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## **INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF BLENDED LEARNING ON STUDENTS' GRAMMAR ACHIEVEMENT**

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### **Abstract**

This study was aimed at investigating the effectiveness of blended learning using e-learning software on students' grammar achievement. To obtain the data, 40 English literature students at fourth semester of Pamulang university were chosen as participants in this study. 20 evening class students were the experimental groups, and 20 morning class students were control group. Each group had different treatment which experimental group had blended learning while control group had traditional learning experience. Grammar test and questionnaire were administered in order to have the real students' scores and find out the students' perception of blended e-learning. A quantitative analysis including descriptive statistics and independent t test were further analysed in order to investigate the effects of blended e-learning on students' grammar achievement. The result revealed that  $p - \text{value} < 0.05$  which means two groups showed significant difference. In other words, blended e-learning presented positive effect on students' grammar achievement.

*Keywords: blended learning, e-learning software, grammar achievement.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In learning English as foreign language, students need to master all English skills and grammar knowledge. Mastering grammar is crucial point since students are able to comprehend natives' speakers easily and respond them correctly. Knowing poor grammar in real communication leads to misunderstanding between reader, writer, listener, speaker. For instance, the use of English in America and Great Britain present some differences in grammar. Furthermore, in sociolinguistics, someone's social status will lead to differences of grammar use. The upper classes have their own characteristics in grammar use, and so do the lower classes. Therefore, comprehending correct grammar will assist students to create comprehensible interaction and avoid misunderstanding in spoken and written context.

In general, the students' grammar mastery is not qualified enough since the teaching and learning strategies delivered do not cover students' need and offer beneficial result. Not only boring strategies but also less students' motivation lead to poor result of students' grammar achievement. Most of students think that grammar mastery is complicated to gain since it is delivered colourlessly without considering students' interest; as a result, students are not able to comprehend grammar knowledge completely. Besides, having known poor grammar

knowledge makes students create some mistakes in delivering the ideas orally and in written ideas. This case causes the ideas cannot be transferred obviously.

This technological era is the best option to resolve this phenomenon. Technology has developed rapidly since each person is able to access it easily. The development of technology influences every sector like social life, education, entrepreneurship, and others. No one can deny it since each activity will be supported by the use of technology. In education sector, teachers try to integrate the concept of learning with the technology in order to obtain the teaching goals. The integration of teaching and learning process with technology is called Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

CALL has been admitted as the new phenomenon in educational institutions. Schools and universities have applied it in order to simplify the teaching and learning process and to be more attractive activities. It also presents some benefits for students and teachers; for instance, students are able to submit the task easily and assist them to seek crucial information through the use of CALL. Furthermore, teachers are able to upload the online material for students to discuss. It provides a feature to help both teachers and students to discuss a topic in order to clarify the topic.

The forms of CALL can be the use of YouTube, video, social media, online learning, and other forms. CALL can be shared out from the use of computer, online learning materials, word processor, and other things related to computer (Chapelle, 2008). It is applied on internet application such as world-wide website (www), email and chat application (Torat, 2000). Each application assists teachers and students to conduct learning process and enables to engage students and computer as media they like most. Online learning is becoming trending topic in the educational sector. It is a beneficial result of the development of CALL, and it has been applied in schools and universities in order to enhance students' academic achievement including English achievement.

It is clear that online learning software offers some beneficial points: promoting autonomous learner, enhancing students' reading comprehension, killing students' boredom, and others. Teachers apply online learning to cover the meeting and encourage students to join the learning process. Academic institutions which have great interaction on e-learning will affect positively on students' performance; on the other hand, those who do not have good interaction on e-learning will have poor students' performance (Rodgers, 2006). The universities that apply e-learning inside and outside classroom may have good improvement on students' academic achievement (Thabet & Kalyankar, 2014). The students who participated the e-learning would have better grade than the conventional ways to run learning process (Holley, 2012). Generally, the existence of technology including e-learning is able to enhance English students' improvement. Moreover, e-learning has been popular among learners and teachers since it provides beneficial features for them. Teachers are able to upload the learning material and access students' work at home or at any places, and students are able to download and do their task at anywhere they want. They do not need to learn at classroom and have face to face learning process. In another word, e-learning lessens the processes of teaching and learning processes. In another version of e-learning, it provides learners four English skills to learn inside and outside classroom. Learners learn four integrated skills and grammar, and they also get score

immediately when they finish and submit their task. Integrated skills are achieved when students are using e-learning since students read online material; it enhances students' comprehension to the topic given. Besides, students may have listening section on it; it increases listening comprehension, and they should type down the answers on available space; it repeatedly advance students' writing skill, and at the last process, teachers may ask students about their task orally; it also improves their speaking ability. To conclude, e-learning contributes not only the simplicity to run learning process but also the integrated skills for users. In real classes, trying to improve students' grammar mastery, teachers engage the conventional learning process and online learning process. The engagement of these learning processes is called blended learning.

Blended learning is booming in recent years, it is believed that it is so potential to transform learning, and it can make learning process more successful (Tucker et al, 2017). Some scholars have defined the concept of blended learning. Blended learning is a learning model that is the most suitable since it engages ICT tools with face to face learning model, and students have some responsibilities outside of schools or universities (Walter, 2008 & Guzzo, et al, 2012). Several studies showed that blended learning can help students perform better in their achievement. Blended learning is a good method to deliver the material since students can have self-directed, access the knowledge, minimize cost, improve students' responsibility, and have flexible time in learning (Saade & Kira, 2009). Another studies investigated the effectiveness of blended learning and students' grammar achievement.

Moreover, it also offers several benefits like cost reduction (Barbian, 2002), place flexibility and individualized learning (Vaughan, 2007). It is clear that online learning can minimize cost of mobility of students and teachers since they do not have to meet in one place to discuss a topic. They have had a schedule to discuss the online material and spend their time to access online material. Online course will also offer place flexibility; it offers learners and teachers to teach and learn courses whenever and wherever they are. They do not need to determine the place to

learn like schools or university, but they can choose the flexible and comfortable place to learn and discuss courses. Furthermore, it concentrates on creating autonomous learning. Students will try to comprehend their lesson by reading a lot until they gain their own comprehension. It also forces students to understand what they have learned without teachers' supervision. It trains them to be more independent learners. They know what they learn and how to solve it in order to gain answers.

The study of blended learning and students' grammar achievement have been conducted by Barr et al (2005), Chenoweth and Murday (2003), Aslani & Tabrizi (2015), Zhang et al (2011), Alshwiah (2009), Cheng et al (2014), and Tosun (2015), and others. They had the same interest in investigating the effectiveness of blended learning and some English skills. On their studies, they found distinctive results; some of them gained positive impact of blended learning, but others failed to find out the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing students' English achievement.

Barr et al (2005) had done the study of blended learning and some English skills. They used some variables: listening, speaking, pronunciation in their study, and they involved voice recording and the internet as the instruments. As a result, it showed that the group not involved to technology had better achievement. Moreover, Chenoweth and Murday (2003) had similar study. They investigated the effectiveness of blended learning with grammatical knowledge, listening, reading, writing and oral production. They asked the students to send chat, send email, and post something on the bulletin board. The result indicated that they could not find any progress between two groups on all variables including grammatical knowledge. The following study comes from Alshwiah (2009) studied the effect of blended learning with the students' achievement and attitude. As a result, she found that there was not any significant progress and good attitude after the students had blended learning for several meetings; it showed no significant difference between control group and experimental group. In addition, the use of blended e-learning could not give any significant effect on students' scores. The students who had e-learning and

traditional learning showed the same scores (Cheng et al, 2014). The same result was also achieved by Tosun (2015). He examined the effectiveness of blended learning in teaching vocabulary. After conducting blended learning for 6 weeks, he found that blended learning did not help students gain more their vocabulary achievement.

On the other side, there were also some similar studies which have opposite result. The following study comes from Aslani and Tabrizi (2015). They conducted the same study with Chenoweth and Murday; however, they focused on one variable, grammatical knowledge. They used some tests to find out the progress. At the end of their study, they found that the use of blended learning helped students gain better grammar achievement. The next study was conducted by Zhang, Song and Burston (2011). They examined the effect of mobile phone and vocabulary learning. They instructed the students to study some words through paper material and another group learned them through mobile phone. The result indicated that the students learning words through their phones were able to learn easily and effectively.

Investigating the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' grammar enhancement might reveal students' differences so that EFL teachers should propose material which students feel affection for it. This study aims to investigate both the impacts of blended learning on students' grammar enhancement and students' perception on it. This study presents the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the students who have traditional learning and the students who have blended learning?
2. What are the students' perceptions of blended learning?

## **METHOD**

In order to investigate the effect of blended e-learning on EFL students' grammar achievement, the writer used quantitative analysis and chose 40 of the fourth students from one morning class and one evening class who studied Grammar 4 at Pamulang University. The morning class students did not have opportunity to have blended e-learning, and the evening class students were more

frequent to apply blended learning. The participants consisted of 30 females and 10 males, and students ranged in ages from 19 to 21.

Table 1. The Participants' Demography

Groups	N	Learning strategy	Age range
Experimental Group	20	Blended E-learning	19-21
Control Group	20	Traditional Learning	19-21

The instruments used in the present study were grammar test and questionnaire. The grammar tests including pre and post test were used to investigate the effectiveness of blended learning on students' grammar achievement. The grammar test had 25 items to be answered consisting 15 items of multiple choices and 10 items of cloze passage test. To check the reliability of the test, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized. To gain it, the writer used SPSS 16 version, and as a result, the reliability of grammar post test was 0.57 which revealed that the reliability of the test was average.

Table 2. Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.57	25

The internal consistency of reliability of Cronbach's Alpha is as follows:

Table. 3 Internal consistency

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
0.8 – 1.0	Excellent
0.6 – 0.79	Good/high
0.4 – 0.59	Average
0.2 – 0.39	Poor

## RESULTS

To answer the first research questions, the writer statistically analysed the post-test scores of both control and experimental groups. The descriptive statistics of participants' performance are as follows:

Table 4. Tests of Normality

Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk	
Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df
.172	20	.121	.943	20
.149	20	.200*	.912	20

➤ 0.2	unacceptable
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Furthermore, the questionnaire was used to find out the students' perception toward blended learning.

The present study had several procedures to gain the data, calculate the data, and find out the result. As the initial process, the writer distributed the grammar test as pre-test before the students had blended learning. The following stage was the students had about 6 meetings for blended learning and 6 meetings for face to face leaning. Both groups were introduced to the same grammatical structures in the present study; however, the control group (morning class) had no opportunity to have blended learning; the instructor focused on teaching traditionally, and the experimental class was introduced to blended learning and focused on discussing the material. After conducting blended learning and traditional learning for several meetings, a post test of grammar which was prepared on the presented material was administered to the participants. At the end of post-test, to investigate the students' perception of blended learning, the questionnaire was also distributed to the participants. The participants wrote down some important points about the use of blended learning in the process of learning. After gaining the data, the writer checked the normality test, homogeneity, analysed post-test score with independent T-test calculation and found out whether blended learning presented the positive impact on students' grammar achievement or not. Then, the writer also proceeded the students' questionnaire in order to find out the students' perceptions.



The above table shows Shapiro-Wilk and Lilliefors' results. It shows the normality of the grammar test. P value was 0.121 for the control group and 0.200 for experimental group; the P value was bigger than 0.05. Therefore, the data had normal distribution. Moreover, on Shapiro-Wilk, the P value was 0.943 for control group and 0.912 for experimental group; the p values were bigger than 0.05. Therefore, the data within the groups distributed normally.

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of variance

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Score Based on Mean	.017	1	38	.898
Based on Median	.057	1	38	.813
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.057	1	32.451	.813
Based on trimmed mean	.029	1	38	.867

The above table reveals the result of homogeneity of variance. The sig was 0.898, and it was bigger than 0.05 which means there was the homogeneity of variance within groups.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score Control group	20	65.85	12.249	2.739
Experimental group	20	75.05	13.446	3.007

Table 6 reveals the description of the study. This study had 2 groups: control and experimental groups; each group consisted 20 students. Both groups had distinctive treatment. The above table shows that the mean score of control group was 65.85, and the mean of experimental group was 75.05. It can be concluded that the mean score of experimental group was higher than control group, or it showed that there was different mean score between two groups.

Table 7. Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Score Equal variances assumed	.017	.898	-2.262	38	.029	-9.200	4.067	-17.433	-.967	
Equal variances not assumed			-37.674	2.262	.030	-9.200	4.067	-17.436	-.964	

The above table was the answer of the first research question. The effectiveness of blended learning on students' grammar enhancement could be seen from the comparison of sig (2 tailed)

(0.029) and alpha (0.05). The table reveals that  $0.029 < 0.05$ ; therefore, this study showed the significant effect of blended learning on students' grammar enhancement, or the groups' performances were significantly different. Furthermore, the means differences seemed negative (-9.2); it means that the first group or control group had lower mean score than the experimental group.

To answer the second research question, the questionnaire was administered to the participants who had experiences in blended learning. The results were as follows:

Table. 8 The students' perceptions of blended learning

Description	N	%
Blended learning promotes independent learners	3	15
It enhances reading comprehension	3	15
It wastes students' money	4	20
It is efficient	5	25
I need to meet lecturers to comprehend more	4	20
It disturbs my weekends	1	5
Total	20	100%

According the above table, 5 students agreed that blended learning was efficient learning media, 4 students preferred face to face learning, 4 students claimed that blended learning wasted their pocket money, 6 students argued that it promoted them independent learners and enhanced their reading comprehension since they should read the online material and discussed the answers. If they did not get more comprehension, they were allowed to discuss with lectures and other students in a discussion forum. One student felt anxious since he had to join e- learning on his weekends. To conclude, blended learning gives distinct responses among students. The dominant perception was efficient since students did not need to attend the class, and it saved their pocket money and their energy.

## CONCLUSION

The first research question was to find out the effectiveness of blended learning through e-learning program on students' grammar performances. The result of independent t -test revealed that there was significant effect between control and experimental groups. In another word, e-learning software gave positive impacts on students' grammar. Furthermore, the questionnaire distributed to the participants also showed that blended e-learning was efficient media for students since it did not spend their time, money, and energy. The students could focus on reading the material, finish their tasks, and discuss the topic on forum if there was unclear explanation stated on online material. These results indicate that applying technology is able to lead to positive students' grammar enhancement. Moreover, it can enhance students and lectures' engagement.

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