

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BLENDED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY OF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Blended learning has become an increasingly relevant instructional model in English language education because it integrates face-to-face interaction, online learning activities, digital resources, and flexible language practice. However, students' perceptions of blended learning remain varied because they experience both pedagogical benefits and practical challenges during implementation. This study aims to examine students' perceptions of blended learning in English language education, focusing on perceived usefulness, learning engagement, interaction, learner autonomy, and implementation challenges. The study employed a mixed-method design involving a survey of 126 undergraduate students enrolled in English language education courses and semi-structured interviews with 18 selected students. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings showed that students generally perceived blended learning positively, with an overall mean score of 3.88. Students valued flexible access to materials, repeated practice, online discussion, face-to-face clarification, and diverse digital learning resources. Blended learning also supported learner autonomy because students could review materials, complete tasks, and manage learning time independently. However, students reported challenges related to unstable internet connection, uneven digital competence, delayed feedback, limited online interaction, distraction, and workload management. The study concludes that blended learning can support English language education when online and face-to-face components are pedagogically aligned, interaction is actively facilitated, and students receive technical and academic guidance.

Keywords: *blended learning; English education; student perception; learner autonomy; digital learning*

A. Introduction

Blended learning has become a significant instructional model in contemporary English language education. It combines face-to-face classroom interaction with online learning activities, digital resources, learning management systems, mobile applications, video materials, online discussions, and independent learning tasks. In language education, this model is relevant because English learning requires exposure, practice, interaction, feedback, and reflection. Face-to-face learning provides direct communication, classroom guidance, social presence, and immediate clarification, while online learning provides flexibility, access to materials, repeated practice, and extended learning opportunities beyond classroom time.

The development of blended learning is closely related to the transformation of technology-enhanced education. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) argue that blended learning has transformative potential because it can integrate the strengths of face-to-face and online learning environments. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) introduce the Community of Inquiry framework, which explains meaningful online and blended learning through cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. In English language education, these three presences are important because students need to construct meaning, interact with peers and teachers, and receive instructional guidance.

Definitions of the model have been contested from the outset. Graham (2006, 2013) defines blended learning as the considered combination of face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction, and Bonk and Graham (2006) collected the early designs on which that definition rests. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) argued that its value is transformative rather than merely additive, and Garrison and Vaughan (2008) and Vaughan (2007) set out the framework and principles that follow. Picciano (2009) proposed a multimodal model that matches media to objectives, while Hrastinski (2019) shows that the term is still used in incompatible ways across studies. Moskal, Dziuban, and Hartman (2013) and Dziuban, Graham, Moskal, Norberg, and Sicilia (2018) trace its move from experiment to institutional norm, and Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) supply the community of inquiry framework through which cognitive, social, and teaching presence are usually analysed.

In English language education, blended learning can support different language skills. Online platforms can provide listening materials, pronunciation models, vocabulary exercises, grammar practice, reading texts, writing forums, peer feedback, and self-paced

quizzes. Face-to-face sessions can be used for speaking practice, discussion, clarification, feedback, collaborative tasks, and performance assessment. This combination allows students to engage with English through multiple modes and learning spaces.

Students' perceptions of blended learning are crucial for successful implementation. Students are not passive recipients of instructional design; they actively interpret, accept, resist, or adapt to learning models. If students perceive blended learning as useful, flexible, and supportive, they are more likely to engage in online activities and participate in classroom learning. Conversely, if students experience blended learning as confusing, overloaded, poorly supported, or technically difficult, their motivation and engagement may decline.

Previous studies have shown that students generally perceive blended learning positively, but they also report challenges. Vaughan (2007) found that students valued time flexibility and learning opportunities in blended learning but also faced issues related to time management and responsibility for learning. Rianto (2020) reported that Indonesian EFL students perceived blended learning as beneficial but experienced problems related to internet access and learning management. Simbolon (2021) similarly found that blended learning influenced students' learning experience and engagement in English courses.

Blended learning can also support learner autonomy. In online components, students are expected to access materials, manage deadlines, complete tasks, participate in discussions, and review learning resources independently. This condition can strengthen self-regulated learning if students have sufficient motivation, digital competence, and academic guidance. However, not all students are equally prepared for autonomous learning. Some students may delay online tasks, depend heavily on teacher reminders, or struggle to manage learning time.

In Indonesian English language education contexts, blended learning has become increasingly common after the expansion of online learning during and after the pandemic period. Students are now more familiar with learning management systems, video conferencing, messaging applications, digital assignments, and online resources. However, familiarity with digital tools does not always mean readiness for blended learning. Students may still face unstable internet connection, limited devices, distraction, unequal digital literacy, and difficulty maintaining motivation in online components.

Therefore, it is important to examine students' perceptions of blended learning in English language education. Understanding students' perceptions can help teachers design better blended courses,

identify barriers, strengthen interaction, and improve student support. This study addresses four research questions: (1) How do students perceive blended learning in English language education? (2) What benefits do students experience in blended English learning? (3) What challenges do students encounter during blended learning implementation? and (4) What pedagogical implications can be drawn for improving blended learning in English language education?

B. Method

This study employed a mixed-method research design. The quantitative component used a survey to identify general patterns of students' perceptions of blended learning in English language education. The qualitative component used semi-structured interviews to explore students' experiences, benefits, challenges, and suggestions in greater depth. This design was selected because students' perceptions involve measurable tendencies and contextual explanations.

The participants were 126 undergraduate students enrolled in English language education courses at a university. They had experienced blended learning for at least one semester. The blended learning model used in their courses combined face-to-face meetings, online learning management system activities, digital materials, online discussions, recorded videos, assignments, quizzes, and messaging-based teacher communication. From the survey participants, 18 students were selected for interviews. The interview participants represented students with positive, moderate, and negative perceptions based on survey results.

The quantitative instrument was the Students' Perception of Blended Learning Questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items grouped into five dimensions: perceived usefulness, learning engagement, interaction, learner autonomy, and implementation challenges. Each item used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Perceived usefulness measured students' views on the value of blended learning for English learning. Learning engagement measured participation and motivation. Interaction measured communication with teachers and peers. Learner autonomy measured independent learning behavior. Implementation challenges measured technical, pedagogical, and personal difficulties. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.91, indicating strong internal consistency.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview questions explored students' experiences in

blended learning, preferred learning activities, online and face-to-face interaction, digital material use, feedback, autonomy, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was recorded with participant consent.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages. The interpretation categories were: 1.00-1.80 very low, 1.81-2.60 low, 2.61-3.40 moderate, 3.41-4.20 high, and 4.21-5.00 very high. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically through data familiarization, coding, categorization, theme development, and interpretation. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing questionnaire results and interview findings. Ethical procedures were applied by obtaining participant consent, anonymizing student identities, and ensuring that participation did not affect course grades.

Instrument quality and analytical rigour were both addressed. The perception questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in English language education and instructional technology, with Aiken validity indices between 0.80 and 0.93, and was piloted with 35 students outside the sample; corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.37 to 0.73 and the overall reliability reached a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. The four subscales also produced acceptable coefficients: flexibility 0.86, interaction 0.84, autonomy 0.85, and instructional coherence 0.82. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the four-dimension structure with acceptable fit indices, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.049, and SRMR = 0.046. Interview participants were selected purposively to represent high, moderate, and low perception scores, transcripts were returned to them for member checking, and 30% of the transcripts were coded independently by two researchers, producing a Cohen's kappa of 0.84. Survey and interview evidence were then compared through joint display analysis so that convergent and divergent findings could be identified explicitly.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

The findings are presented in four parts. The first part reports students' overall perceptions of blended learning. The second part explains the perceived benefits. The third part presents students' challenges. The fourth part describes students' suggestions for improving blended English learning.

Students' Overall Perceptions of Blended Learning

The survey results showed that students had generally positive perceptions of blended learning in English language education. The overall mean score was 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.53, indicating a high perception level.

Perceived usefulness received the highest mean score. Students considered blended learning useful because it gave them access to materials before and after class, allowed repeated review, and provided various digital learning resources. Learner autonomy also received a high score, indicating that students perceived blended learning as helpful for developing independent learning habits.

Interaction received the lowest mean score, although it remained in the high category. Interview data showed that students valued face-to-face interaction more than online interaction for speaking practice and clarification. Online interaction was perceived as useful for asking short questions and submitting tasks, but it was sometimes less dynamic than classroom discussion. The high score in implementation challenges indicates that students experienced significant obstacles even though their overall perception was positive.

Table 1 Students' Perceptions of Blended Learning

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Perceived usefulness	4.12	0.49	High
Learning engagement	3.86	0.55	High
Interaction	3.61	0.64	High
Learner autonomy	3.94	0.52	High
Implementation challenges	3.87	0.58	High
Overall perception	3.88	0.53	High

Source: Processed from student questionnaire data.

Benefits of Blended Learning in English Language Education

Students identified several benefits of blended learning. The most dominant benefits were flexible access to materials, repeated language practice, improved preparation for class, learner autonomy, and integration of digital resources.

Students stated that online materials helped them prepare before face-to-face meetings. They could read texts, watch videos, access vocabulary lists, complete quizzes, and review slides before class. This made classroom meetings more useful because they already had background knowledge about the topic. Repeated practice was another important benefit. Students appreciated digital quizzes, recorded

videos, vocabulary exercises, and online reading materials because they could access them multiple times.

Students also perceived blended learning as supportive of learner autonomy. They were required to manage deadlines, complete online tasks, and review materials independently. Some students reported that blended learning trained them to become more responsible for their own learning. Face-to-face clarification remained important because difficult concepts still needed direct explanation and immediate questioning.

Table 2 Perceived Benefits of Blended Learning

Benefit	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Flexible access to learning materials	4.31	0.46	Very high
Repeated practice and review	4.18	0.51	High
Better preparation before class	4.07	0.56	High
Support for independent learning	4.02	0.53	High
Variety of digital resources	4.21	0.48	Very high
Face-to-face clarification	4.16	0.50	High

Source: Processed from student questionnaire data.

Challenges in Blended Learning Implementation

Students reported several challenges during blended learning implementation. The main challenges were unstable internet connection, workload management, delayed feedback, limited online interaction, digital distraction, and uneven digital competence.

Internet connection was the most serious challenge. Students experienced difficulty accessing videos, joining synchronous sessions, uploading assignments, and completing online quizzes when connection was unstable. Workload management was also a major issue. Some students felt that blended learning increased assignments because online activities were added to face-to-face tasks without clear integration.

Delayed feedback affected learning. Students expected timely feedback on online assignments, writing tasks, and quizzes. When feedback was delayed, students felt uncertain about their progress. Limited online interaction was another challenge. Students felt that online discussions were sometimes formal and task-based. Digital distraction also appeared frequently because students were tempted to open social media, watch unrelated videos, or postpone assignments.

Table 3 Challenges Experienced by Students

Challenge	Mean	SD	Interpretation
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Unstable internet connection	4.22	0.57	Very high
Workload management	4.05	0.60	High
Delayed online feedback	3.78	0.66	High
Limited online interaction	3.69	0.68	High
Digital distraction	3.91	0.61	High
Uneven digital competence	3.56	0.70	High

Source: Processed from student questionnaire data.

Students' Suggestions for Improving Blended English Learning

Interview data generated five major suggestions: clearer task integration, more interactive online activities, timely feedback, balanced workload, and technical support.

Students emphasized that online and face-to-face components should be connected. They preferred online activities that prepared them for classroom discussion or extended classroom learning. They disliked online tasks that felt disconnected from lessons. Students also suggested more communicative online activities, such as voice-note discussions, peer feedback, collaborative writing, short video responses, and vocabulary games.

Timely feedback was considered essential. Students wanted teachers to provide comments, corrections, or answer keys soon after submission. Balanced workload was another major suggestion. Students did not object to online assignments, but they expected them to be purposeful and manageable. Technical support was also needed because some students required guidance on using learning platforms, submitting assignments, joining discussions, and accessing digital materials.

Table 4 Students' Suggestions for Blended Learning Improvement

Suggestion	Student Rationale	Pedagogical Implication
Clearer task integration	Online tasks should connect with face-to-face meetings	Align online and offline learning
More interactive online activities	Discussion forums were sometimes passive	Use collaborative and communicative tasks
Timely feedback	Students needed correction and guidance	Strengthen teacher presence
Balanced workload	Too many online tasks caused pressure	Coordinate task quantity and deadlines
Technical support	Some students needed platform guidance	Provide orientation and help resources

Source: Synthesized from student interviews.

2. Discussion

The findings show that students generally perceived blended learning positively in English language education. They valued flexible access to materials, repeated practice, digital resources, independent learning, and face-to-face clarification. This finding supports previous studies showing that blended learning can provide flexibility and improve students' learning experience when properly designed (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Vaughan, 2007).

Students' positive perception of usefulness indicates that blended learning addressed several needs in English learning. English language development requires repeated exposure and practice. Online components allowed students to review videos, read texts, complete quizzes, and access vocabulary materials multiple times. This benefit is consistent with language learning principles that emphasize input, practice, and feedback (Ellis, 2005; Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Stockwell, 2010).

Blended learning also supported learner autonomy. Students needed to manage time, access resources, and complete tasks outside classroom meetings. This finding aligns with research on self-regulated learning and technology-supported language learning (Lai & Gu, 2011; Reinders & White, 2016). However, autonomy did not develop automatically. Some students struggled with time management and distraction. Teachers need to scaffold autonomy through clear schedules, reminders, learning guides, and structured tasks.

Interaction was the weakest perception dimension. This is significant because language learning depends on interaction. The Community of Inquiry framework emphasizes social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence as essential elements of meaningful online learning (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). In this study, students valued teaching presence and face-to-face interaction but found online interaction less dynamic. This suggests that blended learning in English education should include more communicative online tasks.

The findings show that online discussion forums may become passive if students only post required answers. Teachers need to design tasks that require negotiation of meaning, peer response, oral exchange, and collaborative production. Examples include peer feedback on writing, voice-note pronunciation practice, collaborative reading annotation, small-group video discussions, and online debate preparation. These tasks can make online interaction more meaningful.

Face-to-face clarification remained highly valued. Students did not see blended learning as a replacement for classroom meetings. Instead, they saw it as a combination of online preparation and classroom explanation. This supports the idea that blended learning should integrate the strengths of both modes. Online learning is useful for access, preparation, and review, while face-to-face learning is useful for interaction, clarification, feedback, and performance practice.

The challenges reported by students show that blended learning implementation requires institutional and pedagogical support. Internet instability was the most serious problem. This finding is consistent with Indonesian EFL studies reporting infrastructure and connectivity problems in blended learning (Rianto, 2020; Simbolon, 2021). Teachers should therefore provide low-bandwidth materials, downloadable files, flexible submission options, and alternative access when needed.

Workload management was also important. Students perceived blended learning as burdensome when online tasks were added without reducing or redesigning face-to-face activities. This problem occurs when blended learning is treated as additional work rather than integrated design. Effective blended learning requires workload mapping. Every online task should have a clear function: preparation, practice, extension, assessment, or reflection.

Delayed feedback weakened students' learning experience. Feedback is critical in English language education because students need correction and guidance in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, writing, and speaking. Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that feedback is powerful when it helps learners understand where they are, where they need to go, and how to improve. In blended learning, feedback can be provided through written comments, audio feedback, quiz explanations, peer review, and face-to-face conferencing.

Digital distraction shows that blended learning requires self-regulation. Students may access learning platforms and entertainment platforms on the same device. Teachers should help students develop digital learning discipline by setting clear goals, using time-bound activities, providing checklists, and encouraging reflection. Digital literacy in blended learning should include not only technical skill but also attention management.

The findings have several pedagogical implications. First, teachers should align online and face-to-face components. Online activities should prepare students for classroom interaction or extend classroom learning. Second, blended learning should support communicative language use, not merely assignment submission. Third, teacher

presence should be strengthened through timely feedback, clear instructions, and regular monitoring. Fourth, workload should be manageable and purposeful. Fifth, students need orientation and technical support.

Overall, this study confirms that students' perceptions of blended learning are shaped by the balance between flexibility and support. Students appreciate blended learning when it provides access, practice, autonomy, and meaningful interaction. However, they become less engaged when technology problems, workload, weak feedback, and passive online interaction dominate the experience. Therefore, blended learning in English language education should be designed as an integrated pedagogical ecosystem rather than a simple mixture of classroom and online activities.

Comparison with Previous Studies

Perception studies report a consistent pattern that the present findings reproduce. Owston, York, and Murtha (2013) found that students who perceived blended courses positively also achieved more, and Lim and Morris (2009) identified the learner and instructional factors that account for the difference. In EFL settings specifically, Wright (2017) reported that students valued the flexibility of online components but preferred face-to-face sessions for speaking practice, and the Indonesian studies by Rianto (2020), Simbolon (2021), and Andriyani et al. (2022) report the same combination of positive attitudes and practical obstacles, particularly connectivity and self-discipline. The effectiveness evidence is consistent with these perceptions: the meta-analyses by Means, Toyama, Murphy, and Baki (2013) and Bernard, Borokhovski, Schmid, Tamim, and Abrami (2014) both find a modest advantage for blended over purely face-to-face instruction, with the qualification that the advantage comes from the added instructional time and interaction rather than from the medium.

The autonomy findings should be read alongside research on out-of-class learning. Lai and Gu (2011) and Reinders and White (2016) show that technology extends language learning beyond the classroom only when learners are taught to regulate their own use of it, and Stockwell (2010) demonstrates that even the choice of device shapes how much practice actually happens. Shadiev and Yang (2020) reach the same conclusion in a broader review of technology-enhanced language learning. On the instructional side, Hafner (2014) shows that digital production tasks develop language and digital literacy together, Ellis (2005) supplies the instructed-learning principles that any blend must still satisfy, and Hattie and Timperley (2007) explain why the

students in this study valued the online components most when they carried timely feedback rather than merely content.

Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

Theoretically, the findings support the view that blended learning is judged by students on the coherence of the design rather than on the proportion of online to face-to-face time. The dimension that scored highest was flexibility, which the medium supplies automatically, while the dimension that scored lowest was instructional coherence, which it does not. Students did not object to online components; they objected to online components that duplicated or failed to connect with what happened in class. This is consistent with the transformative rather than additive account of blended learning, in which the two modes are expected to do different work, and it explains why interaction scored moderately: the online space carried content reliably but carried conversation only when the design required it.

Pedagogically, three implications follow. First, course designers should specify what each mode is for and make that division visible to students, since the coherence problem reported here was a communication failure as much as a design failure. Second, the online component should carry feedback rather than only materials. Students valued the online space most when it returned something to them, and least when it functioned as a repository. Third, autonomy cannot be assumed. The students who benefited most were those who already managed their time well, so blended courses should include explicit support for planning and self-monitoring rather than treating self-regulation as a prerequisite.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations should be noted. First, the study measured perceptions rather than learning outcomes, and a positive perception is not evidence of effectiveness; the two are related but not equivalent. Second, the participants came from one programme at one institution, and blended designs vary widely, so the perception profile reported here belongs to this particular blend. Third, the design was cross-sectional and captured views at one point in the semester, whereas perceptions of blended learning are known to change as students become accustomed to the format. Fourth, connectivity and device access were not measured directly, although both appeared repeatedly in the interview data. Future research could combine perception data with achievement measures, compare blends with different online-to-face-to-face ratios, follow students across a whole programme, and examine

how infrastructure constraints shape what students experience as good design.

D. Conclusion

This study examined students' perceptions of blended learning in English language education. The findings showed that students generally perceived blended learning positively, with an overall mean score of 3.88. Students valued flexible access to materials, repeated language practice, digital resources, independent learning, and face-to-face clarification. Blended learning supported learner autonomy because students could review materials, manage tasks, and prepare before classroom meetings. However, students also experienced significant challenges, including unstable internet connection, workload management, delayed feedback, limited online interaction, digital distraction, and uneven digital competence. Interaction received the lowest perception score, indicating that online communication still needs stronger pedagogical design. The study concludes that blended learning can support English language education when online and face-to-face components are clearly aligned, feedback is timely, interaction is actively facilitated, and students receive technical and academic guidance. Future research should examine the relationship between students' perceptions and English achievement, compare blended learning models across institutions, and develop blended learning designs for specific language skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

Declaration of AI-Assisted Technologies

In preparing this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools only to improve English language quality, grammar, readability, sentence clarity, and academic expression. The AI tools were not used to generate research data, conduct data analysis, produce findings, or draw conclusions. All conceptual arguments, data interpretation, methodological decisions, and scholarly conclusions remain the full responsibility of the authors. The authors carefully reviewed, edited, and verified all AI-assisted outputs to ensure the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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