A Systematic Review on Blended Learning Approach in Language Education

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ABSTRACT

Technological developments have greatly influenced the current culture of life. The patterns of children growing, developing, playing, socializing and communicating have changed a lot in line with the times and the latest facilities. Now children and teenagers are closer to technology and even more comfortable learning and connecting using technology. As the main driver of national education, teachers have a major role to play in imparting knowledge in various methods and strategies that are deemed appropriate. Technology integration in the classroom has been a challenge for education systems to meet the demands of 21st century learning needs. A systematic literature review was conducted on blended learning approaches in education by analysis and synthesis. Multiple databases such as Springer Link, Taylor & Francis, Sage E-Journal and Wiley were used as search engines for related articles during the period 2017-2021. The results show that blended learning approach was mostly researched in higher education and initially focused on students. The majority of blended learning approach research is also coming from developing countries, leading to the need to make blended learning approach adoption easier in particular. Teachers, students, and institutions frequently face issues related to a lack of ICT infrastructure and specialization. The results of this study can be used to develop a plan towards blended learning approach adoption.

Contribution/Originality: This study may help to development and adoption of blended learning approach in language education, which is one approach that might be used to improve teaching variety and quality. In order to meet the demands and preferences of the current generation of students, consideration should be made to adopting the blended learning approach more at the primary and secondary school level.

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1. Introduction

Latest developments in technology and telecommunications have made information and knowledge easily accessible. The explosion of technology has prompted change in various fields including education. 21st century learning is a more creative and dynamic method of teaching and learning with relevant teaching content according to current developments. The utilization of project-based learning techniques, cooperative and collaborative learning, high-level thinking application, and technology literacy are all part of the learning process in the classroom. Along with the information and communication technology (ICT) development, giving challenges to teachers to ensure that the learning methods provided can attract students with learning methods must be arranged neatly according to current technology. Due to the interest of students who are inclined toward technology, teachers must present a more engaging and adaptable strategy and technique of learning. Accordingly, the new learning approach contained in the implementation of the new KSSR curriculum is a blended learning approach, specifically focused on the Flipped Classroom model. According to Sashi Kala (2018), blended learning is an effective combination of instruction because it is expected to improve student performance and self-directed learning abilities across all subject areas in schools.

Teachers must ensure that the development of technology can be adapted in teaching so that the knowledge imparted can be absorbed by students in accordance with their development. Ozgen et al. (2021) found technology-assisted learning more interesting and effective. Groups of students who used technology were found to be more efficient and solve problems more effectively. The rapid change in technology has resulted in teachers who do not keep up with the development so that they find it increasingly difficult to implement. Ana Haziqah et al. (2020) found that teachers’ experience of using technology had a significant impact on the level of readiness, acceptance and sense of ease of use in their teaching. Therefore, teachers should prepare themselves with the latest skills in accordance with current developments and needs.

Mohd Azli et al. (2016) study on the implementation of blended learning approach among postgraduates showed a positive reaction. The software used was found to help students learn more effectively. In addition, achievement in examinations also showed a significant improvement. Children’s learning styles and exposure to technology are now also demanding for learning using technology is also widespread up to the primary school level. Park et al. (2014) also argue that technology helps the PdPc process to be more interesting and facilitates information to be disseminated and received by students by various methods. Kamlin and Keong (2020) also argue that the use of technology provides a positive stimulus to student achievement, motivation and engagement. The use of multimedia in PdP is an effective delivery platform. This approach can also help teachers to deliver lessons effectively based on set objectives.

When Malaysia was hit by Covid-19 and the whole country was under the Restricted Control Order (PKP), it directly affected the teaching and learning process at the kindergarten, primary school, secondary school level up to tertiary level. According to Zalat et al. (2021), the main barrier identified to implement e-learning is internet line disruption especially from the aspect of data adequacy and line stability. While Effendy et al. (2021) reported that the amount of e-learning use is directly influenced by instructor and student satisfaction with the e-learning experience as well as their intention to use it. In line with the findings of Hoi and Mu (2021) revealed that children are very interested in how teachers use technology to teach both inside and outside the classroom.
2. Methodology

A study known as a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) involves identifying, selecting, evaluating, collecting, and analyzing data from pertinent prior studies using systematic and explicit techniques (Moher et al., 2009). In order to choose papers that addressed the stated research questions, the study also followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram. In the SLR study that was conducted, the prism flow diagram for article selection includes four stages: identification, screening, qualifying stage, and item insertion stage (Liberati et al., 2009). Thus, the search strategy, selection standards, selection procedure, data gathering, and data analysis for the acquired articles are all covered by the SLR research.

2.1. Article Search Strategies

Mendeley as a leading search database is used in article searches for SLRs. The keyword "blended learning in language education" is used to find related articles using English. In order to find papers about the blended learning strategy in language teaching, search terms were utilized. The articles that are presented in the database are related to the blended learning approach to teaching and learning as a result of these keywords.

2.2. Article Selection Criteria

As indicated in Table 1, the criteria for accepting and rejecting articles, article selection criteria were established in terms of year of publication, language, type of reference material, and field of research of journal articles in order to acquire papers that meet the scope of the study. The publishing year has to be within the last five years, from 2017 to 2021. Because a five-year period is a time when subjects are still being actively discussed and covered by new issues, the selection of articles is constrained to that time frame. Next, only English-language articles from the chosen database were included in this analysis. Because the database in question exclusively distributes content in English, the articles that were chosen are in English. In contrast, the study's selection of reference materials only included journal articles and excluded conference proceedings, books, and research highlights. This is so that readers can utilize the journal article as a reference source with comprehensive and in-depth reporting.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Rejection</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English.</td>
<td>Non-English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of Study</td>
<td>In education field language.</td>
<td>Other field of study than language education.</td>
</tr>
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2.3. Article Selection Process

The procedure of choosing articles for the literature spotlight was carried out. Figure 1 shows a PRISMA flow diagram that has been modified to represent the article selection process (Tawfik et al., 2019). A total of 3224 papers were used in this study that were
found through database searching. The articles are then put through a more extensive and in-depth screening stage using pre-established criteria.

**Figure 1: Article Selection Process Flow Diagram**

Next, four more criteria for article elimination before inclusion in the SLR study are based on the accompanying article selection process flow diagram. The first is an article that does not have the full text, the second is the article's title, the third is the exact same article pulled from the database, and the fourth is an article that fails to meet the study's acceptance criteria, such as articles without empirical data and reviews, which are also excluded. To meet the additional acceptance criteria, an article must first have the full text of the article, then have a title that fits the context of the study, then be examined to determine whether the context of the study is appropriate and there is no duplication, and finally it must meet the acceptance criteria for the study. possess empirical facts instead of reviews.

Therefore, 47 articles have been identified following screening and investigation on the downloaded publications. There are a total of 47 publications that will be included in the SLR study because they fulfill all of the established selection criteria.

**2.4. Data Analysis Method**

47 papers were used in the data collecting process, which was done using two major databases, especially Mendeley. Each prior research article's title, author, year, purpose, and type of blended learning strategy in language education were extracted and entered into a table created using Microsoft Word software to collect data. A table that had been
created and organized to classify the blended learning strategy adopted by each article was used for data analysis. The outcomes of the data analysis will be shown in tabular format. Based on the established acceptance and rejection standards, all articles are chosen.

3. Findings and Discussion

Finding out that blended learning strategies are used most frequently in the language teaching and learning process is the primary objective of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) study that was done. 47 publications fulfill all the established criteria as a consequence of study from earlier research articles. The authors who were cited in the study are shown in Table 2 along with a list of previous research publications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>1  Abdul Majid &amp; Stapa (2017)</td>
<td>The use of scaffolding technique via Facebook in improving descriptive writing among learners</td>
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<td>2  Abdul Wahid et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Student’s perception on implementation of blended learning in UNITEN</td>
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<td>3  Ang &amp; Yunus (2018)</td>
<td>Blended learning: to read or not to read</td>
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<td>4  Arrosagaray et al. (2019)</td>
<td>A comparative study of Spanish adult students’ attitudes to ICT in classroom, blended and distance language learning modes</td>
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<td>5  Bengar (2019)</td>
<td>Development of teaching materials of German literature with children’s literature material based on blended learning</td>
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<td>6  Blyznyuk et al. (2021)</td>
<td>Boom in distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic: challenges and possibilities</td>
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<td>7  Crosthwaite et al. (2021)</td>
<td>Training disciplinary genre awareness through blended learning: an exploration into students’ perceptions of online annotation of genres across disciplines</td>
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<td>8  Cimermanova (2018)</td>
<td>The effect of learning styles on academic achievement in different forms of teaching</td>
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<td>9  Cuesta Medina (2018)</td>
<td>Blended learning: deficits and prospects in higher education</td>
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<td>10 Elaish et al. (2017)</td>
<td>Mobile learning for English language Acquisition: taxonomy, challenges, and recommendations</td>
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<td>11 Fang et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Advancement and the foci of investigation of MOOCS and open online courses for language learning: a review of journal publications from 2009 to 2018</td>
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<td>12 Farani &amp; Fatimahgribi (2019)</td>
<td>Evaluating the use of blended learning approach instructing pre-service English teachers’ ICT competence</td>
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<td>13 Fazza &amp; Mahgoub (2021)</td>
<td>Student engagement in online and blended learning in a higher education institution in the middle east: challenges and solutions</td>
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<td>14 Garcia-Ponce &amp; Mora-Pablo (2020)</td>
<td>Challenges of using a blended learning approach: a flipped classroom in an English teacher education program in Mexico</td>
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<td>15 Hamzah et al. (2021)</td>
<td>Exploring students’ readiness on English language blended learning</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Holiver et al. (2020)</td>
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<td>Hosseinpour et al. (2019)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Isakova et al. (2020)</td>
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<td>Ju &amp; Mei (2018)</td>
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<td>Mendez &amp; Florez (2018)</td>
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<td>Onah et al. (2020)</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Pinto-Llorente et al. (2017)</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Ryane &amp; El Faddouli (2020)</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Satar &amp; Akcan (2018)</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Sim et al. (2021)</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Simonova (2019)</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Tazijan et al. (2017)</td>
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According to the Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2015), the blended learning approach emphasizes information and skills for a subject showed through inquiry-based learning processes, project-based learning, and problem-based learning in an everyday environment. Cooperative learning is additionally integrated into the teaching and learning process of blended learning in order to make the learning process interactive and improve students' capacity for analysis and idea generation (Fazza & Mahgoub, 2018).

The blended learning approach has been widely used at the higher education level in Malaysia. With the ease of technology, maturity and readiness of instructors and students, this approach can be implemented and receive good feedback. Zulnaidi and Nor Haslina (2020) found that students accept the medium of technology as a source of learning that is also influenced by social factors. In fact, according to Sprenger and Schwaninger (2021), students say that they are able to review more effectively in addition to more flexible time and place choices.

The main concept of the blended learning approach in language education is to improve of the language learning process by blending traditional face-to-face instruction with online or technological elements. This strategy combines the advantages of both conventional and digital teaching techniques to produce a more efficient and interesting learning environment. Several themes have been identified through this study. Examples flexibility and convenience, interactive learning, integrated of technology, teacher facilitation, resource accessibility, lifelong learning, cost-effectiveness and adaptability.

The analysis's findings show that blended learning-based language instruction has a large amount of previous study publications. Project-based learning, blended learning, problem-based learning, and cooperative learning come later. Even though cooperative learning is not frequently mentioned, its significance cannot be denied based just on the volume of articles. This might be as a result of many categories including cooperative learning. Mashroofa et al. (2020) recommend that educational institutions invest in strengthening technology infrastructure, adding specialist staff and updating software so that it is always relevant to current developments.
This research contributes value addition to past studies related to blended learning approach. This study focuses on blended learning approaches in language teaching that can be a reference to the next researcher. The adaptation of a blended approach in the language subject has great potential to be explored and applied especially in primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Blended learning gives students the flexibility to choose the time and location of their learning. Multimedia, interactive exercises, and simulations are frequently used in blended learning to make language learning more interesting and enjoyable. Blended learning is an adaptable approach for a variety of learners since it can be adapted to different proficiency levels, language objectives, and age categories. Although digital tools are important, the teacher remains essential as a key facilitator in the blended learning strategy. Teachers encourage students, offer opinions, and promote a positive learning environment.

4. Conclusion

A significant academic database called Mendeley was used in the SLR analysis. 47 articles in total have been found using the database used and satisfy the established selection criteria. The articles acquired are organized according to the blended learning strategy implemented in the teaching and learning of languages. However, this approach has not been thoroughly tested at the secondary and primary levels. It is important to increase teachers’ and students’ readiness to use the blended learning methodology so that Malaysia’s educational standards can be raised in order to meet contemporary expectations. As a way to include all categories of publications relevant to the study that will be conducted, the researcher intends to use more general keywords in future studies.

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Conflict of Interest

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