

# *Impact of Blended Learning on EFL Learning and Teaching*

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**Abstract:** Educational technology is of importance for English as a foreign language (EFL) learner. Educational technology affects their acquisition as well as recognition toward one language thus making an obvious difference in learners' achievement. Yet experts and wide public appreciate that Blended Learning (BL) is a type of brainchild of technology advancement, which is a cooperative and dynamic way combining information technologies to help EFL learners and teachers to interact smoothly and effectively. OMO (Online Merge Offline) is a business mode, but can enlighten educational technology development. In language acquisition, learning strategies need more attention for language learners. Thus, in this paper author list out several suggestions to improve learning strategies with the help of educational technologies. Learning motivation has increasingly been increased due to the practice of blended learning. Some demerits, however, are chaining blended learning development. From students' perspective, teaching methodology, diversified learning resources, easily-operated system and a more interactive peer feedback can be refined. From researchers' notion, more discipline-oriented surveys should be conducted in the further. ChatGPT raises a discussion wave of technology in extensive sphere. In education, more and more its negative prospects are raging among international community.

**Keywords:** blended learning, personalized learning, educational technology, second language acquisition, ChatGPT

## **1. Introduction**

Shakeup and challenges made by artificial intelligence, big data is huge enough to be compared with industrial revolution, information revolution. Among these challenges, surely, education takes its part. When people believed that AI can operate tasks that people can, the whole society, economic, education. In the history and contemporary world, human have seen the flexibility of languages in international communication. Amid the headway having been made in learning technology, the question of the more personalized learning technologies to acquire English have always been put on the high agenda. In traditional language teaching model, language learning is carried out in the order of teacher teaching then student learning. While though the process of researches and teaching practice, instructors now see the importance of students-based learning. Hence, language learning is a procedure that dealing with flexible teaching methods. How to find the ultimate answer to teach and learn better depends on how students and teachers interact with each other and with 'learning intelligence'. Blended learning (BL) has always been the essential subject in educational technology research field. In this paper, author investigate the concept of BL, OMO and personalized learning

and approaches to enhance metacognitive strategies with the help of blended learning. Additionally, how to use blended learning to motivate EFL learners are also being discussed. ChatGPT how to further develop itself is a question need to be discussed.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Blended Learning**

#### **2.1.1. Definition**

Blended learning (BL), sometimes called by hybrid learning is one of the focal points of education technology research area, especially in the period of COVID-19 which posed a devastating impact to human society. In the start of 21st century, BL have gained the attention from various groupings, ranging from k-12 education, higher education and business training. There have been many academic researches and discussions on the definition of BL. For EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, hybrid learning is a personalized, cooperative and dynamic way of learning that is with the combination of information technologies and without the limitation of time and space [1]. Hence, blended learning is a learning process that within classes and out of classes; it means that EFL students can improve and promote their language acquisition via media platforms. Youtube, Bilibili as well as Tiktok and so on can be channels for students to be exposed to multi-cultural environments to enhance their basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating). In addition, Graham defined that blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction [2].

#### **2.1.2. Blended Learning Categories**

Watson in his research described blended learning as a continuum between online and traditional face-to-face learning, which is comprised of [3]:

1. wholly online curriculum conducted by all online learning in remote and without any face-to-face activities
2. wholly online curriculum with alternatives to face-to-face instruction (but not a must),
3. mostly and wholly online curriculum operated in the classroom or computer lab with days,
4. mostly or wholly online curriculum in classroom or computer lab where students meet in daily,
5. classroom instruction including the extensive learning beyond the classroom and the school day
6. classroom instruction merging online resources, but no requirement for students to stay online

As education technologies taking more roles in language teaching and foreign language acquisition, definition on “online learning” and “offline learning” is becoming more complex, due to the digitalized learning environments, making students easily conduct blended learning.

Although OMO (Online Merge Offline) is an assortment of business mode, it also provokes thinking of a time-featured blended learning. Structure of the OMO is shown in the figure1.

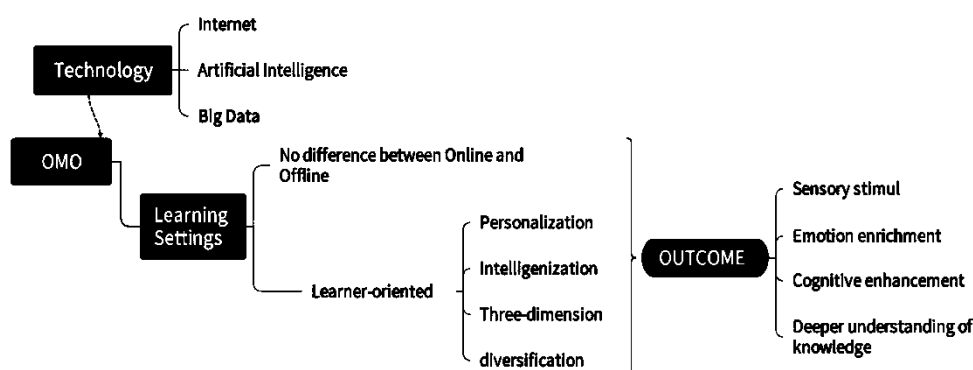


Figure 1: Structure of OMO [4].

### 2.1.3. Benefits of Blended Learning for EFL Learners

Over half-century research and academic discussion among experts from countries, the results that draw from digital learning on what happens in learning environments is rather intricate and multi-faceted [5-7].

The increasingly growing access to the Internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI), forms a strong supporting for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in many aspects. Preponderance of EFL students have occasion to use mobile phone, computer or panel computer to conduct assignments which are being exchanged digitally. The range of blended learning is wide. Its materials are ranged from text-and-image combinations to dynamic media, for instance, videos or animations, and interactive media allowing intervention, control, and feedback, such as simulations, educational video games, or online tests. For EFL learners blended learning provides them opportunities for listening and reading comprehension practice, interpretation, English writing, online vocational practice, online English test (such as, IELTS, CATTI), online cross-cultural-and-lingual communication (such as Speaky, Cambly). Hence, with the advancement of blended learning, EFL students' learning for English acquisition are in the contingent evolution.

## 2.2. Personalized Learning

### 2.2.1. Definition

Progresses, notwithstanding, having been made in learning science and technologies, but personalized learning that can meet every student's need of individualized learning still fall short with a large scale of popularity. Hence, more should be done in this area to make learning more student-based. The birth of personalized learning can be traced back to hundreds of years, from apprenticeship and mentoring in western world; while in China it derived from Confucius's educational idea "teach students in accordance of their aptitude", which focus on learners' individualism from the differences of their knowledge structure, learning capability, life experience, attitude towards learning, hobbies and interest as well as faith and motivation, thus tailoring learning strategies and methods(or approaches) to meet the requirements of their featured learning. Niknam and Thulasiraman argued that educational society has been interested in having a personalized learning system that adjusts the pedagogy, curriculum, and learning environment for learners to meet their learning needs and preferences [8].

### 2.2.2. Language Learning Strategies and Personalized Learning

BL promotes personalization in learning, which is the integration of behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, connectionism and other learning theories, meeting different need of language learning. The point, however, is that students will process their learning less well with inappropriate and time-wasting strategies during their personal learning. With no help of learning strategies, a systemic method, language learners cannot construct their language system in an effective and efficient way. Hence, in this paragraph, author will expound how can language learning strategies affect personal learning in aspects.

For starters, in previous study, it is believed by Oxford that learning strategies encompass metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and affective strategies [9]. Metacognitive strategies are tactical methods that can be applied by learners to monitor and control learners' cognitive process and outcomes including planning strategies, monitoring strategies and adjustment strategies. Cognitive strategies are the approaches and techniques that learners use to process information. Affective strategies can help learners to adjust their motion and motivation and attitude in face of study [10].

Personalized learning, to some degree, is instructed by Metacognitive strategies. EFL learners carry out their extra-curriculum acquisition by managing their task lists, monitoring and adjusting what they are learning and are about to learn. This is the operation of metacognitive strategies.

How to cultivate or better Metacognitive Strategies is going to be discussed. Firstly, for teachers, instructions to students to form a learning record cannot be undervalued. It means that, teachers should shoulder their responsibility to edify students' awareness and ability to make study plans that is characterized by individuality resorting to mobile app. Additionally, teachers can publish assignments about plans writing and study fruit assessment, so as to motivate students to form a capability of doing plans, also of doing self-feedback. This also enable teachers to coordinate students' in-class and off-class learning, to make language learning even high-efficiency and student-oriented.

Metacognitive Strategies also emphasize critical thinking, which is highly personalized. For language learners, in the process of study planning, monitoring, and outcomes appraisal, critical thinking towards language caliber, study habits, learning content, learning methods and platform are another part to better Metacognitive strategies. Learners should select learning content and methods from massive learning resources and multiple method, and identify software from huge app store, which is suitable for own level and habits. They, meanwhile, should envisage their demerits not only on learning, but also planning and learning methods amid conducting outcome evaluation.

The above measures to refine Metacognitive Strategies can provide a way to improve personalized learning.

## 3. Blended Learning and Language Learning Motivation

Larsen-Freeman, at the end of 20th century, introduced Dynamic System Theory (DTS) into the linguistics field. Therefore, savants began to pay attention to the dynamics and variability of language acquisition research, which focused on the dynamic and complex interactive relationship among language learners, learning tasks and learning environment. Meanwhile, Dörnyei and his collaborators created L2 (second/foreign language learning) Motivational Self System [11]. In this system, it is believed that Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience together determine the strength of L2 learning motivation. Ideal L2 Self, refers to the part of the ideal related to the second language, which comes from the learner's internal expectation of the ideal future self. Ought-to L2 Self is thought that language learners believe what attitude and learning state they should have in second language acquisition in hope of meeting certain expectations or avoid certain possible negative outcomes. L2 Learning Experience is about the factors related to specific language learning

situations, such as teachers, learning resources, curriculum design. In the following content, the author will focus on how blended learning work on English speaking. Li Xin, in his study, have explored effects of blended learning mode on oral English learning motivation among the freshmen [12]. In discussion part of the paper, comparing to the control group, the experiment group, that is emersed in blended learning, was indicated to have higher motivation in learning their oral English. The independent-samples t-test revealed that the maximum increase figure is in learning strategy which indicates that blended learning provides students with flexible and diverse learning methods, effectively improving their learning motivation. Blended learning establishes a platform for language learners to study and to explore independently, to make students acquire language in an elastic and interactive environment. In this environment, students are the participants and controller of their learning, which embody the characteristic of constructivism.

#### **4. Blended Teaching in EFL Teaching**

Online teaching provides sufficient support and possibilities for the integration of technology-based learning and teaching, with COVID-19 acceleration. The blended teaching opens a way for highly-engaged and highly-motivated for language students to enhance their contact with classmates and teachers.

##### **4.1. Advantages of Blended Teaching in EFL Teaching**

###### **4.1.1. More Comprehensive Learning in Pre-class Learning**

Before lecturing, teachers tend to provide language students learning resources to do preview tasks or get a general understanding for what they are going to learn. By the means of digital and online environment, students can access their learning material out of time and space limitation, helping them to do more exploration in the related topic.

###### **4.1.2. Higher Motivation in While-class Learning**

Under the support of online teaching, teachers are easier to publish learning tasks that not only suits for learning content, but also encourage students to join class activities by creating group meeting. In this case, language learners can exchange their ideas and information with their co-workers, which offer them a comprehensive and deep acknowledgment to a topic and enhance their learning experience thus making every student involved in the class.

###### **4.1.3. More Objective Appraisal in Post-class Learning**

Preponderance of online learning platform are the combination of teaching and assignments finishing. Due to this, language students can hand in their homework on that platform with handwriting, audio and video. Teachers can also score students results by writing personal comments on their quality of using the foreign language. It offers teachers a chance to overview the attitude and learning difficulties among learners, hence, to provide and conduct a flexible learning mode for students' language acquisition.

##### **4.2. Further Improvement for Blended Teaching**

English teaching is a technically-demand procedure, which attaches great importance to teachers' teaching methodology. Even though blended teaching is an irreversible trend in the future education, but there are still setbacks that will impair EFL students' learning outcome.

The design of the courses structure will influence students' choices for blended learning. Studies have found that reasonable-managed curriculum design is often favored by students. Overall, students have expectations for blended learning to change the traditional learning model. Students appreciate learning ways that is flexible, and diversifies course resources. Students do not want blended learning to increase their learning tasks and academic burden. This poses challenges and difficulties to learning technology designers, teachers and related personnels.

Online teaching systems must be designed to be easy to operate so as to lower the demands on students' computer skills, which helps facilitate blended learning use among diversified academic domain.

Students will employ multiple cognitive processes from learning evaluation and feedback in their learning, from teachers traditionally. What can be improved is that to promote peer feedback. For peer feedback, students can gain experiences and advices that is a most close to the level that they have achieved, which are sometimes instructors cannot give. Real-time interactive zone should be provided, so that students can get peer feedback at some point during the learning process. Providing students with more direct feedback and a more practical classroom experience can also help learners take more responsibility and encourage continuous learning behavior.

There has been much papers in discussion of how BL teaching help teachers to lecture, but there are lacks of talk in subject-specific strategies for teachers. It often provides a broad picture of how teachers can promote student participation in a variety of subjects. Future research could explore how the teaching strategies will be applied to selected subjects in BL, and even compare these strategies between disciplines.

## 5. Discussion about ChatGPT

There has been a lot of debate surrounding the artificial intelligence chatbot in recent months. ChatGPT(Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is one of the AI chatbot, which is developed and operated by OpenAI from United States. It is a query-targeted tool, has received very wide attention since its release in 2022. Evidently, ChatGPT is not developed to cope with difficulties in economic and society area, such as website search and CAT (computer aid translation).

### 5.1. Strengths

Firstly, ChatGPT makes learning resources available to more and more people in undeveloped areas and countries. It, meanwhile, enables personalized learning developed fully, by offering individualized feedback, which can better students learning results. Thirdly, ChatGPT takes part of jobs that teachers did before, thus teachers have more time and energy to concentrate on stimulating students learning interest and creativity.

### 5.2. Weakness

It is not a difficulty to find out that ChatGPT transfer the communication which originally happen between learners and teachers. It put a great challenge for instructors to operate timely and efficient ideas exchange. It means that, actually, the emotional connection will be weakened; thus emotional education will be hard to continue in the long future. Higher reliance to technology will trigger the missing of teamwork if students all the time interact with the chatbot— which will do harm to their social ability, and even cause psychological problems. With loosing monitoring and supervision in homework, students will cheat or plagiarize provided they are lack of self-discipline.



## 6. Conclusion

New technology will provoke the thinking about security, privacy and morale. In education domain, especially in English as a second language (EFL) teaching and learning, more and more benefits and problems await to be shed light on. Amid the development of technology-enhanced learning, blended learning has always been the hotly-discussed topic in academic field, but its definition is on the road to change because of the high-speed development of AI. Experts generally define blended learning (BL) as a learning process that include online learning and offline learning model. OMO, a business model, have the same structure with blended learning. Personalized learning come to the public attention with the development of blended learning. But how 'personalized' the learning remains a thing that teachers and educational technologies designers should think about. Language learning strategies are essential, for it putting great effects on how EFL learners recognize this language. Metacognitive strategies can be enhanced via BL, with the help of teachers. BL open a way for English learners to communicate with teachers and classmates in the online meeting, which will promote their participation and stimulate their motivation. When talk about BL teaching, roles of teachers are important, and how BL teaching help students and teachers in the process of previewing, while-lecturing, and post-evaluation. And there are also serval suggestions put to deal with the recent problems. ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is a disruptive innovation in the history of information technology research and development. It helps education be more student-based, more interactive, and more available. However, it also raises people worries and negative thinking toward it whether will do harm to students learning and life development due to the cheat caused by convenience, absence of communication between teachers and classmates. BL whether can stand the test of time, and whether flourish itself are need to be discussed furtherly.

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