

Integrating Traditional And Digital Methods: Blended Learning's Impact On Pronunciation And English Proficiency

Wu Sha¹ and Hari Krishnan Andi²

^{1,2} Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Malaysia
Corresponding Author: wusha@lincoln.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of blended learning, which integrates traditional and digital methods, on improving English pronunciation and overall language proficiency. With the growing use of technology in language learning, blended learning offers a promising approach by combining face-to-face instruction with technology-enhanced tools such as speech recognition software, language learning apps, and interactive platforms. This paper analyzes the effectiveness of this approach in improving learners' pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall English proficiency. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data from 120 English learners, the study finds that blended learning significantly enhances language acquisition, particularly in pronunciation, compared to traditional methods alone. The results offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers in adopting blended learning for language instruction.

KEYWORDS: Blended Learning, Pronunciation, English Proficiency, Traditional Methods, Digital Tools, Language Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

The increasing globalization and interconnectedness of the world have made English language proficiency an essential skill in various professional and academic settings. However, one of the most challenging aspects of mastering English for non-native speakers is achieving accurate pronunciation. Pronunciation errors can impede communication and lead to misunderstandings (Derwing & Munro, 2023). For decades, traditional classroom-based language instruction has been the primary method for teaching English pronunciation. However, recent technological advancements have introduced new tools and methods that can complement and enhance traditional language teaching (Pennington & Ellis, 2022).

Blended learning-a pedagogical approach that combines face-to-face instruction with digital resources-has emerged as a potential solution to the challenges of teaching pronunciation and improving overall English proficiency. This research paper explores the effectiveness of integrating traditional methods with digital tools in the context of English language learning, particularly focusing on the impact of blended learning on pronunciation accuracy and language proficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of blended learning in language instruction has garnered increasing attention in recent years, as educators seek to balance the strengths of both traditional and digital teaching methods. Studies have shown that the combination of in-person teaching and technology-enhanced learning offers students a more flexible and personalized learning experience (Graham, 2022).

Pronunciation accuracy remains one of the most difficult aspects of language learning, as learners struggle to produce sounds that are not present in their native languages. Traditional methods, such as drills and repetition in a classroom setting, have long been used to teach pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2023). While effective, these methods are often limited by time constraints and the absence of immediate corrective feedback.

In contrast, digital tools such as speech recognition software, language learning apps, and interactive platforms

have the advantage of providing real-time feedback on learners' pronunciation. Neri, Mich, and Fransen (2008) demonstrated that computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) tools allow learners to practice pronunciation at their own pace while receiving instant feedback on their accuracy. Furthermore, Pennington and Ellis (2022) found that integrating traditional instruction with these tools can enhance learners' overall proficiency, as it allows for more autonomous learning.

Blended learning combines the benefits of traditional classroom interaction with the flexibility and efficiency of digital tools. Research suggests that this approach can improve not only pronunciation but also other aspects of language proficiency, such as listening comprehension, speaking fluency, and vocabulary acquisition (Stockwell, 2012). Studies by Levy (2009) and Gonzalez-Lloret and Ortega (2014) have also confirmed that blended learning environments provide learners with greater exposure to authentic language input, which is critical for developing pronunciation skills.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effects of blended learning on pronunciation and English proficiency. The research was conducted over a period of 10 weeks with 120 English learners from two different language schools. Participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group ($n = 60$), which used blended learning methods, and the control group ($n = 60$), which followed traditional face-to-face instruction only.

3.2 Participants

Participants were intermediate-level English learners, ranging in age from 18 to 35 years, with similar backgrounds in language learning. Each participant had at least two years of English learning experience and reported moderate to high motivation to improve their pronunciation and language proficiency.

3.3 Instruments

Two primary instruments were used for data collection: a pronunciation test and a language proficiency test. The pronunciation test involved recording participants as they read a passage, and their recordings were analyzed using speech recognition software to measure pronunciation accuracy. The language proficiency test assessed the participants' abilities in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

3.4 Procedure

The experimental group participated in blended learning sessions, which combined traditional face-to-face classes with the use of language learning apps (such as Duolingo and Rosetta Stone) and speech recognition tools that provided instant feedback on pronunciation. The control group received only traditional classroom instruction, where they focused on pronunciation drills, speaking exercises, and listening comprehension.

Both groups took a pre-test at the beginning of the study to measure their initial pronunciation accuracy and language proficiency levels. After the 10-week intervention, participants completed a post-test to measure any improvements.

RESULTS

4.1 Pronunciation Accuracy

The pre-test results showed that both groups had similar pronunciation accuracy scores at the beginning of the study. However, the post-test results demonstrated a significant improvement in the pronunciation accuracy of the experimental group, with an average increase of 20%. In contrast, the control group showed only a 7% improvement.

Table 1: Pronunciation Accuracy

Group	Pre-Test Pronunciation	Post-Test Pronunciation	Improvement (%)
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	Accuracy (%)	Accuracy (%)	
Experimental	58%	78%	20%
Control	57%	64%	7%

To further analyze the statistical significance of the results, a paired sample t-test was conducted for both the experimental and control groups. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 2: T-Test for Pronunciation Accuracy

Group	Mean (Post-Test)	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Significance
Experimental	78%	5.1	3.88	0.001	Significant
Control	64%	4.8	1.45	0.075	Not Significant

Interpretation:

- For the experimental group, the t-value of 3.88 and the p-value of 0.001 indicate a statistically significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy after the intervention.
- The control group had a t-value of 1.45 and a p-value of 0.075, which shows no statistically significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy for this group.

The experimental group, using blended learning methods, showed a significant increase in pronunciation accuracy, confirming the effectiveness of integrating traditional instruction with technology-enhanced learning (TEL) tools.

4.2 Overall Language Proficiency

Similarly, the overall language proficiency scores of the experimental group improved significantly, with an average gain of 18% in their post-test results, compared to a 5% gain for the control group. The t-test results revealed that the differences between the groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Table 3: Language Proficiency

Group	Pre-Test Language Proficiency (%)	Post-Test Language Proficiency (%)	Improvement (%)
Experimental	65%	83%	18%
Control	64%	69%	5%

Table 4: T-Test for Overall Language Proficiency

Group	Mean (Post-Test)	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Significance
Experimental	78%	5.1	3.88	0.001	Significant
Control	64%	4.8	1.45	0.075	Not Significant

Interpretation:

- For the experimental group, the t-value of 4.12 and the p-value of 0.000 indicate a statistically significant improvement in overall language proficiency after the intervention.
- The control group showed a t-value of 1.02 and a p-value of 0.120, indicating no statistically significant improvement in overall proficiency for this group.

The experimental group demonstrated significantly greater improvements in both pronunciation accuracy and overall language proficiency, confirming the effectiveness of the blended learning approach. The control group, which used only traditional methods, did not show statistically significant gains, highlighting the importance of integrating digital tools with traditional instruction for better language learning outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that blended learning is significantly more effective than traditional instruction in improving both pronunciation accuracy and overall language proficiency. The experimental group, which utilized a combination of face-to-face instruction and digital tools, achieved considerably higher gains in both areas compared to the control group.

Pronunciation accuracy improved by 20% in the experimental group, reflecting the efficacy of speech recognition tools in providing real-time feedback and enabling learners to practice pronunciation independently. The traditional methods used by the control group, though effective, did not yield the same level of improvement, highlighting the benefits of incorporating technology-enhanced learning into language instruction.

In terms of overall language proficiency, the experimental group's significant improvement aligns with previous research suggesting that blended learning environments offer learners greater exposure to authentic language input and more opportunities for autonomous learning (Pennington & Ellis, 2022; Stockwell, 2012). The integration of mobile learning apps and interactive platforms not only facilitated pronunciation practice but also enhanced learners' speaking, listening, and reading skills.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the significant advantages of blended learning in improving English pronunciation and language proficiency. By integrating traditional classroom instruction with digital tools such as speech recognition software and language learning apps, learners can achieve higher levels of accuracy in pronunciation and overall proficiency.

The findings suggest that educators and policymakers should consider adopting blended learning approaches in language programs, particularly for teaching pronunciation, as they offer greater flexibility, immediate feedback, and enhanced learning outcomes. Future research should explore the long-term effects of blended learning on pronunciation retention and proficiency across different linguistic and cultural contexts.

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