	Your age					
22	Gender					
23	Course of Study					

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The digitalization of learning system in STKIP Al Maksum, especially in English Department has led to an increase in the usage of blended learning, with several universities actively incorporating technological platforms and resources into the classroom. E Learning, Moodle is one of the most popular online classroom management systems, allowing teachers to distribute and collect electronic course materials such as video lectures, homework assignments, and assessments, all with the click of a mouse. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Viber are other tools for blended learning that facilitate teacher-student collaboration. Average student satisfaction with the blended learning system and its associated technologies is described using descriptive statistics based on the responses to organized interviews with the students (Table 4). There are large variations around the mean value of 1.897, which indicates a somewhat wide range.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Statements	Minimum	Maximum	Average value	Standard deviation
I think I would like to use the blended learning system in the future	1.0	4.0	2.724	1.1618
I find blended learning difficult	1.0	4.0	2.276	1.0986
I thought the web learning system was easy to use	1.0	4.0	3.207	.7736
I need the support of a technician to use blended learning technologies	1.0	4.0	1.897	1.0805
The various functions of blended learning are successfully integrated and interact with each other	1.0	4.0	2.966	.8653
There are many inconsistencies in blended learning	1.0	4.0	2.552	1.2126
Blended learning technologies can be learned quickly	1.0	4.0	3.034	1.1175
The system is not easy to use	1.0	4.0	2.172	1.1973
I felt confident while using technology	1.0	4.0	3.000	.9258
I needed additional skills prior I started using technology	1.0	4.0	2.276	1.1306
The goals of learning a foreign language were understood and defined in the system of blended learning	1.0	5.0	3.690	1.3121
The process of organizing work in the blended learning system was well organized	1.0	5.0	3.690	1.1681
The material is presented interestingly; it is easily accessible	1.0	5.0	3.345	1.3437
There were enough videos, examples and illustrations in the system	1.0	5.0	3.276	1.3335
Concepts, materials and ideas were understandable and clearly presented	1.0	5.0	3.621	1.2653
The duration of training was sufficient for learning a foreign language	1.0	5.0	3.552	1.2702
The training expanded my professional and communication skills	1.0	5.0	3.414	1.4272
I can use the acquired knowledge in professional activities	1.0	5.0	3.517	1.3528
Blended learning is as effective as traditional methods	1.0	5.0	3.172	1.3905
I am satisfied with the organization of work and the level of autonomy in learning a foreign language	1.0	5.0	3.379	1.4979

Source: Calculated by the authors

Common issues with blended learning technologies include those of a technical nature, the inconvenient nature of a blended learning system, and the requirement for additional technical assistance abilities; the difficulty of integrated instruction. As a result, there is an issue on both the side of the university and the students in terms of assuring the quality of technological features of platforms and systems of blended learning (Berzia, 2019). For this reason, the production of video guides for blended learning tools is essential. Students also highlight the benefits of blended learning, including its potential, its usability, the success with which its many functions and English Department interaction are integrated, and the rapidity with which it allows them to learn. Grades are in the range of 3.172 to 3.690, indicating that the blended learning system and technologies are generally effective in fostering student learning. Uncertain goals for utilizing a blended learning system; Disorganization of the blended learning process; Difficulty or absence of examples and illustrative material; Time constraints; Inadequate study materials; Lack of Opportunities to Develop Professional and Communication Skills.

When it comes to learning a new language, students report an average degree of autonomy and pleasure of 3.379. Therefore, students' work arrangement is not sufficiently decentralized. Chi-square tests of independence can be used to analyze the correlation between students' demographic traits and English Department degree of independence to better understand the factors that contribute to the typical degree of self-direction they exhibit in the classroom (Table 5). First, let's suppose. Blended language learning encourages more independence and self-motivation in students doing three or more courses at once.

Table 4. Results of Pearson’s Chi-Square Test of Independence: Course of Study and Level of Self-Organization and Autonomy of Students’ Work (I Need the Support of A Technician to Use Blended Learning Technologies)

	Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Chi-Square	19.880a	0.19
Likelihood ratio	17.777	0.38
Linear connection	4.276	0.39

Source: Calculated by the authors.

For as much as the value of Chi-Square is 19.880 and the significance level is 0.019, it is possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the levels of autonomy of students depending on the course of study; these variables are significantly interdependent. In order to assess the level of students’ autonomy depending on social-economic characteristics (Holiachuk et al., 2022), a Chi- Square Test of Independence was conducted for the variable “Blended learning technologies can be learned quickly” (Table 6). High test values for the variable course of study with a value of p-value = 0.133 ($\geq 0,05$) indicate that blended learning technologies take time to develop skills of use regardless of the course. At the same time, age and gender affect the speed of learning the functions of blended learning technologies.

Table 5. Results of Pearson’s Chi-Square Test of Independence: Course, Age and Gender and the Level of Self-Organization and Autonomy of Students (Blended Learning Technologies Can Be Learned Quickly)

I believe that most students can learn to use a blended learning system quickly	Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Course of Study		
Chi-Square	13.706	0.133
Likelihood ratio	17.101	0.047
Linear connection	4.186	0.041
Age		
Chi-Square	7.065	0.070
Likelihood ratio	7.466	0.058
Linear connection	6.387	0.011
Sex		
Chi-Square	6.906	0.075
Likelihood ratio	8.826	0.032
Linear connection	4.793	0.029

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Hypothesis 2. There is a difference in the level of self-organization and autonomy of male and female students in blended learning of foreign languages. Table 7 makes it possible to conclude that the average need for technical support and a specialist to use a blended learning system is 2.308 for males and 1.688 for females. The standard deviation for males is slightly higher compared to females.

Table 6. Group Statistics: Gender and Level of Self-Organization and Autonomy of Students

	Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Std. Error Mean
I need the support of a technician to use blended learning technologies	1.00	13	2.308	1.3156	.3649
	2.00	16	1.688	.7042	.1760

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Table 7. Independent Sample T-Test

		Levene-s test for Equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
I Need the Support of a Technician To use Blended Learning Technologies	Equal Variances Assumed Equal Variances Not Assumed	10.94	.003	1.63	27	.116	.62	.382	-.163	1.403
				1.531	17.479	.144	.620	.405	-.233	1.473

Source: Calculated by the authors.

Levene's p-value of 0.003 is less than the significance threshold of $= 0.05$, thus we conclude that the null hypothesis of equal variance between male and female students is false (**Table 7**). Line 2 allows us to draw conclusions about the equality of variance hypothesis: student deviations in self-organization and autonomy are not equal; the t-statistic and its p-value are 1.531 and 0.144, respectively; therefore, with a probability of error of 5%, we have concluded that there are no differences in the level of self-organization and autonomy of work between male and female students. Because of the necessity for technical assistance, the time spent adapting to platforms and technologies, and the teaching techniques used, it is safe to say that students' individual efforts in blended foreign language learning at Department of English are around average. In autonomous learning, this causes a variety of issues.

4. CONCLUSION

Several significant inferences may be drawn from the study that was carried out. There is a correlation between students' social-demographic features and English Department ability to self-organize English Department work while using technology to study a foreign language. To do this, video guides for blended learning tools need to be created. The degree of independence that students are expected to take on varies with English Department age, gender, and field of study, and this fact must be taken into account while designing blended learning programs. Second, the fundamental difficulties that students face in English Department individual work when engaging in blended learning of foreign languages in English department are identified as follows: technical difficulties and the need for support from a technical specialist; the inconvenient nature of a blended learning system; the requirement for additional technical skills; the complexity of blended learning. Students also benefit greatly from blended learning because of its potential, its usability, its ability to successfully integrate diverse functions and English Department interaction, and its ability to expedite the learning process. Thirdly, blended learning's average degree of efficacy as a system and set of technologies for facilitating education is evaluated. The following are some of the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in order to fully realize the potential of the blended learning system: a lack of clarity regarding the desired outcomes of the program; a lack of clarity regarding the blended learning process; a lack of examples and illustrative materials; a lack of time to study materials; and an inability to adequately address the need for increased professional and communication skills. In higher education, the primary areas of growth of blended courses are strengthening students' autonomy in learning and the efficiency of English Department individual work in a foreign language. Interaction, research, task and tool creation, materials, integration, assessment, context, teacher education, and student learning are all important thrusts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Blended learning has to be organized with the notion of variety in mind, and students need to be prepared to adapt to the ever-evolving e-learning environment (Frankl and Bitter, 2011; Sanjeev and Natrajan, 2019). Blended learning recommendations should be flexible enough to change based on the external and internal circumstances of the learning process. These suggestions are derived on research into student learning habits and self-organizational patterns (Wan and Niu, 2018). Findings from this study have some connections to those from A's research. This is a Buran and an A. Evseeva (2015) argues that the best way to teach and learn a foreign language in the present day is a hybrid of online instruction and in-person sessions. The necessity of transferable communication skills that can be used in an online classroom context provides a rationale for the prevalence of integrated blended learning.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The author discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declare that he has no competing interests.

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